

Cyprus

Despite increased UN engagement in Cyprus in 2011, few gains were made in the country's decades-long conflict. Since attaining statehood in 1960, Cyprus has endured violence and partition resulting from tensions between ethnic Turks in the island's north and Greeks in the south. As frequent talks in recent years have shown little progress in resolving the dispute, the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continues to monitor the de facto border and provide essential services to Cypriot civilians. International pressure on both sides to come to an agreement has been building, but until such an accord is reached, UNFICYP will continue to play a vital role.

Background

The island of Cyprus is divided between a predominantly ethnic Greek south and a minority of Turks concentrated in the north. Upon independence in 1960, the country attempted through its constitution to balance the interests of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Political crises erupted early on, however, resulting in the outbreak of violence in 1963. When further division occurred in 1974, the UN brokered a de facto cease-fire, which established the status quo of a divided Cyprus.

UNFICYP was established in 1964 with a mandate to prevent the recurrence of fighting and contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to "normal conditions." Following renewed hostilities in 1974, its mandate was expanded, with monitoring of the de facto cease-fire becoming a top priority. After 1974, cease-fire lines

and a buffer zone were established between the areas controlled by the opposing Cyprus National Guard and Turkish Cypriot forces. This de facto border stretches across the island and varies in width from less than twenty meters to seven kilometers, covering about 3 percent of the island and some of Cyprus's most valuable agricultural land. The zone also cuts through Nicosia, capital of both north and south, dividing it in two. UNFICYP utilizes a system of observation posts and air, vehicle, and foot patrols to monitor maintenance of the military status quo in the buffer zone. The mission's civilian police maintain close cooperation with the Greek and Turkish Cypriot police on intercommunal matters, contribute to law and order in the buffer zone, and assist in investigations and humanitarian activities.

UNFICYP maintains the crossing points on the buffer zone and is examining new potential crossing locations. From 21 November 2010 through 7 May 2011, there were more

UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

• Authorization and Start Date	4 March 1964 (UNSC Res.186)
• SRSG	Lisa Buttenheim (United States)
• Force Commander	Major-General Chao Liu (China)
• Budget	\$58.2 million (1 July 2011–30 June 2012)
• Strength as of 31 October 2011	Troops: 856 Police: 66 International Civilian Staff: 38 National Civilian Staff: 112

For detailed mission information see p. 243

than 778,000 official crossings through the seven points along the buffer zone, in addition to several million euros' worth of trade. Though the main thoroughfare in Nicosia had been closed for forty-four years, hundreds of crossings now occur there every day.

The mission addresses day-to-day issues for Cypriots who live and work in the buffer zone, supporting education and medical services, maintaining roads across the zone, facilitating the supply of electricity and water across the de facto border, and delivering mail and Red Cross messages between north and south. UNFICYP provides permits for civilian activities in the buffer zone, including housing construction, farming, and other commercial ventures. The mission conducts outreach activities in villages near the buffer zone to explain these procedures and process applications.

UNFICYP also undertakes activities benefiting Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in the northern part of the island and Turkish Cypriots living in the south. The mission assists in addressing legal and humanitarian concerns regarding such individuals, including attending court hearings and facilitating family visits. UNFICYP also delivers humanitarian assistance, including in cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and liaises with authorities in the south to provide welfare services, including medical care and education.

One of UNFICYP's most important activities has been assisting in the clearance of landmines from Cyprus. The mission has supported the UN Mine Action Centre in Cyprus (UNMACC), which was established by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) with funding from the European Union in 2003. Teams working with UNMACC have cleared over 27,000 mines from the island that were laid during the outbreak of violence in the 1960s. In February 2011, however, mine removal operations came to an end, as both sides continued to withhold access to remaining mined areas in the buffer zone and no agreement was reached on extending de-mining operations outside the zone. UNMACC estimates

that 15,000 landmines may still remain in Cyprus, and 2 million square meters of land could still contain mines and unexploded ordnance. The Security Council has urged the parties to agree to further de-mining, but there has been no progress in this effort.

In the June 2011 resolution that extended the mission's mandate for six months, the Security Council called on both sides to intensify the momentum of negotiations and increase the participation of civil society in the process, as well as to facilitate removal of the remaining mines. Lisa Buttenheim of the United States is the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for UNFICYP. The mission's force commander, appointed in January 2011, is Major-General Chao Liu of China.

Key Developments

While there were some tense exchanges in 2011 between UNFICYP and Turkish Cypriot military forces, these incidents were generally quickly resolved and the situation in the buffer zone largely remained calm, with no significant cease-fire violations. No major exercises were carried out by either military, with only occasional low-level activities provoking a reaction from the other side. These mostly occurred around Nicosia, where forces are in close proximity to each other. Both opposing forces continued to report alleged violations to UNFICYP, but the number has decreased since 2010. Some previously reported military positions established by both sides in violation of the status quo remain in place. There have also been restrictions imposed on UN staff members of Greek Cypriot origin seeking to undertake their duties in the north. The mission supports measures such as unmanning or closing observation posts where opposing troops are in close proximity, but there has been no progress in advancing proposals for military confidence-building measures.

