



## **Domestic terrorism in Greece: comments on the recent police antiterrorism operation**

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On April 11, the Greek Police after a long period of intense research proceeded on the arrests of 6 individuals, connecting them with the “Revolutionary Fight”, the most dangerous and active – along with “Sechta” - terrorist organisation in the country. Day after day new evidence comes up and discoveries about weaponry, explosives and hiding places. The criminal charges that the suspects face are very serious, yet it is too soon to evaluate properly the whole police operation. While the Greek Police has surely proved to be productive and alert, the juridical research and the court hearing process will decide upon the guilt or not of the suspect and their connection to the “Revolutionary Fight”, or any other terrorist group. Still, there are very interesting points that one can comment at this present stage.

The Greek Police made quite an ambivalent choice regarding its communication strategy. Upon the arrests and before any court proceedings or judicial examination, it published the names and the photos of the suspects. Telephone numbers were also provided to the public, so that citizens could contact the Police in order to give information. This was a move aiming to encourage citizens in taking part actively in the campaign against terrorism. Of course this strategy is posing serious questions about the respect of the rights of the accused, especially on the issue of the presumption of innocence. In addition, and as further research goes on, there is always the chance that the suspects whose photos and info about their life were made public, will not be proved to be members of “Revolutionary Fight”. From a practical point of view, this “open line” between the public and the Police (something quite new for Greek standards) will possibly lead to the incoming of a bulk of irrelevant and useless information by individuals who will telephone without true knowledge of the case.

Another critical point is the following. Terrorism has been characterized numerous times as “war of impression”. When the Greek Police decided to bring forth to the media openly what was described as its operational success against domestic terror, this was a direct blow against the whole network of terror groups operating in the country. It is unfortunately probable that remaining members of the “Revolutionary Fight” (if we accept the Greek Police version that the suspects arrested are the leading members of this group, but even if the suspects have no connection to this organization), as well as individuals and groups belonging to the general and wider anarchist and anti-establishment network will answer with new terrorist attack. Such an attack will just have the meaning that the Police has not achieved total victory and the fight is still on. For this reason Greek law enforcement must be more alert than ever.

The determination of the Greek State to seriously combat terrorism is evident. There is no easy way though to complete this task successfully and no easy solutions for such a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. The recent developments constitute a challenge to the Greek Police and the Greek society, to safeguard both security and social cohesion.