

## Greeks investigating mysterious death of former diplomat's daughter

Athens - A former Japanese diplomat to the Vatican and his Greek-born wife were taken before a public prosecutor on Sunday following the mysterious death of their 37-year-old daughter on the Greek island of Evia. Greek police are investigating the mysterious circumstances surrounding the woman's death and have taken her parents, the former diplomat and his 67-year-old wife, into custody, believing it is a homicide case.

The incident became known to police in the early hours of Friday, when the woman was reported missing by her husband after he repeatedly tried and failed to contact her.

The woman had apparently taken their three-year-old daughter to visit her parents' villa in the town of Amaranthos on the island of Evia.

A search began for the woman but the case immediately took a different turn when the Greek mother of the missing woman appeared at a local hospital on the island, in Kymi, on Friday morning and asked for the death certificate of her daughter, saying she had died accidentally as a result of a fall down the stairs.

Doctors alerted police who went to the area to investigate the villa where the woman's parents lived but faced an unexpected obstacle because the house was overrun by some 14 dogs.

Police used anaesthetic spray to knock out the dogs and afterwards quickly discovered the body of the missing woman wrapped in a sheet in one of the villa's bathrooms.

The case has turned into a mystery because officers were unable to find any sign of obvious injury on the woman's body with the exception of a cut on her left wrist that had not caused any bleeding, leading them to think that it was inflicted after her death.

Investigators are now awaiting the results of a full autopsy and the coroner's report for the official cause of death. The coroner is scheduled to arrive in Amaranthos from Athens in the next few days.

# Laying to rest Cyprus's ghosts

*Talks this week on the reunification of Cyprus look more hopeful than many would have dared to think possible. But the discovery of remains from some of those killed during the 1974 Turkish invasion is refreshing old grievances, as Tabitha Morgan reports.*

The Cyprus police museum is perhaps not high on the list of must-see attractions for the tourist but it does draw a steady stream of visitors, mostly Greek Cypriot children on school trips. One of the main exhibits is a dark blue prison wagon, one of a pair used during the final years of the British occupation for transporting captured guerrilla fighters between the central court and Nicosia prison.

Nine of them were hanged there by the colonial authorities during the 1950s, some no more than teenagers.

In transit the prisoners were locked behind a heavy sliding door, while their guards enjoyed marginally greater comfort sitting on a pair of blue padded seats.

Greek Cypriot pupils are shown the bars on the floor of the vehicle to which prisoner's feet were chained. They are urged to reflect on the courage of those young men who struggled to overthrow colonial rule, and taught to take a pride in the story of their national heritage.

### Ethnic identity

What is less well chronicled is how, just three years after Cypriot independence, when inter-communal killings began in 1963 the van was used to transport a Turkish Cypriot prison officer to his death at the hands of right-wing paramilitaries.

On 21 December 1963 Mustafa Arif, a senior officer at Nicosia



LEFT: The issue of the "missing" is still a contentious topic in divided Cyprus. RIGHT: Scientists have identified the remains of many missing people

prison, was admitted to hospital in what is today the Greek Cypriot side of the city to be treated for a heart condition.

By the next day relations between the two communities had collapsed. Riots broke out in Nicosia, shops were looted and burned and the Turkish Cypriot community retreated behind barricades in the north of the city. Shortly after, Mustafa received a visit from his Greek Cypriot colleagues who urged him leave the hospital and to go with them in the prison van, to a safer place. He agreed to be driven away.

No-one knows for sure what happened next. Was the sick man allowed to sit on one of the comfortable blue padded seats? How long was it before he realised that something was dreadfully wrong?

On the other side of the city, in the Turkish Cypriot enclave, Mustafa's 10-year-old son Kutlay had just learned to ride a bicycle. He was eager to show his father what he could do, so every day Kutlay brought his bike to meet the bus that he confidently expected would bring his father home.

But Mustafa Arif was listed as "missing" and for the next 44 years he has been considered "missing": one of those Cypriots killed because they had the wrong ethnic identity.

### Burial sites

Greek Cypriots have their own missing, mostly men killed at the time of the Turkish invasion in 1974. The stories of their grieving children, and of families pulled out of joint, are just as raw.

These ghostly figures whose killers have never been punished have a symbolic and political potency. There has been little reconciliation, no attempt to reach across the divide and listen to the stories told by Cypriots from the other side of the island. But recent work by United Nations forensic pathologists may soon force that to change. Over the last 12 months the scientists have located and identified the remains of many missing people and returned them to their families. Burial sites that were isolated in the 1960s and 1970s are today in the centre of urban development. One excavation took place in the car park of Nicosia's new multi-screen cinema.

Kutlay is now a middle aged man with a family of his own. Until recently he was the mayor of Northern Nicosia. Earlier this summer he received a phone call from the technicians at the UN lab explaining that most, but not all of his father's skeleton had been recovered from a well in a Nicosia suburb.

Kutlay and his family were invited to view the remains, spread out on a plastic table draped in a white sheet.

Kutlay has spent much of his career campaigning for the island to be reunited. His views on his father's killers are clear.

"They were fascist thugs," he says, "they happened to be Greek Cypriots, but that is not what is important about them."

While the remains of the missing lay lost underground, issues to do with culpability, justice and retribution could be set aside. Now they are being unearthed, Cypriots will have to decide how deeply they want to search for answers to these more difficult questions.

Mustafa Arif was buried earlier this summer next to his wife. It is a mark of how much times are changing here that one of those present was an official Greek Cypriot representative of the President, Dimitris Christofias.

There is no doubt that among the current Greek and Turkish Cypriot leadership there is a strong desire to overcome the past. What is not so clear is whether Cypriots at large are ready to follow their lead.



An air strike by the Turkish Air Force during the 1974 Turkish invasion

## Greek postmen book delivers odd title prize

*A 72-page British book recording Greece's postal routes - "Greek Rural Postmen and Their Cancellation Numbers" - has received a literary award for having the oddest book title of the past 30 years. The book - published by the Hellenic Philatelic Society of Great Britain - beat out many titles, including "People Who Don't Know They're Dead" and "How to Avoid Huge Ships" to become the weirdest-ever winner of the Diagram Prize, organized by trade magazine The Bookseller. The volume garnered 13 percent of the 1,000 international public votes cast online.*

*"The posties pulled off a real shock here," said the prize's custodian, Horace Bent, noting that the favorite had been a book called "Proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Nude Mice." The Diagram Prize was launched in 1978 as a way to relieve boredom at the Frankfurt Book Fair.*