The current series of reunification talks began in 2008 under UN sponsorship and with UNFICYP support. Dimitris Christofias, the president of the Republic of Cyprus, and his

Box 3.2 Women, Peace, and Security

In February 2011, following the tenth anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions that constitute the UN's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) framework, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) released a ten-year impact study on the implementation of Resolution 1325.¹

The impact study assessed the effects of DPKO's work on several WPS components, including participation in peace negotiations, political participation, sexual- and gender-based violence, and judicial reform. The findings reveal mixed success in advancing the WPS agenda. While disparities persist, peacekeeping support for women's political participation resulted in tangible and significant impacts over the past decade. Lessons learned were tested this year by national elections held in Haiti, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

DPKO and DFS, with the assistance of a gender advisory team and mission-specific gender advisers, have successfully promoted women's engagement in political processes both as voters and as candidates. UN-led voter education campaigns, gender-sensitive voter information, improved election security, and women-only voting booths have yielded greater female turnout during elections and increased involvement of women in the formation of government and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

Peacekeeping operations like the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) also support the mobilization of female electoral candidates through enhanced security (such as specialized communication lines), production of campaign posters, and the airing of candidates' profiles on mission radio stations in the lead-up to elections.

Through active lobbying for gender equality in government, peacekeeping missions helped enact legislative quotas in countries including Sudan and Timor-Leste, and in the latter women now occupy more than a quarter of the legislative seats. The rise in women's governmental participation is smaller without quotas, but can still lead to more representative state institutions, as seen in Liberia, Darfur, and Afghanistan over the past decade. Problems remain, however, as women who transcend cultural barriers to governmental participation face the additional challenge of developing their leadership skills while concurrently fulfilling their duties in office. DPKO and the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (also known as UN Women) work to build upon their capacity through multiday training and coaching programs aimed at improving awareness of gender-sensitive policies and providing technical support.

There are more women involved in government than ever before, although they are far from achieving gender equality. By increasing the participation of

women as voters, candidates, and government officials, UN peace operations have created more inclusive and therefore more sustainable postconflict governments and civil societies. Looking to build upon the successes in women's political participation and to continue moving toward gender parity, DPKO and DFS are now working with the Department of Political Affairs to revise joint field guidelines on women's roles in postconflict electoral processes, with a slated release in early 2012. Elections scheduled for spring 2012 in Timor-Leste may be the first beneficiaries of the improved guidelines.

Gaps in implementing other aspects of the WPS framework still remain, including women's roles in peace processes, women's security sector involvement, and prevention and prosecution of sexual- and gender-based violence. In addition, while gender-mainstreaming efforts are now core components of UN peacekeeping mandates, the 2011 impact report recommends that additional resources, improved commitment by senior leadership, and clearer guidelines for crosscutting issues are needed to improve mission-level execution. More consistency between missions and thematic areas will also be necessary to build sustainable peace and propel Resolution 1325 and the WPS framework into the next decade of peacekeeping.

Note: 1. The report is available at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/10year_impact_study_1325.pdf.

northern counterpart at the time met with the SRSG and agreed on a path toward a comprehensive settlement, committing to the concept of a federal government with a single international identity and two constituent states of equal status. The meetings continued after a leadership change in the north, with Dervis Eroglu becoming de facto president of Northern

Cyprus. The leaders of the two sides have met over a hundred times since 2008, and the UN Secretary-General has been closely involved in the discussions, meeting with them several times in 2011. The sides have found broad convergences regarding EU representation, international treaties, federal-level decisionmaking, and economic issues, but specific

details have been lacking despite frequent meetings. A number of important issues regarding governance and power-sharing remain significant obstacles.

In July the two leaders met with the Secretary-General and accepted his offer for an enhanced UN mediation role in reunification talks, with the Secretary-General urging the two parties to reach convergence on core issues by October. Later that month the two sides began a series of nineteen intensive UN-supported meetings. In August the Secretary-General reported that talks were taking longer than had been hoped, with an agreement not likely for some time.¹ The leaders met with the Secretary-General again in late October and were invited to an additional meeting in January 2012, with the eventual goal of a multilateral conference on the Cyprus issue.

Negotiations have been increasingly undermined by developments in 2011. In July an explosion occurred at a military facility in the Republic of Cyprus, knocking out a major power plant and weakening the economy. The republic has seen its credit rating downgraded by three major rating agencies and is facing fears that it will become the next country to seek an EU bailout. Controversial austerity proposals have increased political uncertainty, leading to the collapse of the governing coalition and presenting a further challenge to resolving the north-south situation.

Cypriot affairs have been further worsened by recent strains between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey. In September, despite warnings from Turkey, the Greek Cypriot government began exploratory drilling for oil and gas off the coast of Cyprus. Turkey called this an act of provocation, and stated that Turkish military assets would monitor developments in the area. Turkey has also expressed the intention to start its own seismic exploration program in the area near Northern Cyprus through an agreement with the north's de facto government. Turkey does not accept Greek Cypriot claims to the area, and believes that any development projects should be shelved until the dispute over the political status of the island is resolved.

Conclusion

The European Commission has indicated that it would like to see a settlement to the political status of the island before Cyprus assumes the EU presidency in the second half of 2012, but this currently seems unlikely. If negotiations fail to produce a resolution to this decades-old dispute, UNFICYP will continue to play an essential role in monitoring the situation and improving the lives of Cypriots affected by the partition.

Note

1. United Nations, *Assessment Report of the Secretary-General on the Status of the Negotiations in Cyprus*, UN Doc. S/2011/498, 8 August 2011.