



## **Patriarch Kirill meets with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev**

[gallery]

Upon his arrival in Baku on April 24, 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and his party proceeded to the presidential residence to meet with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev.

Present at the meeting were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, Bishop Alexander of Baku and Prikaspijsk, Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's administrative secretariat, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, head of the department for church-society relations, Mr. V. Legoida, head of the Synodal information, and Russian Ambassador to Azerbaijan V. Dorokhhin.

Welcoming the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, President Aliyev noted his special services for strengthening interreligious relations in the CIS countries. He awarded Patriarch Kirill the Sharif Order, the highest decoration of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Patriarch Kirill thanked the president for the order and, in his turn, expressed a high appreciation of the contribution made by the Azerbaijan leader to the development of interreligious dialogue. 'On behalf of the Orthodox community in Azerbaijan, I would like to thank you for the spirit of peace present in the life of your people', he said, adding with satisfaction that the religious situation in Azerbaijan was distinguished by stability, while the leaders of the country, in which most people confess Islam, showed consideration for the needs of Orthodox citizens.

Patriarch Kirill awarded the Azerbaijan President the Order of Glory and Honour, a highest decoration of the Russian Orthodox Church granted to heads of states and governments, leaders of international and intergovernmental organizations, heads of churches and confessions and outstanding statesmen and public leaders in recognition of their contribution to inter-church and inter-religious cooperation and to the cause of peace and friendship among nations.

After that Patriarch Kirill and President Aliyev had a talk.

*DECR Communication Service*