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What is Paradise or the Kingdom of God?

Louis A. Palivos



Pat Marvenko Smith has painted the Heavenly "Place", of worship, Rev. Ch. 4

The next three articles will be on what is Paradise/Heaven or the Kingdom of God, what is Hades or Hell and what is the Last Judgment? These articles are written from the Holy Scriptures, Holy Fathers' and Mothers' points of views and Science. These articles will dispel mythologies and non-Biblical superstitions. For who is Heaven prepared? For who is Hades prepared? Does Paradise or the Kingdom of God and Hades or Hell exist now? The Biblical and Patristic view is that after death, Paradise is a *temporary* "state" for the faithful souls and Hades is a *temporary* "state" for the unrepentant souls, the Devil and the demons.

The Lord Jesus Christ told the Penitent Thief on the cross, "Today thou shall be with me in Paradise." Lk. 23:43 The thief also refers to Paradise when he says, "Lord, remember me in your Kingdom." Lk. 23:42

The Apostle Paul wrote that, "He was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter." II Cor.12:4. St. John in The Apocalypse wrote, "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Revelations 2:7. According to Arethas of Caesarea, "Paradise is to be understood as a blessed and as an everlasting life". Therefore, Paradise, heaven, eternal life and the Kingdom of God are identical, but with a qualification.¹

According to Father/Professor, George D. Metallinos, Paradise is the following:

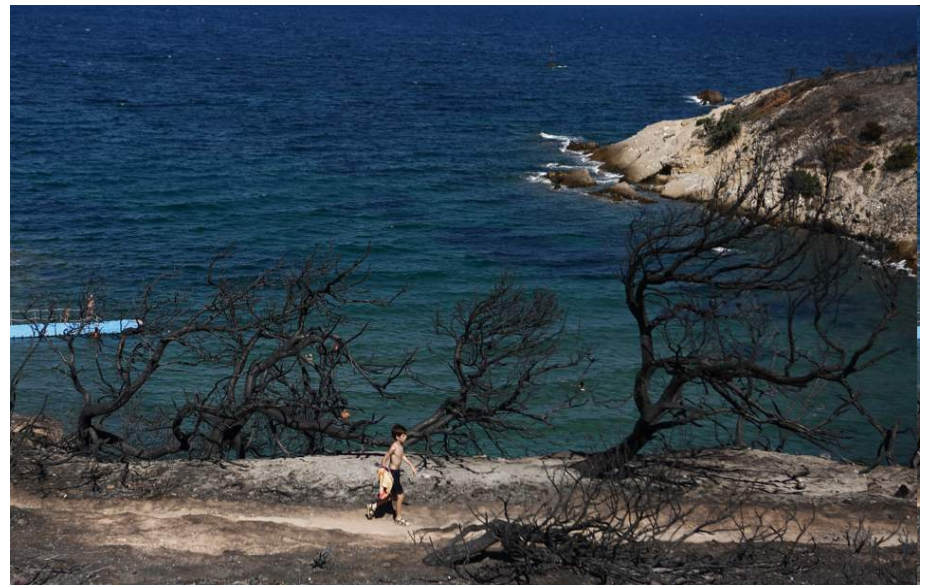
1. It is not a place, but a state or mode of existence;
2. This state or mode of existence is derived from the uncreated Glory and uncreated Grace of God; and
3. Paradise and Hades are the same reality, but experienced by those who have accepted His (Jesus Christ) invitation as Resurrection to Eternal Life and as to those who have rejected His (Jesus Christ) invitation as Resurrection to Hell.²

According to Saint Mark of Ephesus, "Heaven is not a physical place where the angels dwell like as we, but it is a noetic (conscious) place surpassing sense perception, if indeed it should be called a place at all, but more properly, it must be called the Place of God."³ According to Saint John the Damascene, "The PlacGod is God said to be that which has a greater share in His energy and grace. For this

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A survivor's account

CATE WHITTEMORE



A child walks near the Kokkino Limanaki beach in Rafina, east of Athens, ravaged by the deadly wildfire on July 23.

I am an American artist who teaches painting on the island of Skyros in August. July 23, I was visiting my friend in Rafina, at her beautiful house on a steep cliff above the water in Kokkino Limanaki, a semicircular canyon created by cliffs lined with pines and houses looking down. We had prepared a dinner for guests arriving that night from America. I was to stay there while she drove to the airport to pick them up.

That afternoon we stood on her roof watching a cloud of smoke from a distant fire grow closer, and the firefighters' water-dropping helicopters and planes began to fly right over her house, to refill from the sea at Kokkino Limanaki. She called a neighbor who lived in the direction of the smoke, to offer her refuge.

The neighbor, Afrodite, appeared, as she departed for the airport. My friend told us, "If you have to get out, close all the doors and windows and go to the water." None of us thought this would be necessary.

As I was cutting a watermelon, I saw orange sparks flying on the wind in to the pine trees in front of her house. I went upstairs to close the doors and windows, and saw flames all along the property line, 10 meters from the house. Closing the back door, Afrodite and I sped for the path down to the water. I had my phone, my eyeglasses, which I folded on the side of my underwear, slip-on shoes, and Afrodite had two purses.

The long beach canyon was filled with smoke, an apocalypse image, distant people black silhouettes. The fire could now be seen as orange tongues of flame consuming my friend's house and trees. Walking fast, we caught up with the others, as we all distanced ourselves from the smoke. At the other end of the beach, I clambered into the rocks, and looking back, could only see an approaching wall of black smoke. Powerful gusts of wind bore down on us as the fire jumped along the cliff, and the sounds of cars exploding. I had to keep going fast along the rocks to escape the blasts of wind and smoke and showers of sparks.

