



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Washington, D.C.

**Message of the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus in Washington D.C.,
Mr. George Chacalli,
on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus**

My dear compatriots,

As you all know, this year marks the fortieth anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus and of the forcible division of our island. Vice President Biden himself made the point during his recent trip to Cyprus, that *"...it's long past time -- 40 years -- that all Cypriots are reunited"*.

Indeed! Forty years of occupation and division is enough.

Forty long years on, Turkey still maintains control over nearly 40% of Cyprus' territory. Thousands of Greek Cypriots are still being denied their fundamental right of return to their homes; Greek Cypriot properties continue to be illegally confiscated or sold without their owners' consent; Turkish occupation troops are still stationed on the island; thousands of colonists from mainland Turkey have been transplanted to the occupied area and still remain there; freedom of worship continues to be severely restricted, access to religious sites blocked, religious sites systematically destroyed and a large number of unique religious and archaeological objects stolen.

Even on purely humanitarian issues, Turkey continues to be unhelpful and provocative. The Turkish side is still obstructing the process of determining the fate of those persons missing since the invasion of 1974, while the few elderly Greek Cypriots and Maronites remaining in the occupied area suffer daily threats and harassment and are being discriminated against, simply on the basis of ethnic grounds.

In spite of all these, the Cyprus Government remains fully committed to the U.N.-sponsored process to reach a sustainable and enduring settlement that would reunify Cyprus based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in full respect of the human rights of all Cypriots. The Joint Statement agreed between President Anastasiades and the Turkish Cypriot leader last February, lays a solid foundation for result-oriented talks.

The Cyprus Government has already brought a fresh approach to the negotiating process and has tried to create a new impetus for a solution. President Anastasiades has outlined, early in 2013, several confidence-building measures, such as the “Famagusta Package” that, if adopted, would become a game-changer and would create a win-win situation, paving the way for an overall political solution.

The United States has welcomed President Anastasiades’ proposal for this package of *“bold and innovative confidence-building measures, which have the potential, to restore faith in settlement efforts”*.

Regrettably, the Turkish side has not only ignored these proposals, but has made a mockery of the negotiating process by consistently and arrogantly turning to all sorts of delaying tactics. It is also refusing to show any spirit of good-will or compromise, on even the simplest issues, working instead, to entrench division and separation.

In our ongoing struggle, the Diaspora’s contribution in defending Cyprus’ sovereignty abroad has been at the very center of our collective efforts for freedom and justice through the years.

We are truly grateful for everything you have been doing in support of our just cause and we know that you will always stand by our side in our efforts. We draw strength and encouragement from this, to help us face all future challenges.

Our unwavering resilience and determination, is absolutely imperative if we are to succeed. We will spare no effort to reunite our homeland. We owe this, not only to those who have sacrificed their lives for our country, but to our children and our grandchildren.

I want to leave you with a message of hope: Cyprus can become an example of reconciliation, peace, prosperity and stability, not only for the eastern Mediterranean, but for the world in general.

We shall continue our efforts until this goal is achieved. We count on your help and support to make this hope a reality!

Thank you.