President of Russia met with the Primates of the Jerusalem and Russian Orthodox Churches



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On November 5, 2026, a meeting was held at the Kremlin between the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'.

Metropolitan Antony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, also attended the meeting on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Primate of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem arrived in Moscow on the evening of November 4 at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

During the meeting, the Russian Head of State presented His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos with the Order of Friendship "for his great contribution to strengthening friendship, cooperation, and spiritual ties with Russia."

In his welcoming remarks, President Putin noted the good relations between the Russian and Jerusalem Orthodox Churches and the joint efforts to further develop these relations.

He emphasized that Russia has traditionally paid special attention to the situation of the Christian population in the Middle East region. "Most of the Orthodox shrines in the Middle East are located in the Holy Land, and we understand that our joint efforts, both ours and yours, are aimed at preserving the historic Christian presence in the Middle East region. Our cooperation in this sense is particularly needed today," the President of Russia said.

In his response, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem emphasized the special nature of the ties between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Moscow Patriarchate, the Holy Land, and the Russian people.

"The connection between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Russian people is very special. Every Russian pilgrim that has visited us in the Holy Land joins in the 2,000-year mission of our Patriarchate, giving witness to our sacred mission as guardians of Christianity's birthplace," His Beatitude noted. "They see the peace, reconciliation, and hope our Church embodies in a troubled region."

Noting that Jerusalem is a multi-faith, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural mosaic that must be carefully protected, Patriarch Theophilos said: "Our Church's embodiment of coexistence and mutual understanding across the Abrahamic faiths, rooted in the worship of the Almighty, provide a model of respect for the whole world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden, and we pray that our ministries of peace and service reverberate around the world, as the Holy Fire does every year."

His Beatitude mentioned the challenges facing the ministry of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem. Due to the difficult political situation, the number of indigenous Christians in the Middle East is falling, and the faithful of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem face harsh realities and difficult circumstances. Patriarch Theophilos thanked Vladimir Putin for his "ongoing support for the Status Quo arrangement of the Holy Land, which is essential for stability and peace in Jerusalem and the wider region."

"We are aware there are proposals for talks regarding the ongoing situation along your western border," the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem also said. "As a monk, I have a sacred obligation to listen to those around us - to the cries of those who suffer, the hopes they have for their children, and their desire to live in peace. We offer our help, and of course our encouragement, to facilitate and support a sacred act of listening between two nations of faithful peoples."

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos emphasized that he considers the Order of Friendship an award not only for himself but for the entire Orthodox Church of Jerusalem. He also assured the President of Russia that he constantly prays for him in Jerusalem at the Tomb of Christ, asking the Lord to enlighten and inspire him, highlighting that he sees Vladimir Putin as a defender of the Orthodox faith and a man committed to the Church.

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