



## Delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church takes part in COP29 Summit of Religious Leaders



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On 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church led by Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, took part in the Global Summit of Religious Leaders in Baku, Azerbaijan, timed to the 29<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference (COP29).

The conference was organized by the Caucasus Muslims Board, the Muslim Council of Elders, the Government of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Environment Programme.

The Summit brought together leaders of traditional Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Buddhist communities from various regions of the world, as well as statespersons and public figures,

representatives of expert community and journalists from Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, Turkey, Serbia, Romania, Mongolia, the USA, the EU and other regions.

Mr Ali Asadov, Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, opened the Summit by reading out a message of greetings from the President of the country, Mr Ilham Aliyev.

During the first plenary session, the DECR chairman read out a **message of greetings** from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', which said, in particular: "The idea of humans as sole masters of the universe, deeply rooted in public consciousness, has proved to be profoundly erroneous," resulting in "numerous man-made disasters, extinction of various flora and fauna species, as well as irreversible climate changes and a dramatically increased risk of a large-scale nuclear conflict threatening the existence of our entire planet." The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church pointed out that "the Maker entrusted the man as the crown of creation with an important duty of tending and keeping (Gen 2:15) the land, by no means plundering or depleting its riches in order to satisfy sinful desires," and expressed hope that "the united voice of the leaders of traditional religions who have gathered here today will be heard by decision makers, helping to save God's creation."

Among those who took part in the Summit were also Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus; Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), DECR deputy chairman; and Priest Nikolai Vasin, secretary to the DECR chairman.

While in Baku, at the invitation of Bishop Alexy of Baku and Azerbaijan, Metropolitans Anthony and Veniamin, as well as other delegation members and Bishop Aleksej of Hvosno, representative of the Serbian Orthodox Church, visited churches of the Moscow Patriarchate's Baku Diocese, namely, the Cathedral of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women and the Churches of Archangel Michael and the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God.

The Russian Church's representatives also attended a reception given by the head of the Caucasus Muslims Board, Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshükür Pashazade, in honour of the high-ranking religious figures taking part in the Summit, and a reception organized for the Summit delegates on behalf of the Government of Azerbaijan.

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