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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 20 June 2019 to 18 December 2019. It brings up to date the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution [186 \(1964\)](#) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#), since the issuance of my report on UNFICYP dated 10 July 2019 ([S/2019/562](#)) and on my mission of good offices dated 14 November 2019 ([S/2019/883](#)).

2. As at 18 December 2019, the strength of the military component stood at 794 (700 men and 94 women) for all ranks, while that of the police component stood at 66 (37 men and 29 women).

II. Significant developments

3. As outlined in my most recent report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus ([S/2019/883](#)), the consultations carried out by senior United Nations official Jane Holl Lute on my behalf continued over the reporting period, with the aim of facilitating agreement on the terms of reference that would constitute a consensus starting point for a possible negotiated conclusion to the Cyprus issue. In this context, I held an informal joint meeting with the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, in Berlin on 25 November. As I noted in my statement at the end of that meeting, the discussions were focused and frank and the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment and determination to achieve a settlement based on a bi-zonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [716 \(1991\)](#). The two leaders agreed that achieving a comprehensive and durable settlement within a foreseeable horizon was of utmost importance to the future well-being of both communities and that the status quo was unsustainable. They also affirmed their commitment to the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, the prior convergences, and the framework that I had presented on 30 June 2017 with a view to achieving a strategic agreement paving the way forward for a comprehensive settlement.

4. As stated following the meeting, I agreed to extend my efforts to achieve terms of reference to serve as a consensus starting point for phased, meaningful, and results-oriented negotiations at the earliest feasible opportunity. In this regard, I committed to exploring, with the two leaders and with the guarantor powers, the possibility of



convening an informal five-plus-United Nations meeting at an appropriate stage. It was also acknowledged that this time must be different.

5. I continue to monitor developments related to hydrocarbons in and around Cyprus closely and with concern. In recent months, the two sides put forward separate proposals to address the issue of hydrocarbon exploration, as noted in my report on my mission of good offices of 14 November 2019 (S/2019/883). However, significant differences persist. Developments in the region during the reporting period led to a marked increase in tensions, with few prospects of subsiding.

6. Public perception surveys undertaken on behalf of my mission of good offices continue to highlight that, in both communities, a solution to the Cyprus issue is of high importance. Both communities have more positive expectations from a solution scenario than from the continuation of the status quo. The majority in both communities believe that closer cooperation between the sides on issues such as crisis management, cultural issues, women's role in society, sports and environmental protection would be instrumental in bringing the two communities closer. A significant segment of both communities also believe that, should a settlement be achieved, initial problems in its implementation could be resolved and that a settlement would bring economic and social prosperity to all Cypriots. However, scepticism about the prospects for the peace process remains deep, especially among Greek Cypriot youth. There is also a significant number of people in both communities who remain ambivalent regarding a solution. This speaks to the importance for the sides to better engage with, reassure and inform the public with regard to the contours of any future settlement.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

7. In the absence of significant progress on the resumption of settlement talks, tensions persisted on the ground. The attendant rhetoric contributed to further eroding trust across the divide. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to maintain calm in and around the buffer zone, while working to build confidence between the communities. The period saw a few positive developments in this respect, despite an increasingly polarized political backdrop.

8. In its resolution 2483 (2019), the Security Council called upon the sides and the relevant involved parties, with UNFICYP as facilitator through its liaison role, to intensify their efforts to establish a mechanism for direct contact at the military level, and to continue to explore ways to establish mechanisms and enhance existing initiatives where necessary for effectively alleviating tensions, increasing joint efforts on criminal matters and helping address island-wide matters that affected all Cypriots. UNFICYP intensified its efforts during the reporting period to help achieve progress in this regard, liaising with all relevant parties. On a possible military mechanism, all relevant parties expressed interest in such an initiative and stated that they saw value in it, particularly given the prevailing, albeit low-level, military tensions in the buffer zone. My Special Representative shared with the relevant parties some ideas related to possible guiding principles and design options for such a mechanism. These took into consideration the parties' respective positions, drew on the experience of UNFICYP and incorporated best practices gathered from similar contexts. Despite the stated interest and the parties having taken note of those suggestions, common ground has not yet been found on the composition and timing for such a mechanism. Similarly, in terms of civilian contact mechanisms in areas such as crisis management – as agreed by the leaders in 2008 – or addressing irregular migration, concerns related to recognition remained a considerable obstacle at the political level.

