His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with the Chairman of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan



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On November 22, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' met with the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Maulen Ashimbayev, at the Patriarchal residence in the Danilov Monastery in Moscow.

Representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the meeting were Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan and the Secretary for Interreligious Relations of the DECR, Priest Ilya Kashitsyn.

The delegation fr om the Republic of Kazakhstan included the Chairman of the Senate Committee on International Relations, Defense, and Security, A.I. Lukin; Secretary of the Senate Committee on Agricultural Issues, Environmental Management, and Rural Development, O.A. Bulavkina; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation, D.A. Abaev; Head of the

Senate Apparatus, M.A. Spotkai; Deputy Head of the Senate Apparatus, A.D. Baymukanov; Head of the Department of International Cooperation and Protocol of the Senate, N.Zh. Almashov; and Head of the Senate Press Service, D.S. Ramazanov.

In his welcoming remarks, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill highlighted the strong relationship between the Moscow Patriarchate and the leadership of Kazakhstan, as well as the active development of church life in the country. He expressed gratitude for the state's support of the Church's initiatives and shared fond memories of his visit to Kazakhstan in 2012.

Chairman of the Senate Maulen Ashimbayev expressed his honor at meeting with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and conveyed warm greetings fr om the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. "He greatly values the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church in promoting interreligious dialogue and moral values and asked me to convey his sincere gratitude for your work," said Ashimbayev. He also emphasized the Church's significant contribution to fostering harmony and stability in Kazakhstan.

In response, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill asked that his greetings and deep respect be conveyed to the President of Kazakhstan, noting the positive position of the Orthodox Church within modern Kazakhstan.

During the discussion, Ashimbayev acknowledged the important role of Orthodoxy in the life of Kazakhstan: "This role is enshrined in our laws, wh ere it is clearly stated that the Hanafi school of Islam and Orthodoxy are pillars of the spiritual and cultural life of Kazakhstan. The state and its institutions ensure that Orthodox citizens feel comfortable and have every opportunity to fulfill their spiritual needs."

He highlighted the significant contributions of Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, head of the Kazakhstani Metropolia, to the development of the Orthodox Church in the country. Currently, Kazakhstan is home to over 300 Orthodox churches and other religious facilities, with 14 new projects under construction, including a new Orthodox church planned in Astana. Under Metropolitan Alexander's leadership, new dioceses were established, a theological seminary was founded, the Ascension Cathedral in Almaty was extensively restored, and dozens of churches were built across the country.

Ashimbayev also mentioned the recent arrival of the relics of Blessed Matrona of Moscow in Kazakhstan, which took place with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. This event was timed to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Astana Diocese and the upcoming 15th anniversary of the canonical status of the Kazakhstani Metropolia. According to Ashimbayev, this was a significant celebration for Orthodox Christians in Kazakhstan.

"The state leadership, Parliament, and other institutions will continue to do everything necessary to ensure that Orthodox Christians in Kazakhstan feel comfortable, that issues are resolved promptly, and that no obstacles hinder the spiritual interests of Orthodox citizens," assured the Chairman of the Senate.

Speaking about the Russian Orthodox Church's significant role in promoting interreligious dialogue and cooperation on the international stage, Ashimbayev emphasized: "Although the current geopolitical situation is very challenging, the Russian Orthodox Church continues to do a great deal to foster a culture of understanding and dialogue worldwide. We highly value these efforts."

He also noted Kazakhstan's active work in this area, particularly through the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, held every three years since 2003. This forum has become a globally recognized platform for dialogue, discussing vital issues for modern society. At the VII Congress in 2022, topics included promoting moral values and countering radical ideologies. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church have consistently participated in these congresses and the work of its Secretariat, and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill delivered a speech at the 2012 Congress.

"We warmly remember your address at the Congress, wh ere you raised fundamental issues for modern society," said Ashimbayev. "That was twelve years ago, but the ideas and theses you presented remain relevant today and may even be more pertinent given the current global trends."

On behalf of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the head of the delegation extended an invitation to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to participate in the VIII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, scheduled for September 17–18, 2025, in Astana. This is the first official invitation to the upcoming forum, signed by the President of Kazakhstan.

Ashimbayev noted that amid the painful transformations occurring in the world, "it is crucial for the most influential spiritual leaders of our time to come together and address humanity with a united call for harmony, the spread of moral values, and guidance on how we should develop in the future."

The theme of the upcoming forum, as announced by Ashimbayev, will be "Dialogue of Religions: Synergy for the Future." At the conclusion of the meeting, the parties exchanged commemorative gifts.

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