



Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 25 November 2005 to 17 May 2006 and brings up to date the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1642 (2005).

2. On 31 December 2005, Zbigniew Wlosowicz relinquished his post and on 1 January 2006, Michael Møller succeeded him as my Special Representative and Chief of Mission. The Force Commander, Major General Hebert Figoli (Uruguay), ended his tour of duty on 5 January 2006, and was succeeded by Major General Rafael Barni (Argentina) on 6 March 2006. As at 15 May, the strength of the military component stood at 859, all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 69 (see annex).

II. Mission of good offices and other developments

3. Over the past six months, both the Greek Cypriot leader and the Turkish Cypriot leader renewed their calls for a resumption of my mission of good offices. While there were signals of some willingness to begin to re-engage, there have been no tangible indicators of an evolution in the respective positions.

4. On 28 February, I met the Greek Cypriot leader, Tassos Papadopoulos, in Paris. I conveyed my assessment that the situation was not yet ripe for the resumption of full-fledged political talks and expressed my concern that the gap between words and deeds was still too wide. I encouraged him to do what he could to narrow those gaps. In March, I conveyed to the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, my readiness to meet with him at a mutually convenient time following his full recovery from a recent medical intervention.

5. In the course of the reporting period, I also had the opportunity to meet with both Greek and Turkish officials. Late in March, I met with the Greek Foreign Minister to discuss the situation in Cyprus and related issues. In January and March respectively, I met the Turkish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The object of the discussions was the action plan on lifting of restrictions in Cyprus put forward

by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, on 20 January 2006 (see A/60/657-S/2006/48, annex). In that connection, Nicosia indicated on 31 January that it was not in a position to accept Ankara's proposals (see A/60/671-S/2006/82). Athens held a similar view. I have since held extensive consultations on the proposals.

6. My new Special Representative took up his duties early in January and started to explore options to encourage progress on the ground and possibilities for a resumption of contacts between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, which had been suspended for over two years. In February, both agreed to a proposal to establish a mechanism for them to engage on issues of common concern through bicomunal discussions at the technical level. My Special Representative has since been involved in efforts aimed at reaching an agreement on the modalities for such discussions. In order to gauge the pulse of the communities, and build a broad base of support for progress toward the reunification of Cyprus, my Special Representative has also been in contact with wide sectors of civil society and with the wider diplomatic community on the island.

7. The bicomunal discussions at the technical level are not intended to be a substitute for the negotiating process towards a comprehensive settlement in the framework of my mission of good offices, but a step aimed at building trust and understanding, paving the way for the resumption of full-scale negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement. For the time being, both leaders have agreed in principle to my proposal that they meet on the occasion of the installation of the new third member of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, anticipated for June 2006.

III. Activities of the force

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

8. The military and security situation along the ceasefire lines remained generally stable. Overall, the opposing forces showed cooperation and exercised restraint. The number of incidents during the reporting period increased, although most were minor in nature. The Force recorded 468 incidents from November to May as compared to 397 for the same period in 2005. Minor incidents included overmanning, enhancements to military positions, stone-throwing, weapon-pointing and incursions into the buffer zone. Incidents of a more significant nature included cocking and pointing of weapons and hunting incidents. The noted increase may be attributed in part to the UNFICYP mobile concept of operations implemented since 2004, which brings the United Nations Force into more direct contact with the National Guard and the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot Security Forces and facilitates detection of incidents.

9. A confrontation over the opening of a new crossing point at Ledra Street in old Nicosia substantially heightened tensions in the early weeks of the reporting period. Both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots had agreed to open a new crossing point at Ledra Street with UNFICYP facilitation. However, late in November, the Turkish Cypriots decided unilaterally to construct a footbridge over a Turkish Forces patrol track close to the northern edge of the buffer zone. The south was unwilling to open its side of the crossing unless the bridge was removed while

the north was unwilling to open its side without the bridge. The south also withdrew its consent for the United Nations to carry out the necessary repair work on the street inside the buffer zone which, for safety reasons, must precede any opening. Tensions subsided in January but neither side has been willing to compromise and Ledra Street remains closed. Both have challenged UNFICYP demarcation of the buffer zone in the area, compounding the difficulties of reaching a solution.

