



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, NY 10017-2905

www.greeceun.org

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SIXTY-FIRST SESSION**

Third Committee

Agenda Item 67(b)

**Human Rights Questions, including alternative approaches
for improving the effective enjoyment
of human rights and fundamental freedoms**

Statement by

**Ambassador Alexandra Papadopoulou
Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations**

**New York
Friday, October 27, 2006**

Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

The invasion and occupation of the northern part of Cyprus, since 1974, by Turkey constitutes a flagrant violation of International Law and of the fundamental freedoms and rights of the people of Cyprus. Almost one third of the island's population was displaced, and since then they have been denied the right of return and enjoyment of their properties. The living conditions of the enclaved persons in the occupied areas, the missing persons, the continuous colonization of the northern part of the island by settlers from Turkey, the destruction of the cultural heritage of Cyprus and the non-implementation by Turkey of the relevant UN resolutions and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, remain major preoccupations for my country.

Of grave concern to us is the human rights situation of the enclaved persons of Greek-Cypriot origin, who live in the northern occupied areas of the island. We acknowledge the fact that positive measures were recently taken regarding, mainly, the functioning of a school for Greek speakers in the occupied territories. A lot more has to be done, however and, in particular, Turkey must execute the Cyprus vs Turkey judgment of the ECHR of May 2001 which found Turkey responsible for 14 violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, 7 of which directly concern the living conditions of the enclaved G/Cs.

The issue of the missing persons remains of primary importance to the relatives and the governments of Greece and Cyprus. Despite the commitment of the Turkish side to take concrete steps towards its resolution and the efforts undertaken in the framework of the UN Commission on missing persons, no tangible results have been achieved thus far. Against this background, the obligation of Turkey to conduct an effective investigation into the fate of the missing persons to achieve the solution of this problem.

With regard to the displaced persons, we are greatly concerned that Turkey has yet to fully implement its commitments emanating from the Court's judgment in the Loizidou case. Turkey's sole responsibility regarding her jurisdiction and consequently the human rights situation in the occupied areas, was further established by the latest judgement of the ECHR, last year, in the Xenidis-Aresti case. In the meantime, excessive construction activity on G/C land and the sale of illegally seized G/C properties continue unimpeded in the occupied territories. Equally worrying is the increasing influx of settlers from mainland Turkey, to the point where native T/Cs who continue to emigrate, have already become a minority in their own homeland.

Last but not least, we are witnessing a systematic destruction of the cultural heritage of the island. More than 500 churches are already in ruins, due to deliberate negligence or being used for non-religious purposes, while the smuggling overseas of treasures and priceless works of art continues unabated.

Mr. Chairman,

The presence of more than 40.000 Turkish troops, illegally stationed in Cyprus, entrenches the division on the island, thus hindering the prospects for a negotiated settlement. The respect of human rights and the rule of law, fundamental elements of the political culture and tradition of the European family to which Turkey aspires to belong, must be an integral part of any comprehensive, functional and sustainable solution of the Cyprus problem, thus providing an environment of peace, security and prosperity for all Cypriots.

Thank you Mr. Chairman