

CYPRUS

still occupied
still divided
1974-2018





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CYPRUS STILL OCCUPIED, STILL DIVIDED

In July 1974, Turkey invaded the Republic of Cyprus in violation of the UN Charter and the fundamental principles of international law. Beyond the immense human suffering and the great material losses, the dire consequences of the invasion and subsequent illegal military occupation by Turkey are still felt today:

- For 44 consecutive years Cyprus and its people remain forcibly and artificially divided.
- Over 36% of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus is still under illegal military occupation by Turkey, with the presence of dozens of thousands of heavily armed Turkish troops rendering the occupied area of Cyprus one of the most densely militarised areas in the world.
- 200.000 Greek Cypriots, over a third of the 1974 total population, who were forcibly expelled from the northern part of Cyprus, where they constituted about 70% of the population, are still deprived of the right to return to their homes and properties.
- More than 1.130 persons, civilians and soldiers, are still missing, while the Turkish side refuses to cooperate fully in ascertaining their fate.
- Around 410 Greek Cypriots and Maronites, out of 20.000 at the end of August 1974, remain enclaved in their still-occupied villages, living

under conditions of oppression and deprivation.

- The demographic structure and balance of Cyprus has been altered due to the illegal mass transfer of settlers from Turkey to the occupied areas, as well as the emigration of thousands of Turkish Cypriots from the island after the Turkish invasion. As a result, Turkish Cypriots are now vastly outnumbered by troops and settlers from Turkey, thus constituting the minority in the occupied areas.
- The usurpation of Greek Cypriot properties continues through the illegal construction on Greek Cypriot land and the illegal sale of property owned by Greek Cypriots, who were forcibly expelled from their homes.
- Priceless religious and archaeological treasures – part of the world's cultural heritage – are still in danger, while many churches, monuments, cemeteries and archaeological sites have been destroyed, desecrated or vandalised. The monuments in the occupied part of Cyprus have been the target of an ongoing destruction and more than 60.000 cultural objects have been smuggled and illegally sold abroad. More than 550 churches and monasteries have been looted, destroyed or desecrated and more than 20.000 icons, sacred vessels, gospels and other objects have disappeared. Churches have been turned into mosques, museums, places of entertainment, hotels, army barracks, storages and even barns and their invaluable icons and frescoes were removed and illegally sold abroad.

A series of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as resolutions adopted by numerous other international organizations, reflect the universal condemnation of Turkey's invasion and all subsequent acts of aggression against Cyprus. The resolutions demand, inter alia, the withdrawal of foreign troops, the return of refugees to their homes in safety and the ascertainment of the fate of missing persons. Moreover, they call for the respect of the human rights of all Cypriots as well as for respect to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus.

In its Judgment on the 4th Interstate Application of Cyprus v. Turkey on May 10th, 2001, the European Court of Human Rights found Turkey guilty of continuous violations of human rights in Cyprus. The said Judgment is reinforced by the Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of May 12th, 2014, whereby the Court held that Turkey was to pay Cyprus €30 million in respect of the non-pecuniary damage suffered by the relatives of the missing persons, and €60 million in respect of the non-pecuniary damage suffered by the enclaved Greek-Cypriots residents of the Karpas peninsula.

A new round of negotiations, aiming at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, was initiated in September 2013. As all previous ones, it had been conducted under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General's Good Offices Mission. On 11 February 2014, the leaders of the two communities adopted a joint declaration which, inter alia, reaffirmed the basis of a settlement, namely a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation

PHOTO: Katia Christodoulou



with political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council Resolutions and the High Level Agreements. It also reaffirmed that any settlement should ensure the common future of all Cypriots within the EU.

From May 2015 to June 2017, negotiations proceeded intensively and significant progress was reached on an important number of issues.

Regrettably, the International Conference on Cyprus, which was mainly focused on security and guarantees post-settlement, at Crans Montana, Switzerland (28 June – 07 July 2017), concluded without result, due to Turkey's insistence to have the right to unilaterally intervene in Cyprus, to retain an anachronistic system of guarantees and to permanently maintain troops on Cyprus after the settlement.

Ever since, Turkish rhetoric openly challenges the UN-established parameters and the goal of reunification. The Turkish side insists on the same positions which led the Conference in Crans Montana to an unsuccessful conclusion; furthermore, the Turkish side has escalated its threatening rhetoric and provocative actions in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Greek Cypriot side remains committed to reunification within the UN-established parameters for a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation, as any alternative to those parameters does not serve the interests of either Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots. The President of Cyprus has repeatedly reiterated his readiness to continue negotiations from the point terminated in Crans Montana and on the basis of the framework presented by the UN Secretary-General during the Conference.

“Despite our disappointment, what I wish to emphatically stress and convey is that the vision of the people of Cyprus is no other than ending the unacceptable status quo and establishing a federal state which would ensure to following generations of Greek and Turkish Cypriots conditions of stability, for a safe, prosperous and peaceful future. A state free from any foreign interventions and dependencies; “a normal state”, as the UN Secretary– General rightly said. A state led by Cypriots for Cypriots.

I yet again urge Turkey and our Turkish Cypriot compatriots to realize that it is only through mutual respect and compromises and not obsolete fixations to failed practices that we will achieve a viable and lasting settlement; a settlement which should leave neither winners nor losers and fully respect and address the sensitivities and concerns of both communities. This is the only way for Cyprus to fully utilize its potential and exploit its unique geographical position”.

President Anastasiades,
72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly,
September 2017

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