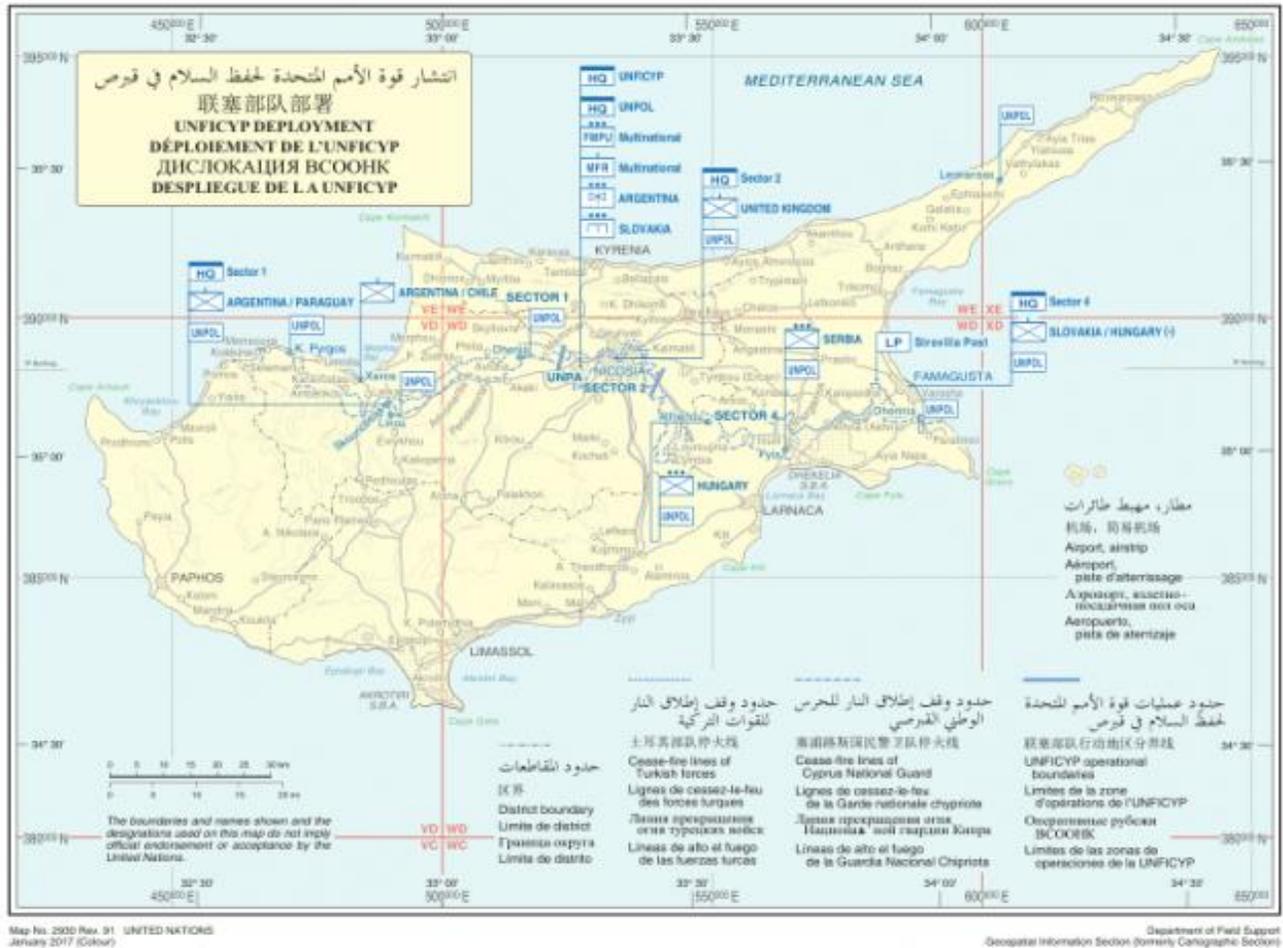


Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)
Peace Operations Estimate Note – United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
(UNFICYP)
(updated 5 June 2017)



[Link to CIA World Fact Book Republic of Cyprus](#)
[Link to UN Mission Website UNFICYP](#)

UNFICYP Executive Summary

The Republic of Cyprus, and its northern area under the control of “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (“TRNC”), may be in the midst of a [“once-in-a-generation opportunity”](#) to resolve its political disagreements and reunite. However, some observers suggest the ongoing negotiations will falter, yet again, because “if Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires, then Cyprus is the [graveyard of diplomacy.](#)”

The [recent negotiations began two years ago](#), with a vision of a two-part federation. Yet there remains significant issues, such as [post-reunification security arrangements](#) and land and property dispute resolutions.

Other major considerations are as follows:

- Concerns about UN “[cost-cutting](#)” and its potential to undermine mandates surround any discussion of UNFICYP’s future (as well as other UN peace missions). As indicated in a [recent UN report](#), the Security Council “welcomes” the Secretary-General:

...to keep all peacekeeping operations under close review to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, **including a review of UNFICYP when appropriate** (*emphasis added*), and noting the importance of transition planning in relation to the settlement, including recommendations as appropriate for further adjustments to UNFICYP’s mandate, force levels and other resources and concept of operations, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties...

In addition, among some actors, UNFICYP suffers (as does the UN) from the [perception of failure](#). 53 years since the first UN personnel arrived in Cyprus, negotiations are still ongoing.

- Texas-based Noble Energy [discovered an estimated 4 trillion cubic feet in gas reserves](#) in Cypriot waters. In conjunction with the Republic of Cyprus government, it will begin further exploration in July 2017. The potential for significant energy reserves in Cypriot fields creates incentives for both final political reconciliation as well for the continued partitioned *status quo*, as both Cypriot governments and their regional partners determine how to leverage the discovery in their own interests.
- The once-in-a-generation window for resolution may already be closing. Some observers suggest that “[peace fatigue](#)” is incipient:

Frustration over lack of progress and impetus showing itself in low hope: While 53% of Greek Cypriots and 48% of Turkish Cypriots wish for the peace process to succeed, 43% and 50% respectively express no hope that [the peace process will produce results](#).

- While the Cyprus situation is considered a non-violent (“[comfortable](#)”) conflict, Cyprus remains in strategic geographic proximity to the international and regional geopolitical issues of today—including the violent ones. A comprehensive solution at this juncture would contribute to the ability of regional powers—such as Greece and Turkey—to fully commit to joint ventures—such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) approaches to the migrant crisis—in order to better preserve regional stability and improve the economic environment of all. However, at the same time, some regional and international influencers may consider the *status quo* (a partitioned Cyprus with competing regional power “patrons”) in their own best interests and may, therefore, seek to undermine any reconciliation progress by any means—to include violence.

Mission Overview

1. [Background](#). According to the UNFICYP site:

On 15 February 1964, after all attempts to restore peace on the island had failed, the representatives of the United Kingdom and of Cyprus requested urgent action by the Security Council. On 4 March 1964, the Council unanimously adopted [resolution 186 \(1964\)](#), by which it recommended the establishment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The Force became operationally established on 27 March 1964.

After the 1974 coup d'état in Cyprus, followed by military intervention by Turkey, the UN Security Council facilitated a ceasefire. On 15 November 1983, then Turkish Cypriot "President" Rauf Denktas declared independence and the formation of a "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" ("TRNC"), which is recognized only by Turkey.

While the mandate has been periodically renewed since its 1964 inception, the renewal has not been without controversy. In 1978, UNSCR 430(1978) "[came within a whisker](#)" of non-renewal. Former Cyprus Foreign Minister Nicos Rolandis (1978-1983) recently recalled: "As far back as 1978, it's been argued that peacekeeping forces should at some point turn to peacemaking operations, they cannot be allowed to drag on forever."

2. Mandate. The mandate of UNFICYP was originally defined in 1964 in the following terms: "...in the interest of preserving international peace and security, to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions." The UN Security Council has periodically extended that mandate, which was conceived in the context of the confrontation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

The most recent mandate, [UNSCR 2338\(2017\)](#), reaffirmed the resolutions on Cyprus, with special emphasis on UNSCR 1251(1999) (29 June 1999). It extended UNFICYP until **July 31, 2017**. The mandate tasks are given as:

*The buffer zone, sometimes called the **Green Line**, extends approximately 180 kilometres (111.85 miles) across the island. The buffer zone between the lines varies in width from less than 20 metres (21.87 yards) to some 7 kilometres (4.35 miles), and it covers about 3 per cent of the island, including some of the most valuable agricultural land.*

In the absence of a political settlement to the Cyprus problem, the mandate of UNFICYP has been periodically extended by the Security Council and the Force has continued its presence on the island to supervise ceasefire lines, maintain a buffer zone, undertake humanitarian activities and support the good offices mission of the Secretary-General.

The renewed mandate also:

Calls on both sides to continue to engage, as a matter of urgency and while respecting UNFICYP's mandate, in consultations with UNFICYP **on the demarcation of the buffer zone**, and on the United Nations 1989 aide-memoire, with a view to reaching early agreement on outstanding issues;

Calls on the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkish forces **to restore in Strovia the military status quo** which existed there prior to 30 June 2000;

Calls on both sides to allow access to deminers and **to facilitate the removal of the remaining mines** in Cyprus within the buffer zone, and urges both sides to extend demining operations outside the buffer zone;

(and)

Commending the work of the **Committee on Missing Persons**, highlighting the importance of intensifying its activities, and therefore the need to provide all information required as expressed in the press release of the Committee on Missing Persons on 28 July 2016 regarding review of archival materials, noting that nearly half of all missing persons have yet to be located and around 63% have yet to be identified, urging the opening up of access to all areas expeditiously to allow the Committee to carry out its work, and trusting that this process will promote reconciliation between the communities...

3. **Deployment.** Argentina and the United Kingdom provide the largest of the troop contingents to UNFICYP (276 each). Slovakia (174) (which include 5 individual police) is the next largest. Serbia and Hungary have 49 and 77 persons assigned, respectively. The remainder of the personnel are spread across predominately European and Latin American contributing countries, as well as Australia.

