

Stemming the Tide of Extremism: Recommendations for the Greek Government

Golden Dawn remains popular, even after revelations about its Nazi ideology, an active trial for members' alleged roles in two murders and dozens of racist and other assaults, as well as attacks against medical clinics, teachers, artists, and bloggers in its self-appointed role as defender of "Greek racial superiority" across society.

Seventy members of Golden Dawn—including its senior leadership and 13 members of parliament—are on trial for membership in a criminal organization, as well as homicide and other specific crimes. The proceedings started in April 2015 and resumed in late September following a hiatus since May. Meanwhile, the neo-Nazi group's political influence continues to grow, as evidenced by its consistent performance in the September 2015 national elections.

This extremist group's enduring influence underscores the need for a rigorous and credible prosecution that meets the highest European judicial standards, with full protection for the rights of the accused, and is not tainted by accusations of political motivation.

Regardless of the outcome of the trial, the government should continue efforts to identify, dismiss, or where appropriate prosecute police and other officials who have aided, abetted, or participated in hate violence or criminal activity associated with Golden Dawn. Uprooting attitudes about racial superiority from public life will require a joint governmental–civil society action plan to combat hatred and violence, in accordance with Greece's European Union, Council of Europe, and OSCE commitments.

Recommendations for the Greek Government

Strengthen Efforts to Prosecute Golden Dawn and Reform Police

- ◆ Ensure adequate security for witnesses, prosecutors, magistrates, and investigators in the criminal case

against Golden Dawn. In particular, provide security to undocumented migrants who may testify in the case and are most vulnerable to reprisals. Allow them to enter the Greek witness protection program, now only available to Greek citizens.

- ◆ Avoid actions that could feed the perception that the case against Golden Dawn may be politically motivated by scrupulously protecting all rights of the accused.
- ◆ Request international assistance in gathering evidence on the financial activities of Golden Dawn and its leadership in connection with their alleged criminal activities and any foreign funding.

Specifically, request assistance from EUROPOL and other international law enforcement agencies, including INTERPOL, the FBI, and the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) in investigating loans, grants, or other transnational financial dealings by Golden Dawn leaders.

- ◆ Expedite prosecutions and trials for police officers who have aided, abetted, or joined in Golden Dawn crimes, as well as those police accused of attacks on migrants.
- ◆ Step up efforts to investigate and arrest suspected perpetrators of ongoing racist and other bias-motivated attacks.
- ◆ Monitor police behavior toward migrants, LGBT persons, and other vulnerable minorities, including in detention – and hold them accountable for inadequate behavior.
- ◆ Implement the current legislative framework to establish an independent mechanism in the Ministry of Public Order to receive and investigate complaints of police abuse and other arbitrary actions.

Make Racial Superiority Politically Unacceptable

- ◆ Counter and expose racist, antisemitic, and homophobic statements by public officials and political party leaders.
- ◆ Establish specific training modules in the school for judges on international agreements and jurisprudence on human rights, combating hate- crime violence, slavery, and human trafficking, and the protection of refugees. Invite the Human Rights Commission and civil society groups with expertise to conduct parts of this training.
- ◆ Conduct anti-racism training programs for the State Security Services, the Armed Forces, and Coast Guard officers tasked with intercepting boats of migrants trying to enter Greece.
- ◆ Reform Greek textbooks and educational curricula to:
 - reduce ethnocentric or highly nationalistic descriptions of world events;
 - discuss the role of Greek units that collaborated with the Nazi occupation as well as the role of citizens in sheltering Greek Jews and otherwise resisting Nazi deportations of Jews; and
 - include a unit on modern antisemitism, racism, and religious intolerance.

To the Parliament

- ◆ Amend the Criminal Code to establish a specific criminal offense of bias- motivated *violence*, in order to ensure that the bias motivation is investigated and evidence of bias is considered at every stage of the proceedings involving violent crime.
- ◆ Adopt a Parliamentary code of conduct to deter politicians from making antisemitic, xenophobic, racist, homophobic, or other hateful remarks from the floor or in public appearances. Use the code as grounds for disciplinary measures that could be imposed on MPs under Article 77 of the Greek Parliament's Standing Orders.