

STATEMENT ON HAGIA SOPHIA

1. Hagia Sophia has been built as a temple two hundred years before the birth of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH), and it has a magnificent history in terms of both history of humanity, religion and civilization, and the Islamic and Turkish history.
2. The historical information unanimously records that this ancient temple was built by its first constructors as a sanctuary for the purpose of worshiping God, who is one, and he created the universe from nothing. In fact, this divine goal was resumed uninterruptedly since the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, when Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror succeeded in achieving a definitive conquest with the honor of attaining the Prophecy of the Prophet, and continued until the beginning of the last century.
3. With the assurance of safety statement (Emanname) he published after the conquest, Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror left all non-Muslims living in Istanbul free with their beliefs, worship, and lives. He protected their safety of life and property, especially their places of worship by stating that “We will protect you as we protect ourselves.” However, as an exception referring to the above-mentioned divine goal, he converted Hagia Sophia into a mosque and entrusted it to our Ummah on condition that it continues its existence as an Islamic temple until the apocalypse.
4. Unlike the fact that it was subjected to severe ravage and destruction by its *own* previous believers from time to time before the conquest, this unique temple was protected by our nation with great care, and they did not even feel the need to change its name. With the minarets added as the symbol of Tawhid (the oneness of God), the continuity of its existence as a temple, which made the first constructors’ divine goals alive, was provided with prostrations (sajdah) to Allah-the Compassionate and the Merciful- for centuries.
5. Hagia Sophia is more than a place of worship, with scientific institutions built around it in many fields such as astronomy, fiqh, mathematics, and theology. It has served as a science and wisdom complex in which divine wisdom was collected as if it is making the best of its name (Hagia Sophia), until 1934 for 5 centuries.

6. Hagia Sophia was first closed to worship in 1934 for repairs and then it was turned into a museum after a radical decision. This issue, which has been continuing against both the sanctity of temples, the historical acquis and the tradition of the foundation since then, has caused great bitterness in our nation and frustration in our society, and a source of ever-widening unrest in it . The issue of whether Hagia Sophia is to be opened to worship or not has been discussed as an issue of independence and freedom or even an issue of foreign influence by various segments of the society from time to time. This situation has always turned into an unfulfilled desire and this has deeply injured every member of our nation.

7. Despite all of this, considering the issue of re-opening Hagia Sophia as an Islamic temple as a part of an unrestricted turbulence on a global scale and considering these innocent and just demands as a sign of a possible conflict between religions and civilizations has painted a sad picture in the eyes of our civilization which had always opened its arms for all religions throughout history. Especially the discussions spreading in the West dealing with the issue as a conversion of a church into a mosque, while the matter for us is merely a museum turning back to its origin as a mosque.

8. A temple from which the nation has been deprived for 86 years has opened its doors to believers again after a disrupted and unpleasant process, and as a result, the joy and enthusiasm of the whole nation is unparalleled. The unity of the different political Parties, thinkers, and orientations, when it comes to Hagia Sophia, once again demonstrated how accurate the steps taken to overcome this historical delay are.

9. Today, as it was yesterday, it is certain that Hagia Sophia, like our other temples, will keep its doors wide open, not only for the sincere believers but for anyone who wants to visit this monument. And our guests will find out that those who pray in Hagia Sofia and believe it to be a place for the ascending souls had proven themselves worthy for this responsibility as the successors of a long and ancient civilization.

10. For all these reasons, it is beyond all kinds of appreciation that Hagia Sophia is opened for worship. On this occasion, the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan's steps that articulate the accumulated feelings of the entire Islamic world has the potential to reconstruct a deep sense of respect, a strong trust, and a powerful sense of belonging between us and Humanity as a whole.

Respectfully announced to the public.

