

CYPRUS

still occupied • still divided



1974 – 2025

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On 20 July 1974, the Turkish armed forces launched a full scale invasion against Cyprus, in violation of all rules of international legality, including the UN Charter.

As a result of the Turkish military invasion and occupation:

- Over 36% of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus is still under illegal military occupation by Turkey.
- As a result of the Turkish military invasion and occupation, 165,000 Greek Cypriots fled their homes becoming refugees in their own country. To this day the occupying forces impede the return of refugees to their homes and property.
- More than 750 persons, civilians and soldiers, are still missing, while the Turkish side refuses to cooperate fully in ascertaining their fate.
- 20,000 Greek Cypriots and Maronites chose not to leave their homes despite the Turkish occupation. Most of those who remained, mainly on the Karpasia peninsula, were gradually forced to abandon the area. The number of Greek Cypriots and Maronites currently living in the area has plummeted to 300 persons.
- 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.

- In full accordance with Turkey's stated goal of partition and national segregation on the island, on 15 November 1983, the occupying regime unilaterally declared the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", an act which was condemned by the international community as legally invalid.
- 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.
- The combination of driving the Greek Cypriot inhabitants out of the region, the destruction of the cultural heritage, and the illegal change of geographical place names in the occupied part of Cyprus, aims at the elimination of every single, centuries-old Greek and Christian element, and eventually the "turkification" of the region. It also aims to change the balance of power and the social fabric in the occupied part of Cyprus, to ensure that the Turkish Cypriot leadership conforms to the policies of the Turkish government.



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 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 Karpasia peninsula.

Negotiations for the settlement of the Cyprus problem have been conducted since 1975 under the auspices of the UN, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions as well as two High-Level Agreements. The first Agreement which was signed in 1977,

laid the basis for subsequent negotiations. The second High-Level Agreement concluded in 1979, additionally provided for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, demilitarisation as well as satisfactory guarantees of the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic. It also provided for priority to be given to the issue of the return of Ammochostos to its legal inhabitants.

From May 2015 to June 2017, the launch of a new process of substantive negotiations renewed international interest, creating new positive momentum for resolving the problem. The process of these negotiations led to significant progress. As a result, in June 2017, the UN Secretary-General convened a Conference on Cyprus in Crans Montana, Switzerland. The Conference came to a standstill due to Turkey's insistence on the permanent presence of military troops in Cyprus and on maintaining its invasive rights.

On 27-29 April 2021, the UN Secretary General convened the informal 5+1 UN meeting for Cyprus, in Geneva, with the aim to achieve a breakthrough for the resumption of a process of negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus problem. Unfortunately, the refusal of Turkey and of the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community to reaffirm their commitment to the agreed basis of a bi-communal bi-communal federation with political equality as defined in UN resolutions, their insistence on the equal status of the "two-states" as a precondition for the resumption of negotiations and their rejection of the Secretary-General's proposal for the appointment of a Special Envoy, led the effort to a deadlock.

In addition, Turkey proceeded with the creation of new faits accomplis in the occupied areas of Cyprus, announcing further illegal actions in Varosha in violation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. These actions were condemned by the Security Council which issued a Presidential Declaration on July 23, 2021, calling 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 appointment of Ms María Angela Holguín Cuéllar as his Personal Envoy as well as in the convention of the informal meeting on Cyprus in a broader format, which took place on 17-18 March 2025, in Geneva.

The decision by the European Commission, in May 2025, to designate Mr Johannes Hahn, as Special Envoy for Cyprus was of decisive importance, underlining the Commission's commitment to the reunification of Cyprus, with the aim of ensuring a functional and viable comprehensive settlement in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles, values and legislation of the EU.



Extract from the televised Easter address by the President of the Republic, Mr Nikos Christodoulides

19/4/2025

“ For yet another year, the bells of the Resurrection will not ring in all our churches across our occupied villages and towns. Refugees will not exchange Easter greetings in their own homes, and those who have suffered – and continue to endure the tragic consequences of the Turkish invasion and occupation – will once again be deprived of the celebration they rightfully deserve.

However, we press forward with perseverance and determination. Despite the obstacles and challenges, we remain steadfast in our efforts to create the conditions for the resumption of negotiations aimed at achieving a solution to the Cyprus problem, on the basis of the agreed framework and the negotiations' acquis, with full respect for the principles and values of the European Union. Our aim is to reunite Cyprus, to liberate it, and to live together in peace and security.

The difficulties and challenges are well known. However, we have both the will and the strategy, and I promise you that I will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the Cyprus problem not only re-enters a phase of negotiation but also moves decisively towards a definitive solution.

We draw strength from the determination of our people and their yearning for freedom and peace. In close cooperation with all political groups, and in a spirit of unity, we are moving forward with a strategy which is already bearing fruit, and which is aimed at breaking down the wall of occupation. Our aim is for the Republic of Cyprus to become a reunified and free state, in which all its citizens – Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians and Latins – may fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the entire territory, as is their rightful due as European Cypriot citizens.

I want you to know that we shall continue our struggle with unwavering determination. Because for us, there is only one choice: the solution of the Cyprus problem and the reunification of our homeland. We will not compromise with the unacceptable status quo; we will not allow Cyprus to remain the last divided state within the European Union.

We are not alone in this endeavour. We have the steadfast support of Greece, of the institutions and leaders of the European Union, and, undoubtedly, the solidarity and backing of our strategic partners. Together, we are building a Cyprus which is stronger, more resolute, and one that stands with greater credibility and self-confidence.”



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