

## **Open Letter to the United Nations and Matthew Nimetz**

*by Victor Bivell*

9 January 2018

To  
Mr Matthew Nimetz,  
United Nations Special Representative for the naming dispute between Greece and Macedonia

CC:

Dr Gjorge Ivanov, President of the Republic of Macedonia  
Mr Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia  
Mr Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic  
Mr Nikola Dimitrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia  
Mr Nikos Kotzias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic

Dear Mr Nimetz,

I write in behalf of the several million ethnic Macedonians around the world whose families originate from that part of Macedonia they choose to call Aegean Macedonia - and which since the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 has been part of Northern Greece and has been known as "Greek Macedonia". Before this our land was part of "Ottoman Macedonia".

I write in regard to the United Nations brokered negotiations between the Republic of Macedonia and the Hellenic Republic to affirm the following:

1. That the United Nations is not authorized to speak or negotiate on our behalf.
2. That the Republic of Macedonia is not authorized to speak or negotiate on our behalf.
3. That the Hellenic Republic is not authorized to speak or negotiate on our behalf.
4. That only ethnic Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia and our representative bodies can speak and negotiate on our behalf.
5. We remind the United Nations that the UN brokered talks can only be about the name of the Republic. Neither the UN nor the Republic of Macedonia is authorized to discuss and negotiate the identity of our people around the world - which is Macedonian, nor the name of our language around the world - which is Macedonian.
6. The Macedonian identity and the Macedonian culture belongs to all people of ethnic Macedonian descent. This includes those born in and born of parents from Aegean Macedonia,

Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia and Kosovo, numerous other countries in Europe, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and many other countries around the world where our people now live.

7. We remind you that these ethnic Macedonians far outnumber the Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia. We are the majority.

8. With every power given by God and Man, we will continue to own and exercise our Macedonian identity, our Macedonian language, our Macedonian religion and our Macedonian culture.

9. Whatever the outcome of the negotiations between the Republic of Macedonia and the Hellenic Republic, the outcome can not and will not in any way change who we are - it will not change the international public affirmation of our identity, the international public affirmation of our language, and the international public affirmation of our culture.

10. Any attempt to change the name of our ethnic identity, the name of our language, the name of our culture and otherwise limit the full enjoyment of our Macedonian identity will be against our individual and collective will and will be illegal and immoral. It is within our rights to meet such an attempt with every appropriate form of concerted international resistance, including legal action, civil resistance and civil disobedience, and as always we reserve the right to form a Government of Aegean Macedonia in Exile with all the powers of a Government.

11. We note the many international covenants and agreements authored by the United Nations that uphold the rights of peoples and individuals including the rights to self-determination and cultural freedom of indigenous peoples and minorities, and we note that the United Nations and its representatives are in every way bound to uphold these.

12. We affirm that even if the negotiations arrive at a mutually acceptable compromise between the Republic of Macedonia and the Hellenic Republic, this will not solve the Hellenic Republic's claim that the name Macedonia is irredentist. It will not secure the Hellenic Republic's hold on the land of Aegean Macedonia.

13. This is because the Hellenic Republic is negotiating with the wrong party. The land of Aegean Macedonia/ Northern Greece belongs to us and our forebears, the ethnic Macedonians who lived there before and during the Balkan Wars.

14. If the Hellenic Republic wants to secure this land, it needs to negotiate with us. It is we, our people, who owned the majority of this land and from whom the Greek army and government acquired it by invasion and occupation in contravention of international law. It is we who have the moral rights to assert our prior ownership of the land. It is we who can legally challenge the Hellenic Republic's claim on this land. It is we who have not given up our rights to this land.

15. We affirm that the manner of the Greek Government's and the Greek Army's conquest of

this land was an act of genocide.

16. We affirm that since the invasion the Governments of the Hellenic Republic have committed ongoing cultural genocide on our people, of which the so called “name negotiations” are a current chapter.

17. We affirm that since the invasion the Governments of the Hellenic Republic have committed ethnic cleansing on our people, the native people of Macedonia.

18. We affirm that since the invasion the Governments of the Hellenic Republic have committed ongoing discrimination against our people. That discrimination continues to this day. It includes discrimination in employment opportunities, in the lack of religious freedom, in the lack of language freedom, in the absence of the Macedonian language in the Greek education system, in the lack of freedom to publicly hold Macedonian names, and other forms of discrimination.

19. We affirm that since the invasion the Governments of the Hellenic Republic have colonized Aegean Macedonia with many hundreds of thousands of settlers from Turkey and elsewhere.

20. We affirm that these people had no prior connection with Aegean Macedonia, yet the Governments of the Hellenic Republic claim that these colonizers and immigrants, these "New Macedonians", have a stronger claim to the Macedonian identity than we, the earlier and longer settlers in the land, many of whom have DNA tests that confirm family residence up to 10,000 and more years ago.

21. If the Hellenic Republic wishes to continue to hold the land and enjoy the wealth of Aegean Macedonia, it needs to negotiate with us, the indigenous people of the land.

22. We are willing to negotiate.

23. We want a Treaty.

24. This Treaty will, for our people, provide the following:

- A full and sincere apology for the invasion and genocide of 1912-13 and the suffering it caused to over six generations of Macedonians.

- A full and sincere apology for the cultural genocide that has occurred against our people since 1912-13.

- Full recognition and acceptance of our Macedonian identity, ethnicity, language, religion and culture, and the freedom to enjoy these throughout the territory of the Hellenic Republic.

- Appropriate restitution for all lands and possessions that were illegally, forcibly or immorally acquired by the Hellenic Republic.

- A full and complete end to all anti-Macedonian activities and propaganda.

25. In return, this Treaty will, for the Hellenic Republic, provide the following:

- The ethnic Macedonians will accept the apologies of the Hellenic Republic and acknowledge that a new page in history has begun.

- The Hellenic Republic will continue to own and govern the Macedonian land now under its authority, and continue to enjoy its wealth.

- The colonizers and immigrants from Turkey and elsewhere will be allowed to stay and to continue to enjoy their properties and wealth.

- The ethnic Macedonians from what is now the Hellenic Republic will not as a group make irredentist or separatist claims on the land.

- The ethnic Macedonians from what is now the Hellenic Republic will co-operate with the Hellenic Republic to implement progressive policies, develop Greece, and give the world an example of ethnic goodwill, co-operation and harmony that will reflect well on Greece and its international standing.

26. The Treaty can be guaranteed by the United Nations and the European Union if this is acceptable.

27. This Treaty will, for the Republic of Macedonia, provide the following:

- End the so called “name dispute”.

- Provide a more secure assurance that it does not have irredentist aspirations on “Greek Macedonia”.

- Provide a more secure basis for it to enter NATO and the European Union.

I believe this proposed Treaty is a necessary and positive solution that will benefit all parties. It will enable the end of the so called ‘name dispute’, it will end the long standing futile and destructive situation between our peoples, it will make possible a long lasting and peaceful future, and it will make possible an historical reconciliation of international and world significance.

Yours faithfully

Victor Bivell

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