



*End discrimination against Turkish Cypriots*



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# **Tolerance and non-Discrimination I and Turkish Cypriots**

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# Human Rights – not if you're Turkish Cypriot

- The UN Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, UK Human Rights Act & many more all prohibit discrimination. Yet Turkish Cypriots are constantly discriminated – embargoed since 1964 for no good reason!
- Cyprus became independent from Britain in 1960, with Greek & Turkish Cypriots the two politically equal co-founders of the Republic of Cyprus.
- The Greek Cypriots resented this power-sharing arrangement because they were the numerical majority.
  - They tried to persuade Turkish Cypriots to accept minority status. When this failed, they brutally attacked them in December 1963 & seized control of the state, continuing to try to oppress them into submission.
- The badly worded UN Resolution 186 on 4 March 1964 referred to the Greek Cypriot authorities as the 'Cypriot Government', a false status they have hid behind ever since at the expense of Turkish Cypriots & their rights
  - The world refuses to act on this, allowing Turkish Cypriots to remain internationally isolated. In Europe may claim to uphold human rights, but not when it comes to Turkish Cypriots.





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### **Turkish Cypriots – the EU’s invisible citizens**

- 300,000 people in North Cyprus don’t officially exist. They are denied EU freedoms & opportunities that millions of others, including those south of the Green Line Border, enjoy daily. Turkish Cypriots are barred from:
  - The European Parliament – their democratically elected officials cannot represent them.
  - Direct trade with, or direct travel to, other EU member states.
  - Even playing a game of friendly football with UEFA registered teams.
- Turkish Cypriots voted in favour of the UN-backed Annan Plan to unite the island before its entry into the EU in 2004. 76% of Greek Cypriots voted against the Plan they helped draw up.
  - Following the vote, world leaders joined EU Commissioner Verheugen in promising “to put an end to the isolation of Turkish Cypriots”. The EU Commission promised direct trade & aid.
  - Since entering the EU on 1 May 2004, the Greek Cypriots have used their EU veto rights to prevent direct trade & obstruct aid to Turkish Cypriots.
- Turkish Cypriots want a formula to enable them to enjoy equal opportunities. but the EU refuses, making it guilty of upholding apartheid in Cyprus.





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# **If sport is a human right, why are Turkish Cypriots excluded?**

- The recent London 2012 Olympic Games were a bitter-sweet moment for Turkish Cypriots. London is the home of its largest Diaspora, but Turkish Cypriots were prevented from participating – even under the Olympic Flag
- The IOC & IPC only recognise the Greek-RoC & demand Turkish Cypriots come under this flag – totally ignoring their political rights & struggle for the past 50 years.
- Precedents exist for athletes from countries with ethnic conflicts to participate at the Olympics (former Yugoslavia, Palestine etc), but these were seemingly ignored, as was a core principle in the IOC Charter, which forbids discrimination *“on the ground of race, religion, politics...”*
  - The IOC seems happy to discriminate against talented Turkish Cypriot athletes including Taekwondo world champions Ziya Gokbilen and Pinar Akpinar, who were denied the right to participate either via their own National Olympic Committee or as Independent Athletes.





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### **OSCE, Human Rights & Turkish Cypriots**

- Embargoed! has been attending the OSCE HDIM conference since 2008
- We are pleased to see important human rights abuses, such as violations against the Roma people and human trafficking, tackled
- We need to see the same resolve about the human rights abuses Turkish Cypriots face – they wage a peaceful, patient struggle for their rights.
- 50 years of isolation is wrong & so too is keeping Turkish Cypriots hostage to a political solution that may never come, while Greek Cypriots have been able to re-build their lives & enjoy full participation with the wider world.
- We call on OSCE members to address this issue with specific action to ensure equal opportunities for all in Cyprus.







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# TURKISH CYPRIOT OLYMPIC PROJECT – THE FACTS



## A. OLYMPIC IDEALS

1. The Olympic Charter recognises that the **“practice of sport is a human right”** and that **“every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which recognises mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play”**.
2. The Charter further states that **“Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on ground of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement”**.
3. On Friday 10 August 2012, Meliz Redif made history as the first Turkish Cypriot to compete in the Olympic Games. She ran in the 4x400m relay for Turkey, having taken up Turkish nationality in order to be able to compete.
4. Currently Turkish Cypriots can only participate in the Olympic and Paralympic Games if they are citizens of a recognised country, which requires them to change their nationality. This runs counter to the Olympic Charter and the principles of the Olympic Movement.



