**46th Session of the UPR
Statement by Türkiye
30 April 2024
(75 seconds)**

Mr. President,

May I take this opportunity to draw attention to the human rights situation of Turkish Cypriots, who are one of the two equal parties together with Greek Cypriots in Cyprus.

The long standing issue of unjust isolations imposed on Turkish Cypriots is a major human rights violation. Trade, sports, travel, communication, cultural events and education restrictions as well as denial of right to representation in international fora still continue today.

We expect the international community to lift the unjust and illegal restrictions imposed on Turkish Cypriots.

Despite continuous calls, the Greek Cypriot side has not yet established a Turkish school in Limassol.

Only four mosques in the Greek Cypriot side are open during working hours, thus restricting and preventing the Turkish Cypriots and other Muslims from practicing their religion.

The attacks against Turkish Cypriots visiting South Cyprus are on the rise. Most recently eight young Turkish Cypriots were attacked in Troodos.

Education system should not breed hatred against Turkish and Turkish Cypriot people.

Turkish Cypriot side is fully committed to resolving the issue of missing persons which is a humanitarian matter effecting both sides.

Lastly, given the baseless allegations, I would like to remind that Türkiye’s 1974 Peace Operation in Cyprus was carried out with the aim of preventing the Island’s annexation to Greece, within the framework of Türkiye’s rights and obligations as a Guarantor power under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee.

Thank you.

**THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

**COMMENTS OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT SIDE**

**ON THE GREEK CYPRIOT NATIONAL REPORT**

**Paragraph 3** of the national report disseminates false information. Türkiye as a guarantor power intervened on the island in 1974 to save the Turkish Cypriot people from total annihilation when the Greek-Greek Cypriot duo made a final attempt to illegally annex the island to Greece. The intervention of Türkiye was carried out under 1960 Treaty of Guarantee and it was fully legal. The only occupation in the island of Cyprus is the occupation of the Government of the now defunct Republic of Cyprus by Greek Cypriots.

Furthermore, the two politically equal peoples of the island have not been living together since the destruction of the then Republic of Cyprus by the Greek Cypriots through force of arms in 1963.

None of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Cyprus have ever referred to the legitimate and rightful Turkish intervention as “invasion” or “occupation”.

The only occupation on the Island is the one committed by the Greek Cypriot side towards the Partnership Republic back in 1963, through the blatant violation of the Constitution and the inherent rights of the Turkish Cypriot people.

**ON THE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (COMPILATION ON CYPRUS)**

The reference to Turkish Cypriots in **paragraph 47** under the heading “Minorities” is totally unacceptable. According to the 1960 International Treaties of Cyprus there are two politically equal peoples in the island of Cyprus namely Turkish Cypriot people and the Greek Cypriot people. Minorities in the island are Latins, Maronites and Armenians. Therefore, references to Turkish Cypriots in this paragraph is misleading and erroneous.

The terminology reflected in the last paragraph of the compilation report, **paragraph 53**, is not compatible with the UN terminology. It should be reiterated once again that the rightful intervention of Türkiye to the island in 1974 has not been defined as “illegal occupation” either in UN Security Council Resolutions or in the relevant UN documents.

Reference in **paragraph 90** to the so-called “persistent division of Cyprus” as the main impediment for reporting on human rights issues pertaining to North Cyprus is a misrepresentation of the reality of the situation. In fact, the main impediment is the refrainment on the part of the international community to cooperate with the Turkish Cypriot side. The Turkish Cypriot side stands ready to become a part of the international system and has taken unilateral steps towards this end, by incorporating international instruments on human rights into its constitution and legal system. Hence, we hope and trust that the international community will rid this impediment, of which itself is a contributor, and cooperate with the Turkish Cypriot side in this regard.

Any report on the situation of human rights in Cyprus should include a reference to the **unjust and inhuman isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots** by the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus for decades. This is an important omission in the Report.

For more than 50 years, the Turkish Cypriot people have been prevented from exercising their basic human rights deriving from principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights without any meaningful and tenable explanation or justification.

It is evident that the obstructionist attitude of the Greek Cypriot side is in violation of the right to development of Turkish Cypriot people which needs to be given effect also as a collective right and not only as an individual right. As enshrined in the UN declaration on right to development, right to development is “*an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized*.”

None of the UN Security Council resolutions call for actions with the effect of isolating Turkish Cypriot people, nor legitimize any of the restrictions imposed upon Turkish Cypriot people.

