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Question of Cyprus

Letter dated 29 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to respond to the allegations levelled against the Cyprus Government by the Permanent Representative of Turkey, contained in document [A/74/510](#), by focusing on three points.

Firstly, I should like to recall that Cyprus has, for decades now, existed under the sword of Damocles of Turkey, not only as the victim of its aggressive and expansionist policies, but also as the subject of its relentless propaganda that attempts to distort the past and pre-empt the future. We have suffered an invasion that resulted in thousands of fatalities and persons who are still missing, destruction and massive violations of human rights, only to be insulted by the shameless branding by Turkey of this aggression as a “peace operation”. It is, in fact, remarkable that one can still be surprised by Turkey’s audacity and arrogance and its extraordinary capacity to distort facts and upend reality. Were it not for such hubris, the outlandish claims of Turkey would not even merit a response.

The facts are well established and no doubts exist, despite the habitual misrepresentation of historical facts by Turkey in order to sanitize its own history. The international community is in a position to rely on the authoritative pronouncements of competent international political, judicial and human rights bodies, and has no place for historical revisionism that allows the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing to accuse their victims of the crime that they themselves have committed. The intercommunal strife in the 1960s, which compelled the Cyprus Government to request the deployment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in order to restore law and order and ensure better protection of all its citizens, could never justify Turkey’s unlawful use of force against Cyprus, regardless of the fact that Turkey itself incited and stoked this violence precisely in order to create a pretext to intervene.

As the facts on the ground speak for themselves, there is simply no way for Turkey to credibly claim that it did not invade and is not occupying a substantial part of Cyprus. As the Secretary-General himself stated in his report of 6 December 1974 ([S/11568](#)), “the Turkish armed forces are now in occupation of about 40 per cent” of



the island. This invasion and the subsequent ongoing occupation were the culmination of a longstanding Turkish policy to create two ethnically clean States on Cyprus, which entailed directing Turkish Cypriots to abandon State institutions and withdraw into enclaves. As the Secretary-General stated in his report of 11 March 1965 (S/6228), “the Turkish Cypriot policy of self-isolation has led the community in the opposite direction from normality” and “the community leadership discourages the Turkish Cypriot population from engaging in personal, commercial or other contacts with their Greek Cypriot compatriots”.

Armed aggression by one State against another not only is prohibited under international law, but also constitutes an international crime. The desperate attempt to find a basis for the invasion in the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee is futile, as, in its most extreme interpretation, the Treaty does not go beyond entailing responsibility for the maintenance of the constitutional order of Cyprus, provided that it is done in line with the Charter of the United Nations. The use of force cannot be justified under the pretext of so-called “rights of guarantee”, nor can occupation, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and massive and persistent violations of human rights. These are the undeniable realities that Turkey has to account for.

Secondly, on the issue of hydrocarbons, let me stress that the threat repeated by Turkey in its letter is no longer a threat but a reality of daily violations of the sovereignty and sovereign rights of Cyprus in its territorial sea and its exclusive economic zone/continental shelf, including through the use of force. Despite the repeated calls by the Security Council “for a reduction of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean”, Turkey has, in effect, surrounded Cyprus with drilling and seismic vessels conducting illegal hydrocarbon exploration, escorted by numerous warships and daily patrols of armed, unmanned aerial vehicles, which, together with the increased number of military exercises, have led to an intense militarization of the sea around Cyprus. At the same time, Turkey refuses to accept the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and customary international law, including the fact that islands have maritime zones, and lays claims even over areas where it could not, under any circumstances, be considered an interested party under international law. As regards the Turkish Cypriots, suffice it to say that the clearly unfounded claims by Turkey against the maritime zones of Cyprus are, ipso facto, injurious to all Cypriots, including Turkish Cypriots.

Thirdly, on the issue of Varosha, as the fenced area of Varosha is under the direct and exclusive military control of Turkey, the latter bears sole responsibility for the lack of compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions since their adoption, as well as for the further violation of its obligations under those resolutions by allowing “scientific inventory work”. The fact remains that anything other than returning the fenced area to its lawful inhabitants under United Nations administration is a breach of the said resolutions and, for the statement of the Permanent Representative of Turkey that “any future steps in the fenced area of Varosha will be completely in line with international law” to hold true, any actions of Turkey in respect of Varosha must have this effect and no other. Turkey should also stop exploiting the deep-rooted desire of the displaced lawful inhabitants of Varosha to return in order to justify flouting the resolutions of the Security Council.

Notwithstanding the above, I welcome the claim that Turkey supports a just and lasting settlement to the Cyprus issue, based on dialogue and diplomacy. I hope to be in a position, in the near future, to welcome tangible deeds by Turkey that substantiate this claim.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 8 and 41.

(Signed) Andreas D. **Mavroyiannis**
Permanent Representative