**Meliz Redif**

The first Turkish Cypriot to compete in the Olympics

## B. A DIVIDED CYPRUS

1. The Republic of Cyprus (RoC) gained its independence in 1960 with Greek and Turkish Cypriots sharing power as political equals. In December 1963, a violent Greek Cypriot coup forced Turkish Cypriots out and took control of the RoC.
2. In 1964, this situation was unwittingly given legal standing under UN Resolution 186, which mistakenly referred to the solely Greek Cypriot administration as “the government of the Republic” – an unjust status they continue to exploit.
3. Turkish Cypriots formed their own administration in 1964 to protect their rights and fight for their survival on the island.
4. The intervention of Turkey in Cyprus in 1974 following a Greek mainland military coup, ended 11 years of bloodshed and guaranteed the safety of Turkish Cypriots by creating a safe haven for them in the northern third of the island.
5. The RoC has not represented Turkish Cypriots since 1964. Indeed, it continues to oppress them, insisting the world only recognises the RoC, while pushing for Turkish Cypriots to remain politically, culturally and economically isolated.
6. In 1983, after years of failing to reach a political settlement, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was declared to reassert the political equality of the Turkish Cypriot people.
7. In 2004, the two sides voted on the internationally-backed Annan Plan to unite the island under a new power-sharing arrangement. 65% of Turkish Cypriots voted ‘yes’, while 76% of Greek Cypriots voted ‘no’.
8. Following their positive vote to unite the island, the international community promised to end the international isolation of Turkish Cypriots. But little has changed...
9. A divided Cyprus was allowed to join the EU in May 2004, with the North’s membership and citizenship rights frozen.



A divided Cyprus: two separate administrations have existed since 1964

## C. CYPRIOTS AND THE OLYMPICS

1. Following changes to the Olympic Charter in 1996, athletes wishing to participate in the Olympic Games must be backed by a National Olympic Committee (NOC) that is recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
2. The NOC for the RoC was admitted into the IOC in 1977.
3. The national Olympic squad from the RoC competed in the Olympic Games for the first time in 1980 in Moscow.
4. The 1960 RoC constitution states both communities have the right to set up their own sporting federations. (Appendix D, Part V, Article 87, 1.e) and that the government and all state institutions include both Greek and Turkish Cypriot representatives.
5. No Turkish Cypriot has ever sat on the RoC's NOC or been selected to represent it at an Olympic Games.
6. The IOC and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) refuse to admit the TRNC NOC as the country is not internationally recognised. As a result, Turkish Cypriots are barred from participating in all major international sporting tournaments, including the Summer, Winter and Youth Olympics/Paralympics, and the World and European Championships.
7. The TRNC NOC has tried in vain to engage in dialogue with the IOC, most recently sending a letter to IOC President Jacques Rogge in April 2012.



Turkish Cypriots shackled in life & sport

© British Turkish Cypriot Association

## D. TURKISH CYPRIOTS AND SPORT

1. The 2011 census put the population of the TRNC at 294,906.
2. Anyone wishing to participate in sport in the TRNC must undergo a health test first to obtain a licence to practice.
3. There are 32 sporting federations in the TRNC. According to figures in January 2012 they have a combined membership of 2,220, with a further 7,465 people licensed, making a total 10,124 people regularly involved in sport in North Cyprus.
4. The most popular sports in the TRNC are athletics, cycling, football, martial arts, shooting, volleyball, and wrestling.
5. Due to the sporting embargoes and non-recognition of the TRNC, Turkish Cypriot sporting federations are prevented from joining their equivalent world federation as they are governed by the IOC which forbids this.
6. The Turkish Cypriot Taekwondo Federation (TCTF) was formerly a member of the IOC-accredited World Taekwondo Federation (WTF). The TCTF was forced out of the WTF due to the non-recognition of the TRNC. Today the TCTF is part of the smaller Global Taekwondo Federation (GTF) producing numerous champions. Yet these athletes are unable to participate in any major international event.
7. In 2011, the TRNC Wrestling Association was granted "associate member" status of the International Association of Federated Wrestling Styles (FILA), putting it on the same legal footing as Kosovo. It means Turkish Cypriots can participate in some tournaments, although they are still barred from major international competitions.
8. The World Badminton Federation Members have admitted members of the TRNC Badminton Federation as individuals. The TRNC federation was informally granted Observer Status. However, such access has been restricted in the last few years.
9. In the 1990s, Ugur Gazi a professional Turkish Cypriot basketball player from Famagusta was signed to play for Galatasaray in Istanbul. As a TRNC citizen he had ongoing visa problems which affected his ability to play abroad.



