



The Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale M.P.

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Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office,
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8th September

I am writing to you as Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Cyprus, with the support of our cross-party group of Officers, regarding the recent announcements about the planned illegal re-opening and settlement of the fenced off areas of Varosha. The APPG has received representations on this matter from our Secretariat, the National Federation of Cypriots in the UK.

Sadly, efforts over the years to enable the citizens of Famagusta to return to the city they were forced to abandon during the Turkish invasion in 1974 have been met with the refusal by Turkey and its illegal regime in the occupied part of Cyprus, despite numerous decisions by the UN to re-open the ghost town, namely, Security Council resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992) and the High Level Agreement of 1979 between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders.

A proposal was put forward by H.E. the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades in February 2019, to establish a Technical Committee on the Reconstruction and Resettlement of the fenced area of Varosha with International and Greek and Turkish Cypriot experts. This Committee would evaluate the situation of properties in Varosha so that the legitimate residents may return safely to their city once the technical work is completed. This proposal, which was resubmitted to the UN Secretary General in August 2020, has the undoubted potential to act as a substantive confidence building measure.

Rather than engaging constructively in reaching a solution, in February this year, the Turkish Vice President Oktay, whilst participating in a roundtable in the occupied area on reopening the ghost town, stated that Varosha belongs to the secessionist regime and it should open under its administration. Similar statements have been made by President Erdogan's Spokesman Ibrahim Kalin. This was followed in August, with a statement from Ersin Tatar, the self-proclaimed 'prime minister' of the occupation regime, who reiterated the plans to re-open the ghost town adding that he was "confident about Turkey's support", following a meeting with President Erdoğan,

As you are aware, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992) consider any attempts to settle any part of Varosha by people other than its legal inhabitants as inadmissible and calls for the transfer of this area to UN administration. Therefore, the reported plans to re-open and re-settle Varosha would clearly contravene these and subsequent UN Security Council Resolutions and create a fait accompli that would have a devastating effect and conceivably damage irrevocably the prospects for a Cyprus settlement and reunification of the island.

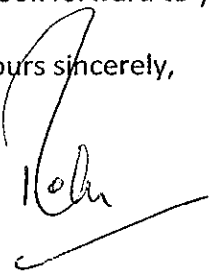
We cannot underestimate or downplay the statements made or intentions telegraphed by senior Turkish officials. We are already witnessing Turkey's belligerence and actions, including its illegal activity in the waters off Cyprus, which only serve to fuel instability in the Eastern Mediterranean. A reopening of Varosha in the manner promoted by Ankara and the occupation regime would no doubt seriously, if not irreversibly, harm the prospects for reaching a Cyprus settlement on the agreed basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. Such a prospect would not serve the interests of Cyprus, nor, may I add, would it serve UK interests.

The statements and posturing emanating from Turkey must be of grave concern to the United Kingdom as Guarantor Power of the Republic of Cyprus's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Moreover, the United Kingdom maintains military bases on the Island within close proximity of Famagusta/Varosha at Dhekelia and is of course Cyprus's partner in the Commonwealth.

Therefore, I urge the Government to consider all measures and pre-emptive actions that it can take to ensure that Varosha is not re-opened in a manner that contravenes UN resolutions and that it clearly voices in a strong and unequivocal manner its public opposition to such a possibility. It is, in our view, incumbent on the British Government to do so and to stand firmly on the side of international law and UN resolutions.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Gale', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rt. Hon. Sir Roger Gale MP

Co-signatories

Vice-Chair: Bambos Charalambous MP

Vice-Chair: Christine Jardine MP

Vice-Chair: Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP

Secretary: Jack Dromey MP