

Since the invasion of Cyprus and the occupation of a large part of its territory, the Republic of Cyprus exercises no effective control over its territory which is occupied and is thus not in a position to implement its laws therein. The application throughout the island of the high standard of the rule of law implemented in the government-controlled area of the Republic of Cyprus will only become feasible once, *inter alia*, all occupation troops are withdrawn from Cyprus.

Turkish Cypriots are absent from the legislative branch of Cyprus since they unilaterally withdrew from state institutions of the Republic of Cyprus in the 1960s. The parliamentary seats allocated to the Turkish Cypriot community by the Cyprus Constitution remain vacant, pending their return to state institutions. Legislation always has and continues to be adopted in conformity with norms of international law, which in any case supersedes domestic law according to the Cyprus Constitution.

The clear disadvantage for Turkish Cypriots, the majority of whom reside in the occupied areas, is that they exist in the legal vacuum created by the occupying power and its subordinate local administration and may only protest the violation of their rights to the occupying power (see European Court of Human Rights judgments of 1996 and 2001, in *Loizidou v. Turkey* and *Cyprus v. Turkey*).

For anyone familiar with the founding treaties of the Republic of Cyprus, it is clear which party is in violation thereof and is estopped from invoking them.

As regards the so-called isolation of the Turkish Cypriots it is reminded that no sanctions or embargoes have ever been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot community, either by the United Nations Security Council or the Government of Cyprus. The myth of the "isolation" of the Turkish Cypriot community has been in recent years the main channel of efforts to partition Cyprus through the establishment of a separate state in the occupied part of Cyprus. This of course would violate the fundamental rule of the modern legal order that forbids the establishment of purported "states" that are the fruit of aggression.

Turkish Cypriots are citizens of the Republic of Cyprus and enjoy equal access to all the benefits available to all other Cypriot and EU citizens, including education and access to justice. They travel freely, trade freely through the legitimate ports of Cyprus, and have a standing invitation to participate in Cyprus national sports teams, which they continue to refuse. Claims to the contrary are poor excuses for the separatism and division-guided unilateralism they pretend to conceal.

Notwithstanding the continuing occupation of Cyprus and its consequences, the Government of Cyprus is committed to addressing the self-inflicted economic underdevelopment of the Turkish Cypriot community by adopting measures that are compatible with the international legal order and which serve the purpose of the island's reunification.