9. With regard to criminal matters, some positive developments were noted. These included frequent meetings and exchanges of information in the context of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and the Joint Communications Room and the growing confidence between relevant actors on both sides, as evidenced by the increased number of handovers of alleged criminals from one side of the island to the other, with UNFICYP facilitation. However, no concrete outcome has yet been achieved on the establishment of coordination mechanisms. At the same time, the need for dialogue and coordinated efforts has become increasingly evident, including in the context of an increased number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers arriving on the island and persistent law and order challenges in the bicomunal village of Pyla.

10. To improve the mission's overall performance and impact in relation to these and other challenges and, more broadly, in the implementation of its mandate, UNFICYP was one of the first peacekeeping operations to develop a comprehensive performance assessment system, starting in February 2019. As part of this process, UNFICYP has developed a comprehensive strategic framework, including indicators of effect and performance, on the basis of which mission activities are assessed quarterly and adjustments are made accordingly.

A. Prevention of tensions in and around the buffer zone

11. In its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to provide further information on how best to strengthen the role of UNFICYP in de-escalating tensions in the buffer zone. The mission continues to consolidate and benefit from the full implementation of its 2017 comprehensive strategic review, following which key personnel were decentralized into the sectors and thus brought closer to the local populations, with whom liaison is key in order to de-escalate tensions that may arise. In 2019, representatives of the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership also visited the mission, providing important recommendations on how to further improve performance overall, including in our efforts to de-escalate tensions in and around the buffer zone.

12. The ability of UNFICYP to de-escalate tensions, however, does not rest solely with the mission, but also with the sides, whose own efforts to keep tensions low and whose respect for the mandated authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone would contribute to de-escalation in the area. In this respect, and in the spirit of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, the Security Council, in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#), specifically called upon the sides and all involved parties to respect the mandated authority of UNFICYP in, and delineation of, the buffer zone. Regrettably, the mission's repeated calls to the sides to respect the delineation of the buffer zone and abide by the 2018 aide-memoire were often unanswered. With its current mandate, which does not provide it with any executive authority, UNFICYP must rely on the cooperation of its interlocutors to prevent tensions in and around the buffer zone.

13. Guided by the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, UNFICYP is committed to contributing to advancing political solutions in the context of its existing mandate. The main added value of the mission towards that objective derives from its efforts to prevent tensions, maintain calm and bolster trust between the communities.

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

14. During the reporting period, UNFICYP contributed to maintaining a stable environment in and around the buffer zone and to preventing a recurrence of fighting.

The situation between the opposing forces has generally remained calm. Political tensions have occurred in connection with move forward violations in the Nicosia area. Elsewhere in the buffer zone, military violations have been sparked by civilian activities such as unauthorized farming and illegal hunting.

15. In all, 414 military violations were recorded during the reporting period, compared with 272 during the previous reporting period and 332 during the period 21 June to 18 December 2018. The number of move forward violations in disputed areas, especially by the Turkish forces, more than doubled compared with the previous reporting period, particularly in the area around the Ledra Palace Hotel crossing in Nicosia. Some violations by the Greek Cypriot National Guard were also recorded in a few areas along the buffer zone, such as moves forward in the Nicosia area and heavy weapons violations at a few positions close to the ceasefire line.

16. Unauthorized farming activities continued to raise security concerns and, in some cases, resulted in overmanning by the opposing forces and threats, particularly by the Turkish forces, to detain farmers. Requests from UNFICYP, including to the police services, for support from the sides to address such issues were often unanswered.

17. UNFICYP continued to be concerned by illegal hunting activities in the buffer zone; 122 such incidents were recorded during the reporting period, compared with 56 during the period 21 June to 18 December 2018. It should be noted that hunters often wore military fatigues, creating a real risk of miscalculation by the opposing forces. UNFICYP continued to handle violations responsibly but, again, support from the sides in that endeavour remained limited.

