



Resolution 2561 (2021)**Adopted by the Security Council on 29 January 2021**

The Security Council,

Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General of 10 January 2021 on his Good Offices [S/2021/5](#) and on the United Nations operation in Cyprus ([S/2021/4](#)), and *expressing* its full support for his Good Offices, including the existing body of work, to remain available to assist the sides,

Underscoring that the responsibility for finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves, and *reaffirming* the primary role of the United Nations in assisting the parties to bring the Cyprus conflict and division of the island to a comprehensive and durable settlement with a sense of urgency,

Expressing full support for the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts, and *welcoming* his intention to convene an informal "five plus UN meeting" with the leaders of the two Cypriot communities and the Guarantor powers at the earliest opportunity, *further welcoming* the stated determination of the leaders of the two communities to respond positively in this regard to find common ground between the parties to negotiate a sustainable lasting solution to the Cyprus problem within a foreseeable horizon,

Urging the sides to renew their efforts to achieve an enduring, comprehensive and just settlement based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions, including OP4 of its resolution [716 \(1991\)](#),

Stressing that the status quo is unsustainable, and that the lack of an agreement furthers political tensions and deepens the estrangement of both communities, risking irreversible changes on the ground, and reducing the prospects of a settlement,

Expressing deep concern at the ongoing tensions in the eastern Mediterranean over hydrocarbons exploration, *convinced* of the many important benefits, including economic benefits, for all Cypriots that would flow from a comprehensive and durable settlement, and *reiterating* the Secretary-General's call for serious efforts to avoid any further escalation and to defuse tensions,

Recalling its Presidential Statement ([S/PRST/2020/9](#)), which expresses deep concern at developments in Varosha, and calls for the reversal of this course of action, *reaffirming* the status of Varosha as set out in its previous resolutions, and *reiterating* that no actions should be carried out in relation to Varosha that are not in accordance



with those resolutions, and *stressing* the need to avoid any unilateral actions that could trigger tensions on the island and undermine the prospects for a peaceful settlement,

Recalling its resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and related resolutions, *recognising* that the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women is essential in building peace in Cyprus and will contribute to making any future settlement sustainable, *welcoming* efforts to bring together a broader range of women actors on both sides, *acknowledging* that the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment that was launched 17 February 2020 in response to resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#) substantiated that delaying a settlement in Cyprus increases both the economic, and non-economic costs of the prevailing political status quo, looking forward to the full and swift implementations of its recommendations, *encouraging* the sides to ensure the needs and perspectives of women are addressed in a future settlement,

Recalling its resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) and related resolutions that recognise the important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, and *further encourages* the full, equal and meaningful participation of youth in this process,

Recognising that effective contact and communication between the sides enhances the prospects for settlement and is in the interests of all Cypriots, and helps to address island-wide matters, including health, crime, environmental protection, and issues related to the adverse impacts of climate change,

Recognising the ongoing impact on the island of Cyprus of the COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts made by both communities to suppress the spread of the virus and mitigate its effects,

Regretting that the sides have continued to pursue largely uncoordinated responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and *expressing concern* that the closure of the crossing points along the Green line has limited opportunities for bicomunal engagement and trust-building activities, and that the continued and prolonged closure of some crossing points threatens to set back the progress made in this area since 2003,

Expressing concern at the continued deterioration of the law and order situation in Pyla, and *urging* both sides to continue to work with UNFICYP to establish effective measures to tackle criminal activities,

Reiterating the importance of confidence-building measures and their timely implementation, and *urging* the sides to step up their efforts to promote intercommunal contacts, reconciliation and the active engagement of civil society, in particular women and youth,

Noting that the Government of Cyprus is agreed that in view of the prevailing conditions on the island it is necessary to keep the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) beyond 31 January 2021,

Welcoming measures to date to strengthen the liaison and engagement capacity of the mission, *noting* the importance of transition planning in relation to the settlement, and *emphasising* the need to review regularly all peacekeeping operations, including UNFICYP, to ensure efficiency and effectiveness,

