Sergey Lavrov: We are concerned for the fate of Christians in the Middle East

November 28, 2012, Russia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov attended the meeting of the Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society's Board which took place at the Society's headquarters in Moscow.

Addressing the meeting, Lavrov underscored the similarity of stands taken by his ministry and the Russian Orthodox Church on the need to consolidate humanitarian relations between the peoples of Russia, the Middle East and North Africa and to ensure Russia's humanitarian and cultural presence in the Holy Land.

The minister gave a high value to the trip made by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to the Middle East, noting that the recent patriarchal visit to the Holy Land vividly showed the role played by the Russian Orthodox Church in asserting peace and harmony in the region.

Mr. Lavrov also expressed concern over the possibility for 'the Arab Springs' in some states to result in being overtaken by extremist groupings who would allow of discrimination against particular ethnic confessional groups. 'In the first place, we are certainly concerned for the fate of Christians', he said.

He also pointed to the high importance of the statement made by the IOPS Board on 'The Protection of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa', saying that his ministry will instruct its missions including the one in the UN to make an active use of this document in their diplomatic work.

Mr. Lavrov concluded his remarks saying that Russia's Ministry for Foreign Affairs has always valued the contribution made by the IOPS to the defence of peace, stability and the strengthening of the

Russian State’s authority in the Holy Land’.

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