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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 19 December 2018 to 19 June 2019. It brings up to date the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution [186 \(1964\)](#) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#), since the issuance of my report on UNFICYP dated 11 January ([S/2019/37](#)) and on my mission of good offices dated 16 April 2019 ([S/2019/322](#)).

2. As at 19 June 2019, the strength of the military component stood at 796 (712 men and 84 women) for all ranks, while that of the police component stood at 66 (43 men and 23 women) (see annex).

II. Significant developments

3. Two years after the Conference on Cyprus closed in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, the negotiations remain in a hiatus. As outlined in my most recent report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus ([S/2019/322](#)), senior United Nations official Jane Holl Lute continued her consultations on my behalf, which were aimed at facilitating agreement on the terms of reference that would constitute a consensus starting point for a possible negotiated conclusion to the Cyprus issue.

4. Following their meeting on 26 February, held under the auspices of my Special Representative and Deputy Special Adviser, Elizabeth Spehar, the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, announced their commitment to following through with various confidence-building measures, including the permanent interconnectivity of electricity grids, mobile telephone interoperability, the exchange of paintings and audio and visual recordings and the clearance of a number of suspected hazardous areas on both sides. Some of the measures had been agreed back in 2015, but remained to be implemented. The permanent interconnectivity of electricity grids has been completed, allowing for electricity to be transferred from the north to the south as an emergency measure on 17 April, thus preventing a blackout. Regarding mobile phones, following significant preparatory work supported by my mission of good offices and the European Commission, operators on both sides have signed separate agreements with a hub



identified in Europe as per the decision of the leaders. Final technical work to practically implement the interoperability of mobile phones in the near future is under way. The leaders also agreed to cancel 18 suspected hazardous areas, 9 on each side, through coordinated, reciprocal surveys. Cancellation began in May with support from UNFICYP and the United Nations Mine Action Service. Further to a subsequent request by the Greek Cypriot side to conduct a combination of technical and non-technical surveys on the suspected hazardous areas, the work is now expected to be completed in early 2020. During their meeting held on 26 February, the leaders put forward additional ideas for potential confidence-building measures, the realization of which my Special Representative continued to explore with both sides through shuttle diplomacy.

5. During the reporting period, UNFICYP engaged with both sides and other stakeholders on other core aspects of Security Council resolution 2453 (2019), including the call for the sides and other involved parties to explore ways to establish mechanisms and to enhance existing initiatives, with UNFICYP as facilitator through its liaison role, for effectively alleviating tensions and to help to address island-wide matters that affect all Cypriots. Specifically, UNFICYP explored with the leaders and other relevant interlocutors potential areas where both sides could stand to benefit from more systematic information exchange and problem-solving, with a view to preventing tensions and negative incidents from occurring and/or to contributing concrete benefits to people through practical means. The areas include disaster preparedness and response, the exchange of criminal information and suspects, response to migration and addressing military-level tensions. With regard to the establishment of a potential military mechanism between the opposing forces, both sides expressed interest in and acknowledged the possible added value of such a mechanism. The positions of the two sides, however, varied with respect to the possible detailed structure, composition and modus operandi of the mechanism. Regarding arrangements of a civilian or law enforcement nature, while the Turkish Cypriot side expressed its willingness to consider enhanced or new mechanisms, the Greek Cypriot side cautioned against any new arrangements that it perceives as conferring a recognized status on the other community, arguing instead for the issues to be addressed through the existing technical committees. Nevertheless, progress was made in identifying gaps where new or enhanced mechanisms between the sides, with UNFICYP facilitation, would benefit the communities. It was also clarified between the sides and the United Nations that such mechanisms would fall directly under the stewardship of the two leaders and their respective teams.

6. The reporting period witnessed a number of political and other developments in both communities. In the north, the “government” in place since February 2018 collapsed on 8 May, following the decision by the “People’s Party” to withdraw from the four-party coalition. On 14 May, Mr. Akıncı requested the leader of the “National Unity Party”, Ersin Tatar, to form a “government”. An agreement was subsequently reached between the two parties to form a new coalition, which received a vote of confidence on 1 June.

7. Eligible voters went to the polls on 26 May to elect the six representatives of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Parliament. Notably, more than 5,600 Turkish Cypriots crossed from the north to the south to cast their votes, more than on any other occasion in a Republic of Cyprus election. Furthermore, a candidate of the main opposition Progressive Party of Working People, Niyazi Kızılyürek, became the first Turkish Cypriot to be elected to the European Parliament.

