

# Golden Dawn supporters killed in drive-by shooting in Greece

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On Friday, two supporters of the fascist party Golden Dawn were killed in a professionally organised attack in the Athens suburb of Neo Heraclio. While the circumstances of the act remain unclear, it is already being used by the government to push forward with the build-up of state powers.

CCTV camera footage reportedly shows that two masked men drove to the local office of Golden Dawn on a motorcycle, left the vehicle around 40 metres from the entrance, and then approached a group of four young men on foot who were guarding the entrance.

One of the two allegedly shot at the group from a range of 15 metres with a semi-automatic pistol. Afterwards, he allegedly delivered shots to the head from close range.

Two men died immediately after the attack. Another is in hospital with life-threatening injuries. The fourth was able to flee inside the building and avoid injury. According to police, at least 13 9-mm bullets were found at the crime scene.

Although the police initially said that both culprits wore motorcycle helmets, the video supposedly shows that one wore a baseball cap.

Golden Dawn stated that both victims had been members of the party. The mother of the injured, Alexandros Gerontas, said that her son had been more of a sympathiser of the party than a member.

Golden Dawn is an openly fascist party, which uses a version of the swastika as a party emblem and is responsible for numerous attacks on migrants, homosexuals and political opponents, including murders. Nikos Michaloliakos, the leader of Golden Dawn, is currently in prison charged with forming a criminal association. At the last elections, the party won nearly 7 percent of the vote.

The identity of the culprits is not known at this stage.

No-one has yet claimed responsibility, and the weapon could not be linked to a previous offence. It remains unclear whether the murders were the result of internal party conflicts, a state provocation or the reactionary act of an anarchist terrorist group. Due to Golden Dawn's ties to the criminal milieu, it cannot be excluded that this was a gang feud.

Nevertheless, from the outset the police suggested political motives behind the deed. They stated that the only group which had committed such killings in recent years was the "Sect of Revolutionaries," which admitted to the murder of a police officer in 2009 and a journalist in 2010.

In addition, members of the "Conspiracy of the Fire Nuclei" have reportedly issued a call from prison for a united front of all terrorist organisations against the fascists. Another possible candidate, according to police, is the group "Revolutionary Struggle," in particular the fugitive Nikos Maziotes.

The media and representatives of the main political parties also immediately assumed a political motive for the crime. The daily *Tu Vima* entitled its coverage "Twelve bullets against democracy" and wrote of a "clearly terrorist act." The largest opposition party, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), described the double murder in a press statement on Friday as an "attack on democracy."

The government has used the attack to divert attention from the brutal social attacks it is imposing on the vast majority of the population, and to build up the state apparatus.

"Greek society will act together and ruthlessly against the murderers," said government spokesman Simos Kedikoglou.

The recent murder of the anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas by a supporter of Golden Dawn was used to

strengthen the state apparatus against working class opposition. Government representatives repeatedly claimed that the state had to act against “both extremes” of the political spectrum.

In this respect the government could rely on support from SYRIZA. Two weeks ago the party backed a government initiative to restrict state financing of parties suspected of building a criminal association. This law was based on the reactionary paragraph 187, which explicitly includes strikes and social protests as potentially criminal activity.

The government is relying increasingly on repressive measures to suppress social protests. Striking workers have already been placed under martial law three times this year and forced back to work.

Protests by public sector workers against the government’s mass layoffs have been on-going for weeks. A general strike has been called for today. Workers in transport, health care and public administration will participate alongside workers from the private sector to oppose the planned property tax, which will impact many workers.

The troika of the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and European Commission is increasing pressure on the government to quickly impose further cuts. Otherwise, they are threatening to stop payment of future tranches of Greece’s bailout. Negotiations are planned to continue this week.

Under these conditions it is highly possible that the attack last Friday could have been a state or semi-state provocation. There are a number of cases in Greek history where terrorist attacks by anarchist groups were used to build up the state apparatus. It has been demonstrated that these groups are infiltrated by or choose to maintain close ties to the state.

In 2002, attacks by the group “November 17,” and in particular the murder of the British military attaché Stephen Saunders, were used to establish article 187 in the criminal code.

The group admitted to having committed 23 murders between its founding in 1975 and its dissolution in 2002. Nonetheless, not a single member of the group was arrested until 2000. There was repeated evidence of the organisation’s close connections to the highest political levels.

The “Sect of the Revolutionaries,” “Conspiracy of the Fire Nuclei” and “Revolutionary Struggle”

emerged directly or indirectly out of the remnants of the “November 17” group. Ideologically, these groups are characterised by a combination of extreme individualism and nationalism. Their terrorist acts objectively serve the strengthening of the state apparatus against the working class, and the establishment of authoritarian forms of rule.

Individual acts of violence against fascists have nothing in common with a genuine struggle against the threat of fascism. This struggle requires instead the independent mobilisation of the working class on the basis of a socialist programme. The various petty-bourgeois tendencies, whether armed or unarmed, are openly opposed to the emergence of such a movement.



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