

Erdogan signs **decree** allowing Hagia Sophia to be used as a **mosque** again

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan issued a decree ordering Hagia Sophia to be opened for Muslim prayers, an action likely to provoke international **furor** around a World Heritage Site **cherished** by Christians and Muslims alike for its religious significance, for its stunning structure and as a symbol of conquest.

decree 法令; 命令

mosque 清真寺

furor 狂热; 激怒

cherish 珍爱; 怀有感情

Built in the sixth century as a cathedral, Hagia Sophia stands as the greatest example of **Byzantine** Christian architecture in the world. But it has been a source of Christian-Muslim rivalry, having stood at the center of Christendom for nearly a millennium and then, after being conquered, of the Muslim Ottoman Empire, when it was last used as a mosque.

Byzantine 拜占庭

Famous for the grandeur of its **immense** and iconic dome, it was converted into a mosque after Mehmed II the Conqueror held his first Friday prayers there in 1453, three days after seizing control of what was then the city of **Constantinople**.

immense 极好的; 广大的

Constantinople 君士坦丁堡

Under the secular republic of modern Turkey, the **monument** was turned into a museum in 1934. It was named a masterpiece of the World Heritage Site in Istanbul and has become Turkey's most popular tourist attraction, drawing 3.7 million visitors last year.

monument 纪念碑; 历史遗迹

Erdogan's decree transferred control of the site to the Religious Affairs Directorate, sealing the removal of its museum status and allowing Hagia Sophia to become a working mosque once again. He added that the action of turning it from a mosque into a museum 80 years ago had been illegal, but pledged that the mosque would continue to be open to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.