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Christians find a champion

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By Sarah Mac Donald

A court victory for the Ecumenical Patriarchate confirming its ownership of an orphanage has raised the hopes of embattled church communities in Turkey.

Christians have been in legal limbo with few rights since the foundation of the modern republic in the 1920s.

If the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, realises his ambitions for the refurbishment of a Greek Orthodox orphanage building on Buyukada Island, Istanbul, it could mark a turning point in relations between the Turkish state and religious minorities. The Ecumenical Patriarch told the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, that he would like to use part of the vast wooden building as a centre for interfaith dialogue.

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