

# CYPRUS

STILL OCCUPIED  
STILL DIVIDED

1974-2021



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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 violent division and illegal military occupation by Turkey are still felt today, since:

- For 47 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 800 persons, civilians and soldiers, are still missing, while the Turkish side refuses to cooperate fully in ascertaining their fate.
- About 400 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 the Republic of 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 was 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 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 on maintaining the right to unilaterally intervene in Cyprus, retaining an anachronistic system of guarantees and permanently maintaining troops on Cyprus after the settlement.

The recent Informal Geneva Conference, which convened on 27-29 April 2021, aimed at exploring the possibility of finding common ground for the resumption of substantive talks with a view to finding a solution within the framework of the UN Security Council resolutions, the High Level agreements and occasional convergences between the two sides. However, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, in defiance of the UN Charter and UN resolutions, demanded that any negotiation should focus on the recognition of sovereign rights for the Turkish Cypriot community and reaching a solution based on the recognition of two states. A claim that is not only against international law and the terms of the Secretary General's mandate, but also clearly contrary to the will of the Cypriot people. With determination and documentation, the President of the Republic of Cyprus responded to the distorting attempts made by the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot sides, proving that the Greek Cypriot side has not only the political will, but also the will to work in order to reach a solution that will finally bring peace and stability in Cyprus and the region.

*What I would like to repeat is that, as a European country and in full respect to the values and principles of the EU and the UN, our intention has never been or will never be to deprive our Turkish Cypriot compatriots from their legitimate rights, in accordance with the EU acquis and the UN Charter.*

*I do believe, provided that there are no foreign interferences, that there is common ground between the two communities to reach a settlement that will fulfil the vision of our people to live in a European country, truly independent and sovereign.*

*A country, free from foreign troops and rights of intervention, ensuring conditions of stability for a safe, prosperous and peaceful future.*

*A settlement with neither winners nor losers, in full respect of the sensitivities and concerns of both communities.*

*For a State truly led by Cypriots and not for a State led by foreigners.*

*President Anastasiades,  
75<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly,  
September 2020*

