



FORUM: Security Council (SC)

TOPIC: The Situation in Cyprus

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POSITION: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Katerina Giannakopoulou-Moumouri. I am 18 years old and I just graduated from the 1st Model High School of Athens. Currently, I am studying political science at the University of Peloponnese and I am as intrigued as you all are for this committee's topics. I have been in the chair position a few times in the past and I am more than excited to serve as your deputy president at this year's AMLMUN conference. Please get in touch with me if you have any queries about the policies, guidelines or study guides. My email is: katherinemoumouri@gmail.com

Kindest regards,

Katerina Giannakopoulou - Moumouri

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The situation in Cyprus constitutes one of the most long-lasting and complex geopolitical conflicts in the euro-mediterranean region. Cyprus, being situated on the cross-path of Europe, near Asia and Africa, has been marked by a de facto division since the summer of 1974.

The Cyprus situation's contemporary history dates back to 1878, when Great Britain took administrative control over the island and declared it a crown colony in 1925. During the period of British rule, the island's two main population groups, meaning the Greek Cypriots, who constituted the majority, at approximately 80%, and the Turkish Cypriots, who constituted the minority, at approximately 18%, developed diametrically opposed political orientations.¹ The Greek Cypriot majority, influenced by the ideal of nationalism, sought the "Enosis" (union) of the island with Greece, a demand that intensified in the post-war period within the context of the global movement for the self-determination of peoples. The Turkish Cypriot community, concerned about the prospect of falling under Greek rule as a minority, gradually

¹ *Demographic Structure of the Cypriot Communities*, pace.coe.int/files/6916/html Accessed 07 Sept. 2026.



adopted the policy of "Taksim" (partition) or, alternatively, the restoration of Turkish sovereignty, with political and diplomatic support from Ankara.

In 1955, failure to reach a solution through peaceful negotiations led the Greek Cypriot nationalist guerilla group EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) to launch an armed insurgency against British colonial rule. Facing domestic pressure, Britain encouraged Turkey's involvement and exacerbated intercommunal tensions. In order to avoid further conflicts, in 1960, Cyprus was proclaimed a sovereign state. Its constitution stipulated that the President would always be a Greek Cypriot and the Vice-President a Turkish Cypriot, with both having veto power over critical issues. Simultaneously, Great Britain retained two Sovereign Base Areas at Akrotiri and Dhekelia as military bridgeheads, while Greece, Turkey, and Britain were designated as "Guarantor Powers" with the right to unilateral military intervention to restore constitutional order, according to the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee.

The new state proved to be institutionally fragile. In December 1963, President Makarios proposed 13 amendments to the Constitution, named the "13 Points", which were rejected by the Turkish Cypriot leadership and Ankara. Violent intercommunal clashes ensued, known as "Bloody Christmas", resulting in the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriot officials from state institutions, the creation of institutional enclaves and the deployment of the first UN peacekeeping force (UNFICYP) in 1964.

The 1960s and early 1970s were marked by political instability, secret negotiations and the strengthening of paramilitary organizations on both sides, such as EOKA B on the Greek Cypriot side, led by General Georgios Grivas. The animosity reached its peak in the summer of 1974. In July 15, 1974, the Greek colonels' dictatorship, in collaboration with EOKA B, organized and carried out a coup d'état aimed at overthrowing President Makarios and imposing a regime that would lead to "Enosis". Later, in July 20, 1974, Turkey, invoking its role as a Guarantor Power under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, launched a large-scale military invasion, codenamed "Operation Attila". Finally, in August of 1974, despite the collapse of the Greek junta and the restoration of democracy in Greece and Cyprus, a second round of Turkish military operations led to the occupation of 37% of the island's territory.²

The invasion had devastating humanitarian consequences. Hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots were displaced from their ancestral homes in the north and fled to the south, while, conversely, Turkish Cypriots moved en masse to the north. The island was de facto divided by a demilitarized buffer zone, namely the Green Line, under UN supervision. In 1983, the Turkish Cypriot leadership in the northern part of the island, under Rauf Denktas, proceeded with the unilateral

² "Cyprus Crisis Erupts: History: Research Starters: Ebscohost." EBSCO, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/cyprus-crisis-erupts Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

declaration of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC), an entity condemned by UN Security Council Resolutions 541 and 550 and recognized solely by Turkey.

From 1974 to the present, the Cyprus problem has remained a suspended yet dangerous issue of international diplomacy. Negotiations have been conducted continuously under the auspices of the United Nations, aiming for a solution based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation (BBF) with political equality, as defined in relevant UN resolutions.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

De Facto

"The Latin phrase "de facto" means "in fact" or "in practice." It is used to describe a situation, a state of affairs, or an event that exists in practice and reality, regardless of whether it has been officially, legally, or theoretically recognized."³

De Jure

"The Latin phrase "de jure" means "by law" or "legally." It is used to describe a situation, a status, or a right that is officially recognized by law, rules, or official authorities."⁴

Veto

"The right to refuse to allow something to be done, especially the right to stop a law from being passed or a decision from being taken."⁵

Coup d'état

"A coup, short for coup d'état, (meaning a "stroke of state") is a sudden, illegal, and often violent overthrow of an existing government. It is typically carried out by a small group from within the state's own apparatus, such as military leaders, rebel forces, or political insiders, who seize control of key government institutions, communications, and power centers."⁶

³ Shrives, Craig. "What Does the Latin Term 'de Facto' Mean?" *What Does the Latin Term "de Facto" Mean?*, www.grammar-monster.com/Latin_terms/de_facto.htm Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

⁴ "De Jure." *Legal Information Institute*, www.law.cornell.edu/wex/de_jure Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

⁵ "Veto." *Veto Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.Com, www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/veto_1 Accessed 01 Sept. 2026.

