



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addresses VIII Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions



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*On 17th September 2025, the VIII Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, entitled “Dialogue of Religions: Synergy for the Future,” began its work in Astana, Kazakhstan. **Among those who spoke at the official opening of the Congress was His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus’.** The text of his speech is given below.*

“Your Excellency, dear Mr Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich, dear participants in the Congress,

“The hospitable land of Kazakhstan has once again gathered together prominent religious leaders, representatives of international organisations, diplomats and people of good will. I have warm memories of my visit to Kazakhstan in 2012, when I took part in the IV Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. I remember its wonderful atmosphere of companionship. While today’s forum continues that tradition, it is also quite evident that the level and authority of this international platform are higher now. Various side events and conferences, a youth forum, cultural initiatives, concept documents – they all are marked by professionalism, valuable meaning and relevance. I would like to express my gratitude to you, Mister President, and to the Government of Kazakhstan, which has developed standing mechanisms for interreligious dialogue, exchange of opinions and peace-building

activities.

“In my 2012 address I pointed out that nothing good would come out of attempts to build a human life without God and religion. I remember discussing this topic with Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich in 2014, during our meeting in the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius Lavra. It was gratifying that my words were heeded and, what is especially important, taken into consideration in the subsequent work of the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

“The international situation today once again demonstrates that the world which rejects God has no future. Bloody conflicts, grave economic and ecological problems, terrorism, violation of basic human rights – all these are direct consequences of the attempts to force religion out of the life of society and leave the only room for it in the narrow private space of an individual.

“We are well aware that despite the existing differences, traditional religions are united by the common goal setting, which is faith in God and morality conforming to this faith. A society of true believers is able to exist and develop in peace and prosperity, as has been evidenced by the world history. Numerous are examples when God punished His chosen people for the lack of faith and moral corruption; great empires were known to cease to exist because of a crisis of faith and moral licentiousness, because of atheism and the lack of a unifying spiritual idea.

“It should be noted that in spite of what is happening around, the activities of the secular ideology proponents get a backlash, including from young people. Today, especially in post-Soviet countries, in contrast with some other regions, there has been a rise in religiousness among the young generation. We see more and more young people in churches, mosques, synagogues and datsans. That said, the youth needs to be shielded from radicalism and guided towards the constructive path of dialogue and respect. In this regard, an idea of holding interfaith youth forums within the framework of our Congresses deserves full support, for they offer an opportunity to our young believers to communicate with one another directly, and not through agenda-driven social networks and channels.

“Many big words can be said about peace, human rights and the need to protect the oppressed. Yet, words must always be substantiated by deeds, and the topic of today’s forum calls for our joint efforts. So, we, religious leaders, fully support the peace-making initiatives of people of good will, aimed at overcoming the current crises, as well as establishing and maintaining the lasting peace.

“This forum has many important aspects. One of them is close cooperation between its organisers and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. To all of us, I think, it is an opportunity to ensure appropriate representation of religious leaders in this major international organisation. Almost 20 years ago we, together with a number of esteemed religious leaders (some of them are present here today), tried to implement an idea of setting up a consultative council of religions under the United Nations. The idea has not lost its relevance. Unfortunately, back then radical secularists did not let us do that. Participation of the traditional communities’ leaders’ would certainly strengthen the peace-building potential of the United Nations. Our concerted voice, which takes into account that we represent different religions and nations, could be the voice of conscience and reconciliation. Today we welcome here, among others, the United Nations delegates, and I hope it will be helpful for promoting our ideas on the UN platforms.

“Religious leaders do have a message for the world that can help it become a better and safer place in future. People of faith make up the centuries-old religious culture that implies mutual respect, peace and constructive cooperation. Thanks to that, representatives of different religions and nationalities live peacefully together, for example, in Russia and Kazakhstan, as well as in other places, and work together for the good of their countries and peoples.

“To conclude my address, I would like to cite the Gospel: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid* (Jn 14:27) – these were the words Christ said to His disciples during their last conversation before His crucifixion. The true peace is only possible when a person is at peace with God the Creator, and it requires a lot of that person. We have gathered here today in the bond of peace in order to promote friendly relations and bear witness to our faith. God help us so that our faith may always go hand in hand with our good deeds. With one voice we affirm that the faith substantiated by good works and moral life can be the foundation for the true and unshakeable peace. And let our collective voice be as loud as possible. And may the final declaration we have adopted serve as yet another reminder that the very existence of humankind depends on spiritual and moral state of an individual human being.

“Thank you for your attention.”

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