



Security Council

Distr.: General
5 July 2022

Original: English

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 16 December 2021 to 14 June 2022. It brings up to date the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution [186 \(1964\)](#) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2618 \(2022\)](#), since the issuance of my reports dated 31 December 2021 on UNFICYP ([S/2021/1110](#)) and on my mission of good offices in Cyprus ([S/2021/1109](#)).

2. As at 14 June 2022, the strength of the military component stood at 797 (697 men and 100 women, or 12.5 per cent women for all ranks, compared with the global peace operations target of 7.5 per cent women), while that of the police component stood at 67 (38 men and 29 women, or 43 per cent women compared with the overall global target of 23 per cent women) (see annex).

II. Significant developments

3. In the absence of prospects of settlement talks between the parties, public confidence in the possibility of common ground on the way forward being found remained low, with attention mainly being focused on internal issues in both communities. Public discussion on the Cyprus issue merely reflected the divergent positions of the sides overall. An unsettled internal political landscape on both sides of the island created additional challenges. Actions taken in and adjacent to the buffer zone by both parties, persistent obstacles to intercommunal trade and contact, ongoing provocative rhetoric and a lack of progress on addressing Security Council resolutions related to the fenced-off part of Varosha contributed to a further deepening of the mistrust.

4. In their weekly trilateral meetings, the representatives of the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar, and the Special Representative/Deputy Special Adviser agreed to insulate the work of the technical committees from the broader political dynamics concerning the Cyprus problem. Subsequently, they achieved a number of new bilateral agreements on cooperation on crime and criminal matters, women's participation in the settlement



process, cooperation on the environment and many other issues (described more fully later in the present report and in the report on my good offices ([S/2022/534](#))).

5. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to have a negative socioeconomic impact across the island, albeit to different degrees on each side, leaving the north in a highly vulnerable position. Cooperation between the two sides on COVID-19 measures at the crossing points, led by health experts within the Technical Committee on Health, was good. Based on data shared within the Committee on a biweekly basis, the epidemiological level was regularly adjusted and measures were gradually relaxed, facilitating crossings. The spillover effects of the war in Ukraine compounded the socioeconomic situation on the island.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

6. The lack of progress towards a resolution of the Cyprus problem had an impact on the work of UNFICYP. Decreased trust and increased political tensions correlated with more actions by the two sides that challenged the mission's mandated authority and were invariably deemed provocative by the other side. These actions, in turn, made conditions less conducive to a resolution.

7. During the reporting period, there was a surge in COVID-19 cases at the beginning of 2022, followed by a drop in April. Despite the existence of robust internal measures with respect to quarantine, testing requirements and guidelines limiting physical interaction, UNFICYP continued to record COVID-19 cases among its personnel, with 262 cases (201 military, 13 United Nations police and 48 civilian personnel) identified and managed over the course of the reporting period. There were no cases of hospitalization or serious illness, and the numbers had declined to no active cases by the end of the reporting period.

A. Prevention of tensions in and around the buffer zone

8. The significant economic fallout on the island resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, particularly on tourism, exacerbated an already difficult situation in the north caused by the devaluation of the Turkish lira and continued severely limited access to trade, and led to fears expressed by some in the north of economic collapse. The economic gap between the two sides significantly widened, not only exacerbating political tensions but also spurring various kinds of illegal trafficking across the buffer zone. During the reporting period, an UNFICYP patrol was shot at by suspected traffickers and the integrity of the buffer zone continued to be challenged.

9. Despite repeated calls by the Security Council for the sides to respect the mission's mandated authority with regard to the buffer zone, encroachment through unauthorized construction continued to take place, putting at risk the integrity of the buffer zone. The unauthorized concertina wire fence deployed in early 2021 parallel to the southern ceasefire line, and stretching for 12 km in the buffer zone, was not removed. Instead, five new gates were added and UNFICYP was informed of plans for another fence, 7.5 km of which would be built in the buffer zone, encroaching, in places, by as much as 235 m beyond the southern ceasefire line. In addition, the Greek Cypriots indicated that further surveillance technology would be deployed along the southern ceasefire line to deter irregular migrants and asylum-seekers from crossing south, and that a new 300-person-strong official force would be created for that same purpose. The mission raised, in this context, the proposal to unstaff the ceasefire lines

(see sect. B) and is concerned that the deployment of the new police capacity could lead to chronic new incursions into the buffer zone.

