



Embargoed!
PO Box 100
Surrey
SM4 9DH

☎ : +44 (0)780 693 2966
🌐 : www.embargoed.org
✉ : mail@embargoed.org

Embargoed! Annual Report 2009-2010





Embargoed!
PO Box 100
Surrey
SM4 9DH

☎ : +44 (0)780 693 2966
🌐 : www.embargoed.org
✉ : mail@embargoed.org

Embargoed! Annual Report 2009-2010

On behalf of the group let me welcome you to our 2010 AGM.

Since our last AGM in 2009 Embargoed! has again been making the headlines for a number of reasons, all good I hasten to add!

In order to do my bit to save the rainforests I will attempt to keep the annual report brief.

The group have always been conscious to try to engage in issues that tug on to the heart-strings of Turkish Cypriots and those who have an interest in Northern Cyprus. However, we must always remember the reason why the group was formed in the first place and this has to be the primary remit of the group – we have effectively brought in a ‘remit test’ which we informally apply.

It has been a real privilege serving the group over the last 3 years or so in my capacity as Chairperson. I hope in that time I have been able to set a good example to both my colleagues within the group but also as an Embargoed! ambassador in the various external engagements I have had. The role is of massive importance and the group has a credibility and reputation that is the envy of many NGO groups within our community. Before I go on to touch on the issues we have been embroiled in since the last AGM I would like to conclude my opening comments by thanking my wife Serife, who has supported me fantastically as a wife and mother to our children. Many of you will know that we have not exactly had the best of luck in the previous 3 years, and she has been a real source of inspiration for me.

There are lots of people to thank in our group. We have a wonderfully capable secretary who is brilliant and we continue to be supported on the PR front by the exceptional Ipek Ozerim. I will run through more thank you’s in my verbal supplement to the report.



Embargoed!
PO Box 100
Surrey
SM4 9DH

☎ : +44 (0)780 693 2966
🌐 : www.embargoed.org
✉ : mail@embargoed.org

Our work has seen us primarily focus on 5 areas relating to embargoes.

These focus areas are: Property, Representation, Trade, Sport and the Genocide issue. Updates on each area follow:

Property: There have been a number of significant developments on the property front which effectively prompted some very creative and thought provoking actions from our group. The Orams' case saw some very sad developments, but it also raised peoples awareness as to just what a minefield the property issue was. It highlighted for many people the unfairness in relation to Turkish Cypriot refugee rights on property which at the time were effectively zero.

Our biggest expense by far was the Property events, entitled 'Solving the Cyprus Property Conundrum, that saw us occupy the House of Lords, courtesy of Lord Wallace of Soltaire, and a packed LSE public event which drew praise from Greek Cypriots attending. The speeches delivered from leading specialists in the world of politics, law and academia from North Cyprus, succeeded in dispelling many of the myths surrounding this issue and placing recent legal developments into context against the backdrop of the Cyprus issue. In addition to this we held a round-table of esteemed legal persons, the intention being to get a white paper put together. This aspect is still outstanding although pain-staking work is being pulled together as I write this report. My thanks go to all of the sponsors who helped to make this initiative a reality including the inspirational project leader Ata Cholak. Not so much thanks go to the people who effectively promised us funds and never came through leaving us in a potentially very awkward position.

The Orams' case also saw Embargoed! lead the way in creating a new property platform designed for further lobbying purposes but this has not unfortunately received the backing of the 60+ TC NGOs in existence [mainly due to Konsey not forwarding the details at the time]. Another high profile action on the property front saw a well co-ordinated lobby outside the Royal Courts of Justice and massive media attention that it attracted.

Into the summer of 2010 Embargoed! was truly saddened and dismayed as the news come out from Cyprus of the Kulaksiz 5 property scandal. The group wasted no time in campaigning for the halt of the auction and calling for the TRNC government to step in to grant the Kulaksiz 5 reprieve from the bank's actions. Unfortunately, despite our best



Embargoed!
PO Box 100
Surrey
SM4 9DH

☎ : +44 (0)780 693 2966
🌐 : www.embargoed.org
✉ : mail@embargoed.org

efforts the auction went ahead – for us it marked one of the darker days Embargoed! has endured in its 6 year history.

