



STATEMENT BY TÜRKİYE
INTERSESSIONAL MEETING
ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

Geneva, 18-20 June 2024

Right of Reply

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

We deem it necessary to bring to the attention of the delegates the provocative and unfounded allegations against Türkiye which we totally reject regarding the demining issue in the island of Cyprus.

Between the years 1963 and 1974, the Turkish Cypriot people were not only expelled from the 1960 Partnership Republic of Cyprus, but also subjected to mass slaughter and gross human rights violations, constituting the gravest human rights violations on the island.

In 1974, when Greece and its collaborator Greek Cypriots made a final attempt in the wake of a coup d'état for the total extermination of the Turkish Cypriot people and to annex the island into Greece, Türkiye's legitimate intervention on 20 July 1974 undertaken in accordance with her rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee saved the lives of Turkish Cypriots.

It should also be emphasized that none of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Cyprus describe the legitimate Turkish intervention of 1974 as "invasion", or the subsequent presence of the Turkish troops on the island as "occupation". In fact, the only occupation in the island is the occupation of the seat of the government of the now defunct Republic of Cyprus by the Greek Cypriots since 1963.

Let me reiterate, once again, that, on 8 July 2022, H.E. President Ersin Tatar has made a proposal for a mine-free island. In line with the understanding outlined in the previous proposals for the clearance of all remaining minefields on the island and pursuant to the calls by the Secretary-General in his reports for cooperation between the two sides, the TRNC proposed that 29 remaining suspected areas are cleared to free the Island from all landmines and that the UNFICYP facilitates demining activities in coordination with two sides, the demining activities commences with the areas adjacent to the buffer zone and the two sides convene to discuss the modalities of the implementation of the demining operations without further delay.

Once again, the Greek Cypriot side has ignored this latest proposal.

The United Nations Secretary-General confirms that there are “29 remaining suspected hazardous areas on the island” most of which are in the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus.

Regrettably, whenever there is an issue which needs cooperation of both sides on the island, the Greek Cypriot side prefers to distract attention from the realities by resorting to disinformation campaign.

However, deceptive statements of the of the Greek Cypriot side regarding the demining issue are refuted with the statements of the United Nations Secretary General in his reports.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate, once again, that the proposal of the Turkish Cypriot side for a mine-free island is still on the table and we are expecting the international community to encourage the Greek Cypriot side to immediately start cooperating with the Turkish Cypriot side on the issue of demining.

Thank you.