

Greece: Golden Dawn Trial Ends with Guilty Verdict

By [Freedom News](#)

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The heavily guarded Court of Appeals of Athens delivered the verdicts today in a five-year-long Golden Dawn trial.

Thousands gathered in an antifascist rally outside of the court this morning to await the ruling. The trial, widely covered in Greek media, was dubbed “great trial” and historic due to the number of defendants, the seriousness of charges and its political implications.

The 454th court sitting in the case started shortly after 11am Greek time. In the most important charge, that of creating and running of a criminal organisation, the court found the Golden Dawn leadership guilty.

The leadership members found guilty are: Nikos Michaloliakos (GoldenDawn leader) Ilias Kasidiaris (former MP) Ioannis Lagos (former MP and sitting MEP) Giorgos Germanis (former MP) Ilias Panagiotaros (former MP) Christos Pappas (former MP) Artemis Mattheopoulos (former MP).

The verdicts for the rest of the defendants will be announced later today, and Freedom will update this text as they come.

Το πλήθος έξω από το Εφετείο πριν μερικά λεπτά. [#GDtrial](#)
pic.twitter.com/TLbd5aFpdj

— GoldenDawnWatch (@GoldenDawnWatch) [October 7, 2020](#)

Golden Dawn leadership and members, including the party’s leader and founder Nikolaos Michaloliakos, were arrested shortly after the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, a popular Greek rapper using the stage name Killah P and known for his leftist politics, in September 2013.

It was the largest prosecution of nazis since Nuremberg. The court compiled a 15,000-page dossier detailing the Golden Dawn crimes since 2008, and charged 68 defendants, including Golden Dawn leadership, all members of its parliamentary club, and a currently sitting Greek MEP. They were charged with an array of crimes, including robberies, beatings, intimidation, illegal arms possession, attempted murders and murders; and the most serious and politically charged one: the creation, under the disguise of a political party, of an organised crime group.

Golden Dawn was founded by Nikolaos Michaloliakos in the 1980s. Michaloliakos was no stranger to nazi politics and violence. In the 1970s, while in prison, he met Georgios Papadopoulos: the head of the military coup d’état that took place in Greece in April 1967,

and leader of the junta that ruled the country from 1967 to 1974. Michaloliakos was serving a 13-month prison sentence for bomb attacks on Athens cinemas screening soviet films, while Papadopoulos was serving a life sentence for his role in the Greek dictatorship. During World War II, Papadopoulos was an active Axis collaborator in the Security Battalions which hunted down Greek resistance fighters.

Shortly after his release from prison, Michaloliakos set up a nazi magazine "Golden Dawn". One of the magazine's issues featured a photo of Adolf Hitler on its cover, with the caption "heroic visionary of Europe". The magazine turned into a political party in 1983. For years, the party struggled with irrelevance, scoring something like 0,1% in polls. In 2005, Golden Dawn activities were suspended due to the clashes with anarchists and the party members were instructed to organise within the closely related Patriotic Alliance party. The breakthrough came in 2010, when Michaloliakos was elected to the Athens Council, and the party's support and membership started to grow. In 2012, Golden Dawn entered the Greek Parliament.

Image on the right: Pavlos Fyssas performing in 2011. Photo by John D. Carnessiotis



The murder of Pavlos Fyssas

On the evening of 17th of September 2013, Pavlos Fyssas went to the Korali cafe in his neighbourhood Keratsini in Piraeus. He was in a company of his girlfriend and a group of friends. They had planned to watch a Champions League football match in which the Greek club Olympiakos was playing. In the cafe, they were spotted by a group of loud and aggressively behaving men who quickly started to harass the rapper, shouting that they know who he is and claiming that his songs are just some leftist bullshit. Pavlos and friends quickly figured that the intimidating men are local neo-nazis and decided to leave the cafe.

Despite the late hour, about 30 strong group of men, armed with baseball bats and dressed in black t-shirts with the swastika-like meander adapted by Golden Dawn as its symbol, was waiting for Fyssas and his friends, who then decided to run.

The nazis caught up with them just before the group managed to reach the nearby high street. That's when the beating started. Police were called, but, as per usual with Golden Dawn violence, chose not to intervene. It was nearing midnight.

At this point, a Golden Dawn member Giorgos Roupakias drove to the scene of the fight, parked his car, went straight to Pavlos and repeatedly stabbed him, turning the knife inside his body to be sure the wounds are lethal. Pavlos died shortly after midnight that night. Before his death, he identified Roupakias as his killer. He was also later identified by two

students: witnesses of the events.

