THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Metropolitan Hilarion thanks MFA of Russia for attention to the problem of persecution of Christians



On September 2, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov awarded Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, an MFA Medal "For Cooperation."

Taking part in "The Church and the World" programme on Rossiya 24 TV channel, Vladyka Hilarion, at the request of the host Yekaterina Gracheva, spoke about the working relations with the head of Russian foreign ministry, describing them as constructive, confidential and of good will.

"Concerning urgent problems of key importance, Sergey Viktorovich communicates directly with His Holiness: they meet personally and discuss the international agenda. If these are matters of daily routine, I will often get into contact with Sergey Lavrov or his deputies," said the DECR chairman.

He underlined that the point of such contacts is for the Church to be aware of what was going on in the life of the state and for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to know the Church's concerns in the area of external relations. "Each time when I visit other countries, I meet with the ambassadors of the Russian Federation there and receive information fr om them about the life of the Orthodox Christians in their countries," added the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations.

Continuing the topic of the interaction with representatives of the diplomatic corps, he noted, “We often discuss the general picture of the international situation. This is very important, because, though the Church is separated from the state and has got an agenda and interests of its own, we all live in one and the same world and cannot help reacting to current developments.”

At the meetings with Sergey Lavrov, we usually cover a wide range of problems, said Vladyka Hilarion. “On that occasion [on September 2], we couldn’t but take up the issue of the situation in Afghanistan, as well as in the Middle East and Africa, wh ere Christians are subjected to persecutions in different forms. We are thankful to our foreign ministry for permanently raising the topic of persecutions against Christians,” underscored the DECR chairman, pointing out with gratitude the specific relationship established between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RF and the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations.

DECR Communication Service

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