18. Overall, the mission observed a notable decrease in military construction and manoeuvre and weapons-related violations by the opposing forces. The decrease in military construction violations could be attributed to the improved speed of identification of potential violations through UNFICYP air as well as joint military and police ground patrols, closed-circuit television imagery and timely intervention by UNFICYP liaison teams.

19. The special status area of Strovilia remained a source of tension and concern, with 37 changes of status quo violations observed during the reporting period, compared with 49 during the previous period. The construction of a new checkpoint by the Turkish forces in the centre of the road outside the liaison post at Strovilia heightened political tensions and was protested by UNFICYP. Military positions established by the opposing forces in violation of the status quo inside the buffer zone and at Strovilia remain in place and are classified as ongoing violations.

20. During the reporting period, Varosha gained increased attention as a result of public statements made by the Turkish Cypriot side and high-level visits organized to the closed-off area by authorities in the north. The presence and movements of UNFICYP in Varosha continued to be restricted by the Turkish forces. UNFICYP continued to use all available technology, including satellite imagery, to enhance monitoring and reporting in this sensitive area. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

21. On 26 February 2019, as a confidence-building measure between the sides, the leaders agreed to the UNFICYP proposal of cancelling nine suspected hazardous areas on each side of the buffer zone. As at 5 December 2019, the 18 areas had been released by the sides from the designation of suspected hazardous areas, in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service.

C. Management of civilian activity and maintenance of law and order

22. UNFICYP continued to manage civilian activity in the buffer zone with a view to preventing tensions. The mission continued to administer the permit system for activities in the buffer zone, including farming, and delivered time-limited and location-specific permits, as applicable. As noted above, many activities were undertaken without authorization from UNFICYP, heightening the risk of confrontation between civilians or between civilians and the opposing forces, particularly when activities take place close to military positions. In total, the mission approved 545 permits (both new and renewed) for civilian activities, including farming and/or grazing, construction and utility maintenance, as compared with 563 during the previous reporting period and 526 during the period 21 June to 18 December 2018.

23. Unauthorized construction in the buffer zone, such as a new construction by the Turkish Cypriot authorities at the Ledra Street crossing in Nicosia in August 2019, which was protested by the mission, continued to be a source of friction between the sides. In Pyla, the university continued to operate without authorization from UNFICYP. In addition, an unauthorized large construction project associated with the university continued during the reporting period, although UNFICYP continued to express its concern about it to senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, as it had done during the previous reporting period (S/2019/562, para. 21).

24. UNFICYP continued to conduct preventive and targeted police patrols, as well as liaison and engagement, focusing on sensitive areas within the buffer zone. Joint targeted patrols were also conducted with law enforcement agencies to respond to, inter alia, illegal hunting and other incursions into the buffer zone, as well as illegal dumping, theft, the smuggling of goods and the arrival of undocumented migrants within the buffer zone. From July, UNFICYP also conducted daily patrols focused on fire prevention, as well as targeted anti-dumping and anti-poaching patrols. These patrols follow the community-oriented policing practices promoted in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative to ensure that peacekeepers are more responsive to the needs of the people whom they serve in the field.

25. UNFICYP continued to play a critical role in providing, through the Joint Communications Room, the main channel for the exchange of information between the police services, in the absence of direct contact between them. The Joint Communications Room was involved in 221 exchanges of information between both sides. UNFICYP also facilitated three handovers of third-country nationals suspected of committing a crime from one side to the other.

26. From 1 to 3 October, UNFICYP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) conducted a training programme on human rights and United Nations policing for UNFICYP and Cypriot police officers from both communities, who attended in their personal capacity. The programme contributed to building knowledge, as well as confidence and trust, among the participants.

27. Through their mukhtars and the local authorities, residents of Pyla, the only bicomunal village in the buffer zone, expressed growing concern about a perceived deterioration of the law and order situation in the village. UNFICYP continued to work with both police services to tackle criminal activities in Pyla, which often involved people from both communities. UNFICYP also continued to explore the possibility of a local coordination system that would allow the timely intervention of the police services, with UNFICYP facilitation, to address illicit activities, such as prostitution, gambling, trafficking and businesses operating without a licence.

