

1974 – 2024

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Turkish invasion

**CYPRUS**

still occupied  
still divided



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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 illegal military occupation by Turkey are still felt today:

- For 50 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 750 persons, civilians and soldiers, are still missing, while the Turkish side refuses to cooperate fully in ascertaining their fate.
- Less than 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 vandalized. Many monuments in the occupied part of Cyprus have been targeted for deliberate 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 the 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-zonal, bi-communal 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 Informal Geneva Conference, which convened on 27-29 April 2021, aimed at finding common ground for the resumption of substantive talks toward achieving 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 UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, demanded that any negotiation should have as a prerequisite the recognition of the Turkish Cypriot community's sovereign rights, with the ultimate aim of reaching an agreement based on two separate states. This demand, 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.

In addition, Turkey proceeded with the creation of new faits accomplis in the occupied areas of Cyprus, announcing further illegal actions in Varosha, a fenced-off area of Ammochostos. These actions, that contravened clear UN Security Council Resolutions prohibiting a change to Varosha's status quo, were again condemned by a Security Council Presidential Declaration issued on 23 July 2021, which called for the immediate reversal of all illegal actions and for full respect of the relevant UN Resolutions including the transfer of Varosha to the administration of the United Nations.

The Secretary General's commitment to the resumption of a meaningful negotiation process, which will lead to a mutually acceptable solution within the UN framework, is reflected in the recent appointment of Ms Maria Angela Holguin Cuellar as his Personal Envoy. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus has reiterated its commitment to support Ms Holguin Cuellar's mission, with a view of swiftly breaking the deadlock and resuming negotiations from the point that they were stopped in Crans-Montana in 2017.

**Message from the President of the Republic,  
Mr Nikos Christodoulides,  
on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Turkish invasion**

Sadly, this year is marked by a grim milestone for our country. It marks fifty years since the tragic summer of 1974 which divided Cyprus – and our souls – in two. That tragic summer profoundly left its mark on the lives and future of our homeland.

Fifty years have passed since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, with all its devastating consequences and inflicted suffering. The occupying troops, the separation and long-term division of the land and its people. The brutal murders, the rapes, the unjust loss of hundreds of lives, amongst them children, the violent uprooting of thousands of families from their domicile.

Fifty years of inquiring about the fate of our missing persons. Fifty years of ongoing, illegal military occupation of more than 36% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. Fifty years of violating fundamental freedoms and human rights of all Cypriots. Fifty years of illegal settlement, demographic, religious and cultural alteration of our land in the occupied areas. Fifty years is far too long.

It is time for peace, liberation and for the reunification of our country. It is our duty and obligation to bequeath a free, reunited and prosperous homeland to our children, a member state of the European Union, where fundamental freedoms are safeguarded and defended, as it is the case in all member states of the European Union.

It is our duty to do so on behalf of the thousands who have heroically lost their lives whilst defending the Republic of Cyprus on the front lines. To all those who remain enclaved in the occupied areas despite adversities and continuous hardship.

As the first President of the Republic of Cyprus, born only a few months before the Turkish invasion and raised in a de facto divided Cyprus, my vision is the reunification of my country and its people, so that we can all live in peace, security and prosperity. I have been serving this vision from the very first day I assumed my duties, and I assure you that I will continue to work towards this end with assertive realism, fortitude and determination.

My aim is none other than achieving a viable and lasting solution on the basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, as defined by relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and within the framework of the principles and values of the European Union.

This is the only way forward for a prosperous future for us and our children, in a modern European state with a substantial role and voice in regional and European developments, for a homeland without barbed wires and occupying troops.



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