



# SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



19 May 2009 No. 2

## CYPRUS

### Expected Council Action

The Council will hold consultations on 22 May and is expected to agree on the renewal of the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). It is also expected to discuss the most recent report of the Secretary-General on Cyprus. The Secretary General's Special Representative in Cyprus Tayé-Brook Zerihoun is expected to brief the Council.

The Council decided to bring forward this mandate renewal to May (it expires on 15 June) to avoid the possible perceptions of conflict of interest due to the fact that Turkey has the presidency of the Council in June.

### Key Recent Developments

The latest UNFICYP report was submitted on 15 May. In it, the Secretary-General said that the situation in the buffer zone had remained calm. But he also pointed out that the overall good cooperation between UNFICYP and the two sides was affected by recent increased restrictions on UNFICYP imposed by the Turkish forces stationed in the north. He also said that demining activities in the buffer zone have continued to make progress and that this was an important confidence-building measure. He added that the work of the bicomunal Committee on Missing Persons in charge of recovering the bodies of the missing has continued in a satisfactory way. The Secretary-General also reported that negotiations between the two leaders were still ongoing in a positive and constructive manner and that they had identified a number of points of convergence and divergence. He added that the existence of a significant body of work (from previous agreements) was an advantage as the leaders could draw upon it. But he also warned that the process cannot be open-ended and that the pace of the talks should increase. They would soon have to establish the broad outline of an agreement. Finally, he said that he would continually keep the operations on UNFICYP under review, taking into account developments on the ground.

On 30 April, the Council heard a briefing in informal consultations by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alexander Downer. (Please see our 28 April *Update Report on Cyprus*). The Council adopted a presidential statement warmly welcoming progress made so far in the negotiations and urging the leaders to increase the momentum. The Council emphasised the importance of full, flexible and constructive engagement of the parties and looked forward to decisive progress in the near future.

The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders continue to meet every week and are currently addressing economic issues (they already addressed power-sharing issues, property issues, and EU matters). The remaining issues to tackle are territory and security and guarantees, after which a second round would allow the parties to begin actual negotiations on issues of disagreement.

In December 2008, the UN Mine Action Centre in Cyprus, which has been conducting mine clearance in the buffer zone since 2004, declared that it was running out of funding. It appears that an agreement was recently reached by which both Greek Cypriot contributions and EU funds would be used for demining. The project was therefore extended to April 2011. So far, about 80 percent of the demining project has been completed.

## **Options**

The Council is expected to renew the mandate of UNFICYP for an additional six months. The Council also has the option to:

- endorse the Secretary-General's observations in his latest report;
- reiterate language used in the April presidential statement encouraging the parties to make further progress in the negotiations;
- encourage further progress on the implementation of confidence-building measures, particularly for the opening of the Limnitis/Yesilirmak crossing;
- welcome positive developments in demining activities and progress achieved in recovering and identifying the bodies of missing persons as confidence-building measures;
- emphasise the desirability of an agreement being reached by the end of 2009 and, to that end, that the parties should enter the second phase of negotiations as soon as possible;
- reaffirm the importance of keeping UNFICYP's operations under close review, taking into account the developments in the negotiations and express its readiness to consider further adjustments to the mandate and force levels when necessary; and
- remind the parties of the need for full cooperation with UNFICYP.

## **Key Issues**

The main issue for the Council is what more it can effectively do to support the full-fledged negotiations. A key question is whether the Council may want to simply reaffirm language used in the April presidential statement or to go further, especially in terms of a timeline.

Another issue is whether to press for further progress on confidence-building measures. While 23 such measures have been identified by bicomunal technical committees established in 2008 and covering criminal matters, cultural heritage, health and environment, only four of them are being implemented, and this was deemed disappointing by the Secretary-General. It seems that a particularly important measure not yet implemented is the opening of the Limnitis/Yesilirmak crossing between the two sides.

Another major issue is UNFICYP itself. First, there is the question of reinforcing the need for both parties to maintain cooperation with it. Secondly, there is the question of when to begin discussions on an exit strategy for UNFICYP or a further drawdown in the broader context of Council efforts to overhaul peacekeeping activities. The Secretary-General observed that a review of the force will be ongoing in view of progress in the talks. In the past the UK had explored the possibility of raising this issue. The Greek Cypriots seem to be sensitive to this,

seeing UNFICYP as a counter-weight to the Turkish military presence on the northern part of the island.

