



General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 July 2020

Original: English

Seventy-fourth session

Agenda items 41 and 74

Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 2 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, with reference to the letter dated 30 April 2020 ([A/74/832-S/2020/350](#)) from the Greek Cypriot representative and the letter dated 1 June 2020 ([A/74/872](#)) by the Permanent Representative of Greece, I would like to bring to your attention the following.

Turkey has already submitted to the United Nations her ipso facto and ab initio legal and sovereign rights in the maritime areas of the Eastern Mediterranean, in particular through the Permanent Mission's notes Nos. 2004/Turkuno DT/4739, dated 2 March 2004; 2005/Turkuno DT/16390, dated 4 October 2005; and 2013/14136816/22273, dated 12 March 2013; and its letters dated 25 April 2014 ([A/68/857](#)), 18 March 2019 ([A/73/804](#)), 13 November 2019 ([A/74/550](#)) and 27 February 2020 ([A/74/727](#)).

Lastly, through my letter dated 18 March 2020 ([A/74/757](#)), the outer limits of the Turkish continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean were submitted to the United Nations, a section of which was delimited through the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on the Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean of 27 November 2019. This Memorandum of Understanding has entered into force upon ratification by both countries as of 8 December 2019.

The international legal framework concerning the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas highlights the principle of equity, according to which delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas between States with opposite and adjacent coasts shall be effected by an agreement to achieve an equitable solution. Furthermore, in direct contravention with the claim which presupposes the islands' right to automatically generate full maritime jurisdiction areas wherever they may be located, numerous rulings by the International Court of Justice have either completely ignored the islands that remain on the wrong side of the median line to generate maritime areas or given only partial effect in delimiting the maritime areas, if their location distorts equitable delimitation or if there are other special/relevant circumstances.



As was indicated in the map contained in the annex to my letter dated 18 March 2020 (A/74/757), the outer limits of the Turkish continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean thus follow the median line between the Turkish and Egyptian coastlines. Therefore, the area where the *Yavuz* conducts drilling operations, much like the operations carried out by other Turkish drilling ships as authorized by the Turkish Government, lies entirely within the Turkish continental shelf.

Similarly, the application by the Turkish Petroleum Corporation in May 2020 for new licenses regarding exploration and drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean also covers areas that lie entirely within the Turkish continental shelf, where Turkey exercises sovereign rights and jurisdiction as declared to the United Nations.

Turkey would like to take this opportunity to clarify once again that, even if registered with or published by the United Nations, neither the unilaterally characterized domestic laws or practices of other countries, nor the bilateral agreements that Turkey has explicitly objected to between third countries concerning the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas are binding upon or can be invoked against Turkey in relevant dealings.

Additionally, I would like to reiterate that there is no single authority that is competent to represent jointly the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, and therefore the Greek Cypriot Administration cannot claim *de jure* and/or *de facto* jurisdiction or sovereignty over these areas and even less so in international waters.

In view of the above, Turkey will continue to exercise its sovereign rights over the area that has been repeatedly announced. At the same time, Turkey once again emphasizes that it stands ready today, as it did in the past, to give its full support to ensure a just, equitable and peaceful solution to all pending issues, including the equitable delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas with all relevant coastal States that it recognizes and with which it has diplomatic relations, in accordance with international law, in order to further contribute to the stability and prosperity of the entire Mediterranean basin. Turkey believes that building peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean will be possible only through dialogue and cooperation.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41 and 74, 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