

The Illegal Declaration of the "TRNC" in 1983 AN ACT OF AGGRESSION BY TURKEY AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

The massive invasion of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey in 1974 initiated a military aggression against the island that tragically has continued unabated for more than three decades. From the onset, this aggression



Ruins of a hospital in Nicosia following air attacks by Turkey in 1974.

created, imposed and has since maintained a status quo of military occupation, forcible division, violation of human rights, massive colonization, cultural destruction, property usurpation and ethnic segregation. Turkey also instigated and supported separatist acts by the Turkish Cypriot leadership against the Republic of Cyprus. This policy culminated with the "unilateral declaration of independence"

by the Turkish Cypriot leadership in occupied Cyprus in 1983. This secessionist move, in direct collusion with Turkey, attempted to establish the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" ("TRNC") and dismember the independent, sovereign Republic of Cyprus. This blatant act of secession was universally condemned and declared legally invalid by the UN Security Council. As a result, no country but Turkey recognises it.

Old plan

The unilateral declaration of independence of the occupied part of Cyprus was part of Turkey's long-held expansionist designs with regard to the island. It is in line with a series of steps aimed at establishing a Turkish state on the island, creating a homogeneous ethnic foothold under Turkey's control. This policy of partitioning Cyprus dates back to the 1950s as evidenced by public statements of Turkish political leaders and maps of Cyprus produced at the time. Partition of the island was rejected by the UN special mediator on Cyprus, Galo Plaza. In his report in 1965, Galo Plaza rejected the idea of partition, affirmed the right of Cyprus to remain independent and united, opposed the physical separation of the two communities on the island and clearly implied that the Turkish leadership was following a policy of self-segregation with partitionist designs. Turkey rejected the Plaza report, caused his resignation and tried to implement its partitionist objectives by force of arms in 1974.

The Republic of Cyprus

Cyprus became an independent Republic on 16 August 1960 on the basis of the 1959 Zurich and London Agreements negotiated by Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities had no substantial role in their drafting or in the drafting of the constitution and were never given the opportunity to vote on them. In effect, both the agreements and the constitution of the nascent republic were imposed on the people of Cyprus. The constitution emphasised differences between Greek and Turkish Cypriots thereby encouraging divisive rather than integrative tendencies between the two communities. Greek Cypriots were determined to strengthen the unity of the state but the Turkish side sought ethnic segregation and geographic separation. There were sporadic intercommunal clashes in 1963-1967 and air attacks and threats to invade by Turkey. Turkish Cypriots ceased to participate in the government. UN sponsored intercommunal talks to reach a settlement were held during 1968-1974; intercommunal tensions subsided and violence virtually disappeared during this period. Progress was reported in the talks but the process came to an end due to the tragic events in the summer of 1974.

Pretext for Invasion

On July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus with massive military force. The pretext was a criminal coup against the President of Cyprus, on July 15, instigated by the military junta of Greece. Turkey put into operation its plan to partition Cyprus. Despite the swift collapse of the coup and the restoration of the legitimate government of Cyprus, Turkey undertook a second wave of invasion in August, in violation of UN ceasefire agreements, and expanded its occupation to nearly forty per cent of the Republic's territory.

In a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing, Turkey in 1974 occupied 36.2% of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus and forcibly expelled more than 160.000 Greek Cypriots from their homes and properties. These displaced people, who in effect became refugees in their own country, constituted 70% of the population of the occupied areas and about one quarter of the total population of the island. To this day, these persons are deprived of their right to return to their homes and properties.

Steps towards secession

Turkey's moves that followed the invasion of Cyprus were also indicative of its partitionist intentions:

- It forced the movement of the Turkish Cypriots from the south part of the island to the northern area under its military occupation, giving them homes and properties of Greek Cypriots who were driven away from their land.
- It has increased the population in the occupied areas with over 160.000 colonists from Turkey in a clear attempt to change the demographics and population ratio on the island. In 2004 alone, 40.000 new settlers came illegally from Turkey.
- It has driven out of the occupied areas the 20.000 Greek Cypriots who remained there after the invasion. The denial of their fundamental human rights by the occupying power and their subjection to constant harassment by illegal settlers from Turkey gave them no alternative but to leave. Only 535 Greek Cypriots remain in the occupied areas.

A Turkish province?

Even though the northern occupied part of Cyprus was the richest and most developed part of the island at the time of the invasion, Ankara's policy of integrating the area with Turkey has brought economic ruin, forcing thousands of Turkish Cypriots to emigrate to other countries. Illegal settlers now outnumber the Turkish Cypriots by almost two to one. There are only about 88.000 Turkish Cypriots compared to the more than 160.000 Turkish settlers. There are also 43.000 Turkish occupation troops.

Over the years, the illegal regime set up in the occupied area has been erasing all evidence of Hellenic heritage in the northern part of the island. Greek place names that had survived Ottoman rule, were given Turkish substitutes. Churches were destroyed, turned into mosques or stables or put to other uses. Ancient monuments were left unprotected, while works of art were illegally removed and sold on the international black market. This systematic destruction of cultural heritage is further proof that Turkey's partitionist designs for Cyprus were designed to be permanent.

The occupied area has increasingly taken on the character of a province in Turkey. The area's economy depends totally on Turkey; the Turkish lira and not the Cyprus pound is the legal tender; the postal code for the occupied area is 'Mersin, Turkey'; and Turkish troops are seldom out of sight.

