

Airport Riot 'Attempt to Sow Discord' Between Jews and Muslims – Orthodox Leader

By [AFP](#)

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Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. **Sergei Vlasov / patriarchia.ru**

Moscow's Orthodox spiritual leader, Patriarch Kirill, on Monday condemned an anti-Israel riot at an airport in the Muslim-majority region of Dagestan as a bid to "sow discord" between Russia's Jews and Muslims.

The powerful religious leader spoke a day after a violent mob descended onto Makhachkala airport looking for Jews after a flight from Israel had landed.

There was "no moral justification for those who planned to attack innocent people," he said of Sunday's incident, adding: "I see what happened as an attempt to sow discord between Muslims and Jews in Russia, who over centuries maintained good relations of friendship and cooperation."

Kirill, a fervent supporter of President Vladimir Putin, saw outside interference in the riot, as did the Kremlin.

"I have no doubt that forces who provoked this incident will stop at nothing to cause disorder in our country," he said in a statement, adding: "In these events we see an attempt to put this alien confrontation onto our land."

Patriarch Kirill welcomed calls by Dagestan's religious leaders to stop the violence and called "for them to be listened to."

He also called on Russians of all faiths "to value with all forces and strengthen this inter-religious world that was built by many generations of our ancestors."

Patriarch Kirill sat between Russia's main mufti and chief rabbi last week as the religious leaders met with Putin in the Kremlin to discuss avoiding tensions between Russia's different religious communities over the war between Israel and Hamas.

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