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**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Forty-sixth session**  
29 April–10 May 2024

## **Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Cyprus\***

### **Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\*\***

#### **I. Background**

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review and the outcome of the previous review.<sup>1</sup> It is a summary of 13 stakeholders' submissions<sup>2</sup> for the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

#### **II. Information provided by other stakeholders**

##### **A. Scope of international obligations<sup>3</sup> and cooperation with human rights mechanisms**

2. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) urged Cyprus to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a matter of international urgency.<sup>4</sup>

3. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommended Cyprus to sign and ratify the European Convention on Nationality.<sup>5</sup>

##### **B. National human rights framework**

###### **1. Constitutional and legislative framework**

4. JS4 reported that Cyprus had not yet harmonized the 2021 Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law with pre-existing laws on domestic violence.<sup>6</sup> It also reported that, despite the establishment of a law on femicide, other forms of violence against women, including rape, sexual abuse, and female genital mutilation, are overbooked in policy and practice in Cyprus.<sup>7</sup> JS4 recommended Cyprus to harmonize

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



definitions of domestic violence in Violence of the Family Laws of 2000 and 2004 with the 2021 Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law.<sup>8</sup>

5. JS2 reported that Cyprus ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of Children in armed conflict (OPAC) in 2010 and expressed concern over the military recruitment of adults and adolescents' children in Cyprus, which operated a conscription system with limited rights of conscientious objection.<sup>9</sup> It noted that the OPAC declaration also allows voluntary recruitment to begin under the age of 18 and OPAC Article 1, states that Cyprus reserves the right to deploy adolescent children to take a direct part in hostilities in cases of "genuine military need", "military effectiveness", or where practical challenges make it hard for them to withdraw them.<sup>10</sup>

6. JS2 recommended to amend the legislation to a) equalise the minimum period for compulsory military and civilian service, b) remove criteria that automatically disqualify certain conscientious objectors from recognition, c) place the administration of alternative service under fully impartial, civilian control, and d) revoke the power of the Minister of Defence to suspend the rights of conscientious objectors in wartime.<sup>11</sup>

7. JS2 recommended that Cyprus implement the recommendation of the Committee on the rights of the Child to raise the minimum age of military recruitment to 18 years, ensuring that legislation prohibits a) the compulsory recruitment of all persons under the age of 18, and b) their use in hostilities.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

8. ECRI noted that the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman) still did not have the competence to initiate or participate in court proceedings on behalf of victims of discrimination or intolerance. ECRI reiterated its recommendation that the Ombudsman be granted the right to initiate and participate *ex officio* in court proceedings, in line with § 14c of ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 2 on equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level.<sup>13</sup>

9. ECRI recommended that a Roma-specific action plan be developed, in connection with the National Roma Strategic Framework 2021–2030, in close consultation with Roma representatives. To facilitate effective implementation, it should be funded by a budget earmarked for Roma and Roma mediators should be trained in sufficient number to serve in different policy areas, including education, health, employment, and housing.<sup>14</sup>

## C. Promotion and protection of human rights

### 1. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

#### *Equality and non-discrimination*

10. JS3 reported that, since the last UPR cycle, no improvement had been noted regarding racial discrimination, it stated that there is no effective mechanism or policy in place to combat discrimination and hate speech against minority and vulnerable groups nor any effective prosecution of hate crimes or convictions for perpetrators.<sup>15</sup> ECRI recommended that the authorities establish a comprehensive monitoring system for hate speech incidents, involving the police, the prosecution service, the courts, the equality body and relevant civil society organisations, especially those supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, Black persons and LGBTI people.<sup>16</sup>

11. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE-ODIHR) in Europe noted that, while Cyprus had a general victim support system, there was no support provided specifically to hate crime victims.<sup>17</sup>

12. JS1 reported that Turkish Cypriots face assault and harassment by racist motives.<sup>18</sup> Turkish Cypriots did not have an accessible and effective mechanisms to apply to when they face racist or discriminatory attacks or treatments and there is no mechanism that provides services in Turkish with clear guidelines or procedures.<sup>19</sup> JS1 recommended to hire Turkish

speaking staff and provide services in Turkish language in the Ombudsman Office.<sup>20</sup> JS1 also recommended that Cyprus shall run informative campaigns in Turkish language to inform its Turkish speaking citizens about their rights and the steps to be followed in case they face unfair or discriminatory practices.<sup>21</sup>

13. JS1 reported that Turkish Cypriots face challenges in opening bank accounts in areas effectively controlled by the Republic of Cyprus, as their applications are often rejected, without proper justification. JS1 recommended to implement administrative measures aimed at identifying and addressing discriminatory practices experienced by Turkish Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus, with a focus on advocating for legislative and administrative reforms to eliminate such practices.

*Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture*

14. JS3 reported that since 2020, there has been a substantial rise in the use of holding cells, with no official justification for their increase.<sup>22</sup> It reported that Ombudsman acting as National Preventive Mechanism of Torture, raised the issue in various reports, stating that holding cells should not be used for purposes of immigration detention and that persons must be transferred to the detention centre within 48 hours.<sup>23</sup> JS3 highlighted that conditions in the holding cells were found to be below accepted standards and included issues related to lack of access to open-air spaces, cleanliness and hygiene, access to information and access to full set of rights.<sup>24</sup>

*Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law*

15. The Venice Commission recommended to: (i) replace the Attorney General in the composition of the Advisory Judicial Council; (ii) provide for a graduated recommendation by the Council to the President which would assist the credibility and objectivity of the appointment by the President and reflect on the desirability to stipulate that the President needs to motivate in writing any decision which does not respect that recommendation and the order of preference laid out in the evaluation of the Advisory Council; (iii) to include “pre-existing, clear and transparent criteria for appointment” in the bill.<sup>25</sup>

16. JS4 reported that victim-survivors of gender-based violence do not experience adequate access to justice.<sup>26</sup> It reported that while women victims of domestic violence have the right to legal aid, in practice, there are currently no specific criteria for administering legal aid, courts often deny this right arbitrarily.<sup>27</sup> JS4 stated that prosecutors and judges do not have adequate training to ensure that cases involving violence against women are not requalified into charges which carry lighter penalties and deprive victims access to protection, support and compensation.<sup>28</sup> JS4 recommended Cyprus to establish specialized, mandatory training for governmental officials, law enforcement, judiciary, health professionals, educators, and others in the field on trafficking, victim identification, assistance, and referral.<sup>29</sup>

17. JS3 reported that the asylum system in Cyprus has never provided free legal assistance to asylum seekers at the first instance examination of the application. Currently only 1 NGO provides free legal assistance with extremely low capacity, (4 lawyers for over 30,000 asylum seekers).<sup>30</sup>

*Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life*

18. JS1 and the International Community Organisations (ICO) reported that Turkish Cypriots could not fully enjoy their right to access to information.<sup>31</sup> Official information is available only in Greek and English and the laws of Cyprus are only provided in Greek language, leaving the Turkish Cypriots completely uninformed of the legal framework.<sup>32</sup> JS1 and ICO stated that this has many negative impacts on Turkish Cypriots in terms of accessing their other rights such as health, education, and on accessing freedom of expression.<sup>33</sup> ICO stated that due to linguistic barriers, Turkish Cypriots who seek to highlight harassment and minor assaults have no accessible mechanism that would serve in the Turkish language to apply to make a discriminatory claim.<sup>34</sup> ICO recommended to remove linguistic barriers to public information, ensuring that cases of racially motivated violence are promptly investigated and providing legal aid to those in need so that everyone has equal access to

justice.<sup>35</sup> JS1 recommended to translate all laws into the Turkish language and make them readily available to its citizens through an accessible platform.<sup>36</sup>

19. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights was concerned about the de-registration of several non-governmental organisations playing an important role in supporting asylum seekers and migrants following the implementation of legal amendments introduced in 2020. She recommended that the Greek Cypriot authorities abide by their positive obligation to actively create and maintain an enabling legal framework and a political and public environment conducive to the existence and functioning of civil society organisations by considering alternative measures to their de-registration and dissolution and applying proportionate sanctions only when strictly necessary.<sup>37</sup>

*Right to marriage and family life*

20. The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM) stated that obtaining family reunification in Cyprus is difficult and only allowed for refugees, while beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are excluded. In 2019, the Commissioner for the Rights of the Child concluded that the ban on the right to family reunification for subsidiary protection holders is contrary to EU directives and incompatible with Cyprus' obligations under the European Convention of Human Rights as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>38</sup> SCM recommended Cyprus to allow family reunification for subsidiary protection status holders.<sup>39</sup>

*Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons*

21. The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) reported that Cyprus is a destination country for human trafficking victims and despite improvements in anti-human trafficking measures in recent years, human trafficking remains a concern.<sup>40</sup> ECLJ also expressed concern over increases in domestic sexual exploitation – where struggling families force women in the family to sell sex to alleviate financial border – and surging sexual exploitations schemes perpetrated through social media.<sup>41</sup>

22. ECLJ highlighted that perpetrators of human trafficking conceal their movements throughout the country by crossing the 180km Green Line at unpoliced location as this makes it easy for traffickers and the victims to move undetected.<sup>42</sup> JS1 also reported that loose and unfair migration policies and inadequate controls in the areas not effectively controlled by Cyprus result in uncontrolled migration, which traffickers exploit to recruit victims. It further reported that there is no collaboration between the two sides of the island to combat human trafficking or protect victims, despite the existence of the Bi-Communal Technical Committee on Criminal Matters.<sup>43</sup> JS1 recommended to clearly mandate and equip the bi-communal Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters with the necessary know-how and assistance to combat human trafficking.<sup>44</sup>

23. ECLJ recommended that Cyprus should continue to improve its methods and means of identifying trafficking victims, including adopting a plan to limit trafficking across the Green Line, and to continue its efforts to prosecute offenders, provide victim services and adopt the most efficient reporting methods.<sup>45</sup> JS4 recommended Cyprus to provide legal assistance to victims of trafficking, ensuring they have an advocate or legal representative to walk them through the process, and to reduce delays in assisting victims of trafficking, including access to health care and financial assistance.<sup>46</sup> It also recommended to ensure availability of native-language psychological support without restrictions arising from immigration law for victims of trafficking.<sup>47</sup>

*Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work*

24. SCM reported asylum seekers can work nine months after submitting their application, but the criteria for obtaining a work permit are selective, and many find themselves in a vicious cycle of having to give a residential address to apply for a job but being required by landlords to have a job to rent accommodation.<sup>48</sup> SCM also stated that the Labour Code authorizes asylum seekers to work only in agriculture, processing, waste management, trade repairs, provision of services, the food industry, restaurants, laundromat services, and disseminating advertising material; in these sectors, there are usually no unions,

low wages, and poor working conditions.<sup>49</sup> SCM reported that the salary of a migrant worker in agriculture amounts to around 450 euros.<sup>50</sup>

25. SCM also reported that once an asylum seeker starts working, financial assistance is terminated, which often means insufficient funds to meet families' needs and material assistance is also stopped if an asylum seeker rejects a job offer twice, as they are considered "wilfully unemployed", even if it is for reasons including inability to commute or failure to take care of children.<sup>51</sup> SCM recommended to expand the sectors asylum seekers are allowed to work in, introduce minimum wage in all sectors, and improve working conditions by allowing unionization or introducing complaint mechanisms.<sup>52</sup>

#### *Right to an adequate standard of living*

26. JS1 noted that some landlords refuse to provide housing to asylum seekers.<sup>53</sup> JS3 highlighted that asylum seekers do not have access to the Guaranteed Minimum Income, instead they have access to very low and inadequate financial support. It reported that reception standards remain below adequate levels, exposing asylum seekers to the risk of homelessness and destitution, and such, most asylum seekers live in the community and are often extremely impoverished.<sup>54</sup> JS3 also reported that reception standards remain below adequate levels, exposing asylum seekers to risks of homelessness and destitution. Most asylum seekers are hosted in the community instead than in reception centres, and often live in extremely poor conditions. Similarly, reception centres need infrastructural renovation as sanitation and hygiene are below standard, and sufficient safeguards against sexual and gender-based violence for children and single women are in place.<sup>55</sup> JS3 stated that the timely identification and response to the needs of vulnerable individuals, including children, within reception facilities and in the community, requires significant improvement.<sup>56</sup>

#### *Right to health*

27. JS1 reported that Turkish Cypriots residing in areas that are not effectively controlled by the Republic of Cyprus face barriers to accessing the healthcare system, restricting their access to essential medical services. This issue is particularly pronounced for the transgender community, which struggles to access gender affirming healthcare, including hormone treatments and surgeries.<sup>57</sup> JS1 recommended to take immediate action to ensure that it's all citizens have equal access to the healthcare system. It also recommended to implement specific measures to guarantee that transgenders can access gender-affirming healthcare without discrimination or barriers, including hormone treatments and surgeries, in line with international human rights standards.<sup>58</sup>