## E. NORTH CYPRUS – A COUNTRY OF TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONS



**Ziya Gokbilen**

*TRNC Taekwondo captain & world record holder*



**Pinar Akarpinar**

*Reigning GTF EuroAsian champion*

1. While Turkish Cypriot athletes are excluded from the Olympic Games, there is still a thriving culture of sport in North Cyprus.
2. The TRNC Taekwondo team are the reigning GTF champions with close to a dozen world class martial artists.
3. Members of the TRNC Taekwondo team regularly win Gold Medals at GTF tournaments, whose standards are on a par with the WTF.
4. Ziya Gokbilen was born in North Cyprus in 1985. His father is a Taekwondo grand master, giving him an early taste for martial arts. The TRNC Taekwondo captain has won numerous tournaments including two gold medals at the 6th Global Taekwondo Federation World Championship finals in Italy, where he also broke the world record breaking five wooden boards with a hand strike.
5. Pinar Akarpinar was brought up in North Cyprus by Turkish parents. Aged just 20, she is the reigning TRNC and EuroAsian Taekwondo champion. She took gold at the 2009 GTF World Championships in Malaysia and silver at the same tournament held in Scotland in 2011.

## F. OLYMPIC TRUCE

1. A central pillar of the Olympic Movement is the Olympic Truce, which dates back to classical times when warring cities would declare a truce throughout the Games.
2. The modern Olympic movement has revived this tradition in the form of the Olympic Truce Movement. In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Olympic Truce Resolution proposed by the IOC, which urged member states to observe the Olympic Truce individually and collectively.

## G. PARTICIPATING UNDER THE OLYMPIC FLAG

1. Athletes from countries in transition where there is no recognised NOC are occasionally allowed to participate in the Olympic Games as Independent Athletes under the Olympic flag. These decisions are made by the IOC Executive Board.
2. The decision to permit individual athletes to participate under the Olympic flag or to recognise the NOC of countries without widespread formal recognition appears to be arbitrary with decisions taken on a case-by-case basis.
3. Despite no formal UN recognition of Palestine, its NOC was recognised by the Olympic Council of Asia in 1986. The IOC subsequently admitted the Palestinian NOC in 1995.
4. Kosovo, however, is recognised by 90 states including the US, yet is still not admitted into the IOC. Neither can Kosovars compete under the Olympic flag – despite major international sporting federations admitting their athletes.
5. Despite UN sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro, the IOC permitted their athletes to participate as ‘Independent Olympic Participants’ in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games.
6. A total of 58 athletes competed under the Olympic Flag at Barcelona, which also included Macedonian athletes as the country had not yet formed its NOC. Between them they won one silver and two bronze medals.
7. At the 2000 Sydney Games, four East Timorese Olympic athletes were permitted to compete as Independent Olympic Athletes. East Timor had only just voted for independence from Indonesia and was still under United Nations administration.
8. Four Independent Olympic Athletes competed at the London 2012 Olympic Games: three from the former Netherland Antilles and one from the newly formed state of South Sudan.
9. Due to ongoing political problems in Cyprus, in May 2012 eight Turkish Cypriot champion Taekwondo athletes applied to the International Olympic Committee to participate under the Olympic flag. They never received a reply.
10. When human rights group Embargoed! intervened on their behalf, they were told ‘Turkish Cypriots should join the NOC of a recognised country’.



## H. IF SPORT IS A HUMAN RIGHT, WHY ARE TURKISH CYPRIOTS EXCLUDED?

1. The Turkish Cypriot Olympic Project is a campaign launched to ensure Turkish Cypriots participate in their own right at the Rio Olympic Games in 2016, whether through their NOC or as Independent Athletes.
2. **We call on the IOC, IPC and international sports bodies to recognise the rights of Turkish Cypriots to participate in sports without requiring them to compromise on their national identity or political equality.**

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