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The #idccdi #PKB considers irresponsible the decision of #Erdogan President of 🇹🇷 to convert #HagiaSophia into a Mosq. We reiterate our commitment to values, the law and #humanitarianism. [facebook.com/IDCCDIInternat...](https://facebook.com/IDCCDIInternat...)

**Statement by Indonesia's National Awakening Party**  
in response to remarks by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey regarding the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque

**SAKABITA, Indonesia:** On 21 July 2020, Indonesia's largest Islamic political party issued an appeal to Muslims and people of good will of every faith and nation, to prevent the reappropriation of religion for political purposes. Responding to inflammatory remarks by President Erdogan of Turkey, the National Awakening Party (PKB) warned that "the rule-based international order is under severe stress, challenged by the emergence of authoritarian, civilizational states that do not accept this order, whether in terms of human rights, rule of law, democracy or respect for international borders and the sovereignty of other nations."

The PKB statement comes in response to an Arabic language tweet, in which President Erdogan announced Muslims "in every corner of the world" to follow Turkey's lead in reappropriating the Islamic nation, or mosque, which was largely seized under the political and military leadership of a caliph from the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE until the dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924.

As PKB Chairman H. Mahsum Elshaker warned members of the world's largest political network, Central Democrat International (CDI), in January of 2020 at the CDI Eurasia Forum in Yogyakarta, Indonesia: "When religions are deliberately placed upon a collision course, it becomes extremely difficult to prevent national conflict, for every religion claims to represent a universal mission. When various religious groups live side by side, closely intermingled, religious conflicts will inevitably provide social stress and violence, which in turn will lead to widespread anxiety or even the eruption of atrocities unable to defend themselves, something that we can already see happening in various parts of the world today."

President Erdogan has deflected the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque by citing Turkey's right, as a sovereign nation state, to do as it pleases with the former Orthodox Christian cathedral. However, Erdogan's statements to the Muslim world belie this argument. His remarks, in Arabic, are attacking the rule-based international order, suffering countries "wherever Muslims dwell throughout the earth", and threaten to obliterate a chain of civilizations that flourished for nearly 1,000 years, along a fault line stretching "from Babylonia to Central Asia to al-Andalus (Spain)". The efforts of President Erdogan's words and actions thus stand far beyond Turkey's borders and threaten both Muslim-majority and non-Muslim nation worldwides.

This may be clearly seen by the fact that Erdogan's statements were widely endorsed by the Muslim Brotherhood, Suni, and a wide range of Islamic, authoritarian, worldviews, including organization, with over 90 million followers—endorsed the 2017 G20 Global Friends of Israel Declaration on International Islam, which states:

25. The Islamic world is in the midst of a rapidly deteriorating crisis, with no apparent sign of resolution. Among the most obvious manifestations of this crisis are the brutal conflicts now raging across a huge swath of territory inhabited by Muslims, from Africa and the Middle East to the borders of India, rampant social intolerance throughout the Islamic world, the unchecked spread of religious extremism and crime, and a rising tide of Islamophobia among non-Muslim populations, in direct response to these developments.

26. Most of the political and military actors engaged in these conflicts pursue their competing agendas without regard to the cost to human lives and misery. This has led to an immense humanitarian crisis, while highlighting the appeal and dramatically accelerating the spread of a de facto Islamist revolutionary movement that threatens the stability and security of the entire world, by summoning Muslims to join a global insurrection against the current world order.

In the midst of these circumstances, it is the height of irresponsibility for Recep Erdogan to further inflame Muslim emotions in pursuit of his domestic political agenda and to serve as a cover for his violation of international covenants—by drilling for natural gas within the territorial waters of Cyprus and Greece, supporting al-Nusra (an affiliate of al-Qaeda) in Syria, and interfering in the Libyan conflict on behalf of the Islamist-dominated interim government—in an effort to advance Turkish regional power and assert maritime rights in the eastern Mediterranean.

As Indonesia knows from its colonial history—and from recent efforts by China to claim "traditional fishing rights" within Indonesia's territorial waters near the island of Natuna—President Erdogan's actions and statements threaten to return human relations to a Hobbesian state of nature, in which the law of the jungle prevails. For if international law is no longer the yardstick for governing disputes between nations, any country that is sufficiently powerful may seize lands or waters internationally recognized as belonging to a weaker nation, and defy the weaker power to assert its claim by force.

Andrés Pastrana A and 4 others

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