In Cyprus since March 1964
Strength: 1,106 total, including:

- **Uniformed personnel: 953**
 - Troops: 884
 - Police: 69
- **Civilian personnel: 153**
 - International civilians: 34
 - Local civilians: 119

The Russian Federation provides three police officers. China and Bangladesh send six and two police, respectively. **The United States has no personnel serving in the Mission.**

UNFICYP's civilian police “maintain close cooperation and liaison with the Cyprus police and the Turkish Cypriot police on matters having intercommunal aspects. Together with the line units they contribute to law and order in the buffer zone and assist in investigations and in the Force's humanitarian activities.”

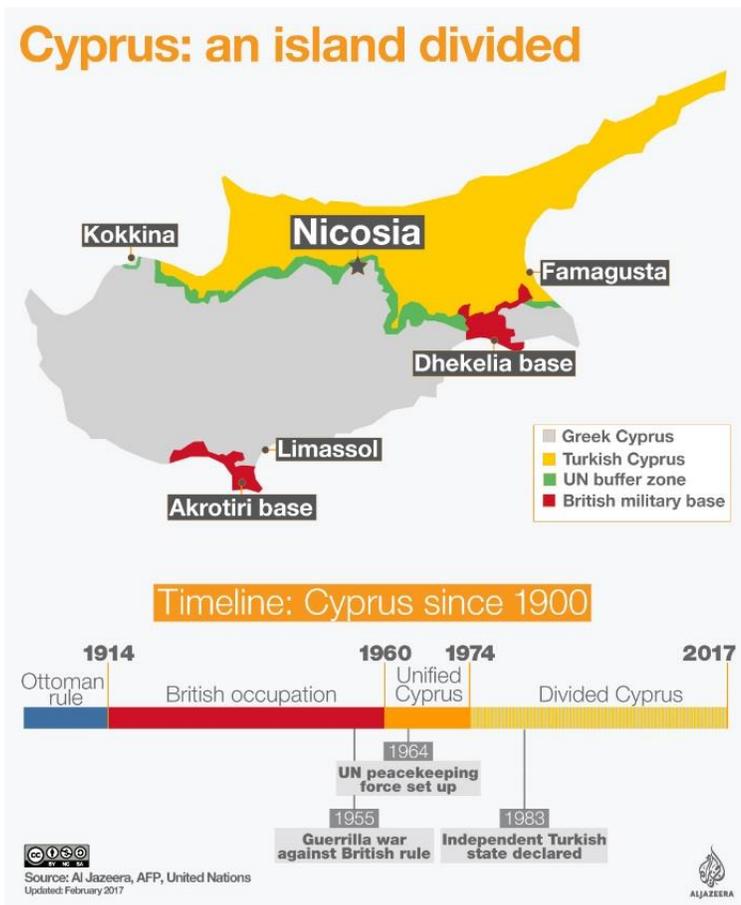
10.4% of the total force are women, the majority of which are from Argentina and the United Kingdom.

4. **Casualties.** There have been **183 total fatalities** in UNFICYP since its 1964 inception, with most in the early decade of the Mission and the last one in 2015 (due to accident).

Situation

5. **Drivers of Conflict.** The Cyprus conflict is essentially an issue of **competing ethno-nationalisms** between Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot communities (*enosis*—or ‘union’--among the Greeks), which tainted the 1960's Constitution and the actions of the national and regional governments throughout the late 1990s until today. According to one observer:

The Cyprus Problem operates on local, regional and international levels. The local entails the relationship between the two ‘ethnically’ categorised [*sic*] communities. Owing to Turkey and Greece’s involvement since its early stages, the conflict has also had a distinct regional dimension for many years. This regional dimension is also the product of islands geography as a bridge between 3 continents and due to the history and demographics of the region...If we add the colonial heritage, proximity to the Suez Canal and interests of Great Britain, remnants of Cold War paranoia that the island was to become a Russian satellite or a ‘Cuba in the Mediterranean’, the British Sovereign Base Areas that host one of



the biggest intelligence infrastructures in the region and the close links between the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches to the equation, the protracted conflict on the island starts looking multi-layered, multi-factored and multi-faceted.

More recently, however, [support for any political union with Greece](#) appears to have waned, with leaders on both sides agreeing to a “bizonal, bicomunal federation”—but unable to enact a resolution due to entrenched disagreements between them. Key issues include: “the return of displaced Cypriots and the handling of their property, repatriation of Turkish settlers, demilitarization of the island and the future role of Greece, Turkey and Britain.”

Regardless of the intentions of the Cypriots of either ethnicity, Cyprus remains a strategic geographic point between three continents and a [‘microcosm of external ambitions’](#). As in the past, other regional and global powers seek to influence the ultimate decisions to their own advantage—which may also include maintaining the *status quo* of the partitioned island.

6. Significant Events.

a. Recent Events.

