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Carnival event featuring Ottoman re-enactment continues to generate reactions



Reverberations continued over a bizarre and utterly provocative incident that took place on Sunday in the main square of the town of Sohos, in northern Thessaloniki prefecture.

As part of the ongoing carnival, a performance group from neighboring Turkey, comprised of middle-aged men decked out in brightly colored Ottoman-era attire, re-enacted a martial procession of the Janissary corp, waving green battle flags adorned with the Muslim half moon and accompanying drum-beaters.

In an urgently issued announcement, the Municipality of Lagadas said the initiative for the appearance of the specific group belonged to a private company that implements European cultural programs, while also claiming that detailed information was not provided to members of the carnival organizing committee.

The statement stressed that members of the Turkish troupe exploited the hospitality of the town, and intentionally misled organizers as to the content of their militaristic and Islamist performance.

The so-called performance was held in front of the Orthodox cathedral, with the parish priest, in fact, ringing the church bells in a sequence displaying mourning.

The Janissaries were elite Ottoman infantry units formed in the 14th century, which served as the sultan’s household army, bodyguards and standing shock troops. They began as an elite corps of slaves made up of kidnapped young Christian boys, who were forcibly converted to Islam.