



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0262

The impact of the 1974 Turkish invasion on Cypriot women and girls, and the crimes committed by Turkish forces and consequences on gender equality

European Parliament resolution of 8 July 2026 on the impact of the 1974 Turkish invasion on Cypriot women and girls, and the crimes committed by Turkish forces and consequences on gender equality (2026/2617(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Articles 8, 10, 78 and 83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA¹ (the Victims' Rights Directive), which provides a framework for victim-centred justice, including in cases of sexual violence,
- having regard to Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence²,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2020 on Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy³,

¹ OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2012/29/oj>.

² OJ L, 2024/1385, 24.5.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/oj>.

³ OJ C 404, 6.10.2021, p. 202.

- having regard to its resolution of 16 September 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 May 2022 on the impact of the war against Ukraine on women⁵,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 17 July 1998,
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions, particularly to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 20 December 1993,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women, peace and security and the follow-up resolutions thereto, namely Resolutions 1820 (2008) of 19 June 2008, 1888 (2009) of 30 September 2009, 1889 (2009) of 5 October 2009, 1960 (2010) of 16 December 2010, 2106 (2013) of 24 June 2013, 2122 (2013) of 18 October 2013, 2242 (2015) of 13 October 2015, 2467 (2019) of 23 April 2019 and 2493 (2019) of 29 October 2019,
- having regard to the UN Secretary-General's latest annual report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2025/389), dated 15 July 2025 and submitted pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019), in which the Council asked the UN Secretary-General to report annually on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013) and recommend strategic actions,
- having regard to the fundamental principles of international law, to the UN Charter, to the 1977 and the 1979 high-level agreements between the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus, to the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council on Cyprus, including Resolution 186 (1964), which reaffirms the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984) on secessionist actions in Cyprus and Resolution 2815 (2026) on the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), and to the agreed framework of a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, for the comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem,

⁴ OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 88.

⁵ OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 155.

- having regard to the report of 10 July 1976 of the European Commission of Human Rights in *Cyprus v Turkey* (Applications Nos 6780/74 and 6950/75),
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 30 August 1961,
 - having regard to the 2018 UN Global Compact on Refugees,
 - having regard to General Recommendation No 38 of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, published on 20 November 2020,
 - having regard to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's report of 15 December 1994 entitled 'Report on the situation in Cyprus (recent political developments)',
 - having regard to the Council of Europe Convention of 11 May 2011 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence,
 - having regard to the mission of its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM Committee) to Nicosia, Cyprus, which took place from 26 to 28 May 2025, and to the subsequent mission report,
 - having regard to Rule 167(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,
- A. whereas on 20 July 1974, Turkish armed forces invaded the Republic of Cyprus and, despite the UN-brokered ceasefire declared on 22 July 1974 pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 353 (1974), proceeded to launch a second large-scale offensive on 14 August 1974 in blatant violation of that ceasefire, thereby consolidating their illegal occupation and expanding it to approximately 36 % of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, forcibly displacing a large proportion of the civilian population and committing widespread violations and atrocities against civilians, including women and girls;
- B. whereas the occupying regime, which is a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion and is subordinate to Türkiye, is illegal and is not internationally recognised; whereas the perpetrators of the gender-based violence were predominantly members of the Turkish armed forces, who were reportedly acting at the direction of and/or under the protection of their officers;

