



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill receives H.E. Mahmoud Gamil Ahmed ElDieb, Ambassador of Arab Republic of Egypt to Russian Federation**



On 12 April 2013, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with H.E. Mahmoud Gamil Ahmed ElDieb, newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Russian Federation, at the Patriarchal residence in St Daniel's Monastery. Taking part in the meeting was also Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for far abroad countries.

Greeting the guest, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church noted that Russia and Egypt had a long history of relations that had started as far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. "Our country was helping Egypt during the most difficult periods of its 20<sup>th</sup> century history. Many young Egyptian people were studying in Russia," Patriarch Kirill said.

His Holiness emphasized the importance of the relations between Russia and Egypt in religious sphere, saying in particular, "It is in Egypt that the Centre of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, headed by His

Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria and All Africa, is located. For many years, His Beatitude served as the representative of the Church of Alexandria to the Moscow Patriarchate; he speaks good Russian and often visits our country; he was awarded with the state Order of Friendship and with the prize of the International Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations which is awarded to those who have contributed to developing relations between Churches.”

Patriarch Kirill also noted that the Russian Orthodox Church had traditionally good relations with the Coptic community of Egypt. “I visited your country after being elected the Patriarch and before that: I met with the administration of the Islamic University, with Patriarch Shenouda of the Coptic Church, and with His Beatitude Theodoros,” His Holiness said.

“We believe that our ties in religious sphere: with the Islamic community, with the Coptic community, and with the Patriarchate of Alexandria, play an important role in developing relations between our countries,” His Holiness added.

Patriarch Kirill expressed his sympathy to Mr. ElDieb with regards to the political crisis which had befallen Egypt in 2010-2011. “We prayed for the people of Egypt, for peace to be reestablished. Now, watching the news from Cairo, we feel glad when we see that people live in peace and feel grieved when we see that people go on conflicting with each other,” he said. His Holiness expressed his hope that all conflicts and tribulations would come to end and traditionally fraternal relations between Egypt and Russia would develop.

The Ambassador of Egypt thanked His Holiness for the meeting and said that he shared Patriarch Kirill’s opinion about the importance of relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill expressed his concern over the situation of Coptic Christians in Egypt, in particular, over the cases of persecution against them. “We are struggling for two communities, the Muslim one and the Christian one, to live in peace,” the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church noted.

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