I was engulfed in a black cloud of smoke and burning cinders, so I sank into the water, still trying to hold my phone out, and keep my shoes. I was pushed along the rocks by the wind, away from the beach. I was inhaling smoke, unable to keep sparks from my hair. My phone was wet and impeding, so I threw it to the rocks. I went underwater, opening my eyes to see the shapes of the rocks beneath me, coming up for air only to inhale smoke. Choppy waves and gusts pushed me out to sea. I swam to some rocks to catch my breath behind them.

I looked out to sea and saw a small boat, and further away, a pontoon boat, and a woman who had been on the beach was far out in the water, shouting to them.

A strong gust came and for a moment the entire sky was black, filled with

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THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

1. To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
2. To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
3. To promote the preservation of the Greek language
4. To encourage all worthy Community causes
5. To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
6. To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
7. To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

What is Paradise or the Kingdom of God?

Louis A. Palivos

(From p. 1)

reason, Heaven is His throne, for in it are the angels who do His will. A noetic place where the noetic and bodiless natures both function noetically and exist, both are present and active.”⁴

However, “a strictly Orthodox perspective affirms a distinction between the two, Paradise and the Kingdom of Heaven, that what is allotted to those in Paradise may be regarded as a pledge for a greater and more splendid allotment in the Kingdom of Heaven, after our physical bodies reunite with our souls in the Second Resurrection, on the Day of Judgment.”⁵

Further, both the Eastern Orthodox and the Coptic Orthodox, when one reposes, pray for the person’s soul to be in “a place of light, a place of green pasture, a place of repose, where all sickness, sorrow and pain have fled away.”

Paradise and Hades are not simply a recompense or a punishment, but the way in which each person experiences the vision of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the state of One’s heart.

The Repentant Person is “cured” or purified in the heart, purification, so that through progressive illumination of the heart by the Holy Spirit, that person attains deification, *Theosis*.

The Unrepentant Person willingly rejects Jesus Christ and becomes demonized by his/her own choice.

The end of the saved person’s journey is to partake in God’s uncreated glory and uncreated energy, not a *created* reality of Heaven and Hell, which is a myth. After death, both the saved and the unsaved are in the presence of God. The unsaved burn or are tormented, in the presence of God, whereas the saved partake in the joy of being with God.

Living in a holy manner unites one to God and one gains freedom from sins and is healed of wickedness.

According to Father/Professor John Romanides, in Heaven, the just will live the “unkinetic motion” and the “kinetic stasis.” The Kingdom of God and Hell do not exist yet, but Heaven and Hades are the same reality differently experienced by those who are saved versus those who are not saved. Those saved are not yet in perfect enjoyment of the blessedness to come, those not saved have not yet received their willful choice of rejecting Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. Both saved and unsaved souls await the Last Judgment.⁶

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to use words, to explain the mysteries of God, the infinite with the finite, and the uncreated energy of God that either luminates or burns with created realities.

Paradise and Hades refer to two different states or stages of the soul in the path toward eternal life, both being *temporary*. Later, the Kingdom of God and Hell shall be the *permanent* and the continuing existence of the soul reunited with the body when full reward will be received.

In the life of the Faith, in Paradise, the souls get a white garment, sing hymns, see others, see God’s presence and Heaven’s Light, smell heavenly scents, hear the voice of many waters, have no sense of time, experience pure joy, the invisible becomes visible, experience degrees of glory, have crowns, thrones and rank and an infinite and limitless space.⁷

Saint Paul states, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things God has prepared for those who love God.” I Cor. 2:9

Metropolitan Ireotheos of Naupaktou, after quoting from St. Isaac of Syria, Thophilectos of Bulgaria, St. Basil, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory Palamas, St. John of Sinai, concludes as follows:

1. The general teaching of the Holy Fathers of the Church is that Heaven and Hell do not exist from God’s view, but from Man’s view.
2. The Holy Fathers teach that there are not two places, but that God is Heaven for the Saints, and Hell for the Sinners.
3. Heaven is God’s Love (St. Isaac).
4. Hell is the effect of God’s Love (St. Isaac).
5. God’s uncreated grace effects the Saint as light and the Sinner as fire (Thophilectos of Bulgaria).
6. Eternal life is light to the righteous who have clear minds but darkness to the sinners who are blind in the mind (Nous) (St. Gregory the Theologian).
7. Persons who either receive the enlightenment or the punishing grace of God (St. Gregory Palamas).
8. Heaven and Hell are the energy of God’s uncreated grace. There is no uncreated Heaven and created Hades.
9. The Church’s calling is to treat people to clear their minds, (Nous) and their hearts, like a hospital that heals persons.⁸

St. Markus Evgenikos states that now “Neither the righteous enjoy perfectly Paradise nor the sinners Hades. Latter, the righteous shall enter the Kingdom of God and the sinners enter Hell” when the soul is reunited with each person’s body.⁹ St. Evgenikos makes a distinction between Paradise and the Kingdom of God and between Hades and Hell. The former, Paradise and Hades, are *temporary* and the latter, the Kingdom of God and Hell, are *permanent*.

In the eternal state the soul is reunited with its body. In the eternal state, time matter and space are transformed: time is eternal, matter is like the Lord Jesus Christ’s resurrected body and space is dimensionless; because time, matter and space could not contain the Lord Jesus Christ’s body!

For those who haven’t accepted Jesus Christ as Lord, repent, for the Kingdom of God awaits you!

