



Press News

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Thursday 25th March 2010: Press statement by ATCA's UK arm on an article written in The Guardian by Mr. Robert Ellis on the 3rd March 2010.

Dear Mr Ellis,

25th March 2010

Re: The Guardian article - "The scandalous history of Cyprus"

With reference to the above article which was published on Wednesday 3rd March 2010 in the Guardian, we would like to point out that the content was not entirely correct and in most part very misleading.

As the Association of Turkish Cypriots Abroad (ATCA), one of our key objectives is to equate the huge imbalance of information provided to the World by the Western media in favour of Greek Cypriots. ATCA is an international non-government organisation representing thousands of the Turkish Cypriot Diaspora in the UK, USA, Australia, Germany and Turkey. Its primary role is to uphold the humanitarian and constitutional rights of the Turkish Cypriot people.

Western media conveniently fail to realise that the Turkish Cypriot people are equal partners of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus Constitution which lasted only 3 years because the Greek Cypriots made 13 changes to the Constitution - each change directly affecting the Turkish Cypriots as an equal Governing partner. They have unjustly been stripped of that legal entitlement and in return been isolated both politically and economically since 1963. The fact that the island remains divided is indeed "a scandal and a tragedy". However, the blame cannot be attributable to the Turkish Cypriots especially after the infamous Greek Cypriot rejection of the United Nations sponsored "Annan Plan" of April 2004 which was backed by the EU, USA and Turkey. The real scandal was allowing the Greek Cypriots into the EU and the ironic tragedy is that the Turkish Cypriots have again been isolated and punished further.

It has publicly been conceived that the EU has made a mistake by solely rewarding the Greek Cypriots with full EU membership. This has diminished any chances of re-uniting the island and has lost the EU its credibility. Additionally, the Greek Cypriots have no incentive to compromise on a fair and balanced formula as they have already achieved EU status without their Cypriot compatriots. As full EU members, they now have all the bargaining tools at the negotiating table whilst the Turkish Cypriots are squeezed into an even tighter corner. They no longer see Turkish Cypriots as an equal partner, which was our status in 1960, but as a minority with no will to equally share any kind of power or sovereignty. Is this fair?

Although we were pleased to hear the recognition of the recent "[Immovable] Property Commission in Northern Cyprus" as a domestic means of solving the property issues related to the Cyprus problem, this in effect is only a half measure as this entity is only regarded by the ECHR as subordinate to Turkey.

Both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot people want to negotiate for a comprehensive solution. The endorsement and acceptance of the Annan Plan by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots respectively in 2004 clearly highlights our will and commitment. A future plan must also be fair and similarly based on a Bi-Communal, Bi-Zonal Federal structure based on "Two Founding States". In order to achieve this, the Greek Cypriots have to accept the Turkish Cypriots as their equals. The Greek Cypriot mindset has to comprehensively change if a future deal is to survive. ATCA believes that the EU could actively contribute to the Cyprus



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peace process by further forcing the hand of the Greek Cypriots in accepting a workable, Federal deal based on two founding states. Failure to achieve this will ultimately lead to permanent partition.

The statement by the Greek Cypriot leader, Demetris Christofias, that Britain "bears much of the blame", displays his manipulative nature to the past circumstances and the confrontational attitude of the Greek Cypriots. ATCA believes that he is noticeably portraying once again a negative view of Britain's position on the island and causing friction unnecessarily.

The Greek Cypriots are hoping to use their power as an EU member to drag the UK into a conflict that was clearly started by the Greek/Greek Cypriot inspired terrorist campaign prior to the 1960 Cyprus Republic. This initially started with the murder of British service personnel and their families, before turning their attention and guns onto the Turkish Cypriots by those involved with the Greek Cypriot Coup of the 15th July 1974.

ATCA believe that Britain made the right choice in helping the setting up of the original "Cyprus Republic", and in particular, including the Treaty of Guarantee as a protective mechanism. What we would now prefer to see by Britain is its unconditional support in the removal of the inhumane isolation of the Turkish Cypriots of Northern Cyprus and to assist in an overall solution by being the first country in Europe to do so. This would not only assist in the search for an amicable and workable resolution to the Cyprus problem, but would also add to its approval of Turkey's EU entry.

We do not, and have never believed the "Treaty of Guarantee" to be a "provisional" entity, but judging by the ill-initiatives of the well documented Greek Cypriot Akritas Plan and their military manoeuvres against the defenceless Turkish Cypriots and British Cypriots, proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the Treaty of Guarantee was of vital importance, and a necessary component for the protection of peace on the entire island. In fact, the Greek Cypriots, even though many of whom had to forcefully change their position after the Turkish Peace Operation in 1974, were "thankful" that the "Turks have arrived to save us", as said in their own words. Turkey only went ahead with phase two of the peace operation in response to the call by the Turkish Cypriots, and after witnessing the many Turkish Cypriot people, including women and children buried alive in clear acts of genocide.

When the first stage of the Akritas Plan was put into practice, many young Turkish Cypriot defenceless men, women and children were mercilessly slaughtered, and were certainly not "prepared" as you had written in your article. We now we have regular calls for Turkey to withdraw their army whilst in Southern Cyprus the Greek Cypriots are spending vast sums of money on weapons, tanks, missiles etc. Why do this and negotiate peace at the same time? Who are these weapons aimed at? Past experience tells us that it's against the Turkish Cypriots, who else?

We appreciate your heartfelt interest in the Cyprus conflict, but remaining impartial and not contorting the facts would be beneficial to all Cypriots in the long run if we aspire to a peaceful resolution. Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the island are all searching for a fair and workable formula and do not need to be hounded by any misinformation regarding their bloody history. We have even recently witnessed the Greek Cypriot leader publicly apologising for many of the mistakes made in the past. Articles wrongly depicting those personal and sensitive events would have no benefit other than to damage the current Cyprus negotiations.

Regards,

Cetin Ramadan

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Notes to editors

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About ATCA – www.atcanews.org

The Association of Turkish Cypriots Abroad (ATCA) was established in July 2003, with the aim of forming a web site which would address the problems of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and that of the Turkish Cypriots worldwide. ATCA has two primary objectives:

- i) To lobby effectively
- ii) To organise and unite the Turkish Cypriots Worldwide

ATCA's strap line/slogan is: Respect, Equality and Recognition

ATCA lobbies hard and effectively in light of the above slogans, calling on the International Community to Respect the Human Rights of the Turkish Cypriots, with particular reference to the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948'.

ATCA always calls on the notion of Equality to be respected in any solution to the Cyprus Problem, in light of past UN Resolutions which stipulate that the Cyprus issue is not one of 'majority and minority' but that of 'two equal Communities'. ATCA also calls upon the International Community to treat the Turkish Cypriots with EQUALITY, so that they may enjoy the same rights and freedoms as the rest of the world citizens, and without interference from the Greek Cypriots, who have attempted to ethnically cleanse the island from Turkish Cypriots since 1963.

ATCA calls upon the Recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, as the Turkish Cypriots are equal with that of the Greek Cypriots, with rights to Self Determination. This was clearly demonstrated in the Annan Plan referenda, where both Peoples exercised their right of self determination. Furthermore, the Turkish Cypriots are NOT 'Stateless', but have their own democratically elected Parliamentarians; President; their own police force; judicial system; and the essential organs and institutions required for the effective functioning of the Republic.

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