His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Meets with Iraqi Ambassador to Russia



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On 28th May 2026, at the Patriarchal Residence in the St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' met with H.E. Mr Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Iraq to the Russian Federation.

Taking part in the meeting was also Archpriest Igor Vyzhanov, Deputy Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Greeting the diplomat, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted that historically, the Russian Orthodox Church had very good relations with the Islamic world. "In Russia, there is a large Muslim community, and our country's history has not known any conflicts between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. These good relations have stood the test of time and dramatic historical events. I mean, first of all, the Second World

War, when Orthodox Christians and Muslims, citizens of Russia, were fighting together against fascism," Patriarch Kirill said.

Besides, the Russian Orthodox Church has established good relations with Muslims in many other countries, first of all, in the Middle East, Egypt and counties of the so-called 'Third World,' His Holiness pointed out.

Patriarch Kirill wished to the Iraqi Ambassador success in his service in Russia, expressing hope that it would contribute to further promotion of the two countries' relations. His Holiness added: "The absolute majority of our people are well disposed and friendly to representatives of Islam! Welcome!"

Mr Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa thanked the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church for the meeting and pointed out that Russia and Iraq had decades-long relations, with Iraq having been one of the first Islamic countries to establish relations with the Soviet Union, which happened in 1944. In 1958, he added, monarchy in Iraq was abolished and the Republican regime was established; and in 1971, Saddam Hussein signed the Treaty of Friendship between Iraq and the USSR. The early 2000s saw certain challenges, when a number of Russian companies left Iraq due to sanctions imposed by the Unites States, Mr Ambassador also said, adding that nowadays the situation has slightly changed, with the two countries maintaining economic relations and everything being good in political sphere.

Besides, what Russia and Iraq also have in common is that their peoples represent monotheistic religions, Mr Mostafa noted. As Mr Ambassador emphasised, today in Iraq, apart from a large Islamic community, there is a considerable Christian community. He expressed his hope that someday all three Abrahamic religions would be present in Iraq.

Mr Ambassador also mentioned that he had already worked in Moscow from 2004 to 2007. "When I found out that I would come to Moscow again, I felt as if I was returning home. I have a major mission here. I hoped to meet with you, Your Holiness. It was one of my top-priority wishes," he added.

"My task here is also to facilitate development of the community of the Assyrian Church of the East, which includes both Russians and immigrants from Iraq. Many of them are descendants of people who immigrated here a hundred years ago because of the persecutions in the Ottoman Empire. Fortunately, today the Church has its building constructed in the Assyrian-Babylonian style," Mr Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa said.

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