- [5 June 2017](#). The UN Secretary General, António Guterres, indicated that reunification negotiations would recommence later this month.
- [27 May 2017](#). The United Nations special envoy, Espen Barth Eide, announced that he was terminating negotiation efforts.
- [February 2017](#). Talks were halted after the Republic of Cyprus parliament voted to commemorate the 1950 “*enosis*” referendum in Cyprus schools. Turkish Cypriots’ demanded the vote be rescinded.
- [26 January 2017](#). The UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2338, renewing UNFICYP’s mandate for another six months.
- [9 January 2017](#). The first international conference on Cyprus was held at the UN headquarters in Geneva with representatives from Greece, Turkey and Britain – the island’s three guarantor powers. The [European Union](#) was an observer. While little was resolved, some clarity was found regarding the issues. Specifically, the term “[four freedoms](#)” was utilized to describe the Turkish Cypriots’ interest in the “free movement of persons, goods, services and capital”—a concept that underpins the interrelationship of EU membership in which Turkey is not currently included.

b. Upcoming Events

- **TBD June 2017**. Proposed resumption of peace talks.
- **31 July 2017**. UNFICYP mandate expires.
- **February 2018**. Next Republic of Cyprus presidential elections.
- **July 2018**. Next Turkish Cypriot elections expected.

Operational Environment (GPMESII)

7. [Geographic](#). The island of Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea (after Sicily and Sardinia). Just over the size of Connecticut, geographically it can be classified as European or Middle Eastern. Its largest point is Mount Olympus, and it has a temperate environment of hot, dry summers and cool winters. It has a central plain with mountains to the north and south, with more scattered but significant plains along the southern coast. Natural hazards include



both earthquakes and drought. There are water accessibility challenges, as there are no natural reservoir catchments, there is seasonal disparity in rainfall, and sea water intrudes into the island's largest aquifer. In addition, coastal degradation and sewage and industrial waste pollution impact Cyprus' environment.

8. Political. Universal suffrage begins at 18 years of age. There is no birth right for citizens. Until 2013, at least one parent must be a citizen. However, in recent years, "[foreigners can become citizens in less than six months](#) in exchange for investing at least €2m (£1.7m) in Cyprus property or €2.5m in government bonds or companies." **In the past five years, the Republic of Cyprus issued an estimated 2,000 new citizen passports; almost 50% to Russians.** However, dual citizenship is recognized. Also, "individual Turkish Cypriots able to document their eligibility for Republic of Cyprus citizenship legally enjoy the same rights accorded to other citizens of European Union (EU) states."

Independence Day is celebrated on 1 October (from the United Kingdom in 1960). However, Turkish Cypriots celebrate "Republic Day" on 15 November (for their 1983 self-declared independence from the Republic of Cyprus).

The Republic of Cyprus is a presidential democracy whose Chief of State/Head of Government is [Nikos Anastasiadis](#) (since 28 February 2013, with 45.5% of the vote). The Vice President position is vacant as it is held reserved for the Turkish Cypriot representative. Three ministerial posts are also set aside for Turkish Cypriots, but they are currently held by Greek Cypriots.

There is an unicameral House of Representatives (or *Vouli Antiprosopon*) has 80 seats, of which 56 are assigned to Greek Cypriots and 24 to Turkish Cypriots (only Greek Cypriots are in place). In the area administered by Turkish Cypriots it also has a unicameral Assembly of the Republic (or *Cumhuriyet Meclisi*) with 50 seats.

Both current Cypriot leaders were [born in the same town of Limassol, Cyprus](#) and are considered "moderate" and "willing to make the sort of concessions necessary to find a solution."

The Turkish Cypriot area calls itself the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC) and it is a semi-presidential democracy, led by [Mustafa Akinci](#) since April 2015.

Limassol is also sometimes called "[Moscow-on-the-Mediterranean](#)" for its large Russian émigré population and its Russian banking interests.

Any eventual peace agreement will face [referendums](#) in both the Republic of Cyprus and the TRNC.

2004 was the last time a reunification agreement was put to public vote, after the multiyear and multiphase negotiations known as the [Annan Plan](#). The minority Turk Cypriots supported it but it was overwhelmingly [rejected by the Greek Cypriot majority](#) (75% of the Greek Cypriot voters rejected the referendum).

The reasons for the NO vote amongst the Greek Cypriots varied. Some analysts suggest the failure of the referendum among Greek Cypriots was due to an aggressive media campaign of disinformation leveraged by Greek Cypriot leadership but initiated by international "patrons" (specifically, Russia). Others suggest there was little incentive for Greek Cypriots to [agree to any political or legal compromises](#) inherent to the Annan Plan, as EU membership for the Republic of Cyprus was a guarantee, regardless of the referendum result.

9. Military/Security. While the Greeks and the Turks each have military elements on either side of the buffer zone, there do not appear to be any significant non-state armed groups in operation. [According to UNFICYP](#):

The situation in the buffer zone between the two sides remained calm, and there has been a decrease in military violations. The opposing forces demonstrated restraint and overall good cooperation with UNFICYP. Nevertheless, that generally good cooperation has been marred by increased restrictions imposed on the Force by the Turkish forces, which has constrained its ability to carry out its mandate and posed significant difficulties for its personnel.

Despite the calmness of the buffer zone, Turkey has previously engaged in naval exercises in Republic of Cyprus-controlled waters without permission. In May 2017, Turkey began issuing [Notices to Airmen \(NOTAMs\)](#) over Cyprus-controlled air-space for its aerial military drills.