1. Arethas of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Patrologia Graeca. Vol. CXXIII, col. 1105 B.

2. George D. Metallinos, *Paradise and Hell in the Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XXVII #3, 2010

3. Archbishop Lazar Puhalo, *On the Nature of Heaven and Hell According to the Fathers*, Synaxis Press, Dewdney, Canada.

4. Ibid 11

5. John Habib, *Orthodox Afterlife: 2000 years of Afterlife Experiences of Orthodox Christians and a Biblical and Early Christian View of Heaven, Hell and the Hereafter*, Saint Mary and Saint Moses Abbey Press, Sandia, TX 78383, 2016

6. Father John Romanides, *Heaven and Hell: Progress and Stagnation, the Heaven of the West is the Hell of Christians*. See also <http://audio.ancientfaith.com/illuminedheart/narrowgate.pdf>.

7. Ibid, John Habib.

8. Metropolitan Ireotheos of Naupaktou, *Hell and Heaven: Place or Way*, July 21, 2016. (Translated from the Greek to English by the Author).

9. Metropolitan Ireotheos of Naupaktou, *The Intermediary State of the Souls*.

Two Greek soldiers released from Turkish jail return home

Two Greek soldiers freed after months in a Turkish prison returned to Greece by government jet early Wednesday after their unexpected release by a provincial court. Defense Minister Panos Kammenos said he phoned his Turkish counterpart to express his satisfaction with the soldiers’ release and invite him to visit Greece. “I hope that their release ... will herald a new day in Greek-Turkish relations. We can live together peacefully, for the benefit of both our peoples.”



The soldiers – 2nd Lieutenant Angelos Mitretodis and Sergeant Dimitris Kouklatzis – were met by Kammenos, the army chief of staff and an honor guard after their arrival at 3 a.m. at the airport in the northern city of Thessaloniki. “All I want to say is thank you,” Mitretodis told reporters. The men were arrested on March 1 for illegally entering Turkey after crossing the heavily militarized land border. Greece strongly protested their long detention in the western town of Edirne, arguing that they had strayed across during a patrol of a trail of suspected illegal immigration amid poor visibility due to bad weather.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras welcomed their release as “an act of justice,” and provided the jet he uses on official foreign journeys to bring them back. Their release “will contribute to strengthening friendship, good neighborly relations and stability in the region,” Tsipras said in a statement. “I want to congratulate and thank (the two men) and their families for their fortitude, patience and trust in our efforts, which were finally justified.”

The two Greeks were released Tuesday pending the outcome of their trial by a Turkish court. Turkey’s state Anadolu Agency said that in a court hearing to review a request for their release the two said in their defense that they had crossed the border by mistake. Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos said the release of the two soldiers “on the one hand constitutes a basic act of justice on the part of the Turkish authorities. On the other hand, it shows how Turkey can and should continue to fully reestablish the climate of friendship and good neighborliness with Greece”. Main opposition New Democracy leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis said: “The release of the two Greek officers is happy news amid the gloomy summer that our country is experiencing. All Greeks await their return with joy and emotion.”

Selective magnanimity and constant injustice



SYRIZA's selective, cynical magnanimity has managed to strengthen the chronic sense of injustice that plagues society.

SYRIZA is right to adhere to the humanistic stipulations of the penal code in the case of a paranoid and unrepentant killer. Showing such meticulous concern for one individual might inspire those in power to try to achieve a modicum of legality in other areas where their policies are seriously deficient. More importantly, however, the symbolism of this noteworthy interest in the comfort of an emblematic figure of leftist terrorism in Greece is understandable: In difficult times, people tend to return to their founding myths to draw comfort and renew their sense of purpose. And the myth of self-proclaimed revolutionaries who believe they are in conversation with the past and the future always holds a strong attraction for people who, like many in this government, have not had to work hard in the real world or take real risks to achieve their aims.

If SYRIZA's communications experts had reckoned that providing comfort to this particular convict would have worked in the government's favor, drawing attention away from the shock of the deadly fire in eastern Attica, they were right – up to a point. But they also made a great mistake. The government's bold move did not ease the pressure on it; instead, people got angrier. At a loss as to what to do in the face of crisis, the government wanted to go back to what would comfort SYRIZA's hard core, to show that no matter how many compromises it has made, no matter how many defeats it has suffered, this remains a radical left-wing group. In politics, the government has employed divisive tactics ("Either we finish them or they finish us," Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has said of the government's opponents); in the economy, it has deliberately targeted those whom it does not consider its voters (as one of its cadres made clear in an editorial); now, by being protective of antisocial groups, such as Athens's anarchists, it is trying to encourage its supporters while showing "the rest" that it does not care.

The government may just find that the number of "the rest" is growing. It appears not to have anticipated the anger that its favors to a mass murderer would provoke even among people who might still not have written off SYRIZA. The economic cost of the government's mistakes, its incompetent management of crises, the sharing out of jobs and perks to friends and relatives, the continuous search for culprits (outside of the government) for whatever happens in Greece, have all undermined the "narrative" of government by faultless young idealists. When we add to this the image of the self-satisfied terrorist enjoying special treatment, the weight of responsibility on the government grows heavier. Its obsession with this specific convict points out a bitter truth: In our country, it is the innocent who must be afraid; the guilty can hope for political protection.



Image caption A photograph from 2015 shows Chinese vessels around Mischief Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands.

China has branded as "irresponsible" US comments that it is intimidating its neighbours with its military deployment in the South China Sea. A top Chinese general said China had the right to deploy troops and weapons "on its own territory". Earlier US Defence Secretary James Mattis said Beijing's actions called into question its broader goals. Six countries have competing claims in the sea, but China has backed its own with island-building and patrols. Gen Mattis had made his critical comments at a security summit in Singapore.

Why is the South China Sea contentious? China's 'globalised' military power Speaking at the same conference, China's Lt Gen He Lei said: "Any irresponsible comments from other countries cannot be accepted." Gen He said Beijing's deployments were part of a policy of "national defence", adding: "They are for the purpose of avoiding being invaded by others. "As long as it is on your own territory you can deploy the army and you can deploy weapons."