⁶ "Coup-d'état Definition & Meaning." *Better Words*, www.betterwordsonline.com/dictionary/coup-d'%C3%A9tat Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

Junta

“A junta (often called a military junta) is a committee of military leaders that seizes control of a country's government by force, usually following a coup, and rules the nation by decree instead of through standard democratic procedures.”⁷

Paramilitary organization

“An armed group that operates similarly to a professional military force, but is not part of an official, state-recognized national military. These groups often support political movements, carry out security functions, or engage in armed conflicts during periods of civil unrest.”⁸

Enosis

“Enosis, meaning “union” in Greek, is the Greek Cypriot political movement advocating for the union of Cyprus with Greece. Rooted in nationalism, it was strongly opposed by Turkish Cypriots and became a primary catalyst for the island's conflicts.”⁹

Taksim

“Taksim, meaning “partition” in Turkish, was the political goal pursued by Turkish Cypriots and Turkey in response to Greek Cypriot “Enosis”. It advocated dividing the island of Cyprus into separate Turkish and Greek sections.”¹⁰

Right to Self-Determination

“Self-determination is the right of a country to be independent, instead of being controlled by a foreign country, and to choose its own form of government.”¹¹

Legislature

“A legislature is the official branch of government responsible for making, changing, and repealing laws. In a democratic system, it typically consists of elected

⁷ Team, Editorial. “What Is a Military Junta?” *AeroCorner*, 23 Oct. 2025, aerocorner.com/blog/what-is-a-military-junta/ Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

⁸ *Paramilitary | Definition, Forces, & Examples | Britannica*, www.britannica.com/topic/paramilitary-armed-force Accessed 07 Sept. 2026.

⁹ *Enosis - Definition of Enosis by the Free Dictionary*, en.thefreedictionary.com/enosis Accessed 07 Sept. 2026

¹⁰ “. ” History behind the Headlines: The Origins of Conflicts Worldwide. . *Encyclopedia.Com*. 9 Jul. 2026 .” *Encyclopedia.Com*, 7 Sept. 2026, www.encyclopedia.com/history/energy-government-and-defense-magazines/cyprus-island-divided Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

¹¹ *Self-Determination Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary*, www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/self-determination Accessed 01 Sept. 2026.

representatives, such as a parliament, congress, or assembly, who debate issues, vote on legislation and represent the interests of the citizens.”¹²

Condominium

“In international law, a condominium is a political territory over which two or more sovereign states exercise shared sovereignty, administration, and joint dominion equally, without dividing the land into separate national zones or annexing it individually.”¹³

Acquis Communautaire

“The accumulated body of European Union legislation, legal acts, court decisions, and political objectives that all EU member states must accept, implement, and adhere to as a binding condition of membership.”¹⁴

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

“An ocean area extending up to 200 nautical miles from a coastal nation's baseline, over which that state holds sovereign rights to explore, exploit, conserve, and manage living and non-living natural marine resources.”¹⁵

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Early History of Cyprus

Cyprus was inhabited in 9000 BC by farming societies, with the locals having their own Eteocypriot language and the land being a part of the Hittite Empire until the 4th century BC. However, afterwards, it was seized by Alexander the Great and then ruled by the Ptolemaic Egypt until 58 BC. In the 4th century AD, it was part of the Byzantine Empire and, in 649, it was invaded by the Umayyad Caliphate and its Arab army. In 668, it was established as condominium from both sides and in 965 it was recaptured by the Byzantine empire. Later, in 1192, after the third crusade, Cyprus was governed by the Lusignan family, who established the Kingdom of Cyprus. Despite

¹² “Legislature: History: Research Starters: Ebscohost.” EBSCO, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/legislature Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

¹³ “Condominium (International Law).” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 19 Aug. 2026, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Condominium_\(international_law\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Condominium_(international_law)) Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

¹⁴ *Acquis Communautaire - Oxford Public International Law*, opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1717 Accessed 07 Sept. 2026.

¹⁵ Written by Benefits.com Advisors Updated May 13, 2024, et al. “Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).” *Benefits.Com - We Make Government Benefit Program Information Easier to Understand*, benefits.com/glossary/exclusive-economic-zone-eez/ Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

the creation of the new Kingdom, the island was captured by the Republic of Venice in 1489 and then conquered by the Ottoman Empire in September of 1570.

The British Period

In 1878, the Ottoman Empire ceded the administration of Cyprus to Great Britain in exchange for support against the Russian Empire. In 1914, following the Ottoman Empire's entry into World War I on the side of the Central Powers, a coalition that consisted primarily of the German Empire and Austria-Hungary, Britain formally annexed the island, which was officially declared a British Crown Colony in 1925. In 1931, the urge of Greek Cypriots to unify with Greece led to open revolt, resulting in the death of six civilians, the injury of many and the burning of Britain's Government House. Consequently, Britain dispatched military forces on the island, and two bishops and eight other citizens were found guilty and exiled. The incident also led to the prohibition of waving Turkish or Greek flags, as well as making references to Greek or Turkish heroes. Moreover, during World War II, any intentions for reunification were put on hold. In 1946, the British announced plans to invite Cyprus to form a Consultative Assembly so as to discuss a new constitution. Despite their proposition, Cyprus refused, claiming that their sole purpose was to unify with Greece.

