

Saturday, June 2nd, 2012 |

Neo-nazi lawmakers in Greece arrested following attack on foreigner

Two MP's from a neo-nazi party in Greece have been arrested in a second incident where the party's leaders have been accused of attacks on foreigners.



Political leader of the Greek far-right party Chryssi Avghi (Golden Dawn), Nikos Michaloliakos (R), and his deputies wait after taking their seats at the Greek parliament in Athens on May 17 2012. (Aris Messinis, AFP)

Two freshly elected Greek MPs from the neo-nazi Golden Dawn party and its leader's daughter were among six people briefly detained after an attack on a Pakistani immigrant, a police source said Saturday.

The two lawmakers, Ilias Panagiotaros and Ioannis Vouldis, as well as leader Nikos Michaloliakos's daughter, were taken into custody but released for lack of evidence after the incident in Athens late Friday, the source said.

The 31-year-old Pakistani man needed hospital treatment after being assaulted by a group in helmets taking part in a motorbike demonstration "that started off from the headquarters of a political party," police said in a statement.

The source confirmed this party was Chryssi Avgi (Golden Dawn), which sent shockwaves through Europe by winning seats in parliament in May 6 elections for the first time since the end of Greece's military junta in 1974.

Michaloliakos, who has said there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz and has questioned the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust, is hoping to match or beat the party's score of 6.9% in fresh elections on June 17.

Another Golden Dawn candidate, Themis Skordeli, has been accused of beating up, together with two other Greeks, three Afghan immigrants in Athens a year ago. A court case was recently postponed for the sixth time.

Rising levels of racism

Three Greek non-governmental organisations meanwhile welcomed a report by the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) calling on Greece to act against what it said was a rising level of racism and related violence.

“Greece should strongly combat the increasing manifestations of racial discrimination, xenophobia and related violence,” the three groups, including Greek Helsinki Monitor, cited the CAT report as saying.

It called on Athens to condemn publicly all intolerance and violence and send “a clear and unambiguous message that racist or discriminatory acts, including by police and other public officials, are unacceptable.”

A report that 18 monitoring Non-government Organisations released in March had said that racist attacks in Greece mostly go unreported and unpunished and had published a list of 63 racist attacks in just two cities over six months.—Sapa-AFP.

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