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Question of Cyprus**Letter dated 18 November 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 18 November 2021, addressed to you by Mr. Mehmet Dâna, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44.

(Signed) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 18 November 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing in response to the statement made by the Greek Cypriot representative on 1 November 2021 to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly of the United Nations. As the Greek Cypriot representatives have long been exploiting the absence of the Turkish Cypriot side on international platforms to blatantly distort historical and legal facts about Cyprus, I am compelled to respond in writing in order to set the record straight and bring to your kind attention the views of the Turkish Cypriot side regarding peacekeeping as well as special political missions.

At the outset, allow me to underline, once again, that there is no single authority in Cyprus capable of representing both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots or the island as a whole. Thus, such statements made by Greek Cypriots under their purported title as the representatives of the so called “Republic of Cyprus” are legally null and void as far as the Turkish Cypriot people are concerned.

The Greek Cypriot representatives continue to disinform the international community by portraying the Cyprus problem as one of “occupation”. It is crucial to underline in this regard that none of the Security Council resolutions on Cyprus describe the legitimate and justified Turkish presence on the island, which is in line with the 1960 international Cyprus treaties, as an “occupation”. In fact, the only occupation on the island is the illegal occupation, since 1963, of the seat of the Government by the Greek Cypriot administration, which hijacked the now-defunct 1960 Republic of Cyprus. It is also interesting to note that, while the Greek Cypriot representative mentions the fact that “self-determination is an inalienable right”, she conveniently fails to mention that Greek Cypriots are not the only people entitled to this inalienable right on the island.

In relation to the comment about the fenced-off area of Maraş (Varosha) made by the Greek Cypriot representative, one must not overlook the fact that, over the course of many decades, the fenced-off area of Maraş has become a major symbol of the status quo in Cyprus, and it is an undeniable fact that leaving the area closed in its current condition is in the interests of no one. It should be noted, in this regard, that the fenced-off area of Maraş is part of the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, where our Government has sole jurisdiction and authority. The work that is underway in this area, as well as the steps planned for the future, are in line with international law and are without prejudice to private property rights. This is a humanitarian act that will provide economic benefits to both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots and create a unique area where Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, as well as other foreign nationals, can work together for mutual benefit. Creating such an example of a cooperative relationship will also be conducive to the efforts aimed at finding a freely negotiated and mutually acceptable settlement on the island.

In relation to peacekeeping, as you are well aware, one of the governing principles of United Nations peacekeeping operations throughout the world is the requirement that the consent of all parties to the dispute be sought and obtained. As such, in the Brahimi Report (Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, 2000), it is clearly stated that “consent of the local parties [and] impartiality [...] should remain the bedrock principles of peacekeeping”. Thus, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) can operate on both sides of the island only on the basis of the consent of both parties. Otherwise, UNFICYP “risks becoming a party to the conflict”, as stated in *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*. Indeed, the principle of consent is also fundamental to the good offices

mission in Cyprus, which treats the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides on the island on an equal footing. Unfortunately, this principle has long been overlooked as regards UNFICYP, as the United Nations persistently refrains from seeking and obtaining the consent of the Turkish Cypriot side.

Similarly, the Turkish Cypriot side has repeatedly put on record the need to establish a formal agreement or framework that defines the relationship between UNFICYP and our authorities. This could be in the form of a status of forces agreement or another mutually acceptable format. Currently, UNFICYP operates in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as our guest, and this is not a sustainable relationship. Therefore, if UNFICYP continues not to heed our calls for a more structured relationship, we will be left with no option but to reconsider our approach to the matter.

It is also important that each mission, particularly if it was established decades ago, be periodically reviewed to ensure that its mandate and operational principles are in line with the current realities on the ground. Otherwise, it is inevitable for that mission to face serious challenges in carrying out its responsibilities in an effective manner. As is known, the Turkish Cypriot side has conveyed to the United Nations on numerous occasions that, after more than 57 years since its deployment to the island, a review of the UNFICYP mandate in addition to its functions and operations, in light of the changing circumstances on the island, is necessary and long overdue.

A peacekeeping force should also be fair and even-handed in its dealings with each relevant party. This is a prerequisite to earning their trust and to establishing good working relationships. Only in this way can it instil confidence that impartiality, as a core value, is strongly embedded at the centre of its activities.

As the Turkish Cypriot side, we are of the view that the above-mentioned principles should be at the heart of every peacekeeping operation, including UNFICYP. In this regard, we expect that a thorough review of its operations, as well as its mandate, is conducted at the earliest opportunity, taking the foregoing into due consideration.

As regards the special political missions, it is imperative that each peacekeeping operation be designed in such a way that it supports peacebuilding efforts and does not become a part of the status quo. The conflicting parties should be aware that the continued existence of a peacekeeping force cannot be taken for granted regardless of the developments in the political process. Its existence should not provide a “comfort zone” for the intransigent party, which considers the continuation of the status quo in its favour.

Special political missions cannot operate in a vacuum and cannot address the issue at hand detached from the realities on the ground as well as the legal and historical facts pertaining to the conflict. Insisting on outdated formulas that repeatedly failed over the course of decades can only help to reinforce the status quo. Therefore, it is imperative that special political missions are not put in a straitjacket and that they are given the flexibility needed to be able to work on the basis of new and creative ideas that would take into consideration lessons learned from past failed processes and could finally deliver a freely negotiated and a mutually acceptable settlement.

I would be grateful if the present letter is circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44.

(Signed) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus