

**STATEMENT BY HÜSEYİN GÜNGÖR, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
IN ACCRA, AT THE UN PEACEKEEPING MINISTERIAL MEETING
(6 DECEMBER 2023, ACCRA)**

Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,

At the outset, please allow me to thank the Government of Ghana and the United Nations for organizing this timely and important meeting.

We recognize the crucial role that the UN peacekeeping missions play in fostering stability and protecting civilians in some of the most complex and dangerous situations across the world.

This year we acknowledge the 75th anniversary of the United Nations Peacekeeping. The change in the conflict dynamics over the last decades require significant evolution from the traditional missions of 75 years ago. In the face of emerging challenges, the mandates of these missions have become more multidimensional.

It is more important than ever that we collectively work towards enhancing the capabilities of peacekeeping operations.

We are pleased to see that significant progress has been made in the reform of the UN peacekeeping architecture since the launch of the “Action for Peacekeeping” initiative of the Secretary General in March 2018, which we fully endorse. The Action for Peacekeeping Plus has helped better implementation of our joint commitments. Also we welcome the advancement made in the women, peace and security agenda and support the expanding role of women in peacekeeping.

Although the practice of UN peacekeeping has evolved significantly over the past decades, three basic principles, namely -Consent of the parties, -Impartiality and -Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate, have traditionally served and continue to set UN peacekeeping operations apart as a tool for maintaining international peace and security.

As stated in the report entitled “the UN Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines” of 2008, in the absence of such consent, a UN peacekeeping operation risks becoming a party to the conflict and being drawn away from its intrinsic role of keeping the peace. In this context, we would like to underline the need for the UN to seek the consent of the Turkish Cypriot authorities regarding the activities of UNFICYP on the Island as a whole and especially in the territory of the TRNC.

Excellencies, Dear Guests,

Türkiye takes part in peacekeeping operations around the globe, conducted either directly by the UN or by other international organizations.

In this context, we currently contribute to seven UN operations namely MINUSCA (Central Africa), UNSOM (Somali), UNIFIL (Lebanon), UNMIK (Kosovo), UNMISS (South Sudan), MINUSMA (Mali) and MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of Congo) with 161 personnel and a corvette-type naval asset.

Since its establishment, Türkiye has contributed around 3 million US Dollars to the UN Peacebuilding Fund which we plan to continue in the future.

Distinguished delegates,

Upon the baseless statements raised by the Greek Cypriot representative about Türkiye, I would like to draw your kind attention to the following:

The Cyprus problem is not an issue of “invasion” or “occupation”. The division of the Island began in 1963, much earlier than 1974, when the Greek Cypriots expelled the Turkish Cypriots from the partnership state organs and institutions as well as from their homes, in violation of the Treaties of 1960 and all human rights norms.

A UN peacekeeping operation was installed in 1964 and has been maintained since then. From 1963 to 1974, the Greek Cypriots conducted an armed ethnic cleansing campaign against the Turkish Cypriots, who had to live in enclaves under siege corresponding to the 3% of the total area of the Island.

When this culminated with a coup d'état carried out by the Greek Junta in 1974 aiming at annexing the Island to Greece, Türkiye was left with no other option but to exercise its rights stemming from the Treaty of Guarantee. Since then, Turkish forces have been the only factor preventing the repetition of earlier tragedies. Given the volatility of the region and the tragic events surrounding it, this is no insignificant function. Therefore, the allegation of invasion is not compatible with the facts in Cyprus, the 1960 Treaties and the nature and contents of the UN comprehensive settlement process. The existence of the Turkish forces on the Island stems from the 1960 international treaties, within the framework of Türkiye's rights and obligations as a guarantor power.

The only occupation on the Island is the one committed by the Greek Cypriot side towards the Partnership Republic back in 1963, through the blatant violation of the Constitution and the inherent rights of the Turkish Cypriot people.

Furthermore, it is the Greek Cypriots, who have violated the buffer zone with several construction projects and numerous infringements. Regrettably, the UN seems to have allowed this to happen with only meager reporting of the facts.

I can assure you that this will now come to an end. Both the Turkish Cypriots and Türkiye will not only bring to the fore all Greek Cypriot violations that have been allowed to take place until now, but will also vigilantly keep track of all future Greek Cypriot activities in the buffer zone. We will hold the UN accountable, both as regards its commitments in the Pile area stemming from the recent understanding and for maintaining balance between the sides in the entire buffer zone.

Taking this opportunity, we reiterate our commitments to the UN peacekeeping operations ranging from the supply of a transport aircraft for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic to various training programs for UN personnel at the Partnership for Peace Center and at various Centers of Excellence.

In concluding, allow me to reiterate our firm commitment to UN's efforts in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding.

Thank you.