10. In Varosha, no steps were taken to address the call made by the Security Council in its resolution [2618 \(2022\)](#) to immediately reverse the actions taken since October 2020. Additional unauthorized developments occurred, including the restoration and inauguration, on 28 April, of the tomb of Pertev Paşa inside the fenced area of the town and, on 10 May, the further development of an additional 145 m of beach in an area that was made accessible to the public in 2021. Both of these developments were the subject of strong protests from various levels of the Greek Cypriot community. The previously reported vegetation clearing, electrical work, road paving and fence building continued. Many visitors, Cypriots and foreigners alike, continued to visit the parts of the town progressively made accessible to the public. UNFICYP again observed the use of aerial commercial drone overflights, linked, in the mission's assessment, to the monitoring of civilian visits. The mission did not observe any significant change in the 3.5 per cent of Varosha where it was announced in July 2021 that the military status had been lifted in preparation for renovation. Access to Varosha for UNFICYP patrols, however, remains significantly constrained since 1974. The additional constraints that were imposed by the Turkish Cypriot security forces in September 2021 were removed in April 2022 subsequent to the mission's engagements at the political and military levels.

11. In relation to the status of Varosha, UNFICYP continues to be guided by relevant Security Council resolutions. Accordingly, the mission and the Secretariat have repeatedly expressed concern over the developments in the fenced-off part of the town. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Türkiye responsible for the situation in Varosha.

12. Despite the buffer zone being a no-fly zone for non-United Nations assets, airspace violations, notably by commercial off-the-shelf aerial drones, continued to occur during the reporting period.

B. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

13. The trend towards an overall increased militarization of the island continued on both sides. UNFICYP believes that this is linked, at least in part, to the absence of progress towards formal peace negotiations. While military tensions remained low, unilateral unauthorized military activities by the opposing forces close to and inside the buffer zone were, in turn, a source of political tension. Such violations have been steadily escalating, in number and severity, since 2018. Bolder actions have been taken, triggering equally concerning reactions.

14. Several categories of violations resulted in exacerbating the perception of the buffer zone as a "hard border". There were 51 new prefabricated concrete firing positions deployed along the southern ceasefire line, bringing the total since 2019 to 290. A 1.6 km trench was dug parallel to the northern ceasefire line in north Nicosia, at times inside the buffer zone, a construction deemed by UNFICYP as military in nature and therefore a violation along its entire length. There have been indications that this construction is at least in part a reaction to the prefabricated concrete firing positions in the south, and potentially the concertina wire fence (see sect. A above). This likely reciprocal reaction illustrates the tangible consequences and risks of escalation posed by the sides not respecting the mandated authority of UNFICYP and its aide-memoire of 2018.

15. There were several instances of the opposing forces moving forward inside the buffer zone, especially along the northern ceasefire line. For example, the Turkish Cypriot security forces moved forward into the United Nations Protected Area (Wayne's Keep cemetery) on 4 May to protest a visit by a civilian to a relative's grave. In such instances, both sides have at times challenged the mission's delineation of the ceasefire lines. As the Security Council has repeatedly made clear, UNFICYP – which drew the ceasefire lines in 1974 – is the only entity competent to affirm where they are located, and the rules governing the buffer zone are set out in its aide-memoire. If the mission's authority in this regard is not respected by the sides, the integrity and value of the buffer zone, indeed the very mandate of UNFICYP, is at risk.

16. UNFICYP engaged with both sides on my proposal, welcomed by the Security Council, to explore a possible agreement on surveillance technology and unstaffing of positions adjacent to the buffer zone. While the sides' response has so far not allowed for tangible progress, the mission will continue to engage on this proposal in the next reporting period. In the meantime, unauthorized upgrades of military surveillance capacities continued to occur on both sides. At the culmination of a series of interactions at both the military and political levels on the need for a direct military contact mechanism, the Greek Cypriot side proposed a potential format for such a mechanism; the Turkish Cypriot side, however, has responded that the establishment of a direct civilian contact mechanism should precede a military one.

