Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church meet with Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat

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On 11 November 2012, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill had a talk with Mr. Nir Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem, at his office.

Attending the meeting were His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem; members of the official delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, accompanying His Holiness on his visit to the Holy Land; Mr. Ziv Ayalon, head of a municipal department; Ms Masha Novikov, Deputy-Mayor; Ms. Naomi Zur, Deputy-Mayor, and other staff members of the Mayor's office.

Mayor Barkat assured the high guests that municipal authorities were trying to take care for the holy places in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is a centre of pilgrimage, he said and added that the number of pilgrims had increased from two to four millions for the last seven years. Russian Orthodox faithful comprise the most part of them. Mayor of Jerusalem hopes that the number of people coming to the sites of Jerusalem will increase up to ten millions in the near future.

His Holiness thanked Mr. Nir Barkat for his words filled with love of the eternal city of Jerusalem for which you bear responsibility. It is gratifying to know that you wish to give a new impetus to the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Patriarch Kirill said that he visited the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in accordance with an Orthodox tradition: a newly elected Primate of the Church pays visits to the heads of other Local Orthodox Churches. "At the same time, - he added, - my visit is a pilgrimage. Any believer comes to Jerusalem to venerate its sites. I met thousands of pilgrims here, including those from the countries, in which the Russian Orthodox Church is present."

His Holiness dwelt on the history of the Russian present in Palestine, the development of pilgrimage and relations with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Discussed in detail were issues related to the activities of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/53453/