

Hundreds of immigrants poisoned at Greek centre

ATHENS, (Reuters) - Hundreds of illegal immigrants held in a detention centre on the Greek island of Lesbos have fallen ill after drinking contaminated water from rusty and mouldy pipes, police said on Wednesday. Police said hospital staff rushed to provide emergency medication after the weekend incident at the centre, where medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) denounced a "humanitarian crisis" in July. "Almost all of the immigrants at the detention centre have been poisoned," a police official, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

"They are in a bad condition, but they can not be

transferred to hospital as they are too many and in a bad state," the official said.

About 600 immigrants, many of them from war-torn Somalia and Afghanistan, were detained on the eastern Aegean island. The police official said water pipes at the centre were old and toilets were not working properly. Greece has been criticised internationally for the poor conditions in its six detention centres and its harsh treatment of migrants who arrived in Greece without identity papers to seek asylum from war-torn countries such as Afghanistan.

MSF ended an emergency programme at the

Lesbos detention centre last month, saying Greece's conservative government was providing no support for its efforts to improve conditions there.

"We hope this will finally push the government into taking some action," said Nondas Paschos, a spokesman for MSF Greece.

Greece, with just 11 million inhabitants and one of the lowest per capita GDPs in the euro zone, is struggling to cope with a rising tide of migrants swamping its long coastline and border with Turkey. Police registered 112,000 illegal migrants last year, versus just 40,000 in 2005.

BARACK OBAMA AND JOE BIDEN: SUPPORTING GREEK AMERICANS

NEW YORK - By APOSTOLOS ZOUPANIOTIS Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama issued today a strong message to the Greek American Community, expressing his support to Cyprus and Macedonian issues, as well as the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The National Chairman of Greek-Americans for Obama, State Treasurer from Illinois Alexi Giannoulias, speaking exclusively to the Greek News revealed Obama's message.

"Senators Obama and Biden have demonstrated, once again, their understanding of issues of importance to our community and their commitment to the rule of law and to justice" Giannoulias told.

"This statement, while just a beginning, provides a solid basis from which our community can engage with the Obama-Biden administration and shows that we may once again have friends in the White House", Alexi Giannoulias concluded. It is the first time ever that a major Presidential candidate refers to "Turkish Occupation".

The Statement follows:

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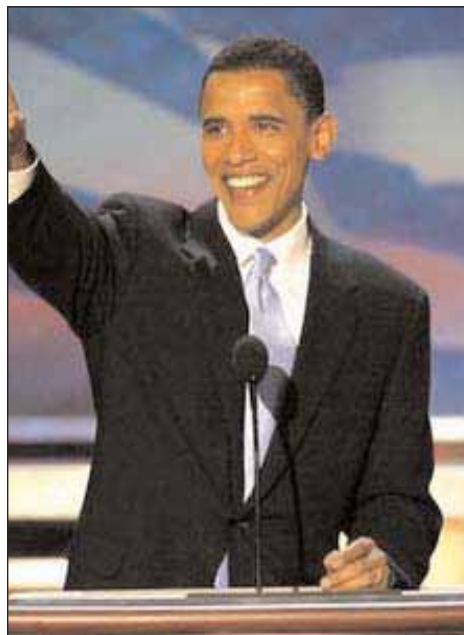
Barack Obama and Joe Biden have been true friends of the Greek American community throughout their careers in public service. Obama has worked closely with this community, especially the large constituency in Chicago, Illinois, and always supported the Greek community's participation in the American political process. Obama and Biden greatly respect the major contributions Greek Americans have made to so many aspects of the American experience. They will continue to work closely with Greek Americans at home and reestablish America's strong partnership with Greece and our other European allies abroad.

A Just and Lasting Political Settlement on Cyprus: As president, Barack Obama will show U.S. leadership in seeking to negotiate a political settlement on Cyprus. He believes strongly that Cyprus should remain a single, sovereign country in which each of the two communities on the island is able to exercise substantial political authority within a bi-zonal, bicomunal federation. There must be a just and mutually agreed settlement of difficult issues like property, refugees, land, and security. A negotiated political settlement on Cyprus would end the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus and repair the island's tragic division while paving the way to prosperity and peace throughout the entire

region. It would also give Cypriots a firm foundation on which to build their future after many years of division and uncertainty. It would help foster better Greek-Turkish relations, strengthen Turkish democracy, reduce the risk of military conflict, and remove a major obstacle to Turkish membership in the EU.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Barack Obama was one of three original lead co-sponsors of Senate Resolution 300, which urged that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia work with Greece within the framework of the United Nations process to reach a mutually-acceptable official name for that country and achieve longstanding United States and United Nations policy goals. Obama supports the UN-led negotiations and believes that there can and should be an agreement between Skopje and Athens on a mutually-acceptable name that leads to greater stability in the Balkans.

