



# Security Council

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## United Nations operation in Cyprus

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 21 June 2018 to 18 December 2018. It brings up to date, since the issuance of my report dated 6 July ([S/2018/676](#)), the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution [186 \(1964\)](#) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2430 \(2018\)](#).

2. As at 18 December 2018, the strength of the military component stood at 802 (755 men and 47 women) for all ranks, while the strength of the police component stood at 67 (43 men and 24 women) (see annex).

#### II. Significant developments

3. In the report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus ([S/2018/919](#)), submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2430 \(2018\)](#), I provided an update on my mission and the consultations conducted on my behalf by a senior United Nations official. In that report, I observed that prospects for a comprehensive settlement between the two communities on the island remained positive, and I informed the Security Council of my intention to instruct the senior official to continue consultations with the parties, with a view to agreeing on terms of reference which would constitute a consensus starting point for meaningful negotiations leading to a settlement within the foreseeable future. As part of this effort, the senior official continued to hold separate discussions with the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, as well as with representatives of the guarantor Powers, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. During the reporting period, the senior official also met with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission, who participated as an observer to the Conference on Cyprus, in Brussels.

4. Recent surveys conducted jointly by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot market research companies, with United Nations and World Bank involvement, suggest that, while expectations remain low, a clear majority in both communities continue to desire reaching a settlement in Cyprus. Although their reasons and motivations differ, there is apprehension in both communities about the implications of a prolonged



status quo. At the same time, uncertainty about the future of the settlement negotiations appears to be hampering political engagement and risks eroding the support for reunification in the two communities. Although the levels of trust between the two communities have grown somewhat in recent years, the polls show that still just under half of Cypriots on both sides trust members of the other community. Levels of socialization with the other community have increased in the Turkish Cypriot community but remain low for Greek Cypriots. There is nonetheless a willingness in both communities to cooperate with the other in areas such as business, sports, environmental protection, culture, education and natural disaster preparedness. Both communities continue to express a desire for a peace process that is more inclusive, transparent and representative of the people. Combined with the uncertain future of the peace process, there is widespread and growing anxiety among Turkish Cypriots with regard to the future livelihoods of members of their community. The serious economic impact of the devaluation of the Turkish lira remained the primary preoccupation of the Turkish Cypriot authorities and public during the reporting period. On the Greek Cypriot side, surveys reveal a marginal increase in that community's interest in the peace process, closely followed by concerns related to the economy and governance.

5. My Special Representative in Cyprus/Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Elizabeth Spehar, engaged with both sides to explore ways of collectively answering the call by the Security Council in resolution [2430 \(2018\)](#) for progress on key related issues. On 26 October, the two leaders, Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades, met for the first time since April under the auspices of my Special Representative. The leaders had a frank exchange of views on the way forward and, following the meeting, announced that they had agreed to open two new crossing points at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya on 12 November, a confidence-building measure to which they had agreed in May 2015. In what has proven to be the most positive development in the peace process since the closing of the Conference on Cyprus held in Switzerland in July 2017, the two new crossing points opened simultaneously on 12 November, bringing the total number of crossing points on the island to nine. Although several demonstrations were held in opposition to the new crossing points, including two demonstrations at Deryneia/Derinya on 12 and 25 November, the numbers of demonstrators remained low and the events passed without incident. The new crossing points have been widely used; in their first month open, the total number of persons crossing, both ways, reached 33,037 at Deryneia/Derinya and 5,450 at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç. In particular, the Deryneia/Derinya crossing point has allowed opening up the greater Famagusta region, a densely populated area with a long history of grass-roots support for intercommunal contact and cooperation.

6. The encouraging development of the crossing points notwithstanding, limited progress was recorded in the implementation of confidence-building measures. During the meeting held on 26 October, the Cypriot leaders informally discussed the possibility of meeting again, if further progress could be made towards implementing the confidence-building measures that had been agreed to in 2015, such as on mobile phone interoperability and further integration of the two electrical grids. While no concrete solution was identified, technical discussions on the mobile phone interoperability confidence-building measure in the context of the Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters highlighted that a resolution could be within reach.

