

Russian Patriarch denounces Moscow airport bombing

by [Sophia Kishkovsky](#)

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Moscow, January 25 (ENInews)—Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill I denounced a terrorist attack at Moscow's busiest airport as "the horrifying scowl of sin, and a barbaric distortion of human nature," and said that acts once condemned even in war "are today becoming a form of protest."

He was speaking after a service at a church overflowing with Moscow State University students and officials who gathered to celebrate St. Tatyana's Day, which is observed annually on 25 January as a religious and student holiday.

This year, it became an occasion to address growing ethnic tensions and remember the victims of a suicide bomber who killed at least 35 people and injured over 150 at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport on 24 January.

The bomber and those responsible for the blast have not been identified, but assailants in a number of previous terrorist attacks have been linked to a separatist movement in Chechnya and other republics of the troubled Northern Caucasus region in southern Russia. Russia has waged two wars against Chechnya since 1994.

Ramzan Kadyrov, Chechnya's Kremlin-backed leader, has been accused of human rights abuses and credited with rebuilding the republic and crushing Islamic militants, while supporting his own form of Islamic fundamentalism.

The services on 25 January took place at St. Tatyana's Church, just steps from the Kremlin and Manezh Square, where Russian nationalist football fans rioted in December and attacked dark-skinned passersby from the Caucasus. The events were sparked by the death of Yevgeny Sviridov, a Russian football fan, in a street fight with migrants from the Caucasus.

"Just recently, frightening events occurred here on Manezh Square, right next to the university church, and suddenly the entire society has shuddered and begun to

speak of problems," said Patriarch Kirill at the service, according to the Interfax news agency.

Ethnic tensions had been growing in Moscow for months before that, including anger over plans to build a new mosque in a southeastern district of the city. Muslim migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia have emigrated to the Russian capital, fleeing wars in their home regions since the collapse of the Soviet Union and searching for economic opportunity.

Ravil Gainutdin, chairman of Russia's Council of Muftis, quoted the Koran in a statement on 25 January and said "the fire of hell" awaits those who carried out the terrorist act at Domodedovo Airport.