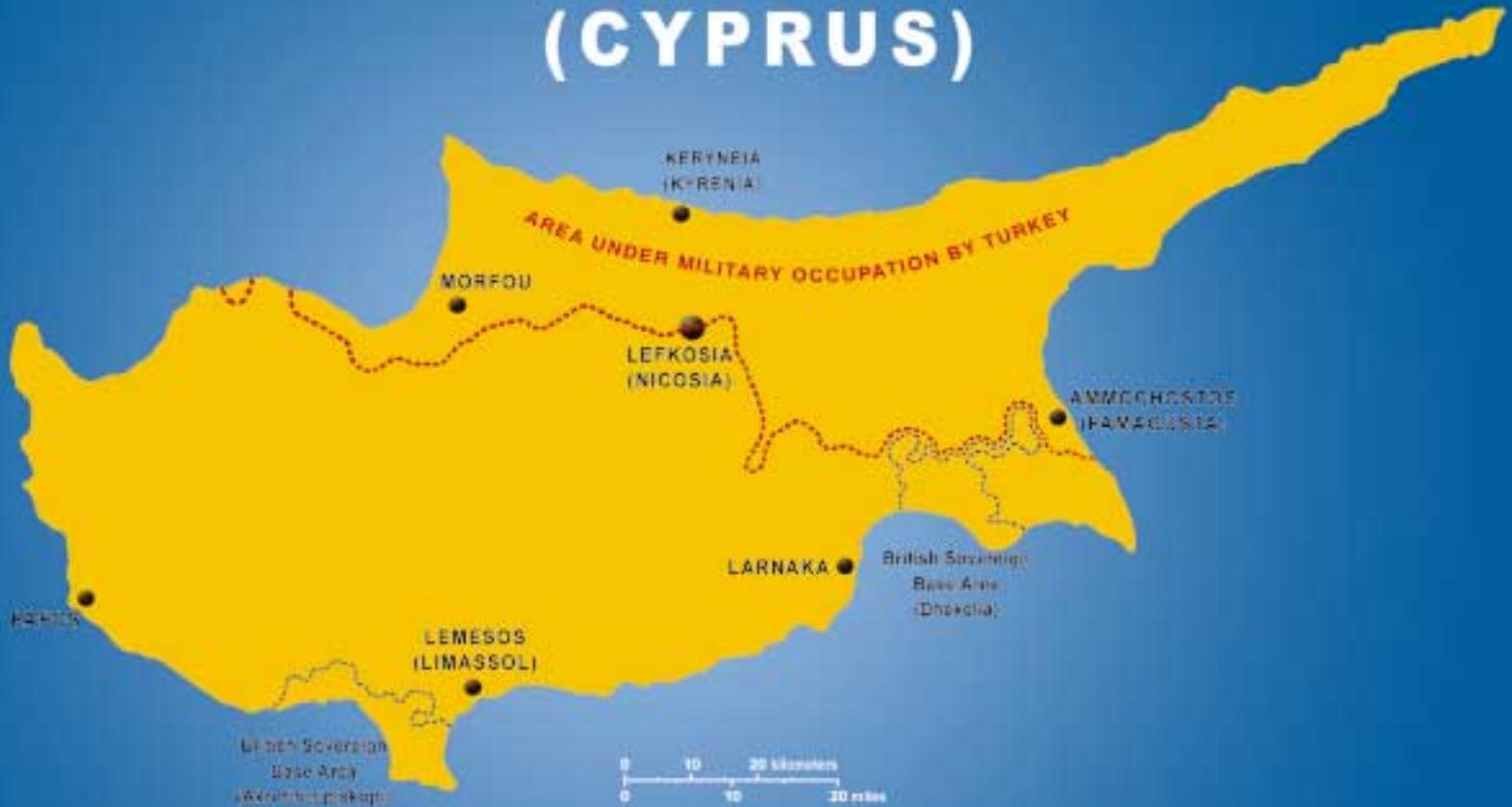




KYPROS (CYPRUS)



Cyprus remains forcibly divided since 1974, when Turkey militarily invaded and subsequently occupied nearly forty percent of the country's northern sovereign territory. Through its occupation, Turkey has implemented a geographic separation of the population of Cyprus along ethnic lines, by forcing the Greek Cypriots out of their homes in the occupied areas and moving the Turkish Cypriots out of their own homes and into the occupied areas.