It should be recalled that the then Secretary-General in his Report, dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), stated that “*there exists no rationale for pressuring and isolating the Turkish Cypriots”* and asked for *“a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)”.*

Against this background, all-encompassing isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people ranges from denial of their right to representation in international fora (i.e. Turkish Cypriot people are prevented from representing themselves at international institutions like United Nations and its bodies etc.); the prevention or restriction of their travel abroad (i.e. no direct flights, travel documents not accepted) and their communication with the outside world (i.e. no post and telecommunication except Turkey); the hindrance of trade and tourism with the outside world, and the hampering of all cultural and sporting relations of the Turkish Cypriot people with other countries. For example, Turkish Cypriot people are prevented from participating at international cultural and sporting events such as Olympics, Eurovision, FIFA and UEFA activities.

In addition, recently, Turkish Cypriot Ombudsman, İlkan Varol, received an official invitation to speak at the panel themed “Human Rights in Global Crises” at the International Ombudsman Conference held in Rome. However, Ombudsman İlkan Varol’s speech on “Human Rights Violations” to be made on 22 September 2023 was cancelled at the last minute, as a result of the obstructionist efforts of the Greek Cypriot delegation at the conference. At this time and this age, freedom of opinion and expression of the Turkish Cypriot side, which is a fundamental human rights principle, is being violated. This shows that the Greek Cypriot side cannot even tolerate a Turkish Cypriot voice, even on topics such as human rights.

Participation of Turkish Cypriot London Tourism Office to Matka tourism fair organised in Finland on January 2024 was also prevented at the last minute due to Greek Cypriot obstructions.

Furthermore, Greek Cypriot Administration has been continuing to blackmail certain flag states forcing them to issue circulars so as to hinder the entrance of the vessels carrying the flags of these states to the Turkish Cypriot seaports, by threatening them with legal consequences, despite the fact that there exist no embargos *vis-a-vis* Turkish Cypriot seaports, which has also been confirmed by the European Commission on repeated occasions. This is clearly to be seen as yet another attempt by the Greek Cypriot side to hamper the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot people.

With references to **paragraphs 16-23** under the heading of the **right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture**, and a**dministration of justice including impunity and the rule of law** it should be recalled that the issue of **missing persons** in Cyprus affects both the Turkish Cypriot side and the Greek Cypriot side. For the Turkish Cypriot People, this tragedy dating back to 1963.

Between 1963 and 1974 hundreds of Turkish Cypriots were kidnapped from their work places, homes or roads, never to be seen or heard of again. Hence, a considerable number of Turkish Cypriots went missing before the events of 1974.

It is also a known fact, supported by available statistical data, that the majority of the 493 Turkish Cypriot missing persons since 1963 are innocent civilians, including women and children whereas the majority of the 1508 Greek Cypriot missing persons are military personnel.

Given the fact that most of the Turkish Cypriot missing cases dates back 60 years, it is an urgency that the grievance of the relatives of the missing persons is not unnecessarily prolonged and they are given the opportunity for a proper closure as soon as possible, also keeping in mind that the relatives are elderly, yet still in quest for finding their peace, before they themselves depart this life.It is therefore of paramount importance that the Greek Cypriot side refrains from politicizing such a humanitarian matter as it has been the case with the excavation in Atlılar village. Regretfully, the excavation in the village of Atlılar, where Turkish Cypriot civilians, all women and children, were buried in mass graves after their tragic massacre in 1974, could only commence with unnecessary delays.

Even though the burial site was known for decades, and all three members of the CMP had agreed to commence with the excavation at the Atlılar Village in the first half of 2023, the Greek Cypriot member stepped back and withdrew his consent two days before the excavation was due under the pretext of sustaining the proportionality between the numbers of the identified Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot missing cases. However, after being exposed to massive pressure, the Greek Cypriot side was forced to reconsider its decision and the committee could commence with the excavations as of the end of July 2023, almost half a century after the tragic massacre took place.

It is our expectation that the report denounces the unacceptable approach of the Greek Cypriot side of politicizing such a humanitarian issue so as to encourage the Greek Cypriot side to refrain from similar actions in the future, which give rise to nothing but unnecessary prolongation of the grievance of the relatives and leave them in uncertainty regarding the whereabouts of their beloved ones, also depriving them of a proper closure.

The Turkish Cypriot side on its behalf is committed to resolve the issue of missing persons and has not only been contributing effectively to the work of the CMP including providing all information at its disposal as early as in 1998 from archives, in collaboration with Türkiye, the Greek Cypriot side, as well as Greece, who maintained troops on the island during that time are yet to deliver on the request of the CMP to provide information from the relevant archives. The Turkish Cypriot side has also established a Missing Persons Unit under the Directorate-General of the Police which conduct investigations into the missing cases under the supervision of the Attorney-General’s Office which starts to work on the files after CMP hands over the case files to it.

The Turkish Cypriot side has been doing its utmost on this humanitarian issue affecting both sides to assist and contribute to the work of the Committee of Missing Persons (CMP) so that CMP successfully delivers its mandate under these circumstances.