A survivor's account

CATE WHITEMORE

(From p. 1)

orange sparks. Some bags blew into the water in front of me, which floated to me a heavy cotton scarf. I covered my head with it, as protection from burning cinders, and covered my nose from the smoke, as I swam.

The small boat appeared again, now about 50 yards out, in showers of sparks.

I was attempting to crawl up a crevice, in order to breathe behind a boulder – from which perch the boat saw me – and began gesturing and shouting. I thought, would the boat explode like the cars? Would I be able to continue in the water, alone into the night?

I slid back into the water and swam hard. They were in a hurry to flee the approaching firestorm. I got to the side of their boat, and two of the four men pulled me out of the water and threw me into the space between the steering console and the side. They welcomed me and tried to speak English – one of them said, "My cousin lives in Ohio" – they were in brown camouflage suits – army, not coast guard, in a recreational craft. They let me off at the pier in Rafina, where I was walked to a small coast guard vessel, told to go into the cabin, drink water, sit down.

There was no water. Inside, a female coast guard glared, and four other rescues sat, drenched and speechless. There was one lifejacket, stuck under layers of wiring. The port became more windy and smoke-filled. All the roads were closed. Ambulances were going nowhere. The hospital was also engulfed. No drinking water, blankets, medical. No information offered. Names not taken.

I feared that my friend's car had exploded on her way to the airport. If she was still alive, she thought I was dead.

The port's vast cement pier was covered with parked cars and one giant ferry stood open. We were walked out of the boat, to a bus stop. "Go into this bus stop – it blocs the smoke. There are no trees here. Stay calm. Sit down."

We stood barefooted, cuts on feet and legs, half-naked and sopping, for several hours. Flames could be seen rocketing up behind a small chapel just behind the marina, and the wind was very strong. I walked to the edge of the port pier, to judge the distance to swim to the next promontory – half a mile.

As we stood using the bus stop as a wind block, an elderly man appeared to ask the coast guard, in Italian, for a boat to rescue his five family members, including three children, who he said had been in the water for two hours. The coast guard told him it was too dangerous. He explained that he was a "maritime captain" and that he only needed a boat, saying he knew how to go straight in and get out. He was again told no, and he furiously walked away in the direction of the fire, and disappeared into the black smoke.

The road leading away from the harbor was a stalled line of people in their cars trying to escape. An ambulance appeared, and offered no help, and left. An SUV police vehicle appeared, and we five were taken beside the stalled traffic to an office building just over the harbor, where they said we were safe, and that there was Wi-Fi. We were taken inside, told to stay calm, and that they would come back. The air was good, and we were able to sit down, to dry.

But no Wi-Fi nor phones. Smoke was drifting by and the trees were churning, so we walked out, crossed the lane of stopped traffic, to the shore to see the approaching fire. There were two 10-year-old children beside themselves with terror, sobbing on the steps.

After an hour of this, we decided to walk back to the port to try to find anyone. Inside the coast guard offices, I found the same female officer, and asked to write down my name, and my friend's name. Seeing my name, she said, "Inside, someone is looking for you." And there was Afrodite, with her two purses, sopping and alive. She had been rescued from the water with others from the Kokkino Limanaki beach. How did they survive?

Another rescued person told me she had left her sister behind on the beach. When she gave her name at the coast guard station, they said her sister was looking for her. She nearly fainted.

We realized our eyes were burning/stinging and we washed them with fresh water. We sat outside on the curb for a long while. I went to get the pair of children from the office building, to record their names.

Along came my friend – alive. She and her guests had driven past the road blocks, through her still-burning neighborhood, looking for me, expecting the worst.

Most houses were ruined, but hers was not. She had found us the one remaining hotel room, which we five slept in. She had been able to reach friends and neighbors and knew all were alive and spending the night in vigilance. A close friend who lived a block back from the beach was found in a hospital in Athens, having suffered burns to her hands and feet. The next morning we drove through the apocalyptic landscape, and were denied entrance to her driveway, by insufferably officious policemen, who physically restrained her, until an English-speaking neighbor, who had lost his own house, intervened. He offered to accompany us, and together we walked onto the devastated cliff overlooking the bay of Kokkino Limanaki. The neighbor who had with walked us stood there and cried. I saw the far promontory where I had gone into the water. The neighbor told me that a group of people had been found alive that morning, on the far end of the beach before the rocks.

In the house, everything still existed, and was as before, watermelon ready.

I was able to recover my credit cards, passport, laptop. I had an invisible, painful, fleck in my eye, and was breathing shallowly in the air at Kokkino Limanaki. I am now in Skyros, where the air is fine, and fresh, and have been seen at the hospital, and given eyedrops. There is still no electricity nor water at Kokkino Limanaki. Reports vary greatly: 20 rescued from the sea; 700 rescued from the sea. Many missing. Many dead.

There is great anger that evacuations were not ordered, and at the lack of coordination – for instance, the firefighter planes were flying right over the fire as it approached the coast. People question the absence of coast guard vessels.

I am ever grateful to the heroes in their tiny boat for saving me from the inferno.

