



Meeting of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic takes place



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On July 30, 2025, a meeting took place between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thongloun Sisoulith, at the Patriarchal and Synodal residence in the Danilov Monastery in Moscow.

Representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the meeting were: Metropolitan Sergy of Singapore and Southeast Asia; Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), Deputy Chairman of the DECR; Archpriest Sergy Zvonarev, DECR Secretary for Far Abroad Affairs; and Priest Andrey Titushkin, staff member of the DECR Secretariat for Far Abroad Affairs.

President Thongloun Sisoulith was accompanied on his visit to Moscow by a delegation that included: Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Saleumxay Kommasith; Minister of Foreign Affairs Thongsavanh Phomvihane; Minister of Defense Khamliang Uthakaysone; Head of the Presidential Administration Khemmani Pholsena; Minister of Finance Santiphap Phomvihane;

Prosecutor General Xaysana Kotphouthone; Acting Chairman of the Central Committee for External Relations Bounleua Phandanouvong; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Russian Federation Siphon Don Ounbouabane; Director General of the Department of Europe and America at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ekkaphab Phanthavong; Director General of the Department of International Relations at the Presidential Administration Ammaly Chanthaphone; and the President's Secretary Bunthan Kousonsavanh.

Greeting the distinguished guest, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church noted that Laos and Russia, despite their geographical distance, are close nations. "There is much in common between the philosophies of life of our peoples and in our views on many contemporary issues," testified His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

"You have personal ties to Russia dating back to your student years: you received your education in Leningrad, which is also my native city, and later worked to develop Lao-Russian relations and promote the Russian language," His Holiness addressed the President of Laos.

Today, as head of state, Thongloun Sisoulith regularly visits Russia and takes effective steps to develop economic, political, and humanitarian ties between the two countries and peoples.

In 1974, as a representative of the Moscow Patriarchate to the World Council of Churches in Geneva, the future head of the Russian Orthodox Church visited Laos. "At that time, including with my participation, an international WCC fund for reconstruction and reconciliation in Indochina was established," recalled His Holiness. "The very fact of the creation of this fund, which mobilized the international community to assist your country, was of great importance for the development of relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and Laos."

In 2018, the Patriarchal Exarchate of Southeast Asia was established. Recently, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church included Laos in the pastoral jurisdiction of the Patriarchal Exarchate, within which the Diocese of Thailand was created. "Religious life is actively developing, and from today's perspective, we can very positively assess everything our representatives have done on both sides," noted Patriarch Kirill.

"Since February 2024, Orthodox services have been held regularly in Vientiane, and in March of this year the Lao side signed the necessary documents for the registration of an Orthodox parish in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. This became possible thanks to your personal involvement, for which I thank you," His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said, addressing the President of Laos.

The visit to Laos in 1974 by the future Patriarch, then Archimandrite Kirill, and the creation of the WCC

international fund for reconstruction and reconciliation in Indochina were very important for the formation of statehood and further development of the country, emphasized President Thongloun Sisoulith in his reply.

“I rejoice at how relations between our countries are developing. The solidarity that the Soviet Union had with Laos during your struggle for true independence continues today, as Russia also shows great respect for everything that has taken place in your country,” said Patriarch Kirill in turn.

Over the years, Laos has undergone major changes aimed at building a more just society, which contributes to mutual respect and strengthens ties between the two countries and peoples, the Primate added.

“Among Orthodox believers in Russia, there is a saying: ‘God is not in power, but in truth.’ Truth was on your side: a terrible force opposed you, yet you prevailed. That was a very important signal to the whole world,” said His Holiness, expressing hope for the further development of relations between the peoples and nations of Russia and Laos.

Today, Russians and Laotians live in conditions of peace and development, emphasized the President of Laos. “When a new Orthodox church of the Moscow Patriarchate is built in Laos, it will become yet another center for organizing cooperation and solidarity between peoples and believers,” added President Thongloun Sisoulith.

“Visiting your country during a difficult time of military conflict, meeting with people who bravely fought against those who sought to destroy your country - this is a very important page in my biography, because I came face to face with the true feat of your people,” shared His Holiness.

The 1975 revolution in Laos, which led to the proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, was supported by representatives of various religions, the President noted: “The majority of the Lao population practices Buddhism, but all other confessions in our country are also ready to fight together for peace, freedom, justice, and solidarity.”

“This is very important. Religions should unite people, not divide them. They should be a factor of peace, not hatred. This is the religious and political mission of truly religious people who live according to their laws and commandments. If religion becomes a factor of division, then something is wrong with it,” concluded His Holiness.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' presented the President of Laos with the Order of Glory and Honor (1st Class) of the Russian Orthodox Church. By

decree of His Holiness, the President was awarded this distinction “in recognition of his assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church.”

Photos: Press Service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus’

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