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Letter dated 12 November 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention another incident which took place during the past months, within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and the continental shelf of the Republic of Cyprus.

On 25 July 2013, while the research vessel *RV Odin Finder*, under Italian flag, was conducting a survey in the south-west part of Cyprus' EEZ, in relation to the future installation of an undersea cable system that will provide advanced telecommunications facilities to the offshore oil and gas industry in the Eastern Mediterranean, its activity was obstructed by the Turkish Navy and it was forced to leave the area.

It should be underlined that *RV Odin Finder* was duly licensed by the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus for the purposes of said survey.

According to the results of the relevant investigation carried out by the Cyprus Police, the incident occurred as follows:

- On 25 July 2013, 1440 UTC, while the *RV Odin Finder* was sailing between exploration blocks 1 and 7 (34°13'16"N, 32°00'43"E) in the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus, it was approached to a distance of 500 metres by a vessel of the Turkish Navy.
- The Turkish military vessel called the captain of the *RV Odin Finder* via VHF 16 and later 72 and asked for the vessel's details and intentions.
- When all the requested information was conveyed, the Turkish Navy requested the *RV Odin Finder* to clear the area, on the pretext that it was a contested area, and instructed it to steer on course 192° (this route would lead *RV Odin Finder* to the exclusive economic zone of Egypt).
- *RV Odin Finder*, after contacting the companies involved in the project, remained in the area until 1700 UTC, when it decided to enter the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and continue its survey there. While the



RV *Odin Finder* was sailing in Cyprus' EEZ the Turkish Navy followed its movements from a distance of approximately one nautical mile.

The Republic of Cyprus proclaimed its EEZ in 2004 through the enactment of the Exclusive Economic Zone Law, Law No. 64(I)/2004. Furthermore with regard to its continental shelf, Cyprus enacted the Continental Shelf Law, Law No. 8/74. At all times during the incident described above, RV *Odin Finder* was within the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus, carrying out the survey for which it was duly licensed.

The actions of the Turkish military vessel described above, in relation to RV *Odin Finder*, constitute unlawful acts attributable to the Republic of Turkey, aiming at scaring away said vessel from the area and disrupting its licensed activities, thus interfering with the lawful exercise by the Republic of Cyprus of its rights with regard to its continental shelf and EEZ, including its rights under articles 56.3 and 79 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which reflect customary international law.

It is evident that Turkey has once again operated outside international law. In the light of the above incident, Turkey is once again called upon to abide by international law and respect the rights of coastal States in accordance with customary international law.

I should thus be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 76, and of the Security Council, and published in the next Law of the Sea Bulletin.

(Signed) Nicholas **Emiliou**
