
AZERBAIJANI FM RECEIVES VATICAN SECRETARY OF RELATIONS WITH STATES

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The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of relations between Azerbaijan and the Vatican. They noted that the official visit of the late President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Heydar Aliyev on 24-27 September 1997 and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. İlham Aliyev to the Vatican on March 6, 2015, as well as the historical visits of Pope John Paul on May 22, 2002, and Pope Francis on October 2, 2016, to our country have opened a new stage in the Azerbaijani-Vatican relations, the Foreign Ministry told News.Az.

Noting that Azerbaijan has historically been a place of peaceful coexistence of representatives of different cultures and religions, Minister Elmar Mammadyarov stressed that Azerbaijan promotes the ideas of shared living, mutual respect and multiculturalism in the world of peace on the basis of national traditions of tolerance. In this regard, he emphasized the importance of the International Humanitarian Forum and Intercultural and Inter-Religious Dialogue Forum, initiated by our country.

Expressing his satisfaction with the visit to our country, Gallagher said that he was accepted by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. İlham Aliyev and during the meeting the sides held useful discussions. Expressing his gratitude for the support and care shown for the Catholic community in Azerbaijan, the Archbishop highly appreciated the level of tolerance and respect for other religious communities in our country.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov said that the 2017 Islamic Solidarity: Religions and Intercultural Dialogue international conference was held jointly by the Caucasus Muslims Office and the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations and that the presence of the Vatican Representative at the conference was highly praised.

Noting the close cooperation between the Pontifical Council for the Holy See and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the two sides stressed the exceptional role of First Lady of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva in further development of cooperation in this field. The restoration of historical monuments, in particular, of the catacombs with the financial support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation was highly appreciated in the Vatican.

Reminding that there are many valuable documents in the archives of the Vatican regarding the medieval history of our country, Minister Elmar Mammadyarov expressed his deep gratitude to Vatican for its support in the publication of the articles and stressed the importance of continuing

cooperation in this field.

During the meeting, Elmar Mammadyarov briefed his counterpart on the negotiation process on the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the just and fair position of Azerbaijan, as well as Armenia's policy of looting and destruction of the material-cultural and religious heritage of the Azerbaijani people in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Touching upon the settlement of Armenian refugees from Syria in the occupied Azerbaijani territories, Minister Elmar Mammadyarov said that the settlement policy and purposefully changing the demographic composition in the occupied territories is a gross violation of international humanitarian law. The minister pointed out that more than one million Azerbaijanis were subjected to ethnic cleansing as a result of Armenia's occupation.

The interlocutors expressed mutual concern about racism, xenophobia, ethnic and religious hatred in the world, and attempts to foster religious conflicts in the world today.

The sides also exchanged views on the development of relations between Azerbaijan and the Vatican, exchange of high-level mutual visits.

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