

WHY is Nikos Dendias speaking at John Jay College tonight at the invitation of the President and the Center for International Human Rights, when he should be



NIKOS DENDIAS
Minister of Public Order
and Citizen Protection

W A N T E D

For CRIMES against the PEOPLE of GREECE?

**Join us to ask that question at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
April 25, 2013, 5:00-7:00pm, New Building, 524 West 59th Street, Rm. 9.64**

Since July 2012, when Nikos Dendias took office as Greek Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, immigrant organizations and the international media have all seen reasons to condemn policies in Greece that until recently would have been viewed as staples of authoritarian regimes: extreme police violence against protesters; discriminatory practices against immigrants; torture of prisoners and a series of other violations of civil rights; arrests of journalists; and tolerance of outrages by neo-Nazis.

The regime imposed during Mr. Dendias's tenure is fairly described as a police state. Tactics of intimidation and coercion are used systematically to suppress any and all civil protest or labor action. In January 2013, riot police staged a pre-dawn raid against a transport depot occupied by metro workers who had been on strike for eight days. The government, invoking martial law, declared the strike illegal and issued a "civil mobilization" order to force the workers back to their jobs. In the Skouries region of Chalkidiki, Northern Greece, where residents protest the new, environmentally disastrous gold-mining operation of Canadian Eldorado Gold, arrests of protesters have been followed by mass collection of DNA samples; a constitutional aberration and a flagrant violation of civil rights. Following an Amnesty International condemnation of excessive teargas use by Greek police, Dendias pledged last September to ban it. Many months later and despite the death last October of a 67-year-old man attributed to teargas, the police continue to deploy teargas against peaceful protesters.

Torture and abuse have been employed to repress protest. In October 2012, fifteen anti-fascist protesters were tortured during their arrest by police and their detention at the Attika General Police Directorate (GADA). Use of taser, beatings, burns with cigarette lighters, threats and sexually abusive comments, and denial of access to medical and legal assistance were documented. When *The Guardian* (UK) publicized the abuses, Dendias threatened to sue the newspaper. In February 2013, human rights organizations criticized the police for beating alleged criminals already in custody, and for photoshopping mugshots to conceal their shocking physical condition. Dendias responded that the photoshopping was done to make their battered faces recognizable to possible witnesses, otherwise "the photos wouldn't have been published in the first place."

Xenophobia and racist attacks are condoned by the Greek police. Documenting dozens of violent attacks primarily against immigrants and foreign workers in a report for the period from Nov. 2011 to mid-2012, Human Rights Watch found that the incidents "usually happen with impunity, with little or no serious effort by the police or others to bring the culprits to justice." Police violence is increasingly tolerated despite condemnations by Amnesty International, the UN Refugee Agency and Human Rights Watch. These policies have contributed to an escalation of racial violence. One week ago, three strawberry plantation foremen in Nea Manolada, Peloponnese, opened fire on 200 workers from Bangladesh and elsewhere when they demanded unpaid wages for six months of work, wounding 29 people, seven critically. Under the scrutiny of national and international press Mr. Dendias visited the site. The survivors received promises they would not be deported; unlike thousands of other foreign nationals now held in concentration camps under appalling conditions and awaiting their fate to be decided.

Support among Greek police for Golden Dawn, the Neo-Nazi group now in Parliament, is extensively documented. Dendias has refused to allow investigation of or to take measures to roll back the intertwining of police with GD. In October 2012, when GD cadre protested outside a performance of the play *Corpus Christi*, they beat up a journalist directly in front of the police, who did not act to stop or arrest them. In another case, Golden Dawn cadre vandalized the offices and shops of the Tanzanian community in Kypseli, Athens, again while police looked on. When members of that community protested the incident at the Aghios Panteleimon police station, they were arrested on charges of "defamation." GD attacks and kills innocent people, like the young Pakistani Shehzad Luqman who was stabbed to death while going to work in January of 2013. In the meantime, Mr. Dendias and his police stand by, watch, and orchestrate the tightening of their control over our lives.

Protest against Dendias's police state outside – Ask the hard questions inside!

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 524 W 59th St, April 25, 2013, 5:00-7:00pm, New Building, Rm 9.64

Organized by AKNY–Greece Solidarity Movement (AKNY.org) & Campaign for Peace and Democracy (cpdweb.org)