



## **Patriarch Kirill goes on official visit to the Patriarchate of Antioch**

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia will be on an official visit to the Patriarchate of Antioch from November 12 to 15, 2011. According to the Orthodox tradition, these 'peace visits' are made by every elected primate of a Church to other primates of Local Orthodox Churches in the order prescribed by the diptych, the traditional list of the Heads of the Churches.

In 2009, His Holiness Kirill visited the Orthodox Church of Constantinople and in 2010 the Orthodox Church of Alexandria.

Upon his arrival in Damascus, Patriarch Kirill will have a brotherly talk with His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch and All the East.

On the same day, there will be the opening of an exhibition devoted to relations between the Patriarchate of Antioch and the Russian Orthodox Church and a presentation of the Arabic version of Patriarch Kirill's book 'Freedom and Responsibility: In a Search for Harmony'.

His Holiness Kirill is also expected to meet with the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Prime Minister Adel Safar as well as Grand Mufti of Syria Ahmad Badr Al-Din Hassoun.

Patriarch Kirill will visit the Moscow Patriarchate Representation to the Orthodox Church of Antioch located in the church of St. Ignatios the God-Bearer in Damascus and meet with compatriots there.

On November 14, His Holiness will visit St. George's Cathedral in Beirut to conduct a thanksgiving there.

His Holiness will meet with President of Lebanon, Gen. Michel Suleiman.

He will also meet with the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Bechara Boutros al-Rahi.

It is planned that on November 15, His Holiness will visit the Balamand University in northern Lebanon to meet with its faculty and students. He will also present the Arabic version of his book on Freedom and Responsibility there.

The visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to the Orthodox Church of Antioch will consolidate the traditional bonds of friendship between the two Churches and between the peoples of Syria and Lebanon and the countries which belong to the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate.

During the meetings in Syria and Lebanon, it is planned to discuss further development of bilateral cooperation, also in the fields of pan-Orthodox interaction, pastoral care and some other topical subjects.

In his talks with the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Antioch and leaders of major religious communities in the two countries, Patriarch Kirill will touch upon the political situation in the Middle East and the situation of the Christian minority in the region. He will also discuss ways of developing dialogue between religious communities and increasing the contribution of religious leaders in promoting peace and public accord.

His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatios IV of Great Antioch and All the East was born in 1920 in Syria. He was elected Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Antioch in 1979. He visited the Russian Orthodox Church in 1981, 1988 and 2003.

There is a Moscow Patriarchate Representation to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, functioning in Damascus.

There are Russian-speaking communities in Beirut, Homs, Aleppo, Latakia, and some other places in Syria and Lebanon.

There is a Representation of the Patriarchate of Antioch to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia which works in Moscow.