



## **Metropolitan Hilarion meets with Syrian delegation led by Supreme Mufti of Syria**

[gallery]

On September 6, 2012, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, received a delegation of religious leaders from the Syrian Arab Republic. It included Sheikh Ahmed Badreddin Hassoun, Supreme Mufti of Syria, and Bishop Luke of Seidnaya (Orthodox Church of Antioch). They were accompanied by Syria's Ambassador to Moscow Dr. Riad Haddad, and Mufti Farid Salman Khaidarov, chairman of the Council of Ulama of the Russian Association of Islamic Accord (All-Russia's Muftiate).

The DECR was represented by Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev secretary for the far abroad, and Deacon Dimitry Safonov of the DECR secretariat for the far abroad.

Metropolitan Hilarion welcomed the guests and conveyed them a greeting from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Addressing the guests, His Eminence stressed that there were people of various religions living in Syria. Until recently, this country showed to the world an example of interreligious harmony, but at present it has plunged into an inter-community and interreligious conflict. He emphasized that terrorism was a common threat for our two countries.

Metropolitan Hilarion expressed special concern for the continued violence in Syria where it has already victimized scores of thousands of people. Extremists have destroyed churches and Christian institutions and eliminated shrines significant for the whole Christendom.

The Supreme Mufti of Syria noted that his visit was an expression of gratitude for the visit His Holiness Patriarch Kirill made to Syria and for the position Russia has taken with regard to Syria and her people.

Bishop Luke spoke about the suffering the Orthodox Christians had to endure in the bloody war but their refusal to leave the country.

In conclusion, Metropolitan Hilarion assured his guests that the Russian Orthodox Church would do all that is possible for her to relieve the situation of Syria's Christian population and to help the sister Church, which is the Patriarch of Antioch.

*DECR Communication Service*

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