



UK News Release

16 September 2016

A key British Turkish Cypriot NGO issues an open letter in order to highlight critical issues relating to the current UN sponsored negotiations.

Friday 16th September 2016: The British Turkish Cypriot Association has issued the following open letter to the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus:

Dear President Akinci,

The British Turkish Cypriot Association support the UN sponsored negotiations and its aim to achieve a viable solution in Cyprus. However, given the current conflicting trajectory of the talks, we have a number of serious concerns, which we see as a threat to the peace and prosperity of the Turkish Cypriot people and therefore the sustainability of any agreement reached.

Given that the Turkish Cypriots will make the ultimate decision at the ballot box on referendum day, the absence of our representation throughout the talks can only make this an unjust and totally undemocratic process. The Turkish Cypriot people were given very little time to absorb the Annan Plan in 2004. Similarly this time around, our people have not been party to any reliable information or participation in a decision about their future and safety. Therefore, they can only join the politicians, whom you have recently complained about, in forming a 'NO' vote to the uncertainty brought about by closed-shop discussions and contradictory statements by your Greek Cypriot counterparts and their media.

As from the latest population census, the number of Turkish Cypriots in the TRNC was 286,257 people but it has been announced that only 220,000 will be the limit on citizenship and voting rights. This therefore will see the start of the unification with limits on the development and future of Turkish Cypriots with no real indication who will be awarded the accolade of citizenship and who will have to re-apply. Only this time the same people will face a demoralising fight with the limits set and what we see as a fairly hostile Greek Cypriot administration deciding our heritage and right to be part of it.

More follows....



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Continued.....

Who do you propose to exclude from voting and citizenship? How can you limit your own people from the right to return and invest in their own country? Furthermore, are you purposefully excluding the Turkish Cypriot Diaspora who has a natural vested interest in the whole process? These people are dual nationals who own properties in the TRNC, continue to fulfil their military obligations and pay TRNC taxes. Is this fair? We demand to know if the Greek Cypriots are following the same principle?

Have the Evkaf properties, illegally appropriated during British rule by Greek Cypriots, been discussed at the negotiation table or are these properties simply going to be handed over to the Greek Cypriots?

The single biggest concern to all Turkish Cypriots relates to the properties they live in. Contrary to the Annan Plan, if our people say "YES" to the proposed plan, they will potentially face individual property claims by the Greek Cypriots. This will bring the TRNC economy to a standstill and long protracted legal processes. If this scenario materializes, who will be funding the "compensation" for these claims? This will no doubt bring civil unrest to our people and huge economic loss.

Has the economic and other losses suffered by Turkish Cypriots during the 1963-74 period been calculated and raised at the negotiation table?

Will there be permanent derogations from EU law to consolidate and affirm the continuity of bi-zonality?

Given the uncertainty of the EU's future status post UK's Brexit decision, can you seriously even consider relinquishing Turkey's Guarantor status? Furthermore, the rise in Greek Cypriot nationalism and the global anti Muslim sentiment will leave our people totally unprotected, exposed and isolated.

We need a well established settlement that will bring stability and future prospects to all Turkish Cypriots and feel that a last minute 'YES' or 'NO' vote to a deal that we have had no involvement in is not part of a stable system that should be put to the people.

Ersu Ekrem

Chairman - British Turkish Cypriot Association

Ends/



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Notes to editors

If you have not received this press release direct, please contact BTCA with your name and email and your language preference, and we can add you to our press mailing list.

About BTCA

The British Turkish Cypriot Association (BTCA) was established in July 2013. It coordinates the activities of Turkish Cypriot associations and individual members of the Turkish Cypriot Community for the purpose of presenting a more balanced view of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and of the Turkish Cypriot people, emphasizing the importance of enhanced understanding between the Turkish Cypriots and the international community.

BTCA is a member of the Council of Turkish Cypriot Associations (UK), which is an umbrella organisation representing 18 British Turkish Cypriot NGOs based throughout the UK. It serves to empower the British Turkish Cypriot community through civic engagement, and to support strong UK-Turkish Cypriot relations through education and advocacy. Established on 8th March 1983, the Council of Turkish Cypriot Associations (UK) is the largest, democratically elected British Turkish Cypriot membership organisation in the United Kingdom.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. Ersu Ekrem (Turkish)

T: + 44 (0) 7828 548472

E: ersu_ekrem@hotmail.com

Mr. Çetin Ramadan (English)

T: + 44 (0) 7803 047187

E: cetin077@aol.com