



National Federation of Cypriots in the UK

Εθνική Κυπριακή Ομοσπονδία Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου

Working for a Free, United Cyprus

Rt Hon Boris Johnson
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

20 July 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

I acknowledge that I am writing at an extremely difficult time not only for the United Kingdom, but globally with the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. On behalf of our 300,000 strong diaspora I want to express our support for the extremely difficult mission that the Government is undertaking to address the global COVID19 and to protect the people of the United Kingdom. We'd like to reassure you as our Prime Minister, that we are doing our utmost, to support the most vulnerable British Citizens of Cypriot origin, during this extraordinary time.

Today, UK Cypriots mark the tragic 46th anniversary of the illegal Turkish invasion and subsequent military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus – a member of the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the European Union. Sadly, still no resolution to the injustices committed by Turkey on the island has been found and the island remains divided. This tragic anniversary is a poignant one for the UK Cypriot community, many of whom are refugees and are desperate to return to their homes and to see a free, united Cyprus.

Today, we also mourn one of the most tragic consequences of the Turkish invasion - the people who are still missing. The relatives of these Cypriot citizens who went missing, still do not know the fate of their loved ones. Turkey refuses to cooperate fully and has prevented access to certain key areas (for example military camps) and has also not provided sufficient information about relocated remains and mass burial sites. The United Kingdom can make a real contribution on this issue immediately by urging Turkey to release all the information that it has.

We remain steadfast in our belief that a reunited Cyprus where all Cypriots could peacefully live and prosper together is both attainable and viable - a solution that is based on the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and High-Level Agreements. The reunification of the island would also further elevate the country as an international and regional hub. Unfortunately, efforts to reunify the island have not yet produced a successful outcome due to Turkey's continued unacceptable demands about its own influence in a reunified Cyprus.

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A complete list of member organisations and the names of all of the current officers and members of the Secretariat of the Federation can be found on the Federation's website.

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Turkey's insistence on maintaining a 'right of unilateral intervention' and a permanent military presence on the island, subject to a review clause, cannot be accepted as part of the security structure of a modern 21st century country. Just as our Government and Parliament opposed the idea of a backstop in the EU Withdrawal Agreement (because it would leave the UK subject to EU rules and regulations without a unilateral right of exit), so the Republic of Cyprus cannot be subject to a security arrangement that does not include a unilateral right of exit, or sunset clause. Cyprus needs a security system that will provide safety for all communities on the island, not one that will enable third countries to continue to exercise influence in a reunited Cyprus.

Our community, as well as the wider international community, are becoming deeply concerned by President Erdogan's increasingly aggressive and authoritarian policies towards Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean region. Forty-six years ago, Turkey invaded Cypriot soil with tanks and today it is invading Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf with drill-ships and warships. Indeed its 7th illegal drilling attempt commenced only two days ago on 18 July. Such activities are a breach of International and European Law and the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus, and we welcome HMG's opposition to the drilling.

In relation to Cyprus, the United Kingdom remains a crucial player. Not only does it have historic treaty obligation under the Treaty of Guarantee which it signed in 1959, it also maintains military bases on the island, and it is Cyprus's partner in the Commonwealth and the United Nations. The UK is also a strategic ally of Turkey, with whom we are currently negotiating a Free Trade Agreement. Ankara ought to realise that the only way to deal with the problems she herself creates, is through a decisive and constructive dialogue that will lead us to a solution based on the relevant UN Resolutions, High level Agreements and the principles upon which the United Nations were founded.

Over the last forty-six years the world has changed enormously, and the UK has played a positive role in advancing and defending the principles of justice, human rights, democracy and international law. The Foreign Secretary made clear earlier this month that as the UK leaves the EU that the Government is "absolutely committed to the United Kingdom being an even stronger force for good in the world". The UK Government has led the international community's response to acts of aggression by other countries, therefore we urge our Government to consider the actions that it can take to encourage Turkey to respect Human Rights and the Rule of Law and to engage constructively to find a solution that reunites Cyprus and its people.

You have the power to make a lasting difference in relation to Cyprus and, on this tragic anniversary, I urge you to exercise this proactively and constructively.

Yours sincerely,

Christos Karaolis
President, National Federation of Cypriots in the UK

Cc: Rt. Hon. Sir Roger Gale MP, Chair APPG for Cyprus,
Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, Mike Freer MP