10. Disputes over demarcation of ceasefire lines and the authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone increased. This is a long-standing problem, dating back to the failure of the opposing forces to agree on the ceasefire lines in the 1970s. Faced repeatedly with the practical problem of determining violations, in 1989 UNFICYP developed an aide-memoire on the supervision of the ceasefire in Cyprus, which remains the authoritative functional guide for UNFICYP. It was at the time presented to, though not accepted by, both sides. As part of an initiative to ensure that both sides honour UNFICYP authority in the buffer zone and decrease incidents and violations of the status quo, UNFICYP has invited them to engage in consultations to review the aide-memoire and the overall management of the buffer zone.

11. Over the past three months two violations of the status quo raised tensions in and along the buffer zone. The National Guard replaced and substantially improved an observation post in the vicinity of Dherinia by erecting a significantly larger structure. UNFICYP objected to the construction and repeatedly asked the National Guard to dismantle it and return the position to the status quo ante. At the time of writing, the National Guard had unmanned the position but the structure remained in place. The Turkish Forces initially did not react but then chose to construct a new observation post in the same vicinity. It is also currently unmanned. Each side cited previous infractions by the other to justify its own actions. Unless dismantled, both structures will be recorded as permanent violations. In general, both sides continued to react to provocative actions of the other rather than exercise restraint in order to defuse a situation.

12. The lifting of the restrictions on freedom of movement of UNFICYP personnel in the north referred to in my report of May 2005 (S/2005/353, para. 15) made possible restoration of operations in areas previously restricted. However, in January, new restrictions were placed on UNFICYP by the Turkish Forces on buffer zone crossing points in sector 4 to the east of Nicosia. UNFICYP police also faced movement restrictions in the Karpas area affecting operations of the small UNFICYP police team based in Leonarisso; meanwhile, a solution was found enabling UNFICYP police to operate effectively in the area.

13. Turkish Forces continued to man the checkpoint at the Louroujina pocket despite repeated protests by UNFICYP. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha. The Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot security forces remain in violation of the military status quo in Strovilia. Since March 2006, they have been manning the position with two soldiers whereas previously one soldier occupied the post. UNFICYP also noted an increase in the frequency of visits by senior officers to the position over the same period.

14. Both forces continue to perceive one another as a potential threat. That perception is reinforced by political and military commentary on both sides. The vast majority of incidents occur in areas where opposing forces are in close proximity to one another, in particular in the Nicosia area where stone-throwing, ill

discipline, threats and weapon-pointing incidents are a routine occurrence. Previous UNFICYP unmanning proposals have not been implemented owing to reservations held by both sides. UNFICYP intends to resume efforts to encourage the military of both sides to pull back from the buffer zone and unman positions in old Nicosia.

15. The United Nations military observer and liaison officer teams continued to make improvements in the exchange of information and the resolution of incidents. There is nevertheless room for improvement in the cooperation of opposing forces with the teams, which are an essential component of the new force structure. Further efforts will be made in the coming months to promote greater cooperation between the regimental commanders of the opposing forces and UNFICYP military observer and liaison officers.

B. Demining in the buffer zone

16. Of the 48 minefields originally identified in the buffer zone, 20 have been cleared to date. Since National Guard minefields in the buffer zone had been cleared (with the exception of a small section in the Louroujina pocket), the focus during the reporting period was on Turkish military minefields in the Nicosia area, with four minefields, comprising 383,293 square metres, cleared. The Mine Action Centre activity is currently focused on the remaining minefields in the Nicosia area listed by the Turkish side for clearance. Since February, UNFICYP has been in consultation with the Turkish Forces to extend demining beyond the Nicosia area to the rest of the buffer zone. The Mine Action project is currently funded until the end of July 2006 and an agreement has been reached with the European Union to release a further €1 million to fund the programme until the end of 2006. An estimated €6 million would then be required to complete the demining project in the buffer zone.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