D. Intercommunal relations, cooperation and trust-building

28. Following the closure of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana in July 2017, interaction between the communities has remained limited and the number of civil society initiatives in support of the peace process has dwindled. UNFICYP continued to assist civil society groups from the two principal communities in their joint efforts to bolster a constituency for peace and build trust. The resources of the mission being modest for such activities, UNFICYP strived to create a multiplier effect by facilitating and nurturing connections between like-minded groups and organizations from both sides of the divide.

29. On the basis of recent polls, UNFICYP identified four thematic areas that are likely to draw the interest of Cypriots from both communities: peace education; environment; youth and entrepreneurship; and gender and the role of women. The mission therefore focused its support on initiatives in those fields, including by connecting potential donors with civil society representatives, with the aim of fostering a multiplier effect. During the reporting period, UNFICYP supported 487 intercommunal events that brought together 9,945 participants from both sides. One event of significance was the fourth International Cyprus Car Rally, held from 27 to 29 September, which crossed the ceasefire lines below the Venetian walls of the old town of Nicosia, attracting 1,000 spectators. Such events allow Cypriots from both sides, who may not meet otherwise, to gather around an area of common interest. Bearing in mind the need to connect communities beyond the immediate proximity of Nicosia, UNFICYP increased its activities in the greater Famagusta region, working with grassroots civil society representatives, including women's organizations, both within the bicomunal village of Pyla and elsewhere.

30. The technical committees remained useful vehicles for interaction between the sides, designed to build confidence and to improve the daily lives of Cypriots across a range of issues. As I noted in the last report on my mission of good offices dated 14 November 2019, the technical committees have shown signs of revitalization and increased engagement ([S/2019/883](#), para. 37). During the reporting period, 11 out of 12 committees met at least once, with some committees meeting once a week and other committees meeting more sporadically.

31. The Technical Committee on Culture continued to work on the restoration of artworks and audiovisual recordings that were exchanged on 3 September 2019 in preparation for an exhibition that will be open to the public early this year. The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Matters continued to meet regularly to assess humanitarian issues across the island.

32. On 22 November, the Technical Committee on Crisis Management completed a project aimed at raising awareness of crisis preparedness, with a focus on earthquakes and fire incidents, for students from the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities in the bicomunal village of Pyla. The project was implemented in close cooperation with the Technical Committee on Education, demonstrating that there is potential for the committees to cooperate and undertake joint initiatives.

33. The Technical Committee on Education continued to promote peace education across the island through the volunteer programme, "Imagine", implemented by the non-governmental Association for Historical Dialogue and Research. On 16 December, the two leaders jointly attended the "Imagine" head teachers conference. Addressing Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot teachers, both leaders welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the Committee. The Greek Cypriot leader called on teachers to continue educating for the development of critically thinking citizens who would seek creative solutions to the challenges of the future and underscored the importance of educational activities to combat racism and develop a culture of peace. The Turkish

Cypriot leader also referred to the importance of building a culture of peace in Cyprus and highlighted the key value of education in that respect. He also referred to the importance of dialogue in trying to resolve disputes and spoke about the need to respect equality, multiple identities and pluralism.

34. New activities for the school year 2019/20 included the development of educational materials that promote peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue, to be piloted in several schools in both communities, and bicommunal study tours to places of interest on both sides. At the same time, most of the recommendations issued in June 2017 by the Technical Committee on Education to the leaders remain to be addressed. Similarly, there was no progress in addressing the impediments to peace in school materials, including textbooks, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#).

35. The religious leaders of Cyprus sustained their commitment to peacebuilding and reconciliation within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. The religious leaders, who have been meeting regularly since March 2011, cooperated with OHCHR and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to uphold the right to freedom of religion. They organized language classes (Turkish and Greek) and thematic seminars on human rights, religious awareness and gender issues and successfully supported pilgrimages on both sides of the divide.

36. The leaders and representatives of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot political parties held five meetings under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia and five meetings at the subcommittee level. They established informal contacts with representatives of the youth wings of political parties as well as youth representatives of the Maronite, Armenian and Latin religious groups, who attended their subcommittee meeting in November.

