

Politico

Ghost town reopening in Northern Cyprus sparks fears of Turkish election interference

The reopening of Varosha also risks derailing reunification talks on divided island, critics say.

By [Nektaria Stamouli](#) - 10/10/20

ATHENS — The partial reopening of a ghost town on Cyprus has thrown prospects for reunification into doubt and prompted complaints of election interference in the northern half of the divided island.

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Gallia Lindenstrauss, a senior research fellow at the **Institute for National Security Studies** in Israel, said Turkey appeared to be asserting control.

“While Northern Cyprus was always dependent on Turkey, it looks as if Ankara is no longer happy with even the little independence it gave to the Turkish Cypriots and is trying to intervene more than ever in what is happening in the island,” she said.

The wider conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean also plays a role. Tensions in the region have surged this year as Turkey moved ahead with energy exploration in waters claimed by Cyprus and Greece.

“There are also indications that Turkey is seeing a great military role for its presence in Cyprus in giving it a military upper hand in the Eastern Mediterranean,” **Lindenstrauss** said.

She added: “All this does not bode well for the possibility of reunification ... On the contrary, these developments seem to push for permanent division of the island and perhaps even annexation of Northern Cyprus to Turkey.”

For full article:

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