



MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA GRECE  
GENEVE

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**Intervention**  
**by the Permanent Representative of Greece**

**Ambassador Franciscos Verros**

**on the Report of the OHCHR and the UNSG**  
**on the question of Human Rights in Cyprus**

Human Rights Council

10<sup>th</sup> Session

Agenda item 2

March 2009

Mr President, Madame High Commissioner, Your Excellencies,

Allow me to express our appreciation to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights and the United Nations Secretary General for preparing the report on the situation of human rights in Cyprus. It is indeed important that the Human Rights Council remains seized of this matter which is still as pertinent as ever.

While trying to be up to date and to include all recent developments in the island, this report seems to overlook the root of the problem that led to the adoption of this mandate. The report was initially requested, in 1975, because of the flagrant violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Cypriot people, as a result of an invasion by another country, in 1974, and the occupation since then of almost 40% of the island.

This situation has caused plethora of UN Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions, but the violation of fundamental rights of the Cypriots, including the freedom of movement, the freedom of settlement and the right to property has not yet been adequately addressed. One third of the Cypriots are still refugees or displaced, being denied their right to return, being deprived of their properties. Many families still don't know what the fate of their missing relatives has been.

The issue is of particular importance to Greece, inter alia because many Greek citizens are also still missing, despite the positive role of the Bi-communal Committee on Missing Persons, which is also financially supported by the Greek Government, since it resumed its work.

Mr President,

The people in Greece, especially the families of those missing, were shocked, lately, by the televised confession of Mr Attila Olgac who claimed that he cold bloodedly shot ten Greek-Cypriot prisoners the days of the invasion of Cyprus. This statement has been later revoked, but this does not alter the crux of the problem, that is the responsibility of the occupying power to exhaust all legal means to investigate these cases. The incident underlines the necessity for the full implementation of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (in 2001) on the 4<sup>th</sup> Interstate case of Cyprus vs Turkey according to which Turkey has to conduct an effective investigation of the fate of those who disappeared in life threatening circumstances in 1974 and to inform their families accordingly.

There are also many other decisions by the European Court of Human Rights invoking and condemning more human rights violations in Cyprus as a result of the occupation. The Ambassador of Cyprus has already mentioned them, so I refrain from repeating them.

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council was created in order to serve the noble cause of promoting and protecting the human rights, as well as identifying and addressing their violations wherever they may occur. We sincerely hope that resumed negotiations between President Christofias and the Turkish-Cypriot leader Mr. Talat will bear fruits and will eventually reunify Cyprus, thus bringing respect to the human rights of all inhabitants.

Until we arrive to this lasting and viable solution though, we hope that the OHCHR will take into account our observations and prepare a report more accurately reflecting the situation in the divided island of Cyprus and its roots.

Thank you Mr. President