E. Facilitation of access and humanitarian functions

37. UNFICYP continued to liaise with both sides, facilitating 42 religious services and other commemorative events; 39 such events were held in the north and 3 in the buffer zone. Of the requests channelled through UNFICYP, 53 per cent were approved by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, compared with 78 per cent in the previous reporting period. Two additional religious sites in the north, namely, Ayia Paraskevi Church in Angastina/Aslanköy and Panayia Church in Lysi/Akdoğan, which had been inaccessible since 1974, were opened for worship for the first time. While these services were welcomed as positive initiatives, the theft of a flag by a Greek Cypriot participant at the Lysi/Akdoğan service soured public opinion in the north, although the flag was later returned and the participant apologized. UNFICYP, together with the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, facilitated pilgrimages to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca on 13 August and 11 November, involving 305 and 426 pilgrims, respectively. On 8 August, UNFICYP facilitated the crossing by 840 Turkish Cypriots into the Kokkina pocket through the Limnitis/Yeşilirmak crossing point for an annual commemorative event.

38. In another positive development, following the clearance of unexploded ordnances at Saint Jacob and Saint George churches and certification by the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) began to implement a restoration project aimed at stabilizing the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century edifices.

39. UNFICYP continued to monitor the well-being of, and ensure access to essential services for, Greek Cypriot and Maronite communities and individuals in the north and Turkish Cypriot individuals in the south, including through home visits, school

visits, humanitarian deliveries and visits to detention facilities. The approval of teachers and schoolbooks at the Greek Cypriot schools in the Karpas Peninsula continued to be a source of tension between the sides that required UNFICYP liaison in an effort to resolve issues and minimize disruption to the operation of the schools.

40. In its fifteenth report on the implementation of European Council regulation (EC) No. 866/2004 (the Green Line Regulation), dated 5 July 2019, the European Commission noted that, while the value of trade had increased by 1.4 per cent in 2018 and the Green Line Regulation continued to provide a workable basis for allowing the passage of persons and goods across the divide, it continued to be concerned that trade in general remained at a low level. The Commission considered that removing certain obstacles identified in the report would help significantly to increase trade through the seven crossing points across the Green Line. The Commission noted that the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce had continued their close cooperation with a view to bringing economic benefits to both communities and hoped that their work would lead to increased economic ties.

F. Refugees and asylum seekers

41. 2019 was marked by an unprecedented number of asylum applications being submitted in Cyprus. At the end of October 2019, 11,217 persons had applied for asylum, compared with a total of 7,761 during 2018. The number of asylum seekers awaiting the outcome of their applications reached 18,731, meaning that Cyprus remained the European Union country with the highest number of asylum applications per capita for the third consecutive year.

42. According to the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1,381 asylum seekers arrived by sea, both by boats sailing from Lebanon and Turkey and by larger commercial vessels. While a few boats carrying Syrian refugees arrived in the south of Cyprus and were assisted by the coastguard, the majority reportedly arrived in the northern part of the island. Asylum seekers from Africa arrived in larger numbers during the reporting period, hidden in containers on large commercial vessels sailing from Egypt and Libya.

43. The majority of the newly arrived asylum seekers came from the Syrian Arab Republic and first arrived in the northern part of Cyprus on tourist or student “visas”. A “visa” requirement was introduced by the Turkish Cypriot authorities at the end of June for Syrian nationals, while the Government of the Republic of Cyprus is pursuing a review of its policy to address irregular migration, both at the crossing points and along the buffer zone. The large number of arrivals has strained the reception capacity in the south, which has resulted in increased homelessness among asylum seekers.

44. The increased number of unauthorized crossings by irregular migrants and refugees through the porous areas of the buffer zone is becoming a challenge for UNFICYP, as the mission has neither the legal nor the logistical capacity to fully monitor or address such incursions.

