Leader of UAE Emirate Sharjah demands Spain's Cordoba cathedral be restored to a mosque

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Tourists visit Cordoba's mosque cathedral, known as the Mezquita [AFP/Getty]

The ruler of the UAE emirate Sharjah Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi demanded Cordoba Cathedral in Spain be restored to a mosque on Thursday, Arabi21 reported.

The Emirati leader said in an interview shared by Sharjah News: "At the very least, we demand the return of Cordoba Mosque, which was granted to the church, as this is a gift which doesn't belong to those who don't deserve it".
This contradicts statements made by other Emirati officials criticising Turkey for its decision to convert the Hagia Sophia to a mosque.

Emirati academic Abdul Khaleq Abdullah criticised the Grand Mufti of Oman's for blessing the Turkish move, calling Erdogan a "malicious Ottoman" on Twitter.

The sixth-century Istanbul landmark's museum status - in place since 1934 - was revoked on Friday and control was handed to the religious authority.

The decision sparked condemnation from Western governments, Russia and Christian leaders - Pope Francis saying he was "very distressed".
Cordoba mosque, known as the Mezquita, in Spain's southern region of Andalusia was the holiest site of Muslim worship in the West during the Umayyad caliphate of the 10th and 11th centuries.

**Read more:** [What will happen to Turkey's Hagia Sophia after controversial mosque conversion?](https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/7/17/sharjah-leader-demands-restoration-of-cordoba-cathedral-to-mosque)

It has been a Catholic site since the Christian reconquest of the city in 1236, after which a cathedral was built inside the building.

Regarded as one of the finest monuments of Moorish architecture, the mosque-cathedral was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1984.