



Religions Working Group of Petersburg Dialogue Forum holds its meeting in Tashkent



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On 3rd June 2025, the Religions Working Group of the Petersburg Dialogue Forum held its regular meeting in the capital of Uzbekistan. It focused on the topic entitled “Social Activity As an Instrument of Interfaith Cooperation and Dialogue.”

Among those who took part in the meeting was Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, head of the Central Asia Metropolitan Area.

The Russian delegation included: Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, head of the Religions Working Group of the Petersburg Dialogue Forum; Mr V.V. Kipshidze, deputy chairman of the Synodal Department for Church’s Relations with Society and Mass Media, who acted as moderator; Mr V.A. Fadeyev, adviser to

the President of the Russian Federation, chair of the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights, head of the Civil Society Working Group of the Petersburg Dialogue Forum; Archpriest Sergy (Zvonarev), DECR secretary for far abroad countries; Hegumen Serafim (Kravchenko), executive secretary of the Moscow Patriarchate's Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry; Archpriest Maxim Pletnev, head of the Coordinating Centre for Combating Drug and Alcohol Addiction of the St. Petersburg Diocese Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry; Priest Iliya Kosykh, head of the DECR Communication Service; Hierodeacon Alexy (Ochkanov) of the DECR Secretariat for Far Abroad Countries; Ms M.B. Nelyubova of the DECR Secretariat for Inter-Christian Relations; Mr S.A. Kurinov of the Presidential Administration Chief of Staff's Secretariat; Ms M.M. Studenikina, head of the Home for the Mother Nonprofit Organisation; and Ms Ye.B. Lebedeva, Sister of Mercy of St. Demetrius Sisterhood, lecturer at the Education Centre of St. Alexis Hospital.

The Uzbek side was represented by Mr B.M. Kadyrov, department chief at the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Archpriest Sergy Statsenko, head of the Education Department of the Tashkent Diocese; Hieromonk Mikhail (Stolyarov), head of the Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media of the Diocese of Tashkent and Uzbekistan; Priest Hovhannes Grigoryan, Representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church to Uzbekistan; Imam B.R. Atajanov of the Mirza G'olib Mosque in Tashkent; Ms R.I. Pundik, head of the Social Charity Department of the Tashkent Diocese; Sister Angelina (Salnikova), head of the Social Department under the Holy Dormition Cathedral in Tashkent; Ms N.V. Nikolskaya, deputy head of the Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media of the Tashkent Diocese; Mr V.O. Gavriilyuk, head of the Temperance Fellowship under the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Tashkent; Ms T.S. Alimkhojaeva, deputy chair of the Board of the Russian Cultural Centre in Uzbekistan; Mr F. Rasulov of the Public Relations Office of the Bahá'í Community in Uzbekistan; Ms Sh. Grafova of the Continental Board for Asia of the Bahá'í Community in Uzbekistan; Ms Sh. Abidova, head of the Uzbekistan Volunteer Association; Ms G.A. Tatarenko, chair of the Svitanak Belarusian Cultural Centre in Tashkent; Mr V.F. Boyko, chair of the Slavutych Republican Ukrainian Cultural Centre in Uzbekistan; Mr S.N. Usenov, chair of the Kazakh National Cultural Centre in Uzbekistan; Ms F.Kh. Nabiyeva, deputy chair of the Zaki Validi Bashkir Social and Cultural Centre; and Ms G. Subkhonova, chair of the Republican Tajik Cultural Centre in Uzbekistan.

Among the participants in the meeting were also Ms M.V. Krutineva, Second Secretary of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Uzbekistan; and Mr R.A. Voytekhovsky, coordinator of cultural projects of the Rossotrudnichestvo Federal Agency in Uzbekistan.

Opening speeches were given by Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, Mr B.M. Kadyrov, Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), Mr V.A. Fadeyev, Mr R.A. Voytekhovsky, and Ms M.V. Krutineva.

During the meeting, the following addresses were delivered: On the Concept of Ensuring Freedom of

Conscience of the Citizens and Governmental Policy in Religious Sphere in the Republic of Uzbekistan, by B.M. Kadyrov; Light of Mercy: Social Assistance Provided at the Dormition Cathedral in Tashkent, by Sister Angelina (Salnikova); Islam Is a Religion of Peace, Goodness and Interfaith Relations of Tolerance, by Imam B.R. Atajanov; Social Activity of the Armenian Apostolic Church, by Priest Hovhannes Grigoryan; Help Provided in the Russian Orthodox Church to Drug and Alcohol Addicts As Illustrated by the Work of the “Favor” Charitable Organisation, by Archpriest Maxim Pletnev; Social Ministry of the Fellowship of Temperance Brotherhoods and Societies in Uzbekistan, by Archpriest Sergy Statsenko and Mr V.O. Gavriluk; Experience of the Russian Orthodox Church and Nonprofit Sector in Preventing Abortions and Helping Pregnant Women and Families in Distress, by M.M. Studenikina; “The Warmth of Our Hands” Charity Event in the Diocese of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, by N.V. Nikolskaya; Palliative Ministry of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Work of St. Demetrius Sisterhood and St. Alexis Hospital, by Ye.B. Lebedeva; Social Activity of the Bahá’í Community at Mahallah Level, by Sh. Grafova; and Volunteer Ministry As Illustrated by the Uzbekistan Volunteer Association, by Sh. Abidova.

The speeches were followed by a wide-ranging discussion. The participants in the meeting focused on the experience the two countries’ religious communities have in providing help to drug and alcohol addicts and families in distress, as well as in abortion prevention and palliative medicine. Among other topics under discussion was interfaith cooperation in social sphere.

Later that day, the Tashkent Diocese gave a reception for the participants in the Petersburg Dialogue Forum.

Photos by Press Service of the Tashkent and Uzbekistan Diocese