

Thank you for your letter of 3 March on behalf of your constituents at the Lobby for Cyprus and the Organisation of Relatives of Missing Cypriots about missing persons in Cyprus.

I understand your constituents concern about the issue of missing Cypriots. The missing people of Cyprus is tragically an issue that continues to affect Cypriots from both communities. We understand that this is a sensitive issue and recognise the need for it to be resolved. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials regularly meet with the UN Committee for missing Persons (CMP). We welcome the significant progress they have made in their work, identifying the remains of around 500 Cypriots from both communities.

In the last three years, the UK has contributed £90,000 to the CMP. In addition, the EU's financial aid regulation for northern Cyprus has allocated €1.5 million. I realise that this provides little relief from the distress the relatives of missing Cypriots continue to experience. But the significant progress that the committee is making is encouraging.

With regards to the comments made by Atilla Olgac, I understand that an investigation has been launched by the Turkish Military. I would like to reassure you that we take these allegations seriously and our Embassy in Ankara is following developments closely.

The United Kingdom, as a party to the European Convention on Human Rights, supports the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. Turkey is obliged to abide by judgments in cases to which it is a party. I discussed this issue with Turkish Foreign Minister, Ali Babacan when I visited Turkey in December. We urge all parties to work together to resolve this painful issue and make available all information on all missing persons. We will continue to make representations in all relevant fora about this issue.

RT HON CAROLINE FLINT MP