



CYPRUS



Civil Defence Headquarters

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1. Legislation :

The Civil Defence Law was amended and consolidated in 1996 and new Regulations were enacted in 1997 in order to re-organise and strengthen the whole Civil Defence System of the Republic.

Other provisions were made in the legislation for the establishment and organisation of Civil Defence Forces and Services on either obligatory or voluntary basis, the training and education of citizens on civil defence, the supply, acquisition and storage of civil defence material, the construction of shelters, provisions for requisitions and the purchases or lease of movable or immovable property.

2. Mission :

« Civil Defence » has the meaning assigned to this term by the provisions of article 61 of the Additional Protocol of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (Protocol I), and includes every measure which :

(i) without resulting to actual armed conflict, it constitutes a form of defence against hostile attack or detracts from any hostile attack the whole or part of its energy, regardless of whether this measure is taken before, during or after the said attack but it does not include the construction and maintenance of shelters intended for use by the armed forces of the Republic ; or

(ii) constitutes a way of confronting disaster or limitation of its results and includes the systematic activities for prevention, planning, education, preparedness, response and handling of its consequences, regardless of whether the measure is taken before, during or after the said disaster.

(iii) The term « disaster » means destructive incident occurring anywhere in the sovereignty of the Republic which is due to earthquake, landslide, flood, cyclone, storm or sea-storm or other calamity, accident of technological nature, fire, explosion, epidemic, accident, shipwreck, or other incident of serious nature, the extent of which causes or may cause danger on the life or the welfare of a large number of persons or extensive damage to the environment or the natural resources of the Republic.

3. Regulation and procedure :

All the powers regarding civil defence belong to the Council of Ministers.

The Minister of Interior on behalf of the Council of Ministers is responsible for the implementation of the Civil Defence Law and the relevant Regulations and has the overall supervision and control of the Civil defence System. He undertakes the co-ordination of the services and organizations which are declared as « essential » for civil defence purposes. Thus civil defence in general, is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior.

In case of war or disaster, for the dealing of which the mass mobilization of human resources or means is required, the Council of Ministers or the Minister of Interior on behalf of the Council may declare a « State of Civil Defence » for 48 hours (for the extension of this period an approval of the House of Representatives is required).

The Council of Ministers may declare the administration of any Minister or any Governmental Department/Service or Independent Office or any Public or Private Corporation, as « Essential Service » for civil defence purposes. Any such declaration has a legal effect to the « essential services » concerned, for planning, training, preparedness and response, in order to be able for effective participation in the Civil Defence System.

The Council of Ministers may appoint a Central Civil Defence Council and the Minister of Interior several District Civil Defence Councils (one for each district). The Councils were established last year.

4. Organisation :

The Council of Ministers has to approve the General Civil Defence plan from which the role, duties and responsibilities for all the components of the Civil Defence system derive.

According to these roles, duties and responsibilities, each component of the Civil Defence system (mainly the « essential services » has to elaborate Civil Defence Plans in order to deal with contingencies which may arise either because of war or disaster.

The plans are furnished to the Central or District Civil Defence Councils (respectively to their level) for checking and co-ordination.

Main threats, mandates and responsibilities :

- a) Earthquakes : The primary responsibility for the co-ordination of relief activities rests on the Ministry of Interior - Civil Defence Force. An integrated Building Aseismic Code is enforced on compulsory basis since 1992. Previously - since 1986 - temporary aseismic measures were used tentatively. A fully automated seismic network of 7 stations has been established and operates under the responsibility of the Geological Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment. Under the same Department a special Technical Committee is to be established regarding the scientific aspect of earthquakes.
- b) Forest Fires : The primary responsibility rests on the Department of Forest of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment. Effective preventive and control measures has been established such as detection system, prevention measures (law enforcement, education, patrolling, forecast of hazard, use of water, road system, fire traces, communications, etc.) and a series of suppression measures.
- c) Rural Fires : The Cyprus Fire Service which comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order through the Police, is responsible to fight all rural fires which are up to the distance of 1km from forests boundaries. The Fire Service is also responsible to fight the urban fires as well as those to airports. After request, Fire Service respond to provide assistance and fire fighting to the Forest Department, the Refinery, the Ports Authority, chemical industries, etc.
- d) Marine Pollution : The primary responsibility rests on the Fisheries Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment. An existing Contingency Plan establishes the necessary infrastructures for an effective and timely response to any marine pollution accident. A Regional Agreement has been signed between Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel to combat major pollution accidents in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- e) Radiological emergencies : The system for response to radiological emergencies is under preparation. New legislation which will cover all matters regarding the issue of ionizing radiation (including emergency response and preparedness) is under discussion and it is expected to be finalised soon. An early warning system for radiation is operated in Cyprus by the General Hospital of Nicosia. The system will be improved and incorporated in the Central Information/Operation Control Centre which will be operated by Civil Defence Force on a 24 hour basis by next year.
- f) War : The main responsibility for civil defence in case of war lays on the Ministry of Interior - Civil Defence Force.

It is worthy to be noted that in case of actual response to a disaster occurred due to one of the above threats, the component of the Civil Defence System which has the main responsibility to respond, will be assisted by various other relevant components through special provisions in Civil Defence Plans.

