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Turkish Cypriots will soldier on

THE following is the interview with Rauf Denktash, the leader of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Kibris) which took place on Aug 2 at his summer residence in Girne.

Q: The Turkish and the Greek Cypriots have been in conflict for a long time now. Could you tell us the background to this?

A: For 37 years now, the West, through the UN Security Council, has been trying to settle the problem in complete denial of the rule of law and facts.

We have been demanding a special session for the purpose of diagnosing the problem. But we are told that the Security Council resolutions are proper, just and fair and that we should not try to change them.

They refuse to understand that these resolutions are wrong in law and in complete denial of the facts in Cyprus and that they are treating the guilty party, who destroyed a partnership republic, without taking into consideration the criminal acts which this party has committed against us as the legitimate Government of Cyprus.

This was what the Greek Cypriots wanted to become. That's why they destroyed a guaranteed partnership republic in which we had equal rights with them.

We did not submit to the demands of the Greek Cypriots at gun-point that Cyprus should be converted into a Greek Cypriot republic and that we should accept minority rights.

That's why they destroyed the partnership and tried to destroy us completely from 1963 to 1974. Had Turkey not saved us, there would be no Turkish Cypriot Muslim person in Cyprus today. The outside world refuses to see these facts.

Without a proper diagnosis, it is impossible to solve the Cyprus problem because you are trying to crown the Greek Cypriots side and colonising us, which we shall never accept.

I have invited individuals and diplomats to come and talk to us about the Cyprus problem. Foreign Governments should send specialist committees in international law to Cyprus, to look at the facts, so they can see what happened in Cyprus.

But nothing has happened. I invite OIC members each time I attend summit meetings as an observer to send delegates to investigate and to report to the Islamic countries the Turkish Cypriots are not a secessionist minority, an illegitimate government or state, that we are the co-founders of a republic established by Christians and Muslims and that the Christian wing cannot be the continuation of the Christian-Muslim partnership or the heir to it.

To treat them as such is to give them the mandate to colonise us, to make us a minority in a state which we established jointly as co-founders in which we were guaranteed by three nations (Turkey, Greece, Britain) that our status will not be changed.

Not only do have they (OIC members) not send such delegations to us for the last two decades, the secretaries-general have not come to see what the Islamic problem is, although it is constantly on their agenda.

Who is secessionist in Cyprus? We want this question asked. Who has unilaterally declared a state but under a false name? It is the Greek Cypriots who seceded from a partnership by destroying it, who put a claim to the title as the Government of Cyprus. They put their claim to the

title and say "we are the Government of Cyprus".

And the sad part is that the world treats them as such.

Our defiance of this injustice, our sacrifices in order not to be dominated, not to be colonised, not to become a minority in a state which we established jointly, are completely disregarded.

Yet, they expect a solution. I told them, 'You have solved the problem by telling Greek Cypriots that they are the Government of Cyprus. You have solved the problem for them' and now you are asking us to help the Greek Cypriots to enter European Union as the Government of Cyprus.

The Greek Cypriots are telling the world that the Cyprus problem started in 1974. They forget the period between 1963 and 1974. The mass graves, the attacks, the hunger which we suffered.

The fact that they confined us into three per cent of the area in Cyprus, threatened us with extinction for 11 years ... the Greek Cypriots have forgotten all that and the world, too, has forgotten that.

They say the Government of Cyprus has made a proper application for EU membership, but the Turkish Cypriots are intransigent, not helping them.

We are really grateful that your Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) has a vision of seeing us and listening to us and allowing us to be heard and we hope this will be an example for other Islamic countries.