

HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF NORTH OSSETIA AND VISITS THE GRAVES OF THE 370 MURDERED PUPILS OF THE 2004 TERRORIST ATTACK

On Sunday 29th August 2010, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa travelled to the emotionally sensitive area of North Ossetia, in the heart of the Caucasus, where he met in its capital, Vladikavkaz, His excellency the President of the Republic of North Ossetia, Mr. Taymuraz Dzambekovich Mamsurov who welcomed him warmly together with representatives of the political world and the presidents of the Greek Societies and associations of the hundreds of Greeks who live there.

During their lengthy meeting they discussed current issues in the broader areas as well as the good relations between Christians and Muslims who coexist peacefully. His Beatitude also passed on the loved and prayers of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, with whose blessing he has undertaken the visit and invited His Excellency Mr. Mamsurov to visit the Patriarchal See in Alexandria and the ancient monastery of St George in Old Cairo who is the Patron Saint of the area, and where a huge religious monument at the top of the Caucasus. His Excellency the President gladly accepted His Beatitude's invitation.

During the journey a pleasant surprise was given to His Beatitude by His Eminence Theophanis, Archbishop of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz, when they visited the church of a Community in the Sentouki area, where the residents who were waiting to see him are of Pontiac extract and speak Greek.

Particularly poignant was the visit of the Venerable Primate of the Throne of St Mark to the place where the memorial and tombs of the 370 pupils and teachers murdered by the Chechen terrorists in September 2004, are found. With tears in his eyes His Beatitude placed flowers and conducted a memorial service.

The visit was completed with His Beatitude's visit to the Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Alania in the mountains of the Caucasus which is the most distant monastery of South Russia, situated only 20km from the border of Georgia.