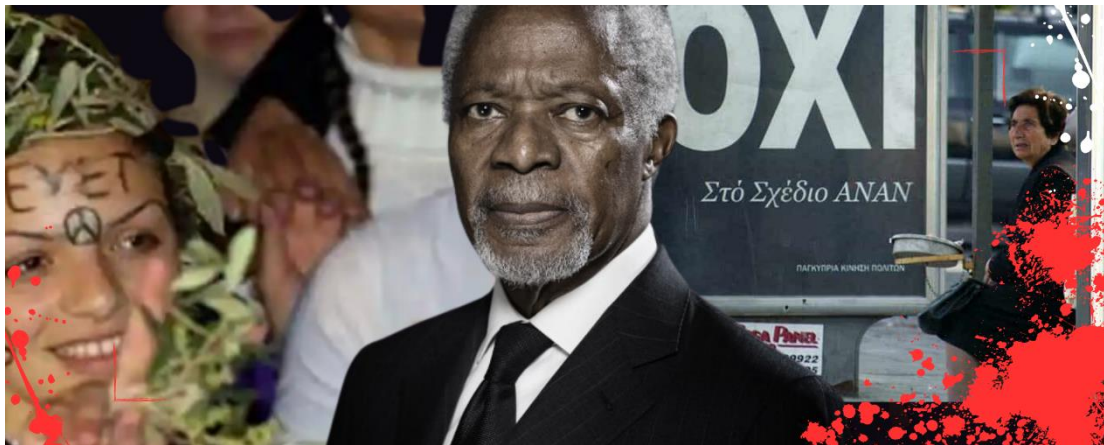




Greetings to all Members and friends of Embargoed!

Welcome to the revamped edition of our Embargoed! newsletter! We're excited to unveil our fresh new style and share the latest updates with you. You may have also noticed our brand-new website is now live, albeit pending some refinement. But that's not all—there's plenty more to discover, including details about our upcoming AGM and the Turkish Cypriot Cultural Festival. Dive in to learn more!



EMBARGOED!

20 Years Since the Annan Plan

Apologies for the length, but the following is key to the situation today in Cyprus – and was actually the catalyst for the creation of our organization.

April 2024 marks 20 years since the last big push for the reunification of Cyprus; the United Nations sponsored ‘Annan Plan’, which took its name from the then Secretary General, Kofi Annan.

Background Dynamics

The Greek-controlled Republic of Cyprus ‘Government’ first began talks aimed at EU membership in 1998, however, their initial approaches were given the cold shoulder. The overwhelming preference by member states at that time was to avoid absorbing the ‘Cyprus Problem’ into the bloc.

All that changed when Greece became more active in pushing the accession of its Greek Cypriot kin. Having been pressured to remove their longstanding veto against the potential membership of Türkiye, Greece saw a chance to flip the balance of power by using their EU veto in a broader sense. This time as a means to advance the accession of Cyprus – which would remain under Greek Cypriot control, but act in the name of the entire island. The accession of Cyprus would provide a union of sorts with Greece and would oblige the EU to be firmly on the side of the Greek Cypriots, were they to become a member state.

Context and Negotiations: The Road to the UN Settlement Plan

It should be noted that the 1960 Cyprus constitution had considered and forbidden such an eventuality. In order to ensure that the balance of influence by Greece and Türkiye remained equal, Cyprus was expressly forbidden from joining any union (political, economic, or otherwise) with any state or states, of which both Greece and Türkiye were not already a member. The EU therefore had a cast iron legal reason for rejecting the candidacy of Cyprus.

With the EU embarking on a phase of enlargement which was generally political (to secure the democratic principles of countries who had recently emerged from dictatorship) rather than the previous economic expansion, Greece indicated that it would indefinitely block the accession of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Malta, unless Cyprus joined too. The single-member veto which Greece had, until then, used against Türkiye, would instead be used to manoeuvre the EU against the Turkish Cypriots.

Rather than face-off with Greece, the EU Member states convinced themselves that they could leverage the situation to bring about a settlement in Cyprus. The carrot of EU membership would be offered to the Turkish Cypriot public in return for their positive vote to a settlement plan which was sure to require painful concessions on their part. Until this time, the consensus was that it was Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriots who were the cause of the island's division. The thinking being that if they could be convinced, the Greek Cypriot vote would be a mere formality.

