



Resolution 2563 (2024)¹

Call for Varosha's return to its lawful inhabitants

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The summer of 2024 marks the sad fiftieth anniversary of the most dramatic episode in Cyprus' modern history – the *coup d'état* promoted by the military dictatorship in Greece, aiming at achieving “enosis” of Cyprus with Greece, and the invasion of the island by Turkey, which intervened under the pretext of Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960. This crisis followed the intercommunal strife of 1963-1964, which led to the displacement of Cypriots from their homes, following which the United Nations decided to deploy the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which is still present on the island. The Turkish military intervention of July-August 1974 resulted in thousands of victims and a significant portion of the population having to flee their homes, leaving everything behind. The scars of these tragic events are still very present in the memories and public conscience of Cypriots. One of the most shocking traces of those events is the ghost town of Varosha, a fenced-off area of the city of Famagusta which has been closed and uninhabited for fifty years.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that Cyprus, which had been part of the British Empire, was established in 1960 as an independent State ensuring equal rights and responsibilities to all its citizens, both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and with guarantees from Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

3. The Assembly deplores that, almost fifty years later, the Cyprus problem is still unresolved, and the island remains divided. The continuing frozen conflict harms the vital interests of all Cypriots and may lead to dangerous escalation. Furthermore, it constitutes a potentially destabilising factor for the eastern Mediterranean region.

4. The Assembly refers to its previous resolutions on the Cyprus issue, in particular [Resolution 1362 \(2004\)](#) “Situation in Cyprus”, [Resolution 1376 \(2004\)](#) “Cyprus” and [Resolution 1628 \(2008\)](#) “Situation in Cyprus”, and reiterates its strong commitment to reaching a fair, lasting and comprehensive solution for a peaceful and united Cyprus which would guarantee the legitimate rights of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, in full compliance with the values and principles of the Council of Europe.

5. The Assembly fully supports the continued efforts made by the UN Secretary-General aimed at reviving the political process with a view to reaching a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus issue, and welcomes the appointment of María Angela Holguín Cuéllar as the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Cyprus to explore whether common ground exists between the two sides, and hopes that her efforts will be able to promote the reopening of negotiations between the two Cypriot communities.

6. The Assembly calls upon all parties involved to contribute to the swift resumption of the political process, and to refrain from any unilateral steps or public statements that could undermine the prospects for a swift resumption. In this context, it considers that the statements made by the leaders of Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriot community promoting a “two-State solution” for Cyprus, thus pushing towards an effective partition of the island, ignore and contradict the desire to establish a united Cyprus in a bizonal and bicomunal federation in accordance with commonly agreed parameters laid down by the relevant United Nations documents.

1. *Assembly debate* on 27 June 2024 (22nd sitting) (see [Doc. 16004](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Piero Fassino). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 27 June 2024 (22nd sitting).



7. In the same vein, the Assembly regrets the announcements made by the President of Türkiye and practical moves taken by the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community since October 2020, with a view to reopening access to the fenced-off area of Varosha. It considers the gradual opening of the fenced-off area as an unacceptable change of the status of Varosha as defined by the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and thus a grave violation of these resolutions that undermines the prospects of reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue.
8. Taking into account the highly symbolic importance of Varosha for the Greek Cypriot community, the Assembly believes that returning it to its lawful inhabitants, either in the framework of the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 550 and 789 placing it under United Nations control, or as part of a package of reciprocal confidence-building measures, would constitute a strong positive contribution towards reaching a comprehensive settlement.
9. The Assembly welcomes, and stands ready to support, all initiatives aimed at building trust between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, such as direct dialogue and practical bicomunal co-operation projects at the level of municipalities, political parties, religious leaders, academia, civil society organisations, youth, etc.
10. The Assembly particularly praises both municipalities of Famagusta/Gazimağusa for establishing constructive and future-oriented dialogue and encourages them to develop common bicomunal projects aimed at preparing Famagusta, including Varosha, for a common future following the eventual solution to the Cyprus issue. It calls upon the political leadership of both communities to facilitate and support such projects.
11. It also welcomes the direct dialogue between representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties under the auspices of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic and encourages all political forces from both sides to make active use of this opportunity to build mutual understanding and dispel mistrust.
12. The Assembly takes note that the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) recognises the Immovable Property Commission (IPC), set up by Turkey in northern Cyprus following the Court judgment in the *Xenides-Arestis v. Turkey* case, as Türkiye's effective domestic remedy for claims relating to properties left by Greek Cypriots in northern Cyprus when they fled to the south in 1974. It underlines this possibility for those Greek Cypriots who so wish to apply for pecuniary compensation, exchange or restitution of their properties abandoned in 1974.
13. The Assembly notes that, according to the official information provided by the IPC, so far it has received 7 596 applications and concluded 1 775 cases. At the same time, the Assembly observes that, in most cases processed to date, the IPC has ruled for compensation in accordance with claims of the applicants, requesting restitution in only 3.5% of the cases. In addition, it notes that, to date, no cases relating to Varosha have yet been completed.
14. Moreover, the Assembly understands that, for most Greek Cypriots, lawful inhabitants of Varosha, applying to the IPC and even obtaining through it the right to return to their homes, which would remain under a *de facto* control of the Turkish Cypriot authorities, is not politically acceptable or practicable.
15. The Assembly calls upon all parties involved to resume in good faith the political process leading to the settlement of the Cyprus problem on the basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation with a single international legal personality, a single sovereignty and a single citizenship composed of two constituent States with political equality, as described in pertinent United Nations Security Council resolutions, and endowed with full powers in matters of assigned competence.
16. The Assembly urges Türkiye and the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community to abandon their stance in favour of a "two-State solution" for Cyprus and to recommit to the political process leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue based on internationally agreed parameters.
17. The Assembly further urges the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community to reverse all steps taken in Varosha since October 2020, to refrain from any further unilateral actions in relation to Varosha that are not in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and to implement as a matter of priority United Nations Security Council Resolutions 550 and 789 by placing the fenced-off area of Varosha under United Nations control.
18. In addition, the Assembly calls upon all parties involved to devise and implement a package of reciprocal confidence-building measures in accordance with international law, aiming at overcoming isolation of Turkish Cypriots, and promoting co-operation, for the benefit of both communities and reunification of the island.

19. The Assembly calls upon the leaders of both communities to resume their meetings and dialogue on practical issues for the benefit of all Cypriots, and to re-engage in a political process under the auspices and with the good offices of the United Nations Secretary-General.

20. The Assembly values the participation of representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community in its debates and in the work of its committees and undertakes to give full effect to [Resolution 1376 \(2004\)](#). It encourages them to use this opportunity to contribute to the European political debate more actively, and to engage in a meaningful dialogue with their Greek Cypriot compatriot counterparts with a view to building mutual trust and preparing the ground for the resumption of direct talks between the two communities, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the aim of reaching a fair, lasting and comprehensive solution for a peaceful and united Cyprus.

21. The Assembly appreciates the role played by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and pays tribute to the soldiers and civilians who have lost their lives in service to provide peace and security to the Cypriots.

22. The Assembly calls upon Greece, Türkiye and the United Kingdom, as guarantor powers, and upon all the members of the United Nations Security Council, to co-operate to find a solution for the Cyprus problem in accordance with the pertinent United Nations Security Council resolutions.

23. The Assembly reiterates its commitment to a united Cyprus and resolves to continue contributing, through the activities of its competent committees, to reaching a solution for the Cyprus problem which is shared by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and which is in accordance with the pertinent United Nations Security Council resolutions.