Representation: The group continues to make serious efforts to build relationships with the opinion-formers, in this case the politicians, councillors and Lords/Baronesses. In particular we saw the European Liberal Democrats pass a resolution at their Barcelona congress urging the EU to end Turkish Cypriot isolation and championed Turkey's EU accession – this motion was spearheaded by Embargoed!

We have seen successful outreach work done into the corridors of both Westminster using the Property focus when Lord Wallace very kindly hosted a session in the House of Lords and also into the European Parliament where we went as part of a great collective mission to raise awareness on the direct trade regulation.

In October 2009 the group sent two teams of delegates to the OSCE Conference – Europe's largest human rights convention - at which we addressed diplomats from the 55 OSCE states. Our first speech to the conference highlighted the lack of representation that Turkish Cypriots are given in the Republic of Cyprus, with an inability to engage effectively particularly in the legal and political arenas. Our second speech tackled the persisting discrimination and racism that Turkish Cypriots and those living in Northern Cyprus face. Our statement that *'Turkish Cypriots live under apartheid conditions'* was mentioned in a circular distributed to all members of ICARE, the European anti-racism group. We were able to draw the attention of the delegates to the situation in Cyprus – in particular receiving the support of the Turkish Ambassador to the OSCE.

We also submitted a report to the OSCE in response to its request for information on incidents and responses to hate crimes committed in 2009 within the OSCE region. Our submission and that of the Turkish Cypriots Human Rights Foundation (TCHRF) have been included in the preliminary draft.

In the run-up to the UK elections Embargoed! mounted a campaign, drawing inspiration from Operation Black Vote (OBV), to engage with the Turkish diaspora encouraging them to vote and vote smart. This was launched with an interview between me and Reverend Jessie Jackson, the eminent civil liberties campaigner. We then followed this up with our Saints & Sinners Report which provided information on the views and opinions of the candidates who were standing for elections in areas of London where the Turkish diaspora is most prevalent. The campaign was received positively by the Turkish media and was successful in



Embargoed!
PO Box 100
Surrey
SM4 9DH

☎ : +44 (0)780 693 2966
🌐 : www.embargoed.org
✉ : mail@embargoed.org

raising awareness amongst our community – it even saw the removal of one of the existing politicians who Embargoed! regarded as a ‘sinner’. We have also visited Brussels and engaged with MEPs on issues relating to Trade and this is covered in more detail in the next section.

Embargoed! were heavily involved in the historic live broadcasting of what turned out to be a 3-hour show dedicated to the UK General Election and the involvement of the UK Turkish-speaking Diaspora. Several key high profile guests appeared on the famous red couch of Genc TV and myself and Dowan Ahmet were the presenters on the evening.

Trade: Embargoed!, along with other NGOs, has engaged directly with the EU in its ‘Trade Not Aid!’ campaign which calls for the introduction of direct trade, something which the EU had promised since 2004. In light of this we were invited to submit comments to the proposed revisions to the ‘Brussels 1’ Regulation on Direct Trade. However due to resistance from some member states the vote on the Direct Trade Regulation has been postponed. In addition to this Embargoed! have managed to get in a quality submission concerning the review of Regulation 44 thanks to the legal expertise of both Ergin Balli and Izzet Sinan.

The early part of 2010 has also seen the Direct Flight case brought to the High Court. The judgment is expected any week now. In honesty Embargoed! would loved to have run a strong campaign highlighting the continuing injustices of not having direct flights but this has been a good example also highlighting the lack of resources that we have at our disposal, driven purely by cost not through anything else.