The EOKA Struggle (1955–1959)

On April 1, 1955, EOKA, under the political leadership of Archbishop Makarios III and the military leadership of Georgios Grivas, also known as “Digenis”, launched an armed guerrilla struggle against the British. The United Kingdom responded with harsh repressive measures, such as exiles, curfews and death sentences for fighters. At the same time, Ankara established the Turkish Cypriot organization TMT (Turkish Resistance Organization) in response to EOKA, bringing the two communities to the brink of civil war.

The Birth, Functional Crisis and Collapse of the Republic of Cyprus (1960–1963)

The Zurich-London Agreements (1959–1960)

Unable to suppress the struggle or resolve the conflict through force, the governments of Britain, Greece, and Turkey, along with the leaders of the two communities, Archbishop Makarios for the Greek Cypriots and Fazıl Küçük for the Turkish Cypriots, reached the Zurich-London Agreements. These negotiations resulted in the adoption of the Treaty of Establishment, Treaty of Guarantee and Treaty of Alliance. Consequently, in August 1960, after these discussions, Cyprus was proclaimed an independent, sovereign state.

The 1960 Constitution of Cyprus and the Treaty of Guarantee

The new Constitution was one of the most complex in the world, based on a bi-communal power-sharing arrangement. Firstly, concerning the executive power, the President was required to be a Greek Cypriot and the



Vice-President a Turkish Cypriot, each holding veto rights over matters of foreign policy, defense, and security. Secondly, the legislature was divided into separate communal assemblies, while a ratio of 70% of Greek Cypriots to 30% of Turkish Cypriots was imposed on the public administration. For the police and army, a 60-40 rate was enforced.¹⁶

On August 16, 1960, the Treaty of Guarantee was signed. Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain were designated Guarantor Powers of Cyprus's independence, territorial integrity, and Constitution, with the right of unilateral military intervention to restore constitutional order. According to the treaty, the UK retained two Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) at Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

The Collapse and "Bloody Christmas" (1963)

The complex institutional framework led to the paralysis of the state apparatus, as the right of veto was frequently exercised by the Turkish Cypriot leadership for lesser issues such as taxation. In November 1963, President Makarios submitted a proposal for 13 constitutional amendments to resolve the deadlocks, such as the abolition of the veto. The Turkish Cypriot side and Ankara rejected the proposal.

On December 20-21, 1963, incidents of intercommunal violence erupted, triggered by a routine police incident in Nicosia, which were known as "Bloody Christmas". As a result, there were hundreds of casualties and Turkish Cypriot officials withdrew or were removed from state institutions, while their community retreated into fortified enclaves under the control of the TMT. In 1964, the UN deployed the UNFICYP, and the first "Green Line" was established in Nicosia by British General Peter Young.

The 1974 Crisis: Coup, Invasion, and De Facto Partition

During the 1964–1974 period, negotiations continued without result, while internal friction intensified within the Greek Cypriot camp, between President Makarios and the paramilitary organization EOKA B, which was openly supported by the military dictatorship of the colonels in Athens. The conflict reached its peak in the summer of 1974, resulting in the division of the island.

Chronology of Events (July – August 1974):

July 15, 1974

The military junta in Athens, led by Dimitrios Ioannides, orchestrated and carried out a coup in Cyprus with the participation of EOKA B, overthrowing President Makarios and installing Nikos Sampson as the coup-imposed president.

¹⁶ 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, www.tc-america.org/issues-information/1960-constitution-of-the-republic-of-cyprus-87.htm Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.



July 20, 1974

Turkey, invoking Article 4 of the Treaty of Guarantee, launched a large-scale military invasion known as "Operation Attila" – Phase I, landing troops in the north part of the island, in Kyrenia, and capturing 3% of the island, before a ceasefire was declared.¹⁷

July 23, 1974:

The military dictatorship in Greece collapsed under the weight of the crisis and democracy was restored with the return of Konstantinos Karamanlis as Prime Minister. In Cyprus, Nikos Sampson resigned, and Glafkos Clerides assumed the presidency on an interim basis.

July 25, 1974 - August 14, 1974

In July and August 1974, two Geneva conferences were held regarding the Cyprus problem, seeking peace between the Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, and the Guarantor Powers. In the first summit, on 25-30 July, the three Guarantor Powers signed the Geneva Declaration on Cyprus, which focused on establishing ceasefire lines and security zones supervised by the UNFICYP, while calling for the evacuation of occupied Turkish enclaves. Moreover, the second conference was held on August 8-14, in which Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots participated as well, for further talks. One of the focal points to be discussed was that of an immediate return to constitutional legitimacy. However, due to disagreements between Greece and Turkey, the efforts collapsed.

August 14-16, 1974

On August 14, 1974, after the Geneva conferences failed, Turkey launched a second military offensive, the "Operation Attila" – Phase II, occupying the north fraction of the island and capturing 37% of the total territory of the Republic of Cyprus, including the cities Famagusta and Morphou.¹⁸ Two days later, on August 16, a ceasefire took effect, which was overseen by the UNFICYP.

¹⁷ The Greek Herald. "Operation Attila: Turkey Launches Its Invasion of Cyprus in 1974." *The Greek Herald*, 19 July 2023, greekherald.com.au/culture/history/operation-attila-turkey-launches-its-invasion-of-cyprus-in-1974/ Accessed 23 Aug. 2026.