17. Notwithstanding the removal of the temporary additional impediments imposed on the mission's access to Varosha (as described in sect. A above), there was no improvement with regard to the overall restrictions imposed on its freedom of movement in Varosha and Strovilia. In Strovilia, the Turkish Cypriot security forces position remained overstaffed.

18. UNFICYP continued to follow up on the call made by the Security Council in its resolution [2618 \(2022\)](#) for the sides to agree on "a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus". No progress was made during the reporting period regarding the clearing of the 29 remaining suspected hazardous areas on the island, including the three active National Guard minefields in the south and the Turkish Forces' legacy minefield in the east. While the Turkish Cypriot security forces expressed potential interest in the subject if it were to involve reciprocity from the other side, the National Guard did not wish to discuss the matter. The mission's Mine Action Service will continue to research options for the next phase of clearance activities to be presented to the two sides, with a special focus on the buffer zone.

C. Management of civilian activity and maintenance of law and order

19. While the authority of UNFICYP over the buffer zone is acknowledged, at least in principle, by the two sides, it was more often challenged – and frequently disputed – when it came to civilian activities inside the buffer zone. Unauthorized civilian constructions in the buffer zone increased by 10 per cent during the reporting period, especially by Greek Cypriot individuals close to the southern ceasefire line. This is a particular concern, as such constructions constitute a permanent erosion of the buffer zone and may even affect future claims by creating facts on the ground, including in special status areas. As a result, these are a common source of political tension and often provoke reprisal actions.

20. In addition, unauthorized civilian activities – mainly farming – in the buffer zone, especially close to the opposite ceasefire line, remained an ongoing problem that regularly triggered tensions on the ground, some of them eventually escalating into political ones. Most of these incidents were triggered by Greek Cypriot farmers moving close to the northern ceasefire line, and sometimes beyond it, triggering a

hostile reaction by the Turkish or Turkish Cypriot forces, which, in turn, on occasion moved temporarily into the buffer zone.

21. Cooperation between UNFICYP and the police services on either side was effective overall and resulted, inter alia, in successfully addressing urgent law and order issues in the buffer zone, effectively completing pilgrimage escorts and achieving a decline in the number of hunting-related incidents. Regular bilateral meetings have been established by the UNFICYP Senior Police Adviser with the police chiefs on each side, which represents an improvement in cooperation. The Joint Contact Room, which, under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, exchanges law enforcement-related information between the two sides on a daily basis, saw a 34 per cent increase in the number of items exchanged during the reporting period.

22. The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders agreed to the creation of a local branch of the Joint Contact Room in the bicomunal town of Pyla/Pile, located in the buffer zone, to help tackle the growing criminality there. The Pyla/Pile office of the Joint Contact Room was officially inaugurated on 15 April, in the presence of representatives of the two leaders, local leaders and the Special Representative/Deputy Special Adviser. It is anticipated that the new office will allow cooperation between the two police forces, under the auspices of the United Nations, to confront the illegal casinos, nightclubs and trafficking-related problems. Meanwhile, the university in Pyla/Pile continued to operate without authorization from UNFICYP, and no progress was registered in resolving the matter of the large unauthorized construction project associated with the university, despite the continued engagement efforts of the mission.

23. On 17 January, a disagreement between UNFICYP and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in the Cetinkaya/moat area of the buffer zone next to the Ledra Palace crossing point resulted in minor physical contact and United Nations vehicles being damaged. While a misunderstanding may have been at the origin of the dispute, the use of force – including by civilians in that case – to access the buffer zone is unacceptable, a point that was readily acknowledged by the Turkish Cypriot authorities. On 21 May, a UNFICYP vehicle was fired upon, presumably by illegal traffickers, while patrolling in the buffer zone in the area of Geri/Yeri. The perpetrators fled towards the south in a vehicle, and local authorities launched an immediate investigation. The United Nations patrol vehicle was damaged in the incident, but no peacekeepers were harmed. UNFICYP issued a statement stating that attacks targeting peacekeepers constituted a serious crime under international law; the statement was supported by statements from several members of the Security Council. The investigation was still ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

D. Intercommunal relations, cooperation and trust-building

24. The relative improvement in the epidemiological situation on the island over the reporting period led to the gradual relaxation of COVID-19-related preventive measures on both sides, which was followed by the parallel easing of the measures at the crossing points. On 3 March, the Technical Committee on Health agreed to lift all testing requirements for fully vaccinated individuals who wished to cross in either direction, which significantly helped to ease crossings. The ongoing role played by the Technical Committee in coordinating actions, sharing data and thus reducing political tensions was both critical and commendable.

