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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew decries insolent event allowed at Panaghia Sumela Monastery, in letter to Turkish minister



Reactions continued from around the world in the wake of a so-called “rave party” and advertising campaign organized and filmed this month at the landmark Panaghia Soumela monastery, which is located in the historic Pontus region of northeast Asia Minor.

In a highly symbolic move, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, conveyed a letter of protest to Turkey’s relevant culture and tourism minister, where he refers to an insult heaped upon the Stavropegic Monastery of Sumela, in the Tzabzon region.

His All Holiness reminded that the Panaghia Sumela Monastery is considered as a sacred site by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and all of Pontian Hellenism, as well as a World Religious and Cultural Heritage monument.

The Ecumenical Patriarch emphasized the fact that the insolent event is in no way

compatible with the monastery’s religious and historical character.

The ancient site today operates a museum under the jurisdiction of Turkey’s culture and tourism ministry, which bears the responsibility for its maintenance and preservation.

The latest dour incident out of Erdogan-led Turkey comes a year and a half after the shocking and blasphemous reconversion of the Hagia Sophia into a mosque.

Greece’s foreign ministry also issued a curt response over the incident.

This was followed by tabled questions by Greek deputies elected to the European Parliament, as well as criticism by Pontian groups and the general secretary of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly for Orthodoxy, Greek MP Maximos Harakopoulos. The latter emphasized that official Turkey is once again left exposed in the eyes of the civilized world.