#### *Right to education*

28. JS1 reported that the formal primary and secondary school programs do not involve education in Turkish language and that certain Turkish Cypriots face barriers in accessing Greek language classes provided by a public university in the Republic of Cyprus because these courses are exclusively available in English.<sup>59</sup> JS1 recommended to a) introduce free Greek language courses that are taught in Turkish and accessible to Turkish Cypriots through both online and in-person formats and b) to provide education in the Turkish language throughout the formal education system.<sup>60</sup> Broken Chalk also recommended that Greek and Turkish languages be taught in the schools, as they are the official languages in Cyprus.<sup>61</sup>

29. Referencing the bilingualism in the field of education, Broken Chalk recommended that a) the two communities should organise educational activities to help children and youth learn more about Cyprus's multicultural and multilingual society and b) that authorities of the educational systems should promote the kind of education that prepares children and youth to live in a multicultural and multi-lingual society.<sup>62</sup>

## **2. Rights of specific persons or groups**

### *Women*

30. JS4 reported that there is a lack of funding dedicated to combatting violence against women and domestic violence in Cyprus, including regarding funding for providing services

to survivors, and training frontline professional. This lack of funding feeds the underreporting of domestic violence cases in the country.<sup>63</sup> JS4 recommended to provide resources, including adequate technical, human, and financial resources, to the proposed structure of the National Coordinating Body that is responsible for preventing and combatting all forms of violence against women for it to carry out its mandate effectively.<sup>64</sup>

31. JS4 also reported that there is only one women’s shelter operating in the northern part of Cyprus, and three shelters operating in the southern part of Cyprus. The shelters are constantly at full capacity and the number of family places is insufficient, with a total of 14 rooms and 47 bed spaces available for women seeking shelter from domestic violence.<sup>65</sup> JS4 recommended to increase shelter capacity to meet the international standard of one family place per 10,000 people.<sup>66</sup> It also recommended to remove logistical barriers, such as referral requirements, to access Women’s House, shelters, and other social welfare programs in order to support all women and girls, particularly women who are in situations of disadvantage and facing multiple forms of discrimination, including migrant women.<sup>67</sup>

32. JS4 recommended Cyprus to establish and fund the database to collect and public comprehensive data on all forms of gender-based violence against women, as indicated in the 2021 Prevention and Combatting of Violence against women and Domestic Violence Law and the recently adopted National Strategy on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence 2023–2028.<sup>68</sup> It also recommended to collect and publish comprehensive data including the number of reports received by the police, the investigations opened, indictments made, final convictions handed down by courts, and requested and granted orders for protection, disaggregated by sex and age of victim and perpetrator and relationship between victim and perpetrator.<sup>69</sup>

33. The European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions (EUROMIL) reported that in 1990, the National Guard of Cyprus hired the first female non-commissioned officers (NCOs) as volunteers for a two-year trial period, imposing discriminatory conditions on their service compared to their male counterparts. Male NCOs were hired without undergoing a two-year trial period, perpetuating unequal treatment based on gender. Gender discrimination persisted in various forms throughout the years.<sup>70</sup> EUROMIL further reported that the Ministry of Defence maintained separate requirements and yearbooks for men and women, resulting in an unjust promotion system. Female NCOs were not eligible for promotion during the trial period, whereas male NCOs were allowed to progress in their careers. Moreover, there was no consideration of the male-female ratio when determining promotions.<sup>71</sup> Further, EUROMIL stated that National legislation, such as the “Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Professional Qualification Law,” is also violated; this law mandates equal treatment in employment, including career advancement, for both genders.<sup>72</sup>

34. EUROMIL reported that these discriminatory practices have had severe consequences for female NCOs, affecting their salaries, pensions, and career development. Numerous complaints have been lodged with the Ombudsman. In response, the Ombudsman issued reports in 2021 and 2022, calling for remedies to address gender discrimination. However, no concrete actions have been taken by the Ministry of Defence to rectify the adverse effects of gender discrimination.<sup>73</sup>

