

ORGANISATION OF RELATIVES OF MISSING CYPRIOTS (UK) ΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ ΣΥΓΓΕΝΩΝ ΚΥΠΡΙΩΝ ΑΓΝΟΟΥΜΕΝΩΝ (ΗΒ)

21 Trinity Road
London
N22 8LB.

Telephone: Office 020-8805 6939

E-mail: ormc1974@btoopenworld.com

Website: <http://www.ormc-uk.org>

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IDENTIFICATIONS: There was one identification since last September. That of Maria A. Christodoulou from Sysclipos. On average the laboratory carries out 50- 60 identifications a year. In this rate it would take another decade to identify the remains already exhumed and many decades to identify those still to be found. The CMP needs ongoing funding but, we believe, technical support as well. There are doing an excellent job but need more technical experts and facilities to deliver faster.

EXHUMATIONS CONTINUE: The exhumation of the remains of 14 more individuals, found at Sychari in the Kyrenia district of the Turkish-occupied area of Cyprus, was announced by the UN-backed Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) on 2 December. Digging at Sychari had been suspended for two weeks because of the unearthing of unexploded artillery shells. The CMP stressed that its search would continue until all the burial places on which it had information had been thoroughly investigated. It was noted that the UN Secretary General's latest report on Cyprus had called on Turkish forces "to adopt a more forthcoming approach" to the granting of access to CMP scientists.

REPLY FROM THE MINISTER AND THE CHAIRMAN OF APPG: We have received a letter from Minister Theresa Villiers in which she refers to the replies she received from the Minister for Europe David Lidington and from the Chairman of APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) for Cyprus David Burrowes. The Minister states that the UK will encourage Turkey to give the CMP greater access by lobbying interested parties in Northern Cyprus and will also coordinate action with other countries in the Council of Europe, ensuring that this topic returns once again to the top of the agenda with the aim of increasing pressure on Turkey to comply. The APPG chairman states that he will ensure that important questions are raised with Ministers in January and will also discuss with APPG members the good suggestion of a specific MP leading on this and other issues. *In our reply to the Minister we pointed out that:- Completion of CMP work would come only when all the cases of missing have been investigated and the remains, and hopefully any survivors, identified and returned to their families. Why the UK Government isn't encouraging, lobbying the responsible parties in Turkey, directly? The UK is Turkey's best friend in Europe and if any justification is needed is the hundreds of British citizens, relatives of the missing and the four British citizens that are missing. We hope that the increasing pressure on Turkey to comply will not only be on "opening up additional areas for the CMP to work in", but to open all areas and more importantly, to put pressure to Turkey to comply with the repeated ECHR judgements, which Turkey continues to ignore.*

MEMORIAL, PRAYERS AND CUTTING OF NEW YEAR'S CAKE:

On Sunday 16th Jan 11 ORMC(UK) held a memorial service for those Missing found dead and given a proper burial, and also prayers were said for the fate of those still missing, at St. Mary's church in Wood Green. The Cyprus Consul General Mr Georgios Georgiou attended and gave a short but detailed speech. Also in attendance were Euro MP Marina Yiannakoudakis and APPG secretary Marina Savva. Afterwards the cutting of the New Year's cake took place at St. Barnabas church hall. Bishop Athanasios blessed, cut and offered the cake. The ORMC(UK) President Neoklis Neokleous welcome and thanked those present especially the Bishop for his continued support, the Consul General for his regular updates and co-operation, the Euro MP for her co-operation and her efforts in the EU Parliament on the issue of our Missing. He also thanked the APPG secretary and asked her to pass on to all the APPG members, at their next meeting, our best wishes. Finally he wished a speedy solution to the issue of the Missing and freedom to Cyprus.

Mrs Panayiota Zeniou recited a poem dedicated to our Missing.



Above: Photo from the New Year's cake cutting.

OPEN MEETING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS: On Wednesday 12th Jan 11, an open meeting was held in room 6, House of Commons, organised by APPG for Cyprus, with guest the Minister for Europe Mr David Lidington. Two of our Committee members attended but unfortunately were unable to ask any questions due to lack of time.

MEETING WITH DAVID BURROWES MP: On Saturday 5th February committee members had a meeting with MP and Chairman of APPG for Cyprus David Burrowes. The meeting was very productive and we discussed plans for taking the issue of our Missing further. The need for pressure to be applied on Turkey to release all the information it has on our Missing and also to allow exhumations in military areas were in the forefront of our discussions. We also expressed our worry at the amount of time it takes to carry out the identifications. The MP was very understanding and will take all issues discussed forward and put them to the Foreign Office and the CMP respectively We thanked the MP for his interest and all his hard work for our cause.

(Photo on the other side).