GREECE IN PICTURES



An aerial photograph of the archaeological dig on Despotiko, a tiny uninhabited islet west of Antiparos, in the Cyclades. Archaeologists conducting an excavation at the site, which hosts the remains of an 8th century BC temple of Apollo, unearthed three additional structures between late May and early July, raising the total to 22, the Culture Ministry said. Director of excavations Giannos Kouragios told Kathimerini that recent findings reinforce the belief that the sanctuary could be bigger than its more famous counterpart on the island of Delos. "I believe it is the biggest sanctuary in the Cyclades," he said. Despotiko probably served as a religious site up until the beginning of the 2nd century BC, when it suffered extensive destruction at the hands of the Athenians as a punishment to Paros for siding with the Persians. Excavation work started in 1997. [Cyclades Ephorate of Antiquities]



Greece's Argyro Afrati, 20, on the vault in the qualifiers for the Women's Apparatus Finals of the Glasgow 2018 European Artistic Gymnastics Championships, late Thursday. The inaugural multi-sport event is to be split between Glasgow and Berlin, which will host the athletics. [EPA]



Interior Minister Panos Skourletis speaks during a handover ceremony in Athens on Saturday after being assigned the duties of Nikos Toskas, who resigned as alternate citizens' protection minister following a public outcry over the handling of the deadly wildfires that ravaged eastern Attica on July 23. In his comments, Skourletis vowed to push ahead with a government crackdown on building without permits, which is seen as having played a role in the high death toll in the fires. "We must look into the long-standing crimes that have been committed," he said adding that the drive against illegal construction and the redesign of civil protection must be combined with an in-depth investigation into the July 23 operation. [Eurokinissi]



The reconstruction of the main arch of the 19th-century Plaka Bridge in Tzoumerka, northwestern Greece, which collapsed in February 2015 due to flooding, will be delayed by one year. The Court of Audit did not approve the contractor assigned to the project and the file was returned to the competent ministry. Restoration work on the remaining parts of the bridge has been completed. Work was carried out during the summer months to avoid the rain in October that often results in the Arachthos River which flows beneath the bridge breaking its banks.



Passengers are seen boarding a ferry at Piraeus port on Friday ahead of the August 15 national holiday, traditionally viewed as the peak of the Greek summer season. An estimated 24,196 passengers left the country's main port for the Aegean islands on Thursday. Another 5,636 and 1,389 respectively departed from the ports of Rafina and Lavrio on the same day. Officials said passenger traffic is 7-10 percent lower compared to the same period last year. On the other hand, passenger traffic at Athens International Airport is reportedly higher compared to the same period in 2017. [Alexandros/ANA-MPA]



Lack of early warning, town planning led to high death toll, study finds

Authorities' failure to issue a timely warning about the approaching wildfire that scorched the town of Mati, a popular tourist resort 17 miles east of Athens, left "almost zero time between realizing the danger and reacting to it," according to a preliminary inquiry into the deadly inferno released Tuesday by the University of Athens.

Researchers found that the narrow streets and numerous dead-ends that blocked off escape routes to the sea, as well as the absence of large public spaces in Mati, an area built up with no town planning, also contributed to the high death toll. Their findings were backed up by images taken during an inspection of the area's fire-hit buildings and neighborhoods.

Access to the sea was worsened by the morphology of the coastline, experts said. "This [fact] combined with low visibility and a choking atmosphere largely led to a high number of people getting trapped," they said.

Meanwhile, fire victims and relatives of those who died are preparing to file lawsuits while prosecutor Varvara Gnesouli has been receiving testimonies from the chiefs of various state bodies that were responsible for the prevention and containment of the fire.

Kathimerini understands that the prosecutor also plans to lift confidentiality restrictions in order to access communications between the various state services involved in fighting the fire to ascertain who knew when it broke out and when authorities were first informed about the deaths.

MARIA KATSOUNAKI

How many locks will keep us safe?

A gang that robbed tourists and locals in the center of Athens was recently caught by police after many months of systematic surveillance. Among those arrested, mostly Bulgarians and Romanians, were eight minors.

So will everyone now be able to walk down Ermou Street and Monastiraki without having to watch their bags and pockets? Probably not. The threat remains, though there is definitely relief after the arrests.

One does not have to resort to statistical data. It is enough to talk about burglaries or thefts with friends, and one immediately understands that the trend is overwhelming.

It would be difficult to find a person in Athens and the wider Attica region who has not been the victim of a burglary, or knows someone who has.

During the summer, advertisements offering better home protection with locks, safes or special mobile phone apps that are connected to cameras are more prevalent. It is very indicative and not a chance occurrence.

How is it to live with the threat of a burglary hanging over one's head, when all one hopes for is not to be present when it happens?

And then, in what state is one's home after it has been robbed and the furniture has been overturned; how does one react to losses, maybe small in value – not everyone hides money or jewelry around their house – but with sentimental significance?

And these are the simpler questions when dealing with a burglary, without taking into consideration other felonies.

Apart from the big political, economic, domestic or foreign policy issues, our perception and relationship with the world is created and formed by what we call daily life, from our automated codes of conduct, our anxiety and stifling obligations, to the evaporation of freedom and pleasure.

Doesn't the feeling that every house and apartment is vulnerable to gangs come at a cost?

Isn't there now a sense that anything you lock and leave behind in your house may never be found again? How many precautions can a person take in a day?

How many locks and how many cameras does it take?

Along with the fear and anger, suspicion and conservative behavior also intensify.

It is not enough to have more policing, which is already dramatically insufficient in Greece.

Nor it is helpful to target specific ethnic groups. Lawlessness, which skyrocketed because of the crisis, the government's indifference, the uncontrolled influx of illegal and criminal elements, has side effects: It exacerbates insecurity, and creates "monsters."

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App helps you get the best out of the beach



A new app has emerged that offers to defuse the tensions over sunbeds and loungers that can be a feature on more popular beaches in the summer.

Aptly named Plazz (plazz.com), the Greece-based digital platform helps users reserve a spot on their favorite beach and, in doing so, benefits businesses as well.

As Manos Paterakis, one of the founders of the company, explains, the platform has developed an expanded network of 3,000 loungers in about a hundred locations across Greece, mostly in the Cyclades, Ionian Islands, Xanthi and Kavala.

