Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church take part in International Conference "Spiritual Bridges: Russia and Africa. Dialogue for Peace and Creation"



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On 27 October 2026, an international conference entitled "Spiritual Bridges: Russia and Africa. Dialogue for Peace and Creation", organised by the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation, was held in Moscow.

The event brought together representatives of religious organisations, the academic and expert communities, and government and public figures from Russia and African countries. Its main objective

was to develop spiritual, moral and humanitarian cooperation between Russia and African states, strengthen interreligious dialogue and expand contacts between religious communities.

The plenary session was attended by Mufti Ravil Gainutdin, Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation; R.B. Temrezov, Head of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic; E.V. Eremin, Head of the Department for Relations with Religious Organisations of the Presidential Directorate for Domestic Policy of the Russian Federation; M.I. Gatin, Deputy Chairman of the Strategic Vision Group "Russia–Islamic World"; M.M. Melekh, Special Representative of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Cooperation in the Field of Ensuring the Right to Freedom of Religion; V.V. Ivanov, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Nationalities; A.K. Alikberov, Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences; M.A. Gryaznov, Director of the Foundation for the Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education; Sheikh Haji Ibrahim Tuhfa, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs of Ethiopia; Khalifa Mubarak Al-Zahiri, Rector of the Mohamed bin Zayed University for Humanities (United Arab Emirates); the Grand Muftis of Uganda, Tanzania and Chad; representatives of religious organisations from other African countries; and Russian academics and public figures.

The plenary session was attended by Metropolitan Konstantin of Cairo and North Africa, Patriarchal Exarch of Africa, who read out a message of greetings from Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, addressed to the organisers and participants of the conference.

The message noted that, for a vast number of people in Russia and Africa, faith remains not merely part of their historical heritage but a living force shaping their worldview and their attitudes towards family, society and others.

"Such bridges cannot be built through politics or economics alone. Their foundations are trust between people, respect for one another's religious beliefs, fidelity to moral principles and a willingness to work together for the sake of peace and the well-being of our neighbours," Metropolitan Anthony emphasised in his message.

The conference also included breakout sessions entitled "The Role of Religious Organisations in Strengthening Spiritual Ties between Russia and Africa" and "Family Values in the Modern World: Tradition as a Choice".

With the blessing of Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the DECR, the forum was attended by Hieromonk Gregory (Matrusov), Head of the DECR Expert Council for Cooperation with the Islamic World, and M.B. Nelyubova, DECR staff member.

Hieromonk Gregory spoke at the session "The Role of Religious Organisations in Strengthening Spiritual Ties between Russia and Africa", delivering a presentation entitled "Common Challenges to Traditional Foundations as a Unifying Factor in Cooperation between Russia and Africa". In his address, he highlighted the common challenges facing religious communities in Russia and African countries, particularly the weakening of family ties, cultural homogenisation and the threat of extremism.

M.B. Nelyubova took part in the session "Family Values in the Modern World: Tradition as a Choice", which focused on preserving the institution of the family, raising the younger generation and passing on traditional moral values.

The conference programme also included discussions on prospects for cooperation between religious organisations in the humanitarian, educational and charitable fields, the development of public diplomacy and the expansion of direct contacts between religious leaders from Russia and African countries.

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