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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
Athens, Greece  
17 August - 7 September 1977

QUESTION OF CYPRUS

Letter dated 29 August 1977 from the Head of the Turkish Delegation  
addressed to the President of the Third United Nations Conference  
on the Standardization of Geographical Names

I have the honour to submit enclosed herewith the cable-transcript text of a letter dated 26 August 1977 addressed to Your Excellency, by His Excellency Rauf Denktas, President of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, in connexion with the representation of Cyprus in the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, being held in Athens.

I should be grateful if this letter, together with its enclosure, were circulated as a document of the Conference.

(Signed) Prof. Dr. Talip Yügel

ATH.77-278

AppendixLetter dated 26 August 1977 from Mr. Rauf R. Denktas, to the  
President of the Third United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names

We were not surprised to see, once again, an attempt made by the Greek Cypriot Representative at the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Athens, to misrepresent undisputable facts.

In Cyprus, bi-communal and bilingual island since 1571, a great number of villages enjoyed either Greek or Turkish names according to the people who lived in them. Some villages enjoyed two names, one in Greek and one in Turkish.

Examples of dual names are: Akaki-Kaca, Alevga-Alevkaya, Amadhies-Amatyas, Angolemi-Angolem, Ayia-Aykebir, Skyllouras-Sillura, Ay Dhometios-Incirli, Ayomoloyitadhes-Balcielmasi, Dhyo Potami-Ikidere, Eliophotes-Alifotez, Epikho-Abohor, Episkopio-Piskobu, Aglanja-Eylence, Omorphita-Küçük Kaymakli, Kalokhorio-Çamlıköy, Kalyvakia-Kalavaç, Karavostasi-Gemi Konağı, Kochati-Koccat, Neokhorio-Minareliköy, Petra tou Dhiyeni-Yeniceköy, Trakhonas-Kizilbaş, Ayi Sarandes-Kirkklar Tekkesi, Dhrimolaxia-Mormenekşe, Kalochoorio-Vuda, Kellia-Celya, Softtheadhes-Softalar.

The wilful and unjustified change of names (of villages and streets) has been a political pastime of the Greek-Cypriot leaders for a long number of years. Protestations by the Turkish Community were never heeded. Thus the historical Bairaktar Square was changed into Hero's square and so on. Historical Turkish monuments and Martyrs' tombs were rudely bulldozed off in order not to leave any vestige of 4 centuries of Turkish heritage in the island.

The Turkish Community, soon after the signing of the Zurich and London agreements in 1959, re-endorsed the Turkish names of the purely Turkish villages which had been given Greek names by the Greeks and circulated these names to the District Offices. Since then, these villages have used their original names in Turkish and under the joint republican years from 1960 to 1963, the Post Office of the Republic has delivered letters to those villages under these original names.

Until the Greek Cypriot onslaught on the Turkish Community in December 1963, Turks lived in 127 purely Turkish and 103 mixed villages. Greeks lived in 405 purely Greek villages. As a result of the Greek onslaught upon us we had to abandon 103 villages. Thus, for 11 years, 30,000 inhabitants of these 103 villages had to be finally destroyed. Turkey intervened and saved us from mass murder. In Aloa, Sandallari, Maratha, Tashkent, Ktima, Moroni, Mari (Tatlisu) and other places where the Turkish Army could not reach, all Turkish Cypriots were mowed down. Hundreds of them were later discovered in common graves by the UNFICYP. At the third Vienna Meeting, the movement of the Turkish Cypriots from Greek areas to the North was agreed upon and UNFICYP helped the remaining Turkish in Greek areas to move North in September 1975.

All in all, half of the Turkish population - 65,000 people - moved north and settled in Greek villages, while the Greek Cypriots who moved south settled in the Turkish villages.

This exchange of population and rehabilitation work it involved for both sides necessitated a consideration of Turkish names for the new habitations. Where the villages had enjoyed dual name there was no problem. The Turks continued to refer to the village with its historical original Turkish name but, where the village had purely a Greek name, a new name in Turkish had to be coined. This matter was considered by the Council of Ministers of the Turkish Federated State, and the Constituent Assembly of the Federated State, at its ordinary meeting on 26 December 1975, adopted a list of names for the newly populated area. The Turkish Army of Turkey had nothing to do with this communal decision which was taken and implemented by the appropriate authorities of the Turkish Federated State, in accordance with its legal and legitimate rights. The question of changing traditional names does not arise; in a bilingual country one has to accept that certain places will have bilingual names.

It is pertinent to note here as a historical fact that the Turkish Cypriot partners of the bi-communal State of Cyprus were never consulted on the presentation to be made by Cyprus at any of the meetings of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. This being the case, it is difficult to understand the moral basis on which Mr. Kranidiotis has tried to build his case, because none exists.

We are ready, when the appropriate time comes, to discuss the standardization of geographical names in our bilingual country with the Greek side prior to appearing before international conferences, as representing the case of Cyprus as a whole. As at present, all that Mr. Kranidiotis can represent is the Greek Cypriot point of view, and not the views of the bi-communal, bilingual Cyprus.

(Signed)

Rauf R. DENKTAS

President

Turkish Federated State of Cyprus