Another key question is commencement of substantial negotiations. Currently there is no timeframe for the negotiations due to Greek Cypriot reluctance. However, it seems that the current window of opportunity is limited in time (the leader of the Turkish Cypriots, Mehmet Ali Talat, is due to step down in the spring of 2010), and therefore there are growing expectations that an agreement should be reached by the end of 2009.

A related issue is whether the changed political situation in the north is having an impact on the talks (please see our 28 April 2009 *Update Report on Cyprus* for more details). Some believe that a wider political representation in the Turkish Cypriot delegation may make it easier to obtain popular consent, as the final agreement between the two leaders is to be put to referendum. Indeed the Secretary-General noted in his latest report that polls have recently shown a high-level of scepticism toward the negotiations among the population on the two sides of the island and that more needed to be done to involve civil society.

### **Council and Wider Dynamics**

The UK has the lead on the issue. Following usual practice, the draft resolution will likely be discussed among the P5 before being circulated to the rest of the Council. There have in the past been some diverging views among the P5 (with Russia being more supportive of the Greek Cypriots and the UK more inclined to the Turkish Cypriots).

This is the first time that Turkey is a member of the Council since the establishment of UNFICYP in 1964. Turkey does not recognise the Republic of Cyprus, and in 1964 opposed the establishment of UNFICYP. It believes that resolution 186, which established UNFICYP, failed to take into account the reality of the situation at that time by acknowledging the sovereignty of the Government of Cyprus despite the fact that the Turkish Cypriots were no longer part of it. (For more details on historical background, please see our 4 September 2008 *Special Research Report on Cyprus*.) Turkey may therefore be reluctant to support the resolution renewing the UNFICYP mandate. However, it seems to be hoping to play a constructive role in the discussions. An important issue for Turkey is the fact that the Secretary-General's observations in previous UNFICYP reports regarding the existing body of work that the parties can draw upon should be endorsed by the Council. (The Greek Cypriots are usually reluctant about this. They reject any reference to the 2004 Annan Plan which did not gain a majority in a referendum.) Turkey also seems to believe that although confidence-building measures are very important and should be encouraged; the focus should remain reaching a comprehensive settlement. Finally, Turkey also supports more UN involvement in the negotiations.

Overall, Council members seem ready to support the talks and confidence-building measures. They also all support a six-month mandate renewal for UNFICYP without any change. It remains to be seen whether they will also be willing to press the parties into further progress in the talks in a specific timeframe and for the implementation of confidence-building measures with more concrete timelines.

## UN Documents

<b>Selected Resolutions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• S/RES/1847 (12 December 2008) renewed the mandate of UNFICYP until 15 June 2009, urging the intensification of the momentum of negotiations, preserving the current atmosphere of trust and goodwill and engaging in the process in a constructive and open manner, and welcoming progress on confidence-building measures.</li><li>• S/RES/186 (4 March 1964) established UNFICYP.</li></ul>
<b>Selected Presidential Statements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• S/PRST/2009/10 (30 April 2009) welcomed progress in the negotiations, urged the parties to increase the momentum and looked forward to decisive progress in the near future.</li><li>• S/PRST/2008/34 (4 September 2008) confirmed the Council's readiness to support the negotiating process between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and welcomed the appointment of Alexander Downer as the Secretary-General's Special Advisor.</li></ul>
<b>Latest Secretary-General's Reports on UNFICYP</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• S/2009/248 (15 May 2009)</li><li>• S/2008/744 (28 November 2008)</li></ul>

## Other Relevant Facts

<b>Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus</b>
Alexander Downer (Australia)
<b>Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Head of Mission and Deputy Special Adviser</b>
Tayé-Brook Zerihoun (Ethiopia)
<b>Force Commander</b>
Rear Admiral Mario César Sánchez Debernardi (Peru)
<b>Size and Composition of Mission (as of 31 March 2009)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Strength:</i> 938 total uniformed personnel, including 869 troops and 69 police; supported by 42 international civilian personnel and 113 local civilian staff</li><li>• <i>Contributors of military personnel:</i> Argentina (including soldiers from Brazil, Chile and Paraguay), Austria, Canada, Croatia, Hungary, Peru, Slovakia and the UK</li><li>• <i>Contributors of police personnel:</i> Argentina, Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, El Salvador, India, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands</li></ul>
<b>Cost</b>
1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009: \$57.39 million (including voluntary contributions of one-third from Cyprus and \$6.5 million from Greece.)

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Security Council Report is published with the support of the Governments of Canada, Greece, Liechtenstein and Norway, The Rockefeller Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. It is incorporated as a not for profit Organisation and operates in affiliation with the Center on International Organization in the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York.

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