



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General
1 May 2020

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-fourth session
Agenda items 41 and 74

Security Council
Seventy-fifth year

Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 30 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to protest the new illegal drilling operations to be undertaken by Turkey in the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of Cyprus, areas in which Cyprus inherently has exclusive ab initio and *ipso jure* sovereign rights. Scheduled to commence only a few days after the completion of the last such operation by the Turkish drilling rig *Yavuz*, the new drilling will be the sixth in less than a year. It is expected to take place 51 nautical miles south-west of the shores of Cyprus and 154 nautical miles from the nearest Turkish coast (see map in annex I), deep in the heart of an area that was proclaimed by my Government as its exclusive economic zone, pursuant to established practice and in accordance with international law, and whose external limits were subsequently defined in an agreement with the Arab Republic of Egypt, the only neighbouring State with which Cyprus has opposite coasts in that area.

The unlawful operations of Turkey in different parts of Cyprus' maritime zones have been uninterrupted since their launch on 4 May 2019. The map in annex II shows all the drillings undertaken by Turkey in the past 12 months within the maritime zones of Cyprus, as well as Turkey's outlandish claims therein.

Turkey cannot purport to have any legal interest in the maritime areas where it lays claims, either for itself or on behalf of others. The invocation of the rights of Turkish Cypriots for Turkey's actions in the eastern Mediterranean is a convenient instrumentalization of the Turkish Cypriot community by Turkey to achieve the same ends through different means, and should not fool anyone. This is notwithstanding the fact that there is a single Cypriot State, the Republic of Cyprus, which is the sole subject of international law on the island and has sovereignty over the whole island of Cyprus and all the rights consubstantial to its sovereignty.

The legal authority of the Government of the Republic, the sole legitimate and recognized Government on the island, based on the democratic expression of the will of the people of Cyprus as enshrined in the 1960 Constitution, extends over the whole island of Cyprus and is the basis for exercising all the rights emanating from Cyprus'



sovereignty on behalf of all Cypriots, to the exclusion of any secessionist entity (or “subordinate local administration of Turkey” in the occupied part of Cyprus, as the European Court of Human Rights calls it) that purports to have such rights.

Turkey’s actions are a direct violation of Cyprus’ sovereign rights and jurisdiction under international law, both customary international law as well as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Moreover, the use by a Member State of its might, in order to usurp another Member State’s sovereignty and to thwart the exercise of its sovereign rights, is a direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

Cognizant of the lack of any legal basis for its imperialist aspirations, Turkey is attempting to create *faits accomplis* in order to impose a reality that incarnates its most extreme demands. Disregarding the efforts of the United Nations to diminish conflict through a global ceasefire in the midst of a serious global health crisis, Turkey opts to escalate tensions in the eastern Mediterranean once again, in line with the axes of its long-standing policy: expansionism, regional hegemony, denial and usurpation of the rights of other States in the region, and legal and geographical revisionism.

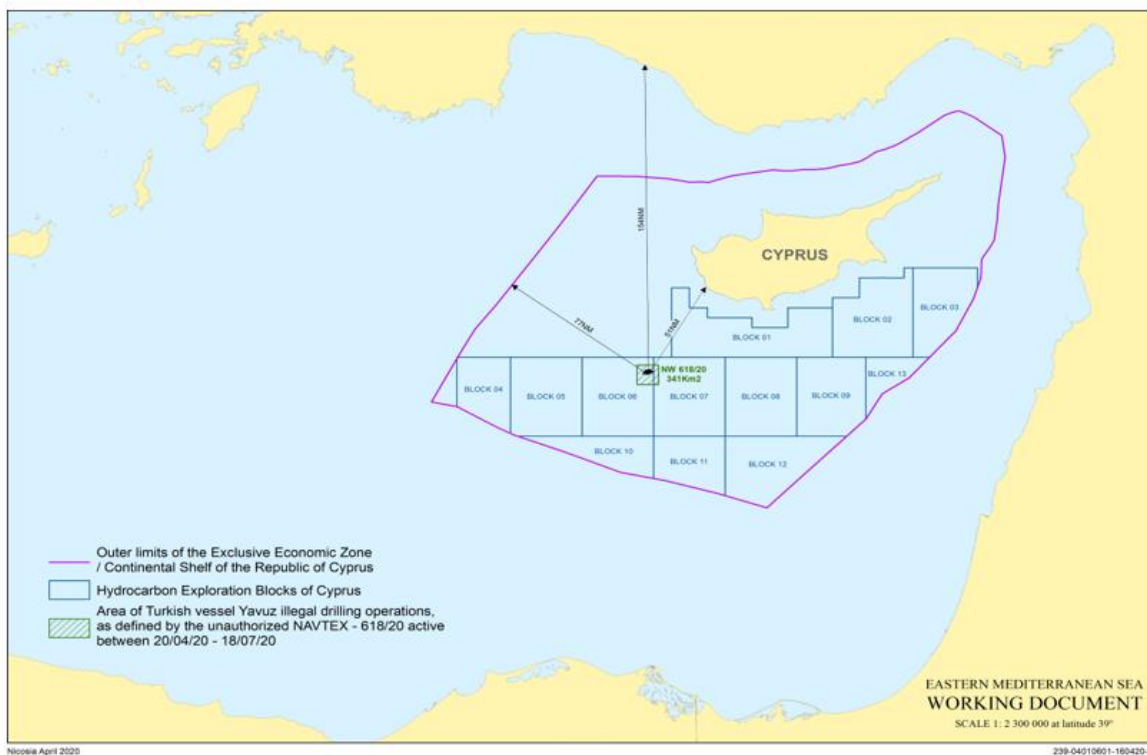
At the same time, Turkey continues to militarize the maritime space all around Cyprus and to illegally conduct unlawful seismic surveys within Cyprus’ exclusive economic zone. In addition to Turkish navy vessels and unmanned aerial vehicles escorting the Turkish drill ships, Turkish armed forces conduct military exercises in Cyprus’ maritime space on a daily basis. This is over and above the constant violations of Cyprus’ sovereign airspace and flight information region by Turkey, the increased violations by the Turkish forces of the military status quo on the ground and, of course, the ongoing military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus since Turkey’s invasion in 1974.

The Republic of Cyprus has no doubts about its sovereignty throughout the territory of the island of Cyprus, its airspace and territorial sea and its sovereign rights over the entire exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of the island. My Government shall continue to exercise and defend these rights by all means at its disposal and calls upon all Member States and all United Nations organs bearing responsibility for upholding the Charter of the United Nations and maintaining international peace and security to fulfil their responsibility. The complete disregard, by a Member State, of established rules that should govern international relations threatens the very fabric of multilateralism and the prevalence of a rules-based, as opposed to a power-oriented, international order.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annexes were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41 and 74, and of the Security Council, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(Signed) Andreas D. **Mavroyiannis**

Annex I to the letter dated 30 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General



Annex II to the letter dated 30 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

