



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Central Asia meet with President of Tajikistan**

[gallery]

On May 17, 2012, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, arrived in the capital of Tajikistan with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

On May 18, he and Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Central Asia met with Tajikistan's President Emomali Rakhmon.

Present at the meeting were Abdurakhim Kholikov, chairman of the Tajikistan State Committee for Religious Affairs, Russian Ambassador to Tajikistan Yu. Popov and Erkin Rakhmatullaev, chief advisor to the President of Tajikistan.

During his talk with the head of the Tajik State, Metropolitan Hilarion conveyed him greetings from the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and said that he experienced a sincere joy over his visit to the republic. The DECR chairman noted that Tajikistan was actively reviving after a prolonged civil confrontation.

Metropolitan Hilarion informed the President of Tajikistan about the aims of establishing a metropolia of the Russian Orthodox Church in Central Asia. It is established, he said, 'because of the need to increase pastoral care for the Russian-speaking population in Central Asia states and because of the great importance that the Supreme Authority of our Church attaches to the development of church life in this region'.

Mr. Emamoli Rakhmon, in his turn, underscored that the Russian Orthodox Church, being the second largest community in Tajikistan after the titular religion, has proved to be a true peacemaker and tireless preacher of humanism and tolerance.

In the course of the meeting, which lasted over an hour and was held in a sincere and warm atmosphere, they discussed a broad range of issues concerning the situation of the Russian-speaking minority in Tajikistan, interreligious dialogue and cooperation and the need for people of traditional

religions to oppose together extremism and radicalism.

*DECR Communication Service*

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