7. During the reporting period, various national and joint naval force and military exercises, as well as search and rescue and other exercises, took place in the eastern Mediterranean, including around Cyprus. Recent developments suggest that natural resources, in particular hydrocarbons, present important opportunities for regional

cooperation in the eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, exploratory drilling activities around Cyprus continued to be a source of low-level tensions.

8. Since the closing of the Conference on Cyprus in July 2017, and especially during the reporting period, there has been an entrenchment of positions on both sides and, at times, the role of the United Nations has been challenged. As outlined in detail below, through enhanced patrolling, UNFICYP observed an increase in violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines. The mission also observed an increase in unauthorized and, at times, provocative civilian incursions into the buffer zone, some of which generated significant tensions between the sides. Both sides demonstrated incomplete cooperation with the mission, with regard to the preservation of calm and stability in and around the buffer zone and the facilitation of intercommunal contact.

### **III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus**

9. Pursuant to the recommendations of the strategic review of UNFICYP (S/2017/1008), the liaison and engagement capacity of the mission was strengthened, which allowed for better monitoring and recording of violations along the ceasefire lines and more active engagement with the opposing forces to promote the timely resolution of any issues. Enhanced ground patrols, including joint patrols by military and police components of the mission, and greater decentralization of operations have improved the ability of UNFICYP to detect early signs of tension, target its patrols at problem areas, deter military violations and civilian incidents and work to promptly resolve issues that could otherwise raise tensions.

#### **A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo**

10. The overall situation along the ceasefire lines remained stable. However, the opposing forces remained heavily armed and the tensions between them persisted, although at a low level. In addition, during the reporting period, there was an increase in observed violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines; there were 332 military violations recorded, compared with 157 during the June to December 2017 reporting period and 207 during the previous reporting period. A significant increase in heavy weapons violations, compared with the June to December 2017 reporting period, was also observed, mostly at National Guard positions, but for the first time also on the side of the Turkish forces.

11. The mission also observed significant increases in unauthorized military construction (a sevenfold increase), a change in the status quo, and overmanning violations. Forty per cent of construction violations involved the installation of networked closed-circuit television capability without any evidence of a corresponding unmanning of positions. Fifteen per cent of positions held by Turkish forces along the ceasefire line are equipped with networked closed-circuit television capability, as opposed to less than 1 per cent of National Guard positions. Other notable construction violations involved the building of permanent installations, such as bunkers and watchtowers, in particular along the Turkish forces ceasefire lines. The new watchtowers offer a clear military advantage and are in direct contravention of the aide-memoire that was updated in 2018. Despite formal protests by UNFICYP to the relevant authorities, construction activities have neither ceased nor been reversed.

12. Compared with the same reporting period last year, UNFICYP observed a greater than twofold increase in incidents and allegations of misconduct, mostly in Nicosia. Buffer zone airspace incursions also increased, with 18 incidents reported, compared with 3 in the previous reporting period. Eleven of those violations involved the use of aerial drones by individuals on either side and possibly by the opposing forces. The prevalence of drones in the buffer zone has contributed to tensions between the opposing forces and raises concerns with regard to the safety of UNFICYP air operations.

13. Military positions were established inside the buffer zone by the opposing forces, in violation of the status quo, including at Strovilia, remained in place and are classified as permanent violations. In a troublesome development, during the reporting period, there was an increase in instances of the restriction of movement and threats directed at UNFICYP military personnel in Strovilia. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

14. The increase in military violations along the ceasefire lines is of concern and requires careful monitoring and assessment. The observation of those violations can in part be attributed to enhanced and more effective UNFICYP patrols, as a result of the implementation of the recommendations of the strategic review of the mission. Better coordinated air and ground patrols have been particularly effective in observing weapons and construction violations in some sections of the buffer zone.

15. Despite repeated calls by the Security Council for both sides to work in earnest towards a “mine-free Cyprus”, differences in their approaches to achieving that objective continued to impede any significant progress. UNFICYP continued efforts to engage the sides to revitalize the stalled demining process.

16. Although the mission continued to engage with the sides on the issue of the updated aide-memoire, neither side was ready to endorse its contents.