On another sad note the summer of 2010 has seen the collapse of Cyprus Turkish Airlines. We at Embargoed! have, along with other civil community groups, written a letter to Prime Minister Irsen Kucuk offering our sympathies for the customers and employees who have been affected and offering a 10-point plan on how the situation may be resolved. We have been at the forefront of pushing a new action group – CTA UK Action Group which looks to ensure the issues of the CTA staff and those customers who potentially lost their ticket money do not come off the radar. Individuals from Embargoed! have given a lot of their own time to helping the CTA staff based here in London, as we felt it right and proper to do so given their horrible predicaments, which incidentally is ongoing.

We have also campaigned hard against Jennifer Lopez’s decision to cancel her concert on 20 July 2010 at the opening of the Cratos Premium hotel. She cancelled the concert after



Embargoed!
PO Box 100
Surrey
SM4 9DH

☎ : +44 (0)780 693 2966
🌐 : www.embargoed.org
✉ : mail@embargoed.org

coming under pressure from Greek Cypriot lobby groups. Whilst she did not rescind her decision not to attend, she has since offered an apology to Turkish Cypriots and Turks for causing offence – whilst this has not gone far enough it is an indication of what the Embargoed! campaign of encouraging members to write to her Agents complaining can do.

Sport: Following the racist behaviour of APOEL fans at their match with Chelsea in Nicosia, Embargoed! immediately wrote to UEFA highlighting the intolerable incidences of racism which occurred. APOEL have since been fined 40,000 Euros for their fans behaviour. During the return leg we worked closely with Chelsea FC and the Metropolitan Police to ensure that there was no repeat of the racist behaviour.

Genocide: The Genocide group has been led by Ersu Ekrem and Ismail Veli – there has been excellent support from one of our university students Feriha Tayfur. The group has met a number of times and an excellent plan is coming together which will coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Republic of Cyprus. We will be reminding President Christofias of those darker years and helping him to celebrate the anniversary accordingly. This event will also need funding and we hope we again receive the support of those who have been able to support us previously.

Other areas: After much hard work, in coordination with a great team of designers Embargoed! is almost ready to launch its reviewed and renewed website, which we are currently in the process of testing. The new design will be much more eye-catching and adopts a more professional look to reflect how our group has grown in the last 6 years. We hope it will allow interested parties and members to keep more abreast of Embargoed!'s developments throughout the year. The site will also have a facility for members to renew, or new members to join our group online by making payment using the PayPal system – we hope this will make joining Embargoed! particularly for our friends in Cyprus, a much simpler process.

Another new feature to the website is our E!TV section. At present this features a report from our second OSCE speech last year and of my interview with Reverend Jessie Jackson. Going into the 2010/2011 term Embargoed! intends to fully utilise this new feature which allows for viral distribution of the Embargoed! message to a wider audience in a fast and effective manner. Our social network groups continue to grow strongly and we have members in the region of 2,500 in these groups alone. These are a vital avenue of communication to many of our supporters.



Embargoed!
PO Box 100
Surrey
SM4 9DH

☎ : +44 (0)780 693 2966
🌐 : www.embargoed.org
✉ : mail@embargoed.org

Whilst we have not focused as much as we would like on the education aspect of the embargoes despite this clearly being an ongoing concern for our group, one of our members Jeanne-Marie Douglas has been helping on this issue and my thanks go to her.

Summary: The past year has presented some interesting challenges for Embargoed! with many highs and some lows. Into the next term the group hopes to build on its continuing success. The present structure of dividing the group into sub-groups has allowed us to simultaneously handle different projects targeting differing areas. These groups are seen through by the work of an active group of Embargoed! members – we would invite many of you sitting here today to consider joining the ranks of the Embargoed! core family!

We have big ideas and willing volunteers but also feel the time is coming for us to up our game. For this reason we would like to thank you, our members, for your ongoing support and hope that you will continue to do so into the future. However the work does not stop here; many of us feel that for Embargoed! to continue as an effective organisation, and in order to reach our potential, the time is approaching for Embargoed! to move towards becoming a fully funded lobby group.

Fevzi Hussein
Chairperson, Embargoed!

Produced: July 2010