The DECR Chairman took part in the international Muslim forum



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On the 12 of December 2023, the XIX International Muslim Forum "The Role of Religious Leaders in Protecting Spiritual and Moral Values and Strengthening Peace and Security" was held at the Moscow Cathedral Mosque. The forum was organised by the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of the Russian Federation with the participation of the Council of Muftis of Russia, the Moscow Islamic Institute, the Foundation for the Support of Islamic Science, Culture and Education.

Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, took part in the event as a guest of honour. The Archpastor was accompanied by Deacon Ilia Kashitsyn, DECR Secretary for Interreligious Relations, and Deacon Nikolai Vasin, Assistant to the Chairman of the Department.

At the opening ceremony of the conference, moderated by First Deputy Chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of the Russian Federation Damir Mukhetdinov, greetings were delivered by Deputy Head of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation M.M. Magomedov and Deputy Chairman of the Government of Russia M.S. Khusnullin. The welcome address of the Chairman of the Federation Council V.I. Matvienko was read by the Deputy Chairman of the Strategic Vision Group "Russia - Islamic World" F.M. Mukhametshin. Next, Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainutdin, Chairman of

the Council of Muftis of Russia and the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of the Russian Federation, spoke, among other things, about the jubilee meeting of the Interreligious Council of Russia, headed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', which was held on the 7nd of December 2023. The Mufti emphasised the importance of developing Orthodox-Muslim interaction and joint defence of traditional spiritual and moral values.

The DECR Chairman welcomed the organisers and participants of the forum. In his speech, the Archpastor noted the unique nature of interaction between religions and peoples that has developed in Russia. Speaking about the contribution of religious leaders to strengthening traditions, peace and security, Metropolitan Anthony quoted the words of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill from his speech at the meeting of the Interreligious Council of Russia on the 7 of December: "Religious leaders of the country are called to contribute to strengthening the unity of Russian society, setting an example of friendship and harmony. I am confident that the experience of building peace between religions, accumulated by us and our ancestors, will continue to serve the well-being and prosperity of our society".

The DECR Chairman outlined important areas of co-operation between Orthodox and Muslims, which are designed to respond to today's challenges: military conflicts, protection of believers and religious shrines, countering the spread of radical ideas. A quotation was presented from the statement of the Interreligious Council of Russia published on the 7 of December 2023: "Our strength lies in unity while preserving the identity and diversity of religions and cultures".

Metropolitan Anthony concluded his speech with the words of Ecclesiastes: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14), expressing hope for a successful interaction between communities of traditional religions.

Among the speakers and participants at the forum were: Mufti of Egypt Shawki Karim Allam, the Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments of Algeria Youssef Belmehdi, Mufti of Kazakhstan Nauryzbai Taganuly, Mufti of Kyrgyzstan Zamir Rakiev, Secretary General of the World Assembly for the Rapprochement of Madhhabs Ayatollah Hamid Shahriyari, Head of the World Council of Muslim Communities (UAE) Ali Rashid Nuaimi, Mufti of Tatarstan Kamil Samigullin, Chairman of the Patriarch's Expert Council on Interaction with the Islamic World Hieromonk Gregory (Matrusov), Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Centre for Interreligious Dialogue in Doha (Qatar) Ibrahim Al-Nuaimi, Scientific Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences V. V. Naumkin, ambassadors of Muslim countries in Russia, religious, state and public figures from Palestine, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Qatar, Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan and other countries.

On the margins of the forum, a ceremony of signing a co-operation agreement between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Wakfs of Algeria and the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of the Russian Federation had taken place. The participants of the conference adopted the final statement.

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