¹⁸ "Cyprus Crisis Erupts: History: Research Starters: Ebscohost." EBSCO, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/cyprus-crisis-erupts Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

Map of the divided Cyprus¹⁹

Humanitarian Consequences

After the second phase of operation Attila, more than 160,000 Greek Cypriots were displaced from the north to the south, losing their properties. Similarly, approximately 45,000 Turkish Cypriots relocated from the south to the north, completing the total separation of the two communities with this population exchange.²⁰ Furthermore, hundreds of soldiers and civilians from both groups went missing during the conflicts, an issue that has since been investigated by the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP). Many incidents of sexual violence, especially against Greek Cypriot women, have also been reported, committed mainly by the Turkish armed forces.

Moreover, both sides have been accused of numerous crimes. More specifically, Turkey has been found guilty by the European Commission of Human Rights for displacement of persons, deprivation of liberty, life and possessions and ill treatment. Additionally, extensive destruction of cultural heritage and religious sites still continues in the region of Cyprus under Turkish occupation. Lastly, Turkey has transferred 150,000-160,000 settlers from mainland Turkey, an effort condemned by the UN as a deliberate attempt to alter the demographic character of the island, shift the balance of power in the occupied region, and prejudice resolution of the Cyprus conflict.²¹ On the other hand, Greece has committed massacres of Turkish Cypriot civilians in several villages, which have reportedly been unpunished.

The Partition and the Diplomatic Framework for Resolution (1974–Present)

On November 15, 1983, the Turkish Cypriot leadership, under Rauf Denktaş, unilaterally declared the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC). This action

¹⁹ Andronikos, Pavlos. "Σ.Ε.Κ.Α. Victoria." *The Cyprus Issue*, www.seka.org.au/cyprus_issue.htm Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

²⁰ *Frozen Conflicts - A Field Atlas*, frozenconflicts.net/cases/cyprus Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

²¹ Watch, Genocide. "Genocide Warning: Cyprus." *Genocidewatch*, 3 Mar. 2021, www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-warning-cyprus Accessed 01 Sept. 2026.

was unanimously condemned by the UN Security Council in Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), which deemed the secession legally invalid and called upon states not to recognize it. To this day, Turkey remains the only country to recognize it.

Since 1974, the UN Security Council has issued dozens of resolutions defining the framework for a solution. The internationally accepted model is the Bizonal, Bicomunal Federation (BBF), which proposes the establishment of a single federal state consisting of two distinct zones, each managed largely by its respective community, hence the bizonal aspect of it. Regarding the bicomunal section, power-sharing and governance would be split equally between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

Moreover, the most organized and comprehensive effort to reach a settlement took place under the auspices of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2004. According to the Fifth Version of the Annan Plan, a “United Cyprus Republic”, following the BBF framework, was to be established. The aforementioned plan was put to separate, concurrent referendums for each community on April 24, 2004. Greek Cypriots decisively rejected it by 76%, despite the fact that 65% of Turkish Cypriots supported it.²²



The results of the Annan Plan Referendum²³

One week after the referendums, on 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus officially joined the European Union (EU) as a full member. Under Protocol 10 of the Accession Treaty, the application of the *Acquis Communautaire* was suspended in the northern part of the island, in which the government of the Republic of Cyprus did not

²² “UN Plan Fails in Cyprus: Implications for Turkey, the European Union, and the United States.” *The Washington Institute*, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/un-plan-fails-cyprus-implications-turkey-european-union-and-united-states Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

²³ “Y.T.C (@young_turk_cyp) on X.” *X (Formerly Twitter)*, 13 June 2025, x.com/Young_Turk_Cyp/status/1933512922791084248 Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

exercise effective control, until a comprehensive solution was reached. EU accession drastically altered the balance of power, transforming the Cyprus problem into a European issue, while simultaneously providing the Greek Cypriot side with a strong diplomatic foothold.

Recent Developments and Diplomatic Deadlock (2017–2026)

The Disagreement at Crans-Montana (2017)

After years of negotiations, the UN-sponsored conference on Cyprus was held in July 2017 in Crans-Montana, Switzerland. However, significant disagreements between the Turkish and Greek/Greek-Cypriot sides prevented a resolution. While the former insisted on maintaining a military presence and the right to intervene, the latter advocated for the withdrawal of armed forces and the abolition of Guarantees.

The Shift Toward the "Two-State Solution"

After 2017, and particularly following the rise of Ersin Tatar's leadership within the Turkish Cypriot community and the hardening of Ankara's stance, the Turkish side officially abandoned the negotiating basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. It now openly advocates for a solution of two separate sovereign states and sovereign equality between them—demands that are categorically rejected by the UN Security Council and the Republic of Cyprus as being contrary to relevant resolutions.

Energy Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean

Over the past decade, the discovery of natural gas reserves within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Cyprus has further complicated the geopolitical landscape. Turkey challenges Cyprus's maritime boundaries by conducting unauthorized drilling operations and signing memoranda contested by Greece, Cyprus and other parties, such as the 2019 Turkey-Libya Memorandum, a course of action that has sparked heightened tension in the Eastern Mediterranean and led to sanctions from the European Union.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Republic of Cyprus

Since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, and particularly following the events of 1974, the Cyprus problem has been the decisive factor that has shaped the life, politics and development of the island in multifaceted ways. The de facto division of the island, the military occupation of the northern part and the existence of the Green Line create a persistent climate of uncertainty and insecurity between the two communities. Additionally, the problem of missing persons, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees and the loss of their properties constitute enduring open wounds for the Cypriot society. Simultaneously, the restriction of contact between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots hinders social cohesion.