8. On the Cyprus issue, notwithstanding the notable progress on confidence-building measures and initial engagement on mechanisms, the mood surrounding the peace process did not improve, with the two sides continuing to disagree over substance and blaming each other for the persisting stalemate. In the absence of

negotiations, scepticism remained widespread and interest in and hopes for the peace process remained low. In spite of the Security Council's call, in resolution 2453 (2019), for both leaders to improve the public atmosphere for negotiation by preparing the communities for a settlement and delivering more constructive and harmonized messages, few, if any, concerted efforts in that direction were noted.

9. Developments in the region have also not contributed to a positive atmosphere for a resumption of talks. In a concerning development, tensions over hydrocarbons continued to grow, with few prospects of subsiding in the near or medium term. Meanwhile, there continued to be a particularly dense concentration of various national and joint naval forces and military, search-and-rescue and other exercises in the eastern Mediterranean, including around Cyprus.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

10. A prolonged hiatus in the political process and uncertainty surrounding its future were accompanied by a steady increase in low-level tensions that UNFICYP observed in and around the buffer zone, as well as persisting mistrust across the divide. In this context, the role of UNFICYP towards the creation of political, social and security conditions that are conducive to a settlement remained essential, in particular its role in maintaining a calm and stable environment in and around the buffer zone, in facilitating confidence-building measures and in promoting cooperation between the sides and the communities.

A. Prevention of tensions in and around the buffer zone

11. Although the situation in the buffer zone remained calm for the most part, the entrenchment of the sides' positions and the challenges to the authority of UNFICYP reported in my previous report persisted and, at times, increased during the reporting period. Notwithstanding the call of the Security Council, in resolution 2453 (2019), for the sides to engage constructively with UNFICYP on issues of concern, to abide by the 2018 aide-memoire and to respect the mandated authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone, contestation of the ceasefire lines and challenges to the status quo and the authority of UNFICYP occurred on an increasingly frequent basis. Along the northern ceasefire line, the challenges mostly took the form of a direct contesting of the line delineated by the United Nations, moves forward by military personnel into the buffer zone, restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNFICYP personnel in certain contested areas and some unauthorized civilian activity. Along the southern ceasefire line, military violations were far fewer than along the northern ceasefire line. At the same time, UNFICYP continued to encounter insufficient compliance with the aide-memoire, including unauthorized civilian activities that generated tensions, in particular when such activities were conducted in close proximity to Turkish forces positions, or when they undermined the integrity of the area, as in cases of unauthorized constructions.

12. The use of targeted patrolling, focusing on hotspots, coordinated cross-component engagement – military, police and civilian – at all levels and community outreach, allowed UNFICYP to address some of the civilian and military violations successfully. Nevertheless, in the absence of full acceptance by the sides of the 2018 aide-memoire and cooperation with UNFICYP, the mission's ability to curb problematic unauthorized activity remains limited. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the best efforts of the mission, both sides have yet to recognize and accept the updated aide-memoire.

B. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

13. In all, 272 military violations were recorded during the reporting period, compared with 332 during the previous reporting period. Whereas 2017 saw the lowest level of military violations on both sides in a five-year period (2014–2019), 2018 saw a six-fold increase in construction violations and a three-fold increase in move forward violations along the northern ceasefire line. While the amount of unauthorized construction reported in the previous reporting period (21 June–18 December 2018) remained the same, in the period under review (19 December 2018–19 June 2019), there were continued enhancements along both ceasefire lines, albeit at a slower overall rate (36 violations recorded along both lines, compared with 71 during the previous reporting period). Of the 24 out of 36 construction violations committed by the Turkish forces, the installation of closed-circuit television cameras and related equipment accounted for almost half thereof. Construction violations by the National Guard, meanwhile, numbered 12 in total, an increase from 3 during the same period last year. Attempts by the mission to encourage both opposing forces to scale back construction and enhancements were not met with success. The number of recorded heavy weapons violations by the National Guard fell significantly, from 35 in the previous reporting period to 6 in the period under review, as did incidents and allegations of ill-discipline, with changes in air patrol frequency possibly accounting in part for the reduction.

14. Of particular concern during the period under review is the significant spike in move forward violations. In total, 76 such violations were recorded during the period under review, compared with 12 during the previous reporting period. A total of 71 of the move forward violations were recorded along the northern ceasefire line, for the most part in areas in which the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire line is contested by the Turkish forces. Although not new, such types of violations occurred more regularly, often in response to the routine UNFICYP presence and activities and, notably, in high-visibility areas that were used frequently for civilian traffic and bicomunal activities. UNFICYP observed some instances of assertive, obstructive and at times verbally aggressive behaviour towards its military personnel, resulting in more sustained restrictions on the mission's freedom of movement in some areas.