A dangerous precedent

Through UN Security Council resolutions 541 of 1983 and 550 of 1984, the international community strongly condemned the unilateral declaration of an independent state by the Turkish side, declared it legally invalid, and called for its immediate withdrawal. As a result, no country in the world has recognized the illegal regime, except Turkey, which funds it and exercises virtual control over it.

A series of other UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as resolutions adopted by other international organisations,



UN buffer zone along the 1974 ceasefire line in Nicosia.

reflect the universal condemnation of Turkey's aggression against Cyprus; demand the return of the refugees to their homes in safety and the tracing of the missing persons; and call for respect for the human rights of all Cypriots as well as for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus. Moreover, the European Court of Human Rights has found the government of Turkey responsible for gross and systematic violations of human rights in occupied Cyprus.

Efforts to solve the Cyprus problem

Successive rounds of UN-sponsored talks since 1974, between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to resolve the Cyprus problem and reunite the country, have been undermined by the Turkish side, which has sought a settlement that in effect would leave Cyprus permanently divided and hostage to foreign interests. The Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, have been insisting on the genuine reunification of the island and its people.



Repeated rounds of talks under UN auspices have been held in an effort to solve the Cyprus problem.

- The right of all Cypriots to acquire property and to live wherever they chose without restrictive quotas; and
- A functional government without deadlocks or voting restrictions based on ethnicity.

In an age when barriers elsewhere in Europe have been dismantled, the forcible division of Cyprus is an anachronism maintained by Turkey for purely expansionist reasons to the detriment of all the people of the island, who lived peacefully together for centuries and should be allowed to do so again. Their future lies in a united, independent, bicomunal, federal republic where human rights and fundamental freedoms will be safeguarded, as stipulated in all the relevant UN resolutions and envisaged by the European Union, to which Cyprus was admitted on 1 May 2004.

As the President of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, said: **"What we are demanding is very reasonable and what we are aiming at is self-evident. We are demanding and aiming at the reunification of our country and our people in the framework of a bicomunal bizonal federation. A state with one economy, a cohesive society and non-fragmented institutions. We are demanding and aiming at the safeguard of our fundamental rights and of our basic freedoms. We are demanding a solution which can be workable and lasting in order to serve the interests and rights of all Cypriots and not of other countries."**



The latest UN effort resulted in the presentation of a plan by the Secretary-General for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. On 24 April 2004 the people of Cyprus were asked to approve or reject, through separate, simultaneous referenda by the two communities, the Secretary-General's proposal (Annan Plan V). A clear majority of 75.8% Greek Cypriots rejected the proposed Annan Plan because they felt that the finalised text, which incorporated arbitrarily many last minute demands by Turkey, was not balanced and did not meet their main concerns regarding security, functionality and viability of the solution. By their vote the Greek Cypriots obviously did not reject the solution to the Cyprus problem which remains their primary objective. They only rejected the particular plan which was put before them. Moreover, they have not turned their backs on their Turkish Cypriot compatriots who approved the plan by 64.9%, with thousands of illegal Turkish settlers voting with them in the referendum. On the contrary, they have been working towards a solution that will meet the expectations of both communities. The "no" vote is a legitimate expression of the real concerns for a seriously flawed plan which, among other weaknesses, did not provide for:

- The removal of the foreign troops and settlers from Cyprus and the elimination of the right of foreign powers to unilaterally intervene in Cyprus;
- Adequate guarantees to ensure that the commitments undertaken by the parties involved would be carried out;
- A property recovery system that appropriately recognised the rights and interests of displaced Greek Cypriots who were forced from their homes in 1974, and a property compensation arrangement that did not require Greek Cypriots to fund their own restitution;

RESOLUTION 541 (1983) Adopted by the Security Council on 18 December 1983

The Security Council,

Having heard the statement of the Foreign Minister of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus,

Concerned at the declaration by the Turkish Cypriot authorities issued on 15 November 1983 which purports to create an independent State in northern Cyprus,

Considering that this declaration is incompatible with the 1960 Treaty concerning the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee,

Considering therefore that the attempt to create a "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", is invalid, and will contribute to a worsening of the situation in Cyprus,

Reaffirming its resolutions 365(1974) and 367(1975),

Aware of the need for a solution of the Cyprus problem, based on the mission of good offices undertaken by the Secretary-General,

Affirming its continuing support for the United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's statement of 17 November 1983,

1. Deplores the declaration of the Turkish Cypriot authorities of the purported secession of part of the Republic of Cyprus;
2. Considers the declaration referred to above as legally invalid and calls for its withdrawal;
3. Calls for the urgent and effective implementation of its resolutions 365(1974) and 367(1975);
4. Requests the Secretary-General to pursue his mission of good offices in order to achieve the earliest possible progress towards a just and lasting settlement in Cyprus;
5. Calls upon the parties to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in his mission of good offices;
6. Calls upon all States to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment of the Republic of Cyprus;
7. Calls upon all States not to recognise any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus;
8. Calls upon all States and the two communities in Cyprus to refrain from any action which might exacerbate the situation;
9. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council fully informed.



WORLD FEDERATION OF OVERSEAS CYPRIOTS

Britannia Road, London N12 9RU, UK

Tel.: +020 84459999, Fax: +020 84459977, E-mail: secretary@nfcypriots.org
P.273 / 2005 - 20.000 Printed by: Zavallis Litho Ltd

