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Moscow Hosts High-Level Ecclesiastical–Diplomatic Reception for Easter: Emphasis on Christian Unity and International Dialogue



In a scene reflecting the convergence of ecclesiastical presence with international diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation hosted, on April 22, a solemn official reception at the Grand Mansion in Moscow on the occasion of the Glorious Feast of the Resurrection (Easter), with broad participation from religious leaders and church representatives, alongside high-ranking political and diplomatic figures.

The event was attended by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, who was received by Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, in the presence of representatives of the Presidential Administration, the Russian Government, the Federation Council, the State Duma, as well as heads of foreign diplomatic missions and diplomats from around the world.

In his address, the Russian Foreign Minister emphasized the depth of cooperation between the Ministry and the Church, affirming that this partnership contributes to “strengthening the moral foundations of international relations, fostering mutual trust and respect among peoples, and providing spiritual support to Russian compatriots abroad.”

He added:
“ This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, one of the key synodal institutions effectively carrying out the mission of church diplomacy. We work closely with this structure, and its contribution to strengthening Orthodox unity, advancing interconfessional dialogue, and expanding humanitarian cooperation cannot be overstated.”

For his part, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addressed the state of inter-Orthodox relations, stressing the importance of developing fraternal ties with the Local Orthodox Churches, stating:

“We attach great importance to fostering fraternal relations with the Local Orthodox Churches, and the majority continue to maintain good relations with the Moscow Patriarchate,” noting that this is evidenced by mutual visits that took place over the past year.

In this context, he also pointed to the challenges facing these relations, explaining that “inter-Orthodox relations are currently undergoing a serious test concerning fidelity to ecclesiological principles and the canonical order of the Church,” criticizing what he described as attempts to impose foreign ecclesiastical concepts regarding the special authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople, which, he said, has led to a prolonged crisis, particularly concerning the church situation in Ukraine.

He further added:
“I would like, in the presence of diplomats and representatives of Christian communities, to once again draw attention to the cases of discrimination against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, as the governmental pressure imposed upon it has reached the level of open religious persecution.”

The meeting also witnessed broad participation reflecting Russia’s religious diversity, with representatives of various Christian Churches, alongside representatives of different Islamic traditions and the Jewish faith. Notably, there was a distinguished presence of Christian Church representatives, expressing the ecumenical dimension of the event, including:
Ezras Nersisyan, Archbishop of the Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan, representing the Armenian Apostolic Church;
Revd. Canon Dr. Arun John, representative of the Anglican Church in Russia;
Archbishop Tapio Luoma, Primate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland;
Monk Priest Dawoud Al-Antony, representative of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Moscow;
Fr. Peter Pavlov, priest of the Assyrian Church parish in Krasnodar.

This meeting, held on April 22, reaffirms the important role played by Churches in promoting dialogue among peoples and strengthening a culture of peace and mutual understanding. It also highlights the commitment of various Churches to building bridges of cooperation in light of current global challenges and the growing need for a unified spiritual and humanistic voice.

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