“We now have more than 35,000 users, of whom 35 percent are based abroad. And our turnover is growing at a rate of 40 percent a year,” says Lefteris Farmakas, his cofounder.

“The disappointment that people who have covered long distances in the summer heat face when they find no places to enjoy themselves at the beach provided the incentive for the app,” he adds.

“There is a great and urgent need for an organized approach to the beach, so we came up with a solution to cover this shortcoming and also to benefit businesses.”

Plazz users can discover and connect with unique beaches and directly reserve their lounge online from any computer, smartphone or tablet.

The app also offers business a platform through which they can manage bookings and make promotional offers.

The company’s success too off last year when it began collaborating with Marketing Greece, Skyscanner and Uber. In addition to developing partnerships with online travel agencies, Plazz wants to expand its services to hotels that have pools (and deckchairs) and also to users, so they can order food and drinks or even beauty services and water sports activities.

The seasonal nature of the tourism industry is a challenge for the app, Paterakis admits. “Seasonality is of great concern to us and that is why our business plans are expanding our operations to areas such as Latin America, where the summer season is almost all year round.”

Thus, Plazz’s strategic objective is the further development of the network in several locations in Greece, as well as its representation in other countries abroad. “We are focusing on beaches and hotels in the Mediterranean, as well as in countries near the equator, to extend the platform’s operation to the rest of the year,” he says.

Fitch upgrades Greece rating to 'BB-' from 'B'



Global rating agency Fitch Ratings upgraded the long-term foreign currency issuer default rating on Greece to ‘BB-’ from ‘B’.

The outlook on Greece is stable, Fitch said on Friday.

Greece’s banking sector is getting better, Fitch noted, adding that the country’s relationship with its European creditors has “substantially improved”.

The hard truths our politicians aren’t telling us



Former finance minister Alekos Papadopoulos once more expressed some difficult truths when he said on that Greece will not be able to remain in the eurozone with the “maladjusted” political personnel it has today.

From the left and right, from the progressive, liberal and conservative camps, almost every single one of our politicians has taken the slippery slope of populism due to fear of the political cost of doing otherwise. Some even fear they will disappear from the political stage if they dare speak the truth.


This is a fact that was confirmed at Thursday’s debate in Parliament, during which most of the politicians opted to take the easy route, the one that best serves their own interests rather than that which serves the country, because they feel that the latter could endanger their chances of re-election.

Papadopoulos reminded us that once Greece’s creditors withdraw from the forefront after the country’s much-lauded exit from the program – regardless of whether this is “clean,” as the government claims, or not, as the opposition insists – we will then have to deal with the international markets. And this is not going to be a walk in the park

Unlike others, the former finance minister had the courage to state that the measures in all the memoranda that Greece has agreed to, and which will be enforced in the years to come, are necessary to the country’s survival, “regardless of whether they constitute a fourth memorandum or not.” He even went to so far in this statement of honesty and courage as to say that planned pension cuts are a structural measure that should not be suspended, as it may be the key to saving the country’s pension system.


If there is one thing we have learned from the crisis, it is that we reached this point because the voices of reason were drowned out by strident tones of populism. And this is something that has been experienced by everyone who tried to defend common sense, from the center-right to the center-left, from former New Democracy leader and prime minister Constantinos Mitsotakis to former PASOK minister of social services Tassos Yiannitsis.

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GREEK NEWS

Gov't spokesman heralds wage increases after exit

Government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos indicated in comments on Sunday that the leftist-led administration



was planning wage hikes as part of a series of measures to counter the impact of austerity after Greece exits its third bailout in August.

"Preparations for the day after have already begun," he told the news website Dikaiologitika News.

"The government's goal is that, immediately after August 21, the official expiry of the program, that all the final details of a series of interventions in favor of the majority of society are finalized," he said.

The government's priority is that the end of the bailout era is translated into "practical improvements in the daily lives of citizens," he said.

Immediate goals include the restoration of collective bargaining rights for workers and increases in salaries for civil servants who have seen their wages slashed over the years.

The raising of the minimum wage is also in the cards, he said.

Asked to comment on claims by the main conservative opposition New Democracy that the government has effectively committed Greece to a "fourth memorandum" due to the additional austerity measures due to come into effect over the next couple of years, Tzanakopoulos accused ND of trying to sabotage the country and its prospects.

ND has been leading leftist SYRIZA in most recent opinion polls by around 10 percentage points.

Greece's population shrinking due to crisis

Greece's population has decreased by



around 355,000 people since the financial crisis started hitting hard in 2011, and if nothing is done to offset this downward trend, by 2050 Greek citizens will at most number 10 million, according to the country's statistics agency (ELSTAT).

Even more worrisome is ELSTAT's prediction that by 2080 the country's population could drop to 7.2 million. The alarm was also raised in a study called "The Greek Population Under Siege," authored by Ira-Emke Pouloupoulos, a Paris University professor, member of the New York Academy of Sciences and vice-president of the Hellenic Society for Demographic Studies.

"The aim of the book is to prove that during the crisis large sections of the Greek population have been 'persecuted,' in that they are systematically subjected to discomforts that have led to or will end in the future with their departure from Greece, their family, their work, their friends, even life," she told the state-run ANA-MPA news agency.

Ankara slams 'irresponsible' Kammenos comment on Greek soldiers



Ankara has dismissed comments earlier this week by Greece's Defense Minister Panos Kammenos, who said that the arrest of two Greek border guards in early March had been engineered by the Turkish leadership.

In a statement on Friday (that was only available in Turkish at the time of going to press), the Turkish Foreign Ministry said that the suggestion "illustrates [Kammenos's] irresponsible and unfriendly behavior."