35. EUROMIL recommended that Cyprus should a) take immediate and effective measures to eliminate gender discrimination within the National Guard of the Republic of Cyprus and ensure equal opportunities for male and female NCOs; b) establish a transparent promotion system based on merit, skills, and performance rather than gender, and take into account the years served as volunteers; c) provide remedies to redress the negative consequences suffered by female NCOs, including compensation for disparities in salary and career advancement; and d) strengthen accountability mechanisms to prevent future discrimination, including regular monitoring and reporting on gender equality within the National Guard.<sup>74</sup>

#### *Children*

36. JS4 reported that Cyprus has not implemented Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention regarding child custody, visitation rights, and safety issues in domestic violence cases, and

child contact arrangements leave women exposed to further coercive and controlling behaviour of the perpetrators.<sup>75</sup>

37. Hope for Children (HFR Cy) reported that in 2023, Cyprus had the highest per capital rate of registered asylum applications, more than one thousand among them lodged by unaccompanied children (UAC).<sup>76</sup> It commended that the number of UAC in the first reception centre has significantly dropped thanks to the expansion of child protection services but stated that there lacks a concrete legal framework to set child protection principles, monitoring measures and complaint protocols for the children.<sup>77</sup> HRF Cy also reported that Cyprus had increased the foster care programme in order to cover all districts in areas within its effective control based on protocols of cooperation between the Social Welfare Services and Hope for Children.<sup>78</sup>

38. SCM reported that the 300 children in Pournara detention center receive one bottle of water daily and share two toilets and one shower room.<sup>79</sup> It also stated that women traveling alone, or unaccompanied children often commingled with single, adult men, and no sufficient safeguards against sexual and gender-based violence are in place.<sup>80</sup> SCM recommended the Republic of Cyprus to respond to the needs of vulnerable individuals in the community and reception centres more promptly and guarantee safeguards against sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>81</sup>

#### *Older persons*

39. The European Committee of Social Rights noted that an adequate legal framework was required to combat age discrimination in a range of areas beyond employment, namely in access to goods, facilities and services, healthcare, education, services such as insurance and banking products, participation in policy making/civil dialogue, allocation of resources and facilities. There should also be a legal framework on assisted decision making for the elderly guaranteeing their right to make decisions for themselves unless it is shown that they are unable to make them. Housing law and policy must take account of the special needs of elderly persons. There shall be sufficient supply of adequate and appropriate housing for elderly persons. Elderly persons living in institutions must be guaranteed the right to appropriate care and adequate services, the right to privacy, the right to personal dignity, the right to participate in decisions concerning the living conditions in the institution, the protection of property, the right to maintain personal contact with persons close to the elderly person and the right to complain about treatment and care in institutions.<sup>82</sup>

#### *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons*

40. JS1 reported that while same-sex couples have the right to civil partnership within Cyprus, they are unjustly denied the right to adopt children. This discriminatory practice goes against international human rights standards and perpetuates unequal treatment of LGBTIQ+ and families.<sup>83</sup> JS1 recommended to take immediate steps to rectify this situation and extend equal adoption rights to all couples, irrespective of their sexual orientation.<sup>84</sup>

41. ECRI recommended as a matter of priority that the authorities prepare a national LGBTI strategy, accompanied by a national action plan, with a sufficient separate budget for its implementation and with enhanced action against intolerance against LGBTI persons among its key elements. ECRI also recommended to take further action to ensure greater LGBTI awareness in the school environment by i) providing initial and in-service training for all teachers and school principals in primary and secondary education with suitable training on SOGI issues and ii) addressing substantial questions on SOGI issues in designated textbooks on sexuality education. Furthermore, a firm message of zero tolerance of LGBTI-phobic attitudes and behaviours should be conveyed to all education professionals interacting with pupils and parents.<sup>85</sup>

#### *Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers*

42. SCM stated that the Coast Guard of Cyprus circles boats carrying refugees at high speeds, ramming, and swamping them to attempt capsizes and abandoning them at high sea without fuel or food, and additionally beat and injure individuals on boats, intimidate them by shouting and brandishing weapons at them, and separate families.<sup>86</sup> The Council of Europe

Commissioner for Human Rights and SCM urged the Republic of Cyprus to ensure that independent and effective investigations are carried out into allegations of pushbacks and ill-treatment of arriving migrants, including persons who may be in need of international protection, by members of the security forces.<sup>87</sup>

43. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights further called on the Greek Cypriot authorities to bring the conditions in reception facilities for asylum seekers and migrants into line with applicable human rights standards and to ensure that they enjoy effective access to all necessary services.<sup>88</sup>

44. JS4 recommended to establish and strengthen a systematic mechanism for early identification of vulnerable asylum seekers and a referral system between reception centres and services for survivors of gender-based violence, including sexual assault, rape, domestic violence, and female genital mutilation.<sup>89</sup> It also recommended to provide gender-sensitive support services in reception centres for migrants in order to prevent the risk of violence among women refugees and/or provide specialist support to women survivors of Sexual Gender Based Violence.<sup>90</sup>

#### *Stateless persons*

45. JS3 stated that Cyprus' nationality laws are applied discriminatorily, particularly affecting children born to mixed marriages or to non-Cypriot parents who entered or stayed irregularly, leading to increased statelessness among children, as they don't automatically receive Cypriot nationality. According to reports, the number of people denied Cypriot nationality ranges from 6,000–10,000.<sup>91</sup> JS3 further reported that the situation is exacerbated by delayed decision-making and the absence of measures ensuring nationality rights for children born to asylum seekers, international protection beneficiaries, or stateless individuals. The issue is increasingly affecting Greek Cypriot-origin children with non-Cypriot parents, where the Ministerial Council's approval is required for nationality, often resulting in prolonged statelessness, the backlog in these cases further compounds the problem, leaving a growing number of children stateless.<sup>92</sup> JS3 highlighted that although these issues were raised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its latest Concluding Observations to Cyprus, there has not been any significant progress made.<sup>93</sup>

46. JS3 reported that naturalisation for Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIP) has always been problematic, as the procedures are extremely slow and lack transparency, furthermore BIPs are not facilitated in any way other than being able to apply after completing 5 years instead of 7 years of stay as is the case for other TCN.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, children are not naturalised when born in the country, under any circumstances, which limits access further. In 2021, 11 BIPs were granted citizenship and in 2022, 27 BIPs were granted. It also reported that regarding the time required to examine applications for citizenship these are still lengthy and, in most cases, will take on average 3–4 years. Indicatively, the applications submitted in 2020 are currently under examination, which requires several months to be concluded.<sup>95</sup>

47. JS3 noted that naturalisation is very difficult to access for most refugees and migrants who have a low to mid income, including for those who have been living in Cyprus for well over 10 years, were born in the country or arrived at a very young age. In many cases, the decision rejecting the application mentions that the refugee does not have sufficient ties to the country or is a burden for the state. Furthermore, in practice there is no access to long term residence or any other permanent status.<sup>96</sup>

### **3. Specific regions or territories**

48. ICO stated that a key ramification of the partition of the island is the limitation on freedom of movement and its knock-on effect on religious, cultural and heritage sites, specifically, about the increasingly restrictive criteria for granting permits to conduct religious services outlined by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, limiting freedom of religion and cultural rights.<sup>97</sup> It also expressed concern at the reports of the destruction of cultural heritage sites and artefacts, mostly, in the northern part of Cyprus in particular Orthodox churches.<sup>98</sup>

49. JS1 reported that Turkish Cypriots, as the Cypriot citizens who reside in the areas not effectively controlled by the Republic, cannot form, or jointly form a CSO or take a management position in a CSO. JS1 further reported that in the past a couple of activists living in the areas not effectively controlled by the Republic of Cyprus tried to establish a civil society organisation and their efforts were rejected due to failing to give an address within the controlled area of the Republic. JS1 recommended to remove these discriminatory restrictions and ensure that all citizens have equal access to rights, regardless of their ethnicities.<sup>99</sup>

50. JS1 reported that mixed-marriages children that could not receive citizenship from Cyprus due to discriminatory policies, have reported that officers create bureaucratic problems and preventing their freedom of movement throughout the island, at the designated check points.<sup>100</sup> JS1 further reported that Turkish Cypriots who are Cypriot citizens are entitled to civil partnerships; however, discriminatory restrictions are imposed on their third-country partners.<sup>101</sup> These individuals are required to reside in the areas effectively controlled by the Republic of Cyprus to access essential rights such as residency permits, citizenship rights, and travel through legally recognized ports. JS1 stated that this requirement results in unequal treatment of individuals based on their nationality.<sup>102</sup> JS1 recommended that Cyprus ensure that all citizens and their partners have equal access to rights, regardless of their nationality.<sup>103</sup>

