



• Ancient site under threat... The Government has lodged a further protest against illegal Turkish excavations at Salamis in the occupied area.

Excavations at Salamis denounced as destructive

A further strong protest against illegal archaeological excavations at the ancient Salamis site in the occupied area near Famagusta was lodged on 30 August by the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the UN in Geneva, Alexandros Vikis.

In a letter to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, Mr Vikis noted that the latest illegal excavations at Salamis, which had started in August 1999, had been carried out by a team from Ankara University in June-July, whereas the Cyprus Department of Antiquities has been prevented from carrying out work at any site in the Turkish-occupied area.

The Government of Cyprus, said Mr Vikis, "holds the Government of Turkey responsible for all illegal archaeological excavations

carried out in the occupied area". He continued by pointing out that "such excavations have an adverse and destructive effect on the cultural heritage of Cyprus and are contrary to the legitimate interests of the people of Cyprus".

In his letter, Mr Vikis drew Mrs Robinson's attention to a decision adopted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 13 August which reaffirmed the importance of ending the Turkish occupation of Cyprus "so that all human rights and freedoms will be enjoyed by all Cypriots". In that decision the Committee requested the UN Secretary General to draw its conclusions to the attention of the Security Council, the General Assembly and other appropriate UN bodies "in the earnest hope"

that they will take the measures required to secure implementation of UN resolutions and decisions on Cyprus.

●The duty of the international community to help preserve Cyprus' cultural heritage in the occupied area was stressed on 19 August by House of Representatives President Demetris Christofias. Speaking at the inauguration of a photographic exhibition in Athens on the destruction and desecration of over 500 churches and other buildings under Turkish control, Mr Christofias complained that very little response had been obtained to previous protests and announced that the House of Representatives would shortly initiate a special programme to provide continuous information to the international community on this issue. □

Moscow backing

Keen appreciation of the "unequivocal and steadfast support" which the Government of Cyprus has received from Russia was expressed by Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides in a speech in Moscow on 30 August. He was speaking during a two-day official visit to Russia, in which he had talks with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and was assured of continued full Russian backing for Government policy on the Cyprus problem.

Addressing the Moscow Diplomatic Academy, Mr Kasoulides set out the key elements of the Government's policy, stating that it was directed primarily to solving the Cyprus problem and reuniting the country and to joining the European Union (EU). He added that Nicosia also wished to contribute to peace in the Eastern Mediterranean and to play an active role in the Balkan region.

Noting that the international community demanded full implementation of UN resolutions in the case of Yugoslavia and the Middle East, the Foreign Minister urged that "the same principles must be vigorously applied in the case of Cyprus". At the same time, he appealed to the international community for it to convey to Turkey its expectations for "flexibility and a spirit of goodwill to achieve a solution".

Mr Kasoulides also expressed the hope that Russia would continue its "constructive and positive role" on the Cyprus issue. □

Monitoring of antennae to continue

Electromagnetic emissions from the controversial communications antennae in the British sovereign base area (SBA) at Akrotiri are 76 times lower than the limits recommended by the European Commission, according to a study released by the Ministry of Communications and Works on 28 August. A joint Cyprus-UK statement pledged that the health and environmental aspects of the antennae would be given close study.

Local opposition to a new 100-metre-high British antenna in the Akrotiri SBA had resulted in violent clashes in early July. Urgent consultations had therefore been instituted between the two sides on establishing the facts of the situation, to which end a Cypriot scientific team supported by French experts had been allowed into the base area to carry out readings of radiation

from the British antennae.

The Cyprus Ministry statement said that measurements taken by both sides showed that "emissions are and are expected to remain well within EU parameters established as not posing a risk to health". It also confirmed that "a joint long-term medical research study" would be conducted "in order to respond to the concerns of local residents".

On the possible environmental effects of the antennae, the statement recorded that the two sides had agreed that "a respected, independent, transparent and international panel of reputable experts" would consider the issue in "a holistic manner". A commitment was given that a joint environmental management strategy would be produced for the Akrotiri Salt Lake, including the creation of the fully protected nature reserve. □

Passport "charges" in occupied area deplored

Cyprus Government Spokesman Michalis Papapetrou on 31 August deplored the action of the "authorities" in the Turkish-occupied area in taking Turkish Cypriot citizens of the Republic of Cyprus before a military "court" to face "charges" of possessing passports issued by the Government of the Republic.

Mr Papapetrou said that the action by the occupation regime demonstrated that Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş was panicking

over the fact that increasing numbers of Turkish Cypriots were applying to the legal authorities of the Republic for valid travel documents.

The Spokesman stressed that the Cyprus Government "has proved that it respects all its citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin" and noted that Turkish Cypriots in the Republic were treated "as equal citizens with equal rights". □