25. On the issue of crossing points, there were both bicomunal and monocommunal demonstrations during the reporting period calling for the opening of new crossing points, especially for vehicles in the east of Nicosia. UNFICYP

witnessed an increase in the frequency of lengthy queues at the Agios Dometios/Metahan crossing point in Nicosia – the most used crossing point on the island – due to staffing and other issues on the Greek Cypriot side, in the face of increased demand. The Special Representative/Deputy Special Adviser urged measures to expedite these crossings as a means of strengthening ties between the two communities, and necessary steps were agreed upon. As a result, there was a modest improvement in April, and further improvements were promised. The latest European Union statistics show that, in 2021, there was a notable increase in the number of crossings by Cypriots, up from 780,087 to 1,208,993, reflecting the gradual return to normal daily life after the first year of the pandemic. However, this number remains well below the pre-pandemic figure (3,694,958 in 2019). The number of European Union citizens other than Cypriots and third-country nationals crossing the line also increased significantly, from 106,624 to 371,910.

26. Trade in goods across the Green Line was also negatively affected by the pandemic and the temporary suspension of certain crossing points in 2020. According to the European Union, there was a significant increase in the volume of trade in 2021. The total official value of goods traded across the Green Line in 2021 was assessed at €6,151,022, compared with €4,693,898 in 2020, a 31 per cent increase.

27. As with crossing points, as outlined above, the Republic of Cyprus announced during the reporting period, encouraged by UNFICYP, to reduce the impediments on its side to cross-Green Line trade, that it would begin implementing the long-standing Green Line Regulation on a partial list of non-animal, processed food items. As at the end of the reporting period, implementation of that decision was still pending.

28. As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, web-based platforms continued to be relied on to maintain links between existing beneficiaries of intercommunal activities, which also enabled participation by those located in remote areas who would not have been able to attend in-person events. As from April, improvements in the epidemiological situation on both sides of the island allowed for an increase in in-person meetings. Most of these meetings were held in or close to the buffer zone, thus leaving the Cypriot population that resides away from the capital unable to benefit from such interactions. Bicomunal activities continued to face challenges and obstacles linked to the status of the north and concerns relating to “recognition”, challenges which have become more acute as the Turkish Cypriot leadership has advocated sovereign equality. Nonetheless, some important topics of mutual concern drew Cypriots from both communities together, for example to protest against gender-based violence or the nuclear threat, to request new crossing points or the resumption of the peace process, or to discuss bicomunal business opportunities.

29. The regular meetings between the Special Representative/Deputy Special Adviser and representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders continued to be fruitful, supporting the work of the technical committees and addressing other issues of mutual concern. An understanding reached in January to insulate the work of the technical committees from the overall political impasse, through the use of neutral terminology, allowed a number of new bilateral agreements to be endorsed by the leaders, including the opening of a branch of the Joint Contact Room in Pyla/Pile to address criminality in this bicomunal buffer zone village, as recommended by the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters; the “Action Plan on ways to ensure women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the settlement process/an eventual settlement process”, as recommended by the Technical Committee on Gender Equality; and various initiatives in support of the environment. The Technical Committee on Crossings remained without a Greek Cypriot Co-Chair for most of the reporting period and was therefore not operational. Of the 12 technical committees, 8 met regularly during the reporting period, 2 met only once or twice and 2 did not meet at all. More information on the technical

committees and their activities is provided in the report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus ([S/2022/534](#)).

30. The subject of education reform to address the problem of divisive and intolerant rhetoric propagated in schools, as called for by the Security Council, drawing on the 2017 recommendations of the Technical Committee on Education, remained unaddressed, particularly in the south, despite engagement by the Special Representative/Deputy Special Adviser. This issue has been identified by the United Nations, including the Security Council, but also by many Cypriots, as a sine qua non not only for reconciliation efforts but also for conflict prevention. More generally, unhelpful public rhetoric from both sides continues to undermine efforts to build trust.

31. Representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties continued to meet in person, under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia, and the religious leaders of Cyprus sustained their commitment to peacebuilding and reconciliation within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. More details are provided in the report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus ([S/2022/534](#)).

E. Facilitation of access and humanitarian functions

32. The progressive relaxation of COVID-19-related measures at the crossing points also had a positive impact on humanitarian crossings by Cypriots who needed to access health services or meet with relatives on the other side. Consequently, the number of COVID-19-related requests to UNFICYP for humanitarian facilitation continued to decrease.

33. The mission maintained its ongoing support to the Greek Cypriot and Maronite communities living in the north, as well as to some Turkish Cypriots residing in the south. UNFICYP addressed welfare issues of minority communities by facilitating continued access to services provided by their authorities. This included the handover of vaccines to Greek Cypriot and Maronite residents in the north, facilitating access to financial benefits in the south for eligible Turkish Cypriots, as well as the transport of educational materials, principally in the Karpas Peninsula. Political tensions over the appointment of Greek Cypriot teachers in the Karpas Peninsula and the choice of schoolbooks continued to be a problem between the sides.

34. The mission, in accordance with established practice, facilitated religious pilgrimages and services across the Green Line; here again, political considerations interfered. Following a National Guard military shooting exercise in early February that involved Orthodox priests wielding weapons, most of the priests who participated in the exercise were not allowed to cross to the north to officiate at religious services. Many Cypriots from both communities deplored the participation of religious figures in such a hostile and high-profile event.

F. Refugees and asylum-seekers

35. In December 2021, 1,296 asylum applications were submitted to the Republic of Cyprus, bringing the total number of asylum applications for the year 2021 to an unprecedented 13,235 compared with 7,094 in 2020, representing an 87 per cent increase. The upward trend continued in the first quarter of 2022, with a total of 5,066 persons lodging asylum applications by the end of March 2022, representing an increase of 100 per cent compared with the same period in 2021. In addition, some 16,000 Ukrainian nationals arrived in Cyprus between 1 February and 30 April 2022, 9,647 of whom submitted applications for temporary protection.

36. Access to asylum procedures on the Greek Cypriot side of the crossing points continued to be denied, with asylum-seekers presenting themselves to the police at the crossing points to seek asylum being refused such access and pushed back into the buffer zone. This lack of access to regular procedures, coupled with pushbacks of boats in 2021 which resulted in nine confirmed instances of refoulement of persons in need of international protection, contributed to an exponential increase in the number of persons who crossed the Green Line irregularly in order to eventually gain access to asylum procedures, putting them at risk of exploitation and abuse by smugglers and traffickers. In 2021, 11,488 of the 13,235 asylum applicants, representing 87 per cent of the total, crossed irregularly from the northern part of Cyprus in order to seek asylum.

37. Authorities in the north arrested a few traffickers during the reporting period and accepted the return of migrants intercepted in the buffer zone with documentation indicating that they had travelled from the north. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that much more could be done to stem the flow of irregular migrants through the northern part of Cyprus, especially in view of the large number of asylum-seekers holding valid student permits issued by the Turkish Cypriot authorities.

38. The increase in the number of asylum applications led to a further deterioration of living conditions in the first reception centre, which operated at 300 per cent of its capacity, creating a hazardous environment prone to frequent instances of violent altercations. Unaccompanied children, who remained at the centre in substandard conditions and with their freedom of movement entirely restricted for months, were moved to temporary accommodation, albeit without their freedom of movement being restored.

G. Gender, and women and peace and security

39. The Technical Committee on Gender Equality “Action Plan on ways to ensure women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the settlement process/an eventual settlement process”, as requested by the Security Council, was endorsed by the leaders on 16 January and officially launched on 13 April, with the support of UNFICYP and my mission of good offices in Cyprus. The launch was attended by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, under the auspices of the Special Representative/Deputy Special Adviser. During the event, the Action Plan was presented by the Technical Committee to civil society actors from across the island and to several Member States, as an initial step to raise public awareness of the plan.