Moreover, the cost associated with the constant military presence, the loss of productive resources, property-related issues and the fiscal burden of defense affect the country's economic growth. Nevertheless, the Republic of Cyprus has managed to develop a strong economy, albeit one that is clouded with the possibility of a crisis. Lastly, regarding the foreign policy of the Republic of Cyprus, it is largely shaped by efforts to end the occupation, the implementation of UN resolutions and the leveraging of its EU membership to find a viable and functional solution. Hence, Cyprus strongly supports the UN-proposed Bizonal Bicommunal Federation, maintaining it is the only acceptable solution for reunification.

Greece

Greece is a Guarantor Power and a close ally with the Republic of Cyprus, since the majority of the island is Greek Cypriot, sharing religion, language and heritage. In the 1960s, Greece had sustained a military contingent in Cyprus, according to the Zurich-London Agreements, while the Greek military junta supported a coup against President Makarios, which was followed by the Turkish invasion in 1974.

Both nations are full members of the United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Greece provides diplomatic support by advocating for Cyprus across international bodies such as the UN and EU, upholding its sovereign rights. Greece proposes a Bi-zonal, Bi-communal Federation with a single sovereignty, aligned with UN Security Council resolutions, strictly rejecting a two-state division. Moreover, a requirement of the Greek government is the "complete withdrawal of Turkish troops and the abolition of the outdated 1960 system of interventionist Guarantees to render Cyprus a fully sovereign, "normal" state", as stated.²⁴ Greece does not recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as a country, maintaining that the Republic of Cyprus is the sole legitimate government of the island.

Turkey

Turkey is one of the most significant actors in the Cyprus problem, being one of the three Guarantor Powers. The issue of the division of the island became entrenched after their military intervention on the island, invoking their rights as a Guarantor Power, and their successful occupation of the northern part of Cyprus. Furthermore, Turkey does not recognize the Republic of Cyprus, while being the only nation that recognizes the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as a sovereign country. Ankara also maintains restrictions on Cypriot-flagged vessels.

²⁴ "Turkey 'will Not Step Back on Guarantees in Cyprus' until Turks Assured of Security - World News." *Hürriyet Daily News*, www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-will-not-step-back-on-guarantees-in-cyprus-until-turks-assured-of-security--115059 Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

Turkey strongly supports the Turkish Cypriot community. More specifically, they provide diplomatic assistance through their international recognition of the TRNC, while backing the Turkish Cypriots' offshore claims in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Turkish state subsidizes and funds development projects in the northern area of the island, as well as participating in hydrocarbon exploration and drilling activities in areas that the Republic of Cyprus deems to fall under its jurisdiction. Finally, they maintain a substantial military presence on the island.

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

The TRNC plays an important role in the Cyprus issue. Declared unilaterally by Turkish Cypriots in 1983 following Turkey's 1974 military intervention, it exercises de facto control of the northern third of the island. The TRNC seeks international recognition as a sovereign state, as well as a settlement based on two sovereign and equal states, a framework known as "taksim". However, it is recognized only by Turkey. Furthermore, it disregards the UN-proposed BBF solution, deeming it "unsuccessful and unrealistic, as a result of the intransigent stance of the Greek Cypriot side, due to their unwillingness to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot People".²⁵ The United Nations and the international community view the TRNC's territory as part of the Republic of Cyprus, maintaining that any long-term resolution must come through UN-backed negotiations for a reunited, bizonal federation. Lastly, international embargoes, except for Turkey, are placed on the TRNC, since no direct trade, air travel and shipping are allowed, while goods between the TRNC and the Republic of Cyprus can be traded under strict limitations, thanks to the EU Green Line Regulation.

United Kingdom (UK)

The United Kingdom took administrative control over the island and ruled it for 82 years, until Cyprus's independence in 1960. Nowadays, both Britain and Cyprus are members of the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations. Britain's position on the Cyprus matter is affected by the two nations' historical connection, which is further accentuated by the fact that it is still a Guarantor Power. Although the island is now an independent and sovereign state, the UK retains two Sovereign Base Areas on Akrotiri and Dhekelia, which are of strategic importance as part of the UK's overseas defence network. The United Kingdom does not recognise the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as a sovereign nation, only the Republic of Cyprus, yet maintains certain contacts with the Turkish Cypriot community. Lastly, it has

²⁵ "Current Situation on the Island." *KKTC Dışişleri Bakanlığı*, mfa.gov.ct.tr/pages/current-situation-on-the-island Accessed 01 Sept. 2026.



historically supported UN-led efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement between the two communities, advocating for the BBF framework.

European Union (EU)

The European Union worked as a strong incentive for a solution during the pre-accession period, when Cyprus was not yet part of the Union. Throughout the 1990s and up to 2004, the prospect of Cyprus's accession served as a powerful driving force for achieving a comprehensive solution, culminating in the UN-led Annan Plan process, which was shaped partly by the requirements of the EU.

On May 1, 2004, the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU. As no solution had been reached prior to the island's accession, the Cyprus problem was transferred into the European institutional framework, with the conflict becoming an internal EU issue. In addition, the application of the *Acquis Communautaire* was suspended in the northern areas in which the Republic of Cyprus does not maintain control. Cyprus's accession guaranteed citizens important legal protection and rights through European law, yet simultaneously created a new reality regarding the status of Turkish Cypriots. More specifically, the EU attempted to provide financial support to them by establishing the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, so as to promote the idea of reunification and bring the aforementioned community closer to the EU. Lastly, Turkey's path towards EU accession was directly linked to the normalization of its relations with the Republic of Cyprus and the nation's contribution to a solution, issues that frequently led to diplomatic deadlocks and tensions in Brussels.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Since the 1970s, the OIC has issued numerous resolutions concerning the Cyprus issue. Initially, it called for equal treatment and a hearing for the Turkish Cypriot Muslim community in international forums, while gradually adopting stronger language in support of its rights. The Turkish Cypriot side participates in the proceedings of the OIC with observer status, initially as a Muslim community and later under the designation of "Turkish Cypriot State", a move Nicosia views as an attempt to upgrade the status of the internationally unrecognized regime in the occupied areas. Despite pressure from Turkey for the direct and official recognition of the TRNC by OIC member states, no such collective action has taken place. Furthermore, several Arab and Mediterranean Member States, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, often harbor reservations or express disagreement regarding extreme resolutions promoted by Ankara, thereby preventing the organization from fully aligning itself with Turkey's and Turkish Cypriot's demands for partition.

