

Putin Congratulates Muslims on Eid al-Fitr Holiday

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Vladimir Putin congratulated Russia's Muslims with the Eid al-Fitr holiday.

President Vladimir Putin on Monday congratulated Muslims across Russia on the Eid al-Fitr holiday, a feast marking the end of the monthlong fast of Ramadan.

"From time immemorial, Eid al-Fitr has celebrated the fulfillment of good deeds and care for those in need, epitomizing people's desire for self-improvement," Putin said in a statement posted on the Kremlin website.

Putin also took the opportunity to praise the role of the Muslim community in Russia's cultural and spiritual life.

"The Muslim community in Russia ... is making a significant contribution to the development of interfaith dialogue, fruitfully cooperating with governmental and non-governmental organizations in matters of charity and education," Putin said in the statement.

Eid al-Fitr, known in Russia as Uraza Bairam, is traditionally marked by a day of feasting and comes after the observation of a monthlong period of fasting from dawn until sunset throughout the holy month of Ramadan. Pregnant women, diabetics and Muslims suffering from illness are among those exempt from the fast.

At least 35,000 people gathered on Monday outside the main mosque in St. Petersburg to celebrate the start of the three-day festival, while a further 7,000 people gathered outside a smaller mosque in the city, local police were quoted as saying by Interfax.

In Moscow, about 230,000 people are expected to attend prayers commemorating Eid al-Fitr, while 60,000 people alone are expected to gather at the city's largest mosque, near Prospekt Mira, ITAR-Tass reported, citing local Muslim authorities.

As of last year, 23 million Muslims live in Russia, ITAR-Tass quoted the head of the country's council of Muftis, Rawil Gaynetdin, as saying.

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