G. Gender, and women, peace and security

45. In order to foster the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of the peace process, in line with Action for Peacekeeping and as requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#), UNFICYP supported my mission of good offices in Cyprus, which began initial consultations on the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#). Furthermore, the bicomunal Technical Committee on Gender Equality

resumed its work over the reporting period, facilitated by my mission of good offices and UNFICYP, identifying possible intercommunal trust-building initiatives and initiating discussions on the Security Council's request to develop an action plan supporting women's participation in peace talks.

46. Women's civil society organizations have also taken steps to support the meaningful inclusion of their perspectives in peace efforts. Of note, during the reporting period, UNFICYP supported another "Women walk and talk" event, focusing on women's empowerment and the role of women in the peace process. During the event, a petition was initiated by women's civil society actors calling for the resumption of talks and for the meaningful inclusion of women in the process. The petition was circulated to wider civil society and ultimately submitted to the offices of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders.

47. On 5 October, civil society organizations from the north and south held the first intercommunal festival, "United by Colours", in the buffer zone, marking their official collaboration to advance the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community island-wide. To mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence 2019 campaign, UNFICYP launched a video on social media addressing various challenges and consequences of gender-based violence and profiled Cypriot women's activities in this area.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

48. As at 18 December, the bicomunal teams of scientists of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, supported by the United Nations and mandated to recover, identify and return the remains of persons who went missing during the events of 1963/64 and 1974, had exhumed the remains of 1,230 persons on both sides of the island. To date, the remains of 968 missing persons, of a total of 2,002, have been identified and returned to their families, including 29 during the reporting period. In 2019, the remains of 27 persons were exhumed (including 6 during the same reporting period), compared with 13 exhumations in 2018 and 41 in 2017. In June 2019, the Committee was granted access to 30 additional military areas in the north that could contain burial sites, of which 7 have been excavated so far, without recoveries. Nine additional sites on this list are ready for excavation in the coming months.

49. In an effort to locate additional possible burial sites of missing persons, the Committee continued its efforts to secure access to the archives of countries and organizations that had a military, police or humanitarian presence in Cyprus in 1963/64 and 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee conducted extensive research in the archives of the United Nations in New York and Nicosia and completed a search of the records of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva. While commendable efforts have been undertaken by the United Nations and ICRC to provide the Committee with access to archival holdings, including classified ones, little archival information on possible burial sites from the parties directly involved has been shared with the Committee. Given the number of Turkish troops deployed and the length of the frontline in 1974, cooperation with the Turkish army with regard to its military archives remained a priority in order to locate additional burial sites. The Committee also continued to cooperate with the Cyprus police regarding complex cases of persons who went missing in 1963 and 1964.

V. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse

50. UNFICYP continued to promote strict adherence to the United Nations policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. It actively engaged with the

Regional Conduct and Discipline Section to coordinate and monitor activities related to the prevention of and remedial actions for misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, and to the enforcement of the policy of zero tolerance. Twenty-five training sessions on United Nations standards of conduct, including on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, were delivered to incoming military, police and civilian personnel, as well as contractors.

51. During the reporting period, UNFICYP did not receive any allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse. Two new allegations of misconduct unrelated to sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded against two UNFICYP personnel.

VI. Financial and administrative aspects

52. The General Assembly, by its resolution [73/314](#), appropriated the amount of \$50.8 million for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to \$17.1 million, from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

53. As at 19 December 2019, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNFICYP amounted to \$17.9 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$3,142.0 million.

54. Reimbursement of troop costs and contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 September 2019.

VII. Observations

55. In recent reports on my mission of good offices, I noted that the absence of a resolution of the Cyprus issue was not sustainable, which I continue to firmly believe. The lack of negotiations since July 2017 does not mean that the situation on the island remains unchanged, either at the political level or in the buffer zone. As highlighted in the framework of my Action for Peacekeeping initiative, there is a direct link between the mandates of peacekeeping and good offices missions, where, on the one hand, the prevention of an escalation of tensions on the ground contributes to conditions conducive to advancing political solutions to conflicts and, on the other hand, progress towards a political agreement can contribute to a calmer and more stable situation. In the case of Cyprus, I note that, since the closure of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana, over time, tensions on the ground have progressively increased.

