

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH of

**H.E. Mr. Mintimer Shaimiev**  
the President of the Republic of Tatarstan

Winner of the King Faisal International prize  
for the year 1427H/2007  
for Service to Islam

Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim

Your Majesty, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz,

Your Excellency Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, the President of the Russian Federation,

Your Royal Highnesses,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Assalamu aleikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

On the occasion of conferring on me the King Faisal International Prize for the year 1427H/2007 for Service to Islam, I express my sincere gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz, for the exceptional attention to me and for presenting me with the King Faisal International Prize personally, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

I am also extremely thankful to His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, the Chairman of the Prize Committee of the King Faisal Foundation, to the staff of the Foundation and highly respected members of the Prize Committee for awarding me with this prestigious prize.

I am honoured by this recognition and it is with pride and much humility that I accept this prize. It is also the recognition of the high international role and the authority of the Russian Federation, its multinational and multi-faith people, about twenty millions of Russian Muslims.

Nowadays, we are going through a positive process of spiritual renaissance in the Russian society and the state, including that of Russian Muslims. As for Tatarstan there were only 23 functioning mosques before “Perestroika”, but within the last 15 years their number has increased up to over 1100. The first Russian Islamic University was established in the republic.

I was glad to visit the headquarters of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in spring 2006, to meet with its General Secretary, H.E. esteemed Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, to discuss with him the prospects of the development of multilateral cooperation of Russia and OIC member-countries.

Furthermore, I was given the great honour of being the guest of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, performing umrah and visiting Holy Mecca. I would like to sincerely thank you, Your Majesty, for your hospitality and the opportunity to touch the origins of the religion of our glorious ancestors, the holy land Allah’s Messenger, Muhammad, may Allah convey His peace and blessings upon him, walked on.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the our Muslims to express to you, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Your Majesty, and to the brotherly people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia warm gratitude and thanks for your permanent support and attention to issues of the Russian-Saudi and Russian-Arabian cooperation for the well-being of our peoples, in the name of progress and prosperity. Thanks to your wisdom, Your Majesty, and wisdom of the Government of the Russian Federation our countries are becoming closer again in order to follow the direct path of knowledge and creation, the path of those upon whom Allah’s peace and blessings are.

Please allow me to once again greet the highly-respected gathering with the words of Muslims and the peace:

Assalamu aleikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakahatuhu