



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: Russian Orthodox Church's presence in Africa dates back to 19th century



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His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia **spoke** at the Second Russia–Africa Summit in St. Petersburg on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023. In his address he **noted**, in particular, that the Patriarchal Exarchate of Africa had been established in response to requests coming from Orthodox Christians in Africa and with the view of offering them pastoral guidance.

“At the same time, there is nothing unprecedented in the Russian Orthodox Church’s presence in the African land. First Russian parishes were opened on the continent as far back as the 19th and early 20th centuries,” His Holiness said and added that in Abyssinia, Russian churches were built in 1889 and 1896 and in Egypt, a permanent parish of the Russian Orthodox Church was set up in 1914.

“Following the revolution in Russia, with more and more people fleeing our country, new parishes started opening in Africa. In 1920, a church was consecrated in Tunisia; in 1922, a parish was established in Algeria; in 1927, Russian Orthodox parishes appeared in the territory of Morocco. In 1998, I had the honour to consecrate the first Russian church in South Africa,” the Primate of the Russian Church continued.

It was with deep sadness that His Holiness Patriarch Kirill also pointed out that in 2019 the Primate of the Church of Alexandria, Patriarch Theodoros, acting under external pressure, made a decision to recognize a certain schismatic group in Ukraine.

“Those deplorable events prompted the Russian Orthodox Church, as I have already mentioned, to establish the Patriarchal Exarchate of Africa in December 2021. The Patriarch of Alexandria, led by certain Western forces, made the decision to create the new schism in Orthodoxy and we had to respond to that act. Thus we resolved to set up the Exarchate on the African continent. Our flock includes not only Russian people residing in Africa, but also local citizens who confess Orthodox faith and today belong to our Church,” His Holiness said in conclusion.

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