There is the [usual level of criminal activity](#)—to include international criminal groups—throughout Cyprus, although less so in the TRNC area.

a. State Armed Groups.

[The Cypriot National Guard \(Ethniki Froua, or EF\) of the Republic of Cyprus.](#) It includes naval and air elements. 18-50 years is the age for compulsory military service for all Greek Cypriot males, with a 14-month service obligation. Men may be 17 years of age for voluntary service.

b. Other International Actors. The following list is not complete, but provides examples:

Other Countries.

Greece. Greece is one of the two most involved of countries that occupy Cyprus. In modern history, Greece orchestrated the [1974 coup d'état](#) in Cyprus—purportedly designed in part to unify Cyprus with Greece at least politically, if not in actuality (*enosis*). The coup gave credence to the Turkish narrative of the time, which demanded respect for Cyprus' independence as outlined in the 1960 [Treaty of Guarantee](#) and resulted in the unilateral Turkish invasion—an action supported in the international community at the time.

A subset of the 1960 [Treaty of Nicosia](#), the Treaty of Guarantee was established "to guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus, and not to promote the union of Cyprus with other states or partition of the Island."

While the Greek involvement in the Cyprus coup d'état was one of many events that ultimately led to the overthrow of the military *junta* in Athens, the subsequent and current democratically-elected [Greek leaders continue to advocate](#) for the Republic of Cyprus in regional and international forums. Over 1000 Greek soldiers remain stationed within the Republic of Cyprus (south of the buffer zone).

Russia. Officially, Russia is supportive of Cyprus reunification, with the exception of its insistence that Turkey, Greece and Britain "be stripped of their role as guarantors," which would, in effect, significantly reduce or eliminate the United Kingdom's military presence in the country. Recently, however, the Russian ambassador to Cyprus was seen at a seminar of anti-reunification advocates "[dedicated to derailing](#) any prospect of an agreement between Greek and Turkish Cypriots."

Greek Cypriots have historically considered Russia "as a protector rather than a troublemaker" due to their shared Orthodox Christian faith and Cyprus' role as a financial and banking center for Russian business. However, more recently, some Greek Cypriots have expressed concern about Russian

interference in Cypriot politics—“What they have been doing in America and Europe they have been doing for 50 years in Cyprus,” according to Mr. Makarios Drousiotis, a Greek-Cypriot researcher.

In 2014, Mr. Drousiotis published a book, “The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War,” that purports to reject the “Moscow-generated” narrative that suggested “the West is to blame for Turkey’s 1974 invasion of the island and the decades of division that followed.”

Supposed rationales vary for Russian “interference” and its desire to impede reunification. On the one hand, the historic and traditional relationship with the Greek Cypriots may serve as enough reason. On the other hand, it may be in order to maintain the disequilibrium of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as it balances the needs of its disputing members. Still another consideration may be energy economy-related. Turkey, and therefore the TRNC, currently imports the majority of its natural gas from Russia. A political reconciliation of the two Cypriot governments may lead to joint exploration and utilization of gas from the Cypriot reserves, reducing the Turkish dependence on Russian resources. Finally, “a reunification deal would deliver a success to the United States, whose diplomats have been particularly active in trying to prod Greece, Turkey and their ethnic kin in Cyprus toward an agreement.”

Turkey. Turkey is the other of the two most involved of countries that occupy Cyprus, in the north of the buffer zone Turkey calls the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)—although that name is not recognized by any other country or international organization. While unilateral, the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus was conducted under the auspices of 1960 [Treaty of Guarantee](#), and had international support (to include the United States) at the time. However, the subsequent partitioning of the island and occupation by Turkish forces was not in keeping with the Treaty.

The **Turkish Cypriot Security Force (GKK)** is predominately a ground force with estimates between 30-40,000 soldiers. Most recently, Turkey’s President Erdogan said that Turkey will always “[maintain a presence in the island as one of its guarantors](#).” Minimum age of service is similar to that of the Turkish army.

The United Kingdom. The British forces have occupied Cyprus for much of the past few hundred years. In the late 1800’s, their occupation of selected sites was as a “Protectorate” and with the agreement of the Ottoman government. However, in 1914 and at war with the Ottomans, the United Kingdom annexed all of Cyprus and by 1925 declared it “[a Crown Colony](#).” The period of history between the Crown Colony establishment and the 1960 independence of Cyprus from British governance was marked with policies and processes designed for stability between the two dominant ethnic communities (Turks and Greeks), or the favoritism of one group over the other, depending on the geopolitics of the day. In ceding independence to Cyprus, however, the British government retained control of significant military bases and its long-standing interest in Cypriot stability and security. In more recent years, the British government offered to [return significant portions of its military bases](#) to the Republic of Cyprus, if a political reunification with the TRNC is made.

International Organizations.

European Union (EU). It is important to note that while the Republic of Cyprus, like Greece, is a member of the European Union, Turkey is not. Therefore, EU efforts on behalf of reunification are most often in support of other international organizations’ efforts. [As an example](#), “The negotiations between the two Cypriot Communities aim at reaching a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the EU is founded...Since the beginning of this Commission, the Cyprus settlement issue has been under

the direct political responsibility of President Juncker, with Mr. Pieter Van Nuffel appointed as his Personal Representative to the UN Good Offices Mission in Cyprus in July 2015.”

