

The effect of holding the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan

The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which was initiated in 2003, is one of the most important institutions of interfaith dialogue and harmony in the country and the world. The Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in Astana in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2022 became one of the largest international events in the history of independent Kazakhstan and were of great importance in terms of Kazakhstan's entry into the international arena.

The seven Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions were attended by leaders and outstanding representatives of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism and other traditional religions.

The Congress won with wide recognition by many major international forums working in the field of building and developing dialogue between civilizations and religions.

Within the framework of three decades of Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the successful and effective organization of the work of the Congresses has brought significant political dividends to the secular state, increasing its authority in the international arena as a mature and strong country capable of adequately responding to the most pressing and acute problems of the modern era.

The Congress became Kazakhstan's significant contribution to the global process of interreligious and interfaith dialogue and holds a special place among the efforts of the global community in strengthening the principles of harmony and tolerance, mutual understanding and cooperation both within the country and in the international arena.

The fact that Kazakhstan is hosting the Congress attended by various religious and political figures is another proof of political and economic stability of the country. This situation will positively impact Kazakhstan's increase in the ranking of countries with a high degree of religious freedom.

The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions has made a significant contribution to the formation of a culture of mutual understanding and respect in societies and states of the world. UN resolutions widely note the valuable contribution of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions to the promotion of global dialogue between religions, cultures and civilizations.

In order to implement the initiatives of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, at the suggestion of Kazakhstan, the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution (No. 62/90 dated 17.12.2007) on the proclamation of 2010 as the "International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures". Over the past 20 years, the Congress of Religious Leaders was accorded wide recognition by other major international forums working in the field of building and developing a dialogue of civilizations.

Such authoritative international organizations as the Muslim World League (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), the Community of Sant'Egidio (Italy), Asia House (Spain), the Tony Blair Faith Foundation (Great Britain), the Cordoba Initiative

(USA), as well as the Interreligious Council of the CIS, the "Religions for Peace" Conference, the Vienna International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue named after King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the World Council of Churches, and the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue have shown great interest in the activities of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Taking into account that Kazakhstan will demonstrate its political and economic stability at the global level, this can serve to attract foreign investment into the national economy, as well as contribute to increasing the country's tourism potential.

The noble ideas of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions gain broad support in the world community, both in religious and political circles. They give the world a chance to overcome stereotypes about interreligious relations that developed over centuries, to design an effective formula for global tolerance of interaction in the 21st century.

The Congress provides productive meetings and communication interactions between leaders of world religions and major political figures so that they can directly listen and hear each other; use the rich spiritual heritage of world religions and the common historical experience of civilizations to determine the role of leaders of world and traditional religions in the spiritual and social development of humankind.

It is an extremely difficult task to organize and conduct a Congress attended by representatives of different worldviews, foundations, and mentalities at the highest level.

And the fact that the Congresses were held, and effective mechanisms for cooperation and communication between participants were created and established is, without a doubt, a significant achievement.

The congress contributed to the organizational formation of a unique dialogue platform and literally inspired spiritual leaders to reach out to each other.

After all, at the Congress there are people who meet who are sometimes divided not only by different religious views and cultural aspects, but also by years of confrontation between the states of which they are citizens.

This is what makes the Congress unique: that thanks to painstaking, subtle and delicate work, representatives of different views conduct a dialogue, exchange opinions, and not only listen, but also hear each other.