15. Military positions established by the opposing forces in violation of the status quo inside the buffer zone and at Strovilia remained in place and are classified as permanent violations. During the reporting period, 49 changes of status quo violations were recorded, compared with 11 during the same period last year and 44 during the previous reporting period. In all, 41 of these violations occurred in Strovilia. Tensions in Strovilia increased significantly in February 2019, following the temporary erection of a barrier by the Turkish forces, reportedly intended to block suspected smuggling activities. Greek Cypriot residents of Strovilia, meanwhile, began voicing concerns about restrictions on their freedom of movement in the form of newly introduced identity checks and insurance requirements, causing alarm on the Greek Cypriot side. When UNFICYP attempted to reinforce its monitoring presence in Strovilia, it was prevented from accessing the area on several occasions. Although the barrier was subsequently removed and tensions lowered, Strovilia remained a source of friction between the sides. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

16. In relation to aerial incursions and the use of drones, following a request from UNFICYP, the Department of Civil Aviation of the Republic of Cyprus agreed to amend the Civil Aviation Act 2002 to include the buffer zone on the list of restricted flying areas.

17. Although not a new phenomenon, contestation of the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire lines and challenges to the military status quo by the United Nations, as well as to the authority of UNFICYP, in particular in the form of move forward violations, are occurring on an increasingly frequent basis. In order to address the aforementioned violations, UNFICYP stepped up its engagement through more frequent senior-level meetings with the opposing forces. Frequent engagement with both opposing forces has proved beneficial in maintaining open channels of communication and addressing violations.

18. During the period under review, seven UNFICYP units and subunits were evaluated on military performance, including three infantry units (one per sector) and four subunits (the military force reserve, the force engineering unit, the force protection unit and the aviation unit). The areas evaluated included mandate comprehension and support, command and control, training and discipline, sustainment and health, as well as assessments of personnel, operational information, operations, logistics, signals and training. All units were assessed to have performed satisfactorily, with some areas to be improved upon, such as language skills, radio communication skills, negotiation skills and interoperability. The mission addressed the areas needing improvement through training courses and exercises, such as mission induction training, English language “train the trainer” courses, medical courses and conduct and discipline training, including with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse. Headquarters-level exercises were conducted to test cross-component integration and communication among the sectors and between the sectors and the mission’s headquarters.

C. Management of civilian activity and maintenance of law and order

19. The careful management of civilian activity in the buffer zone remained a core function of UNFICYP and an essential aspect of preventing tensions. During the reporting period, 248 new applications for permits were received for civilian activities, including farming and/or grazing, construction and utility maintenance, and 563 permits were issued, both new and renewed.

20. Unauthorized farming activities continued to be a source of intracivilian and civilian-military tensions, in particular when undertaken in close proximity to Turkish forces positions. Increases in move forward violations in particular were often directly linked to such unauthorized civilian activities. Following the November 2018 incident in which unauthorized Greek Cypriot farming stoked tension at the northern ceasefire line, in the period under review, the Turkish forces moved forward into the buffer zone in Dhenia and in Avlona, in support of unauthorized activity by farmers coming from the north. UNFICYP remains concerned about various cases of competing “permits” issued by the Turkish Cypriot authorities for farming activities inside the buffer zone. Awareness-raising efforts, outreach to local communities and political-level engagement with authorities on both sides have produced some results with regard to resolving problems in the period under review and continue to be enhanced.

21. While unauthorized farming and hunting within the buffer zone remain the primary source of tension, unauthorized constructions have a far-reaching impact on preserving the integrity of the area until a settlement is reached and, as such, can also heighten tensions. In this regard, UNFICYP expressed its concern to senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus about the large amount of civilian construction under way inside the buffer zone in Pyla, a project associated with the adjacent university that has proceeded despite not having been authorized by the mission. The university in Pyla continued to operate without authorization from UNFICYP.

22. During the reporting period, UNFICYP conducted preventive patrols and joint targeted patrols with law enforcement agencies to respond to a wide range of civilian incidents in the buffer zone, including unauthorized incursions, hunting, illegal dumping, theft, and the smuggling of goods and persons, in particular asylum seekers and irregular migrants. In April, UNFICYP launched bicycle patrols in the buffer zone as part of a community-oriented policing initiative. The patrols have ensured greater flexibility in accessing the buffer zone and have enabled greater interaction with community members.

23. With UNFICYP facilitation, 195 requests for information were handled in the Joint Communications Room during the reporting period, in support of investigations being conducted on either side on matters relating to drug trafficking, theft, robbery, burglary, abductions and homicide. The Joint Communications Room also assisted in the exchange of information on missing persons, domestic violence and family and child custody disputes. In the light of multiple murder cases in the south in which the victims were migrant women and children, UNFICYP worked with the Joint Communications Room to raise awareness of and provide support on issues relating to gender-based violence, including encouraging more systematic sharing of information in such cases. In addition, seven persons who were suspected of having committed a crime on one side and who then fled to the other were successfully handed over through dialogue and the facilitation of practical arrangements by UNFICYP.

