

Note To Delegates

Note to the Delegates Dear Delegates, Welcome to the 2025 Mid South Model United Nations Conference (MSMUN) and to the Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM). My name is Rabbani Rhythm, and I will be one of your 2025 SOCHUM chairs. I am a freshman planning to major in Biomathematics, with a minor in Computer Science and Statistics. Johan Gime and Jack Adkins will also be chairing SOCHUM with me. Jack is a freshman planning to major in Economics and Business. Johan is a freshman who is undecided about his major but is interested in International Studies and Politics. We are all very excited to chair the SOCHUM committee. The 2024 Agenda of the Human Rights Council encourages us to better pursue past resolutions to respect the intrinsic value of human life in the international community. Therefore the topics we will be discussing this year will focus on the domestic and international crisis that emerge from the political tensions in Cyprus. Both topics have a significant impact on the humanitarian as well as the geopolitical aspects of the situation. We look forward to meeting all of you at the conference and hope that these issues will inspire debate and cooperation. Please do not hesitate to email Johan, Jack, or me if you have any questions.

Regards,

Rabbani Rasha Rhythm, Jack Adkins, and Johan Gime

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Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Council is the Third Committee of the General Assembly. Our important work focuses on examining human rights questions, including reports of the Human Rights Council.

SOCHUM was founded in 1945 to promote the principles established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our work enforces and promotes the ideals of fundamental freedoms which ought to be enjoyed by the entirety of the international community. These include the right to life, the expression of cultures, the freedom of political participation, the protection of children's rights, and the promotion of social development, among many others. We seek to design peaceful settlements for these issues in the international community, initiating studies to encourage cooperation and popularizing freedom for all.

The Committee discusses questions relating to the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination. The Committee also addresses important social development questions such as issues related to youth, family, aging, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.

Topic A: Rights of Prisoners

1. History and Past UN Action

The Republic of Cyprus ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on August 17th, 1991, agreeing to an international framework for preventing the abuse of prisoners. The Republic of Cyprus also ratified the Optional Protocol against Torture, or “OPCAT”, on March 27th, 2009, which is a stronger, more extensive version of the earlier convention.

2. Current Situation

According to the UN Subcommittee on Torture’s investigation, the Republic of Cyprus has made substantial progress in protecting the rights of prisoners, but the lack of independent monitoring in prisons allows for rampant abuse. Furthermore, the Subcommittee found that the conditions for detaining migrants were not consistent with Cyprus’s obligations under international law. The committee against torture also found that some prison facilities were overcrowded at 140% of the maximum capacity. The Republic of Cyprus’s laws forbid torture and mistreatment of prisoners, but multiple reports have exposed illegal abuse by police in various prisons, facilitated by a lack of security cameras in various locations. In locations with security cameras, the footage did not feed to a central agency, so it could be tampered with onsite. Abuse is also rampant in the Turkish-controlled region of Cyprus, where an NGO reported that the head of the prison administration ordered violence against at least six inmates, including minors. NGOs and UN investigators report that prisons in the Republic of Cyprus as well as the Turkish-controlled region are grossly overcrowded.

3. Problems a Resolution Should Address, and Possible Solutions

In order to safeguard to dignity of prisoners on the island of Cyprus, SOCHUM urges nations to consider these questions:

1. What sort of new international institutions could be created to solidify protections for prisoners, or how can existing institutions be strengthened?
2. In what ways can SOCHUM provide aid and resources to the Republic of Cyprus or to the Turkish-controlled region to improve prison conditions?
3. What actions can be taken to de-escalate the ethnic dispute on the island, which exacerbates domestic human rights issues?

4. Resources

[2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cyprus](#)

[UN experts urge Cyprus to address migrant detention conditions, improve overall monitoring](#)

[Committee against Torture's dialogue with Cyprus Centers on detention conditions and fundamental legal safeguards | OHCHR](#)

Topic B: Cyprus' Cultural and Ethnic Divide

1. History and Past UN Action

In 1963, fighting broke out on the island of Cyprus between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. Because of their differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds, both sides had struggled to accept each other since Cyprus became a nation in 1960 after declaring independence. Because of the ongoing conflict, the UN passed a resolution in 1964, which placed UN peacekeeping troops in Cyprus with the consent of the government of Cyprus. However, in July 1974, Turkey invaded the island's northern side and occupied 37% of the island. This part of the island had the largest Turkish Cypriot population, a population that wanted the island of Cyprus to be annexed by Turkey. The military occupation of the northern part of the island was in direct violation of the UN Charter and was quickly denounced by the UN as illegal. The UN holds to this day that Turkey had no right to invade Cyprus. In 1975 the Turkish side declared independence as a separate state from the Republic of Cyprus. The UN again condemned this move in a resolution and declared the Turkish side violated the 1975 intercommunal agreement. Since 1975, Turkey has continued to occupy the north of the island, and all reunification efforts have been insufficient.

