



1974

CYPRUS

still occupied • still divided

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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 the continuing occupation:

- Over 36.2% of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus continues to be under illegal military occupation by Turkey.
- 162.000 Greek Cypriots fled their homes and remain refugees in their own country, deprived to this day of the right to return to their homes and properties because of the occupying authorities.
- By the end of 1975, the overwhelming majority of Turkish Cypriots who lived in areas controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus had been forced to abandon their homes and relocate to the occupied territory of the Republic of Cyprus as a result of Turkey's coercive policy.
- 746 people, both civilians and soldiers, remain missing, while the Turkish side refuses to cooperate fully in ascertaining their fate.
- 20,000 Greek Cypriots and Maronites had chosen not to abandon their homes despite the Turkish occupation. Most of those who remained, mainly on the Karpas peninsula, have been gradually forced out of the area.
- Today, the number of Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in this area has fallen sharply to just 300 persons. This is the result of ongoing harassment, restrictions on movement, denial of access to adequate health care, lack of sufficient educational facilities beyond basic education, as well as the limitations on the right to use their property and the right to freely practise their religion. It is a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing designed to force the enclaved Greek Cypriots and Maronites to abandon their homes.
- Since 1974, Turkey has been applying a systematic policy of settling the occupied part of Cyprus by the mass transfer of over 160 000 Turkish citizens from Turkey, with the aim of changing the demographic character and altering the population balance on the island. As a result, Turkish Cypriots are vastly outnumbered by troops and settlers from Turkey such that they are now a minority in the occupied territory.
- In full accordance with Turkey's declared 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 that was condemned by the international community as legally invalid. In Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), the United Nations Security Council deplored this declaration as legally invalid, called for its withdrawal, and urged all states to not recognise the purported entity created by secessionist actions and to not facilitate or in any way assist it. It should be noted that in the case of *Loizidou v. Turkey*, the European Court of Human Rights confirmed that it does not recognise any state in Cyprus other than the Republic of Cyprus, that the so-called "TRNC" is not a state under international law, and that Turkey, due to the control it exercises over the occupied areas with the presence of more than 30.000 soldiers, is responsible for human rights violations.
- 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.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), in its Judgment on the 4th Interstate Application of Cyprus v. Turkey on May 10th, 2001, found Turkey guilty of continuous violations of human rights in Cyprus. In 2014, in a more recent decision, the Court awarded just satisfaction amounting to €30 million, which Turkey must pay to the relatives of the missing persons, and €60 million to the enclaved Greek Cypriot residents of the Karpas 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 and demilitarisation, as well as satisfactory guarantees of the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic. It also prioritised the issue of the return of Ammochostos to its legal inhabitants.

From May 2015 to June 2017, negotiations progressed intensively and significant progress was made on a number of important issues. The launch of a new round of substantive negotiations resparked international interest, creating new positive momentum for resolving the problem.

The conference that followed, convened by the UN Secretary-General in Crans-Montana, Switzerland (28 June – 7 July 2017), ended in a deadlock because of 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 an informal 5+1 meeting on Cyprus, in Geneva, aimed at finding a way to restart direct talks to resolve the Cyprus problem. Sadly though, the refusal of Turkey and of the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community to reaffirm their commitment to the agreed basis of a bicommunal and bizonal federation with political equality as defined in UN resolutions, their insistence on the equal status of "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, the fenced-off area of Ammochostos. These actions were condemned by the Security Council which issued a Presidential Declaration on 23 July 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 UN administration.

The UN Secretary General's commitment to the resumption of a meaningful negotiation process, that will lead to a mutually acceptable solution within the UN framework, was reflected in the appointment of Ms Maria Angela Holguin Cuellar as his Personal Envoy, as well as in his initiative to convene an informal meeting on Cyprus in a broader format, which was held on 17-18 March 2025, in Geneva.

Since November 2025, meetings have been held between the President of the Republic, Mr Nikos Christodoulides, and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mr Tufan Erhürman. The aim of these meetings is to create, step by step, the necessary conditions to be able to resume substantive negotiations with real content and prospects that will deliver tangible results. Keeping open and honest channels of communication serves the goal of resuming direct talks to solve the Cyprus issue on the agreed basis of a bicommunal and bizonal federation with political equality. The ongoing initiatives undertaken by President Christodoulides, as well as the constructive proposals he is putting forward, are part and parcel of this approach, which demonstrates in practice the unwavering will of the Republic of Cyprus to create a positive atmosphere for the resumption of meaningful negotiations.





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