# Primates of Russian and Serbian Churches meet with head of Serbia's Government, Mr. Aleksandar Vučić



On 14 November 2014, the Primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches met with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vučić.

Present at the meeting, which took place at the premises of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, were also Mr. Ivica Dačić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; and Bishop Irinej of Bać.

Mr. Vučić greeted His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and expressed his joy over the visit of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church to Serbia. The head of the Government thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for the support and aid to the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which included the assistance in constructing the Cathedral of St. Sabbas in Belgrade.

Addressing Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia said in particular:

“We feel that in Serbia we are among our brothers; and these are not protocolarly words. Suffice is to look at the faces of people meeting us in the streets. The sincere and warm feeling that the Serbs have for our people is fully manifested during such events as this one.

“Our whole history stands behind these feelings. The ties between our nations, countries, and Churches have become a part of the national identity, having created a solid foundation impossible to be destroyed by a political will of these or those statesmen or political parties. It is remarkable that among the Serbian leadership we meet people who are well aware of that and express the feelings of their nation, cooperating and maintaing good political relations with the Russian Federation.

“This year a great disaster, a flood, has befallen your country. We sympathized deeply with the Serbian people. When I applied to common people, not to businessmen or bankers, they collected about a million dollars. I am glad to see that people, who are not often rich, respond heartely and are eager to support the Serbian people.’’

After the talk of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church had a meeting with the head and members of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in an expanded format.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill raised the issue of Kosovo and Metohija, noting that the Russian Orthodox Church does not change her position. “We are firm in our conviction that there can be no discrimination against the Serbian population in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, there can be no isolation of the Serbs, living there, from Serbia,’’ His Holiness said, “It is not for a Church to offer a model of political settlement; it is politicians who should do it. Yet, at all levels we insist on the observance of rights and freedoms of the Serbs living in those territorries.’’

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