Patriarch John X of Antioch meets with Foreign Minister S. Lavrov



On February 20, 2015, His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch met with the head of the Russian foreign policy departments, Mr. Sergey Lavrov.

Mr. Lavrov congratulated the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Antioch on winning the prize of the International Public Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Nations. He noted the special contribution that Patriarch John X made to the promotion of peace and accord between various religious communities in the Middle East. ‘Undoubtedly, the decision of the Foundation reflects the recognition of your role as Primate of the Church of Antioch who has done very much to preserve the multi-cultural nature of this very important region, to advocate the rights of Christians and to respect their more than two thousand years old history’, Mr. Lavrov stated.

Having emphasized the importance of defending the interests of the Christian population in the Middle East, Mr Lavrov said, ‘We are seeking to actively help establish truly collective efforts for overcoming

the crisis in Syria and Yemen in a peaceful way and to prevent destabilization of the situation in Lebanon, Iraq and other countries of the region'.

Patriarch John, on his part, thanked the Russian leaders on behalf of the Orthodox Church of Antioch and stressed, 'We can see what you have undertaken to restore peace both in the whole world and in the Middle East region'.

His Beatitude also noted that he was grateful to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for the invitation to visit Moscow.

Speaking about the prize of the Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Nations, Patriarch John said, 'I believe this award becomes a kind of recognition of the suffering experienced by people in the region. The prize will be devoted, in the first place, to our people and the two metropolitans who are in captivity'.

'We thank Russia, its government and people and the Russian Orthodox Church', he continued, 'for the stand they have adopted politically and internationally, for their support of peace, for their efforts to settle conflicts and crises throughout the world, especially in Syria and the Middle East. I am also grateful for the humanitarian aid which comes from Russia to Syria and other countries in the region, to those who very much need it. We also appreciate the efforts made by Russia for a peaceful solution of problems in the region'.

In conclusion of the meeting, Patriarch John X presented Mr. Lavrov with the Order of Sts Peter and Paul (1st degree). This highest award of the Orthodox Church of Antioch was granted to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs in recognition of his efforts to support peace in the Middle East.

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