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Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 10 February 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I refer to the letter addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Turkey dated 16 December 2021, which is contained in document [S/2021/1061](#).

Cyprus rejects in toto the content of said letter as we have rejected all claims put forward by Turkey as well as the geographical coordinates purporting to show the outer limits of Turkey's continental shelf in the eastern Mediterranean, including through our letters of 24 April 2020 ([A/74/824-S/2020/332](#)) and 20 January 2020 ([A/74/660-S/2020/50](#)).

While Turkey alone continues to espouse a fabricated version of international legality, the international community has no doubt that there exists only one state in Cyprus, which is constituted by, and has sovereignty over, the entire island of Cyprus, and that Cyprus is represented by the sole legitimate Government on the island since the Republic of Cyprus emerged into statehood in 1960. Cyprus will continue to protect its *ipso facto* and *ab initio* sovereign rights over its continental shelf, in line with international legality and applicable international law.

Turkey's maximalist and expansionist claims are not founded in established rules of international law and have no legal effect. Their purpose is to create an alternate reality, tailored to serve Turkish interests and geopolitical aspirations. By pursuing the objective of the unlawful appropriation of Cyprus' maritime zones or parts thereof, Turkey intends to use it as a springboard for controlling the eastern Mediterranean. The progressive creation of facts by Turkey to this end has been ongoing for some time and comprises: (a) the harassment and use of force against vessels conducting hydrocarbon exploration on behalf of the Cyprus Government in our maritime zones; (b) disputing Cyprus' maritime zones; and (c) the instrumentalization of Turkey's secessionist policy in Cyprus, also for the purpose of appropriating its maritime zones. It also comprises repeated threats, such as the one issued in document [A/76/609-S/2021/1061](#).

Given the incompatibility of such threats with the Charter of the United Nations, Cyprus looks to the United Nations to ensure that Turkey will not, once more, use



force against it. Attempting to prevent a State from exercising its sovereignty and sovereign rights is wholly contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter. Disregarding international law because it leads to a less advantageous outcome than force goes fundamentally against any notion of effective multilateralism.

By contrast, Cyprus has delimited its maritime zones in accordance with international law and is exercising its sovereign rights therein lawfully and continues to stand ready to delimit its maritime boundaries with Turkey in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, or to reach a special agreement (*compromis*) to jointly submit the issue to the International Court of Justice for the designation of a definitive maritime boundary delimiting the continental shelf/Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus and Turkey on the same basis.

Turkey's refusal to pursue the peaceful settlement of an artificial dispute that Turkey itself has created only confirms its preference for settling disputes based on relative power and not rules. Invoking the Turkish Cypriots to make outlandish claims, or to dismiss the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, creates a convenient but flawed smokescreen. I need only mention that the claims of Turkey would amount to appropriating 44 per cent of Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone, depriving all Cypriots of it, including Turkish Cypriots. Legally, of course, any argument built on secession and the advancement of an entity that is the fruit of aggression is null and void. Turkey's urging cooperation with a purported entity that it established through the unlawful use of force, maintains by means of an ongoing occupation and fully controls in order to claim rights over Cyprus, defies reason or common sense.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 44 and 78, and of the Security Council, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as in the next edition of the Law of the Sea Bulletin.

(Signed) Andreas **Hadjichrysanthou**