## **B. Contribution to law and order**

17. The UNFICYP police component continued to conduct preventive and targeted patrols, as well as liaison and engagement tasks, focusing on identified sensitive areas in the buffer zone. Joint targeted patrols were also conducted with law enforcement authorities to respond to, inter alia, incursions, hunting, the smuggling of goods and the arrival of undocumented migrants in the buffer zone.

18. UNFICYP continued to facilitate and support the bicomunal Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and the Joint Communications Room. During the reporting period, the representatives of the two sides in the Joint Communications Room exchanged information on a daily basis, in support of the investigations being conducted by the respective police services, on inter alia, murders, thefts, abductions, missing persons and drug trafficking. A total of 152 exchanges of information and requests pertaining to criminal matters were handled by the Joint Communications Room. In three cases, intervention by the Joint Communications Room allowed for the release of Greek Cypriot farmers and hunters, who had been detained in the north for allegedly crossing the ceasefire line.

19. UNFICYP liaison and facilitation remained particularly important in the bicomunal village of Pyla, inside the buffer zone, where UNFICYP maintains the only permanent police presence, albeit with no executive authority. On 9 October, tensions increased significantly when police services from both sides intervened simultaneously to respond to an incident of smuggling at a commercial establishment owned by a Greek Cypriot but operated by a Turkish Cypriot. Despite tension at the

scene between the individuals involved and between the police services, intervention by UNFICYP allowed for the situation to be resolved without incident.

### **C. Management of civilian activity in the buffer zone**

20. UNFICYP continued its efforts to manage civilian activities in the buffer zone and to prevent and address unauthorized access and activities, which can generate tensions between civilians and between civilians and opposing forces. During the reporting period, 143 new applications for permits for civilian activities, including farming and grazing, construction and utility maintenance, were received. Following a thorough assessment of applications, 526 permits were issued, compared with 980 permits in the June to December period in 2017. The significant reduction is a result of the extended validity of previously issued permits and the fact that the number of applications has dropped. The university in Pyla continued to operate without authorization from UNFICYP.

21. Unauthorized activities by Greek Cypriot farmers in the immediate vicinity of Turkish forces positions resulted in heightened tensions in late November, especially when compounded by manipulation of the incidents by media outlets and political actors. There were several such incidents in the Dhenia area, west of Nicosia, where Greek Cypriot farmers crossed the Turkish forces ceasefire line, prompting a military response in the form of overmanning, moves forward and the threat of arrest.

22. As a result of ongoing concerns regarding unauthorized access to the buffer zone by armed hunters, the Government of Cyprus agreed to a request from UNFICYP to exclude the buffer zone from designated hunting areas depicted in annual hunting maps, which have been adjusted accordingly.

### **D. Intercommunal relations and trust-building**

23. In its resolution [2430 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council called upon both sides to revitalize the work of the 12 technical committees established by the two leaders to implement confidence-building measures aimed at improving the daily lives of Cypriots, 6 of which are facilitated by UNFICYP. Some progress was recorded in that regard, with the more active committees holding regular meetings and activities and a few of the previously less active or inactive committees showing signs of revitalization.

24. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, which held over 15 meetings under United Nations auspices, completed conservation works at the ravelin and land-gate, Saint Anne's Church and Tanners' Mosque in Famagusta. Cleaning and stabilization works on the mosaics of the Ayia Triada Basilica and Ayios Philon archaeological areas were also completed.

25. The Technical Committee on Crossings was also active, especially in view of the opening of the new crossing points on 12 November. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, for its part, held four meetings. After a hiatus of several months, the Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters met on 5 December to explore possible solutions to the issue of mobile phone interoperability, and the Technical Committee on the Environment met on 29 November to discuss the extension of a linear park along the Pedieos/Kanlı Dere River connecting the northern and southern sections of Nicosia. The feasibility study for the project was completed during the reporting period. After a period of inactivity, the Technical Committee on Culture also resumed its work in the second half of 2018, including by facilitating bicomunal musical performances. Following a joint

meeting on 22 November, the Technical Committees on Crisis Management and Health began to explore the possibility of organizing a joint crisis management exercise on responding to public health emergencies. UNFICYP and my mission of good offices continued to encourage both sides to support the resumption of the work of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality.

