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Erdogan continues provocations against Christianity, threatening to reconvert Haghia Sophia into mosque



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Friday essentially gave the go-ahead to his increasingly Islamist administration to reconvert the iconic Hagia Sophia – the pre-eminent cathedral in eastern Christendom for nearly a millennium – back into a mosque.

According to the Turkish mass daily Hürriyet, the authoritarian Erdoğan said Ankara may start work to change the current status of the Hagia Sophia – Holy Wisdom – the most emblematic Orthodox Christian landmark in the world, which has functioned as a widely visited museum since 1934.

The matter of Hagia Sophia's status came up when the Islamist government in Turkey marked the 567th anniversary of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople by reading passages from the Muslim holy book, the Koran, in the Hagia Sophia.

Among others, the Greek government officially expressed its concern over the action, while Christians around the world, especially Orthodox Christians, watched the latest provocation by the official Turkish state in dismay.

The issue was also brought up on Wednesday during a central executive board meeting of Erdoğan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Hürriyet quoted anonymous sources as attributing the following statement to the Turkish president, "...Prayers can be performed and Al-Fatiha surah can be recited in the Hagia Sophia. Only our great nation can decide this... Hagia Sophia can still be visited by tourists, just like the Blue Mosque."