40. UNFICYP also continued its intercommunal engagement with women’s groups, including support for initiatives in the context of International Women’s Day on 8 March. These initiatives included enabling civil society from across the island to engage on issues related to gender bias and stereotyping, and women’s civil society groups to discuss issues related to peace and security with the Special Representative/Deputy Special Adviser. UNFICYP also launched a social media campaign with women peacekeepers from the military, police and civilian components of the mission and, through its platforms, helped to enhance the promotion of activities centred around International Women’s Day to its audiences on both sides of the island.

41. As part of its continued efforts to engage youth in the women and peace and security agenda, UNFICYP partnered with the British Council for a series of workshops and youth-designed projects, with a focus on enhancing women and youth inclusion in the peace process. UNFICYP also organized capacity-building workshops and related activities with young people and youth groups from remote areas of the island.

42. In line with its objectives to advance gender parity and support gender mainstreaming across the mission, UNFICYP continued to focus on greater gender inclusion throughout its operations and on supporting an environment that is also responsive to the particular needs of women peacekeepers. In particular, discussion forums and capacity-building sessions were held throughout the reporting period with uniformed personnel, and further emphasis was placed across mission components on ensuring gender-responsive operations.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

43. Since the start of its operations in 2006, the bicomunal teams of scientists of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, supported by the United Nations and funding from donors and mandated to recover, identify and return the remains of persons who went missing during the events of 1963/64 and 1974, have exhumed or received the remains of 1,183 persons on both sides of the island. The European Union remains the Committee's main financial contributor. Ten persons were exhumed during the reporting period with seven teams of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot scientists carrying out excavations across the island. The overall exhumation figure may include persons who are not on the official list of missing persons and is finalized only after the completion of anthropological analysis and DNA identification, a process commonly completed within one to two years. If the identified remains are not related to the mandate of the Committee, they are then subtracted from the official exhumation figures. As at 26 April 2022, the Committee had identified 56 potential burial sites that were ready to be excavated. In 2022, the Committee conducted excavations in 5 of the 30 military areas in the northern part of the island to which access had been granted in June 2019, with no recoveries made during the reporting period. This brings to 16 the number of these military areas excavated so far.

44. To date, of 2,002 missing persons, 1,026 have been formally identified and their remains returned to their families for dignified burials, including 4 during the reporting period.

45. In an effort to obtain additional information on the location of the burial sites of missing persons, the Committee continued its efforts to gain access to information from the archives of countries and organizations that had maintained a military, police or humanitarian presence in Cyprus in 1963/64 and 1974. During the reporting period, the Turkish Cypriot office of the Committee continued to have access to Turkish army aerial photos taken in 1974, and the Greek Cypriot office of the Committee continued to research the Republic of Cyprus National Guard archives of 1974. In line with the now complete digitization of the archives of its Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot offices, the Committee is also using a shared web-based geographic information system application that allows for the visualization and sharing of information between the Committee's three offices and is accessible to field- and office-based employees.

V. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse

46. During the reporting period, UNFICYP maintained its successful efforts to encourage strict adherence to the United Nations policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. In coordination with the Regional Conduct and Discipline Section based at the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the mission implemented activities related to prevention, enforcement and remedial action regarding misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and prohibited conduct in the workplace.

47. Given the COVID-19 context, most of the training for all categories of personnel in the mission related to conduct and discipline, including on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption, was delivered online.

48. During the reporting period, UNFICYP did not receive any allegations of sexual exploitation and/or abuse.

VI. Financial and administrative aspects

49. The General Assembly, by its resolution [75/299](#) of 30 June 2021, appropriated the amount of \$53.8 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to \$18.2 million from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

50. As at 8 June 2022, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP amounted to \$19.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$2,827.5 million.

