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Letter dated 1 December 2020 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 1 December 2020, addressed to you by Mehmet Dânâ, 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, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 1 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 6 November 2020 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council ([A/75/585-S/2020/1091](#)) which, yet again, distorts the realities on the ground. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring to your kind attention the following.

At the outset, it should be underlined that none of the Security Council resolutions on Cyprus describe the legitimate and justified Turkish intervention of 1974, undertaken in accordance with article 4 of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, as “invasion” or the subsequent presence of Turkish troops on the island as “occupation”. Such allegations are nothing but pure Greek Cypriot forgery aimed at distorting the historical facts and realities of the island. In this context, it is imperative to recall the dramatic statement made before the Security Council on 19 July 1974 by Archbishop Makarios, the Greek Cypriot leader at the time, in which he openly accused Greece, not Turkey, of invading and occupying Cyprus. His remarks, which came only four days after the Greek/Greek Cypriot coup of 15 July 1974, are well recorded in the annals of the United Nations and hardly require further elaboration.

Regarding the claims of so-called “infringements of international air traffic regulations” and “violations of the national airspace of Cyprus”, I wish to underline that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are carried out with the full knowledge and permission of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the only competent body to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace and notices to airmen are issued in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

The false assertions in the said letter regarding the use of Turkish Cypriot ports and airports are also groundless, since the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, these allegations ignore the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent, self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As regards the false statements concerning Ercan Airport in North Cyprus, it should be reiterated that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport provide regular, reliable and safe air traffic services. All flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which it has full jurisdiction and control. However, unwillingness on the part of the Greek Cypriot side to cooperate with the Turkish Cypriot civil aviation authorities on the matter, in line with the calls made in your reports on Cyprus for cooperation between the two sides and international actors on matters concerning the island as a whole, can at times endanger the safety of air traffic over the island.

Moreover, the unjust isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to reinforce by unilaterally calling all airports and seaports in Northern Cyprus “illegal”, is in complete violation of international law and is incompatible with the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in

his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 ([S/2004/437](#)), where he clearly states “I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions [541 \(1983\)](#) and [550 \(1984\)](#)”.

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ensuring aviation safety and security by regulating all aspects of civil aviation, including the operation of airports, the management of air traffic, etc. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards and necessary upgrades have been performed to keep up with the developing technology. Moreover, the number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the growing number of flights over the years and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2019 alone, the number of passengers that used Ercan Airport stood at 4,035,276. Moreover, in 2019, 27,760 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 224,898 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace. In that regard, it must also be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue. Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric and remind that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

Lastly, on the pretentious contentions regarding the fenced area of Maraş in the said letter, I wish to remind once again that the Council of Ministers of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus took a decision tasking the Maraş Inventory Commission, composed of specialists and experts, with conducting a scientific inventory, to identify and study the condition of the movable and immovable properties and the environmental risks, which would facilitate the determination of any future steps as regards the fenced area of Maraş. This decision is in line with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions and respects the right of possession of its former inhabitants. Detailed views of our Government on this issue were conveyed to you and the President of the Security Council through a letter by Kudret Özersay, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, dated 4 October 2019 ([S/2019/796](#), enclosure). Furthermore, the pretext for the Greek Cypriot representative’s allegations on the fenced area of Maraş had, in fact, collapsed, particularly following the rejection of the confidence-building measures as regards the fenced area of Maraş on numerous occasions, most notably in 1994 and 2014, as well as the overwhelming rejection of the comprehensive settlement plan for Cyprus by the Greek Cypriot side in 2004 and the breakdown of the Cyprus Conference in 2017 in Crans-Montana, Switzerland – at the crux of all of which is the Greek Cypriot unwillingness to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot side ([S/2004/437](#)).

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mehmet Dâna
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus