

## EDUCATION RIGHT IN CYPRUS

According to the constitution and law in democratic countries, it is guaranteed and assured for every individual to receive education in his/her mother tongue as a basic human right.

The right for education in the Republic of Cyprus which was equally established by the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots in 1960; is given an administration and responsibility to the communal chambers of both communities according to the 20th and 87th articles of the constitution. Since both communities organized their own educational activities separately considering the constitutional law by providing financial support from the central government, there was no Ministry of Education in the Republic of Cyprus. Until the civil conflict happened in 1963, both communities applied and practiced their rights and decisions in respect of the constitution. In 1963, Turkish Cypriots were threatened by force of arms and dismissed from the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus therefore, could not get any aid for education from the central government; they administered their own system themselves. Despite all these obstacles; according to the report S/6569 of the Secretary General of the United Nations which was declared on 29th July 1965, Turkish Cypriots who wanted to take part at the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, were rejected by the Greek Cypriots.

As a result of the conflict and military intervention of Turkey in 1974, there had been tragic developments and ethnic division which also had a major effect on the system. Greek Cypriots forced the children of Turkish Cypriot families who were living on the lands in the south of the island, to go to the Greek schools. Those families living in Nicosia were directed to send their children to English Schools or private schools. During the same period, Greek Cypriots used their rights to have education in their language –mother tongue- in their own schools which were under the administration of the Turkish Cypriots.

With the opening of the check-points in 2003, the request of opening a school for about 1000 Turkish Cypriots living in Limassol, where they could have education in their mother tongue; was rejected by the Greek Cypriot government. Instead, they were directed to schools which were all Greek Cypriot teachers, and moreover faced a threat of ceasing the financial aid of children. Our Trade Union filed law suit to the Supreme Court in order to impede the progress of these requests and pressure, and the court was resulted in 3 years before the examination of a Greek magistrate. With the judicial order; the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus is not practiced in the frame of "doctrine of necessity" and a school for Turkish Cypriots shall not be opened. This decision was taken to the appellate court by us; however the decision is not yet given.

As can be seen; since 1963 Greek Cypriots have been occupying the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, and violating the 6th article of the constitution related to the right of mother-tongue, and 20. and 87. Articles related to the right of education as well as impeding the right of education.

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