



EVKAF

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"Your compassion will bring compassion."

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454

With the centuries-old waqf culture, we
keep goodness alive and carry the legacy
of the past to the future with hope.

Page 2

Cyprus Evkaf Administration
454 Years Old

Page 3

The Evkaf Struggle of
Turkish Cypriot People

Page 4

Witnesses of History:
Salih Coşar

Cyprus Evkaf Administration is 454 Years Old



The 454th anniversary of the establishment of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration and the 69th anniversary of its transfer from the British Colonial Administration to the Turkish Cypriot people were celebrated with a ceremony.

The ceremony started with a moment of silence and the reading of the National Anthem and continued with the placing of a wreath on the bust of Atatürk. Then speeches were made.

Following the speeches, the award ceremony of the painting competition between primary schools on the theme of 'Contributions of Foundations to Society', sponsored by Northern Cyprus Turkcell, was held in cooperation with the Cyprus Evkaf Administration and the Ministry of National Education.

Tatar: "Cyprus Evkaf Administration is a monument of honesty, every cent has a value here."

President Ersin Tatar expressed his gratitude and respect to those who have contributed to the Cyprus Evkaf Administration and noted that

very important values have passed through the administration of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration.

Referring to the importance of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, Tatar said, "The Evkaf Administration has great services in bringing the TRNC to this point. It has made a great contribution to the continuation of our national values and existence here on the road to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus with the spirituality and values of the people as a whole. This is also our value. It is an expression of our national, spiritual and, in a way, freedom."

Tümer: "The waqf is the relic of the past and the guarantee of the future."

Mustafa Tümer, General Director of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, said: "This year, we are proud to celebrate the 454th anniversary of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, which has served the people of Cyprus for centuries and left deep traces in the social, cultural and economic fabric of the society."

"Waqf is one of the best examples of civilisation, solidarity, sharing and social responsibility. Waqfs

established in Cyprus since the Ottoman period have provided a wide range of services from education to health, from the protection of the poor to the maintenance of religious buildings for centuries." Tümer stated that after the British Colonial Administration started to rule the island in 1878, the waqf properties in Cyprus faced long years of neglect and mismanagement.

Tümer stated that as a result of the struggles in 1956, the Evkaf Administration was taken from the British administration and given under the control of the Turkish Cypriot community and regained its original mission.

Tümer said, "Today, the Cyprus Evkaf Administration continues to work with an understanding in accordance with the requirements of the age with the strength it draws from its roots, and sheds light on the future while protecting its historical heritage." and stated that the institution, which combines the understanding of waqf with a modern vision through education, social aid, culture-arts and restoration projects, continues to build bridges between the past and the future.



On 23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day, Children's Faces were Smiled

23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day was celebrated with various activities. Evkaf Goodness Volunteers participated in the Akçay Children and Spring Festival and the children's festival in Maraş Veyselliler and made the little ones smile. In the event full of face painting, brain teasers, music and dance performances, children had fun and experienced the joy of the holiday to the fullest.



Colin Stewart's Visit to Cyprus Evkaf Administration

Colin Stewart, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Cyprus and UNFICYP Chief of Mission, paid a visit to the Cyprus Evkaf Administration.

During this important visit, the issues of preserving the multicultural and multi-faith nature of Cyprus, maintaining religious buildings with mutual understanding and building trust between the two peoples were discussed. Colin Stewart noted that the activities carried out by the Cyprus Evkaf Administration are not limited to the repair of physical structures, but also build dialogue, mutual

respect and tolerance between peoples.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tümer, Director General of the Evkaf Administration, expressed his satisfaction with the visit and stated that the foundation culture is a common value that belongs not only to the Muslim community but also to all humanity. "This heritage is not only a reflection of the past; it is also a responsibility that must be carried into the future for peace, solidarity and humanity" said Tümer.

Pointing out that mass visits are organised to more than 100 different churches from Southern Cyprus to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus every year, Tümer stated that this practice should be extended to Turkish Cypriots within the framework of mutual understanding and equality.

Tümer also drew attention to the increasing Muslim population living in Southern Cyprus and emphasised that other mosques should be opened for worship in this direction.



The Evkaf Struggle of Turkish Cypriot People

The island of Cyprus was introduced to a waqf system based on Islamic law with the conquest of the Ottoman Empire in 1571. This system played an important role in the Islamisation of the island and the social organisation of Turkish society as a structure that encouraged social solidarity in religious, social and economic fields. Foundations established during the Ottoman period provided a wide range of services from mosques to madrasas, fountains to inns, and became one of the main elements of social welfare.

Period of British Administration

In 1878, with the de facto cession of Cyprus to the British, the administration of the waqfs also came under the control of the British colonial administration. During this period, the waqf properties belonging to the Turkish Cypriot community suffered serious damages due to various administrative problems and deliberate negligence. Under the British administration, waqf revenues were misused, many properties were lost or rented out for long periods at low prices. This situation caused great discomfort among the Turkish Cypriot community and led to an increase in demands for the return of the waqfs to the administration of the Turkish community.