- C. whereas the consequences of the 1974 Turkish military invasion of Cyprus for women and girls have long been overlooked, with Cypriot women's experiences of violence and forced displacement remaining some of the least acknowledged and often being excluded from official historical, legal and institutional recognition;
- D. whereas the suffering caused by the events of 1974 and their aftermath, as well as in the context of previous intercommunal violence, affected women and girls from all communities in Cyprus, including Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot, Maronite, Armenian and Latin women, and their experiences of violence, displacement, loss and trauma deserve equal recognition, dignity and support;
- E. whereas the Republic of Cyprus remains the only EU Member State of which the territory is partially under illegal military occupation by a third country, with long-lasting consequences for all Cypriots, particularly women and girls, and for the EU;
- F. whereas it is essential to recognise the systematic, organised, large-scale gender-based violence carried out by the Turkish military forces and the gender-based violence carried out by paramilitary extremist perpetrators on the island;
- G. whereas Turkish armed forces have, by way of systematic conduct and established practice, caused deprivation of life to all Cypriot communities, including through the indiscriminate killing of civilians, and have subjected persons, including women of all ages, to torture and inhuman and degrading treatment;
- H. whereas women are disproportionately affected by conflict-related and aftermath violence, with the impact taking multiple forms, such as sexual violence, forced displacement, forced and compulsory labour, forms of sexual exploitation, economic collapse, and physical and psychological trauma; whereas the resulting harm often persists for decades after the formal end of hostilities, undermining women's economic independence, bodily autonomy and political participation;
- I. whereas many survivors were compelled to migrate in order to escape stigma and cope with post-traumatic stress, and an unspecified number of cases of suicide or attempted suicide have been reported; whereas the issue remains largely taboo, despite recent instances of survivors providing public testimony, including anonymously;
- J. whereas rape and sexual violence against the civilian population continue to be used, in a widespread and intentional way, as a weapon of war in order to gain political or military advantage; whereas conflict-related sexual violence is also used as a method of torture and even considered a 'spoil of war'; whereas conflict-related sexual violence can also be a weapon and tactic of destruction;

whereas acts of sexual violence are considered crimes under international human rights law in both war and peacetime;

- K. whereas widespread impunity for rape contributes to rape culture;
- L. whereas it was mentioned during the FEMM Committee mission to Cyprus that there was ongoing engagement with the Greek Orthodox Church as a societal actor contributing to the preservation of cultural identity and dialogue in the context of the ongoing situation in Cyprus, following the events of 1974 that resulted in the occupation of the island; whereas it was raised, in the context of the mission, that it shows capacity to respond with sensitivity and pragmatism in periods of acute social upheaval, with its commitment to promoting gender equality in this regard;
- M. whereas there is an urgent need to address the long-term trauma, experiences and suffering of Cypriot women and put in place victim-centred counselling and specifically designed support services to further their personal, social and economic empowerment; notes that this must be done in a way that respects autonomy and confidentiality and, more broadly, shows utmost respect for human dignity, including psychological dignity;
- N. whereas the real number of Cypriot victims of sexual violence remains unknown, with estimates varying considerably and figures reported by the FEMM Committee mission ranging between 700 and 1 500; whereas this uncertainty hinders the processes of reparation and compensation; whereas the survivors of sexual violence in Cyprus often do not come forward to report the acts they suffered because of trauma, stigma, fear, shame and a lack of institutional support and a safe and trusted reporting mechanism; whereas this has exacerbated the long-term psychological, social and economic consequences;
- O. whereas the victims included women of all ages, from underage girls and teenagers to young women, middle-aged mothers and older women, and even boys, fathers and men;
- P. whereas in 1974, rape and other forms of sexual violence were already prohibited under international humanitarian law, including Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which requires women to be given special protection against rape and any form of assault;
- Q. whereas the May 2025 FEMM Committee mission to Cyprus highlighted the urgent need for recognition of the impact of the invasion and ongoing occupation on women and girls, including as a matter of dignity and justice for survivors;
- R. whereas gender equality, respect for human dignity and the protection of fundamental rights are core EU values and must be

upheld consistently, including with regard to past crimes affecting EU citizens;

1. Condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the Republic of Türkiye's military invasion and continued illegal occupation of the Republic of Cyprus, now in its 52nd year, as a serious breach of international law and an obstacle to peace, stability and EU-Türkiye relations; strongly condemns the grave and enduring consequences of the invasion for Cypriot women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence and other forms of sexual exploitation, enforced displacement, family separation, and other violations of international humanitarian and human rights law disproportionately affecting women and girls, as well as the long-term social, economic and psychological harm suffered;
2. Stresses that the Republic of Türkiye bears continuing responsibility under international law for the violations committed during and after the 1974 invasion, which include grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, and recalls that such responsibility entails the obligation to ensure that victims are provided full reparation, including restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition; calls on the Member States to ensure the provision of effective reparation for all victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence; recalls that such reparation should be adequate, promptly attributed, and holistic in order to recognise the harm suffered;
3. Calls for the resumption, as a matter of urgency, of negotiations on the reunification of Cyprus under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, stressing that they should continue from the point at which they were interrupted in Crans-Montana in 2017; strongly reaffirms its view that the only solution to the Cyprus problem is a fair, comprehensive, viable and democratic settlement, within the long-established and agreed UN framework and EU *acquis*, on the basis of a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions;
4. Fully acknowledges the profound and multidimensional impact of the invasion and occupation on Cypriot women and girls, whose courage, strength and suffering has all too often remained invisible, under-reported and insufficiently recognised at national, European and international levels; underlines that Cypriot women and girls have also been key agents of resistance, solidarity and peacebuilding and calls for their leadership to be recognised and supported in all relevant policies; states that any political process concerning the future of the island must fully include women, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000);

5. Calls on Türkiye to withdraw its troops from Cyprus and refrain from any unilateral action that would entrench the permanent occupation of the island and from action altering the demographic balance;
6. Recognises the consequences of the forced displacement, including internal displacement, resulting from the invasion and ongoing occupation, and its enduring impact on first-, second- and third-generation Cypriots, particularly women and girls, who have been disproportionately affected; highlights that many have experienced the loss of homes, community networks and cultural continuity, as well as intergenerational trauma, identity fragmentation and persistent feelings of dislocation and non-belonging, compounded by gender inequalities and the specific social expectations placed upon women; emphasises that this needs to be addressed through targeted psychosocial support policies for victims and survivors;
7. Recognises that conflict-related sexual violence has long-term secondary social and economic consequences, including poverty, exclusion and stigma, and calls on the Council to ensure that these effects are fully assessed and reflected in reparation measures adopted at national level;
8. Recognises that the majority of women and girls who were raped during the invasion and in its aftermath could access sexual and reproductive health services, particularly abortion, in Cyprus' hospitals and British bases, even though abortion was criminalised at the time;
9. Calls on the Member States to ensure that survivors of rape have access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights services, particularly emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis, treatment and prevention of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and HPV testing, safe and legal abortion services and maternity care, as part of the clinical management of rape;
10. Commends the 22 EU Member States that have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (Istanbul Convention), including Cyprus; calls on the Commission to propose legislation establishing an EU-wide definition of rape whereby rape is defined by the absence of freely given, informed and reversible consent, in line with Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention; calls on the Member States to commence legislative changes to bring the definition of rape in their national legislation into line with Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention;
11. Calls on the Commission to support Cyprus in continuing efforts to determine the full scale of conflict-related crimes, including sexual violence, and establish the number of victims, to collect data and safely document testimonies, thus ensuring adequate official

recognition, redress and reparation for survivors and, where appropriate, their descendants, to promote historical awareness and to provide support services for survivors through an enhanced national action plan;

12. Recognises the initiative in Cyprus for the construction, in Nicosia, of a Monument to Women Victims of Sexual Violence as a space of collective memory and recognition; believes that placing the monument in a visible and prominent location will contribute to the recognition of the victims' trauma and suffering;
13. Encourages the Member States that have experienced widespread human rights violations, whether during armed conflict or under authoritarian regimes, to address, without delay, the issue of sexual and gender-based violence endured by victims and survivors, to break the silence, to encourage testimonies by means of formal investigation and to establish memorial initiatives that specifically recognise and document violations committed against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence, forced displacement and gender-based persecution, in order to officially recognise the crimes and open up the possibility of compensation; stresses that such initiatives should form an integral part of justice processes aimed at challenging historical silencing, removing stigma and affirming women's autonomy, integrity, agency and dignity;
14. Calls on the UN Secretary-General, who consistently prepares annual reports on sexual violence in conflict zones, to investigate the relevant UN archives and other sources to document the atrocities committed in Cyprus;
15. Welcomes the efforts undertaken at national level in Cyprus to acknowledge survivors and address past injustices suffered by all communities; calls on the Member States to set up compensation mechanisms for victims and survivors of sexual violence in line with the Victims' Rights Directive; underlines that Article 16 of the Victims' Rights Directive states that compensation should be paid by the offender;
16. Calls on Türkiye to provide effective compensation to the victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and other serious violations committed during and after the 1974 invasion;
17. Encourages EU-wide awareness-raising about conflict-related sexual violence and the long-term consequences thereof in order to break taboos, combat stigma and empower survivors to come forward;
18. Supports the organisation of a high-level public hearing with the participation of people who have survived conflict-related sexual violence worldwide, and especially in Cyprus, women's rights organisations and peacebuilders, experts in international criminal law and representatives of civil society, in order to formally

