



## **Representatives of state authorities and public circles and ambassadors of foreign states congratulate the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church on his 65th birthday**

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A grand reception marking Patriarch Kirill's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday took place at the refectory chambers of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in the evening of 21 November 2011.

Before the reception, many guests congratulated the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church at the Throne Hall of the Patriarchal Chambers, among them Vladimir Kozhin, head of the department of presidential affairs; Valentina Matviyenko, chairman of the Federation Council; Boris Gryzlov, speaker of the State Duma; Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin; Vladimir Churov, chairman of the Central Election Commission; ministers of the federal government, deputies of the State Duma, ambassadors of foreign states accredited in Moscow, mass media leaders, businessmen, and representatives of scientific, cultural and public organizations, press Office of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia reports.

Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshuqur Pasha-zade, chairmen of the Caucasian Muslim Board and leaders of the traditional religious communities of Russia also attended the reception.

Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna addressed His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on behalf of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. Messages of greetings from the Presidents of Belarus and Azerbaijan were read out, and Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshuqur Pasha-zade presented the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church with the 'Sheikh ul-Islam' Order, an award from the Caucasian Muslim Board.

His Holiness warmly thanked all those present for congratulations, saying: 'These are not just tokens of courtesy, and I take them as marks of solidarity. Patriarch's ministry is very difficult and would have been absolutely impossible if he does not rely on the prayer and support of many people. The energy of human spirit is very strong, and I feel it in your kind words, I feel it seeing your faces and your eyes, I feel it as you extend support to the Patriarch in his ministry.

'I express my special gratitude to the members of the Holy Synod, both permanent and invited to its sessions. I thank the heads of the states who congratulated me; I thank representatives of other confessions and religions, representatives of governments, public organizations, business, mass media

and, certainly, our pious and courageous people.

‘May the Lord extend His mercy to all countries which have been closely linked with one another by their past and by the ministry of the Russian Orthodox Church. May the Lord extend His mercy to all those present in this hall. I wholeheartedly thank you, and may the Lord keep you. Many and good years to all of you.’

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