Ecumenical Patriarchate: Barack Obama was one of 73 Senators who signed a letter to President Bush in 2006 urging him to press Turkey to restore the full rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the



Orthodox Christian Church in Istanbul. He has sent Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice a personal letter on the same matter. Senator Obama calls on Turkey to respect the Ecumenical Patriarchate's rights and freedoms, including its property rights. Turkey should allow the reopening of the

Patriarchate's school of theology on Halki Island and guarantee the right to train clergy of all nationalities, not just Turkish nationals.

The U.S. Economy: Despite their hard work, American families are finding it harder and harder each day to make ends meet. Barack Obama supports an immediate \$50 billion emergency stimulus plan that would provide immediate assistance to help struggling local governments, continue needed infrastructure projects and protect jobs. Barack Obama will restore fairness to the tax code and provide 95 percent of American workers with a tax credit of up to \$500 per person, or \$1,000 per working family. Obama will fight for trade agreements that support American jobs and enforce good labor and environmental standards.

Affordable, Accessible Health Care to All: There are 45.5 million uninsured Americans today. Obama will sign legislation by the end of his first term in office that will provide affordable, accessible health coverage to all Americans. His plan will save a typical family up to \$2,500 every year on medical costs by modernizing our health care system.

Hatzis heads for bright lights, big city

SEVERAL years ago, Triple M drive hosts Tony Moclair and Julian Schiller asked their producer if they could use his surname for one of their characters. Chris Hatzis happily consented, little suspecting that Greek boofhead Guido Hatzis would become a minor cultural phenomenon. "It caused my life no end of hassle," Hatzis says. "I thought it was going to be this little thing that would go away in a couple of days."

Unlike the self-proclaimed "Greek love god", the musical tastes of the real Hatzis extend beyond the synth-rock sound of Pseudo Echo, a good reason why New York-based internet station, BreakThru Radio (www.breakthru.com), has just hired him as its program director.

Of course, internet radio has until very recently been seen as a nerd hobby rather than serious competition for the big commercial players, but BreakThru attracts more than 1million listeners a day. "It amazes me how many people get their new music online these days," Hatzis says. "I don't think there are many other station like this. It really is a one-stop, radio-on-demand operation. We've filled a niche in the market."

Hatzis is something of a radio guru in Melbourne, having started at TripleR in the early 1980s as a producer and presenter before a few brief stints at commercial stations such as TripleM.

At the beginning of this year, he began making a show for BreakThru called Transpacific, featuring new music from Australia and New Zealand. "I'd been listening to BreakThru a bit and I was really interested in the way they had set up their station," he says. "So I sent them an email asking if I could visit the next time I came to New York. And when I met the CEO, Cal Rifkin, he asked me to do the show."

Several months later, Rifkin offered Hatzis a job as program director - on the condition he move to New York.

"I was pretty shocked," Hatzis says. "I think he asked me because he could see that I had a real passion for music - and also because somebody else had just left the station, I think that had a lot to do with it, too."

So did the 15 years he spent at ultra-credible TripleR. But BreakThru, which plays unsigned and independent artists from all genres, is not just another alternative music station - it provides aspiring musicians with a big audience, but plays their music without forcing them to sign away their rights.

Artists forgo royalties in return for exposure and can rescind the deal whenever they like - for while major artists see the internet as a threat, emerging performers view it as a Godsend.

"For a number of years now, artists have been able to bypass the old-world order and gain exposure on the internet," Hatzis says. "Sites like MySpace and iTunes are a big part of that."

"There are a lot more avenues to success for new artists now. And although a certain section of the industry is trying to put up walls and close these things down, another part has embraced the technology."

Hatzis says he wants to immerse himself in his new job before deciding whether to make any big changes to the station's program schedule. Besides, he has to get his nuptials out of the way first. "It's a bit of a shotgun wedding," he says of his impending union with his long-term girlfriend. "And the US State Department is the father holding the gun. "I really can't wait to get over there. I'm very attracted to the passion and enthusiasm of the station and I'm ready to be a part of it."

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