17. UNFICYP continued to cooperate with its United Nations partners and the sides to facilitate projects of common benefit for Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots in the buffer zone and to promote confidence-building measures between them. The bicomunal road construction project in the buffer zone at the Astromeritis/Bostanci crossing point, funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services, was completed. UNFICYP obtained agreement for the operation of the crossing point on a 24-hour basis, commencing on 30 March 2006. The mission also facilitated other infrastructure improvements for the benefit of the civilian population in the buffer zone including the construction of the Akaki River dam west of Nicosia, road construction in the village of Mammari and the building of a warehouse in Peristerona.

18. Movement of people and trade across the buffer zone continued. UNFICYP has recorded a total of about 10.6 million crossings since the opening of the crossing points in April 2003. Approximately £C1.5 million (about \$3 million) worth of goods crossed the Green Line from the north to the south and £C350,000 (approximately \$700,000) worth of goods crossed from the south to the north. Only

a fraction of the crossings have had any incidents associated with them; however, three years after the first opening, there is little to no evidence of integration.

19. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated 43 bicommunal events with the participation of 1,340 people. These events were held in Ledra Palace in the buffer zone, which continues to be seen as an essential neutral place to host sensitive activities involving members of the two communities. Regular monthly meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders also continued to be held at Ledra Palace under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia. At their invitation, my Special Representative used the occasion of the meeting held in April to brief the political party leaders on his proposals to re-engage the two sides towards a solution of the Cyprus problem.

20. UNFICYP continued discussions with the Greek Cypriot side regarding the establishment of a Turkish primary school in Limassol, which is not yet operational. Since my last report, UNFICYP has pursued the matter by exploring various options with both sides. The Turkish Cypriot Teachers' Union filed a lawsuit at the Supreme Court to guarantee Turkish Cypriots' right to an education in their mother tongue. The trial began on 5 May. The special measures to upgrade the provision of primary education in the existing Greek Cypriot school for Turkish Cypriot students described in my previous report (S/2005/743 and Corr.1, para. 20) are now in place. Late in March the Greek Cypriots offered to consult further with UNFICYP on modalities for opening a separate school; these consultations remain pending. UNFICYP continued to mediate the appointment of one additional teacher for the Greek Cypriot secondary school in Rizokarpaso.

21. In January, in the mixed village of Pyla in the buffer zone, UNFICYP assisted in bringing the children of the two communities together for a cultural event which was marked by the planting of joint "friendship trees" in their respective schools. The two schools, which are 100 metres apart, had not held any joint activities in almost 30 years. On 30 November, teachers of the two schools held a reconciliation workshop with UNFICYP support, in which pedagogical methods were also discussed.

22. UNFICYP conducted 64 humanitarian convoys, money deliveries and humanitarian visits as part of its mandated humanitarian tasks in support of the 385 Greek Cypriots and 132 Maronites living in the north. UNFICYP continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south in obtaining identity documents, housing, welfare services, medical care, employment and education. On 24 April, UNFICYP facilitated the pilgrimage of 300 Greek Cypriots to Saint George's Church in Varisha in the buffer zone. In addition, UNFICYP mediated with both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots for cooperation on the preservation and restoration of cultural and religious sites, particularly in the north.

23. UNFICYP has observed an emerging trend of an increase in unauthorized construction of buildings for personal and commercial use and utilization of land outside the areas designated for civilian use in the buffer zone, especially in the vicinity of Pyla and other eastern areas located in sector 4. These are primarily projects carried out by Greek Cypriots. UNFICYP has initiated discussions with the relevant authorities to establish practical procedures ensuring that civilian use of the buffer zone does not compromise the security situation or hamper the ability of UNFICYP to carry out its mandated functions.

