



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, Chairman of the Caucasus Muslims' Board



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On 4th May 2025, while in Baku, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' met with Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, Chairman of the Caucasus Muslims' Board.

Among those present at the meeting were Bishop Alexy of Baku and Azerbaijan; Bishop Alexy of Ramenskoye, personal secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; Archpriest Dionisy Svechnikov, secretary of the Baku Diocesan Administration; Mufti Haji Salman Musaev, first deputy of the Sheikh ul-Islam; Mr Polad Bulbuloghlu and Mr Javanshir Pashazade, members of the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan; and Mr Sahib Naghiyev, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee on Affairs with Religious Associations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Patriarchal Press Service reports.

Greeting the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade said, in particular: "I am very glad to welcome you to my home. Linking us are the bonds of long-standing friendship, fellowship and mutual support, and our relations have a solid foundation laid back in the time of our nationwide leader, Heydar Aliyev. You participated in many meetings with him, and late Patriarch Alexy took part in the process, and it is very gratifying to me that today Mr President, Ilham Aliyev, fully

supports this excellent tradition.

“You make an invaluable personal contribution to developing interfaith relations between the Azerbaijani and Russian believers, to promoting the atmosphere of tolerance, mutual understanding and solidarity. It is noteworthy that throughout the years of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia you always strived to get the negotiations with the Armenian side, under your mediation, on such a track that would prevent the conflict from affecting the interfaith sphere.

“As for relations between the Caucasus Muslims’ Board and the Russian Orthodox Church, praise be to the Almighty, they are strong, steady and unshakeable thanks to your personal engagement, your personal guidance. We also thank you for sending Bishop Alexy to Azerbaijan as the head of the diocese. Vladyka Alexy is a very energetic man, and we fruitfully cooperate with him. I hope that in future things will get even better.

“Life has granted me an opportunity to meet and be friends with many leaders of religious denominations but, truth be told, I have never experienced such sincerity, such close brotherly friendship as I have with you. A short while ago a great feast was celebrated – the Orthodox Easter. We sent you our written greetings, but now we have an excellent opportunity to greet you in person. And the coming Victory Day on 9th May is our common feast. Our grandfathers and fathers shed their blood for the sake of freedom, in order to cleanse the world of the fascist evil. So, it is our common great feast, and I extend to you my greetings on this occasion in advance.

“You were here last time six years ago, and I believe that the brother needs to come to see his brother more frequently, at least once in two years. So, I once again welcome you and hope that you will visit us over and over again. My family and I, and we all are happy to see you here.”

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said in response:

“Your words have come from the heart, and I could feel that. And as for interfaith relations of our Church, one of the strongest bonds, perhaps, is the one that links you and me.

“Orthodox Christians and Muslims co-exist in Russia but, by God’s mercy, our country has never known religious wars. We were brought up that way, and the same was true of the pre-revolutionary Russia – the tsars saw to it that no conflicts occurred between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. You know that there were Muslim military leaders at court, in the head of state’s entourage. That is, the Islamic Ummah, the Muslims, be it in times when they were subjects of the Russian Empire or citizens of the Soviet Union but especially nowadays constitute an essential factor in strengthening inter-ethnic peace in Russia, serving as a bridge that helps Russia develop its relations with the Islamic world and, of course, as a bridge between our two peoples.

“Once again, I would like to emphasise your personal contribution. You have always been well-disposed towards the Orthodoxy, towards our people, and I could feel your good attitude towards me. You have always spoken frankly and cordially, with your words being in line with your actions at all times.

“When it comes to diplomacy in a good sense of this word – not as an art of achieving one’s political goals by any means, but as an instrument intended to ensure the development of good relations among countries and nations – the diplomacy you engage in, with your talent and authority, certainly brings great benefit to our countries and peoples. I wholeheartedly thank you for that.

“Friendship between our two countries and peoples, our two presidents’ policy and our countries’ economic, political and cultural cooperation – all these significant factors create a unique atmosphere in the relationship between Russia and your blessed country, as well as in our relations as religious leaders. I would like to reiterate that the relations between Muslims and Orthodox Christians in our two

countries play an important role in strengthening inter-state ties. Therefore, by serving an important cause of establishing mutual understanding between people who believe in God we at the same time help strengthen inter-state relations and bonds between our two nations.

“With all my heart, I wish prosperity to Azerbaijan and success to your remarkable leader, who is a really talented politician and a person of high, including political, culture. I would like to cordially thank you for the hospitality. I always feel this special cordiality when I meet with you, your colleagues and brothers here. I would like to assure you of my reciprocal warm feelings. Time and again, I wish help from above to you and all your relatives, friends and colleagues. May we all continue to work together in furthering Azerbaijan-Russia relations.”

To conclude the meeting, Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill exchanged memorable gifts.

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