



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: I always pray to the Lord to grant well-being and peace to the Palestinian people**

On 10 November 2012, H.E. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian National Authority, gave dinner in honour of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia who is visiting the Holy Land.

Among those attending this grand reception was His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos, the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem.

President Mahmoud Abbas emphasized that he was glad to welcome His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and his delegation to Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ was born, and called Patriarch Kirill's visit a historic event: "We appreciate the contribution of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to the Russian-Palestinian relations, to the relations between the two people."

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said in response:

"I am very glad to be in Palestine. I have been here before many times and venerated the shrines of this land. But this is a special visit as it is my first visit to the Holy Land as the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. I have come here not only as the Patriarch of the multi-million flock, but also as a pilgrim longing to visit the land where our Lord Jesus Christ was walking two thousand years ago.

The Moscow Patriarchate has maintained close relations with Palestine. I pray for the well-being and long-awaited peace with justice for this land. Palestinians have always been dear guests of Russia and of the Russian Orthodox Church. I am very pleased to note that every time when You, Your Excellency, come to Moscow, we take an opportunity to meet and discuss important issues... I cordially thank you and your staff for warm hospitality and for the attention to me as the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and to the members of our delegation.

I also thank you for our talk, in which you have shared your views on peaceful settlement in the Middle East. I am deeply convinced that your personal commitment to peaceful ways for achieving stability in this region is the only valid position. I believe that the majority of people dreaming about peace in the Holy Land adhere to your position."