



KUZEY KIBRIS TÜRK CUMHURİYETİ  
ŞEHİT AİLELERİ VE MALÛL GAZİLER DERNEĞİ  
THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS  
ASSOCIATION OF MARTYR'S FAMILIES AND WAR VETERANS  
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Since the borders opened on the island of Cyprus in 2003 there have been many ethnically motivated attacks on Turkish Cypriots and people of other nationalities. Such incidents against the Turkish Cypriot People, which have also been recorded by several international reports, range from physical and hatred attacks on Turkish Cypriot people to attacks on Muslim and Turkish heritage on the island. As an example, in the recent Cyprus report of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) it is said that "concern has been expressed about racially motivated attacks against Turkish Cypriots" and also "Racist statements in the public sphere continue to be a common phenomenon" in South Cyprus.

Sadly, government level acts of hate crimes and human rights violations have also been carried out against Turkish Cypriots. So much so that there have been examples of Government bodies issuing statements with unpleasant wording in reference to the TRNC and Turkish Cypriots, urging foreigners not to travel to or visit North Cyprus, as such restricting the most fundamental freedoms of both the citizens and the tourists which live in or visit South Cyprus and wish to travel to or visit the TRNC.

A list of hate crimes and human rights violations against Turkish Cypriots as well as discriminatory statements are given below for the consideration of the Universal Periodic Review.

1. In February 2018, a car belonging to a Turkish Cypriot woman was attacked while parked at a parking space of a shopping mall. The rear windows of the car were hit and broken by unidentified attacker as she found out when returned to her car with her 3,5-year-old toddler. The incident had been reported and complaints had been filled with the Greek Cypriot police at Metehan, but nothing has been heard of the perpetrators being penalized.
2. The Cyprus Association of Pharmaceutical Companies had an announcement in the Cyprus Mail (daily Greek Cypriot newspaper) on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2018, which read as follows; the Cyprus Association of Pharmaceutical Companies in South Cyprus warned the public not to buy medicine from North Cyprus as they claimed concern over the safe



storage and handling of the medicines and of the pharmacists' education and training in the North.

3. In February 2018, two Turkish Cypriot women had faced verbal assault while shopping at the Ledras Street. The two young women were shopping when young Greek Cypriot men sitting at a cafe started to follow the two women and verbally (both in Greek and English) assaulting the women. The two women then entered to a shop for shelter but the men followed the women in the store continuing the harassment publicly. When the women asked for help to the security staff at the store, the security staff's response was "this issue is not my business" and shut an eye to the event asking for the women to leave the store. The two women finally started to run towards the border to cross to the Turkish side, until when the Greek Cypriot men stopped following the women close to the border.
4. Very recently, the Greek Cypriot people were purchasing petrol for personal use in vehicles from the North as stated in the Cyprus Mail article dated 28 June 2018. In response, the customs department of South Cyprus published a statement saying that "in the event of illegal transport of fuel from the occupied areas, irrespective of them being in portable tanks or the vehicle's fuel tank, these will be confiscated and those involved will be subject to the penalties stipulated by the law" alleging that the fuel brought from the TRNC has a higher sulphur content than the standards applied by the Greek side, therefore implying they are in violation of fuel standards. This is a clear indication of injustice towards the Turkish Cypriot people.
5. In June 2018, the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a call to foreign mission representatives stationed on the island not to visit any of the historical sites located in the North, alleging the historical sites are used illegally with particular reference made to Othello Castle. We would like to express that the renovation works for Othello Castle has been carried out by the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage responsible for renewing and restoring historical artefacts as part of the cultural heritage of the island of Cyprus - projects which are funded by the European



Union. This approach of the Greek Cypriot side, which implies a belief of sole proprietorship to such artefacts on the island despite the fact that all restoration works are carried out bi-communally and involve, religiously and historically, both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot artefacts, is a clear violation of the rights of Turkish Cypriot people, as well as those that would like to visit our country, as they are limiting freedom of movement (Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.)

6. In February 2017, a total of 5 cars belonging to Turkish Cypriot families, who were on family trips to Troodos, were attacked and damaged, as also reported by the Cyprus News Report, on 10 February 2017. The tyres were cut with knives and the cars' main bodies were severely dented. Complaints were filed with the Greek Cypriot police but we have not heard of the perpetrators being penalized.
7. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern dated 12 May 2017, "at the reported racially motivated verbal abuse and physical attacks by the right-wing extremists and neo-Nazi groups against persons of foreign origin...as well as human rights defenders and Turkish Cypriots. The Committee is further concerned at the use of racist stereotypes and hate speech in the public sphere, sometimes promulgated by the media against members of certain minority groups including...Muslims. The Committee is concerned at the lack of enforcement or existence of sufficient legislation to obtain accountability for these acts".
8. A major cause of concern regarding such incidents is that the Greek Cypriot side, which fails to take necessary precautions before occurrences of such events, also upsettingly fails to penalize the perpetrators after they have occurred. It was reported in an article by the Greek Cypriot daily Alithia in November 2015 under the headline "Attacks by Greek Cypriots on the Turkish Cypriots go unpunished" that none of the attacks which took place against Turkish Cypriots between 2004 and 2012 have been penalized by the Greek Cypriot legal system. The article further cites the statement of the Greek Cypriot Ombudsman, who confirmed that adequate investigation has not been carried out



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regarding any of the many attacks against Turkish Cypriots in Southern Cyprus. This unfortunate situation remains true in 2017. In fact, Greek Cypriot news source, the Cyprus Mail, also reported in February 2017 that none of the attacks perpetrated against Turkish Cypriots since the opening of crossings in 2003 have resulted in a full legal action culminating in a court sentence.