The ministry said that the reasons for the continued detention of the two soldiers – a lieutenant and a sergeant – have already been explained to the Greek authorities.

It added that Greek efforts to keep the issue on the agenda "with meaningless and unfounded allegations" are designed to deflect attention from Greece's failure, it said, to meet its obligations regarding the extradition of the eight Turkish servicemen who sought asylum in the country following the botched coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2016.

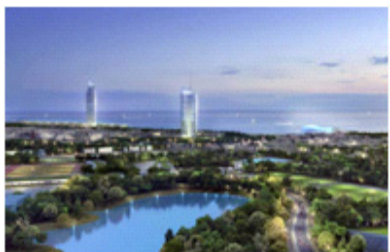
Speaking to Real FM radio on Wednesday, Kammenos said the Greek soldiers were arrested so that they could at some point be exchanged for the eight Turkish servicemen.

"I do not think this was a random act. They found an opportunity on a night with snow to put their plan into action," he said.

Kammenos has repeatedly described the pair, who were arrested after crossing the border in bad weather, as "hostages."

Greek officials have repeatedly ruled out the possibility of a swap.

Greece opens consultations over Elliniko plot's casino



The Hellenic Gaming Commission (HGC), the body responsible for granting new casino operating licenses, announced on Thursday that it is starting consultations for the approval of a casino permit at Elliniko – Attica's biggest development project – opening the way for the tender to find an investor for the project.

Property developer Lamda signed a 99-year lease with the state in 2014 to convert 620 hectares at the former airport in Elliniko, southern Athens, into an integrated resort of luxury residences, hotels, a yachting marina and casinos.

The HGC has invited interested parties to participate in the consultation by submitting their feedback and comments on the initial teaser by September 10.

The commission said the decision on the so-called Integrated Resort Casino (IRC) in Elliniko is not just about the licensing of a gaming facility but "reflects the collective vision and commitment to collaborate on the further development and implementation of a sustainable tourism destination."

The HGC envisages a "world-class integrated resort casino operation as an important part of Elliniko, a project destined to transform the wider area of Athens and improve the lives of millions of residents of and visitors to our capital city, as well as to enhance the Greek tourism product and become a growth engine for the Greek economy."

The submission of comments during consultation may also reveal the investors interested in participating in the eventual tender, which should be expected before the beginning of October, as time is running out to complete the process.

The IRC will be built over more than 600,000 square meters and include a mix of hotels, convention and exhibition facilities, themed attractions, entertainment, a 15,000 sq.m. casino, shops, gourmet restaurants, and other tourist attractions.

Elliniko is a landmark urban development project that is expected to create 10,000 jobs during the construction period and 75,000 jobs afterward.

Tensions between Athens and Moscow spike in ongoing diplomatic spat



Tensions between Athens and Moscow over a diplomatic spat escalated further on Friday when the Greek Foreign Ministry issued a strongly worded statement in response to Russia's decision to expel two Greek Embassy staff from Moscow, calling it an "arbitrary" and "re-

taliatory" move and accusing Moscow of being Turkey's "comrade in arms."

Noting that Greece's decision to expel two Russian diplomats from Athens in July had been based on "specific evidence of illegal and irregular activities of Russian officials and citizens within Greece," the ministry said Russia's move had no such evidence to back it up.

Greece is a "peace-loving country with a multidimensional, independent democratic foreign policy," the ministry said in the statement titled "Putting national interest first: Soberly and firmly." The country is a "sovereign state" which "demands respect and relations based on equality from all countries," it added. "Since it began fighting as a comrade in arms with Turkey, providing it with a number of facilitations in the security sector, [Russia] appears to be steadily distancing itself from positions befitting the level of friendship and cooperation that has characterized Greek-Russian relations for the past 190 years," the ministry said. "It appears not to understand that Greece has its own interests and criteria in international politics."


The statement repeated that Athens resorted to action against Russian diplomats "only after documenting tangible incriminating evidence," referring to "attempts to a) bribe state officials, b) undermine its foreign policy, and c) interfere in... internal affairs."

"It is obvious that there are some Russians – fortunately few – who think they can operate in Greece without respecting laws and regulations, and even make threats," the statement continues.

"Such a case is the effort made to impose the presence of the 'Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society' in Greece, an organization created by the czars' secret services in the 19th century with a view to de-Hellenize the patriarchates of the Middle East," it added.

Greece will respond to Moscow's move "with forbearance and sobriety," the ministry said. On Monday, Russia said it was responding in kind to what it called an unfriendly decision by Athens to expel two Russian diplomats in July. Two Greek Embassy staff were ordered to leave Russia and the director of Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias's political bureau, Giorgos Sakellariou, was barred from the country.

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Trump doubles metal tariffs on Turkey as lira falls by 20%



President Donald Trump has doubled US tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminium, as the precipitous fall of the Turkish lira accelerates.

In a tweet, Mr Trump said the currency was weak against "our very strong dollar", adding that "US relations with Turkey are not good at this time". Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a speech that the drop was part of a "campaign" led by foreign powers. Turkey also warned it would retaliate against the US tariffs move. "The United States should know that the only result that such sanctions and pressure will bring... will be harming our relationship as allies," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement. The two Nato members are at odds on a range of issues - how to fight the Islamic State group, Ankara's plans to buy Russian missile defence systems and how to punish the alleged plotters of a failed coup in Turkey in 2016. Most recently, President Trump issued sanctions on top Turkish officials over the ongoing detention of a US pastor who is facing terror and espionage charges in Turkey.

What is happening in Turkey?

In the past 24 hours, the lira has lost around 20% of its value. It had already fallen more than 40% in the past year. Is Turkey heading for an economic crisis?

