



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Congratulations of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the 75th anniversary of the World Council of Churches



World Council of Churches

DECR Communication service, 21.06.2023.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent a congratulatory message to Prof Dr Jerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and the members of the WCC Central Committee on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the organisation.

Rev. Prof Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches

Members of the WCC Central Committee,

Reverend Prof Pillay,

Dear members of the WCC Central Committee,

I extend to you my heartfelt greetings on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the World Council of Churches – the largest international organisation serving as a place of encounter and dialogue for Christians of different traditions.

The World Council of Church was founded in crucial times when devastating revolutions, dreadful persecutions of Christians and two sanguinary wars that had claimed millions of lives became things of the past. However, it was also the time when the Cold War began, putting humanity in danger of a nuclear catastrophe. In those trying times, despite geopolitical divisions, Christians decided to combine their efforts in order to strengthen peace between countries and nations and promote inter-church cooperation.

The Russian Orthodox Church joined the WCC in 1961 – as the Cuban missile crisis started to unfold. Acting in close cooperation with representatives of other Local Orthodox Churches and Christian confessions, for decades the Moscow Patriarchate was taking part in the WCC's peacemaking mission, devoting great attention to counteracting xenophobia, racism and social injustice.

Today we have once again found ourselves in the face of a large-scale geopolitical confrontation. Tragic developments in Ukraine is what makes my heart ache. The Moscow Patriarchate takes a clear and unambiguous stance – we call for preventing further escalation of the conflict. No effort should be spared to ensure that blessed peace is restored in the war-torn land and an end is put to the bloodshed, along with any persecution on religious, political or language grounds. In this regard, I would like to make special mention of the efforts of Prof Jerry Pillay and the WCC current and former leadership who over the last few months visited Moscow and Kyiv on several occasions.

As calls are regularly heard, urging to give up dialogue and turn to the rhetoric of ultimatums and threats, the peacebuilding role of the World Council of Churches acquires particular importance. I believe that we must maintain bridges of communication built by us and our predecessors over the decades – not only for our sake, but for the sake of future generations. As the 11th General Assembly held in 2022 showed, these views are shared by the WCC leadership and the overwhelming majority of its member churches. I hope that with God's help the Russian Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches will continue their fruitful cooperation.

I wish you good health, peace and help from our Saviour in your further work aimed at promoting and

strengthening inter-Christian contacts.

With love in the Lord,

**+KIRILL
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA**

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