



THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

10 August 2021

Excellencies,

I am writing in response to the statement of the Greek Cypriot head of delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) distributed to all members of the OSCE PA on 21 July 2021. Since the Greek Cypriot side has, once again, opted to exploit the absence of the Turkish Cypriot side in international platforms in order to further its political agenda, I am obliged to respond in order to set the record straight.

The Greek Cypriot representative distorts the realities on the ground, as usual, regarding the fenced-off area of Maraş. At the outset it should be underlined that fenced-off area of Maraş is part of the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), where the TRNC Government has sole jurisdiction and authority.

Over the course of many decades, the fenced-off area of Maraş has become a major symbol of the status-quo in Cyprus. Rejection of all the plans for an agreement and the Confidence Building Measures containing the fenced-off area of Maraş by the Greek Cypriot side, made it necessary to take steps towards the fenced-off area of Maraş. It is an undeniable fact that leaving the fenced-off area of Maraş closed in its current condition is in the interest of no one.

The steps taken by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the fenced-off area of Maraş are in line with international law and the protection of private property.

In July 2021, TRNC Government has lifted the military zone status of a pilot area which corresponds to %3.4 of the fenced-off area of Maraş. The purpose of this decision was to enable the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) to process the property claims as this was previously not possible due to the military status of the area. Majority of the Greek Cypriot property owners welcomed the decision of the TRNC.

For the pilot area in question, the IPC will now be able to process and decide on the applications made through any one of the remedies in place, namely, restitution, compensation and/or exchange. IPC

was established in 2005 by the TRNC and is recognized as an effective domestic remedy by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) with the authority to deal with applications and deliver decisions on the property claims by providing remedies in the form of restitution, compensation and/or exchange.

Therefore, all the steps that have been taken in the fenced-off area of Maraş by TRNC are in line with the UNSC resolutions. The opening of the fenced-off area of Maraş should be seen as a humanitarian act which will be economically beneficial to both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot peoples.

Regarding the efforts to find a freely negotiated and mutually acceptable settlement in Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot representative is, yet again, attempting to disinform the international community and conceal the fact that more than fifty years of negotiations carried out on a federal settlement framework have decisively failed because of the categorical rejection of the Greek Cypriot side to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot people. The Greek Cypriot side's continuation to pay lip service to such a settlement is solely aimed at keeping the Turkish Cypriot side trapped in an endless negotiating process while it continues to reap the benefits of the unacceptable status quo. The Greek Cypriot side should no longer be allowed to consume the resources as well as the time of the international community to further its own anachronistic political agenda.

In view of the foregoing, it is unfortunate that instead of acting in line with the call of the United Nations Secretary General that "*this time must be different*", the Greek Cypriot leadership insists on the said "tried and failed" framework during the recent informal five plus UN meeting held in Geneva in April 2021, effectively preventing meaningful discussions on a new and realistic basis that could finally yield a positive outcome. As was put on record during the informal five plus UN meeting, the Turkish Cypriot side is ready to negotiate a cooperative relationship based on two States with sovereign equality and believes that this is the only best option paradigm to achieve a win-win outcome on the island.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Önder Sennaroğlu
Speaker of the Parliament of the
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus