

**Statement by Turkey  
on 13 June 2005  
at the Ottawa Treaty Intercessional Meeting**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

At the outset, allow me to join the other delegations in congratulating you, the Co-Chairs, and the organisers for what promises to be a successful Conference. In this direction, I assure you of my delegation's cooperation and support throughout the deliberations of the Conference.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

My delegation did not have the intention to take the floor in this manner. Nor did we have the desire to politicise this important Conference, aimed at finding ways to eliminate human suffering caused by landmines. However, after hearing the statement of the representative of the Greek Cypriot Community and since the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not represented in this fora, my delegation felt that it would be useful to address some of the aspects in that statement, so that the delegations in this hall have the opportunity to hear the other side of the argument as well.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Needless to say, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is engaged in its own mine action to rid the world of this scourge of landmines. As a matter of fact, the Turkish Cypriots contacted the UN regarding mine action before the unilateral Greek Cypriot actions began.

That aside, a minute ago, the representative of the Greek Cypriot Community used this platform and the unilateral actions they have initiated on the island to attack Turkey. Naturally, this style did not come as a surprise for this delegation. Furthermore, the representative referred to Turkish Forces on the island as "occupation forces". I tried to count how many times but I simply lost count.

The Greek Cypriot Community representative obviously has a selective memory. He seemed to have forgotten why the Turkish Forces were compelled to intervene in the first place. The human carnage, which was being committed on the island by the EOKA-B, that interalia overthrew the President of the Cyprus Republic, late Archbishop Macarios, prompted my country to fulfil its obligations under the London and Zurich Agreements as a Guarantor Power. The UN Security Council verbatim records of the period accurately reflect the events that took place on the island from the late Macarios's own accounts.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Let me remind the delegates that the existing situation on the island could have come to an instant halt, if the Greek Cypriot Community had approved the Plan aimed at unifying the island. This Plan was the product of the hard work of the UN Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan, the leaders of the Guarantor Powers, along with important members of the international community.

In separate referenda held on the island on 24 April 2005, the Turkish Cypriots voted in favour of the Plan by more than 65%. However, the Greek Cypriots, pressured by their leaders, voted against the Plan by more than 75%.

What my delegation would like the distinguished delegates in this hall to take away from this exchange is this:

The existing situation of the island could have come to an instant halt but the Greek Cypriot Administration pressured its people to say “No”.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

With your permission, I would now like to pass the microphone to Major Yıldırım from the Turkish General Staff.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Along its eastern and southeastern national borders and around some security installations, Turkey has APLMs emplaced in 1957 and 1959 in order to prevent the illegal border crossings. There are also those laid by the terrorist organization PKK / KONGRA-GEL. Their locations are not precisely known at the moment.

The objective of Turkey’s mine clearance program is to clear the emplaced ones by the year 2014 and to destroy the stockpiled ones by 2008. The work initiated to use modern demining equipment is ongoing. Upon the completion of the necessary preparations, the southern border minefields will be cleared with modern demining equipment. The actual destruction of stockpiled mines is planned to take place following the completion of the Mine & Ordnance Disposal Facility in 2006.

Whilst carrying out the aforesaid plans, humanitarian and economical aspects are also being taken into consideration. For the upcoming years, before 2014, Turkey aims to clear and destroy all the APLMs and thus contribute to the local economies by using cleared areas for agricultural purposes. This would obviously help in bringing new employment opportunities to the region. These plans are being coordinated with local

The Turkish Government has already initiated the Syrian Border Mine Clearance Project. This program involves both the clearance of mines and the cultivation of land. Since time is of the essence, modern demining equipment will be used in order to clear the area as soon as possible. Minefields in the other regions are being cleared physically as was initiated before. Currently a demining company of 75 men strong and 11 demining teams (18 men strong each) are currently working in the region. These units hold mine detectors, physical demining equipment, mine detection dogs, classical demining machines and protective gear within their inventory list.

The minefields in demining regions are secured with perimeter fences and marked with proper warning signs. In addition to these, minefields on the borders are kept within military restricted/security zones, which are defined by laws and announced to the public by security units. The security units notify the public in mined regions by conducting visits. Although the location of mines emplaced by the terrorist organization PKK / KONGRA-GEL are not

known precisely, they are being secured and cleared as detected. Thus, in certain regions, the public can only be warned of the potential danger of terrorist mines.

The APLM clearance activities with physical and mechanical means are currently ongoing. As reported in April, thru the year 2004, 1,225 APLM were physically removed and destroyed, and 15,500m<sup>2</sup> of land has been cleared of APLMs by classical demining equipment. So far, the total number of APLM removed, has reached 16,065 and the total area cleared of APLM came up to 64.000m<sup>2</sup>. The Turkish Armed Forces plan to retain 0.5 % of the stockpiled APLMs (16.000) for training purposes. This figure may be reassessed as the process of downsizing the armed forces progresses. In terms of helping mine victims, Armed Forces Rehabilitation Center offers service to both military and civilian casualties. During 2004, 123 people were treated at the facility.

Finally, while continuing its demining activities, Turkey is willing to share its experiences with other states and is determined to fulfill its obligations within the period of time foreseen by the treaty.

Thank you Co-Chairs.