2. Current Situation

Currently, Turkey is the only country that recognizes the northern part of Cyprus as an independent nation. The most recent reunification effort broke down in 2017, and no agreements have been reached since. The reunification effort is important since the illegal occupation of the island by Turkish soldiers has been an international issue since 1974.

Without reunification, the country of Cyprus will not be able to solve many of its other issues, such as prison reforms, political corruption, and resource management. With a population of around 1.3 million people, this small island is at the center of an international power struggle. The UN has been watching for over half a century, and it is time to once again attempt to tackle this issue.

3. Problems a Resolution Should Address, & Possible Solutions

In order to safeguard to dignity of prisoners on the island of Cyprus, SOCHUM urges nations to consider these questions:

1. How can SOCHUM promote and incentivize reunification between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots?
2. How should SOCHUM address the continued illegal occupation of Cyprus by Turkey?
3. What concrete steps should the Republic of Cyprus take regarding the illegal occupation?
4. How should the UN respond to the crisis given the history of the UN's failed responses?

4. Resources

[Cyprus | Data](#)

[An Island Divided: Next Steps for Troubled Cyprus | Crisis Group](#)

['Why can there be no peace?' Cyprus remains divided 50 years on](#)

[Intercommunal Negotiations - Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

[The Cyprus Issue - Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

Countries & Their Positions on the Cyprus Crisis

Cyprus – The island remains divided between the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus (Greek Cypriot-controlled) and the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognized only by Turkey. The government seeks reunification under a federal model but opposes permanent division.

Turkey – Turkey has been a key player in the Cyprus conflict since its 1974 military intervention, which led to the occupation of the northern part of the island. It supports the TRNC and advocates for a two-state solution rather than reunification.

Greece – As a historic ally of Greek Cypriots, Greece supports the Republic of Cyprus and backs a unified island under a federal system. It opposes the Turkish military presence on the island and has been involved in diplomatic negotiations.

United Kingdom – The UK retains two sovereign military bases on Cyprus (Akrotiri and Dhekelia) and plays a role in mediation efforts. It supports a negotiated settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation.

United States of America – While not directly involved, the U.S. supports diplomatic efforts for reunification and has condemned the ongoing division. It also has strategic interests in Cyprus due to regional security and energy concerns.

Russia – Russia has historically maintained strong ties with the Republic of Cyprus, particularly in economic and military cooperation. It has supported UN-led negotiations but remains wary of Western influence in the region.

France – France is a strong supporter of the Republic of Cyprus, particularly within the EU, and opposes Turkish actions in Northern Cyprus. It has also increased military cooperation with Cyprus in response to regional tensions.

Germany – As a key player in the European Union, Germany has supported a diplomatic resolution to the Cyprus issue. It has pressured Turkey to cease aggressive actions in the Eastern Mediterranean while promoting dialogue.

Egypt – Egypt has built a strategic partnership with Cyprus, particularly in maritime security and energy cooperation. It opposes Turkish drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and supports Cyprus in the conflict.

Italy – Italy, through its energy giant ENI, has stakes in Cyprus’s offshore gas reserves. It has opposed Turkish interventions in Cypriot waters and advocates for a diplomatic resolution.

Azerbaijan – A close ally of Turkey, Azerbaijan has not formally recognized the TRNC but has shown diplomatic sympathy for its cause. It supports Turkey’s position in the conflict.

Iran – While not directly involved, Iran opposes Western influence in the region and has occasionally criticized Turkey’s military presence in Cyprus, preferring diplomatic negotiations over external interventions.

And finally...

Armenia – Armenia has historically supported the Republic of Cyprus due to shared historical grievances against Turkey. It strongly opposes Turkish military presence in Northern Cyprus and advocates for Cypriot sovereignty. The Armenian community in Cyprus has also played a significant role in strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.