The forcible division of Cyprus and the illegal prohibition of movement across the UN ceasefire line, imposed by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, led to a relative "isolation" of Turkish Cypriots, depriving them of government services and other benefits and opportunities available to all Cypriot citizens irrespective of ethnic origin.

Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot leadership created additional problems for Turkish Cypriots through their secessionist policies.

The purported secession of the occupied areas from the Republic of Cyprus through a “Unilateral Declaration of Independence” to establish the so-called “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” [“TRNC”] in 1983, exacerbated the situation. **The international community immediately and categorically condemned this secessionist move, while the UN Security Council itself declared the act “legally invalid” and called for the withdrawal of the “UDI”.** The Council subsequently called on all states not to assist or cooperate in any way whatsoever with the secessionist entity. It also called upon all states not to recognize any state on Cyprus other than the Republic of Cyprus.

On the one hand, they were not allowed to carry official documents of the Republic of Cyprus, which they were entitled to as citizens of the Republic, or make use of services and facilities, including the legal ports and airports of entry and exit on the island. On the other hand, their own leadership forced Turkish Cypriots to carry documents issued by an illegal regime, not recognized by the international community, thereby restricting their international transactions and creating serious legal and other problems for them.

Following the failure of the “Annan Plan-V” in the 2004 referendum, because the majority of Cypriots felt that the proposed Plan did not satisfy the fundamental concerns of both communities, **there has been talk about ‘easing’, ‘lifting’ or ‘ending’ the isolation of Turkish Cypriots and bridging the “economic disparity” between the two communities on the island.** Regrettably, this has led to widespread **misinformation** and some **questionable proposals**, ostensibly to change the situation. **Turkey even misled** some in the international community into believing that the Government of Cyprus and the Greek Cypriot community are, somehow, responsible for the predicament of the Turkish Cypriots.

The Turkish side has used this novel approach of easing Turkish Cypriot “isolation” to divert attention from Turkey’s ongoing aggression on Cyprus in view of Ankara’s EU aspirations, and to upgrade politically the illegal regime in Turkish occupied Cyprus.

In essence, they have been seeking to secure, for Turkey’s subordinate local administration in occupied Cyprus, economic attributes of an independent state without formal international recognition. This would allow the illegal regime in occupied Cyprus to operate, but without any incentive for the reunification of the island.



In order to gain international support for their actions, Turkish leaders have adopted, as their main argument, the **misleading slogan** of “ending the economic isolation” of Turkish Cypriots when, in fact, **their goal has been all along political.**

But any moves promoting the de facto recognition of the illegal secessionist entity would be in direct violation of international law and UN Security Council resolutions, especially resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984). Such moves would also undermine efforts for the reunification of Cyprus, which is the declared position of the UN, the EU and the international community at large, as well as of the two Cypriot communities themselves.

The plight of the Turkish Cypriot community is the direct result of Turkey’s aggression on Cyprus, which keeps the country, its people, its institutions and its economy forcibly divided. It is also the result of misguided policies by Turkish Cypriot leaders who have consistently promoted Turkey’s interests at the expense of their own community and of Cyprus as a whole. It is certainly not the result of any action taken by the Government of Cyprus, which has sovereignty over all Cyprus, and which abides by its obligation to defend its sovereign rights and the rule of law.

The record clearly shows that the military occupation of northern Cyprus by Turkey has victimized both communities on the island, in different ways, and is, along with the Turkish Cypriot leadership that is answerable to Ankara, directly responsible for whatever sense of “isolation” Turkish Cypriots may have experienced.

