



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev



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On 3rd May 2025, in Baku, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' met with H.E. Mr Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

They were joined in the meeting by the President's spouse, Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva, First Vice President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Present at the meeting was also Bishop Alexy of Baku and Azerbaijan, Patriarch Press Service **reports**.

Greeting the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, President Aliyev said:

"Welcome, Your Holiness! I am very glad to see you. Thank you for accepting my invitation and visiting Azerbaijan. This is not your first visit to our country. Mehriban and I have very warm memories of our

previous meetings. Time flies! Six years have passed since your last visit, and certain developments have taken place in the meantime in the world, as well as in our country and in the region, which are changing the usual stereotypes completely.”

“As for the relationships between our two peoples, here, on the contrary, everything is stable. We traditionally have great sympathy and respect for each other, along with mutual support, and I am pleased that the close relations between our peoples create such a foundation for the inter-state relationships.”

“And, of course, the Orthodox Christian community in Azerbaijan is an important factor of inter-state relations. I am sure that they will be happy to welcome you, just like we all are. As we discussed on repeated occasions, the inter-confessional and inter-ethnic peace, concord and mutual support reign in Azerbaijan, which is a significant factor for our two countries’ sustainable development. Without this factor, any kind of development is out of the question. We are very pleased that representatives of the Russian Orthodox community take an active part in developing our country, defending its sovereignty, its territorial integrity, and, along with other representatives of numerous ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan, make a considerable contribution to our country’s development.

“It is always very nice to meet and talk with you. Once again, I would like to wholeheartedly welcome you to Azerbaijan. For you, Azerbaijan is not a strange place. For many years, we have known you as a great friend of Azerbaijani people. In your speeches and in your actions you have always shown us respect and, I am sure, this positive dynamic will continue in future. Once again, welcome!”

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said in response:

“Your Excellency, esteemed Mr President, esteemed Mehribah Khanum, here in front of you is a man who, apparently by the Divine Providence, has visited most of the countries in the world. It is an absolutely unique experience, for I visited all those countries not at a certain point, but on repeated occasions, so that I can compare the state of affairs in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe over the last forty years.

“I can say that having this considerable experience of meeting with different people, including state leaders, is what shaped my convictions, my views on life and politics. Truth be told, visits to certain countries and meetings with certain state leaders may not always make one feel comfortable. There are things that I may not wish to talk about or remember. But when it comes to your blessed country, I always fly here with a joyful heart. I think the reason is you, your personality, and, of course, the personality of your wonderful wife. Human warmth and sense of genuine friendship comfort my soul and disposes me towards the right, trust-based and honest dialogue, which I always have with you.

“As for Russia-Azerbaijan relations, it seems to me that they have a good progress. God willing, may this continue. As I was leaving Moscow, I had an opportunity to meet with Vladimir Vladimirovich [Putin]. He spoke very warmly of you and said some good and proper words. He also asked me to convey to you an invitation to visit Moscow to celebrate an important occasion – the 80th anniversary of Victory [in World War Two].

“Our President too is not inclined to change his beliefs for the sake of courtesy. He will either say nothing or speak frankly. Based on my experience of talking with Vladimir Vladimirovich, I can say that in his words I sensed genuine sympathy and openness, and I can witness to that. So we hope that you will be able to visit Moscow on this outstanding occasion – the 80th anniversary of Victory over the dreadful enemy.”

During the meeting, the Primate of the Russian Church and the President of Azerbaijan discussed various issues of mutual interest.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill presented the Order of St. Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles, 1st class, to Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva, First Vice President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and Chair of the Azerbaijani Culture Friends Foundation, in consideration of her contribution to upholding traditional values in society. Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva thanked His Holiness for the high award.