



**STATEMENT BY TURKEY  
ON AGENDA ITEM 158 FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS (UNFICYP)  
FIFTH COMMITTEE-2ND PART OF THE RESUMED 75TH SESSION  
5 MAY 2021**

Mr. Chair,

We would like to thank the UN Secretariat and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for submitting their respective reports for individual peacekeeping missions. We extend our appreciation to the Fifth Committee Secretariat, the ACABQ, and UN Secretariat for their continuous support, as well as for ensuring business continuity throughout the pandemic.

We also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian women and men and other personnel for their work and dedication in maintaining peace and security in different parts of the world, especially during these challenging times due to COVID-19 pandemic.

We honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace, as well as those who continue to risk their lives, particularly during the pandemic. UN peacekeeping operations have unfortunately suffered high numbers of fatalities in the last decade. Intensification and sophistication of asymmetric threats by terrorist and extremist groups is a serious challenge to UN peacekeeping both in terms of force protection and implementation of the mandate, as we have sadly learned by experience in recent years. Turkey recognizes the courageous work the blue helmets accomplish in conflict zones around the world.

Their service and sacrifice help countries navigate the path from conflict to peace. We also commend peacekeepers assisting local communities in their effort to fight the COVID-19 outbreak and in vaccine campaigns.

Turkey is fully committed to successful UN Peacekeeping in support of international peace and security. Turkey continues to provide troops and police to UN Peacekeeping Operations. We will work collaboratively within the

Committee on the budgetary and operational elements of Peacekeeping Operations. We will advocate greater clarity and transparency in how resources are linked to mandated tasks, while ensuring flexibility in view of unpredictable conditions COVID-19 has posed.

With reference to the reports of the Secretary-General and ACABQ on the 2019-2020 budget performance and to the proposed budget of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for 2021-2022, Turkey would like to register the following points.

First of all, Turkey fully supports the efforts to find a mutually acceptable, freely negotiated settlement of the Cyprus problem, in line with the current realities on the ground. Only a settlement based on the sovereign equality of the two States in Cyprus can be realistic and sustainable.

That said, we regret to see that in the Supplementary Documents containing responses provided by the Secretariat to the ACABQ, UNFICYP maintains its tendency to completely ignore one side in Cyprus, namely the Turkish Cypriot side. This attitude is not compatible with the delicate balance that needs to be preserved between the two sides to the conflict in Cyprus. More specifically, the depiction of the Greek Cypriot administration as the “host country/host government” or “Republic of Cyprus” in the said documents runs counter to the historical and legal facts. It is well-known that since 1963, there has not been a single government representing both peoples on the island. Rather, there exist two independent, self-governing States, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within their respective territory.

Furthermore, references to the approval/authorization by the Greek Cypriot authorities for certain projects carried out by UNFICYP are unacceptable. According to the bedrock principle of all UN peacekeeping operations, the consent of all parties to a conflict must be sought and obtained. This is the missing element in the context of UNFICYP’s operations, which can also be observed in the responses provided by the Secretariat. UNFICYP still operates in the TRNC territory thanks to the Turkish Cypriot authorities’ goodwill and constructive approach, without a legal basis. Establishing the legal ground for UNFICYP’s operations in the TRNC, through either signing a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) or agreeing on another mutually acceptable legal arrangement is urgent and necessary. However, the aforementioned Supplementary Documents point to a lack of intention on the part of UNFICYP to develop formal mechanisms or written agreements with Turkish Cypriot authorities in general and regarding the authorization of agricultural activities or construction projects in the buffer zone in particular. This is unacceptable.

In addition, the asymmetrical figures regarding the “national staff” employed at UNFICYP also attest to the lack of balance in UNFICYP’s approach. The share of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots in this category, %17.6 and %64.7 respectively, inevitably raises the question as to how, in this case, UNFICYP is supposed to be impartial towards the two co-owners of the island, namely the Turkish Cypriot people and the Greek Cypriot people.

Similarly, the so-called “voluntary contributions” of the Greek Cypriot administration to UNFICYP, which is also reflected in the responses provided by the Secretariat to the ACABQ, seriously undermines the credibility of UNFICYP as it causes a conflict of interest between UNFICYP and the Greek Cypriot side. We are concerned with potential risks this may cause for UNFICYP’s activities, including, but not limited to, reporting of the violations by the Greek Cypriot side in the buffer zone and along the ceasefire line.

Last, but not least, the Secretariat’s responses on demining operations in Cyprus contain information which cannot be considered factually correct. In this regard, the information that in 2017 the two leaders requested UNFICYP to stop demining operations does not reflect a true picture. As is known, it is the Greek Cypriot side who is unwilling to continue with the demining operations in the buffer zone and to expand it to the whole island with the aim to achieve a mine-free Cyprus. This is also reflected in Secretary General’s reports on UNFICYP (S/2017/586 and S/2018/25), whereby it is stated that “While the Turkish Cypriot side has indicated that it would accept the clearance of all four areas as a package, the Greek Cypriot side maintains the position that its three minefields are required to counter a perceived threat.” We therefore request this factual mistake be rectified.

Thank you.