

23/07/2020

Reverse countdown for sacrilegious conversion of Hagia Sophia into mosque by Islamist Erdogan govt



Intense international diplomatic activity continued this week in the run-up to the offensive conversion of the Hagia Sophia, the greatest of all cathedrals in eastern Christendom, back into a mosque - the result of a decision earlier this month by autocratic Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

A Muslim prayer service is scheduled for Friday, part of a partisan fiesta organized at the 6th century monument by Erdogan's administration and the ruling AKP party.

The shocking development for the Hagia Sophia comes amid a crescendo of continued Turkish provocations and saber-rattling across the eastern Mediterranean and Near East.

Mitsotakis-Putin phone contact; Kremlin cites provocation against entire Orthodox world

Meanwhile, the issue of altering the Hagia Sophia's current status as an internationally renowned museum dominated a telephone conversation on Wednesday between Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The two leaders emphasized the unrivalled cultural, historic and religious significance of the unique World Heritage Site, as both men stressed the importance of preserving the Hagia Sophia as a universal symbol of world heritage, peace and cohesion, Tass reported from Moscow, citing an announcement by the Kremlin.

The same Russian announcement referred to a "...provocation for the entire Orthodox world."

Additionally, Mitsotakis and Putin touched on regional issues, including the situation in war-torn Libya and developments in the East Mediterranean.

Turkish provocations and aggressiveness as well as the sacrilegious decision regarding the Hagia Sophia were on the agenda during today's plenary session at the European Parliament.

Still on a legislative level, members of Greek parliament's permanent committee for expatriate Hellenism called on ethnic Greek counterparts in legislatures and parliamentary assemblies around the world, as well as expatriate groups and the Church, to brief their local constituencies and congregations over the Hagia Sophia's conversion.

Despite the heightened condemnation by much of the West and Christian Churches, preparations continued at a fever pitch to convert the Orthodox basilica back into a mosque.

Curtains used to hide Christian mosaics in basilica

Turkey's Minister of Religious Affairs, Ali Erbas, a close Erdogan ally, toured preparations inside the cathedral, where crews were hanging heavy curtains to conceal much of its remaining frescoes and mosaics, and laying down hundreds of

square meters of turquoise rugs.

The Hagia Sophia remained closed and heavily guarded on Thursday.