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Letter dated 9 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I am writing to you concerning the statement made by the representative of Greece during the general debate of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

As for the remarks by the Prime Minister of Greece regarding Cyprus, we stress the need to set the record straight. The Cyprus dispute is not an issue of “invasion” or “occupation”, but an issue of the renewal of a partnership between the co-owners of the island, which was destroyed by the Greek Cypriot side in 1963. The division in the island began in 1963 when the Greek Cypriots expelled Turkish Cypriots from the partnership State organs and institutions, as well as from their homes, in violation of the treaties of 1960 and all human rights norms. From 1963 to 1974, the Greek Cypriots conducted an armed ethnic cleansing campaign against Turkish Cypriots, who had to live in enclaves under siege corresponding to 3 per cent of the surface of the island. When this culminated in a coup d’état in 1974, aimed at annexing the island to Greece, Turkey was left with no other option but to exercise its rights emanating from the treaties of 1960, within the framework of its rights and obligations as a guarantor power. Since then, Turkish forces have been the only factor preventing the repetition of earlier tragedies.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate Turkey’s support for a just and lasting settlement to the Cyprus issue, as was clearly demonstrated once again in the last round of talks that ended with failure in Crans-Montana in 2017. Only a negotiated settlement that is based on dialogue and diplomacy can be sustainable. We will continue to engage with all the relevant parties with this understanding.

As the country with the longest continental coastline, Turkey has legitimate rights and vital interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, in line with international law, Turkey has been fully exercising its sovereign rights over its continental shelf, the outer limits of which were registered with the United Nations. We deplore the unilateral hydrocarbon-related activities of the Greek Cypriot side in the Eastern Mediterranean, which jeopardize regional security and stability. Turkey is determined to protect her continental shelf rights, as well as those of the Turkish Cypriots in the region.



Lastly, Turkey is fully cognizant of the Security Council resolutions on Maraş (Varosha). Ongoing scientific inventory work is conducted by the Turkish Cypriot authorities to ascertain and study the condition of movable and immovable properties in the area, as well as the environmental risks. Any future steps in the fenced area of Maraş will be completely in line with international law, while protecting and respecting the rights of former inhabitants of the town. It is noteworthy that former Greek Cypriot inhabitants of Maraş have expressed their support for this initiative, as this will eventually enable them to go back to their properties.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative
