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Republic of Cyprus details massive cultural heritage, religious destruction in Turkish-occupied areas of island

Today marks the dour 36th anniversary of the illegal and secessionist declaration of statehood by a Turkish-Cypriot pseudo-state in the one-third of the island republic still occupied by the Turkish military. The unilateral action was roundly condemned by the international community at the time, with UN Security Council resolution 541 “deploring” the action, as it states.

The internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus’ antiquities department this week published a long list detailing the destruction of the island’s cultural heritage in the occupied areas. This “cultural genocide” witnesses efforts to erase anything related to Christian Orthodoxy.

Specifically,

– 133 churches and monasteries have been desecrated

– roughly 15,000 icons, including some 3,500 dated to the Byzantine era, have been stolen

– 77 churches have been converted into mosques

– 28 churches are being used by the Turkish military as storage for weapons and munitions

– Several churches are being used by occupation forces as hospitals

– Even more shockingly, 15 churches are used as stables

– 20 churches have been turned into bars, coffee shops, nightclubs and even casinos, while one church, dedicated to the Savior, in the village of Chrysiliou, has been converted into a morgue.