56. Following the frank and focused discussions that I held with both leaders during the meeting I hosted on 25 November in Berlin, I continue to hold out hope that a durable settlement to the Cyprus problem can be achieved. I welcome the leaders' commitment and determination to achieve a settlement based on a bi-zonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [716 \(1991\)](#). As acknowledged in Berlin, this time must be different. I reiterate my commitment to exploring, with the Turkish Cypriot leader and the Greek Cypriot leader and with the guarantor powers, the possibility of convening an informal five-plus-United Nations meeting at an appropriate stage. In this regard, I again urge the leaders, the guarantor powers and other interested parties to make productive use of the coming period.

57. I continue to monitor developments relating to hydrocarbons closely and with concern. I have repeatedly stressed that the natural resources found in and around Cyprus should benefit both communities and constitute a strong incentive for all parties to find a mutually acceptable and durable solution to the Cyprus problem. Bearing in

mind that all parties have expressed their commitment to this objective, I reiterate my call for serious efforts to avoid any further escalation and to defuse tensions.

58. While some concrete achievements on the implementation of previously agreed confidence-building measures were made during the past year and the sides put forward proposals and ideas about possible new measures, discussions and progress on these need to be further pursued. It is important that the sides continue to demonstrate their goodwill and make greater efforts to create conditions conducive to a successful negotiation process, to renew hopes for a settlement and to build a path towards sustainable peace. UNFICYP and my mission of good offices in Cyprus will continue to be available to support the sides in this respect.

59. The Security Council has repeatedly called on the leaders to refrain from using rhetoric that might deepen the mistrust between the communities, insisting on the importance of improving the public atmosphere and on preparing the communities for a settlement, while also highlighting the importance of peace education. Forty-five years after the ceasefire and de facto division of Cyprus, most of these pillars of reconciliation, unfortunately, remain to be built. Consequently, I echo the calls of the Security Council in this regard, including its request to the two leaders to increase their support to, and ensure a meaningful role for, civil society actors in peace efforts. I urge the sides to do more themselves to promote and support people-to-people initiatives as evidence of their genuine commitment to a solution.

60. I call upon other opinion leaders on the island, be they from the political, commercial, religious, artistic or other spheres, to contribute to bringing the communities together. In the light of significant societal scepticism and disengagement with regard to the peace process, coupled with an estrangement between the communities that has now run over three generations, redoubled efforts are required for Cypriots to reengage for peace and bridge the divide between them. Conversely, acts that are aimed at provoking the other community or inciting hatred should be addressed and clearly denounced by political and other leaders.

61. Notwithstanding repeated calls on my part and on the part of the Security Council, efforts to achieve greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to broaden and deepen economic, cultural and other forms of cooperation remain limited. The full implementation of European Council regulation (EC) No. 866/2004 (the Green Line Regulation) would help significantly to increase the volume of trade and should be pursued with renewed vigour. Increased cross-island trade, together with deeper economic, social, cultural, sporting and other ties and contacts, would promote trust between the communities and help to address the concerns of the Turkish Cypriots regarding isolation.

62. In their efforts to promote closer cooperation between the communities, local non-governmental actors and those who support them continue to be confronted with challenges and obstacles linked to the status of the north and concerns relating to “recognition”. While United Nations policy on Cyprus is maintained and decisions of the Security Council on the matter are upheld, concerns about recognition should not in themselves constitute an insurmountable obstacle to increased cooperation. As the sides explore further opportunities for confidence-building and cooperation, I urge them to devise creative ways of overcoming obstacles with a view to achieving meaningful progress and delivering tangible benefits to their communities. The United Nations remains fully committed to providing them with the facilitation and support necessary.

63. Although I welcome the parties’ stated commitment to seeing a military contact mechanism established, I regret that differences in position on modalities for this mechanism could not be overcome. I urge the parties to work with my Special Representative to establish this mechanism without delay, thereby initiating an

important military confidence-building measure and meeting the expectations of the Security Council in this regard. I recall the agreement of the two leaders in 2008 to establish a mechanism for cooperation in crisis situations, under the umbrella of the Technical Committee on Crisis Management, and urge them to proceed to implementing that agreement. I also urge the parties to make a genuine effort to explore new or enhanced avenues for cooperation on key civilian matters, including in relation to law and order, particularly in Pyla. A notable step in the law enforcement area has been a more systematized procedure enabling the handover of third-country nationals and alleged criminals from one side to another with UNFICYP facilitation. The sides should build on these initial efforts to make sure that criminals do not continue to exploit the de facto divide of the island.

