



**THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
Department for External Church Relations

## **Patriarch Kirill congratulates the president of Greece on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the struggle for the liberation of the Greek nation**



*His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus Kirill sent congratulation to the president of the Republic of Greece Katerina Sakellariopoulou on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the struggle for the liberation of the Greek nation.*

**To: Her Excellency  
Madam Katerina Sakellariopoulou  
President of the Republic of Greece**

**Your Excellency,  
Esteemed Madam President,**

Allow me to convey to you and in your person to all of the Greek nation my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Greek independence.

In the events of two-hundred years ago the people of Greece, who endured

many afflictions and trials in a state of captivity and yet who remained steadfast and strengthened throughout hardships by their native Orthodox faith, manifested great spiritual courage and heroism. The blessing of the white and blue flag of Greece in 1821 in the monastery of the Great Lavra became not only a sign of the beginning of the self-sacrificial struggle for the rights and freedom of the Greek population, but also a symbol of national unity, at the basis of which lay an ardent love for their native land. The inviolability of the people's spirit, the will to victory and an acute sense of responsibility for the destiny of the Fatherland, which all Greeks experienced in those days, forged a united Greece from Thracia to Crete, from the Ionian islands to the islands of the Aegean Sea.

The Russian people has never been indifferent to the fate of her Greek brothers and sisters in spirit and in the faith. In feeling their pain and suffering, in closing ranks in times of hardship, in taking up arms to defend the right of Greeks to a life of peace on the land of their forefathers, Russians actively testified to their love, even unto the readiness to "lay down their lives for their friends" (Jn. 5.13). The liberation of Greece was preceded by the national revival that had come into being, including in such places as Odessa, Taganrog and Chersoneses. This became possible in many ways thanks to the previous victories of Russian arms and the support of the Russian philhellenes. The Russian Orthodox Church values highly the care which modern-day Greece takes in preserving the memory of Russian soldiers and sailors who fell in battle for the freedom of their Greek brothers. The name of Ioannis Kapodistrias alone bears witness to how the historical destinies of our respective countries are closely intertwined.

Bound by a single faith and religious culture and by similar national traditions, the peoples of Russia and Greece bear a common civilizational mission in the contemporary world. Our saints, our Orthodox forebears taught us to value sacrifice over pragmatism, friendship over advantage, truth over force and freedom over well-being.

Today, in spite of the transient political tensions, including those imposed from without, our peoples retain their adherence to the good traditions of hospitality and friendliness, to mutual aid and solidarity. I believe that the inheritors of Holy Russia and Orthodox Greece enjoy not only a common past but also a common present and without doubt will enjoy a common future.

On this important and festive day for all of Greece I wish you and all the Greek people peace and prosperity.

With respect,

**+Kirill**

**Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'**

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