

# CYPRUS

still occupied  
still divided  
1974-2015



PHOTO: Stavros Ioannides, Press and Information Office



## CYPRUS STILL OCCUPIED, STILL DIVIDED

The consequences of Turkey's military invasion of Cyprus in 1974 constitute, to this day, an open wound in the contemporary history of the island: The military occupation, the forcible division, the violation of human rights, the massive colonization, the destruction of cultural and religious heritage and the property usurpation imposed since Turkey's military invasion remain, to this day, some of the main characteristics of the status quo on the island.

Today, Turkey, a candidate country for EU accession, remains accountable to the international community for its military invasion and occupation of a member state of the European Union and the United Nations. The occupation of part of the island and the gross violation of human rights constitute an unacceptable state of affairs, an affront to the international legal order and an ongoing threat to regional stability that must be redressed the soonest possible.

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 military occupation by Turkey are still felt today, given that:

- 36.2% of the sovereign territory of Cyprus remains under illegal Turkish military occupation, with the presence of thousands of heavily armed Turkish troops rendering the occupied area of Cyprus, proportionally, one of the most militarized regions in the world.
- 200,000 Greek Cypriots, over a third of the total population, who were forcibly expelled from the occupied northern part of the Republic of Cyprus, where they constituted about 70% of the population, are still deprived of the right to return to their homes and properties.

- About 1,070 persons, civilians and soldiers, are still missing, while the Turkish side refuses to cooperate in ascertaining their fate.
- Less than 440 Greek Cypriots and Maronites, out of 20,000 at the end of August 1974, remain enclaved in their villages, which are still occupied, 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 following the Turkish invasion. 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 after the Turkish invasion.
- 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.

A series of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as resolutions adopted by numerous other international organisations, reflect the universal condemnation of Turkey's invasion and all subsequent acts of aggression against Cyprus. The resolutions demand the withdrawal of foreign troops, the return of refugees to their homes in safety and the ascertainment of the fate of the missing persons. Moreover, they call for the respect of the human rights of all Cypriots as well as for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus. More recently, the European Court of Human Rights in its judgment against Turkey on 12 May 2014 has found the government of Turkey responsible for gross and systematic violations of human rights in Cyprus.

Successive rounds of UN-sponsored talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to resolve the Cyprus problem did not yield a positive result due to the negative stance of the Turkish side. The Greek Cypriot side, on the other hand, remains steadfast on positions of principle, proceeds to the negotiating table in good faith and with targeted proposals, seeking to free Cyprus from Turkish troops and to reunify the country and its people.

Following the assumption of his duties, President Anastasiades has set the solution of the Cyprus problem as a top priority, on the basis of a functional European state, with the substantive involvement of the EU. On 11 February 2014, following an initiative by President Anastasiades, the leaders of the two communities agreed on a Joint Declaration on the re-launching of the negotiations. The Joint Declaration, taking into account the concerns of both communities, clearly sets the basis for the solution, while at the same time explicitly defines the basic international and European principles and values that need to be safeguarded in the pursued solution. The Joint Declaration expresses the leaders' determination to reach a solution based on a bizonal, bi-communal federation, with political equality, as defined in the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, the High Level Agreements and the principles of the European Union. The united Cyprus, as a member of the United Nations and of the European Union, shall have a single international legal personality, a single sovereignty and a single Cyprus citizenship.

The Cyprus Government comes to the new round of talks in goodwill, with the aim to achieve a solution to the longstanding problem that afflicts the people of Cyprus. The Government expresses its political will and determination to work sincerely and do all in its power to achieve a compromise settlement that will safeguard the prosperity and a common peaceful future for the people of Cyprus. Furthermore, the re-

PHOTO: Katia Christodoulou



*The Church of Agios Afksentios in the occupied village of Komi Kebir.*

united Cyprus will be able to fully utilise its geostrategic position as a factor of peace and stability in the volatile region of the Eastern Mediterranean and as a bridge between the European Union and the peoples of the region.

The Cyprus Government is ready to utilise the positive momentum created by the change in leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community. The additional Confidence Building Measures agreed upon, as well as any measures to be agreed upon in the future, contribute to facilitating the everyday life of citizens and create a positive environment for the dialogue underway. However, everything is tested and proven at the negotiating table. Turkey, which maintains troops in Cyprus and has a decisive influence on Turkish Cypriots, is called upon to concretely demonstrate its occasionally proclaimed willingness to resolve the Cyprus problem.

In order for the settlement to be just, viable and lasting, it must:

- Terminate the occupation and the presence of settlers in Cyprus.
- Safeguard the unity of the people, the territory, the institutions and the economy.
- Safeguard the human rights and basic principles of all citizens.
- Guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the united Cyprus, a member state of the EU and the UN, and ensure its single international personality, single sovereignty and single citizenship.

The Cyprus Government and the Greek Cypriot side in general are committed to working towards reconciliation and cooperation with the Turkish Cypriot community, calling upon them to take advantage of the promising prospect of building a peaceful, prosperous future for all Cypriots, for the present and future generations.

“We seek a solution that will reunify the country and safeguard the human rights of all Cypriots: Greek Cypriots, our Turkish Cypriot compatriots and all lawful Cypriots, irrespective of where they belong, what language they speak or what religion they believe in.

Our goal is to reunite our common homeland. The reunification of the island must be supported by the people, withstand difficulties, develop opportunities for growth and prosperity, safeguard the European principles and rules, guarantee stability in Cyprus and the region and allow for the creation of alliances and conditions of mutual development for the benefit of all.”

Nicos Anastasiades  
President of the Republic of Cyprus





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