European Court of Human Rights: Case of Cyprus v. Turkey

The judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (Grand Chamber) of 10 May 2001 deals with one of the few cases in which the applicant is the government of another State Party to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In this case, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus alleged that due to Turkey’s military operations in 555 Northern Cyprus, and especially after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983 ("the TRNC"), the Government of Turkey was to be considered responsible for continuing violations of several human rights. One of the violations arising out of the living conditions of Greek Cypriots in Northern Cyprus concerned freedom of expression and information, as protected by Article 10 of the Convention. More specifically, it was asserted that the TRNC authorities engaged in excessive censorship of school-books and restricted the importation and distribution of media, especially Greek-language newspapers and books whose content they disapproved. Referring to the Commission’s report, the Court was of the opinion that there was not sufficient evidence that restrictions were imposed on the importation of newspapers, the distribution of books or on the reception of electronic media. The Court, on the other hand, found that during the period under consideration, a large number of school-books, no matter how innocuous their content, were unilaterally censored or rejected by the authorities. According to the Court, the respondent Government failed to provide any justification for this form of wide-ranging censorship which far exceeded the limits of confidence-building methods and amounted to a denial of the right to freedom of information. These measures of excessive censorship were considered by the Court to be a violation of Article 10 of the Convention.

Judgment by the European Court of Human Rights (Grand Chamber), Case of Cyprus v. Turkey, Application no. 25781/94 of 10 May 2001
http://merlin.obs.coe.int/redirect.php?id=32

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