It was under these conditions that the UN presented their settlement plan which aimed at reunification of the 2 communities. Following extensive cross-border meetings and consultations, with Greece and Greek Cypriots on one side and with Türkiye and Turkish Cypriots on the other, it was agreed that any blanks (where agreement between the 2 communities was not made) would be filled in by the UN.

The resulting plan envisaged a federal republic of 2 partner states, which required the ceding of a significant amount of territory from Turkish Cypriots to Greek Cypriots (from 36.2% to 28.5%), a phased reduction in the number of Turkish and Greek mainland forces on the island (eventually leaving an equal, and only token number of each) and the opening of the Varosha/Maras region of North Cyprus, to be inhabited by Greek Cypriots.

To give the plan the best chance of success, the EU and UN sought and received assurances that the plan would be officially supported by both Cypriot Leaders (North and South of the border). Their support would be made plain throughout the run-up to a simultaneous referendum of the 2 communities. And to ensure that the moment was seized, the joint referendum would take place on 24th April 2004, precisely 1 week prior to Cyprus' accession on 1st May.

Imbalanced Scenarios: Consequences of the Referendum Choices

The rules of this high-stakes game were starkly different for each side. Just like the Cyprus status quo today, it was anything but a level playing field. The following is a summary of the 4 potential outcomes which each community had to consider before placing their vote:

1

Greek Cypriot - Yes

Turkish Cypriot - Yes

Both communities would join the EU in a new unified federal state.

The 'Republic of Cyprus' and 'Turkish Cypriot Republic of Cyprus' would cease to exist

2

Greek Cypriot - No

Turkish Cypriot - No

Greek Cypriots would join the EU as the Republic of Cyprus (representing the whole island).

Turkish Cypriots would not join the EU and would remain in an unrecognised state, subject to continued embargoes

3

Greek Cypriot - Yes

Turkish Cypriot - No

Greek Cypriots would join the EU as the Republic of Cyprus (representing the whole island).

Turkish Cypriots would not join the EU and would remain in an unrecognised state, subject to continued embargoes

4

Greek Cypriot - No

Turkish Cypriot - Yes*

Greek Cypriots would join the EU as the Republic of Cyprus (representing the whole island).

Turkish Cypriots would not join the EU and would remain in an unrecognised state. *

*In this last scenario it was intimated that the UN and EU would not go as far as recognising 2 separate (non-federated) states on the island. However, they would ensure that “the Turkish Cypriots would not be left out in the cold”.

Outcome Implications: The Promise and Reality of International Recognition

This was said as a means of encouraging and rewarding a Turkish Cypriot Yes, while simultaneously warning the Greek Cypriots that a No vote from their side would not be without consequences. If the Turkish Cypriots voted Yes, their international isolation – and the embargoes - would have to end.



Referendum Ramifications: Diverging Paths and Unforeseen Consequences

The result of the referendum was a resounding (76%) No (“Oxi”) from the Greek Cypriots and a majority (65%) Yes (“Evet”) from the Turkish Cypriots. Given the rules of the game the outcome was unsurprising.

For the Turkish Cypriots, their majority acceptance reflected a people who were desperate to remove the embargoes placed upon them. While acknowledging the painful concessions required and the inherent risk they were accepting, they saw a chance to take their place in the world; to travel, trade, share, interact and compete with the outside world as equals. It was a way to finally obtain their human rights.

For the Greek Cypriots, their overwhelming rejection reflected a state faced with the prospect of losing their title of the ‘sole legitimate Government of Cyprus’, and in doing so, it would have spelled the end to their cherished dream to rule Cyprus as a Greek island. Their decision was further influenced by a tearful television address by the then President, Tassos Papadopoulos.

Tearful Tassos

Despite having promised the UN, US and EU that he would support the plan, instead he appeared on television on the eve of the referendum to beg his people to reject the deal with tears streaming down his face.



