

Greek Orthodox priest guilty of assault

A Greek Orthodox priest has been found guilty of assaulting the same parishioner for a second time this year.

Father John Grillis pleaded not guilty to two counts of assault against John Mihalopoulos between 9.55am and 10am (AEST) in Burwood on June 26, 2007.

In Burwood Local Court on Tuesday, Magistrate Margot Stubbs found Grillis guilty of common

assault. The more serious charge of assault occasioning actual bodily harm was dismissed.

No conviction was recorded against the 53-year old, despite Grillis facing identical charges against Mihalopoulos in August.

In that instance, Grillis pleaded guilty to one charge of common assault over an incident at the Greek Orthodox Church in Burwood on February 1,

2006. An assault occasioning actual bodily harm charge was dropped after the prosecution and defence reached an agreement late on the first day of the hearing at Burwood Local Court.

In deciding not to record a conviction at that time, Magistrate William Pierce took into account the minor nature of the offence, Grillis' previous good character and a degree of provocation.

EU poll shows Greek concern

Greeks are the most pessimistic people in the eurozone, as seven in 10 believe that their country is going in the wrong direction, according to a survey conducted on behalf of the European Union and which was published yesterday.

The percentage of people who feel this concern about the course that Greece is taking (69 percent) is up 14 percent over last year. The Eurobarometer survey was conducted in October and November, before the recent riots.

No country in the eurozone or the first 15 members of the EU registers such a high rate of concern. The Hungarians are the most pessimistic in the 27-member block.

On average 49 percent of EU citizens expressed unhappiness about the current state of affairs in Europe.

Economic concerns appear to worry Greeks most, as 88 percent believe that the country's economy is in worse shape than that of other EU countries and 92 percent expect things to get worse over the next 12 months.

Theo Theophanous hits out at police

THEO Theophanous's career as a minister in the Brumby Government is over after police charged him with rape.

Mr Theophanous stood down from Cabinet but maintained his innocence and said police had mishandled the investigation into allegations he raped a woman in Parliament House 10 years ago.

Premier John Brumby will announce a Cabinet reshuffle on Monday.

Labor is reeling after police issued Mr Theophanous with a Christmas Eve summons alleging he raped a woman in his office in 1998.

Mr Theophanous accused police of not giving him "a fair go" during the investigation, and said he would continue as a backbench MP.

"I do not intend to resign as a Member of Parliament as I am completely innocent of any wrongdoing," he said.



Hitting out: Theo Theophanous with his wife, Rita, at his press conference. Picture: Joe Sabljak

to Mr Theophanous, has in recent years lived in Greece where investigators interviewed her earlier this year.

The veteran MP yesterday launched a scathing attack on his accuser.

"It is easy for a desperate woman with nothing to lose and much to gain to make a false allegation

from another country in such a vicious and public way," he said.

A rattled Mr Brumby said he first knew of the charge yesterday morning when his departmental head told him.

"Obviously I was surprised, and I guess like a lot of people I came into the office today and intended to finalise all the work before Christmas," Mr Brumby said.

The Premier then spoke to Mr Theophanous and accepted the Upper House MP's resignation from Cabinet.

Mr Theophanous's wife, Rita, stood by his side. "I know he's innocent," she said.

She said the timing of the charge was "a bit sad".

The ordeal had taken a toll on the family, she said.

"It's been a stressful time, but we've grown through it and we'll continue to grow. We'll fight it and we'll win."

Mr Theophanous will appear at Melbourne Magistrates' Court on January 23 charged with one count of rape.

Top lawyer Robert Richter, QC, will defend him.

Article from Melbourne Sun

Tests suggest terrorist link

Two rifles used to shoot at police bus; extreme anarchist theory losing strength

The shots fired at a bus carrying policemen earlier this week came from two rifles, tests have revealed, prompting authorities to consider the possibility that an existing or new domestic terrorist organization was behind the attack rather than an extreme anti-establishment group.

Ballistic tests on the seven cartridge cases found by members of the anti-terrorist squad revealed on Thursday that the bullets, two of which hit the bus, had been fired from two different rifles, most likely Kalashnikovs.

The shots were fired from a building on an abandoned firing range where the University of Athens's residence halls, known as Panepistimioupolis, are located. One bullet blew out two tires on the bus while another struck the engine. No police officers were injured.

Authorities now believe that at least two people were involved in the attack and that a third person was probably acting as a lookout for the gunmen. A source who wished to remain anonymous told Kathimerini that the incident is unlikely to have been the work of extreme anarchists or

anti-establishment figures.

Anti-terrorist officers are disregarding a claim of responsibility by a group calling itself Popular Action and are instead expecting those behind the shooting to issue a proclamation.

Police are now focusing on the theory that the shots were fired by members of an existing terror group, such as Revolutionary Struggle, which fired a grenade at the US Embassy last year, or experienced urban guerrillas that have formed a new organization.

Officers were presented with another unusual shooting to investigate yesterday after a Proastiakos suburban railway train carrying passengers through the southern suburb of Tavros was fired upon late on Thursday.

One bullet smashed through a window but no passengers were hurt. It was not clear if a second shot had been fired at the train, which was traveling from Athens to Kiato, west of the capital. Police had not made any statements by linking the shooting with Tuesday's attack on the police bus or any other incidents since the death of 15-year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos on December 6.