

## Bloggers Spot Patriarch's Pricey Watch

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Bloggers are having a field day with the photoshopping of Kirill's watch.

The Moscow Patriarchate apologized Thursday for a photo editor's "absurd mistake," an image of Patriarch Kirill badly photoshopped to disguise his expensive Breguet wristwatch.

Late Thursday, a picture of Kirill meeting with Justice Minister Alexander Konovalov in 2009 went viral after bloggers spotted a reflection of the watch in the table they were seated at — but no watch on his wrist.

The hubbub prompted a statement of apology from Kirill's office.

It was "an absurd mistake by the photo department," the Moscow Patriarchate said in a statement carried by Interfax. "It was a serious violation of our internal ethics."

The statement added that the guilty person or persons will be punished.

The scandalous picture was replaced with the original on the church's website, but copies of the photoshopped version had been distributed all over the Internet by that time.

The image is of too low quality to reveal the brand of the watch. But its shape and size fit the image of Kirill's \$30,000 Breguet wristwatch, which was spotted by Ukrainian journalists in 2009.

News portal Vip.glavred.info [published](#) pictures from the trip showing Kirill wearing the luxurious timepiece.

Earlier this month, journalist Vladimir Solovyov said on Vesti-FM that in a private conversation Kirill had told him that the Ukrainian pictures were "doctored" and that he wears a small watch with Russia's coat of arms, a gift from President Dmitry Medvedev.

Solovyov said Kirill later acknowledged that he owns a Breguet watch he got as a present, but he denied ever wearing it. The watch is lying in a box at his home, Solovyov said.

Kirill hadn't commented on the issue as of Thursday afternoon.

The church's web archive contains several pictures of Kirill seated at the same table in which both the watch and its reflection are visible.

But it's still unclear why that particular picture with Konovalov was photoshopped and surfaced on the blogs.

The Russian Orthodox Church said in a recent statement that it has been under attack from "anti-Russian forces."

"The attacks have become more prominent during the pre-election and post-election period, which shows their political forces," the statement said.

The March 4 presidential election was dominated by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Ahead of the vote, Kirill called Putin's rule a "miracle of God."

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