



Freedom and Fairness

For Northern Cyprus

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
The Rt. Hon. James Cleverly MP
King Charles Street,
London
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Dear Foreign Secretary,

On 14 August 1974 a massacre took place on the island of Cyprus. 126 women, children, and even a 16 day-old baby from the villages of Muratağa, Sandallar and Atlılar were murdered by terrorists from the fascist Greek Cypriot group EOKA-B. Their intention was clear: eradicating the Turkish Cypriot people from the island and streamlining 'Enosis' - a constitutionally illegal annexation of Cyprus by mainland Greece and its far-right military junta.

Their bodies were found 49 years ago today, on the 1st September 1974 in shallow, unmarked pits. Many had been raped, forced to dig their own graves, and shot. The Associated Press described the corpses as: "so battered and decomposed that they crumbled to pieces when soldiers lifted them from the garbage with shovels."

Lars Harkanson, representative of the UN Peacekeeping Force said "I have not encountered such a disaster or barbarism. I have not seen anything like this in my life... the whole world will learn of these atrocities."

You will have heard various claims about the history of Cyprus, many false and inaccurate. This is because for some the truth is painful to realise - notably that Greek Cypriot ideologues, supported by Greek troops facilitated an invasion of the island in 1967 to carry out the Akritas Plan, a blueprint devised in 1963 for the genocide of the Turkish Cypriot minority on Cyprus.

The massacre of 1974 was just one of a string of murders that saw more than a thousand Turkish Cypriots exterminated, with hundreds still 'missing'. Greek Cypriots who also hoped against this illegal union with mainland Greece were also killed in their hundreds.

Such bloodshed on Cyprus must never be allowed to happen again.

These massacres remain broadly unrecognised by the international community and by national governments who have been exposed to a malicious and dishonest lobbying effort by Greek Cypriot interest groups. You will have heard that such devastation began on the island in 1974, that Greek Cypriots were the victims of Turkish aggression, and that those in South Cyprus are the ones who speak nothing but the truth. These are all false.

Turkish Cypriots in Northern Cyprus do not just want to set the record straight about historical injustices. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a forward-thinking, democratic, free country that seeks friendship with both South Cyprus and the United Kingdom. However, the whitewashing of the Muratağa, Sandallar and Atlılar massacres from history is an injustice that I urge you to recognise.

Turkish Cypriots are co-owners of the island of Cyprus but they haven't been treated as such since 1963. This massacre happened because of a perceived superiority of one majority ethnic group over the island's Turkish Cypriot community. The UK is a leading voice against ethnic cleansing across the world - signing the UN Genocide Convention, taking decisive action in Bosnia in the 1990s, and leading the charge against China's extermination of Uyghur Muslims.

I would welcome your condemnation of what happened in these villages 49 years ago and the attempted genocide of the Turkish Cypriot people between 1963 and 1974. I would also welcome your recognition that the history of Cyprus is not one that can be told solely by Greek Cypriot groups that masquerade as the 'voice of Cypriots living in the UK'. Like most histories, there are two sides - as a guarantor power of Cyprus the UK must maintain such a stance.

Your predecessor, Dominic Raab met Turkish Cypriot President Ersin Tatar in 2021, as have former and current Foreign Office ministers. The President spoke about the need for historical justice, alongside the UK's responsibility to ensure Turkish Cypriots remain sovereign equals on the island of Cyprus. I would urge you to do the same as Mr Raab and your colleagues.

Yours faithfully,

Çetin Ramadan

Co-chair of the Freedom and Fairness for Northern Cyprus campaign
