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**Letter dated 29 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 28 December 2020, addressed to you by 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, and of the Security Council.

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



Annex to the letter dated 29 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 11 December 2020 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York for circulation as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, which, yet again, distorts the realities on the ground. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

As for the false accusations regarding the closed area of Maraş (Varosha) in the said letter, which are merely based on rhetoric, I wish to remind, once again, that the steps which are being taken in this regard are in line with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, and respect the right of possession of its former inhabitants. These steps would also enable the Immovable Property Commission to deliver European Court of Human Rights-sanctioned remedies to the applicants regarding the properties in the closed area of Maraş, which is part of the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, where our Government has sole jurisdiction and authority. On the other hand, the track record of the Greek Cypriot administration vis-à-vis the closed area of Maraş makes it abundantly clear that its sole purpose is to exploit it as a propaganda tool with a view to consolidating the status quo in the island, at the expense of the rights of the former inhabitants of the area, including Greek Cypriots. The pretext for the Greek Cypriot representative's allegations on the closed area of Maraş had, in fact, collapsed, particularly following the rejection of the confidence-building measures as regards this area 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 (see [S/2004/437](#)). Detailed views of our Government on this issue were already conveyed to you and the President of the Security Council through a letter dated 4 October 2019, which was issued as a document of the Security Council ([S/2019/796](#)).

Regarding the exhausted Cyprus negotiations, the Greek Cypriot representative is, yet again, blatantly attempting to misinform and mislead the international community. As a matter of fact, in the light of more than 50 years of failed negotiations, carried out on a specific settlement framework, due to the intransigent stance of the Greek Cypriot side, there is no doubt that insisting on the “same straitjacket” could only serve the perpetuation and consolidation of the status quo on the island, which all the relevant parties consider unacceptable and unsustainable. Needless to say, any attempt to impose a settlement framework on the two sides in Cyprus has neither a legal nor a moral basis. As you rightly underscored in the latest report on your good offices mission in Cyprus ([S/2020/685](#)), “this time it must be different”. This time can only be different if we abandon the straitjacket we undertook for 50 years that has failed us for all this time.

In this connection, our expectation from the United Nations as well as the international community at large is to respect the free will of the two peoples in Cyprus and their inherent and inalienable right to freely discuss and formulate what kind of a future they envisage for themselves on the island. Exhaustion of negotiations on the basis of a bicomunal, bizonal federation due to recurrent Greek Cypriot rejection of the said settlement itself, its refusal to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot side and its efforts to isolate and suppress the Turkish Cypriot people, while paying lip service to the United Nations parameters in the past 50 years, has led the Turkish Cypriot people to vote, in the recent Turkish Republic of Northern

Cyprus presidential elections, for a two-State settlement on the basis of sovereign equality, in line with the realities on the ground in Cyprus. In the light of the said state of affairs, it is high time that instead of insisting on the said “tried and failed” basis, an unofficial five-party meeting is tailored to search for a common ground on a new negotiation process in Cyprus.

Regarding the claims of so-called “infringements of international air traffic regulations” and “violations of Cyprus’ national airspace”, 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 baseless assertions in the said letter regarding the use of Turkish Cypriot ports and airports are also false 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.

It is, therefore, crucial that your call in your most recent report, dated 10 July 2020 (S/2020/682), where you rightly urged “promotion of closer cooperation between communities, local and international actors”, adding that “concerns about recognition should not in themselves constitute an insurmountable obstacle to increased cooperation”, is upheld in the upcoming Security Council resolution and implemented in concrete terms by the esteemed Member States of the United Nations. We trust that a call in your upcoming report to the Security Council towards this end will contribute to the realization of cooperation between both the relevant Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot authorities in numerous areas such as air traffic safety, trade, tourism and hydrocarbon resources, as well as the international actors and each side on the island.

Moreover, the unjust isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to reinforce by unilaterally calling all air and sea ports 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...”.

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 the last year alone, the number of passengers who used Ercan Airport stood at 4,035,276. Moreover, 27,760 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 224,898 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace in the same year. 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 remind the Greek Cypriot side that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

Last but not least, contrary to the claims of the Greek Cypriot representative, it should be emphasized 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 important 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.

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 **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus