



The Russian Armed Forces' Patriot Park for all Believers

OE Watch Commentary: As reported earlier (see: “Russian Religious Patriotism,” *OE Watch*, Jul 2020), this past summer, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the Ministry of Defense (MoD) staged an elaborate ceremony to dedicate a new Orthodox cathedral to the Russian Armed Forces within Patriot Park, located just outside Moscow. The huge memorial complex is designed to commemorate all those who fought and died during the Great Patriotic War (WW II). However, because many non-Orthodox fought in the war and since Russia is a multi-denominational state, Russians who practice a different religion are now also requesting representation within Patriot Park.



President Putin with Orthodox Patriarch Kirill in Patriot Park.

Source: Kremlin.ru [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vladimir_Putin_in_Patriot_Park_\(2018-09-19\)_04.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vladimir_Putin_in_Patriot_Park_(2018-09-19)_04.jpg), Attribution: CCA 4.0 intl

The first excerpt from the official Russian news agency *TASS*, points out that “the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) cannot discuss with the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation the construction of religious sites of other confessions at Patriot Park in Kubinka.” According to the article, the reluctance of the

ROC to broach this topic, stems from previous discussions where the MoD claimed that it “does not consider it possible to build another religious facility near the park.” Some belonging to the other traditional faiths in Russia (Islam, Judaism and Buddhist) do not agree with this decision.

The second excerpt from the mostly independent Russian news source, *Islamnews.ru* describes how Jewish and Muslim clerics are attempting to gain religious representation at Patriot Park. The article describes how “the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia supported the initiative of the head of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Russian Federation to build worship facilities of other faiths in Patriot Park.” The excerpt emphasizes that since today “there are good, warm relations between representatives of different religions and peoples... it would be logical and correct that this fact be reflected in the historical and museum complex.” The article also posits that such a move will “be a good vaccination against the emergence of extremist and xenophobic sentiments.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“The Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia supported the initiative of the head of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Russian Federation to build worship facilities of other faiths in the Patriot Park...”

Source: “В РПЦ заявили, что не обсуждают с Минобороны постройку храмов других конфессий в Кубинке (The Russian Orthodox Church said that they are not discussing with the Ministry of Defense the construction of churches of other confessions in Kubinka),” *TASS* (official Russian state news agency), 2 December 2020. <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/10155477>

The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) cannot discuss with the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation the construction of religious sites of other confessions at the Patriot Park in Kubinka. This was announced to TASS on Wednesday by the head of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of the Moscow Patriarchate, Bishop of Klin Stefan (Privalov), who is also the head of the main church of the Russian Armed Forces in the Patriot Park.

“This issue has already been discussed several times. We have Poklonnaya Gora - there is both a synagogue and a mosque. ...Near the Patriot Park [the Russian Orthodox Church], we can only talk about our own church,” Bishop Stephen said. According to his information, the Ministry of Defense does not consider it possible to build another religious facility near the park.

Source: “Российские евреи поддержали предложение муфтия Гайнутдина о храмах всех вероисповеданий в парке Патриот (Russian Jews supported the proposal of Mufti Gainutdin about churches of all faiths in the Patriot Park),” *ИА IslamNews* (considered a mostly independent news source), 9 December 2020. <https://islamnews.ru/news-rossiyskie-evrei-podderzhali-predlozhenie-muftiya-gaynutdina-o-khramakh-vsekh-veroispovedaniy-v-parke-patriot>

The Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia supported the initiative of the head of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Russian Federation to build worship facilities of other faiths in the Patriot Park.... In Russia today there are good, warm relations between representatives of different religions and peoples. And it will be logical and correct that this fact will be reflected in the historical and museum complex.... This can be a good vaccination against the emergence of extremist and xenophobic sentiments.