24. UNFICYP police continued to strengthen the working relationship with both sides on enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement and maintaining law and order in and around the buffer zone. Both the north and the south report an increase in crime through the buffer zone, such as smuggling of goods, including cigarettes, explosives (fireworks) and narcotics, and human trafficking. Local police and municipal authorities have begun to show some willingness to cooperate with UNFICYP on such matters and UNFICYP police have established a coordination mechanism to research and map reported crimes occurring in and across the buffer zone. UNFICYP police have also strengthened their patrolling capability and now conduct joint patrols with UNFICYP military in the Nicosia area. Increased interaction with the police services on the island facilitated good cooperation in dealing with public order and safety matters in the buffer zone, such as demonstrations, pilgrimages, hunter incursions and medical emergency transportation. Continued attempts to enhance information-sharing between the north and the south on criminal matters affecting both sides have met with little success. UNFICYP police continued to visit prisons in order to monitor the general conditions and fair treatment of Turkish Cypriots in the south and Greek Cypriots in the north. During the reporting period, there were 4 Greek Cypriots detained and released in the north; there are currently 27 Turkish Cypriots serving sentences in the south.

25. UNFICYP continued to coordinate activities on gender-related issues. On International Women's Day, UNFICYP hosted a bicomunal panel of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women to discuss the subject of trafficking of women in Cyprus. A bicomunal anti-trafficking group was formed at the event and will meet periodically under United Nations auspices at Ledra Palace. In addition, UNFICYP continued to organize meetings and activities of the bicomunal Cypriot Women's Policy Group, a group of prominent women who meet periodically to discuss modalities for cooperation between the two communities.

26. My new Special Representative has emphasized the need for greater cohesiveness in the efforts of the United Nations system in Cyprus. UNFICYP has been coordinating more closely with the United Nations Development Programme, represented on the island by two projects: Action for Cooperation and Trust and Partnership for the Future. Action for Cooperation and Trust was launched in November 2005 to build networks of cooperation between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. To date, the project has contributed to several joint activities between the north and the south to promote HIV/AIDS awareness. It has also facilitated a process of consultations among veterinary and health experts from the north, the south and the international community, including the World Health Organization, which intensified when avian influenza was found in birds on the island in January. Action for Cooperation and Trust has also collaborated with UNFICYP on the issue of religious and cultural heritage sites.

27. The project, Partnership for the Future, focuses on the rehabilitation of the old city of Nicosia in cooperation with the Nicosia Master Plan and provides direct support to small businesses on both sides of the island through targeted capacity-building activities and grant schemes. Following the commitment made by the European Union in 2004 to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community, the project was entrusted by the European Union with helping to reduce the socio-economic imbalance between the two communities, thereby facilitating the reconciliation process. The project does this through targeted technical assistance

initiatives covering private sector development, infrastructure development and the preservation of cultural heritage, and feasibility studies for the economic development of the northern part of Cyprus.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

28. In the course of the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus finalized the project proposal document on the exhumation, identification and return of remains of missing persons. This marked the end of a lengthy process of discussions, analysis and consultations with all entities involved. The Committee decided to place emphasis on local participation and ownership, thereby strengthening the project's potential positive impact on the broader reconciliation process. Progress has also been made with regard to the necessary infrastructure. As agreed, an anthropological laboratory was built in the buffer zone for the examination and storage of the remains of missing persons. The Turkish Cypriot laboratory involved in DNA testing is operational. The project will be launched as soon as the necessary funding has been secured. All progress to date has been made possible by voluntary contributions.

29. Exhumations were carried out twice for capacity assessment purposes under the supervision of an international forensic expert. This occasion brought together, for the first time, the Committee's new bicomunal team of archaeologists and anthropologists, composed of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot scientists who will play a major role throughout the project. Both sides agreed to the appointment of a new third member of the Committee, Christophe Girod, who will assume his duties in the course of June 2006.

V. Financial aspects

30. As indicated in my previous report (S/2005/743 and Corr.1), the General Assembly, in its resolution 59/284 B, appropriated for UNFICYP the amount of \$46.5 million. In this regard, I am grateful for the voluntary contribution of one third of the cost of the Force, equivalent to \$14.7 million, by the Government of Cyprus, and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million by the Government of Greece. Other countries and organizations might wish to do likewise, in order to reduce the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

31. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, which amounts to some \$45.0 million, is currently under consideration by the General Assembly, which is expected to act on it shortly.