26. The Technical Committee on Education also met regularly, including three times under United Nations auspices. The Imagine project, a voluntary programme that promotes peace education and building connections between children from both communities, was launched on 14 November for the 2018/19 academic year. During the 2017/18 academic year, the programme brought together nearly 2,000 students and 198 volunteer teachers from 94 classes in schools from both communities.

27. As part of its mandate to facilitate a return to normal conditions, UNFICYP works to build mutual understanding and trust between the two communities through a variety of intercommunal initiatives. During the reporting period, the mission supported 112 intercommunal events that brought together 4,834 participants. UNFICYP also continued to assist both Nicosia municipalities in implementing social, cultural and environment-related activities, including the aforementioned Pedieos/Kanlı Dere River project.

28. In addition, UNFICYP continued to reach out to civil society organizations beyond Nicosia, including in the Deryneia/Derynia area, where UNFICYP supported the creation and opening on 9 July of an intercommunal space, the 'Famagusta Avenue Garage', in the area immediately adjacent to the crossing. In Pyla, UNFICYP continued to engage with both communities daily and to support initiatives bringing them together, such as the fourth bicomunal Pyla Peace Festival, held on 12 and 13 October, and drew 1,200 participants.

29. The religious leaders of Cyprus maintained their engagement within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. On 25 October, the religious leaders addressed a joint letter to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders expressing hope for a fruitful continuation of the settlement negotiations. They also engaged in other joint initiatives, such as advocating for the preservation of religious artefacts and launching social media campaigns to promote tolerance and to combat violence against women and girls.

30. The leaders and representatives of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot political parties met on seven occasions under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia to formulate recommendations with respect to a resumption of the settlement negotiations. In addition, on 9 October and 5 December, the political parties engaged in joint bicomunal initiatives to raise awareness of the issue of missing persons and to support efforts by the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus to find and identify the remains of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots who went missing during the conflict.

## **E. Facilitation of access and humanitarian functions**

31. UNFICYP, together with the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, facilitated two special pilgrimages at Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca on 28 August and 20 November involving 300 and 655 participants, respectively. The mission also liaised with the authorities on both sides to facilitate 53 religious services and commemorative events involving more than 9,550 participants, 45 of which were held in the north and eight in the buffer zone. Sixty-eight per cent of requests channelled through UNFICYP were approved by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, compared with 47 per cent in the June to December period in 2017. On 8 August,

UNFICYP facilitated the crossing of some 1,131 Turkish Cypriots into Kokkina through the Limnitis/Yeşilirmak crossing point for an annual commemoration event. Of the 77 requests for services submitted to the Turkish Cypriot authorities through UNFICYP, 50 were approved and 5 are pending. Seven religious sites in the north that had been inaccessible since 1974 were opened for worship for the first time during the reporting period. Those transferring religious icons to the north for use in religious services, however, continued to face restrictions.

32. Beyond the buffer zone, UNFICYP continued its regular visits and humanitarian deliveries to 328 Greek Cypriots and 93 Maronites residing in the north, as well as its visits to Greek Cypriot schools in the Karpas Peninsula. The mission also facilitated the transfer of one deceased Greek Cypriot for burial in the north. The Turkish Cypriot authorities approved 276 of 310 textbooks proposed by the Government of Cyprus for use at two Greek Cypriot schools in the Karpas Peninsula. The request for the reappointment of two Greek Cypriot teachers already working at the schools, however, was rejected by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, as was the request for the appointment of 2 of 10 new Greek Cypriot teachers, disrupting the operation of the schools. Although Turkish-speaking pupils continued to have access to Turkish-language education at a primary school and high school in Limassol, there were no developments with respect to the establishment of a Turkish Cypriot primary school in that city.

33. UNFICYP continued to monitor legal and humanitarian issues faced by 12 Turkish Cypriots apprehended in the south and five Greek Cypriots held in the north through visits to the detention facilities.