Expressing appreciation to Member States that contribute personnel to UNFICYP, and *noting* the continued voluntary contributions to the funding of UNFICYP by the Government of Cyprus and the Government of Greece,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Secretary-General, his Special Representative Elizabeth Spehar, and senior United Nations official Jane Holl Lute,

1. *Reaffirms* all its relevant resolutions on Cyprus, in particular resolution [1251 \(1999\)](#) and *recalls* the importance of achieving an enduring, comprehensive and just settlement based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions, including OP4 of its resolution [716 \(1991\)](#);

2. *Fully supports* the Secretary-General's decision to convene an informal "five plus UN" meeting between the leaders of the two Cypriot Communities and the Guarantor Powers at the earliest opportunity, and *urges* the sides and all involved participants to approach these talks in the spirit of openness, flexibility and compromise and to show the necessary political will and commitment to freely negotiate a mutually acceptable settlement under United Nations auspices;

3. *Reiterates its call for* a reduction of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and underlines that disputes should be resolved peacefully in accordance with applicable international law, and further *calls* upon the leaders of the two Cypriot communities and all involved parties to refrain from any actions and rhetoric that might damage chances of success;

4. *Recalls* its resolution [2537 \(2020\)](#) and *calls upon* the two leaders urgently to:

(a) provide the necessary political support and overall guidance to free the Technical Committees from obstructions in their work and enable them to function effectively, and to empower them to submit proposals for their consideration to enhance intercommunal contacts and improve the daily lives of all Cypriots, and consider the advice of the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General regarding further ways to empower the Technical Committees and improve their performance;

(b) engage the Technical Committees more actively to ensure effective coordination and cooperation on health matters, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other infectious diseases which have island-wide implications, including through the effective use of the expertise available in the bicomunal Technical Committees on Health, Crisis Management, Humanitarian Affairs and Economic Matters;

(c) ensure effective coordination and cooperation on criminal matters;

(d) promote peace education across the island, including by further empowering the Technical Committee on Education to implement the recommendations contained in its joint report of 2017, in particular those concerning policy-making, and to address impediments to peace in school materials, including text books, as a contribution to trust-building between the communities, on which there continues to be no progress;

(e) improve the public atmosphere for negotiation to secure a settlement, including by preparing the communities for a settlement through public messages on the way ahead, and delivering more constructive and harmonised messages, including by more explicitly encouraging contact and cooperation between the communities and providing direct support to grassroots people-to-people initiatives, and by refraining from actions or rhetoric that detracts from a successful process or could make it more difficult to achieve;

(f) increase their support to, and ensure a meaningful role for, civil society engagement in peace efforts, in particular strengthening the participation of women's organisations and youth in the process, including by empowering the Technical Committee on Gender Equality to meet and develop an action plan supporting women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace talks and providing direct support and encouragement to civil society organisations to enhance intercommunal contact and trust-building, and to support implementation of the recommendations of

the gender sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment to address existing barriers and ensure a future peace agreement can more equally benefit men and women in Cyprus;

5. *Regrets* the lack of progress on an effective mechanism for direct military contacts between the sides and the relevant involved parties, *requests* the Secretary-General to report further on the reasons behind this lack of progress, and *urges* full engagement with the proposal on the establishment of such a mechanism presented by UNFICYP, and its timely implementation;

6. *Calls* upon the sides to reduce existing barriers to intercommunal contact, emphasizes the importance of effective communication for risk-mitigation and trust-building between the communities, and *urges* the sides to agree and implement further confidence building measures that can contribute to a conducive environment for settlement, including those related to the military, economic cooperation and trade;

7. *Further calls* on the leaders of both communities to urgently agree on the reopening of all the crossing points and the return to the operating status that existed prior to 29 February 2020 as soon as practically achievable, and to work on harmonizing the protocols governing the crossing points, and *urges* effective coordination to prevent the spread of COVID-19, ensuring any continuing restrictions on movement across the island to prevent the spread of COVID-19 do not go beyond what is necessary to protect public health; and noting that the opening of the crossings since 2003 has been an important confidence-building measure between both communities and one which is essential for the settlement process;