The Republic of Cyprus’ membership in the EU is also makes a Cyprus passport “[a golden ticket](#)” for would-be citizens. The new passport program, initiated after the 2013 financial crisis, allows for foreigners to become citizens—and retain dual-citizenship—in less than six months in exchange for investments in properties or bonds with Cyprus. Some observers call this practice a “sale of EU citizenship” that has significant corruption considerations.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It is also important to note that while Greece and Turkey are both members of NATO, the Republic of Cyprus is not. In fact, Cyprus is the only European Union member state that is neither a NATO member state nor a member of its Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Disagreements regarding Cyprus and its future contribute to significant divisions within NATO, especially as Turkey’s current government [appears increasingly uninterested in continued alignment](#) of its geopolitical goals with its NATO partners.

10. Economic. Most recently, the Republic of Cyprus’ [exploration for gas along its coastal waters](#) has the potential to deepen—or heal—the rift between the Cypriot ethnic groups:

Turkey opposes what it calls a unilateral Greek Cypriot project that flouts the rights of the island's breakaway Turkish Cypriots. Turkey is also said to claim part of gas exploration areas, or blocks, off Cyprus' western and southern coast, as its own. The Cyprus government says drilling is its sovereign right and that potential proceeds from any mineral wealth would be divvied up among all citizens once a peace deal is signed.

Cyprus also enjoys many other natural resources, to include: copper, pyrites, asbestos, gypsum, timber, salt, marble, and clay earth pigment. Yet less than 11% of the economy is in industry. The largest share of the economy is the 90% in the service sector (tourism, financial services, shipping, and real estate).

Most of the land use falls into an “other” category, as only 13.5% is in agricultural and less than 20% is forested. The major exports include citrus, potatoes, pharmaceuticals, cement, and clothing to major partners: Greece, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Israel. Import commodities include consumer goods, petroleum and lubricants, machinery, and transport equipment from the same partners, with the addition of Italy, Germany, China, and the Netherlands.

Cyprus has been a member of the EU since May 2004 and adopted the euro as its national currency in January 2008. During the first five years of EU membership, the Cyprus economy grew at an average rate of about 4%, with unemployment between 2004 and 2008 averaging about 4%. However, the economy tipped into recession in 2009 as the ongoing global financial crisis and resulting low demand hit the tourism and construction sectors. An overextended banking sector with excessive exposure to Greek debt added to the contraction...Cyprus lost access to international capital markets in May 2011. In July 2012, Cyprus became the fifth euro-zone government to request an economic bailout program from the European Commission, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund - known collectively as the "Troika."...Cyprus' two largest banks merged and the combined entity was recapitalized through conversion of some large bank deposits to shares and imposition of losses on bank bondholders. As with other EU countries, the Troika conditioned the bailout on passing financial and structural reforms and privatizing state-owned enterprises. Despite downsizing and restructuring, the Cypriot financial sector throughout 2015 remained burdened by the largest stock of non-performing loans in the euro zone, equal to nearly half of all loans. Since the bailout, Cyprus has received positive appraisals by the Troika and outperformed fiscal targets but has struggled to overcome political opposition to bailout-mandated legislation, particularly regarding privatizations. Cyprus emerged from recession in 2015 and its economy grew an estimated 1.5% for the year, setting a positive tone for the scheduled end of the bailout program in March 2016. Growth recovered to 2.8% in 2016.

The Republic of Cyprus also has [a long history of Russian banking interests](#) in the country. Over half of the passports issued to new Cypriot citizens since 2013 have gone to Russians. Those passports were granted after significant investment in property or government bonds by the applicants, “sparking about €4bn of foreign investment last year — equivalent to almost a quarter of the island's annual economic output.”

On the Turkish Cypriot side of the buffer zone, the European Union’s “*acquis communautaire*” has been suspended until reunification of the island.

The market-based economy of the TRNC is roughly one-fifth the size of its southern neighbor and is likewise dominated by the service sector with a large portion of the population employed by the government...The “TRNC” maintains few economic ties with the Republic of Cyprus outside of trade in construction materials. Since its creation, the “TRNC” has heavily relied on financial assistance from Turkey...The Turkish Lira is the preferred currency...The “TRNC” weathered the European financial crisis relatively unscathed...because of the lack of financial sector development, the health of the Turkish economy, and its separation from the rest of the island.

11. Social. The 1974 invasion provoked a [massive displacement](#) of tens of thousands of Greek Cypriots from Turkish-held areas, and a corresponding displacement of Turkish Cypriots from other areas of the island to the Turkish-held side. On the Republic of Cyprus side of the buffer zone, the population is overwhelmingly of Greek ethnicity (98.8%) with the other 1% including Maronite, Armenian, and Turkish-Cypriot. The official language is Greek (81%), but includes Turkish (official) 0.2%, English 4.1%, Romanian 2.9%, Russian 2.5%, Bulgarian 2.2%, Arabic 1.2%, and even Filipino 1.1%. The major religion is Orthodox Christian (89.1%), but also includes Roman Catholic 2.9%, Protestant/Anglican 2%, Muslim 1.8%, and Buddhist 1%. Other religious practices includes Maronite, Armenian Church, and Hindu.