For example:

- **Turkey keeps the island, the two communities, its institutions and its economy separated**, thereby preventing normal interaction and transactions by Turkish Cypriots within Cyprus and abroad and depriving them of essential services provided by the Government.
- **Turkey has, until recently, prevented Turkish Cypriots from acquiring passports**, identity cards and other official documents that all Cypriot citizens are entitled to and which facilitate travel as well as other essential activities and transactions in Cyprus and internationally. These documents allow Turkish Cypriots to enjoy EU benefits such as study, work and live anywhere within the Union, and enjoy diplomatic and consular protection in third countries.
- **Turkey has flooded the occupied areas with more than 160.000 illegal settlers from Anatolia** creating economic, social, demographic and, ultimately, political problems for the Turkish Cypriots and for Cyprus as a whole. **Low-paid settlers from Turkey, who currently outnumber Turkish Cypriots by two to one, pushed Turkish Cypriots out of their own labour market causing much of their relative economic deprivation.**
- **Turkey introduced the Turkish lira in the occupied areas in 1983**, causing high inflation and other serious economic and social problems for the Turkish Cypriots. This and other similar steps designed to integrate the economy of the occupied areas with that of Turkey, subjected Turkish Cypriots to many of the disadvantages of the Turkish economy.

- **Turkey has controlled the economy of the occupied areas through conditional aid**, direct instructions and management, creating an inefficient and corrupt system, with disastrous results for the Turkish Cypriots.
- **Turkey has since 1980 been behind the rejection by Turkish Cypriot leaders of confidence-building measures**, including several concerning trade, because, although resulting in benefits and ending the “isolation”, such measures would not promote the international recognition of the illegal regime in occupied Cyprus.
- **Turkey is behind the rejection by Turkish Cypriot leaders of substantial financial assistance from the EU** for the Turkish Cypriot community and the implementation of trade regulations and other constructive proposals by the Government of Cyprus that would greatly benefit Turkish Cypriots.
- **Turkey created the illegal situation in northern Cyprus that led to European Court of Justice decisions**, which have determined restrictions on exports from the occupied areas of Cyprus; and, it is this illegal situation, which prevents the implementation of the EU *acquis communautaire* in northern Cyprus.
- **Turkey prevents the export of Turkish Cypriot goods and services through the legal ports and airports** in the government-controlled areas. The Government of Cyprus has even offered special arrangements to Turkish Cypriots for this purpose at **Larnaca Port**, but their leadership and Ankara discourage them from availing themselves of these facilities.

In other words, Turkey prevents Turkish Cypriots from realizing their full potential and enjoying the benefits and opportunities emanating from their status as citizens of Cyprus and the EU.



The Government of Cyprus was concerned about the economic situation of Turkish Cypriots long before the Annan Plan. It has demonstrated its good intentions toward their economic development and welfare through the adoption of practical and tangible policy initiatives designed to benefit the people directly.

Clearly, only the genuine reunification of Cyprus that provides for the reintegration of its people and economy can improve the situation of the Turkish Cypriots, allow them to realize their full potential and share the benefits of EU membership. The top priority of the Government, therefore, is to end the artificial division of Cyprus.

But even under the prohibitive conditions of military occupation and division, the Government has always extended to Turkish Cypriots, where possible, a number of essential services, including free supply of electricity, pensions and social security benefits, and sharing of international economic and other assistance secured by the Government of Cyprus. It has also provided protection for Turkish Cypriot properties in the government-controlled areas.

Repeatedly, however, the Turkish Cypriot leadership and Ankara rejected proposals by the Government of Cyprus that would have benefited Turkish Cypriots. For example, the invitation to the Turkish Cypriot community to join the Cyprus delegation for the EU accession negotiations was turned down by their leader, depriving them of the opportunity to participate in that important historic process.

The Government also proposed and strongly supported the EU Regulation on Financial Assistance of 259 million euro to benefit the Turkish Cypriot community. Unfortunately, there were efforts by others to attach political and other stipulations for its release. Significantly, it is again the Turkish Cypriot leadership, backed by Ankara, which has denied Turkish Cypriots much of that substantial economic assistance by forfeiting half of the funds, and by risking losing the rest as well.

The Cyprus Government has been better able to provide services to Turkish Cypriots since the partial lifting in 2003 of illegal restrictions imposed by the Turkish side on the free movement of people across the UN ceasefire line.

Turkish Cypriots have since been able to work, in increasing numbers, in the government-controlled areas, earning income estimated at more than 700 million dollars so far, and enjoy an expanded range of benefits, including free medical care. Their economy has also benefited greatly from the millions of crossings by Greek Cypriots and foreign tourists to the occupied areas.

