



## **Patriarch Kirill begins his visit to Kazakhstan**

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On May 29, 2012, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia began his visit to Kazakhstan.

The delegation accompanying the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church includes Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's administrative secretariat, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, head of the synodal department for church-society relations, and Mr. V. Legoida, head of the synodal information department.

At the Astana airport, His Holiness Kirill was met by Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, head of the ROC Metropolia in Kazakhstan, Mr. A. Sudyin, vice-chairman of Kazakhstan's Senate, Astana's Akim I. Tasmagambetov, Mr. K. Lama Sharif, director of Kazakhstan's agency for religious affairs, Russian ambassador to Kazakhstan M. Bocharnikov and other officials.

In his talk with mass media reporters, Patriarch Kirill said, 'It is my second visit to this blessed land and this time I come with a special mission – to take part in the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of World and Traditional Religions. At the same time however, I will have an opportunity to visit the center of the Metropolia of Kazakhstan here, in Astana, and to participate in its consecration.

'These two events are of great importance. Kazakhstan is a country in which interreligious relations have been developing harmoniously, in which relations between religious organizations and the state have been built in a very fruitful and constructive way. And we know that it is the wise policy of the President of Kazakhstan that has determined to a great extent the parameters in which this peaceful and good cooperation has been maintained.

I would like to convey greetings to all the people of Kazakhstan and to wish them peace, prosperity, strong interreligious relations and successes in both material and spiritual development'

Then Patriarch Kirill proceeded to the presidential residence 'Ak-Orda' for a meeting with Kazakhstan's President N. Nazarbaev.

*Patriarchal Press Service*

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/54119/>