The Turkish-controlled part of the island is predominately of Turkish ethnicity, with corresponding language and religion preferences. The dominant religion is Sunni Muslim.

Two-thirds of the population lives in urban centers. Almost half the population is between the ages of 25 and 55, with a median age of 36 years and a life expectancy of 78 years. Cypriots enjoy a generally healthy environment with good medical care available.

Over 99% of the population is considered literate, with an average of fifteen years of education per person. Unemployment is approximately 11%, but youth unemployment is at 36% (estimated in 2014).

a. Rule of Law. There is a robust and sophisticated Rule of Law structure on both sides of the buffer zone. The Republic of Cyprus uses a mixed legal system of English common law and civil law with European law.

The UNFICYP also supports the work of the UN’s Committee on Missing Persons which addresses identification of the “missing” from the previous decades’ worth of violence between the communities.

The most recent mandate notes that “half of all missing persons have yet to be located and around 63% have yet to be identified, urging the opening up of access to all areas expeditiously to allow the Committee to carry out its work, and trusting that this process will promote reconciliation between the communities...”

b. Human Rights. There are no current allegations of violent human rights violations in Cyprus, on either side of the buffer zone. However, like many Mediterranean and European countries, “Cyprus is a

[trafficking destination](#) for persons subjected to forced prostitution and labor. Sex trafficking occurs within venues used by Cyprus' commercial sex industry (bars, pubs, coffee shops, cabarets, massage parlors) and private apartments. Groups vulnerable to forced labor include domestic workers, asylum seekers, and foreign migrants working in the construction and agricultural sectors.”

While violent human rights issues are extremely rare, some observers suggest that the ongoing partitioned situation continues to violate the [human rights of families displaced](#) after the 1974 Turkish invasion, in that they have yet to reclaim property or compensation for the same.

c. Humanitarian Assistance. The UNFICYP mandate is not focused on humanitarian tasks, although there are some UNFICYP-led or [facilitated humanitarian outreach](#) to isolated Cypriots. According to the UNFICYP website:

Another major function entrusted to UNFICYP is to encourage the fullest possible resumption of normal civilian activity in the buffer zone. To this end, it facilitates the resumption of farming in the buffer zone; assists both communities on matters related to the supply of electricity and water across the lines; facilitates normal contacts between Greek and Turkish Cypriots; provides emergency medical services; and delivers mail and Red Cross messages across the lines. UNFICYP also discharges certain humanitarian functions for the Greek Cypriots and a small Maronite community living in the northern part of the island. It also periodically visits Turkish Cypriots living in the southern part of the island and helps them maintain contact with their relatives in the north. The Force cooperates with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in providing humanitarian assistance to needy displaced persons in Cyprus, and with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in particular in facilitating projects involving both communities.

However, the increasing use of Cyprus as a destination among African migrants fleeing the eastern and southern Mediterranean coasts may soon result in corresponding tasks focused on their needs.

12. [Information.](#) In the Republic of Cyprus, “freedom of speech is generally respected and a vibrant private press often criticizes the authorities.” Both sides of the buffer zone have fully modern information assets, where “State-run radio and TV compete with private operators, and relays of Greek and Turkish stations are on air across the island.” 71% of the country’s population use the internet; and 93% have cell phones.

13. Infrastructure. Cyprus (both north and south) has improved infrastructure for all types of transportation assets. Potable water, improved sanitation, and other related infrastructure are available throughout the country, whether urban or rural.

Peace Operations Functions

14. Command and Control.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Cyprus and Head of UNFICYP:

Elizabeth Spehar (Canada)

Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP):

Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir (Bangladesh)

15. Intelligence. It is unclear what specific intelligence assets are available to UNFICYP. However, it is likely that there is a sophisticated system in place as the Mission shares space with other European forces.

16. Operations. At this time, it is unclear what specific, if any, operational events have occurred in UNFICYP other than the usual border observations and demining activities facilitation.

17. Protection.

a. Mission Protection. While UNFICYP casualties have been significantly less than those experienced in other UN Missions, all missions are experiencing increasingly hostile and insecure environments for UN personnel and other aid, humanitarian, and development agency personnel.

b. Protection of Civilians. There is no specific Protection of Civilians task in the UNFICYP mandate, although the maintenance of the “buffer zone” implies the protection of the population of each side of the zone from the potential of violence from the other side.

18. Sustainment. There are few sustainment issues in UNFICYP.

Issues and Considerations

19. Issues. The major issue confronting UNFICYP is that the roots of this conflict are embedded in the international political fabric of several decades, with potential solutions requiring major compromises among the actors that thus far remain elusive. [As observed](#): “Since Cyprus’s political and cultural divisions stem from global, regional, and local disputes, the eventual reunification of the island will require a confluence of interests in all three arenas.”

20. Considerations.

a. US. The Trump Administration has not yet announced any changes or modifications to the United States approach regarding Cyprus. Cyprus was “[a pet issue](#)” for the Obama Administration. Secretary of State Tillerson appears inclined to keep the US engaged, having met with both Cypriot leaders in his first days in office.