24. In the bicomunal village of Pyla, inside the buffer zone, UNFICYP facilitated police operations targeting individuals suspected of robbery, blackmail, kidnapping, theft, fraud and threat offences. In coordination with the police services on both sides, UNFICYP also supported public order operations in response to demonstrations and other large public events inside the buffer zone and at crossing points.

D. Intercommunal relations, cooperation and trust-building

25. Given the prevailing climate on the island, which is not conducive to a return to talks, UNFICYP stepped up its efforts to convene and connect interested Cypriots from both communities in order to foster cooperation, resolve issues of common concern, build trust and help to create a constituency for peace. In contrast to previous reporting periods, most of the bicomunal technical committees established by the leaders as part of the peace process were active during the period under review, facilitated by my mission of good offices and UNFICYP. A total of 11 of the 12 committees met at least once under United Nations auspices and several met on a regular basis and facilitated cooperation between the two communities outside of formal meetings. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage continued to work on the protection and preservation of shared heritage with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Commission. Completion ceremonies were held on 20 March for restoration works at Saint Anne's Church and Tanners' Mosque, in Famagusta, and two projects completed at a Paphos minaret and hammam are also ready for inauguration. Four additional conservation projects are under way. Furthermore, the committee launched the Heritage Youth Ambassadors initiative, whereby young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots endeavour to bring young people together to cooperate and work together on their shared heritage.

26. As a further illustration of the important work conducted by the technical committees, the Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters and the Technical Committee on Culture worked to facilitate the implementation of confidence-building measures agreed by the leaders, namely, the permanent interconnectivity of the electricity grids, the interoperability of mobile phones and

the exchange of paintings and recordings. The Technical Committee on the Environment continued its discussions on the extension of a linear park connecting both sides of Nicosia. The Technical Committees on Crisis Management and Health explored the possibility of a joint crisis management exercise. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and the Joint Communications Room both remained active. The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Matters launched a programme bringing together 40 children and young people with disabilities and representatives of non-governmental organizations for joint activities. New activities initiated by the Bi-Communal Technical Committee on Education included capacity- and skills-building activities for students and teachers, pilot visits under the study visits initiative Learning from Nicosia and teacher trainings, one of which was organized bicommunally. During the 2018/2019 academic year, the Imagine project, supported by Germany, reached 1,724 students and 175 volunteer teachers from both communities.

27. Following the launch, on 10 April, of the European Union-funded facility in support of the technical committees, which was aimed at developing the capacity of the committees and enhancing the impact and visibility of their work, project proposals were submitted by the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, on the Environment and on Humanitarian Matters, two of which were approved.

28. UNFICYP continued to promote cooperation between the communities bordering the buffer zone in order to overcome the effects of the division and address issues of common concern, such as reportedly toxic water from abandoned mines, which was flowing into waterways, and damaged buildings and decaying historic and cultural heritage sites inside the buffer zone. In early February, the two Nicosia municipalities, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and representatives of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process worked together effectively, with support from the mission, to address the partial collapse of a tenth-century church in central Nicosia.

29. During the reporting period, UNFICYP supported 228 intercommunal events that brought together 8,146 participants from both communities. UNFICYP, with support from my mission of good offices, is expanding the scope of its bicommunal activities, engaging in a more sustained manner with new constituencies, including young entrepreneurs, children and young people, women's groups and environment-focused organizations on both sides. It is hoped that such efforts can create new avenues for cooperation, as well as more systematically and effectively integrate the perspectives of women, young people and businesspersons into the peace process.

30. In Pyla, efforts to bring the two communities together gained momentum. In March, UNFICYP supported an event that brought together local football clubs, one from each side, and their supporters. In May, the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot primary schools and teachers of Pyla visited each another for joint events for the first time. The Pyla Bicommunal Women's Initiative, meanwhile, organized several excursions, in both the north and the south, and helped to facilitate the coming together of young people in Pyla for various activities. Following the opening of the Deryneia/Derinya crossing point in November 2018, UNFICYP stepped up its efforts to promote bicommunal contact and cooperation in the Greater Famagusta region, focusing on the empowerment of women and young people. The Deryneia Garage, a community space, continued to show promise as a hub for bicommunal activity in the area.

31. The religious leaders of Cyprus sustained their engagement within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. In addition to the religious leaders issuing joint statements

to appeal for the preservation of religious sites and to promote respect, dialogue and non-violence, Greek and Turkish language courses were offered to members of various religious institutions. Furthermore, joint visits were undertaken to places of worship and cultural importance, and social media were used to promote religious freedom and respect for all religious traditions.

32. The leaders and representatives of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot political parties held five meetings under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia and five meetings at the subcommittee level. The date of 11 June 2019 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the start of the dialogue between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties in the service of peace in Cyprus. Several events were organized on that occasion in the presence of the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Miroslav Lajčák, and my Special Representative.

E. Facilitation of access and humanitarian functions

33. Liaising with both sides, UNFICYP facilitated 47 religious services and other commemorative events involving more than 11,000 participants; 43 such events were held in the north and 4 in the buffer zone. UNFICYP continued to work with both sides to facilitate religious services island-wide. In all, 78 per cent of the requests channelled through UNFICYP were approved by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, compared with 68 per cent in the previous reporting period. One additional religious site in the north, which had been inaccessible since 1974, was opened for worship for the first time. UNFICYP, together with the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, facilitated a pilgrimage to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque, in Larnaca, on 6 June, involving 580 pilgrims. For the first time since December 1963, former Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Dhenia village held prayers at the Dhenia mosque, inside the buffer zone, where they were warmly welcomed by Greek Cypriot residents.

34. UNFICYP continued to monitor the well-being and ensure access to essential services for Greek Cypriot and Maronite communities and individuals in the north and Turkish Cypriot communities in the south, including through home visits, school visits, humanitarian deliveries, post-mortem transfers and visits to detention facilities. The Turkish Cypriot authorities rejected two Greek Cypriot teachers who had been nominated to work at Greek Cypriot schools in the Karpas Peninsula.

35. The crossing of persons and goods between the two sides continued to be facilitated through the Green Line Regulation (European Council regulation (EC) No. 866/2004 of 29 April 2004). According to European Union statistics, although a slight increase (1.4 per cent) in trade was recorded in 2018, compared with 2017, various obstacles have kept levels of trade, on average, low. According to the European Union, the number of Greek Cypriots crossing the Green Line has increased steadily in the past year. By contrast, the number of Turkish Cypriots crossing has decreased slightly. According to the police authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, from January to May 2019, there was a total of 800,608 crossings by Greek Cypriots, compared with 514,654 by Turkish Cypriots. From April to the end of May 2019, the number of Greek Cypriot crossings was three times as high as during the same period last year. The increase began after the dramatic fall of the Turkish lira in March 2018 and is considered to be linked mainly to the purchase of fuel.

F. Refugees and asylum seekers

36. During the reporting period, there continued to be a significant increase in the number of arrivals and asylum applications in Cyprus. Between 1 January and 31 May 2019, the Asylum Service of the Republic of Cyprus received 5,659 asylum applications, compared with 7,761 received during all of 2018, maintaining the first place status of Cyprus among European Union member States in terms of per capita applications. New arrivals from the northern part of the island, consisting mostly of Syrian nationals arriving from Turkey and Lebanon and persons of African origin entering as students or to seek employment, crossed to the south in steadily increasing numbers, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the immigration authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

37. UNFICYP recorded fewer boat arrivals directly into the buffer zone during the reporting period (two boats carrying 68 Syrian refugees). However, new smuggling routes are being used for crossings from the north to the south, through porous sections of the buffer zone. In the Avlona-Akkaki area, 264 refugees, most of whom were Syrian, were reported by the Cyprus police as having been “smuggled” from the north to the south between 1 January and 30 April 2019. As of 31 May, a further 551 asylum seekers were recorded as having crossed through recognized crossing points since January 2019. In response to the above-mentioned trends, UNFICYP increased its cooperation with relevant authorities and the UNHCR office in Cyprus, as well as intensifying its police patrols in areas of the buffer zone suspected of being used as transit routes. UNHCR estimates that, if the current trend continues, the Republic of Cyprus could face a threefold increase in new asylum applications by the end of 2019, putting extraordinary pressure on an already stretched reception system.

G. Gender, and women and peace and security

38. UNFICYP began operationalizing its gender parity strategy throughout uniformed components. It also continued its engagement with women’s civil society organizations to strengthen their inclusion in intercommunal efforts and confidence-building initiatives. In addition, UNFICYP engaged with university students to deepen their understanding of the women and peace and security agenda and to discuss gender equality. The intercommunal Cypriot antennae of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, which is supported by Italy and UNFICYP, was formally launched on 17 May, with a view to strengthening women’s inclusion at all stages of the peace process. The Network’s first formal initiative, a workshop on inclusive and gendered mediation and peacebuilding targeting young women, was held on 18 May.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

39. As of 13 June, the bicomunal teams of scientists of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, mandated to recover, identify and return the remains of persons who had gone missing during the events of 1963/64 and 1974, had exhumed, in total, the remains of 1,209 persons on both sides of the island. To date, the remains of 939 missing persons, out of a total of 2,002, have been identified and returned to their respective families, including 16 during the reporting period. The United Nations is concerned about the diminishing numbers of missing persons exhumed over the past year and is intensifying its support for the Committee to improve results. Following the granting of access to 30 military areas in the north in November 2015, the Committee has thus far conducted 29 excavations in military areas, including two during the reporting period, leading to the recovery of the remains of 37 persons. In

June 2019, the Committee was granted access to 30 additional military areas in the north.

