

The Ecumenical Patriarchate continues to suffer from excessively unfair and unacceptable treatment at the hands of the Turkish state. Three examples of such treatment include:

1.) The closure of the Theological School of Halki (on the island of Heybeli) in 1971. The Theological School of Halki is the only institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the training of its clergy. One cannot underestimate its importance for the essential survival of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

2.) The continuous confiscation of Church property by the Turkish government, which refuses to recognize titles to Greek minority properties purchased or acquired by donation after 1936.

- Recently, the Supreme Court of Turkey allowed the government to confiscate a very large and historic orphanage belonging to the Greek Orthodox community on the island of Pringipo.
- Approximately 1400 properties belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate have been confiscated, 152 of which have been taken from the Baloukli hospital in Istanbul. Today, the Baloukli hospital is threatened with bankruptcy by the recent imposition of an unbearable retroactive tax on the grounds that it is not considered a non-profitable organization.

3.) The refusal of the Turkish government to recognize the legitimate “Ecumenical” title of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a title historically established since the sixth century and internationally recognized by political and religious communities.

The very existence of these problems in Turkey is distressing, particularly at a time when the international community is especially sensitive to the importance of religious freedom, human rights, and the protection of the rights of minorities. The lawful right of the Greek Orthodox community and other minorities in Turkey to contemplate a secure existence and a prosperous future must be protected.