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EUROPE/RUSSIA - Patriarch Kirill writes to Obama: May the U.S. listen to the unanimous voices of religious leaders

Moscow (Agenzia Fides) - On the eve of the 12th anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the Patriarch of Moscow and Russia, Kirill yesterday sent a message to President Barack Obama urging him to shelve plans for a military attack against Assad's regime and to focus on diplomatic paths to stop the Syrian conflict, as has been suggested in recent days by leaders of all religious communities, starting from Pope Francis. "The Russian Orthodox Church" - Kirill writes in his message to Obama, released by the Patriarchate and sent to Fides Agency - "knows the price of the suffering and loss of life, after our people in the last century survived two devastating world wars that caused millions of deaths and ruined the lives of multitudes of people. In addition, we feel the pain and losses suffered by the American people in the terrible terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001". After 12 years since those attacks with destabilizing geopolitical effects still in place, Kirill turns to Obama asking him to listen to the "voices of religious leaders who in an unanimous manner are opposed to any military interference in the Syrian conflict" and urged him to make every effort "to start peace negotiations as soon as possible".
According to the Head of Russian Orthodoxy, an outside military intervention in Syria could lead to the conquest of power by radical forces that will certainly not be willing to "ensure interfaith coexistence in the Syrian society". In this regard, the Patriarch expressed particular concern for Christians in Syria, "who in that case would end up under the threat of extermination or mass exile". This is why - concludes Kirill, in evident harmony with the moves of Russian diplomacy, one should exploit "the opportunities that have been open for a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Opportunities that involve control on behalf of the international community of chemical weapons in Syria".
Patriarch Kirill and President Obama met in Moscow in July 2009. On that occasion, Kirill had invited him to put aside the "widespread anti-American sentiment in Russia and anti-Russian sentiments widespread in America" in the name of common Christian values shared by the people of Russia and the U.S. . (GV) (Agenzia Fides 11/09/2013)

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