

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/3616/Add.1
13 September 1957

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Twelfth session

PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY: ITEM PROPOSED BY GREECE

Letter dated 13 September 1957 from the Permanent Representative of
Greece to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General

New York, 13 September 1957

Following my letter of 12 July 1957,^{1/} I have the honour to send you attached hereto the explanatory memorandum of the item "Cyprus" of the provisional agenda of the twelfth regular session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Christian X. PALAMAS
Permanent Representative of Greece
to the United Nations

^{1/} A/3616.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. Since 1954 Greece, acting on behalf of the people of Cyprus, has repeatedly and consistently requested the General Assembly of the United Nations to take action in order to ensure the application of the right of self-determination in the case of the Cyprians. Such action, being in line with the principles of the Charter, could contribute to the peaceful settlement of the conflict opposing the Cyprian people, striving for freedom, to the United Kingdom, the ruling colonial Power in the island.

2. The delegations of the Member States are well aware of and fully acquainted with the historical background of the problem, as well as with the tragic events which have taken place in the island within the last two years. During this period the struggle between the oppressed people and the British authorities gained in momentum, costing heavy losses in human lives and property. The situation was dangerously drifting, thus imperilling the peace in this most vital area of the Middle-East.

It is in the light of these developments that the General Assembly, at its last session, assuming its responsibilities under the Charter, adopted resolution 1013 (XI) on 26 February 1957.

3. Since the adoption of this resolution, more than six months have elapsed. Considering the developments that have occurred during that time it becomes evident that while the situation, as it now stands, has turned out to be easier for the British administration and forces, the people still live under harsh oppression. Some changes of a minor importance to the Emergency Regulations have brought no substantial relief to the people. It is sad to notice that compliance by the Cyprians with the General Assembly resolution has resulted in violence now being used against them unilaterally by the British authorities. Such a course of action was certainly not intended by the General Assembly when it adopted the resolution.

Furthermore, no progress whatsoever has been made on the road to a solution of the main problem which was, and still remains, the liberation of the people of Cyprus from colonial rule and the application of their right of self-determination. Obviously, it was up to the ruling Power to take the initiative to start

negotiations with the people concerned. No such action has been taken in conformity with the relative resolution of the General Assembly. Instead, a proposal to this end, made by Archbishop Makarios, was flatly turned down by the British Government.

4. As referred to in a letter of the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Sir Pierson Dixon, dated 11 May 1957, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, there has been an offer to deal with this problem on a tripartite basis, within the framework or in connexion with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Greek Government felt that it did not have the right to get involved into proceedings not in line with the resolution of the General Assembly and which would result in the total, or partial, withdrawal of the question of Cyprus from the authority and the responsibility of the United Nations. This would not have been in accordance with the mandate entrusted to Greece by the people of Cyprus. An issue of freedom and fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter should be settled in accordance with these principles.

It must be understood that no solution of the Cyprus question can be agreed upon without the consent of the people of Cyprus. Solutions which run against the will of the people are no solutions at all.

In the light of these considerations Greece is willing to continue contributing towards a peaceful settlement of the problem.

5. In the present instance Greece is not looking to secure any benefit for herself. She has no claim to formulate. She is disposed and willing to make every reasonable concession and sacrifice in the interest of peace. She has no egotistical ambitions. But she cannot disregard the rights of the Cyprian people. In discharging this sacred responsibility, Greece is bound to stand in the way of any action meant to serve designs and ambitions coming from any other quarters to the detriment of the Cyprian cause.

6. The Greek Government has already in its files some 500 signed testimonies substantiating accusations that the colonial authorities in Cyprus in the course of their repressive drive have indulged in inhuman practices, brutalities and atrocities in the handling of prisoners or persons arrested for interrogation.

On the very sad picture of the sufferings endured by the Cyprian people this stands out as a black spot of particular gravity.

Those accusations are not sporadic and isolated. The number of the victims and the similarity of the tortures, as well as the techniques in atrocity used by the local authorities, can be explained only if such methods were applied by specially trained personnel (in a large number of testimonies the members of a Special Branch of Police are mentioned), and covered by the tolerance - if not by the express approval - at least of some of those discharging British responsibilities in Cyprus. Such an opinion is also shared in some British quarters.

This is placing the United Nations before a problem which, though initially linked to the political and other contingencies prevailing in the island, is of a specific character and bears broader consequences. Methods and practices of bodily and mental torture perpetrated against the human being and defined by international law as "crimes against humanity", constitute a challenge to the British people as well as to the international community.

The Greek Government would have wished not to have to refer this case to the General Assembly as it has so far avoided to disclose factual evidence in its possession about unacceptable British activities and practices. But, in spite of the fact that the Greek Government is always inspired by the same sense of restraint, this is too serious a case to be silenced. In relation to it, British public opinion has already strongly reacted. The noble British people had entertained with the Greek people such close ties that, whenever the former fought great struggles for liberty, the latter was never its foe or a neutral, but always was its companion in arms.

Such methods are unknown to the British people and this is why efforts were made in order to have the whole issue thoroughly investigated and dealt with. Such efforts were frustrated by those in the island who had reasons to fear the truth and the punishing anger of the British people. Any impartial public inquiry has been opposed under futile arguments and excuses.

The British Government, which certainly does not condone the use of such inhuman methods, but which, undoubtedly, bears the final responsibility for it, is bound by the actions of its colonial administration, actions which do not belong to the era of the United Nations.

/...

The General Assembly, in considering the case in its particulars and in its wider implications, could find the answer to the sad plight of the victims and to the indignation of the civilized world.

At a later stage full data and detailed particulars will be placed at the disposal of all delegations.

7. It is in the light of the present situation, as stressed by facts, and in pursuance of peace, freedom and justice as defined by the Charter, that the General Assembly is called upon to examine anew the Cyprus issue and take whatever proper and efficient steps it deems necessary to adopt.