34. During the reporting period, a significant increase in arrivals and asylum applications in Cyprus was recorded. By the end of October 2018, asylum applications in Cyprus had reached 6,064, the highest on record since 2008, according to the country's Asylum Service, and a 57.5 per cent increase compared with the June to December period in 2017. Cyprus has processed the highest number of applications per capita of the 28 member States of the European Union. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), during the reporting period, some 26 boats carrying Syrian nationals reached Cyprus, mainly in the southern part of the island, but the overwhelming majority of Syrian asylum seekers arrived in the north by air from either Lebanon or Turkey.

35. UNFICYP often serves as first responder for arrivals in the buffer zone who are in need of urgent assistance. There were four such arrivals in the western sections of the buffer zone during the reporting period, involving 157 Syrian refugees, including 6 women and 7 children. In the light of the recent increase in the number of arrivals on the island outlined above, the mission police component stepped up its monitoring of any irregular crossing of the buffer zone by refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, working closely with immigration authorities and liaising with UNHCR.

## **F. Gender and women and peace and security**

36. In line with my gender parity policy, Major General Cheryl Ann Pearce was appointed as the new UNFICYP Force Commander on 8 November, and she takes up her duties in January 2019. UNFICYP is now the first peacekeeping operation to be led by a woman serving as Special Representative, with both uniformed components, military and police, headed by women.

37. Furthermore, during the reporting period, UNFICYP provided tailored, specialized training to its military, police and civilian personnel to strengthen awareness of and support for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

38. UNFICYP also engaged with women's civil society organizations to ensure their inclusion in intercommunal efforts, including those facilitated by the mission. As noted in the report on my mission of good offices (S/2018/919), UNFICYP supported and co-facilitated two meetings of Cypriot women hosted by the Cyprus Women's Lobby on 4 July and 6 December on strengthening and broadening the involvement of women in the peace process. In addition, UNFICYP facilitated a series of events, held between 22 and 26 September, with co-founders of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition.

39. UNFICYP also continued to support intercommunal women's walks and discussions. The latest such walk, which took place on 27 October, centred on opportunities to enable women to influence the discourse on peace and security in Cyprus.

#### **IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus**

40. As at 18 December, the bicomunal teams of archaeologists of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, a long-standing humanitarian and confidence-building initiative, had exhumed the remains of 1,200 persons on both sides of the island. To date, the remains of 923 missing persons, of a total of 2,002, have been identified and returned to their families, including 39 during the reporting period. Following the access granted in November 2015, the Committee has thus far conducted 27 excavations in military areas in the north, including 4 during the reporting period, leading to the recovery of the remains of 37 persons.

41. In an effort to identify additional locations of the potential burial sites of missing persons, the Committee continued its efforts to secure access to the archives of countries and organizations that had a military or police presence in Cyprus in 1963, 1964 and 1974. During the reporting period, requests were submitted to the archives services of Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). While extensive efforts have been undertaken by the United Nations and ICRC to provide the Committee with access to all relevant archival holdings, little archival information on such locations has thus far been shared with the Committee by the parties directly involved.

#### **V. Implementation of the 2017 strategic review**

42. Additional progress was made towards the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the report of the strategic review of UNFICYP (S/2017/1008), which was conducted in late 2017. Both sector 4 and the Mobile Force Reserve are now operating as elements with personnel from a single troop-contributing country, increasing efficiency within their respective areas of operation. In addition, 6 of 10 additional liaison officers recommended by the strategic review to ensure continuity have been deployed to mission headquarters and the sectors to improve institutional understanding of the respective areas of operations. The other 4 liaison officers are expected to be deployed to the sectors during the first quarter of 2019. The process of relocating military personnel in sector 2 from the Ledra Palace Hotel to containerized accommodations in an adjacent area began in late November, with a planned completion date of 31 January 2019.

43. On 1 November 2018, the Head of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre was deployed to UNFICYP, allowing for the creation of a limited integrated analytical capacity in the mission, which will enable UNFICYP to improve its situational awareness, better anticipate, adapt to and plan for any changes in the mission context and use its resources more effectively.



44. The integration of the security components of UNFICYP was initiated in July, in the context of my mission of good offices. A workplan for the period 2018–2019 for the Cyprus Integrated Security Section was issued as a guideline for the transition period, pending full implementation.