Roupakias is a dedicated Golden Dawn member and had attended both its political and combat workshops. He was a vice-leader of Golden Dawn's Nikaia neighbourhood chapter "strike brigade", and worked in the cafeteria of the party's offices. He was today found guilty on all charges.

In June 2019, a Golden Dawn member Ioannis Aggos testified during the trial that it was he who set in motion the chain of events which led to the murder of Fyssas. Aggos stated that he was sitting nearby Pavlos and his party at the Koralia cafe that night and called Ioannis Kazantzoglou, a high ranking Golden Dawn member from the Nikaia chapter, to report to him the rapper's whereabouts. The murderer Roupakias himself called Giorgos Patelis: the leader of the Nikaia chapter. Patelis in turn called Yiannis Lagos (now the MEP and the defendant in the trial). Patelis and Lagos were continuously in touch with each other via phone until 2.30am that night.

Named after another Piraeus neighbourhood, the Nikaia chapter of Golden Dawn was notorious for violence. Only 6 days before the murder of Pavlos, they have partaken in a savage beating of the PAME trade unionists who were putting up posters in Perama, near Piraeus. This incident also occurred at night and saw about 50 Golden Dawn members armed with iron bars attacking a group of about 30 communists, sending 8 of them to the hospital. The court ruled today to reduce the charge in this case, from attempted murder to grievous bodily harm.

Attacks on migrant people

While Golden Dawn was known for horrific violence against its political opponents, LGBTQ+ community, alternative artists and everybody else they considered "undesirable", they were mainly focussed on violence, intimidation and harassment of the Greek migrant community, with a particular focus on people from Africa and Asia.

Golden Dawn have set on the mission to "cleanse" Greece of migrants, and their crimes in a pursue of it are pretty much countless.

The Golden Dawn's mission to "cleanse" Greece of migrants flared up in 2009, when the party activists descended on Agios Panteleimonas square in Athens, where they have effectively occupied and shut down a kid's playground because the fascists didn't want Greek children to play with migrant children. The playground was closed down by the Golden Dawn members, and its occupation lasted until 2015, when, after 6 years, the playground was opened for all by the Antifa Social Center "Distomo" activists and given back to the children: Greek and migrant alike.

One of the many charges in the Golden Dawn trial was for the beating of Abuzid Embarak, an Egyptian fisherman, during a late-night attack on his home where he lived with two others.

Testifying in court in September 2016, Abuzid Embarak described how, on 12th June 2012, 17 or 18 Golden Dawn members, all dressed in black and armed with iron bars, attacked him as he slept on the terrace of his home in Perama district in Athens. The attack left him near-dead and unable to eat solid foods for six months. During his testimony, more than four years after the attack, he still has not recovered, was unable to work fully and could not

stand for long periods.

He told the court that he has passed out during the attack, and that “If they knew I was still alive, they would never have left. They believed I was dead – and then they said ‘go’.”

During Abizid’s testimony, the court had to warn the fascists’ lawyers that they are breaching the court protocols, as, in the attempt to belittle his statement, they were talking loudly and laughing. One of the fascist lawyers, defending the Golden Dawn MP Christos Pappas, demanded to know if the victim worked in Greece legally. Another of Golden Dawn lawyers claimed that Abizid was being paid by George Soros for his testimony.

The court today found all three defendants charged with the attempted murder of Abuzid Embarak guilty.

Another horrific Golden Dawn crime happened in 2010, when the party members locked with padlocks the only door to a basement where 40 people from Bangladesh were praying, threw Molotov cocktails inside, and stood outside watching it burn. The fire was, thankfully, put out by the people trapped inside, who also called the police. The cops, on their arrival, told the nazis to disperse.

Today’s verdict, if guilty, will likely be the end of Golden Dawn as a political party and a massive blow to Greece’s neo-nazis. However, in the anticipation of the verdict, some Golden Dawn members have already set up two new nazi groupings, and are unlikely to stop their hateful activities. But, at least, they will be doing it without having a parliamentary representation allowing them legitimacy in the mainstream politics, and without the 8 million Euro government subsidy granted to Golden Dawn due to its presence in the Greek parliament, and frozen pending the trial verdict.

Some of the Golden Dawn crimes, and the plight of migrants in Greece, are described in the 2013 Reel News film Into the Fire:

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Featured image: Golden Dawn members at a rally in Athens, 2015. Credit: DTRocks, published under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

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