51. JS1 stated that the Human Trafficking Unit in the Police fails to understand the latest human trafficking trends in the areas not effectively controlled by the Republic of Cyprus, and they lack updated information in terms of the context and legal framework.<sup>104</sup> JS1 recommended to regularly train and inform the staff of the Anti-Trafficking Unit on the trafficking trends in the areas that are not in the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus.<sup>105</sup>

52. ICO reported that the persistent division of the island and the status of the northern part means that those living in the northern part of Cyprus are excluded from free health care or participating in voting, even if with a Cypriot passport.<sup>106</sup>

53. Broken Chalk reported that the leading sector in the northern part of Cyprus is education, with 23 universities, however, they are not recognised by the competent national body in the Republic of Cyprus.<sup>107</sup> JS1 and ICO reported that university diplomas of Turkish Cypriots who graduated from any of the universities located in the northern part of Cyprus are not recognized by any public institutions or educational institutions.<sup>108</sup> This results in Turkish Cypriots receiving lower salaries compared to their counterparts, since they are accepted as high school graduates, rather than university graduates.<sup>109</sup> JS1 asserted that this poses issues when entering the workforce as some Turkish Cypriots are requested to provide exam qualifications, to validate their university degrees, but ultimately, get rejected.<sup>110</sup>

54. JS1 reported that authorities have been denying the entries of the asylum seekers trying to cross from the northern part of Cyprus causing them to wait for weeks and months, which results in degrading treatment.<sup>111</sup> It further stated that when asylum seekers arrive irregularly, they are arrested and detained and the conditions at detention facilities are deplorable.<sup>112</sup> JS1 noted that the areas that there is no asylum system in place in the northern part of Cyprus.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, if an asylum seeker returns to the northern part of Cyprus, they would be immediately arrested since they crossed irregularly to the buffer zone first, and then detained, brought before the court, imprisoned, and deported to their countries or origin, where there is a high risk that they would be persecuted.<sup>114</sup> JS1 recommended the Republic of Cyprus to immediately stop denying the access of asylum seekers via the checkpoints, since this practice directly puts asylum seekers in danger of persecution.<sup>115</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/41/15 and A/HRC/41/4/Add.15, and A/HRC/41/2.

<sup>2</sup> The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) (one asterisk denotes a national human rights institution with A status).

### *Civil society*

#### *Individual submissions:*

Broken Chalk ECLJ	The Stitching Broken Chalk, Amsterdam (The Netherlands); The European Centre for Law and Justice, Strasbourg (France);
EUROMIL	European Organization of Military Associations and Trade Unions, Brussels (Belgium);
HFC Cy	“Hope for Children” CRC Policy Center, Nicosia (Cyprus);
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Geneva (Switzerland);
ICO	International Community Organisations, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland);
SCM	Syrian Center for Media and freedom of expression, Paris (France).
<i>Joint submissions:</i>	
JS1	<b>Joint submission 1 submitted by:</b> Human rights Platform, submitting on behalf of, Queer Cyprus Association Refugee Rights Association Civil Society Initiative Turkish Cypriot Human Rights Foundation, Nicosia (Cyprus);
JS2	<b>Joint submission 2 submitted by:</b> Conscience and Peace Tax International submitting on behalf of International Fellowship of Reconciliation Conscience and Peace Tax International, Grand Lancy (Switzerland);
JS3	<b>Joint submission 3 submitted by:</b> Cyprus Refugee Council and Caritas Cyprus, Nicosia (Cyprus);
JS4	<b>Joint submission 4 submitted by:</b> Advocates for Human Rights and The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Minneapolis, United States of America.
<i>Regional intergovernmental organizations:</i>	
CoE	The Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France);
OSCE-ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/Organizations for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Warsaw (Poland).
<sup>3</sup> <i>The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:</i>	
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
OP-ICESCR	Optional Protocol to ICESCR
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

<sup>4</sup> ICAN, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> ECRI Cyprus report, para. 102.

<sup>6</sup> JS4, para. 8.

