

THE TURKISH CYPRIOT HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION

Address of the Representative of the **TURKISH CYPRIOT HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION**
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to the 2007 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the OSCE

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Presentation on the Displaced Persons in Cyprus

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the OSCE and ODIHR to make such a big organization where NGOs and Government representatives can come together and discuss how to better improve democracy and human rights all around Europe.

Before beginning my presentation, I would like to give you a little bit background information with regard to the identity of TCHRF which I have the honor to represent today. TCHRF was established by a group of human rights activists who were amongst the leaders of mass rallies in favour of comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus conflict and thereafter the European Union membership of an expected United Republic. As Turkish Cypriots overwhelmingly embraced the Annan Plan-prepared by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan with the hope that it would have settled the long standing conflict- it was unfortunately rejected by a resounding 'NO' vote of Greek Cypriots in 2004 Referendum. The TCHRF was established primarily to deal with the human rights problems of Turkish Cypriots who have been left outside the EU even though they have accepted the Plan which was highly welcomed and embraced by the International Society chiefly amongst them the EU, that would have reunited the island.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The issue of 'Displaced persons' continues to be the bleeding wound in the history of Cyprus today. Unlike the Greek Cypriot official propaganda which advocates that the so-called Cyprus problem has started in 1974 with the invasion and occupation of Turkey which deprived Greek Cypriots of their homes and property; its roots lie in the 1950s when EOKA-Greek Cypriot paramilitary organization initiated an armed struggle against Turkish Cypriots with the aim of annexing Cyprus with Greece. Confronted by the Turkish Cypriot resistance afterwards, the conflict seemed to have come to an end with the establishment of Republic of Cyprus of which both Turkish and Greek Cypriots are

the co-founders. However, 3 years after the establishment, as a result of the rejection by the Turkish Cypriots of the 13 amendments issued by the Greek Cypriot President of then Republic of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios, inter-communal conflict broke out. Turkish Cypriots have been displaced their homes and forced to live in ghettos, tents until 1974. As Turkey, one of the guarantors of RoC, militarily intervened to restore the Constitutional order and preserve the territorial integrity of RoC, several Greek Cypriots have also been displaced from their homes and properties.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My purpose in taking you back to the recent history of Cyprus was not to try to teach you the political history of Cyprus of course. But instead, I wanted to emphasize that there has not only been Greek Cypriot displaced persons in the past of Cyprus, but there have also been Turkish Cypriots too who have been displaced from their properties even before the Greek Cypriots. And unless this reality is understood, the problem of displaced persons will continue to be the bleeding wound for the generations to come.

I will have only one r. And that is a cocommendation to share with you and that is a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem that would not only solve the problem of displaced persons but all the other critical aspects of the problem of which I do not have time to discuss now.

Thank you very much for the opportunity provided here and for listening to me.

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