40. In an effort to locate additional possible burial sites of missing persons, the Committee continued its efforts to secure access to the archives of countries and organizations that had a military, police or humanitarian presence in Cyprus in 1963/64 and 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee conducted research in the archives of the United Nations in New York and Nicosia, as well as in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, including private archives in libraries in Oxford and London. While extensive efforts have been undertaken by the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide the Committee with access to all relevant archival holdings, little archival information on possible burial sites from the parties directly involved has thus far been shared with the Committee.

V. Implementation of strategic review recommendations and configuration of United Nations activities

41. I am pleased to confirm that all the recommendations of the strategic review of UNFICYP, endorsed by the Security Council in January 2018, including the reduction in force strength, the redeployment of police and civilian personnel to the sectors, the strengthening of the mission's liaison and engagement capacity and of the Sector Civilian Activity Integrated Offices and the establishment of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre, have been completed. During the reporting period, all outstanding recommendations were implemented, namely, the relocation of sector 2 military personnel from the Ledra Palace Hotel and the deployment of all remaining sector-level continuity liaison officers.

42. Regarding the configuration of United Nations activities in Cyprus, as highlighted throughout the present report, the task of maintaining a secure, stable environment in and around the buffer zone remains the crucial element of the role of UNFICYP in creating conditions conducive to reaching a lasting settlement. In the current political climate, it is an increasingly complex task and necessitates that the security aspects of the mandate of UNFICYP, from a preventive and deterrence perspective, remain the cornerstone of the mission's effort for the foreseeable future. A concentration of patrolling, presence and engagement in sensitive hotspot areas helps to manage tensions. In addition, the mission will need to adopt a careful approach to the management of civilian activity in the buffer zone, working with both sides to limit its extent in proximity to the ceasefire lines. Doing so would also help to relieve pressure on the UNFICYP civilian component, which is by far the smallest of the three components yet plays a key role. At the same time, in the light of increasing friction and new challenges, including irregular migrant crossings, the ability of UNFICYP to sustain a presence in sensitive and porous sections of the buffer zone while maintaining sufficient feet and eyes on the ground across the zone's entire length could become strained and requires careful and ongoing assessment.

43. The Action for Peacekeeping agenda, a key priority of which is contributing to the attainment of political objectives, presents the scope for UNFICYP and my good offices mission in Cyprus to collaborate more closely towards promoting political progress while maintaining stability, with the ultimate shared objective of assisting the sides in reaching a peaceful and lasting settlement in Cyprus. In addition, efforts by UNFICYP to secure agreement on further confidence-building measures, support their implementation and establish mechanisms for problem-solving and alleviating tensions will draw on resources throughout the military, police and civilian components. UNFICYP and my good offices mission will also enhance joint reporting

on the basis of the monitoring and analysis of developments on the ground by their respective staff.

44. In the light of the call of the Security Council to revitalize the work of the bicommunal technical committees, and with the newly established facility providing catalytic resources to support more committee initiatives, UNFICYP and my good offices mission in Cyprus will need to ensure adequate support, along with assistance from UNDP, as appropriate.

45. In Security Council resolutions on Cyprus, numerous recommendations are made to the sides regarding how they can achieve progress in areas such as strengthening the participation of civil society, in particular women and young people, and promoting intercommunal contacts and trust-building, all key elements of peacebuilding. UNFICYP and my good offices mission will continue to jointly support the leaders in implementing the recommendations and working towards achieving these objectives on the basis of the leaders' specific areas of expertise and networks. For example, my teams on the ground are working ever more robustly on implementing the women and peace and security agenda, a key tenet of Action for Peacekeeping, including through supporting the development in Cyprus of networks of women mediators.

46. Moreover, as environmental challenges become more prevalent, including in the eastern Mediterranean, efforts by my peace missions on the ground to help local communities to tackle them, in particular where there can be a link between environmental and intercommunal efforts, will be strengthened. Any significant changes to the configuration of United Nations activities on the ground will necessitate the consideration of mandates and available resources.

VI. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse

47. UNFICYP continued to promote strict adherence to the United Nations policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, 25 training sessions on United Nations standards of conduct, including the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, were held for a total of 785 UNFICYP personnel. UNFICYP did not receive any allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse. New allegations recorded against two UNFICYP personnel, relating to infraction of regulations and rules, were referred for investigation. An assessment of the state of conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse in the mission, as well as a risk assessment for sexual exploitation and abuse, were conducted in March 2019.