## **VI. Transition planning**

45. As requested by the Security Council, UNFICYP maintained its transition plans in relation to a possible settlement. No further progress was made regarding the plans during the reporting period, however, due to the absence of full-fledged negotiations.

## **VII. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse**

46. UNFICYP continued to promote strict adherence to the United Nations policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse. The mission held 19 training sessions for 720 personnel on the United Nations standards of conduct. In addition, the mission issued regular broadcasts and used online platforms to disseminate the pocket cards on “No excuse” for sexual exploitation and abuse to all personnel. UNFICYP did not receive any allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse during the reporting period.

## **VIII. Financial and administrative aspects**

47. The General Assembly, by its resolution [72/292](#), appropriated the amount of \$52.9 million gross for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to \$17.9 million from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

48. As at 10 December 2018, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNFICYP amounted to \$12.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$1,569.8 million. Reimbursement of troop costs has been made for the period up to 31 October 2018, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 September 2018.

## **IX. Observations**

49. As I concluded in my latest report on my mission of good offices, I believe that prospects remain positive for a comprehensive settlement within the foreseeable future. I also remain convinced that, prior to deploying the full weight of my good offices, the sides should agree on a joint way forward. I therefore urge the leaders and the guarantor Powers to continue their constructive engagement with the United Nations senior official and to engage with each other, to that end. I strongly encourage the engagement of civil society, including women and young people, to bring momentum to the process, as well as the development of novel ideas to help to bridge persistent differences of views. I reiterate my observations from that report that the time of continued support for a horizon of endless process without result has ended and that consensus has emerged that the status quo is no longer sustainable.

50. While the parties work to determine the best way forward in the context of the consultations, UNFICYP continues to play an indispensable role at various levels in preventing tensions from escalating and hindering dialogue and the search for a

political solution. I note with concern the enhancements made to military positions and capabilities that were recorded on both sides during the reporting period, in a deliberate breach of the military status quo. I am also concerned about the increase in unauthorized civilian incursions into the buffer zone, which cause friction, especially when they occur in close proximity to the opposing forces and when they are intended to provoke the other side or the United Nations.

51. In the continued absence of direct contact between the relevant military, police and civilian authorities, UNFICYP plays a crucial role in liaising effectively between the sides and helping to resolve issues that could increase tensions. I therefore call upon both sides to respect the authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone and to heed the call of the Security Council to work with the mission in the demarcation of the buffer zone and to implement the United Nations aide-memoire. In addition, I encourage the sides to consider developing, with support from UNFICYP, their own mechanisms for alleviating tensions, be they of a military, police or civilian nature.

52. I welcome the opening of two new crossing points at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya, which promotes freedom of movement across the island and generates greater opportunities for contact, trust-building and economic cooperation between members of both communities. I commend Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı for seeing this long-awaited confidence-building measure implemented and encourage them to consider opening additional crossing points, including in Nicosia, as advocated for by the Nicosia mayors.

53. I continue to urge for greater efforts to create a climate conducive to achieving more economic and social parity between the two sides and to broaden and deepen economic, social, cultural and similar ties and contacts, including through sport and with a view to encouraging trade. Such contacts promote trust between the communities and help to address the concerns of the Turkish Cypriots with regard to isolation. In that respect, I also continue to urge the sides to work towards the full implementation of European Council regulation No. 866/2004, the “Green Line regulation”.

54. The diminishing hope for a settlement and the low levels of trust between the two communities, as highlighted in recent surveys, should be a matter of concern to all Cypriots, with the leadership on both sides having the key responsibility to work to overturn those trends. It is of concern also to UNFICYP, given its mandate to facilitate a return to normal conditions and its efforts to create conditions conducive to a lasting settlement. In that regard, UNFICYP will further increase its efforts to bring the two communities together, including beyond Nicosia, and remains ready to support cooperation in priority areas, including those areas identified in the recent surveys.

55. The positive example of the crossing points notwithstanding, I regret that progress could not be achieved in implementing other confidence-building measures, such as the interoperability of mobile phones and the further integration of the two electricity grids, which were agreed to by the leaders in 2015. While confidence-building measures cannot and should not be a substitute for genuine and results-oriented negotiations, I am convinced that prospects for dialogue and for lasting settlement will only be enhanced through such action. Implementation of the remaining 2015 confidence-building measures should be possible with the necessary creativity, determination and political will and I urge for the undertaking of further work to overcome any technical or other obstacles to that end.