64. I thank the Security Council for its concern, expressed in resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#), regarding how to best strengthen the role of UNFICYP in de-escalating tensions in the buffer zone. The mission recently implemented significant strategic and tactical changes to its modus operandi to enhance its prevention capacity, including pursuant to the 2017 strategic review. At the same time, Action for Peacekeeping is built on the acknowledgement that the success of peacekeeping operations is only as strong as the political contract between Member States and the missions on the ground. The support of the relevant Member States, including those in the Security Council, to the work of UNFICYP is therefore essential to strengthen the mission's capacity to de-escalate tensions.

65. I am concerned about the continuing disregard shown by the sides towards the mandated authority of UNFICYP, especially in the buffer zone. I refer particularly to military moves forward and changes to the status quo, and to unauthorized constructions in Nicosia, Pyla and Strovilia. The mission's aide-memoire, as repeatedly highlighted by the Security Council, is the document of reference to describe the arrangements followed by UNFICYP to prevent a recurrence of fighting, to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and to contribute to the return of normal conditions. I would like to echo the Security Council and urge all parties to abide by the aide-memoire, including by respecting the no-fly zone status of the buffer zone and the UNFICYP delineation of the ceasefire lines. In relation to that, I also deplore the restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNFICYP personnel imposed in, inter alia, Varosha and Strovilia, and request that the mission's ability to patrol and implement its mandated activities be fully restored.

66. UNFICYP records all observed violations and engages with the sides to resolve the issues. However, the mission has also noticed that some violations and their impact are amplified politically and through the media, further increasing tensions and mistrust. I deplore any attempts to instrumentalize the recorded violations in this respect and call upon the sides to work constructively with UNFICYP to address violations and to refrain from further increasing tensions. Similarly, I regret the continued unauthorized civilian incursions and occasional provocative behaviour in the buffer zone and the direct impact that these have on military violations, for example, in the form of unauthorized farming by Greek Cypriot farmers close to the positions of Turkish forces and by Turkish Cypriot farmers similarly farming on unauthorized land.

67. During the period under review, UNFICYP continued to play a crucial role in monitoring, engagement and liaison in response to violations and low-level tensions. Its continued presence remains essential to the creation of conditions conducive to a political settlement. In recognition of the continued contribution by UNFICYP to the maintenance of peace and stability, I recommend that the Security Council extend the mission's mandate until 31 July 2020.

68. I would like to thank the partners, in particular the European Commission, that have continued to provide support for the work of both United Nations missions in Cyprus, UNDP and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and have contributed to the implementation of various confidence-building measures. I also thank the 36 countries that have contributed troops, police or both to UNFICYP since 1964, and I pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace in Cyprus.

69. I express my gratitude to Elizabeth Spehar for her service as my Special Representative in Cyprus, the Head of UNFICYP and my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus. I also extend my thanks to all the men and women serving in UNFICYP for their steadfast commitment to the implementation of the mandate of the mission and the cause of peace on the island.

Annex

**Countries providing military and police personnel to the
United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 18 December 2019)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of military personnel</i>
Argentina	243
Australia	2
Austria	3
Brazil	2
Canada	1
Chile	12
Ghana	1
Hungary	12
India	1
Pakistan	2
Paraguay	12
Russian Federation	2
Serbia	3
Slovakia	241
Ukraine	1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	257
Total^a	795

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of police personnel</i>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6
Bulgaria	3
China	4
Jordan	3
India	5
Ireland	12
Italy	4
Lithuania	1
Montenegro	1
Romania	5
Russian Federation	6
Serbia	2
Slovakia	5
Sweden	2
Ukraine	7
Total^a	66

^a Of the military personnel, 700 are men and 94 are women. Of the police personnel, 37 are men and 29 are women.

