



Metropolitan Hilarion meets with Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University

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On June 13, 2011, in the course of his working visit to Cairo, Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, met with the Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar University, Sheikh Ahmad al Tayeb.

During their talk, Metropolitan Hilarion reminded his interlocutor that the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited the university and met with Sheikh al Tayeb a year ago. He also emphasized the importance of developing dialogue between Al-Azhar's scholars and Orthodox theologians in Russia.

He also expressed concern over a surge of anti-Christian attitudes in a part of the Egyptian society and cited the tragic events of May 2011 when Christian churches were set on fire and people were injured in Giza. Metropolitan Hilarion said that the anti-Christian sentiments were artificially fanned up by those forces who are interested in destabilizing the socio-political situation in Egypt.

The DECR chairman gave a high assessment to prospects for establishing an organization called 'Egypt is Our Home' to include both Muslim and Christian members. This idea has been recently set forth by Sheikh al Tayeb. This organization is expected to work for strengthening interreligious relations, to struggle with the spread of radical views and to call Egyptians to national unity regardless of their confessional affiliation.

His Eminence said that Russia is a country where the principles of religious solidarity are rooted in centuries of peaceful coexistence between Christianity and Islam. But Russia knows from her own experience what terrorism is.

According to the DECR chairman, traditional religions are called to play a special role in overcoming the crisis of the modern civilization, raising their voice against disregard for moral norms, injustice, vice and violence. 'Muslims and Christians are called to oppose together the propaganda of vice, sin and all-permissiveness', he emphasized.

Sheikh al Tayeb, on his part, gave a high value to the visit of Patriarch Kirill Egypt and pointed to the importance of his visit to the world largest Islamic university. The president of the university informed the high guest about Al-Azhar's work of the university and its effort to promote interreligious dialogue and

accord in the Egyptian society.

After their talk, Metropolitan Hilarion met with the faculty and students of the university at its conference hall.

DECR Communication Service

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