

## **CTCI UPR Documentation to UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner**

Long standing “Cyprus Problem” between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot people of Cyprus which begun with the eruption of inter-communal violence in December 1963 and ended in Turkey intervening the violence in the Island which topped when a coup d’etat to topple president of Cyprus, staged by Greek Military Administration in Greece in 1974. Since then, the island is ethnically divided into two, leaving Turkish Cypriots to use their right to self determination under the unrecognized state of “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” and Greek Cypriots to rule what is left over of “Republic of Cyprus” established in 1960 by this very two nations living in the island. After 30 years of very limited interaction between two sides, a European Council Regulation mainly to initiate trade between sides during the period of Annan Plan, a United Nations Secretary General sponsored plan to reunite the island were taken to referendum to the people of both sides which had never been implemented as it had largely rejected by Greek Cypriots, eventhough convincingly accepted by Turkish Cypriot people.

European [Council Regulation 866/2004](#), also broadly know as “Green Line Trade Regulation” sets out the terms under which persons and goods can cross from Northern part of Cyprus to Southern part of Cyprus and vice versa. Despite an early rapid increase in mutual trade untill 2008, this trend have steadily gone backwards, as there emerge significant resistance to the increase of sales from Turkish Cypriots to Greek Cypriots within government, political and business circles in Southern part of Cyprus. This resistance have mostly took the form of attacks, boycotts, obstructions, pressures to the Greek Cypriot business people who buy the goods produced in Northern part of Cyprus, legally under the Green Line Trade Regulation. This legal platform that had been designed to facilitate trade, close relationship and peace in the island have become a platform to suppress to people who intended to operate on these very principles. In this respect, two major incidents have occurred within the period of 2014 – 2018.

On 13 October 2017, the Greek Cypriot newspaper Cyprus Mail published a story entitled “Pancyprrian school works being carried out with materials from north”. The story takes up the recent decision to use construction material from the “North” in order to conduct construction works at the Pancyprrian Gymnasium, which is the oldest high school on the Island. The outrage reportedly came from Greek Cypriot lawmakers and MPs. Greek Cypriot House watchdog committee chair Zacharias Koulias was even quoted stating “Today has been the saddest day of my parliamentary career” in response to the decision to use the materials from the North. Edek MP Marinos Sizopoulos also stated that “It is an insult to the Republic of Cyprus and a mark of disrespect for those who fell in 1974.” Meanwhile, it should be noted that the trade of these materials from the North to the South are completely within the Green Line Regulation. It is, once again, a great shock that Greek Cypriots, particularly people in positions of political power, choose to politicize something as mundane as the origin of construction material. This is yet another example of the extent of intolerance of the Greek Cypriot side to anything Turkish Cypriot. (<https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/10/12/pancyprrian-school-works-carried-materials-north/?hilite=%27construction%27>)

The second incident was again reported in daily Cyprus Mail gazette entitled “Businessman attacked for exporting potatoes from the north”. Accordingly, a group of a mob of around 200, composed of farmers, other potato exporters and seven MPs, showed up at the premises of a Greek Cypriot businessman Christos Christofi’s company Sowrrano Fresh Ltd in Achna in the Famagusta district due to the fact that the businessman had made a deal with a Turkish Cypriot counterpart to bring over potatoes for export under the Green Line Regulation (GLR). According to the report, Four of the

seven MPs at the protest were from ruling DISY. Christofi said he identified two of them as Kyriacos Hadjiyiannis and Giorgos Georgiou, both MPs for the Famagusta district. He said he did not recognise the other two DISY deputies. Michalis Georgallas from the Solidarity Movement – a Famagusta deputy – and the two far-right ELAM deputies, Christos Christou and Linos Papayiannis, the latter also a Famagusta district deputy, were there as well, according to Christofi. He also said the SBA police were called and “protected us” and stopped them from entering the premises. At the time of the incident, Christofi has said that he brought over 150 tonnes of potatoes and is contracted to bring 700 tonnes in total and export them, mainly to Greece, and the UK. None of the potatoes are sold on the local market. He said also revealed that his detractors were also calling his customers abroad and spreading lies about the crop. “They’re calling clients and telling them the potatoes are from Turkey,” he said.

