



**Freedom and  
Fairness**

For Northern Cyprus

The Rt. Hon. Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
King Charles Street, London  
SW1A 2AH

23/05/2024

**Subject: Direct flights to Ercan International Airport on the island of Cyprus**

Dear Lord Cameron,

We are writing to express our support for the commencement of direct flights from the United Kingdom to Ercan International Airport - the largest airport on the island of Cyprus.

Britain has a unique responsibility to ensure that all Cypriots, regardless of their ethnicity, have equality in the fulfillment of their potential and the right to live their lives free from arbitrary discrimination. 300,000 Turkish Cypriots live in the UK, whilst 15,000 British expats live in Northern Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots see Britain as a historically loyal defender of their interests and have been calling on the UK Government as a mediator to resolve the issue of direct flights.

The Government currently operates one of the most restrictive policies of any country in Europe when it comes to air travel to Ercan. Until 2017, passengers wishing to visit relatives, seek medical help, or holiday in Northern Cyprus could board an aircraft that would depart the UK, and briefly stop in Türkiye, before flying to Ercan. Since then, regulations have changed, and inbound travel to the UK has become an arduous chore. Passengers must now land in Türkiye, disembark for fresh security checks, before boarding a different aircraft at another gate. For the elderly and infirm this is cruel and unnecessary.

The unsuccessful 2004 Annan Plan referendum that sought to unify the island under a new constitution was voted for by Turkish Cypriots, but rejected by the rest of the island's population leaving the Cyprus issue unresolved as a frozen conflict. Following that democratic exercise, your predecessor as Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said "we must act now to end the isolation of Northern Cyprus. That means lifting the embargoes in respect to air travel." In this regard, the UK Government has not fulfilled its commitment to the Turkish Cypriot people and has been unwilling to discuss any tempering of measures.

If the UK permits flights to non-UN member states such as Kosovo, and to countries that it doesn't recognise such as Taiwan, why not to Northern Cyprus? The new Ercan Airport abides by international aviation security standards, and safely hosts hundreds of thousands of passengers each year.

Akrotiri and Dhekelia are two of the UK's most significant assets when it comes to regional security. If the British Government is unwilling to meaningfully engage with Turkish Cypriots, we risk letting countries such as Russia and Iran do so instead - fundamentally challenging the UK's strategic foothold in the eastern Mediterranean.

In the interests of fairness and our national security, we ask the UK Government to send a clear message that it upholds the commitments it has made to the Turkish Cypriots and show others that our influence in Cyprus is not waning, but steadfast. We call on the Government to facilitate direct flights to Ercan Airport and make travel easier for hundreds of thousands of people.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,