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**Letter dated 7 July 2023 from the Permanent Representative of
Türkiye to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 5 July 2023 addressed to you by the Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mehmet Dâna (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 38, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sedat Önal
Permanent Representative



Annex

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 6 June 2023 addressed to Your Excellency by the Greek Cypriot Representative in New York that is circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council ([A/77/911-S/2023/411](#)) 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.

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

Ercan State Airport in the TRNC is in full conformity with all standards recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization and necessary upgrades have regularly been made 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 Center is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara Area Control Center in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2022 alone, the number of passengers who used Ercan State Airport stood at 3,048,395. Moreover, 22,695 planes used Ercan State Airport for arrival and departure and 161,865 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.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to remind the Greek Cypriot side that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Türkiye. The Greek Cypriot side’s unfounded claims contained in the said letter go as far as denying the existence of the Turkish Cypriot people and ignoring the fact that today there exist two independent, self-governing States on the Island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

The present infringements of international air traffic regulations in the Ercan advisory airspace by the Greek Cypriot administration, as well as Greece, referred to in our letter dated 21 June 2023 ([A/77/937-S/2023/461](#)), not only constitute a blatant violation of the sovereignty of the TRNC, but also endanger the safety of international civil aviation and contravene relevant international rules and regulations. The TRNC has made numerous calls to the Greek Cypriot administration to cooperate on the matter in order to avoid any undesired incident and to ensure the safety of air traffic over the island.

Moreover, the unjust isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to reinforce by unilaterally claiming that all air and sea ports in the TRNC are “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 the 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 continuation of the Turkish Cypriot isolation at the behest of the Greek Cypriot administration is a gross human rights violation that the Greek Cypriot representatives conveniently forget to mention and opt to fabricate allegations of so-called human rights violations by Türkiye.

Contrary to the claims of the Greek Cypriot representative, it should be emphasized that none of the United Nations 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 Türkiye, of invading and occupying Cyprus.

Furthermore, the Greek Cypriot representative has the audacity to falsely claim “constant violations to the military status quo and near-daily advances into the buffer zone” (by Türkiye), at a time when it has been recorded in Your Excellency’s latest report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) ([S/2023/3](#)) that “The mission observed that the [Greek Cypriot] National Guard added 65 new unauthorized prefabricated concrete firing positions along their ceasefire line, bringing the total since 2019 to approximately 290” and that “the unauthorized concertina wire fence deployed in early 2021 parallel to the southern ceasefire line, for the most part inside the buffer zone, and stretching for 12 km, was not removed”, which are just two of the many recent violations of the status quo in the buffer zone by the Greek Cypriot side.

While the Greek Cypriot representative mentions the Brahimi report ([A/55/305-S/2000/809](#)) in a futile attempt to portray the legitimate demand of the Turkish Cypriot side from the United Nations to take consent of both sides for its operations on the island of Cyprus as “threats to expel the United Nations peacekeeping operation”, he conveniently ignores the fact that the Brahimi report clearly underlines that “consent of the local parties ... should remain the bedrock principles of peacekeeping”. Without adhering to its own principles, that is to say, seeking the consent of the Turkish Cypriot side as well, the United Nations not only puts into question UNFICYP’s impartiality, but also “risks [it] becoming a party to the conflict”, as per the publication *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*.

As for the false accusations regarding the fenced-off area of Maraş (Varosha) in the said letter, which are merely based on rhetoric, I wish to remind, once again, that the fenced-off area of Maraş is part of the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), where our Government has sole jurisdiction and authority. In this regard, decisions taken are in line with international law and our openings in the fenced-off area of Maraş, which has become the symbol of the status quo on the island, are a positive development that should be supported by the international community. It should be noted that while taking gradual steps to open the area, the TRNC Government, on every occasion, has made it public that it would fully respect and protect property rights. As a first step, our Government has set up an inventory committee, tasked with assessing the condition of immovable properties, infrastructure and environmental risks. In October 2020, the TRNC Government took another decision to open certain public areas, i.e. two main streets and the beach, for visitors of all nationalities. In July 2021, the TRNC Council of Ministers lifted the military zone status of a pilot area, which corresponds to 3.4 per cent of the fenced-off area of Maraş, with a view to enabling the Immoveable Property Commission to

process applications in this area. It is important to remember in this regard that the Commission was established in 2005, in line with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, and is recognised as an effective domestic remedy for the settlement of property claims in the form of restitution, compensation and/or exchange.

Moreover, the TRNC's constructive opening, designed in a manner fully respecting and protecting property rights in line with international law, does not contradict the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions as well. It should also be noted that when the relevant Security Council resolutions were adopted at the time, there was no European Court of Human Rights-sanctioned effective domestic mechanism for the property claims in the TRNC. We strongly believe that the opening of the fenced-off area of Maraş will not only serve as an effective tool to satisfy the property claims, but also be economically beneficial to both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot peoples.

Regarding the efforts to find a freely negotiated and mutually acceptable agreement in Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot representative is, yet again, attempting to disinform the international community and conceal the fact that more than fifty years of negotiations carried out on a federal settlement framework have decisively failed because of the categorical rejection of the Greek Cypriot side to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot people. The Greek Cypriot insistence to pay lip service to such a settlement is solely aimed at keeping the Turkish Cypriot side trapped in an endless negotiating process while it continues to reap the benefits of the "unacceptable" and "unsustainable" status quo. The Greek Cypriot side should no longer be allowed to consume the resources as well as the time of the international community to further its own anachronistic political agenda. In view of the foregoing, it is unfortunate that instead of acting in line with the call of Your Excellency that "this time must be different", the Greek Cypriot leadership insists on the said "tried and failed" framework, preventing meaningful discussions on a new and realistic basis that could finally yield a positive outcome. A sustainable and lasting agreement is only possible with the acknowledgement of our inherent rights of sovereign equality and equal international status.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 38, and of the Security Council.

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