

Greek PM condemns attack on TV station

Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis Wednesday condemned as "reprehensible" an attack on a private television station.

"We condemn all such unacceptable actions," Karamanlis said of the incident, which took place Tuesday night.

Masked gunmen opened fire on the offices of Alter TV and tossed a makeshift explosive, but caused no injuries, national police said.

Gunmen, mounted on two high-powered motorcycles, sped by the side entrance of the network shortly before the Alter TV prime-time newscast, stopping briefly to shoot at a fleet of cars parked within the station's compound, according to witnesses at Alter TV.

"We counted at least 13 shots," said Alter TV journalist George Stergiopoulos. "When they stopped, I looked out and saw them zipping away."

Police later cordoned off surrounding streets, while explosive experts examined the bullet cartridges and the makeshift bomb that failed to detonate.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Interior Minister Prokopis Pavlopoulos swiftly condemned the incident, saying an attack against the media was "an attack against the freedom of speech and democracy."

Hours after the incident, police carried out a controlled explosion on a car with a makeshift bomb in the parking lot of a Citibank in Athens, officials said in a statement. A bank guard alerted police in the early hours of Wednesday morning to a suspect vehicle abandoned by at least three unknown people with covered faces in the parking area near the premises.

The area was cordoned off and a police crew was dispatched, police said. They found a timed improvised explosive device consisting of 5 bottles of household propane and full of explosive electronic detonators, batteries and two mechanical watches, thought to be backup timers. The vehicle used was stolen in January, police said. It was not immediately clear if the two incidents were linked.

Digital map of the Greek Church wealth

More than 30 000 treasures of the Greek Church can be found in the digital map, which was presented in the Byzantium Museum. The website is a product of the joint work of the nongovernmental organization of the Greek Church "Solidarity" and OTE. The project is executed within the European program "Information society" and 20% of the expenses were taken by the national budget.

The project was one of the dreams of the deceased archbishop Hristodoulos, who started it. Now that the project is done and the website is available online, archbishop is Yeronimos, who said in the official opening that "the cultural richness of the Greek



Church is a national heritage for Greece." It will be accessible to everyone online – to specialists and scientists and to everyone, who is curious to see the website: <http://art.solidarity.gr>, which has the three language option – Greek, English, and Russian.

Rare manuscripts

The user of the website is able to look through some rare manuscripts and prints, which are hard or even impossible to be found and used by people in libraries. The book catalog is still small – right now 135 manuscripts and 59 old print books are uploaded. Only in the library of the monastery of Prophet Illya in Santorini there are more manuscripts! But in the uploaded on the website manuscripts and documents, together with the name, the information about the number of pages, content, place where they are kept, and bibliography are included.

Relics and iconography

Icons, crosses, wooden altars, relics – all of those are representative of the Church art and next to their image there is a detailed explanation of their historic background. Over 30 000 relics of great cultural importance are presented in the digital map of the Greek Church. There are images as well as blueprints of temples and monasteries, mostly from the further away regions in the mountains and villages in Greece. The website also gives the opportunity to find educational materials and materials about learning more about the Byzantine music.

Right next to the 30 000 relics, there are constantly new additions. The digital map also shows the places, where the included relics could be seen and also the road, which leads to the monasteries. The digital map gives the public the opportunity to learn about the rich Greek tradition. Monuments and different objects are also shown, which is important for their preservation.

Woman left to die in makeshift monastery

A 76-year-old woman on the island of Salamina, near Piraeus, who had turned the house she lived in with her deaf sister into an unofficial monastery, was left to die by robbers who bound and gagged her, police said yesterday.

Officers were called to the home, which doubled as a monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary, after neighbors found the deaf woman standing in the middle of the road, looking dazed and appealing for help.

Police found the 76-year-old gagged and bound to a chair inside the house. A coroner found that she had died of asphyxiation.

Her sister was able to tell officers, with the help of a sign-language interpreter, that two thieves had broken into the property on Monday night and tied up the two elderly women. Officers believe that the robbers targeted the property as they expected to find valuable religious items there.

The most corrupt are the doctors in the Greek hospitals

The most corrupt people are the doctors in the hospitals, the tax-agents, and the clerks in the town-planning according to data announced today by the Association "Transparency without borders" in Athens. 6000 people were used in the research and 27.6% of them say someone has tried to bribe them. In comparison with 2007, in 2008 the corruption has increased with 1.2%. Governmental institutions have a bigger corruption problem than private firms.

The participants in the survey had to answer the question: "Has it ever happened to you or to a family member to be asked for a bribe in any governmental institution or a private firm, in order to be attended to faster?" One out of three or 28% answered positive, where 20.3% of them were asked for a bribe in a governmental institution and 10.6% in a private firm.

All together 13.5% were asked for a bribe during 2008, which shows that the corruption cases have increased with 1.3% compared to last year. The difference is that during 2007, 2/3rds of the cases were connected to governmental institutions and during

2008 the corruption in the private sectors has increased. There, the most popular bribing cases are among doctors, lawyers, bank employees, driving instructors, and the freelance contractors.

Here is some more detailed data: in public hospitals the most corrupt doctors want "douceur" for surgeries, for check-ups or for giving birth and the average amount is between 50 euro and 6000 euro, where mostly the paid amount is 869 euro. In the private hospitals the amounts start from 60 euro and get to 80 000, where mostly the paid amount is 4 543 euro.

In the public sector the most corrupt employees after the doctors are the tax-agents and the clerks working in town-planning. In order for one to get a document, which allows building in the city, he/she has to pay 2 169 euro but the asked amount could reach 15 000 euro. In the tax company, in order to start or close a firm, and also about any question about receiving inheritances, you need to pay around 2 362 euro but the "douceur" can reach up to 30 000 euro.

The overall amount according to the calculations of the Association "Transparency without borders,"

which during 2008 went for "douceurs" is around 749 million, which is 100 million more than in 2007.

The research also shows data about the tendencies and the positions of the public regarding the "corruption" phenomenon. Here comes the optimistic message of the research, which is based on the conclusion that 80% of the surveyed approve the actions, which support corruption or are tolerant towards it.

Mr. Kostas Bakouris, who presented the research noted: "I'm afraid that we will become boring once again but I have to repeat myself that it is very important to be voted for an ethic code and to train employees from the public administration. For one more time, the Association "Transparency without borders" needs to stress that there are regulations, which support this transparency but there are applied selectively."

The results of the research give the opportunity to see how serious the corruption consequences are in the health field, in the financial institutions, in the environmental organizations and in the public organizations as a whole.