

News and Current Events :: Turkey: Greek Chora Church to be Converted into a Mosque; Is Hagia Sophia the

Turkey: Greek Chora Church to be Converted into a Mosque; Is Hagia Sophia the Next? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2019/11/18

The Turkish Council of State recently approved a decision on the Kariye Museum. Originally a Byzantine Greek church in Constantinople (Istanbul), it was converted into a mosque by the Ottoman Turks. According to the new ruling, the former church is to be converted into a mosque again.

This decision could also pave the way for the conversion of Hagia Sophia, built as a basilica and now a museum, into a mosque, according to a report published on November 5 by the pro-government Turkish newspaper, Yeni Safak.

Through a decision by the Council of Ministers on August 29, 1945, many mosques and masjids, including the Kariye Mosque, were allocated to the Ministry of National Education as museums and museum depots whose maintenance and repair expenses were to be paid from the state budget, said the newspaper.

However, to overturn the change-of-status of Kariye Museum, the Association of Permanent Foundations and Service to Historical Artifacts and the Environment filed a lawsuit in 2005, requesting the cancellation of the decision.

According to Yeni Safak, the final verdict of the Council of State noted that;

The Kariye mosque is one of the public immovables belonging to the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation.

Immovables are public property established for direct charitable services such as places of worship, hospitals, and soup kitchens, and the provisions of private property cannot be applied to them. These charitable public immovables cannot be allocated to be used for a purpose other than the use specified by the Foundation.

The Kariye Museum, however, was originally an Orthodox Church, namely the Chora Church. According to the official website of Princeton University:

Described by Osterhaut as "second in renown only to Hagia Sophia among the Byzantine churches of Istanbul", Kariye Camii attracts much attention because of its rich mosaics and frescoes. The original structure was built by the Holy Theodos in 534 in the reign of Justinian. In the 11th and 12th centuries, it was rebuilt by the Comnenus family and dedicated to Christ (thus the name, Christ in Chora). The structure suffered the great earthquake of 1296 and was later converted into a mosque in 1511 after the Turks conquered Istanbul. Since 1948, the building has been the Kariye Museum, a popular tourist attraction.

However, Yeni Safak claims that "The decision by the State Council, which paves the way for the Kariye to be a mosque again after 74 years, will be a precedent for Hagia Sophia, which is the subject of constant debate."

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Re: Turkey: Greek Chora Church to be Converted into a Mosque; Is Hagia Sophia the Next - posted by docs (), on: 2019/11/18

One of the historical practices of Islam has been to convert famous or prominent Christian churches into mosques after they had conquered the territory. It's almost like standard operating procedure for Islam.