32. As at 31 January 2006, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 15 June 2006 amounted to \$25.4 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to \$2,664.5 million.

33. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 31 January 2006 and 31 December 2005, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VI. Observations

34. Over the past six months, the ceasefire in Cyprus was maintained and the situation remained stable. On the whole, both sides extended good cooperation to UNFICYP, with some exceptions. Threats to United Nations peacekeepers by soldiers of opposing forces and disagreements with UNFICYP over the delineation of the buffer zone are indications that both sides are willing to take security risks to make gains on the ground or score points against each other. Differing opinions on the regime in the buffer zone inevitably lead to encroachments and changes to the status quo. In the absence of agreed ceasefire lines, the National Guard and the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot Security Forces should respect UNFICYP operational determinations on the parameters of the buffer zone. Such a message, if delivered by the command structures of the military on both sides to their rank and file, would help to reduce misunderstandings on the ground, thereby enhancing the security of UNFICYP soldiers.

35. The increase in civilian construction in the buffer zone may be a consequence of greater confidence in the security situation. While that would constitute a positive development as an indicator of normalization of conditions, the ability of UNFICYP to ensure security will be steadily eroded by continued construction, without UNFICYP approval, of residential and commercial facilities outside areas designated for civilian use. It is hoped that both sides will extend their cooperation to UNFICYP in that regard.

36. It is clear that an early completion of the work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and a solution to the issue of the missing persons would greatly contribute to reconciliation on the island. The appointment of the third member affords an opportunity to all concerned to redouble their efforts and put aside political considerations, in order to close this painful humanitarian chapter. I would urge the donor community to contribute to that effort.

37. I note with satisfaction the progress in demining efforts in the buffer zone. I appeal to the international community to lend its full support to the successful completion of the demining efforts in the Nicosia area, in the whole of the buffer zone and ultimately the whole of the island.

38. Over the past six months UNFICYP has continued to build on the advantages of the force structure adopted early in 2005 and to steadily improve coordination among its civilian, military and police components under the new concept of operations. I intend to continue to keep the operations of UNFICYP under review, with the aim of making recommendations for possible further adjustments at the appropriate time, taking into account conditions on the ground and progress at the political level.

39. I continue to believe that only the achievement of a comprehensive settlement will bring an end to the Cyprus problem. In the absence of such a comprehensive settlement, the presence of UNFICYP on the island continues to be necessary. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 15 December 2006.

40. At this juncture, it is important for the parties to resume contacts and to begin to think about how to re-engage in the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. I continue to believe that there is a need to match words with

action. To that end, my Special Representative has engaged in a process aimed at encouraging renewed contacts. As already indicated, I intend to dispatch the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey in the near future to assess the political situation in and around Cyprus and the prospects for a full resumption of my good offices. My Special Representative will continue to function as a high-level point of contact on the ground for the two sides.

41. In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to Zbigniew Wlosowicz for his dedicated service over five years as Chief of Mission of UNFICYP and to Major General Figoli for his command of the Force. I also extend my appreciation to Michael Møller and Major General Rafael Barni, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP, for the efficiency and dedication with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

Annex

**Countries providing military and civilian police personnel
as at 15 May 2006**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military personnel</i>	<i>Civilian police</i>
Argentina ^a	295	4
Australia	—	15
Austria	4	—
Bosnia and Herzegovina	—	4
Canada	1	—
Croatia	—	2
El Salvador	—	8
Hungary	84	—
India	—	7
Italy	—	4
Ireland	—	18
Netherlands	—	7
Slovakia ^b	200	—
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	275	—
Total	859	69

^a The Argentinean contingent includes soldiers from Brazil (1), Chile (15), Paraguay (15) and Peru (14).

^b The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Croatia (4).