However, the proposed State Department budget and foreign aid reductions will still impact Cyprus engagement, especially in prioritization of effort. In addition, the ongoing [review of mandates](#) by the US Ambassador to the United Nations and her office suggests a refocus on political solutions to ongoing peace operations, which certainly includes UNFICYP.

It is important that the Trump Administration recognizes the [full complexity](#) of the Cyprus situation, particularly as it is one of many factors impacting regional stability at the nexus of three continents.

b. UN. [One observer suggests](#): “If Cyprus’s reunification comes to pass, it will reaffirm the value of the U.N.’s enduring, patient commitment to peacebuilding as an alternative to violence and a tool for conflict resolution.” In the meantime, however, the UN must continue to consider [the future of UNFICYP](#) in the face of success—or another failure—of the reconciliation negotiations. Options for UNFICYP may include:

- **Status Quo.** No change to Mission mandate or resources of the same.
- **Full Withdrawal.** Whether precipitously or in stages, the UN should carefully consider the local, regional, and global implications of a termination of mandate authority and full withdrawal of UN forces.
- **Mandate Modifications.** There are many developing factors that may suggest a significant change to the mandate in its next renewal, to include but not limited to: the increasing impact of

the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean, the atrophy of available Mission funding, and the emerging political reconciliation—or not.

c. Cyprus. Cyprus' general openness to conflict resolution may be due to the personalities of the leadership—and their personal governing agendas. [The two Cypriot leaders appear willing to compromise](#) (Mr. Anastasiades of the Republic of Cyprus and Mr. Akinci of the TRNC), hailing from the same small town in Cyprus. In addition, the leaders of their regional “patrons”, Greece and Turkey, are focused on other domestic and regional issues, such as the [lingering economic crisis](#) in Greece, or Turkey's faltering relationship with the West. The economic pressures within Cyprus may also contribute to the new openness. The Republic of Cyprus' 2004 EU accession [bolstered its political and economic power](#) in relation to both Greece and Turkey, so “Whether by accident or design, Cyprus holds the key to the eventual inclusion of Turkey into the EU...” Also:

[The legal landscape has shifted.](#) The [European Court of Human Rights](#) opened the way for lawsuits from Greek Cypriots who lost property; by one reading, even ordinary tourists to the north could potentially face fines for staying at hotels or eating on *[sic]* restaurants built on Greek Cypriot land. That could have a potentially disastrous economic impact in the north. Putting pressure on the Turkish Cypriots, they may soon be outnumbered by the settlers who arrived after the 1974 invasions, and their descendants...The pressure on the Greek Cypriots to negotiate is less clear. While some now believe a de facto partition is permanent, the mainstream view is that reunification is the best outcome, although substantial disagreements remain over what it should look like.

A [four-step road map](#) to continued resolution may include:

- **Step 1:** Shift the focus away from hard security and guarantees that only emphasize on last resort, deterrence and worse case scenarios to soft security and preventative measures that emphasize on sustainability and viability, by broadening the concept to include human security, economic, social and ontological security. The underlying objective should be to achieve an endogenously resilient Federal Cyprus that relies on its own institutions to guarantee the security of its citizens.
- **Step 2:** Acknowledge that a transitional period will be required before Federal Cyprus can be endogenously resilient and secure, where special arrangements and external support will be necessary to build the capacity of Cypriot institutions and provide a sense of security to all citizens and communities. Focus on benchmarks and performance indicators that can ensure a smooth implementation period.
- **Step 3:** Negotiate and agree those aspects of transitional arrangements that are less controversial (e.g. timelines for implementation of the settlement, what support will be provided by an international mission) in order to prevent deadlock, increase points of convergence and reinforce hope and public engagement in the process before negotiating those aspects of transitional arrangements that are more controversial (e.g. 'last resort' provisions, role of historic guarantors).
- **Step 4:** Enshrine all agreements and steps in a Treaty of Implementation, which will outline a robust bridge from the current status quo, to the ultimate vision of an endogenously resilient Federal Cyprus.

Resources

21. Key Documents and On-Line References (Selected).

- [BBC News Country Profile Cyprus](#)
- [Brookings Cyprus and the NATO EU Divide \(2010\)](#)
- [Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book Republic of Cyprus](#)
- [The Center for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development The Cyprus Problem Why Solve a “Comfortable” Conflict \(April 2017\)](#)
- [Department of State Cyprus](#) and [USAID Cyprus](#)

- [Foreign Policy Cracking the Cyprus Code \(March 2017\)](#)
- [Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute Volume7 Issue1 Modern Odyssey UN Peacekeeping and Conflict Termination \(April 2017\)](#)
- [Open Diplomacy Institute Cyprus Dispute a Failure of UN Mediation \(May 2017\)](#)
- [Security Council Report Cyprus](#)
- [United Nations, General Assembly Fifth Committee Seventy-first Session, 33rd Meeting \(AM\) Stressing That Cost Cutting Must Not Undermine Mandates \(9 May 2017\)](#)
- [UN Mission Website UNFICYP](#)