VII. Financial and administrative aspects

48. The General Assembly, by its resolution [72/292](#), appropriated the amount of \$52.9 million for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to \$17.9 million from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

49. As of 12 June 2019, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNFICYP amounted to \$16.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$1,984.9 million.

50. Reimbursement of troop costs has been made for the period up to 31 January 2019, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2018.

VIII. Observations

51. Recent polling commissioned by the United Nations and European Union-financed World Bank surveys suggest that public expectations regarding a resumption of the talks and prospects for a settlement remain low. As I noted in my previous report on my good offices mission, there is consensus that the status quo, that is, the absence of a resolution of the Cyprus issue, is not sustainable. There is also widespread support for the view that a horizon consisting of an endless process without results lies behind us, not ahead of us. I reiterate my call to the parties to engage in the current consultations exercise constructively, creatively and with the necessary urgency. The parties should redouble their efforts towards restoring full-fledged negotiations, and their engagement should be infused with a sense of purpose and determination to reach a successful end within a foreseeable horizon.

52. Although they are not and should not be construed as a substitute for advancing in the settlement negotiations, I welcome the progress made in concluding the leaders' agreement on confidence-building measures initiated in 2015 and their efforts to implement additional measures. Assuming that they are implemented fully, such measures should help to rebuild public confidence in the process and rekindle a greater measure of hope. In view of the extensive preparatory work undertaken thus far, I urge the sides to finalize the technical implementation of the interoperability of mobile phones at the earliest opportunity. I also appeal to the leaders to implement additional, impactful confidence-building measures and make bold, unilateral gestures to restore damaged trust and resume dialogue, with support from the United Nations. I note with regret that, notwithstanding repeated encouragement from me and the Security Council, few efforts have been made to improve the public atmosphere for negotiations, deliver constructive messages between the sides or prepare the communities for a settlement.

53. As highlighted in my previous report, divergent school curricula and conflicting and divisive narratives about the past remain a serious obstacle to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence on the island. I therefore encourage the leaders to facilitate sustained, island-wide student exchanges in order to promote peace education at all levels and to pursue the joint recommendations made by the Bi-Communal Technical Committee on Education to the leaders in November 2017.

54. In the light of significant societal scepticism and disengagement vis-à-vis the peace process, efforts by United Nations entities and the diplomatic community in Cyprus to facilitate and support civil society initiatives aimed at fostering intercommunal dialogue and bringing the communities together help to create conditions conducive to a settlement by building a constituency for peace. I urge the sides to do more themselves to promote and support such initiatives as evidence of their genuine commitment and to inform the Security Council and me regularly of their respective efforts.

55. In their efforts to promote closer cooperation between the communities, local and international actors continue to be confronted with challenges and obstacles linked to the status of the north and concerns relating to "recognition". While United Nations policy on Cyprus is maintained and decisions of the Security Council on the matter are upheld, concerns about recognition should not in themselves constitute an insurmountable obstacle to increased cooperation. As the sides explore further opportunities for confidence-building and cooperation, I urge them to devise creative ways of overcoming obstacles with a view to achieving meaningful progress and delivering tangible benefits to their communities, without prejudice to the issue of recognition. The United Nations remains fully committed to providing them with the facilitation and support necessary.

56. I am concerned about continued unauthorized civilian incursions and occasional provocative behaviour in the buffer zone and the direct impact these have on military violations, for example, in the form of unauthorized farming by Greek Cypriot farmers close to Turkish forces positions or Turkish Cypriot farmers similarly farming on unauthorized land. While dialogue between the mission and relevant authorities has helped to address some of the more problematic unauthorized civilian activity, these types of occurrences remain too frequent.

57. I regret the significant increase in violations along the northern ceasefire line, in particular moves forward by military personnel into the buffer zone; the direct challenging of the ceasefire line and the authority of UNFICYP; and restrictions imposed on the mission's freedom of movement in some areas. Together with large-scale construction violations, whether civilian or military, challenges to the ceasefire line result over time in a more permanent alteration of the status quo in the buffer zone. I am also concerned that recent developments along the ceasefire line and related tensions in the area may be linked to the continued absence of progress in the negotiations, generating increased competition over the buffer zone and land located within it.

58. I stress once again the importance for the sides of respecting the mandated authority of UNFICYP. The mission's mandate requires reconciling security considerations and the maintenance of the military status quo with facilitating reasonable civilian activities within the buffer zone, in particular when livelihoods depend on it. In order to achieve this delicate balance and maintain calm and stability, UNFICYP must be allowed to exercise its mandated authority impartially on the basis of carefully defined criteria, the most important of which is security. Echoing the call of the Security Council in resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#), I stress that it is incumbent upon both sides to accept and assist UNFICYP in the implementation of the 2018 aide-memoire. Without this, the ability of UNFICYP to preserve the integrity of the buffer zone and to maintain a stable environment therein will become increasingly challenged, with possible negative security and political implications.

