

**79<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Informal Meeting of the General Assembly on the comprehensive report of the Secretary General on the implementation of Resolution 77/220 entitled “Missing Persons”**

**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus,**

**Ms. Gabriella Michaelidou**

New York, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025

Mr. President,

Cyprus aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union. Allow me to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

First, I would like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for his comprehensive presentation. Cyprus is one of the co-sponsors of this biennial resolution on “Missing Persons” and we thank Azerbaijan for bringing this important matter to the attention of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

The issue of missing persons in connection with armed conflicts is a human tragedy that continues to affect many countries around the world, including my own country, Cyprus.

It’s a humanitarian issue that touches the very core of human dignity, accompanied by numerous and severe human rights violations not only of those missing, but also of their families who have to endure a state of prolonged uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones, leading, undoubtedly, to challenges, including poverty and vulnerabilities, with a severe emotional impact and psychological distress.

Mr. President,

Cyprus, as a victim of foreign military invasion and ongoing occupation for five decades now, continues to recall the important humanitarian issue which arises in respect of the missing persons.

The fate of around 50% of the missing persons, both soldiers and civilians, including children, women and older persons, remains undetermined to this date.

Mr. President,

The Government of Cyprus fully supports the mandate of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) in Cyprus, which operates under the auspices of the United Nations. Turning political willingness into action, the Government of Cyprus has increased its contribution to CMP, that now amounts to 4 million Euro in total.

The occupying power, as the State responsible for their disappearance in life threatening circumstances, has the legal and moral responsibility to cooperate and support the efforts to restore the human rights and dignity of the missing persons in Cyprus.

This obligation includes providing to the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus **all necessary assistance** to achieve tangible results, to ensure **immediate and unhindered access to all military areas** in the occupied part of Cyprus, to fully disclose to CMP all information in its possession, including from **military archives**, to provide information on **relocated remains**, to take concrete positive measures to **avert any future relocation** of remains and disturbance of burial sites, and to **conduct effective investigations**, in order to establish the fate and conditions of disappearance of all the Greek Cypriot and Greek missing persons.

The occupying power has to implement all relevant judgements of the European Court of Human Rights as per its international obligations, and to pay the Just Satisfaction awarded by the European Court of Justice to the families of the missing persons.

This is an open wound that will not heal until all families receive answers. We recall that UN General Assembly Resolution 3450 of 1975 underlines the basic human need for families to be informed about the fate of their missing relatives.

Mr. President,

Beyond supporting the efforts of the UN Committee on Missing persons, the Government of Cyprus decided in 1999 to implement its own national program of exhumations and identifications of remains in the areas under its effective control, in order to provide answers to the families of missing persons and to carry out whatever actions necessary. All information regarding this issue, in possession of the Government, has also been submitted to CMP.

Furthermore, in an effort to alleviate as much as possible the pain and enduring consequences the issue of missing persons has for hundreds of families, the Government of Cyprus has enacted legislation to provide financial and /or other benefits to their relatives. It is worth noting that the Cyprus Parliament has indicated the 29<sup>th</sup> of October each year, as a day to commemorate missing persons in Cyprus.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to repeat that determining the fate of all missing persons is a top priority of the Government of Cyprus. The issue of Missing Persons is a purely a humanitarian issue, and any attempts to politicize it cannot be supported or tolerated.

I thank you.