There have been more than 10 million crossings of people and nearly 3 million crossings of vehicles across the ceasefire line since 2003.

The substantial increase in economic activity and trade across the ceasefire line since 2003 has been a major factor in the rising per capita income of Turkish Cypriots, which has more than doubled in the last two years to about \$11,000.

These peaceful, incident-free crossings have also destroyed the myth cultivated for years by Turkish propaganda that the two communities cannot live together and must therefore be kept separated.

In order to facilitate increased transactions between the two communities, the Government has proposed further steps: the opening of at least eight additional crossing points along the ceasefire line; the clearing of minefields along the buffer zone; the disengagement of military forces from the walled part of the capital city of Nicosia and others.

While steadfastly promoting efforts for a **comprehensive settlement to the division of Cyprus**, the Government also continues a systematic policy designed to foster trust and reconciliation between the two communities and to promote conditions for the ultimate reunification of Cyprus. The Government has already implemented a series of such tangible measures that have yielded visible results.

Policy initiatives by the Government, unilaterally or in cooperation with the EU (such as the **EU Green Line Regulation**), facilitate intra-island trade for agricultural goods produced by the Turkish Cypriot community

as well as their export through legally operated ports and airports of Cyprus. **Regrettably, the Turkish Cypriot leadership, always backed by Ankara, refuses to implement many of these measures for political considerations, thereby depriving Turkish Cypriots of additional significant economic and other benefits.**

The Turkish side seems to hold out for the prospect of external “direct trade” through illegally operated ports and airports in occupied Cyprus, an idea not justified by economic considerations, but pursued as a political goal to promote the secessionist regime. In this context, **“direct trade” has become a code term for an effort to legitimize an illegal situation in the territory of Cyprus, an EU member-state, where the EU has suspended the *acquis communautaire* because the area is under military occupation by Turkey.**

“Direct trade” and “direct flights” through ports and airports operated by the secessionist regime in occupied Cyprus are contrary to the rule of law, in violation of Cyprus’ sovereign rights, and counterproductive in the efforts to achieve a genuine reunification of Cyprus in the context of a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem.

The reintegration of Turkish Cypriots into the international community can be accomplished, legally and comprehensively, only through the effective reunification of Cyprus and not through the upgrading of the illegal regime in occupied Cyprus, which is Turkey’s subordinate local administration.

There are **legal and more effective ways** to advance both the economic development of Turkish Cypriots, and the reunification of Cyprus, for the benefit of all its citizens. A number of such proposals, including the opening and joint operation by the two communities of the **Port of Famagusta** under EU supervision, proposed by the Government of Cyprus, are on the table for the Turkish side to consider.

The constructive approach of the Government of Cyprus toward the Turkish Cypriot community will continue and will help to strengthen the foundations for reunification and reconciliation.

It is therefore imperative that those in the international community, who genuinely wish to contribute to the economic development of Turkish Cypriots, and the cause of reunification of Cyprus, do so in cooperation with the Government of Cyprus and in ways that violate neither the rule of law nor the sovereign rights of Cyprus.

Only the reunification of Cyprus and the reintegration of its economy can adequately address the political and economic welfare of the people of Cyprus as a whole.

Encouraging separatist tendencies in the occupied areas under the false banner of “ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots,” or other politically motivated schemes currently promoted by Turkey, will do little to enhance the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community.

To the contrary, **such ideas divert attention from Turkey’s continuing aggression against Cyprus that keeps the island divided and from Ankara’s failure to abide by its obligations to the EU**, including the opening of its ports to ships carrying the Cyprus flag. They also **inhibit the political will and discourage initiatives** to address the core issue at hand, which is the solution to the division of Cyprus. **As such, these proposals help to solidify the illegal situation created by Turkey in northern Cyprus, victimizing Turkish Cypriots even further.** They also set back the cause of reconciliation and lasting peace on the island and in the region.

The Government of Cyprus will continue to expand its integrative policy initiatives unilaterally and in cooperation with the EU Commission and its EU partners while pursuing a viable settlement on Cyprus that will reunify the country and its people, reintegrate its economy and satisfy the fundamental concerns of all its citizens.



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