This particular incident occurred with regards to importation of potatoes from Northern part of Cyprus, perfectly sums up how hatred and intolerance are ignited by Greek Cypriots lawmakers, overlooked by Greek Cypriot government officials and security forces and cooperation with Turkish Cypriot people are suppressed in an organized manner within the Greek Cypriot political, governmental and business circles with an aim to dispose any kind of practice that might benefit economic, social, political to Turkish Cypriot community of Cyprus. We believe that this kind of incidents will surely continue unless the root causes of this hatred, discrimination, intolerance, racism in above-mentioned spheres in Greek Cypriot community are exposed and put under control of rule of law without any excuse. (<http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/08/31/businessman-attacked-exporting-potatoes-north/>)

Intolerance and disrespect to any actions that might benefit to Turkish Cypriot community can again be presented by the recent action of South Cyprus Customs Authorities as opposed to a hike in fuel purchases by Greek Cypriot people from North Cyprus due to lower prices. In June 2018, Greek Cypriot people started to increase the purchase of petrol for personal use (in vehicles) from North. As a response the customs department of South Cyprus published a statement saying that “in the event of illegal transport of fuel from the occupied areas, irrespective of them being in portable tanks or the vehicle’s fuel tank, these will be confiscated and those involved will be subject to the penalties stipulated by the law” alleging that the fuel brought from TRNC has a higher Sulphur content than the standards applied by the Greek side, therefore in violation of the fuel standards. In addition to mutual trade relationship, Green Line Trade Regulation, regulates the movement and the related checks on people and their vehicles in which does not include the origin of fuel they use, not to mention the claim with regards to sulphur content of fuel sold in TRNC is completely wrong as the standards applied in TRNC are same with the ones in applied in South Cyprus. (<https://cyprus-mail.com/2018/06/27/customs-declare-war-on-fuel-bought-in-north/?hilite=%27custom%27>)

Intolerance, false propaganda, intimidation, obstructions to any activities that would benefit Turkish Cypriot people and TRNC economy by South Cyprus officials are widespread within the context of tourism.

A memorandum issued by the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as a circular of the Department of Migration, issued a strong warning to foreign citizens who wish to travel to the TRNC if they wish to stay at hotels in the North which were either themselves or the land they were built on previously owned by Greek Cypriots, but failed to make this information known to foreign embassies and travel agencies. Firstly, it is important to underline that the hotels in Northern Cyprus are the bearers of title deeds issued by the relevant Turkish Cypriot authorities and function in accordance with the rules and regulations in the North. The Greek Cypriot administration, however,

attempts to discourage tourists from visiting Northern Cyprus by making political claims and false propaganda. Secondly, whether the Greek Cypriot side conveys this information to foreign embassies and travel agencies or not, we are of the firm belief that the international community should not pay any mind to such attempts to block contacts with the Turkish Cypriots through claims of illegality. <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/09/20/north-tourist-ban-came-foreign-ministry/?hilite=%27hotels%27%2C%27north%27>

In April 2017, even a group of Serbian children who would take part in a cultural festival in North Cyprus, have been denied entry to Cyprus and sent back to Serbia, after South Cyprus authorities found out that they were to stay in a hotel in North and attend a folklore festival. <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/04/18/serbian-children-not-deported-foreign-ministry-says/?hilite=%27serbian%27%2C%27cultural%27>

As another example of actions of South Cyprus authorities aiming to discourage and undermine tourism activities in North Cyprus, a tour bus was stopped by Greek Cypriot police and prohibited from crossing from North to South Cyprus in May 2017. The bus, which was carrying tourists from Europe and the United States, was prevented from taking the tourists through the Akyar (Strovolia) crossing point to Larnaca Airport to catch their flights. The tourists went through agony and stress while the driver of the bus attempted to secure passage for them. All of the documentation of both the vehicle and the tourists were complete, and yet the bus driver was told that only Turkish Cypriots could cross on a Turkish Cypriot-registered bus since the insurance covers them only. The tourists were then forced to be taken to the Ledra Palace crossing point all the way in Nicosia where they had to cross the border on foot and where a Greek Cypriot bus was hired to take them to the airport. Such obstacles not only violate the right to free movement of EU citizens but are also a source of great concern for the Turkish Cypriot people.