IMUN 2026 Research Report

Historical Security Council Issue #3: The Cyprus Crisis. March 1964.

The Cyprus crisis (1963-64) was an ethnically driven conflict following independence from British rule in 1960. In 1960, Cyprus' population of 570,000 was 78% Christian Greek Cypriots, 18% Muslim Turkish Cypriots and 4% other minorities (Joseph, "Cyprus Gains"). After the first general election in July 1960, Cyprus became a republic, with 40 seats allotted to Greek Cypriots and 15 to Turkish Cypriots, with Archbishop Makarios, head of the *Enosis* (union with Greece) movement, as president. At that time, Cyprus was admitted as a member of the United Nations (UN). In March 1961, it also gained membership in the Commonwealth, along with the British government's agreement to provide financial assistance for the next 5 years (Bowman et al.; "Cypriot Intercommunal"). During this period, Greek and Turkish communities reached an agreement on a constitution. In addition, a Treaty of Guarantee gave Britain, Greece, and Turkey the right to intervene. Despite these provisions, the newly elected President Makarios caused concern among Turkish communities by proposing constitutional changes, particularly regarding local government and finance, that would rescind power-sharing arrangements with the Turkish Cypriots ("Cyprus Profile"). Intercommunal violence erupted between the two communities in the fight known as the Bloody Christmas of 1963 in Nicosia. In the days that followed, it spread across the rest of the island, resulting in the death of 364 Turkish Cypriots and 174 Greek Cypriots and the forced displacement of 25,000 Turkish Cypriots. An interim peacekeeping force, the Joint Truce Force, was established by Britain, Greece, and Turkey until the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), was formed under United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 186 (1964) ("Bloody Christmas").

The *Enosis* movement was created in the beginning of the nineteenth century by the ethnic Greek population of Cyprus that sought to end nearly three centuries of Ottoman rule

and achieve union with Greece. In 1878, the United Kingdom assumed administrative control of the island under the Cyprus Convention, aiming to prevent Ottoman territories from falling under Russian influence. Although Britain took over the administration of Cyprus, sovereignty formally remained with the Ottoman Empire under the terms of the agreement. When the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers in the First World War, Britain annulled the earlier agreement, rejected Ottoman claims to Cyprus, and formally declared the island a British colony. In 1915, Britain offered to cede Cyprus to King Constantine I of Greece if Greece joined the war on the Allied side, but the offer was declined ("Cyprus problem").

During British colonial rule, life in Cyprus reflected the realities of colonial governance. Human rights and political freedoms were constrained by the nature of the colonial system. Although both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities retained significant autonomy in educational, religious, and cultural affairs, the colonial authorities firmly opposed any political movements or aspirations of self-determination. Between 1955 and 1959, the Greek Cypriot anticolonial guerrilla campaign led to widespread violence and unrest, making the administration of the island increasingly difficult and expensive for the British.

Cypriot independence was finally granted after giving way to pressure from three sources. Firstly, a bloody Greek Cypriot anticolonial rebellion occurred, led by Archbishop Makarios III and Colonel George Grivas, the founder and leader of the underground Ethnike Organosis Kyprion Agoniston (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters). Another factor was the global pressure that arose from internationalizing the Cyprus issue within the broader African and Asian self-determination and decolonization movements. Lastly, American pressure was applied to Great Britain, Greece, and Turkey to seek a solution to the Cyprus question and heal the Greek-Turkish "festering sore" within the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization (NATO) (Joseph, “United Nations Peace”).

Within three years, tensions between the two communities began to seep into administrative matters. Disagreements over local governance and taxation led to a governmental deadlock. While Greek Cypriots looked for *Enosis*, Turkish Cypriots wanted *Taksim* (partition) to ensure that their communities would not be united with Greece. Intercommunal violence erupted in Nicosia, culminating in Bloody Christmas (1963). Several ceasefires were arranged and failed until it was agreed that a force of 2,700 British soldiers would help enforce one. Subsequently, a "buffer zone" was created in Nicosia, and a green-inked line on a map drawn by a British officer separating the two sides of Nicosia established what would be known as the Green Line ("Cypriot Intercommunal"; Loizides). In March 1964, the demilitarized buffer zone, or green line, was to be patrolled by UN peacekeeping forces under UNSC Resolution 816, while further diplomatic efforts were made to resolve the crisis.

Debate should focus on formulating a resolution to the Cyprus conflict that restores peace, protects both Greek and Turkish Cypriot civilians, upholds constitutional order, and accounts for complex geopolitical implications. Delegates should discuss how violence between communities can be reduced in the short and long term; what measures can be taken to protect civilians; what humanitarian assistance can be provided to displaced persons and affected civilians; what role Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom should play in resolving the crisis; if the UN should deploy a peacekeeping force, and if so, what should its mandate be; and other relevant issues. Debate should consider the significant human and economic costs of the conflict, as well as the international tensions and their implications for human rights and international law. Finally, delegates should ensure that their attitudes and the information they rely on reflect what was publicly accessible as of March 31, 1964, maintaining historical accuracy and context in their deliberations.

Relevant resolutions and documents:

UNSC Resolution 186 (1964)

- Establishes the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in response to the deteriorating security situation on the island, which threatened international peace and security. Calls on all Member States to refrain from actions that could worsen the situation, asks the Government of Cyprus to take all necessary measures to stop violence and bloodshed, and calls on both communities and their leaders to exercise utmost restraint ("Resolution 186 (1964)").

UNSC Resolution 187 (1964)

- Reaffirms Resolution 186 (1964) on the Cyprus crisis and calls on all member states to refrain from actions that could worsen the situation or endanger international peace. Notes the progress reported by the Secretary-General in establishing the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and that advance elements are en-route to the island. Requests that the Secretary-General press forward with the deployment of the peacekeeping force ("Resolution 187 (1964)").

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