56. In line with the repeated call of the Security Council, including most recently in resolution [2430 \(2018\)](#), I call upon the parties to work with UNFICYP to devise a balanced package of military confidence-building measures, which could include

demining and further unmanning of positions. The United Nations continues to stand ready to facilitate and support efforts towards a mine-free Cyprus.

57. I applaud the commitment and work of the technical committees that remained active in spite of the ups and downs of the political process. I remain of the view that there is significant untapped potential for bicomunal work through the technical committees. I urge the leaders to provide the Committees with the necessary flexibility and support to further intensify their efforts.

58. Access to religious sites across the island remains a key element for the exercise of freedom of worship, as well as for building trust, and I continue to urge for the granting of full access to such sites, in the north and in the south. I acknowledge the efforts of the Turkish Cypriot authorities during the reporting period to open up religious sites in the north that had previously been closed to worship and wish to see such efforts continue, given that requests to visit some pilgrimage sites in the north continue to be denied.

59. As highlighted in my previous report (S/2018/676), divergent school curricula and conflicting and divisive historical narratives remain a serious obstacle to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence on the island. Recent surveys suggest that a majority of Cypriots on both sides support the joint production of educational material, student exchange programmes and even the teaching of the language of the other community in schools. I therefore encourage the leaders to facilitate sustained, island-wide student exchanges and to promote peace education at all levels. In that regard, I welcome the focus of the Imagine project for the 2018/19 academic year on broadening its reach and enhancing sustainability, including through teacher training.

60. With ongoing exploratory drilling activities off the coast of Cyprus, a risk of further tensions over hydrocarbons remains. In this context, I reiterate that the natural resources found in and around Cyprus should benefit both communities and should provide a strong incentive to find a durable resolution to the situation in Cyprus.

61. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the important humanitarian and confidence-building work carried out by the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus on behalf of the families of victims. It remains critical that the Committee continue to receive sufficient financial support and information, including access to the relevant military and police archives. I therefore encourage the parties to intensify their efforts to share pertinent archival information with the Committee. I also support the Committee's call for all individuals with relevant knowledge to come forward, given the pressing challenge of time working against further progress to find and identify missing persons.

62. In the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which sets out the principles and objectives of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, Member States affirmed their collective commitment to enhancing the political impact of peacekeeping by advancing political solutions, providing support for peacekeeping to play an effective role in preventing conflicts and building peace, with adequate capacities, and ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of a peace process. In Cyprus, the realization of those objectives requires a commitment to supporting the efforts of UNFICYP to contribute in a meaningful way to the creation of conditions conducive to a lasting political settlement, including through progress in all of those fields.

63. UNFICYP will continue to monitor the evolving situation on the ground, assess its impact against the requirements of the mission mandate and adapt its operations to implement its mandate effectively. In the light of its continued contributions to peace and stability and the creation of conditions conducive to a political settlement,

I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNFICYP for six months, until 31 July 2019.

64. I would like to once again thank those partners, in particular the European Commission, which have continued to provide support for the work of both peace missions, the United Nations Development Programme and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and have contributed to the implementation of confidence-building measures, such as the opening of the new crossing points.

65. I thank the 36 countries that have contributed either troops, police or both to the mission since 1964 and pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace in Cyprus.

66. 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. I also wish to thank Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir of Bangladesh, who served as Force Commander of UNFICYP from July 2016 until September 2018, for his dedicated service to UNFICYP. I 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.

