

## **Georgian Patriarchate ‘saddened’ by Turkey’s decision to strip Hagia Sophia of museum status**



Tbilisi, July 14, Interfax – The decision of Turkish authorities to strip the Hagia Sophia of its status as a museum is a “very sad fact,” head of the Georgian Orthodox Church’s public relations service Archpriest Andria Dzhagmaidze said.

“In regard to the Hagia Sophia, the Patriarchate of Georgia has published a statement saying that this is a very sad fact. In the present situation, in which multilateral tensions exist in the world, calm and friendly relations between Muslims and Christians are causing much envy. It would be wise not to turn the Hagia Sophia into a mosque,” the priest said.

Last week, the patriarchate urged Turkish leaders to show wisdom and leave the Hagia Sophia as a museum.

The patriarchate also stated that the Georgian Orthodox Church respects Turkey’s sovereignty and hopes that Turkey will not perceive the Georgian Patriarchate’s position as meddling, but treat it as an expression of opinion and concern over one of the oldest Christian Orthodox churches.

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