

## **Official Turkey prepares for conversion of yet another iconic Orthodox basilica into mosque**



The Islamist Erdogan administration's belligerence in the east Mediterranean continued unabated at the start of the week. On the domestic front, the authoritarian Turkish president and his top ministers continue to stoke the fires of chauvinism and religious intolerance in the country.

While preparations are continuing for the reopening of the iconic Chora church as a mosque, the head of Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs, Ali Erbas, said it was actually Europe that was showing disrespect to the Koran and symptoms of so-called Islamophobia.

The ancient Christian communities of Asia Minor, or Anatolia, the majority of modern-day Turkey's land mass, have been thoroughly wiped since the beginning of the 20th century, following genocide and forced deportations, a textbook description of ethnic cleansing.

Conversely, tens of millions of Muslim immigrants and their descendants, including millions of Turkish guest workers, have emigrated to western and northern Europe

since the 1950s.

Meanwhile, back in the Bosphorus metropolis itself, groups of professional tour guides continue to gather, on a weekly basis, in front of the Chora Church of the Savior to protest against the insolent decision by Turkish authorities to change the status of the basilica from a museum into a mosque.

According to professional guide Serdar Oguzoglu, who was quoted in news stories, he and his colleagues are appalled because the fabulous mosaics and frescoes that adorn the interior of the Orthodox church will be obscured.

He said "...Once it becomes a mosque, that's what will happen. It is a terrible blow to art in general and to our profession in particular."