United Nations (UN)

Following the intercommunal unrest of 1963–1964, the UN established and deployed a peacekeeping force to Cyprus (UNFICYP) in March 1964. Its presence contained violence, prevented renewed large-scale hostilities and, after 1974, undertook the monitoring of the Green Line (Buffer Zone). The UN provided the legal and political framework through dozens of resolutions that define the basis for a solution to the Cyprus problem, such as a Bizonal, Bicomunal Federation with political equality, while declaring the self-proclamation of the TRNC legally invalid. Moreover, UN Secretary Generals have undertaken sustained good office initiatives. From time to time, they have put forward various plans and ideas, such as the Cuéllar Proposals and the Ghali Ideas, culminating in the 2004 Annan Plan, which was submitted to separate referendums for the two communities. The UN has served as a mediator at critical junctures, providing a forum for dialogue between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, as well as the involved countries and Guarantor Powers, meaning Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
October 21st, 1931	Revolution of Greek Cypriots demanding the union with Greece
1939	Cypriots fought with the British in World War II
April 1st, 1955	Creation of National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA)
August 16th, 1960	The British, Greek and Turkish governments signed the Treaty of Guarantee
December 20th-21st, 1963	The outbreak of intense intercommunal violence, known as “Bloody Christmas”
1971	Creation of EOKA B
July 20th, 1974	The first Turkish invasion, codenamed “Operation Attila” - Phase I
August 14th, 1974	The second Turkish invasion, codenamed “Operation Attila” - Phase II, which resulted in the occupation of the northern part of the island by Turkey
August 16th, 1974	A ceasefire agreement came into effect
November 15th, 1983	The Turkish Cypriot authorities declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus



	(TRNC) as an independent, sovereign state
November 18th, 1983	UN Security Council Resolution 541 considered the declaration of TRNC legally invalid
1992	UN-sponsored talks began between the two sides
May 10th, 2001	Turkey was found guilty of violations of human rights in 1974 against the Greek Cypriots by the European Court of Human Rights
April 24th, 2004	The Annan Plan was put to separate referendums for each community
May 1st, 2004	The Republic of Cyprus joined the European Union
June-July, 2017	The Crans-Montana Conference was held, without a solution being reached
2019	Both Athens and Ankara stated that they wanted to ease the tension between them through dialogue
November 25th, 2019	Guterres, the Secretary-General of the UN, Anastasiades, the President of Cyprus and Akinci, the President of Northern Cyprus had an informal dinner in Berlin and talked over the next steps on the Cyprus dispute
January 20th, 2020	The United Nations Special Envoy for Cyprus stated that there is scepticism whether or not the reunification is still possible ²⁶
2021	Recorded violations of Cyprus' airspace and territorial waters by the Turkish military

²⁶ Admin. "Un Envoy Says Cypriots Doubtful Reunification Will Ever Happen." *The National Herald*, 11 Nov. 2021, www.thenationalherald.com/un-envoy-says-cypriots-doubtful-reunification-will-ever-happen/ Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.



RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

United Nations Security Council Resolution 541 (1983)

Adopted on 18 November 1983, this resolution explicitly responded to the Turkish Cypriot unilateral declaration of independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on November 15, 1983. Its intended purpose was to denounce the secession, characterize the declaration of the TRNC as legally invalid and prevent international recognition of the breakaway state. It called upon all UN Member States not to recognize any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus. It successfully established an international legal firewall around the conflict. To this day, Turkey remains the only country that recognizes the TRNC, keeping it internationally isolated, while the Republic of Cyprus remains recognized globally as the sole legitimate government of the island.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 550 (1984)

Adopted on 11 May 1984, it reaffirmed Resolution 541, strongly condemned further secessionist actions, such as the exchange of ambassadors between Turkey and the TRNC, and specifically addressed the ghost town of Varosha, the fenced-off southern district of Famagusta. Its purpose was to block attempts to settle Varosha with anyone other than its original inhabitants and to increase diplomatic pressure against actions that solidified the island's partition. It demanded that Varosha be transferred to the administration of the United Nations. However, Varosha remained largely sealed off as an empty ghost town under military control for decades, serving as a powerful symbol of the unresolved status quo—until unilateral steps by Turkey and the TRNC in recent years to partially reopen parts of it sparked renewed international condemnation.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 649 (1990)

Adopted unanimously on 12 March 1990, this resolution took stock of stalled intercommunal talks and formally reaffirmed past high-level agreements between Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders from 1977 and 1979. Its purpose was to explicitly anchor the negotiation process to the concept of a Bizonal, Bicomunal Federation (BBF) with political equality, pushing both sides back to the negotiating table under the UN Secretary-General's auspices. As a result, it solidified the BBF model as the principal blueprint for any future UN-backed peace settlement, reflecting UN's preference of it over alternative models, such as a permanent partition or total unitarism.

