



**THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Department for External Church Relations

## **Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church meets with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Jordan to Russia**

On 14 April 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia received at his residence in Chisty side-street the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Russian Federation Mr. Ahmed Sataan Al-Hassan.

They were joined by the second secretary of the Embassy of Jordan Mr. Nader Tarawneh and the Revd. Sergiy Zvonarev, acting DECR secretary for far-abroad countries, press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia reports.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greeted the Ambassador of Jordan and noted traditionally good relations of the Russian Church with the diplomatic representation of the Hashemite Kingdom. 'Jordan is a friendly country. Many Christian holy sites are located there. The Russian have visited Palestine and Jordan from the earliest times to venerate these holy places.'

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church mentioned another factor that brings the two countries closer together, namely, "a high level of interreligious dialogue and cooperation between Jordan and Russia." His Holiness believes that Jordan has attained a true interreligious peace. He highly appreciate the part played by King Abdullah II, who is 'a patron of interreligious relations and attaches great importance to them.'

"Jordan and the Russian Federation are friendly countries engaged in a fruitful political dialogue. We, as representatives of the Church, welcome this development of relations as it corresponds to the historical tradition and spiritual hopes of our people. Undoubtedly, it is beneficial to our countries."

Ambassador Al-Hassan thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia for his kind words and conveyed greetings from the King, the government of people of Jordan.

The preservation of the Orthodox holy places in the Middle East was discussed. While talking about interreligious relations in Jordan, the Ambassador noted that there were no place accessible to only Christians or Muslims: all place of veneration are accessible to all people. The state pursues a policy of providing the followers of different religious traditions an opportunity to venerate the holy places freely.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church said that the holy places should not be turned into museums or objects of tourism and pointed at their special spiritual significance for the pilgrims and for local residents.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill went on to tell about the participation of the Russian Orthodox Church in different initiatives for peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis and shared his vision of the way out from the difficult situation in the region.

His Holiness mentioned the construction of a church and a house for pilgrims on the plot of land on the left bank of the Jordan River handed over to Russia by the leadership of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The construction will be completed irrespective of technical problems linked with the relief of the territory.

The participants in the meeting expressed their hope for the continuation of cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and Jordan.

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