

BULGARIAN HOLY SYNOD WEIGHS IN ON AGIA SOPHIA



The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church issued a statement on the recent lamentable events surrounding the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Istanbul, joining its voice “in the calls of our sister Local Orthodox Churches.”

The Bulgarian Synod is closely following the matter of Hagia Sophia’s reconversion into a mosque with great attention and concern, the statement reads, published on the official site of the Bulgarian Patriarchate.

“As a millennial shrine for all Christianity and a spiritual center of Orthodoxy, this temple is dear to every Christian heart and represents an exceptional cultural value for all mankind,” the hierarchs write.

“That is why we join our voice in the calls of our sister Local Orthodox Churches, as well as of a number of state leaders and international institutions, to preserve the current status of Agia Sophia as a museum and a UNESCO World Heritage site,” the statement continues.

“Wisdom and goodwill” are needed to resolve this matter, “in the name of preserving good interreligious and good neighborly relations!” the Synod concludes.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Erdoğan shows no signs of reversing his decision to drop Agia Sophia’s museum status in favor of a mosque, and plans are underway to hold the first Muslim prayer service in the 6th-century cathedral on Friday.

The Churches of Jerusalem, Romania, Georgia, Cyprus, and Russia, and the Greek Archdiocese of America have all made statements on the tragic fate of Agia Sophia, as have a number of individual hierarchs from throughout the Orthodox world.

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