“I personally feel that I have been cheated by the government of the Republic of Cyprus”

Such was the turnaround in his attitude that the then EU Enlargement officer, Gunter Verhuegen, blasted the Greek Cypriot Administration for “cheating” its way into the Union. It was a rare and surprisingly strong departure from the usually tame nature of diplomatic language. He considered the about-turn by Papadopoulos to have been a personal betrayal too, proclaiming *“I personally feel that I have been cheated by the government of the Republic of Cyprus”*. On 26th April 2004 Verhuegen continued to rail against the Greek Cypriots when he complained that *“A unique opportunity to bring about a solution to the long-lasting Cyprus issue has been missed...There is a shadow now over the accession of Cyprus...What we will seriously consider now is finding a way to end the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.”*

In the days after Cyprus’ accession, we heard a flurry of announcements from world leaders promising the lifting of economic and cultural embargoes, the opening of the air and seaports, the agreement of a substantial aid package and the tacit recognition of the existence of Turkish Cyprus.

So, what changed?

In short, nothing. Unsurprisingly, all the initiatives detailed above have been blocked by EU Members, Greece and (Greek Cypriot controlled) 'Cyprus'. And the EU has slowly but surely become another tool for Greece and the Greek Cypriots to use against the Turkish Cypriots.

It was a direct result of this betrayal by the UN and the EU which led to the birth of Embargoed! The embargoes against the Turkish Cypriots were cruel and unjust at their onset in March 1964. They became even more so after April 2004.

Responses from Barnet Council and Middlesex University: Engagement and Challenges Ahead

Embargoed! received responses from both Barnet Council and Middlesex University regarding their ill-advised meetings with a group who purport to represent the town of Morphou, despite them not living in the town, accepting that they have no jurisdiction in the town and not having been elected by the residents.

While both responses fell short of what we would expect, Middlesex University have at least shown a willingness to engage with us with a view to future talks or initiatives on Cyprus. Meanwhile, Barnet Council seem more hopeful that we will just go away.

Along with the British Turkish Cypriot Association (BTCA) and the Turkish Cypriot Women's Philanthropic Association (TWPA), we have approached our umbrella group, the Council of Turkish Cypriot Associations UK (CTCA UK) to coordinate a response on behalf of all Turkish Cypriot groups across the UK. As part of this, we are collectively investigating potential legal action against one or both entities.



SELECTIVE FACTS **NON INCLUSIVE!**

The Mayor of Morphou & The Mayor of Barnet
'Human Rights in Cyprus' Lecture

Monday, 18 March

Free
Business and Law Faculty

RACIST ORGANISERS!



Read more about it in T-Vine

EMBARGOED! ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Still Standing

Nejla and James have continued their vigil over the last month.

[Follow us on Instagram](#)



Embargoed! Website Launch: Explore Our New Online Home

As promised, the new Embargoed! website is now live. You can see it here. While some work still needs to be done on updating files and/or correcting typos etc, the site is looking much more fit for 2024. Please take a look and provide feedback on any issues to **info@embargoed.org**

Huge thanks goes to our Member, **Danilo Fiorillo**, for voluntarily creating the new site.



Further details

CTCA

7th Turkish Cypriot Cultural Festival

Embargoed! will join other Turkish Cypriot groups (Derneks) under the umbrella of CTCA UK to celebrate the 7th Turkish Cypriot Cultural Festival.

We will have a stand and hope to see some of you at what is the biggest Turkish Cypriot festival outside of Cyprus. The organisers are expecting upwards of 25,000 people to attend.

The festival will take place on 30th June at Donkey Lane, Enfield.

Join

If you are not already a member of Embargoed!, please consider joining us. Membership is only £10 per year and helps us immensely. If you are a Member, why not urge family or friends to sign up too?

Impartiality

Embargoed! prides itself on having no set ideology. Whatever your view on a potential solution for the Cyprus problem, if you agree that the Turkish Cypriot community should not be isolated, then you have a place among us.

Opt out

If you would prefer not to hear from us, please advise us by replying to this mail so that we can remove you from our mailing list. This need not affect Membership status.

Promote or Donate

If you are already a Member, thank you!

We are extremely grateful to all of our Members and are very excited to see our numbers growing in recent months.

