

Half century since Turkish state closed pre-eminent seminary of Ecumenical Patriarchate, Halki School



Tuesday, January 12, will mark the four 50-year anniversary of the closure of the Halki School of Theology by Turkish authorities.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate's pre-eminent seminary was closed on the basis of a controversial and reactionary law handed down by the Turkish constitutional, which banned private tertiary education in the country.

The legal decision was essentially the pretense needed by the Turkish state to close down the renowned Greek Orthodox seminary, despite the fact that the theological school's operation and standing is enshrined in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, the foundation of the modern Turkish republic.

Despite decades of international pressure on successive Turkish governments and the fact that the seminary's continued closure ranks as an egregious violation of religious freedom in the predominately Muslim country, not only has official Ankara not taken any action to allow the school to reopen, but has, instead, signaled that it will create an Islamic studies center on the Marmara Sea isle of Halki, where the

seminary and the adjacent Monastery of the Holy Trinity is located.