

OBJECTIVE 03

To support reconciliation, dialogue, closer relationship and trust between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities

RE-ENACTING AYIA MARINA/GÜRPINAR SALIH ÖRSES



Photo Credit: Bobbe Poumos Theoklitou



THIS ACTION INVOLVED

"From the Past to Future: Ayia Marina (Gürpınar)" Documentary with interviews and facts about Ayia Marina/Gürpınar.

A website presenting stories on a 2D Ayia Marina/Gürpınar map.

A panel discussion, documentary screening and exhibition event on 20 January 2018.

Information dissemination through both printed & social media.

ABOUT SALIH ÖRSES

Salih Örses is a peace activist whose grandmother is from the abandoned village. He visited Ayia Marina/Gürpınar in 2006. After the discovery of the ruined and desolate village, he dedicated his activities to highlight the history and collective memory of Ayia Marina/Gürpınar, where Turkish Cypriots and Maronites used to live together.

STORY OF THE ACTION

Ayia Marina/Gürpınar was a unique mixed village where Turkish Cypriots and Maronites lived in peace together until 1964. Due to the events of 1963, the Turkish Cypriot community had to leave the town, as did the Maronites in 1974. Since then and until 2017, the village has been inaccessible to the public.

In 2017, it was decided to allow the former residents of the village to return. This opened the doors to Salih Örses to raise awareness on the Ayia Marina/Gürpınar community and advocate for the villagers' right to rebuild their community.

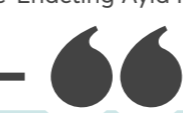


"I digitized the map to search for the places they used to live in, guided by their photographs, their shared memory and history. Of course, it was not easy at all, as people went through bitter experiences during the 1963 and 1974 events. As a result, the villagers had to migrate, leaving everything behind. During the interviews, they relived those painful memories."

Salih Örses



To begin the process of rebuilding the village, a virtual version was created on a map, using information gathered from interviews with former residents and old photographs. The interviews were used in a documentary screened at Home for Cooperation on January 20, 2018, along with a panel discussion and a photo exhibition. Documentary photographers Bobbe Poumos Theoklitou and Mehmet Yakup, along with Tijen Erol Yakup, video editor and producer of the documentary, have vastly contributed to the Re-Enacting Ayia Marina action.



"Thanks to this documentary, people had the opportunity to learn more about the Ayia Marina/Gürpınar village. It has been viewed by more than 7,000 individuals in ten days and a great number of people are now aware of the specific Ayia Marina/Gürpınar culture."

Salih Örses



RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

During the implementation of the action "Re-enacting Ayia Marina/Gürpınar", Salih worked with the land registry office and he was able to reach out to former villagers through the Kotsiatis/Koççat mukhtar/village headman. He also created links with Ayia Marina/Gürpınar Solidarity Society and Maronite Community, which helped him reach village residents. Former residents were allowed to return to the village in 2017. But, to this date, the process has not started. The action's biggest success was putting the "return of the former residents to Ayia Marina/Gürpınar" on the duty bearers' agenda to encourage its implementation.



Photo Credit: Mehmet Yakup

WHAT'S NEXT?

Salih Örses is still working on gathering stories and photos to complete the 2D map and the family trees. He also would like to compile these stories in a book. Once the former residents return to their village, Salih would like to create a museum focusing on the shared history of the village and the journey of its residents. However, his primary aim is to allow Ayia Marina/Gürpınar to return to what it was, a village full of life, where everyone was living peacefully side by side.

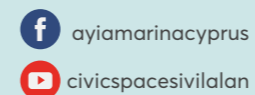


Photo Credit: Mehmet Yakup



Photo Credit: Bobbe Poumos Theoklitou

TO FIND
MORE ABOUT
THE ACTION



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