



Security Council

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Letter dated 8 May 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

With regards to the statement by the representative of Greece delivered at the Security Council resumed open briefing entitled “The safety and protection of waterways in the maritime domain” on 29 April 2026, where Greece regrettably objected to the use of the term Turkish Straits, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

First, Türkiye considers the objection raised by Greece to be unfortunate, as it diverted attention from substantive issues under discussion and appeared to aim at serving domestic considerations rather than contributing to the objectives of the meeting.

Second, Türkiye firmly and totally rejects Greece’s unfounded assertions. Attempts to politicize a widely used geographical term do not contribute to constructive dialogue, regional stability or the proper understanding of the 1936 Montreux Convention regime. The term Turkish Straits is a well-established geographical expression referring collectively to İstanbul Strait and Çanakkale Strait, all of which are situated within and under the sovereignty of the Republic of Türkiye. The use of the term has historical, political and legal justification, including respect for long-standing and current general practice, as well as due regard to Türkiye’s sovereign rights and jurisdiction. The term Turkish Straits is descriptive, geographically accurate and fully compatible with the continued application of the Montreux Convention.

Established international practice and principles concerning the standardization of geographical names affirm the precedence of official national forms. Accordingly, where a geographical feature lies entirely within the sovereignty of a State, the official name designated by the competent national authority may naturally be used in official statements. In this regard, the term Turkish Straits has also been conventionally and consistently used in numerous international documents, including resolutions and documents of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Third, Greece’s assertion that the use of this term is inconsistent with the 1936 Montreux Convention and the legal regime therein has no basis in the letter and spirit or purpose of the Convention. The Convention establishes the legal regime governing passage through the İstanbul Strait, the Marmara Sea and the Çanakkale Strait. Beyond this purpose, however, the Convention does not aim to standardize geographical names.



The use of the term Turkish Straits is neither relevant nor a challenge to the legal regime established by the Convention. On the contrary, Türkiye has consistently upheld the Convention and will continue to implement it meticulously and impartially, as has been the case for the past 90 years.

Against this background, Greece's attempt to enforce a terminology other than "Turkish Straits" poses a challenge to Türkiye's competence to name a place under its sovereignty, which can only be reasoned with historical aspirations. Yet these attempts would change neither the legal nor the political status of the Turkish Straits.

Türkiye will continue to use the term Turkish Straits in accordance with its sovereignty and jurisdiction and expects all Member States, including Greece, to respect this established and legitimate usage.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ahmet **Yıldız**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