recognise their testimonies and experiences within the EU institutional framework and to show the gravity of the 1974 Turkish invasion;

19. Stresses the need for stronger legal frameworks in Cyprus and for victim-centred justice mechanisms to properly address the conflict-related sexual violence that targeted countless women and guarantee appropriate responses to victims' calls for justice;
20. Strongly condemns the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, which is a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions, and calls on the Commission to raise awareness of this issue by reflecting on the Cypriot conflict experience, in order to prevent further violence and take action should new conflicts break out; further calls on the Commission to continue promoting accountability and supporting initiatives, including dedicated financial mechanisms, that uphold the rights of victims and their families, to promote remembrance, to advance gender equality within the EU and to facilitate victims' social reintegration;
21. Calls on the Commission to reinforce its financial support to the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus so that it can fully fulfil its mission of exhuming, identifying and returning missing persons' remains to their relatives, who include Cypriot women who continue to face profound psychological distress in addition to the specific impact of the war; stresses, however, that financial assistance alone is insufficient given the continued lack of full cooperation, restricted access to military areas and archives, and obstruction by Türkiye and the illegal secessionist entity in the northern part of Cyprus, which significantly hinder the effective functioning and timely completion of the Committee's humanitarian mandate;
22. Calls on Türkiye to grant full and unrestricted access to all relevant official records relating to the 1974 invasion and its aftermath, and to cooperate fully with international authorities and the Republic of Cyprus with regard to the conflict-related sexual violence, enforced disappearances and other serious violations of international humanitarian law;
23. Reaffirms that the EU has not only a political but also a moral and legal obligation to uphold the dignity, rights and historical memory of all EU citizens, including Cypriot women and men who suffered conflict-related violence, and highlights the need for sustained engagement and principled action in addressing such serious violations so as to ensure consistency with the EU's external commitments to gender equality and human rights;
24. Calls for reinforced and sustained EU financial and technical support for victim-centred services in Cyprus, including specialised trauma and gender-sensitive counselling, long-term psychosocial assistance

and intergenerational healing programmes, which are specifically tailored to survivors and their families and are provided by qualified and specialised personnel to prevent secondary victimisation;

25. Supports Cyprus' full implementation of UN Resolution Security Council 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, particularly through the adoption of an enhanced and more comprehensive national action plan, and calls for the inclusion of more women in the peacebuilding processes;
26. Calls for full compliance with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, particularly as regards support for victims of sexual violence and due diligence in preventing, investigating, punishing and providing reparation for such acts of violence;
27. Commends the work of civil society organisations and bicomunal groups on gender equality in Cyprus, including grassroots civil society initiatives, particularly those led by women, and applauds their role in fostering trust, reconciliation and dialogue; encourages the exchange of good practice between Cyprus and other countries with experience in violations of women's rights; urges the Commission to enhance cooperation with Cypriot civil society, victims' associations and relevant international bodies engaged in truth-seeking and reconciliation efforts, including through the provision of adequate EU funding;
28. Reaffirms the binding nature of UN Security Council resolutions concerning Cyprus;
29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and asks that it be translated into Turkish and forwarded to the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Türkiye.