



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with the ambassador of Jordan to Russia



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On July 29, a meeting took place between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Russian Federation, H. E. Khaled Shawabkeh.

Participating in the meeting was also Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Having thanked His Holiness for the opportunity for meeting, the ambassador conveyed to Patriarch Kirill words of appreciation from King of Jordan Abdullah II for his work for the benefit of Churches and Christian holy places. Mr. Khaled Shawabkeh also expressed hope for broadening religious tourism to

Jordan after the interruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic and for further development of relations between the two countries.

Having warmly thanked the ambassador for the greetings conveyed, His Holiness stated that the Russian Church has long-established, lasting and friendly relations with Jordan, noting among the factors promoting them the beneficial attitude to these contacts shown by His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan and the royal family, as well as the well-disposed attitude by the people of that country.

‘State borders do not divide the Holy Land - it is one. Jordan is a historically important part of the Holy Land. Precisely for this reason we deemed it necessary to build a pilgrimage center in the territory of this country so that pilgrims from Russia, who wish to visit the Holy Land, could come to both Israel and Jordan and, certainly, the Palestinian Autonomy’ His Holiness stressed, ‘The very fact that the Holy Land lives in the heart of Orthodox people opens up great prospects for further development of pilgrimage, and it means, for deepening relations between our nations’.

Patriarch Kirill made a special mention of his visit to Jordan in February 2020 and the meeting that took place there between the Primates and representatives of Local Orthodox Churches. His Holiness pointed out that the historic assembly ‘had a great importance for consolidating Orthodox Churches at a rather difficult time’. His Holiness stressed with gratitude ‘the very positive and beneficial attitude’ to this initiative shown by His Majesty King Abdullah II.

His Holiness also touched upon some specific areas of cooperation with Jordan. In particular, he mentioned the participation of the Russian Orthodox Church in building a school in the town of Dibbeen and in implementing a training program for student who come from Jordan to the territory of the Russian Federation. ‘All these initiatives and programs are implemented in a beneficial atmosphere; for nothing darkens our relations, and they certainly help deepen relationships between the peoples of Russia and Jordan and between our countries’, Patriarch Kirill said. He expressed hope for further development of the relations including between believers of the two countries with participation of the Russian Orthodox Church and religious organizations in Jordan, in particular the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, whose canonical territory includes Jordan.