51. Reimbursement of troop costs and contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2021 in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VII. Observations

52. During the reporting period, the island continued to be considerably affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and, in addition, by the economic fallout of the war in Ukraine. While both communities suffered from the socioeconomic consequences of these crises, the Turkish Cypriot economy, which was already in distress before the pandemic, deteriorated even further. I am concerned that, as a result, the economic gap between the two sides will continue to widen, a situation that fuels resentment and distrust between the two communities, exacerbates the estrangement between the two parts of the island and spurs illegal trafficking through the buffer zone in both directions. The acute economic difficulties faced in the north of Cyprus do not benefit any of the parties to the conflict, but instead make prospects for a settlement more difficult.

53. Notwithstanding repeated calls by the Security Council and the Secretary-General, efforts in Cyprus to achieve greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to broaden and deepen economic, cultural and other forms of cooperation remain limited. Crossing points should facilitate the flow of traffic, and the full implementation of European Council regulation (EC) No. 866/2004 (the Green Line Regulation) would significantly help to increase the volume of trade and should be pursued with renewed vigour. Increased cross-island trade, together with deeper economic, social, cultural, sporting and other ties and contacts, would help to address the increasing concerns of the Turkish Cypriots regarding their isolation and promote trust between the communities.

54. I am also concerned about the lack of meaningful interactions between the two communities, which remained largely estranged from each other and focused mainly on the internal issues of their respective sides. With the passage of time and the risk that the communities drift ever further apart, supporting people-to-people trust-building and fostering cooperation more broadly on issues that affect the daily life of Cypriots, including through deeper social, cultural, sporting and other ties, is fundamental. I urge the leaders to encourage more direct contact and cooperation between the two communities and to provide concrete support for people-to-people

initiatives, as called for by the Security Council and as evidence of their genuine commitment to a solution.

55. In their efforts to promote closer cooperation between the communities, local and international actors continue to be confronted with challenges and obstacles linked to the status of the north and concerns relating to “recognition”. While the United Nations policy on Cyprus is maintained and decisions of the Security Council on the matter are upheld, I reiterate that concerns about recognition should not in themselves constitute an obstacle to increased cooperation.

56. The absence of progress towards the resumption of fully fledged negotiations creates space for new facts on the ground and gives rise to provocative unilateral actions that raise tensions. In this context, UNFICYP continues to face significant violations and contraventions of the mission’s aide-memoire. I note with concern that this situation can lead to systematic brinkmanship that will only worsen the already difficult climate between the parties.

57. Encroachment by both sides into the buffer zone, mostly in the form of unauthorized construction, remains one of the main sources of tensions. In addition to creating operational challenges for UNFICYP, these actions generate a more hostile climate on the ground and between the sides and can carry security risks. In addition, unauthorized construction for private and commercial use in the buffer zone, in contravention of established procedures for the management of civilian activity, undermines respect for the United Nations delineation of the buffer zone and for the mandated authority of UNFICYP. I urge both sides, once again, to respect and abide by the United Nations delineation of the buffer zone, which is the only delineation recognized by the Security Council. I recall the Council’s request that all unauthorized constructions inside the buffer zone be removed and that both sides prevent unauthorized military and civilian activities within and along the ceasefire lines.

58. Another example of the contravention of the mission’s aide-memoire was the enhancement of surveillance technology on both sides of the buffer zone, which was done without consultation with UNFICYP. As proposed in my previous report, I would urge the parties to work with my Special Representative to explore the idea of unstaffing the ceasefire lines, in return for the potential validation by the United Nations of surveillance technology that is neither deployed inside the buffer zone nor able to see beyond it. I believe that such a measure could significantly contribute to building confidence and stabilizing the buffer zone.

59. Beyond the buffer zone itself, I have repeatedly stressed the importance of the parties refraining from taking unilateral actions that could raise tensions and compromise a return to talks, while also calling upon all parties to engage in dialogue in order to resolve their differences. In that respect, I reiterate my concern over recent developments in the fenced-off area of Varosha and the lack of response to the Security Council’s call for a reversal of the actions taken since the announcement of the partial reopening of the fenced-off town in October 2020. I further recall the Council’s decisions related to Varosha, notably its resolutions [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#), and the importance of adhering fully to those resolutions, underscoring that the position of the United Nations on this matter remains unchanged. I also deplore the restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNFICYP imposed in the area and elsewhere, as in Strovilia, and once again request that the ability of the mission to patrol and implement its mandated activities be restored in full. I recall that the mandate provided by the Council to UNFICYP is not limited to the buffer zone but extends to the entire island.