8. *Commends* the ongoing work of the Committee on Missing Persons, and *calls upon* all parties expeditiously to enhance their cooperation with the Committee's work, in particular through providing full access without delay to all areas and responding in a timely manner to requests for archival information on possible burial sites;

9. *Expresses* its full support for UNFICYP, and *decides* to extend its mandate for a further period ending on 31 July 2021;

10. *Expresses serious concern* at the continued violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines, *urges* the sides and all involved parties to respect UNFICYP's mandated authority in, and delineation of, the buffer zone, *urges* the use of the 2018 United Nations aide-memoire by the sides to ensure peace and security in the buffer zone, *calls on* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council and troop-contributing countries any actions that impede UNFICYP's ability to fulfil its mandate, and *calls on* both sides to remove all unauthorised constructions and to prevent unauthorised military or civilian activities within and along the ceasefire lines, and *urges* both sides to take all appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of UNFICYP personnel;

11. *Reiterates its calls* on the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkish forces to restore in Strovilia the military status quo which existed there prior to 30 June 2000, and reaffirms that UNFICYP's freedom of movement should be respected;

12. *Recalls* the status of Varosha as set out in relevant resolutions, including resolutions [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#), and its Presidential Statement ([S/PRST/2020/9](#)), which expresses deep concern at developments in Varosha, and calls for the reversal of this course of action, and reaffirms that UNFICYP's freedom of movement should be respected;

13. *Welcomes* the announcement that 18 suspected hazardous areas across the island have now been cleared of mines, and *urges* the leaders of both communities to agree and continue a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus;

14. *Requests* UNFICYP to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate; *requests* the Secretary-General and troop- and police-contributing countries to increase the number of women in UNFICYP and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women at all levels, and in all aspects of its operations including senior leadership positions, and to implement other relevant provisions of resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#);

15. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General to standardise a culture of performance in UN peacekeeping, *recalls* its requests in its resolutions [2378 \(2017\)](#) and [2436 \(2018\)](#) that the Secretary-General ensure that performance data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations is used to improve mission operations, including decisions such as those regarding deployment, remediation, repatriation and incentives, *reaffirms* its support for the development of a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework that identifies clear standards of performance for evaluating all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel working in and supporting peacekeeping operations that facilitates effective and full implementation of mandates, and includes comprehensive and objective methodologies based on clear and well-defined benchmarks to ensure accountability for underperformance and incentives and recognition for outstanding performance, *calls on* the United Nations to apply this framework to UNFICYP as described in its resolution [2436 \(2018\)](#), and *notes* the efforts of the Secretary-General to develop a comprehensive performance assessment system;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take necessary measures to ensure full compliance of all UNFICYP personnel, civilian and uniformed, including mission leadership and mission support personnel, with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to keep the Council fully informed about the Mission's progress in this regard, including by reporting on the start, agreed deadlines, and outcomes of UNSCR 2272 reviews, *stresses* the need to prevent such exploitation and abuse and to improve how these allegations are addressed in line with its resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#), and *urges* troop- and police-contributing countries to continue to take appropriate preventative action, including vetting of all personnel, pre-deployment and in-mission awareness training, and to take appropriate steps to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel, including through timely investigations of allegations by troop- and police-contributing countries, and UNFICYP as appropriate, holding perpetrators to account, and repatriating units when there is credible evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and abuse by those units;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit by 10 July 2021 a report on his Good Offices, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting-point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement, *encourages* the leaders of the two communities to provide written updates to the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General on the actions they have taken in support of the relevant parts of this resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 5 and 6 and 8, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to include the contents of these updates in his Good Offices report; *further requests* the Secretary-General to submit by 10 July 2021 a report on implementation of this resolution, and to keep the Security Council updated on events as necessary;

18. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.