59. The mission's efforts to step up its engagement with both opposing forces will continue, as should commitment on the part of the opposing forces to maintaining a regular dialogue with UNFICYP at all levels. When misunderstandings and tensions arise, unilateral actions must be avoided and existing mechanisms for liaison with UNFICYP must be taken advantage of fully. Restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNFICYP, imposed in Strovilia and elsewhere, must be lifted immediately and permanently, and the mission's ability to patrol and carry out other mandated activities must be restored fully.

60. Continued violations and low-level tensions during the period under review demonstrate how UNFICYP, through its monitoring, engagement and liaison, continues to play an indispensable role in preventing escalation. I am concerned that, pending a full-fledged resumption of the Cyprus talks, violations of the military status quo will continue, posing a potential threat to security and stability in the buffer zone and beyond. Against this background, the continued presence of UNFICYP remains essential to report and address violations in accordance with its mandate, prevent tensions and contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to a political settlement. In recognition of the continued contribution by UNFICYP to the maintenance of peace and stability, I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mission's mandate until 31 January 2020.

61. The continued division of the island and the absence of regular contact between the sides outside of the negotiations generate tensions and hamper the sides' ability to address issues that can have a negative impact on the safety and well-being of their communities. Such issues include, but are not limited to, impunity for crimes when

suspected criminals flee from one side of the island to the other; gaps in planning and preparedness for natural disasters, pandemics and other crises; and the challenge of managing the increasing flow of irregular migrants and asylum seekers who arrive on the island. I therefore urge the sides to reach agreement on the establishment of mechanisms to alleviate tensions and address island-wide matters, as called for in my previous report and in Security Council resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#). Although such mechanisms can complement confidence-building measures and help to build trust, their primary function is to serve as practical, systematic arrangements, to be put in place through UNFICYP facilitation, for problem-solving and reducing day-to-day tensions. I urge all relevant stakeholders to engage constructively with the mission so that practical, mutually acceptable formats for such mechanisms can be found and operationalized rapidly.

62. Notwithstanding repeated calls on my part and on the part of the Security Council, efforts to achieve greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to broaden and deepen economic, cultural and other forms of cooperation remain limited. The full implementation of European Council regulation (EC) No. 866/2004, the Green Line Regulation, would help significantly to increase the volume of trade and should be pursued with renewed vigour. Increased cross-island trade, together with deeper economic, social, cultural, sporting and other ties and contacts, can promote trust between the communities and help to address the concerns of the Turkish Cypriots regarding isolation.

63. I continue to monitor developments relating to hydrocarbons closely and with concern. I have repeatedly stressed that the natural resources found in and around Cyprus should benefit both communities and constitute a strong incentive for all parties to find a mutually acceptable and durable solution to the Cyprus problem. Bearing in mind that all parties have expressed their commitment to this objective, I reiterate my call for serious efforts to avoid any further escalation and defuse tensions.

64. I welcome the Security Council's call, in resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#), to report on how United Nations activities on Cyprus can be best configured to advance political progress while preserving stability. The request has served as an important reminder that, even in long-standing peace operations such as UNFICYP, there remains room for improvement and adjustments. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, I am committed to ensuring the highest level of peacekeeping performance. I am also cognizant of the limited room to manoeuvre in a lean mission such as UNFICYP. I will nonetheless continue to strive towards ever-greater efficiency and effectiveness in UNFICYP.

65. I would like to once again thank the partners, in particular the European Commission, that have continued to provide support for the work of both United Nations missions in Cyprus, UNDP and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and have contributed to the implementation of confidence-building measures. I also thank the 36 countries that have contributed troops, police or both to UNFICYP since 1964, and I pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace in Cyprus.

66. I express my gratitude to Elizabeth Spehar for her service as my Special Representative in Cyprus, the Head of UNFICYP and my Deputy Special Adviser. I also extend my thanks to all the men and women serving in UNFICYP for their steadfast commitment to the implementation of the mandate of the mission and the cause of peace on the island.

Annex

**Countries providing military and police personnel to the
United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 19 June 2019)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military personnel</i>
Argentina	242
Australia	3
Austria	4
Brazil	2
Canada	1
Chile	12
Hungary	11
Pakistan	3
Paraguay	12
Serbia	3
Slovakia	242
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	259
Total^a	796

<i>Country</i>	<i>Police personnel</i>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8
Bulgaria	3
China	4
India	7
Ireland	12
Italy	1
Lithuania	1
Montenegro	3
Romania	4
Russian Federation	6
Serbia	2
Slovakia	5
Sweden	2
Ukraine	8
Total	66

^a Of the military personnel, 712 are men and 84 are women. Of the police personnel, 43 are men and 23 are women.

