



# General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General  
19 November 2020

Original: English

General Assembly  
Seventy-fifth session  
Agenda item 76  
Oceans and the law of the sea

Security Council  
Seventy-fifth year

## Letter dated 13 November 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter of the Permanent Representative of Greece dated 14 October 2020 ([A/75/513-S/2020/1015](#)) and upon instructions from my Government, I would like to bring to your attention the following.

Consequent to her deployment in the Eastern Mediterranean, the seismic research vessel *Oruç Reis* returned to the port of Antalya on 12 September 2020 for routine maintenance and resupply operations. As of 12 October 2020, Turkey has been proceeding with seismic survey activities within its own continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean, the outer limits of which have been established in accordance with international law and principles, and are consistent with the relevant decisions of international courts as well as State practice in maritime boundary delimitation. In this regard, with reference to my letters dated 21 August 2020 ([A/74/997-S/2020/826](#)), 18 March 2020 ([A/74/757](#)) and 13 November 2019 ([A/74/550](#)) elaborating the details of these principles, the seismic research activities of *Oruç Reis* announced with a NAVTEX message (1262/20) within the Turkish continental shelf do not constitute a violation of the sovereignty of any State.

In this context, I deem it necessary to reiterate that Greece's recurring objections to Turkey's exercise of its sovereign rights within its own continental shelf, based merely on the claim that the island of Kastellorizo generates full effect in maritime boundary delimitation, are devoid of any legal basis. Considering the dominating geographical circumstances in the relevant area, namely the overwhelming length of the Turkish coastline and the seaward projection thereof, the island of Kastellorizo could not be accorded maritime jurisdiction areas beyond territorial waters in accordance with the jurisprudence of international courts as well as the State practice in that respect.

Greece's selective interpretation of the law of the sea concerning the role of the islands in the delimitation of the continental shelf/exclusive economic zone and simultaneous neglect of the principle of equity as the fundamental rule of maritime boundary delimitation are indicative of Greece's insistence to maintain maximalist and excessive maritime boundary claims, ignoring the legitimate rights of Turkey.



Regardless of the current state of affairs in the Eastern Mediterranean as outlined above, Turkey honours all its commitments reached at bilateral and multilateral forums and is ready to engage in a dialogue without any preconditions at the earliest convenience. In the meantime, Turkey will carry on exercising its sovereign rights over its maritime jurisdiction areas while maintaining its resolve for a sincere and meaningful dialogue with Greece towards a peaceful and lasting solution based on equity for all outstanding issues between the two countries.

On this occasion, I would also like to refer to my letter dated 2 July 2020 (A/74/936) once more, in which I have clarified that, even if registered with or published by the United Nations, neither the unilaterally characterized domestic laws or practices of other countries nor the bilateral agreements that Turkey has explicitly objected to between third countries concerning the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas are binding upon or can be invoked against Turkey in relevant dealings.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 76, and of the Security Council and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(Signed) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**  
Permanent Representative

---