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Cyprus – Syllouris sends letter to Erdogan condemning Hagia Sophia decision

House President Demetris Syllouris on Thursday sent an open letter to Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan condemning the decision to turn Hagia Sophia in Istanbul into a mosque.

He said Turkey's illegal actions in Cyprus turned Ankara into a conqueror rather than a guarantor of the island's independence.

Commenting on the Hagia Sophia decision, Syllouris said that according to the Quran, a fundamental principle of Islam was respect to the monuments of other religions.

"Instead, you have chosen to go down in history as the historical desecrator of an international symbol, a monument of world cultural heritage, a masterpiece of art, and a symbol of the coexistence of cultures and religions," he added.

"All this rhetoric of hatred, the promotion of passion, do not lead us towards peace,

which you call upon and which all peoples seek."

Instead, Erdogan was showing that he scorns the fundamental rights of all people and especially Christians.

On the Cyprus issue, Syllouris said Turkey does not recognise the Republic of Cyprus, even though it is a member of the UN and the EU.

He added: "You persistently call upon the treaty of guarantees to justify your illegal acts and occupying presence in Cyprus, as well as all the terrible things you have done against the Republic of Cyprus and the Cypriot citizens," he added.

By invading Cyprus in 1974 and subsequently occupying the northern third of the island, Turkey ceased being guarantors and were now conquerors, he said.

Prior to the war, Syllouris said he came from the mixed village of Potamia, where Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots coexisted together. He added back then people from each community respected each other's faiths.

Syllouris said Erdogan's actions "cannot reverse or erase the truth of history," as Hagia Sophia "will always remain a symbol and reference for the whole of humanity, an achievement of art and a monument of culture, and will always be called Hagia Sophia".

Source