

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

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## NEWS BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 2015

**WELCOME BACK:** With the summer over we would like to welcome all of you back. We hope you have all had a nice holiday, recharged your batteries and ready for action!

**IDENTIFICATIONS:** The following identifications have been announced: Demetraki Therapi from Larnaka, Costa Constantinou from Kaimakli, Michael Pekri from Vatili.

**WINE FESTIVAL:** As every year in the past, we were present again at the Wine festival at Alexandra Palace on 27-28 June. We had our stand full of photos of our missing and tens of appropriate slogans and leaflets, to remind everybody that 41 years on and the issue of our missing is still unresolved.



**MARCH AND RALLY:** With our banner and photos of our missing we took part in the march and rally on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July. Setting off from outside the Turkish Embassy and arriving in Trafalgar Square for the rally. Speeches were delivered by the Minister for Agriculture of Cyprus Mr N. Kouyialis as well as British MPs and Community leaders.



### LOBBY OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS:

On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July we were outside the HoC with our banner and photos demanding our human rights of knowing the fate of our missing. MPs from all parties came out and met with us listening for the umpteenth time to our demands. Present were also the mayors of Kyrenia and Lapithos.



### THE DISAPPEARED OF CYPRUS:

In collaboration with our Organisation, Lobby for Cyprus held its annual seminar at Teatro Technis, on Thursday 16 July where tragic stories of the missing persons of Cyprus were told by their relatives.

Toulla Savva was the first of the speakers to give her story about her brother, Andreas Savva from Alambra. Although Andreas' remains were found last year, the pain and confusion still continues for his family who have no answers about the circumstances of his untimely death.

Helen Anastasi read out the account of Kika Kattirtz, from the village of Ayios Amvrosios, Kyrenia. Kika's brother, George Drakos went missing in action. George's remains show that he had been shot in the back of the head.

Kendeas Yiannaki told the story of his father, Theodosios Yiannaki, a business man from the village of Achna in Famagusta. Theodosios was seen alive by eye-witnesses, handcuffed, blindfolded and in the custody of Turkish forces. Theodosios was interrogated and tortured by Turkish soldiers who sought information about arms smuggling. He was then taken to Kyrenia hospital to be treated for the injuries inflicted upon him during the ordeal. He was last seen after having emergency surgery to amputate both legs and has been registered as missing ever since.

Liza Matsangou read an account written by Xenia Chambou and Leonidas Zachariou, whose brother Panayiotis Zachariou from Ayios Andronikos in Karpasia. has been missing since 1974. After so many years of anguish, Panayiotis's mother took her own life at 67 years old, unable to continue living with the pain. Today, Panayiotis's seven siblings are still waiting for news and answers from Turkey.

Finally, Niki Hadjoulis gave her account about two missing family members. Her case is perhaps the most well known as her brother Christakis is the youngest person on the Cyprus missing persons register. Last seen in the hands of Turkish authorities, at just five years old after being shot in both legs. Written reports have revealed that Christakis was sent to Ankara for treatment. Niki's father has also been missing since 1974, leaving her family to search endlessly for answers and in hope that Christakis is still alive, somewhere.

Our President Neoklis Neokleous, addressed the audience to explain that the problem remains unresolved, 41 years on, because Turkey refuses to cooperate with sincerity. It ignores UN resolutions, EU calls and relevant ECHR judgements. Declares that it supports the work of the UN's Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus but in actual fact undermines it by denying access to all areas and removing skeletal remains from their original burial places. Those remains that have been found so far were discovered due to intelligence provided by private individuals. Turkey's behaviour not only heightens and prolongs the agony of the relatives but also shows total disregard to the institutions to which is a member, or aspires to be a member of.

To end, Dr Theodora Christou spoke to give her expert opinion as a human rights lawyer on the actions, or rather inactions of Turkey in the case of the missing. As Theodora explains, despite its responsibility to the victims and their families to locate the missing persons, Turkey refuses to conduct effective investigations and often provides inaccurate information in order to hamper the search for those who have not yet been found. Instead, since 1974, the Turkish authorities have worked on the principle that the passage of time will dilute the evidence or fade memory.

As this event illustrated, the memory of the missing can never be forgotten and time cannot undo the war crimes carried out by Turkey during its invasion and subsequent occupation of Cyprus.