

## Serikbay Satybaldiuly Oraz, Grand Mufti of Kazakhstan

Thomas Schirmmacher, Associate Secretary General for Theological Concerns of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), met the Grand Mufti of Kazakhstan, [Serikbay Oraz](#), during a conference in Baku to prepare his subsequent short visit to Nur-Sultan in Kazakhstan.

Schirmmacher also spoke with the President of the Kazakh Catholic Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Tomasz Peta, and the Apostolic Nuncio in Kazakhstan, Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt. He asked this officially recognised, albeit strictly controlled, religious community to stand up for the religious minorities in the country. Earlier, Schirmmacher had received reports on [the situation in the country](#) from representatives of the Evangelical Alliance of Kazakhstan, of a member of the WEA, and of the Federation of Pentecostal Churches of Kazakhstan.



Kazakhstan is the only country in Central Asia that does not assign Islam a special role in its constitution. "[Kazakhstan is a Muslim country](#), but not an Islamic state," Oraz summarized his view.

[Serikbay Satybaldiuly Oraz](#) was born in 1975 and is Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (DUMK) and the fourth grand mufti of Kazakhstan. He studied Islamic theology in Tashkent, at the Egyptian Al-Azhar University and at the University of Islamabad (Pakistan). In 2014 he additionally graduated from Dula-tov Kostanai University with a Master's degree in Management. In 2016 he received a Master's degree in Islamic Culture from the Egyptian University of Islamic Culture Nur-Mubarak. He taught at the Islamic Institute and became Rector of the Islamic University. Afterwards he held various leading positions within the DUMK. In 2013, he became deputy chairman of the DUMK, and in 2017 Serikbay Oraz was elected chairman and Supreme Mufti of Kazakhstan at the VIII regular general assembly ("Kurultay") of the DUMK.

In Nur-Sultan, the former Astana, Schirmmacher met the deputy mayor and was shown around the city. Foreign Christians are allowed to visit Christians and churches in Kazakhstan, but are not allowed to preach or perform religious ceremonies without a permit. (See also the [UN Human Rights Report on Kazakhstan](#)). [This post with more photos online ...](#)