

Greek president Pavlopoulos attends double event honoring Dormition, Pontian Greeks at Mt. Vermion



President of the Greek Republic Prokopios Pavlopoulos attended a liturgy at the Church of Panagia Soumela on Mt. Vermion, northern Greece, on the occasion of Thursday's Dormition of the Virgin Mary, and a memorial service which marked the centennial of the genocide of 353,000 Pontian Greeks.

In statements at the church in Kastania, Imathia prefecture, Pavlopoulos said that Greeks should unite to achieve two goals, promote the recognition of the genocide of Greeks from Pontus, the Black Sea area, "as a stain of barbarity forever impressed in human memory" and "oblige the perpetrators to express, at the very least, a sincere and retroactive apology, disowning the up to now immoral tactic of ruthless violation of generally acceptable and irrefutable historical proof." This will provide a lesson through memory to deter forevermore "such brutal and barbaric actions" that hit at the core of human values and undermine human progress, he noted.

Tying the celebration of the Dormition to the history of the church, built to

commemorate Pontian Greeks and honor the pilgrimage site of Panagia Soumela in Turkey, Pavlopoulos quoted a Greek minister in Eleftherios Venizelos' cabinet saying in 1930 that "along with the holy icon of Panagia Soumela, Pontus came to Greece."

The annual liturgy was attended by representatives from several parties, New Democracy Eurodeputy Stelios Kibouropoulos, religious and military leaders and the board members of the National Foundation "Panagia Soumela", who welcomed the president in the area.

Following the liturgy, a procession of the historic icon was held around the church and the president also lay a wreath at the bust of Alexandros Ypsilanti, a leader of the revolt against Ottoman Turkish occupation of Greece in 1821 who was of Pontian descent.

Pavlopoulos presented honorary certificates of the Panagia Soumela Foundation to students of the area in memory of pupils who died in a traffic accident at Tempipi in 2003. He was also scheduled to pay a visit to Greek Orthodox religious sites in the area and attend a lunch in his honor by the Foundation.

Events at the area will round up with traditional dancing and other events by Pontian associations.





/ Source: [ANA-MPA news](#)