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Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 16 December 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to our letters dated 28 April 2016 ([A/70/855-S/2016/406](#)), 12 April 2017 ([A/71/875-S/2017/321](#)) and 21 September 2019 ([A/74/462-S/2019/764](#)), I am writing to express Turkey's concerns regarding yet another provocative act by the Greek Cypriot Administration, which granted an offshore hydrocarbon exploration licence to and signed an exploration and production sharing contract with the consortium of ExxonMobil and Qatar Petroleum for the so-called "Block 5", a part of which violates Turkey's continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean.

First of all, I would like to remind all interested parties that the outer limits of the Turkish continental shelf have been declared to the United Nations through a number of official notifications, the first one of which is our note verbale No. 2004/Turkuno DT/4739, dated 2 March 2004 and the latest one being my letter dated 18 March 2020 ([A/74/757](#)).

Turkey will protect its sovereign rights and interests and will not allow any unauthorized hydrocarbon activity within its continental shelf. Our resolve in this regard has been made public numerous times before and most recently again with the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on 2 December 2021.

Furthermore, it shall be recalled that there is no single authority which is de jure or de facto competent to represent both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots, consequently Cyprus as a whole. The hydrocarbon resources in and around the Island of Cyprus belong to the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot peoples together as the co-owners and sovereign equals of the Island. Turkey fully supports the proposals made by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to the Greek Cypriot Administration, the latest one of which was put forth on 13 July 2019, to establish a cooperation mechanism that would entail, among other components, equitable revenue sharing on offshore hydrocarbon resources. This proposal could easily bring



a solution to the issue of hydrocarbon resources around the Island, and thereby serve as an important confidence-building measure. It is regrettable that the Greek Cypriot side continues to disregard Turkey's and Turkish Cypriots' repeated calls in this regard.

On a related note, the announcement by the Greek Cypriot Administration to continue the drilling activities within the so-called "Block 10" constitutes another example among the many escalatory steps jeopardizing peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey and the TRNC are determined to protect their legitimate rights and interests, in the face of such unilateral acts and provocations.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 44 and 78 (a), and of the Security Council, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(Signed) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative
