

RAXEN BULLETIN

1. THE “POLITICAL HEADLINES”

During January 2006 a number of violent incidents and murders against immigrants took place. Especially the killing of an Albanian young man received wide publicity on national media and political debate. In all cases knives have been used as aggression weapons.

In the very first hours of the new year 2006 a 18 years old Albanian has been brutally murdered in his home in Rethimno-Crete and his ill father has been beaten by a group of locals after their dispute with a group of Albanians the previous night in a town's night club. The victim was not involved in that dispute, however he was killed, as he was the only Albanian the residence of whom was known to the killers. What caught the attention of national media were the reactions of Crete society and local public discourse, as well as general public's attitudes, which often offered justification to the killers and denied any racial motivation behind such incident instead of condemning strongly the violence. In fact, the killing has been followed up right away by similar violent incidents in Crete. In Iraklio a young Albanian worker has been beaten by 3 persons who faked to hire him for agriculture work and in the province of Rethimno (Aghia Galini), where a 29 yrs old Georgian immigrant has been stabbed to death after a dispute by a 25 years old local Rethimnian in a bar.

The Albanian young immigrant's killing has led to immigrants' and civil society manifestations and marches against racism in Athens and Crete.

The late 2005 issue of the Pakistani immigrants mid-2005 abduction and interrogation by men posing as Greek police has still been at the centre of media attention in early 2006. In a parliamentary hearing of the Committee on Public Order and Justice the public order minister denied that his services illegally abducted and interrogated Pakistani immigrants after last year's London bombings. Instead he announced that 5,432 immigrants have been monitored and questioned in a legal fashion in massive security sweep in July-August 2005 at request of British MI6 service.

2. UPDATE ON LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

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One year after the transposition of the anti-discrimination directives in the Greek legal order (Law n.3304/2005) the Greek state has introduced two citizenship exceptions in employment, providing exclusive access to profession only to Greek and EU citizens. In particular:

1. Through the circular n.119005/Γ7, the Ministry of Education and Religions excluded non Greeks or EU citizens from the right to be assigned as temporary teachers at Music Schools (primary-secondary education). After such development a number of foreign teachers employed in Greek Music Schools for a number of years have not renewed their employment term. The major opposition party (PASOK) has issued a press release on this matter: (<http://www.pasok.gr/portal/gr/41/30321/7/7/1/showdoc2.html>) (10.02.2006)
2. Through the application of the recent Presidential Decree n.58/2005, non-Greeks or EU citizens are not allowed any more to apply for a license to sell goods at open markets ('laikes agores').

3. RESEARCH

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No major scientific report on racism and xenophobia.

After the killing of a young Albanian in Crete on 01.01.2006 an opinion poll by the V-PRC poll company commissioned for a national radio network (Sky radio) has shown that public opinion is not strongly condemning violence against Albanian immigrants. While 44% of the interrogated sample find the assassination 'unjustified act' a 34% support that 'it is the Albanians' fault too'. A significant 24% of the sample refused to respond at all and therefore to give a judgment about the murder.

In the same opinion poll Greek citizens have been asked if they consider that the Pakistanis' abductions by secret services did indeed took place and while the majority (53%) agree, a significant 36% refuse to respond at all. (Eleftherotipia, 13.01.2006)

4. ANNEX

There are no official data or incidents lists on racist violence and crimes.

The following unofficial list of incidents is based upon national media publications (including deaths due to physical causes under police supervision):

1. Rethimno –Crete. A 17 years old Albanian has been stabbed to death by a group of locals who irrupted in his home in the morning hours of 01.01.2006. The murderers have previously beaten the boy's ill father and chased the victim to the terrace of the house, where the murder took place. A 18 yrs old local (currently serving his military service) assisted by his father stabbed 17 times with a knife the victim. (All national electronic and press media, 01.01.2006)
2. Iraklio-Crete. A young Albanian worker has been beaten by 3 persons who faked to hire him for agriculture work and then brought him to a rural isolated spot. (Crete TV, 04.01.2006)
3. Aghia Galini, Rethimno –Crete. A 29 yrs old Georgian immigrant has been stabbed to death by a 25 yrs old local Rethimnian in a bar. (Athens News Agency, 22.01.2006)
4. Chalkidiki - Northern Greece. A 26 yrs old immigrant has been stabbed by the 59 yrs old Greek after a dispute between his son and the immigrant. (Eleftherotipia, 30.01.2006)
5. Patras – Peloponessus. A 15 years old Afghan refugee has been beaten the by the Port Policemen at the Patras port while trying to hide under a truck traveling to Italy.
6. Patras – Peloponessus. A 20 years old Afghan irregular immigrant has died after to heart attack suffered as he witnessed and tried to interfere during the beating of a 15 years old Afghan boy by the Port Policemen at the Patras port. (To Vima, 15.02.2006)
7. Athens - An Iraqi immigrant has died due to heart attack in the police department right after his eviction by an old house in the center of Athens. (Network of Social Support to Immigrants and Refugees, 12.01.2006).