

TERRORISM IN GREECE: AN OVERVIEW

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On March of 2011, many believed that this was indeed the “fat’s lady song” on terrorism in Greece. A simple camera device and a long, in duration, surveillance and forensics data analysis, resulted to the arrest of multiple core members, of the terrorist group **Fire Nuclei Conspiracy** which was thought as the continuous stage of former group 17N [¹]. But facts since then changed and lead now to a different direction.

A member of 17N (**C. Ksiros**) who was accused for 28 crime/terrorism hits, convicted and served time in prison, managed to escape during his official “leave” (!!!) [²] and turned all things around again. Today Police and Anti-terrorism unit, think that he conspired with imprisoned members of **Fire Nuclei Conspiracy** and might have met with members who are still at large to possibly, design and execute new hits. A recent attack at the Greek National Bank with a car bomb, resulted by forensics analysis, to be their coordinated handiwork [³].

On March of 2013, **Stratfor**’s vice president, **Scott Stewart**, published a report [⁴] where it was explaining on the radicalization process at Greece. On this report serious arguments were pointed out. One of many, was the long lasting leftish ideology (**Anarchists**) prevailing among youngsters, along with the continuous social and economic crisis at Greece.

In this report, he writes:

“Because unemployment is so pervasive, jobless, disenchanted people are joining radical parties espousing a wide variety of ideologies. far-right parties, such as Greece's Golden Dawn party; and anti-austerity leftist groups, such as Greece's Coalition of the Radical Left, or Syriza. With unemployment in Greece at 27 percent, it is not surprising to see both radical right-wing and radical left-wing groups gaining support from those who have become deeply disaffected by the crises.”

¹ http://www.grreporter.info/en/police_believe_it_captured_fire_nuclei%E2%80%99s_leaders/4215
Arrest of Fire Nuclei Conspiracy

² http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2014/01/29/feature-01 - 17N member escape

³ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/04/10/uk-greece-blast-idUKBREA3909320140410> Greek Bank car bomb

⁴ <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/greeks-radical-left-dangers-disaffected-and-unemployed> - Stratfor terrorism analysis for Greece.

On 30.5.2013, US State Department's office, publishes a world-wide report regarding terrorism, where, Intelligence services of US reach to same outcome about presence of modern terrorism at Greece [⁵], but from a different perspective. This perspective presented a threat that, Greece is possible to face foreign terrorists entrance via under guarded borders. In quotes:

“The porous nature of Greece’s borders is of concern. While Greek border authorities try to stem the flow of illegal migration, its ability to control large-scale illegal migration via its land and sea borders with Turkey is limited. The recent political upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East have intensified illegal migration to and through Greece via the Greece-Turkey border and the Greek Aegean islands.”

Both reports now, show one thing: A transformation process that shows a possible shift in terrorism's nature for Greece, on origin and attack methods. Until 2011, most of the attacks were targeting persons and buildings of political and authority importance. But this changed with the attack at a commercial center in Athens [⁶] and the IED bomb parcel attacks at various foreign embassies in 2010 and references to FAI ([Informal Anarchist Federation](#)).

Additional elements/facts that showed a change in terrorism's nature and modus operandi in Greece were also presented by the terrorists. For example the bomb device at the commercial center of Athens, was built inside a pressure cook pot, containing nails and metal objects (claymore-like IED) just like most Islamic groups build them!!! On top of that, all statements in manifesto by these terrorists, were mentioning, foreign names and organizations [⁷] as support/demands. These findings helped Authorities to verify their theory that Greece has left the sphere of domestic terrorism/extremism and went on International level “standards”.

This does not seem to be the only security issue related to terrorism, though. Greece according to US state dpt. is a country with an advantageous geographical position, but with a proven disability of border control, as shown on previous mentioned report by Stratfor.

On August of 2013 Stratfor publishes a report presenting all dangers and threats of Jihadists fighting in Syria and elsewhere, returning to Europe [⁸]. Greece as geographical entry point to European Union has already serious issues with border control (illegal immigration) even though FRONTEX is providing a significant aid on this effort. A simple proof is the increase of illegal immigrants entering the country

⁵ <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209981.htm> US state dpt report for world wide terrorism

⁶ http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcqi/w/articles/wsite1_1_20/01/2013_479386

The Mall attack news-report

⁷ <http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/The-Mall-Statement> Statement about MALL attack (Greek site)

⁸ <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/european-jihadists-continuation-historical-trend> Jihadists from Syria return to Europe

[⁹]. This poses as backdoor for terrorists to enter as it was verified by the arrest of four Turkish terrorists of DHKP-C terrorist group [¹⁰] on February of 2014, who illegally entered Greece, arrested and extradited to Turkey for further actions. An also important report on Greece security and safety status was published by OSAC institution [¹¹] which is taking under consideration recent political and economic crisis for Greece.

Last but not least of security concerns related to terrorism, is the recent uprising of Golden Dawn political party which is under prosecution as a criminal organization[¹²].Golden Dawn's members attacks on individuals or/and group of people based upon their nationality, skin color and other racial characteristics showing a terrorism form that Greece did not experience in the past.

In conclusion Greece, based on previous mentioned reports and data, seems to be fulfilling uneasy terms, of being a possible safe haven destination for many kind of threats. A possible "terrorism transit station" for terrorism and organized crime cells along with "lone wolves", since authorities are lacking resources and an organized assertion plan to deal with those threats, in and around country's borders. Domestic terrorism is also evolving into a much different form while it is getting more recruits, as a result of many and high-tensed social grievances due to recent economy and political crisis.

It is essential for local authorities and state government, to make sure via a more intense cooperation with international institutions and services along with a better risk/threat assessment plan, since terrorism (along with other security issues) seem to be on a path for a "caterpillar transformation" where nothing good will come out of the cocoon .

⁹ http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2013.pdf Frontex risk analysis report 2013

¹⁰ <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-339076-greek-police-4-turks-arrested-in-anti-terror-raid.html> Turkish terrorists arrested by Greek police

¹¹ <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=15636> OSAC report for safety/security in Greece

¹² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/28/us-greece-goldendawn-idUSBRE98R02Q20130928> Golden Dawn arrested