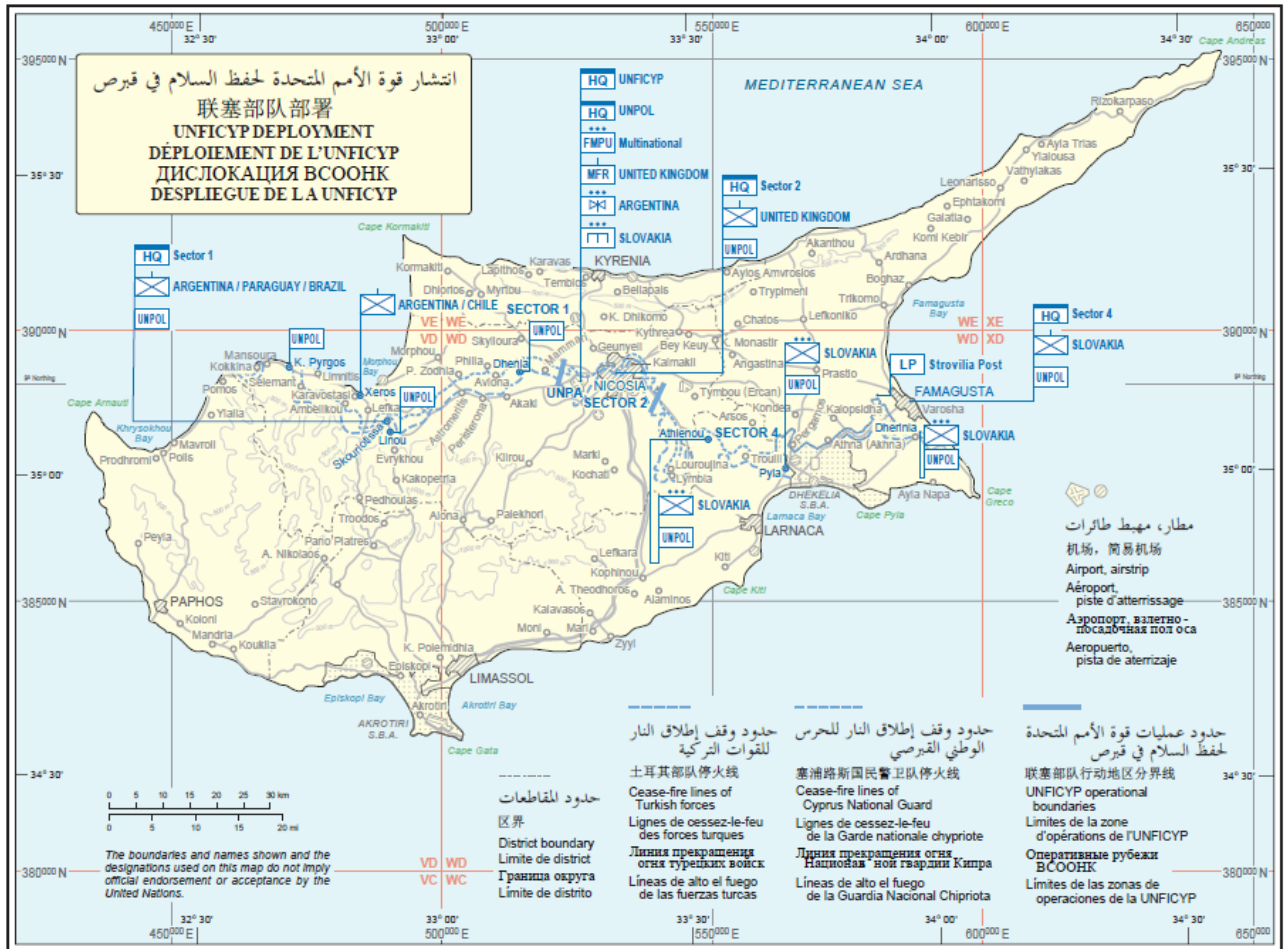
## Annex

**Countries providing military and police personnel to the  
United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 18 December 2018)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military personnel</i>
Argentina	244
Austria	5
Brazil	2
Canada	1
Chile	12
Hungary	11
Pakistan	1
Paraguay	12
Serbia	2
Slovakia	241
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	271
<b>Total<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>802</b>

<i>Country</i>	<i>Police personnel</i>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8
Bulgaria	3
China	6
India	3
Ireland	12
Italy	2
Lithuania	1
Montenegro	4
Romania	4
Russian Federation	7
Serbia	2
Slovakia	4
Sweden	2
Ukraine	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>

<sup>a</sup> Of the military personnel, 755 are men and 47 are women. Of the police personnel, 43 are men and 24 are women.



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