60. Particularly in view of the current challenges, I encourage the leaders and their representatives to maintain dialogue and to engage with each other, including through the weekly discussions between their representatives and my Special Representative/

Deputy Special Adviser, as one of the only platforms for achieving progress on confidence-building measures and resolving outstanding problems on the ground that may lead to tensions. It is also critical that the leaders and their representatives continue to provide the technical committees with the political support that they require to sustain their constructive dialogue and deliver tangible results.

61. Direct interactions do not affect in any way the status of the parties and are important for addressing issues in a timely and effective manner. Therefore, I urge the sides to put aside rigid perspectives and instead accept that the establishment of a direct military contact mechanism between the opposing forces would be a very positive step for stability and confidence-building on the island. Similarly, I welcome the extension of the Joint Contact Room under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters to the village of Pyla/Pile and hope that it will receive all the political support it needs to effectively address criminality there.

62. The Security Council has also repeatedly called upon the leaders to refrain from using rhetoric that might deepen the mistrust between the communities, insisting on the importance of improving the public atmosphere and preparing the public for a settlement, while also highlighting the importance of peace education. Most of those pillars of reconciliation, unfortunately, remain to be built, and I especially regret the absence of progress towards removing divisive and intolerant rhetoric from schoolbooks.

63. UNFICYP prioritizes gender parity in peacekeeping and will maintain its efforts to support gender and peace activists to take their rightful place in the peace initiative on the island. In that connection, I welcome the adoption in January of an “Action Plan on ways to ensure women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the settlement process/an eventual settlement process”. I encourage the leaders to continue supporting the work of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality and the critical role of civil society and to ensure a linkage between the two, in order to pursue a sustainable and equitable solution to the Cyprus issue for all.

64. There is no doubt that the island has been facing a genuine crisis as to the number of asylum-seekers, refugees and irregular migrants who arrive in large numbers compared with the size of the Cypriot population. However, a lack of access to asylum procedures in accordance with international law continues to exacerbate the problem and is of serious concern to the United Nations. At the same time, I call upon both sides to work together and mobilize their efforts to address the source of the problem. I would encourage the continuation of regular interaction between experts on both sides to discuss the issue of irregular migration in meetings facilitated by the United Nations missions on the ground to which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees representative on the island provides technical expertise.

65. Given the complex regional environment and its impact on Cyprus, I call upon relevant actors in the region to exercise restraint and take constructive approaches to resolving their disputes. It is important that all parties demonstrate their goodwill and make greater efforts to create conditions conducive to a political settlement.

66. In the light of the continued contribution of UNFICYP to peace and stability and to the creation of conditions conducive to a political settlement, I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the mission for six months, until 31 January 2023.

67. I would like to thank the partners, in particular the European Commission, that have continued to provide support for the work of both United Nations missions in Cyprus, the United Nations Development Programme and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, and that have contributed to the implementation of important

confidence-building measures. I also thank the 36 countries that have contributed troops, police or both to UNFICYP since 1964 and pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace in Cyprus.

68. I express my gratitude to my Special Representative in Cyprus, Head of UNFICYP and Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Colin Stewart, for his leadership of the United Nations presence on the island. I also express my appreciation to all the women and men serving in UNFICYP for their steadfast commitment to the implementation of the mandate of the mission and the cause of peace on the island.

Annex

**Countries providing military and police personnel to the
United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 14 June 2022)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of military personnel</i>
Argentina	250
Austria	3
Brazil	2
Canada	1
Chile	6
Ghana	1
Hungary	11
India	1
Norway	2
Pakistan	3
Paraguay	12
Russian Federation	4
Serbia	8
Slovakia	240
Ukraine	0
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	253
Total^a	797

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of police personnel</i>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8
Bulgaria	1
China	6
Finland	5
Ireland	12
Italy	4
Jordan	4
Lithuania	1
Montenegro	5
Nepal	1
Romania	5
Russian Federation	6
Serbia	2
Slovakia	6
Sweden	1
Total^a	67

^a Of the military personnel, 697 are men and 100 are women. Of the police personnel, 38 are men and 29 are women.