Treaty of Establishment (1960)

The Treaty of Establishment is the founding legal treaty that formally declared the Republic of Cyprus as an independent, sovereign state. It settled the transfer of sovereignty from Great Britain to the new Republic, while installing permanent strategic military stipulations for the UK. Under this treaty, the United Kingdom legally retained permanent sovereignty and full control over two Sovereign Base Areas at Akrotiri and Dhekelia, which remain British overseas territory today and function as crucial military listening and staging posts in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Treaty of Guarantee (1960)

Signed by Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom upon independence, this treaty prohibited Cyprus from entering into any political or economic union, such as “Enosis” or partition, with any other state. Crucially, Article 4 gave the three Guarantor Powers the right to take joint action with the sole aim of reestablishing the constitutional order, or, if joint action was impossible, reserved the right for each power to take unilateral action. Turkey invoked Article 4 as the legal basis for its 1974 military intervention following the Greek junta-backed coup. Legal debate over whether Turkey’s intervention, and particularly the subsequent military operations and territorial control, fell within Article 4 is a major part of the Cyprus issue. To this day, the treaty remains a major bone of contention; Greek Cypriots view it as an outdated instrument of foreign interference that must be abolished, while Turkey and Turkish Cypriots view it as essential for their security.

Treaty of Alliance (1960)

A mutual defense pact signed between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey. It provided for the stationing of small, fixed contingents of Greek military forces, specifically 950 troops, and 650 troops of Turkish military forces on Cypriot soil.²⁷ Its aim was to assist in the training of the Cypriot Army and participate in the defensive system of Cyprus, with the aspiration to promote military cooperation and trust between Greece and Turkey. Rather than fostering trust, the aforementioned military camps became flashpoints during incidents of intercommunal violence. The Greek military contingent was partly implicated in the 1974 coup against President Makarios, while the Turkish one was incorporated into and reinforced Turkey’s military during the 1974 intervention.

²⁷ Cyprus Treaty of Alliance, www.tc-america.org/issues-information/cyprus-treaty-of-alliance-90.htm
Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus is one of the longest-running UN missions in history. Following violent intercommunal conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in late 1963, it was established in March 1964 under UN Security Council Resolution 186. Its role evolved across key political attempts to solve the Cyprus issue. Its main goal was to prevent further outbreaks of fighting, maintain law and order, and help restore normal social and economic conditions. UNFICYP was one of the first UN missions to incorporate a civilian police unit (UNCIVPOL) alongside military troops.

In July 1974, a Greek junta-backed coup in Cyprus was followed by a Turkish military intervention. The UN Security Council expanded UNFICYP's mandate to establish and patrol the UN Buffer Zone, often called the Green Line, as well as provide humanitarian assistance. The force physically separated the two sides to prevent further direct war. The Buffer Zone spans roughly 180 kilometers across the island, including the divided capital, Nicosia. Throughout several diplomatic efforts, including the 1977 and 1979 High-Level Agreements and the 2004 Annan Plan proposal, UNFICYP maintained the security foundation and stability required for negotiations. UNFICYP remains active today, monitoring the Buffer Zone and supporting diplomatic efforts to find a comprehensive settlement.

The ABC plan (1978)

The ABC plan was a proposed settlement of the Cyprus dispute, presented by the United States of America and co-authored by Britain and Canada, hence the abbreviation. The ABC plan was the first comprehensive attempt to provide a general framework for a solution after 1974, advocating for the creation of a federal state in which every community would administer its own constituent territory. External affairs, defense, currency and the central bank, telecommunications, immigration and civil aviation would be managed by the central government. The President and Vice-President would represent the two different communities, endowed with a joint veto power on federal legislation. A bicameral legislature would be established, with the upper chamber split equally between the two communities, and the lower one divided according to a population-ratio basis.²⁸ Moreover, the withdrawal of all foreign troops and significant territorial adjustments in favor of Greek Cypriots were envisaged.

Despite both sides rejecting the plan, with the Greek Cypriot leader Spyros Kyprianou being the first to deny its application, much of it survived in future negotiations. The main reasons behind its failure of implementation were the two

²⁸ Solutions to the Cyprus Conflict, minorityrights.org/app/uploads/2024/01/download-977-download-the-full-report.pdf Accessed 01 Sept. 2026.

sides' different interpretation of "Bicommunalism", since the Turkish Cypriots considered each federal state to be made up exclusively by one community, while Greek Cypriots believed that they would be comprised predominantly, but not exclusively, of one community.

The Annan Plan

On January 16th, 2002, negotiations began between the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Glafkos Clerides, and the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktas, with limited real progress made. Furthermore, on 16 November 2002, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented to both sides a detailed plan for a comprehensive agreement, known as the Annan Plan. The draft was submitted in a revised version in December 2002 and February 2003.

The Fifth Version of the Annan Plan envisaged the creation of the "United Cyprus Republic", a federation comprising two constituent states. It further proposed territorial adjustments, the withdrawal of a portion of the troops and the resolution of property issues. On April 24, 2004, the plan was put to separate, simultaneous referendums. Even though the Turkish Cypriots approved it by 65%, hoping for an end to international isolation and for economic development, the Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly rejected it by 76%.²⁹ The latter expressed serious concerns about security, including the continued presence of Turkish troops and Turkey's role as a Guarantor Power, as well as worries regarding property compensation, the implementation of territorial changes and limitations on the return of displaced persons.