- 7 JS4, paras. 8–11.
- 8 JS4, p. 8.
- 9 JS2, paras. 1 and 2.
- 10 JS2, para. 27.
- 11 JS2, para. 30.
- 12 JS2, para. 31.
- 13 ECRI report on Cyprus, 7 March 2023, paras. 1–3.
- 14 Ibid, para. 112.
- 15 JS3, p. 1.
- 16 ECRI Cyprus report, para. 49.
- 17 OSCE-ODIHR, paras. 12–13.
- 18 JS1, para. 1.
- 19 JS1, para. 2.
- 20 JS1, p. 2.
- 21 JS1, p. 2.
- 22 JS3, p. 2.
- 23 JS3, p. 2.
- 24 JS3, p. 2.
- 25 CDL-AD (2021) 043, para. 59.
- 26 JS4, para. 3.
- 27 JS4, para. 14.
- 28 JS4, para. 15.
- 29 JS4, p. 7.
- 30 JS3, p. 3.
- 31 JS1, para. 14; and ICO, para. 9.
- 32 JS1, para. 14.
- 33 JS1, para. 14; and ICO, para. 9.
- 34 ICO, para. 10.
- 35 ICO, p. 5.
- 36 JS1, para. 15.
- 37 Letter to the Minister of interior of Cyprus by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.
- 38 SCM, para. 29.
- 39 SCM, p. 8.
- 40 ECLJ, para. 13.
- 41 ECLJ, para. 17.
- 42 ECLJ, para. 14.
- 43 JS1, para. 6. See also ECLJ, para.15 and ICO, para. 19.
- 44 JS1, p. 3.
- 45 ECLJ, para. 26.
- 46 JS4, p. 7.
- 47 JS4, p. 7.
- 48 SCM, para. 24.
- 49 SCM, paras. 24–26.
- 50 SCM, para. 25.
- 51 SCM, para. 26.
- 52 SCM, p. 8.
- 53 JS1, para. 16.
- 54 JS3, p. 7.
- 55 JS3, p. 6.
- 56 JS3, p. 6.
- 57 JS1, para. 22.
- 58 JS1, p. 8.
- 59 JS1, paras. 16–17.
- 60 JS1, p. 6.
- 61 Broken Chalk, para. 37.
- 62 Broken Chalk, paras. 31 and 33.
- 63 JS4, para. 17.
- 64 JS4, p. 7.
- 65 JS4, para. 12.
- 66 JS4, p. 8.
- 67 JS4, p. 8.

- 68 JS4, p. 7.  
69 JS4, p. 7.  
70 EUROMIL, p. 1.  
71 EUROMIL, p. 1.  
72 EUROMIL, p. 2.  
73 EUROMIL, p. 2.  
74 EUROMIL, p. 3.  
75 JS4, para. 16.  
76 HFC Cy, p. 3.  
77 HFC Cy, p. 3.  
78 HFC Cy, p. 4.  
79 SCM, para. 18.  
80 SCM, para. 20.  
81 SCM, p. 8.  
82 Council of Europe contribution for the 46<sup>th</sup> UPR session regarding Cyprus; Fourth report on the non-accepted provisions of the revised European Social Charter Cyprus, the European Committee of Social Rights, December 2020, p. 24.  
83 JS1, para. 18.  
84 JS1, p. 7.  
85 ECRI, Cyprus report, paras. 17 and 41.  
86 SCM, para. 7.  
87 Letter to the Minister of interior of Cyprus by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights; SCM, p. 8.  
88 Letter to the Minister of interior of Cyprus by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.  
89 JS4, p. 8.  
90 JS4, p. 8.  
91 JS3, pp. 9–10.  
92 JS3, pp. 9–10.  
93 JS3, p. 11.  
94 JS3, p. 11.  
95 JS3, p. 4.  
96 JS3, p. 5.  
97 ICO, para. 22.  
98 ICO, para. 23.  
99 JS1, p. 5.  
100 JS1, para. 4.  
101 JS1, para. 19.  
102 JS1, para. 19.  
103 JS1, p. 8.  
104 JS1, para. 6.  
105 JS1, p. 3.  
106 ICO, para. 18.  
107 Broken Chalk, paras. 25–28 and 36.  
108 JS1, para. 5 and ICO, p. 5.  
109 JS1, para. 5.  
110 JS1, p. 3.  
111 JS1, para. 10.  
112 JS1, para. 11.  
113 JS1, para. 11.  
114 JS1, para. 11.  
115 JS1, p. 4.
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