5. Staff :

The main mission of Civil Defence Force is the performance of various humanitarian tasks intended to protect the civilian population against the dangers, and help it to recover from the immediate effects of hostilities or disaster as well as to provide the conditions necessary for its survival.

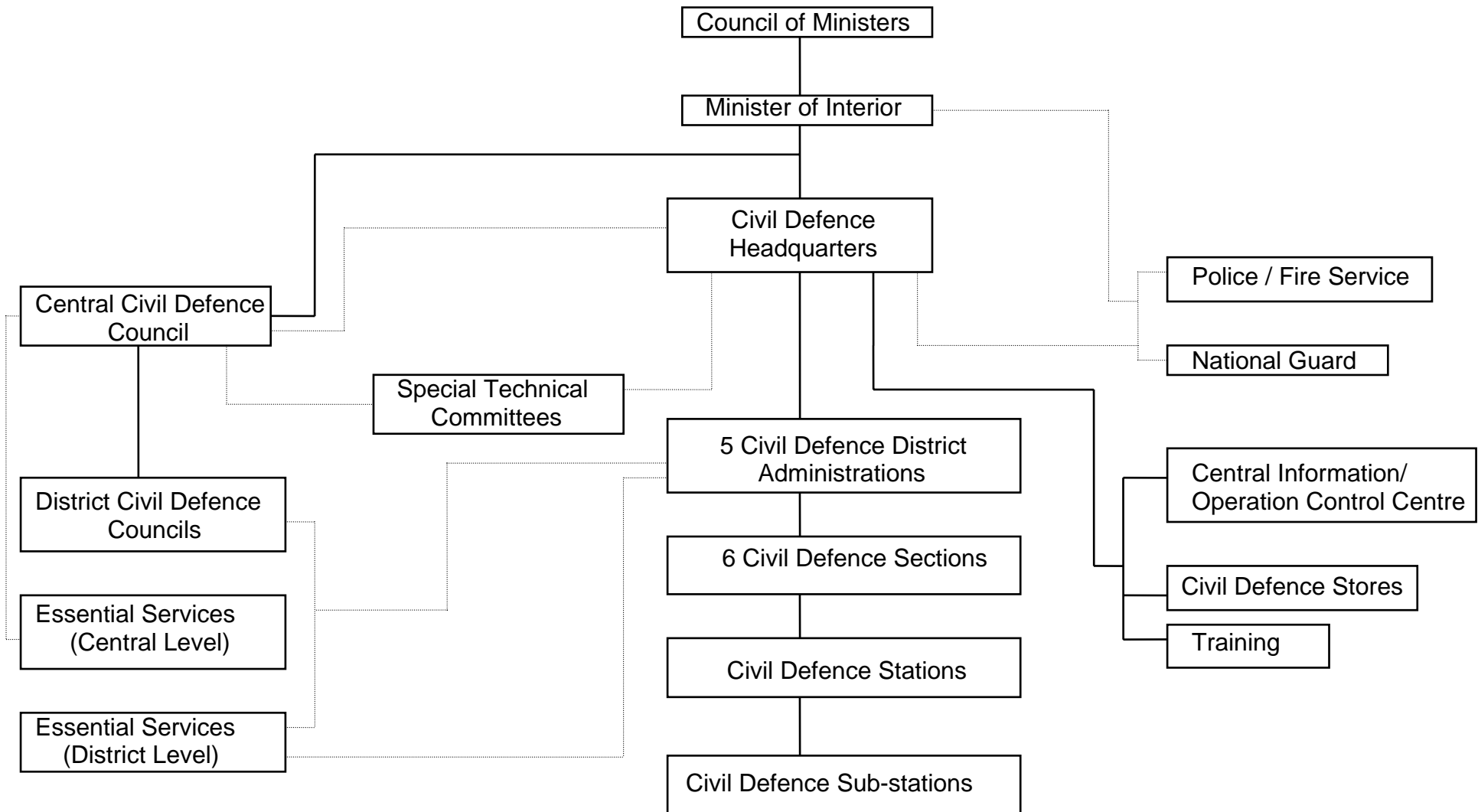
Civil Defence Force is organized by the establishment of civil defence units in almost all the urban areas and all the villages near the cease fire line.

Most of the units are manned in their majority by conscripts and volunteers. The Cyprus Civil Defence members which are apportioned in the various units receive a basic training and are later trained and positioned in different divisions of the Civil Defence. These different divisions are the First aid. The Telecommunication Section, the Welfare Section and the Fire Fighting, Rescue and Neighbourhood watch Section.

Cyprus Civil Defence has completed the Organisation Programme, basic elements of which are the following:

- The expansion of organized civil defence units in almost all the non-occupied by the Turkish forces residential areas;
- The supply and installation of a new warning system covering the whole island;
- The establishment of a new Central Information and Operation Control Centre working on a 24hour basis connected with the single call number 112 which is already operated by the Police simultaneously with the preciously used number 199;
- The improvement of Civil Defence training programmes;
- The strengthening of the Civil Defence with additional permanent staff in combining with the making more worthy the service of volunteers;
- The acquisition of equipment and the establishment of a new logistic system.

CIVIL DEFENCE IN CYPRUS



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