



## Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church meets with Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Iliya II

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His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, on his one-day visit to Azerbaijan, met with His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Iliya II at the "Gulistan" Palace in Baku.

Taking part in the meeting were Metropolitan Gerasim of Zugdidi and Tsaisi (Georgian Orthodox Church) and the DECR MP deputy chairman archpriest Nikolai Balashov.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church presented a panagia to Catholic-Patriarch Iliya II and expressed his satisfaction with an opportunity to meet with him and discuss bilateral relations between the Churches and people of Russia and Georgia.

"This is our first meeting after my election to the Moscow Patriarchal Throne," His Holiness said. "I thank You for the prayers You offered up on the day of my enthronement."

Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya II presented His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with a panagia and "a Sunny Night" book published in Georgian and English to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enthronement of Iliya II as Patriarch of the Georgian Church. He underscored that relations between the Russian and Georgian Churches were "fraternal, and nothing will ever shake them."

According to archpriest Nikolai Balashov, the Primates of the two Churches said with confidence that "friendship, mutual understanding, cordial and fraternal relations of the two Churches are a pledge of the reestablishment of relations between the states and people to the full extent in due time.

His Holiness Kirill believes that the two Churches, like locomotives, "will pull out the inter-state relations from the impasse," though this will need time, press-service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia reports.

The Primates also discussed the church life in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and how to bring it into compliance. Fr Nikolai added, "We shall continue consultations on these and other problems of mutual concern."