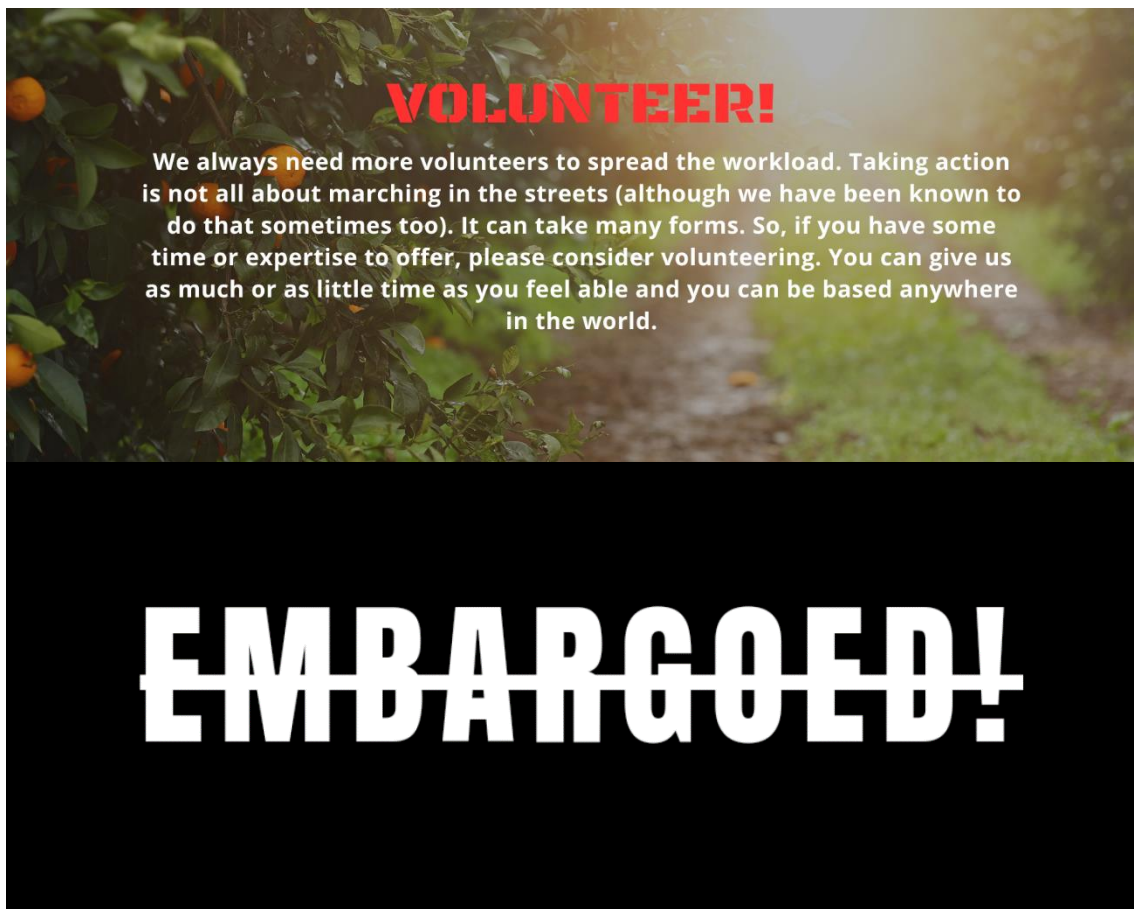
We would really like to see that trend continue, so please spread the word with family and friends. Change will only come with action. And that action is easier with greater numbers – and funds.

While the work undertaken by our team is entirely voluntary, we do require funds to work effectively. Among other things, we need to create and print material, run our website and attend events to ensure that our voice is heard.

Your membership fee and any donations make up 100% of our income. If you can spare any more, please consider donating.

All monies in and out of Embargoed! can be scrutinised in our accounts. Embargoed! is a strictly not-for-profit organisation with no salaried staff.

Support Us



VOLUNTEER!

We always need more volunteers to spread the workload. Taking action is not all about marching in the streets (although we have been known to do that sometimes too). It can take many forms. So, if you have some time or expertise to offer, please consider volunteering. You can give us as much or as little time as you feel able and you can be based anywhere in the world.

EMBARGOED!

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www.embargoed.org