

Enclosure

I have the honour to bring to your kind attention the recent decision taken by the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to commence construction works regarding the Pile – Yiğitler road project. As of today, the project has been launched.

Regarding this timely decision, the TRNC has been expressing the need for the said project, which envisages expanding and enhancing the existing road, for the past 25 years. Many consultations have taken place with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), both aimed at illustrating the pressing need to facilitate the lives of our people, as well as to highlight our responsibility towards this end. To our dismay, our good-faith attempts to meet this humanitarian need have consistently been overlooked by all interested sides. Now, given that the implementation of this project has reached an irreversible stage for the well-being of Turkish Cypriot people living in the village of Pile, I would like to take this opportunity to recall some general information regarding the scope and goal of this project, with the confidence that it will be duly taken into account by your offices.

In this framework, it is crucial to note that this purely humanitarian project has been prepared with the aim of enabling the Turkish Cypriot residents of Pile to easily and freely access their own lands as well as the TRNC for schooling and similar needs; to improve their day-to-day circumstances; and to alleviate them from their current dependency on the random will of the Sovereign British Base (SBA) authorities while travelling between the TRNC and Pile. It is my firm belief that this humanitarian need, as well as the pertinence of preserving a fair and equitable approach to both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot peoples of the island, is sufficient justification to begin the road works, particularly in light of the undue advantage afforded to the Greek Cypriot people living in Pile, who are not subject to any customs controls or restrictive measures when traveling between the Greek Cypriot Administration (GCA) and Pile.

Moreover, despite our repeated objections, the Greek Cypriot people continue to be allowed to take unilateral initiatives in the buffer zone, in persistent violation of the status quo. To name a few examples, in 1996, the Greek Cypriot people monopolized the Pile section of the road in question and constructed the Larnaca – Dikhelia – Ayia Napa road, which even passes through land with Turkish title-deeds. Furthermore, the Pile – Oroklini road also passes through the buffer zone. Not to mention, the university in Pile continues to operate, as does the open-air cinema built to the south of the Derinya crossing point. Please find a comprehensive list of the GCA's violations of the buffer zone, enclosed herewith.

I am compelled to draw particular attention to the humanitarian nature of this long-overdue initiative of our Government, which does not entail any territorial or military motives, nor does it aim to alter the status quo of the buffer zone, wherein the authority of the United Nations is acknowledged. Moreover, in addition to assuming every aspect of the construction of the road, we intend to take the necessary measures concerning use of the road, as its sole purpose is to ease the lives of Turkish Cypriot residents of Pile. It should be underscored that this project has fully taken into consideration due respect towards the equal and inherent rights of both sides of the island and the spirit of cooperation, as good neighbours who must be able to coexist side-by-side. Needless to say, the unique mandate of the United Nations, in general, and UNFICYP, in particular, to remain at an equal distance to both sides remains a crucial component to its dealing with the Turkish Cypriot people: one of the two equal co-owners of the Island.

I would like to emphasize that the Greek Cypriot administration is not in a position to dictate terms or have any say regarding territory of the TRNC. Hence, any steps regarding TRNC territory are not subject to the protestations of the Greek Cypriot side, nor do they have a bearing on the outcome. TRNC authorities are the only relevant authorities with jurisdiction, as well as a responsibility over the rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriot people.

(Signed) Tahsin **Ertuğruloğlu**
Minister of Foreign Affairs