

Turkish authorities step up threats, demands to reconvert iconic Hagia Sophia back into 'conquest mosque'



Official voices in Turkey continue to press for the reconversion of the iconic Hagia Sophia into a mosque, from its current status as the country's most visited museum.

Turkey's high court is expected to rule on July 2 over yet another petition to convert what was eastern Christendom's most important cathedral for nearly a millennium back into a mosque.

For instance, Turkey's justice minister this week said Hagia Sophia must definitely, as he said, open for Muslim prayers, claiming that a precedent is another court decision to turn the historic Chora cathedral into a mosque, from its status of a museum.

In a related development, Greece's foreign minister, Nikos Dendias, spoke by phone with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, with the latter, according to reports, reiterating the international organization's standing position, namely, that the Hagia Sophia is a world heritage monument and that this status should not change.