The Crans-Montana Conference

The Conference on Cyprus took place in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in July 2017 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who brought the two communities and the three Guarantor Powers to the same table. There, for the first time, the discussions on the internal aspects of the Cyprus settlement were connected to the external aspects concerning Security and Guarantees, specifically regarding the abolition of the 1960 Guarantees and the withdrawal of Turkish troops. Nonetheless, the conference ended without fruit due to unbridgeable differences between the Greek/Greek-Cypriot side, which called for the removal of troops and the abolition of Guarantees, and the Turkish side, which insisted on maintaining a military presence and rights of intervention.

²⁹ "UN Plan Fails in Cyprus: Implications for Turkey, the European Union, and the United States." *The Washington Institute*, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/un-plan-fails-cyprus-implications-turkey-european-union-and-united-states Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Enhancing Dialogue and Cooperation

A practical approach to resolving the Cyprus issue begins with the strengthening of security and confidence between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. First of all, the mandate and resources of UNFICYP should be reinforced to ensure effective monitoring of the Buffer Zone, while facilitating communication and preventing local incidents from escalating into wider tensions. Furthermore, the Security Council could encourage structured confidence-building measures to endorse cooperation and foster trust. More specifically, expanding trade across the Green Line with standardized regulations could constitute a crucial step that promotes intercommunal cooperation and economic independence. Moreover, in order to foster dialogue and greater interaction between the two populations, new border crossing points could be established, upon the locals' agreement, and joint educational programs could be launched. Finally, another plan is to create joint technical committees to address day-to-day challenges affecting both sides. By demonstrating the tangible benefits of everyday cooperation, these initiatives reduce political friction. Over time, sustained trust and economic interdependence lay the necessary diplomatic foundation for high-level political leadership to negotiate a permanent, comprehensive settlement.

The Permanent Division of the Island

The two-state solution suggests the permanent division of the island into two separate sovereign states, with the Greek Cypriot state located in the south and the Turkish Cypriot in the north, opposing the proposals of reunification after the military intervention of Turkey in 1974. This solution, historically known as taksim, is mostly pushed by the Turkish Republic and the Turkish Cypriots, which have recently advocated for a two-state solution based on sovereign equality. Under this framework, international recognition of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) would be required, along with the formal recognition of the de facto division that has existed since 1974.

According to this plan, each state would have its own government institutions, likely reducing disputes over internal power-sharing and constitutional arrangements, as well as potential deadlocks. In addition, a two-state solution would give each community the freedom to have their own distinct religious and cultural future, while, at the same time allowing them to trade, socialize, work and live together on the same island.³⁰ Simultaneously, the embargoes to the TRNC could be lifted, following

³⁰ Zihni, Fahri. "The Cyprus Issue: Do Greeks and Turks Need a Two-State Solution?" *The New Arab*, www.newarab.com/opinion/cyprus-issue-do-greeks-and-turks-need-two-state-solution Accessed 02 Sept. 2026.



international and bilateral agreements, since the entity would be recognized as a sovereign state, hence facilitating the northern part of the island to develop economically.

Nevertheless, the longstanding issue of property claims and unresolved property rights and the displacement of persons would remain, while territorial adjustments to the borders would be made, which could fuel further conflict. More importantly, though, adopting the two-state solution proposed would be contradictory to UN Security Council Resolutions, such as 541 and 550, which explicitly reject the unilateral declaration of independence by the TRNC. Thus, endorsing a two-state solution could be perceived as creating a global precedent for the international recognition of territory partition following a military intervention.

The Reunification of Cyprus under a Bizonal, Bicomunal Federation

The plan mentioned proposes the reunification of the two opposing communities and the restructure of the Republic of Cyprus. More specifically, this Bizonal, Bicomunal Federation (BBF) framework provides for a single state with single international sovereignty, citizenship and international personality. The federal state would be composed of two politically equal constituent zones, ensuring shared governance and equal administrative authority within their respective territories, aiming at protecting the rights of both communities. Lastly, according to this solution, political equality would be in accordance with UN resolutions, which does not mean numerical equality.

From the UN's perspective, the primary advantages of reunification extend across economic, geopolitical, social and legal dimensions. Division creates constant tension between NATO allies Greece and Turkey over airspace, maritime boundaries, and military presence. Reunification would eliminate a major source of tension. Reunifying the island opens up merged infrastructure, trade, and labor markets. Studies estimate that economic integration could boost island-wide GDP significantly over a 10-to-20-year period through expanded trade and investment.³¹ Moreover, decades of unresolved property rights for displaced Greek and Turkish Cypriots create a complex legal challenge. A comprehensive UN settlement provides a structured mechanism for property restitution, exchange, or financial compensation.

However, the aforementioned federal model requires redefining internal boundaries between the two constituent states. The TRNC currently controls roughly 36% of the island's territory. Historic proposals, such as the 2004 Annan Plan and 2017 Crans-Montana talks, envisioned reducing the Turkish Cypriot state's land area to around 28–29%.³² Towns like Varosha (Famagusta) and parts of the Morphou region

³¹ "Delivering the Cyprus Peace Dividend." *Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)*, www.prio.org/publications/12242. Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

³² Lindenstrauss, Evangelia Akritidou Gallia, et al. "Half a Century Later: Cyprus's Unification Remains Distant." *INSS*, 27 July 1970, www.inss.org.il/publication/cyprus-50-years/. Accessed 08 Sept. 2026.

were identified for return to Greek Cypriot administration, allowing displaced persons to return under Greek Cypriot control. Finally, freedom-of-movement arrangements would also require detailed agreement under any federal settlement.

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