

Security Council unanimously agrees to extend UN Cyprus Mission amid political impasse

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus ([UNFICYP](#)) has been extended for 6 months, as a result of a Security Council Resolution unanimously adopted on Wednesday. The move comes at a time when reunification talks between the two divided halves of the island are at an impasse, following the collapse of talks in July 2017.

Resolution 2453 reaffirms the UN's position on Cyprus, urging all sides to renew their commitment to the creation of a federal state and stressing that the current status quo is unsustainable. However, no fresh talks between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot authorities have so far been scheduled.

The latest [report](#) of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus notes that the two communities want a peace process that is "more inclusive, transparent and representative of the people," and that uncertainty surrounding the future of settlement negotiations seems to be hampering political engagement, and risks eroding support for reunification in the country. Recent polls show that there are still high levels of mutual distrust, despite growing levels of confidence between both sides on the Mediterranean island. in recent years.

The main positive development mentioned in the report is the opening of two new border crossings, which are separated by a buffer zone maintained by UNFICYP. One of the crossings, at Deryneia/Derinya, has opened up the greater Famagusta region – a densely populated area with a long history of grass-roots support for intercommunal contact and cooperation. The situation alongside the ceasefire lines remains stable, but the opposing forces on either side remain heavily armed, and the tension between them, whilst at a low level, remains "ever-present."

The resolution urges the implementation of confidence-building measures, such as the development of an island-wide electricity and mobile phone network, and calls on leaders on both sides to promote peace education, and improve the atmosphere for settlement negotiations through constructive and harmonised messages.