9. On 13 April 2017, a Turkish Cypriot couple who are on the board of directors of the Human Rights Association of the TRNC, were attacked in South Cyprus. Their vehicle was cut off by Greek Cypriot fanatics and seriously damaged. It is very ironic to see that promoters of human rights are even themselves victims of a human rights violation.
10. In May 2017, a tour bus was stopped by Greek Cypriot police and prohibited from crossing from North to South Cyprus. The bus was carrying tourists from Europe and the United States, and wanted to take the tourists through the Akyar (Strovilia) crossing point to Larnaca Airport to catch their flights. Through the process, the tourists experienced agony and stress while the driver of the bus worked towards getting them to the airport. The documentation of both the vehicle and the tourists were complete, and yet the bus driver was told that only Turkish Cypriots could cross on a Turkish Cypriot-registered bus since the insurance covers them only. The tourists were then forced to be taken to the Ledra Palace crossing point all the way in Nicosia where they had to cross the border on foot and where a Greek Cypriot bus was hired to take them to the airport. Such obstacles not only violate the right to free movement of EU citizens but are also a source of great concern for the Turkish Cypriot people.
11. On 26 July 2017, the Turkish Cypriot side took the decision to allow for the return of the Maronites to their former villages where they resided prior to 1974. This decision was taken by the Presidency Office with the unanimous support of the Government. Despite this positive and constructive humanitarian gesture of the Turkish Cypriot side, the Greek Cypriot side has begun a defamation campaign and has been urging Maronites living in the South to make excessive requests of the North, such as to hold religious services in areas situated in military zones or derelict churches. They do this in order to



incite a negative response from the Turkish Cypriot side, so that they can then blame us for inhibiting various freedoms. This is another example of the Greek Cypriot side's policy to politicize humanitarian issues rather than taking them for face value.

12. As also reported by the UN Secretary-General in his July 2016 report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2016/598 dated 8 July 2016), the Dhenia Mosque in Nicosia became the target of an arson attack on 21 February 2016 and suffered extensive damage shortly after its restoration by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage was completed in December 2014. As stressed by the UN Secretary-General in his aforementioned report "the Mosque was previously vandalized in January 2013 and no arrest were made" by the Greek Cypriot authorities.
13. In the Country Report of Cyprus completed by TOGETHER! (a project financed by the Justice Department of the European Commission) entitled "LET'S END HATE CR!ME"([http://kisa.org.cy/wpcontent/uploads/2016/01/Hate\\_Crime\\_Together\\_report\\_Cy.pdf](http://kisa.org.cy/wpcontent/uploads/2016/01/Hate_Crime_Together_report_Cy.pdf)) in respect of ending hate crimes it is highlighted that in South Cyprus "there is no hate crimes as such. Hate crime is not specifically addressed, defined or provided in the penal code or in other law, as a crime per se". The report states that "Turkish Cypriots have been attacked by groups of Greek Cypriots because of their national origin". They also face racial discrimination especially in their workplace (i.e. unemployment benefits being refused or employer refusing to pay on time.)

The above report also mentions that "reports from civil society organisations and migrant communities show that most vulnerable groups to hate crimes are migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and Turkish Cypriots". The report underlines on numerous occasions that "formal reports on hate crime are very limited, almost non-existent..... and a formal policy on hate crimes fails to exist". A striking observance stated in the report was to the effect that "from our experience, hate crimes are either not identified or recorded properly, or even if properly recorded they are not prosecuted most of the times because of lack of necessary evidence always according to the authorities".



14. The Greek Cypriot newspaper, *Politis*, reported on 18 January 2014 that a 16 year-old student of Limassol Technical School was beaten by 6 of his fellow students and hospitalized on Thursday, 16 January, for distributing brochures written in Turkish at an event which took place within the framework of a bi-communal trip to Troodos. The trip was organised by EDON, the Youth Wing of the Greek Cypriot political party AKEL. It is also reported that the incident was notified to the police but that the police remained inactive, claiming that a complaint was not issued by the student. The incident was described as an act of fascism by AKEL, who also pointed out that such incidents are no longer isolated and should not remain unpunished. EDON, which also made a statement following the incident, is reported to have expressed that it was shocking that the Greek Cypriot administration remained passive in the face of such occurrences. Despite such statements condemning this act, it is apparent once again that the authorities of South Cyprus refrain from taking any measures to prevent or punish such acts of hatred and violence which stem from hatred towards Turkish Cypriots, even among the younger generation.

In reference to the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Cyprus (A/HRC/26/14) (the 26th session, agenda item 6) Article 107, states “public schools that are attended by a considerable number of Turkish Cypriot students provided lessons in the students’ own language, religion and culture” yet considering the abovementioned hate attack towards a young student purely due to his distributing of brochures in the language of Turkish is highly worrisome, considering such attacks can go unpunished and without a positive step towards improvement by the Greek Cypriot side.

15. A very striking example of racially motivated incidents is the attack against the former Turkish Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat on 26 March 2014 at a conference in South Cyprus. Turkish and Greek Cypriot press reports said that more than a hundred members of the far-right ELAM organisation burst into the conference hall in Limassol where Mr. Talat was present as a speaker at a panel which included the US Ambassador on the



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island, high level Greek Cypriot officials, academics and officials from the European Commission. (On 1 July 2016 the members of ELAM who carried out the attack were acquitted by a court in South Cyprus. Talat blamed the South Cyprus police for “not even trying to prevent the incident” and of not submitting enough evidence to the court.)

The Association of Martyr's Families and War Veterans would like to reiterate that it is deeply saddening to see the indifferent attitude of the Greek Cypriot administration, as they do not fully investigate such racially and ethnically motivated hate attacks towards the Turkish Cypriot people, which deeply scars the trust relationship between the two communities, and seriously violates the human rights of both Turkish Cypriots and also visiting foreigners.

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