



## Archbishop Leonid of Vladikavkaz and Alania meets with Orthodox public of Lebanon



On June 9, 2021, in conclusion of his working visit to Lebanon, Archbishop Leonid of Vladikavkaz and Alania, vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, met with the Orthodox public of the country.

Present at the meeting were Bishop Constantine of Zabadan, vicar of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and father superior of the Monastery of St. Elias in Shwayya (Lebanon); Mr. Marwan Abu-Fadel, general secretary of the Orthodox Council (Liqa); and members of the Executive Council of the movement; Mr. A. Rudakov, Russia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Lebanon; and Archimandrite Phillip (Vasil'tsev), rector of the Beirut Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In the beginning of the event, which took place at the Orthodox Liqa headquarters, Mr Marwas Abu-Fadel conveyed words of deep gratitude to the Russian Orthodox Church and to Russia 'for their very fast coming to Beirut after the disaster in the port'. He noted the role of Russia in building and maintaining peace both in the Middle East and around the world and highlighted the peacemaking efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church and its Primate.

The Orthodox Liqa general secretary presented Archbishop Leonid with a commemorative token of the movement.

In his response, Archbishop Leonid said that the Church of Antioch and the Russian Orthodox Church 'are doing all that is possible to make people in all the world and, first of all, in our country live a better life, adding 'with all our hearts we empathize with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Syria and Lebanon on whom misfortunes and hardships have befallen' and stressed that these lands are sacred for Christians.

As His Eminence Leonid pointed to the fact that hundreds of thousands of Christians are leaving these lands, which causes a deep concern.

'My Motherland, Russia, has repeatedly experienced the hardest historical trials. And the Russian people are no strangers to wars, suffering and human sacrifices', he said, 'So, when we hear about the misfortunes and trials of our brothers in Christ, also about the tragic event when quite recently there was an explosion in Lebanon that took a heavy toll of lives, we immediately responded to it. We have joined the process of restoration of both church buildings and other constructions. And now I have come to clarify what else we can do, what actions we can undertake and what aid we can render to our fraternal Lebanese people. I have met with His Beatitude Patriarch John X and Metropolitan Elias of Beirut. They have supported all the initiatives.

'We are keeping abreast of events, we have areas of common interests and I believe through joint efforts and with God's help we will manage to do much in the nearest future', he concluded.

Archbishop Leonid presented the Orthodox Liqaa general secretary Mr Marwan Abu-Fadel with an icon of St George the Conqueror.

Addressing the meeting, Ambassador A. Rudakov noted in particular, 'We will always promote the initiatives implemented through the Russian Orthodox Church's channels to help Lebanon in the difficult situation in which the country was caught last August'.

After the meeting, there was a brotherly tea-party.

DECR Communication Service

with reference to the website of the Beirut Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church

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