The Struggle of the Turkish Community Council

In the 1940s and 1950s, these demands began to be voiced more systematically, and especially the Turkish Community Council, which was established in 1956, started an intense struggle for the return of the waqfs to their original owners. Within the scope of its mission to protect the social, cultural and religious identity of the Turkish Cypriot community, the Turkish Community Council advocated the transfer of the management of the waqfs to the community's own representatives. In this process, as a result of diplomatic contacts and social pressure with the support of Ankara, the administration of the waqfs was gradually transferred to the Turkish Community Council towards the end of the 1950s.



Official Transfer and After

The administration of the waqfs was officially transferred to the Turkish Community Council in 1958. Following this transfer, the Administration of Waqfs began to be managed by representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community and efforts were initiated to compensate for the damages suffered during the British rule. These efforts included the reorganisation of foundation records, the identification of lost properties and the restructuring of waqf law.

The transfer of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration from the British administration to the Turkish Community Council is not only a change of ownership and management, but also a process of reclaiming the cultural and religious heritage of the Turkish Cypriot people. This transfer paved the way for the waqfs to serve in accordance with their original purpose and was an important milestone in the preservation of the collective identity of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Legal Struggle Process

The struggle of the Turkish Cypriot community for the protection and recovery of waqf properties has been shaped not only as a political but also as a legal resistance.

I. Legal Challenges during the British Period:

- Complaints were made to the British authorities for the improper use of waqf properties. However, the colonial administration generally ignored these complaints.

II. Legal Initiatives of the Turkish Community Council (1950s):

- The Cyprus Evkaf Administration in the TRNC took legal initiatives for the return of the properties based on Ottoman documents.
- Restitution negotiations were conducted with the British and later with the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.
- Files were prepared for the re-recognition of waqf law.

III. Post-1974 and TRNC Law:

- A list of missing waqf properties was drawn up.
- Demands for the return of some immovable properties or compensation were raised.
- With the TRNC Constitution, the "community property" status of waqf properties was secured.

IV. Controversies in International Law:

- There have been some disputes between the Greek Cypriot administration and the Cyprus Evkaf Administration regarding property.
- There are also cases that have been referred to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).





Turkish Cypriot Witness to the Struggle: **Salih Coşar**

15 April 1956 was an unforgettable turning point for the Turkish Cypriot people. On that day, in the heart of Nicosia, in front of the Evkaf building, where the Cyprus Evkaf Administration is now located, a great crowd had gathered. As the flags fluttered in the sky, the enthusiasm of the people was engraved in history with each passing minute.

Aydın Sami Bey, the teacher of Nicosia Turkish High School, played a great role in the formation of this crowd. He had mobilised his students to gather in front of the Evkaf building. Salih Coşar, who was a senior high school student at the time, directed all his friends to the ceremony area with the instructions of his teacher. As the student representative, it was his duty to organise the crowd.

That day, all high school students gathered in front of the Evkaf building on this meaningful day when the Waqfs were handed over to the Turkish Cypriot people. Seeing the crowd, the people started to make their way towards Sarayönü in groups. There was joy and pride on everyone's faces; because this was the good news of freedom that had been awaited for years.

Salih Coşar would never forget that moment. On the instructions of his teacher, he immediately pulled up a chair and began to recite a poem in front of the crowd in order to increase the enthusiasm. Each line of his poem resonated in the hearts of the listeners, making them even more enthusiastic. The fluttering of the flags in the wind increased the enthusiasm of the crowd, and everyone's voice was raised as a whole. The visuals of that moment immortalised

Salih Coşar's excitement and the enthusiasm of the crowd as he recited poetry on the stage.

As of 2025, exactly 69 years have passed since this historical event. On the anniversary of the takeover of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration from the British administration, the memories of that day are still fresh. The poem read by Salih Coşar symbolises the enthusiasm of that crowd and their desire for freedom. That day was not only a change of administration, but also the beginning of a process of reclaiming the cultural and religious heritage of the Turkish Cypriot people.

When we look back on this meaningful day, the enthusiasm and hopeful eyes of that crowd remain in our memories as a symbol of the resistance and determination of the Turkish Cypriot community. 15 April 1956 was engraved in history as one of the important steps taken by the Turkish Cypriot people towards independence.



General Directorate of Cyprus Evkaf Administration

11-13 Kyrenia Street, PK118, Nicosia - TRNC

tel: 0392 22 83 134

tel: 0392 44 40 494

email: evkaf@evkaf.net

Evkaf on Social Media

www.evkaf.org

Facebook: @evkaf

Instagram: @evkafofficial

Twitter: @evkafofficial