In a televised speech on Friday, President Erdogan called on citizens to exchange foreign currency and gold for lira, calling it an "economic war". "This is a domestic and national struggle," he said, as the lira continued to fall. In a veiled attack on the US he added: "Some countries have engaged in behaviour that protects coup plotters and knows no laws or justice." "Relations with countries who behave like this have reached a point beyond salvaging." After he spoke, Mr Trump tweeted that aluminium tariffs "with respect to Turkey" would be raised to 20% and steel to 50%. The reaction from global currency markets to the rift caused the euro to slump to a 13-month low and pushed the dollar to a one-year high.

The Turkish trade ministry responded that the additional tariffs were against the rules of the World Trade Organization. "Turkey expects other member countries to abide by international rules," the ministry said in a statement, adding that the US remained an important trade partner.

The bazaar feels the squeeze

It has been a dramatic day in Turkey but the Turkish government has put on a brave face. President Erdogan said: "If they have dollars, we have our people, we have our right and we have Allah" - rhetoric that goes down well with his supporters but not necessarily with international markets. Some will adhere his call to exchange their dollars, euros or gold for Turkish lira but many others have started feeling the squeeze. Interest rate hikes, which Mr Erdogan sees as the mother of all evils, are not very likely to happen. President Erdogan may seek help from the IMF, following the example of Argentina, but that is not likely either as it would have strings attached, and would be frowned upon in Turkey. There is a feeling that the quickest and most efficient step could be to ease the tensions with Washington. Shortly after Mr Trump's tweet, Mr Erdogan spoke on the phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin.. Officials from Mr Erdogan's office said the two men had "expressed pleasure" that relations between Turkey and Russia were progressing "positively" amid joint defence and energy projects.

Why are US-Turkish relations strained?

Friday's developments are the latest manifestation of growing differences between the two sides on a number of issues. Earlier this month, the White House hit Turkey's justice and interior ministers with sanctions over the country's ongoing detention of an American pastor. Turkey is accusing Andrew Brunson - who operates a small church in Izmir - of having links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party and the Gulenist movement, which Turkey blames for the failed coup. He had been held in prison for almost two years, but was recently moved to house arrest due to health issues. Turkish officials have been in Washington this week for talks on his release but these seemed to fall apart in recent days. The US has also been refusing to extradite Fethullah Gulen, a cleric and former Erdogan ally who has been living in the US state of Pennsylvania. Turkey accuses him of leading the attempted "Gulenist" coup. In addition, Turkish politicians are furious at American military support for Kurdish militia fighting the so-called Islamic State in northern Syria. Half of Turkey's oil imports come from Iran. Therefore the re-imposition of US sanctions against Iran has been seen by economists as likely to harm the Turkish economy.

International Women's Day: images of women protesters

For International Women's Day, we celebrate 100 years of female defiance in photos, including the woman who handbagged a neo-Nazi and the marchers who sparked the Russian Revolution.

Swedish photographer Hans Runesson captured this moment on 13 April 1985 "Be the woman hitting a neo-Nazi with a handbag you wish to see in the world". Taken in Växjö,



Sweden during a demonstration by the neo-Nazi Nordic Reich Party, the photo shows 38-year-old Danuta Danielsson swiping at one of the marchers with her handbag. The Polish-Swedish passerby, snapped "impulsively", according to Runesson, who told BBC Culture that the man did "nothing - he walked further" afterwards. The photo continues to

resonate for many as a silent rallying cry.

And it had an eerie parallel in 2016, when social activist Tess Asplund placed herself



in the path of protesters from the Nordic Resistance Movement in Sweden. David Lagerlöf snapped the instant when the social activist confronted a May Day march of 300 uniformed nationalists in Borlänge, Sweden: fist clenched, her impassive stance communicated as much as countless violent encounters. Standing still, her dress fluttering, as two police officers in full riot gear approach her, a woman protester in Baton Rouge, Louisiana made the headlines with a similarly resolute body language when this image was taken in 2016.

Immobile, composed, Evans is like the



calm at the eye of a storm - her comment above a Facebook post of the image was: "I appreciate the well wishes and love, but this is the work of God. I am a vessel!" Taken by the photographer Jonathan Bachman, it has been seen by some as a symbol of peaceful defiance. A nurse, Evans travelled to Baton Rouge to protest the fatal police shooting of Alton Sterling, telling The Guardian: "I have a six-year-old son, Justin, and I fear

more for his life than I do for my own.



Photographed by Carlos Vera Mancilla in 2016, this photo reveals the visual power of an individual stance. Taken at demonstrations marking the 43rd anniversary of the military coup that resulted in the overthrow of President Salvador Allende by Augusto Pinochet on 11 September 1973, the image captures the full force of a glare. Outside the General Cemetery of Santiago - the site of Allende's grave, and a memorial to those 'disappeared' during Pinochet's regime - an unnamed female protester squared up to a riot policeman,

staring unflinchingly through his visor.



Another photo, taken in the Honduran city of Tegucigalpa this year, shows a less confrontational form of defiance: lying down. A supporter of the defeated presidential candidate Salvador Nasralla, protesting the contested re-election of President Juan Orlando Hernández, lay on the pavement in front of riot police - her seeming nonchalance in fact a display of inner strength.

This photo shows women marching in St

Petersburg on 8 March 1917. The date (23 February in the old Russian calendar) marked International Women's Day, an important day in the socialist calendar - and, now, it also commemorates the first day of the Russian Revolution. While the marchers carried placards that had patriotic slogans, they also demanded change like "Feed the children of the defenders of the motherland" or "Supplement the ration of soldiers' families, defenders of freedom and the people's peace".



"By midday of that day in 1917 there were tens of thousands of mainly women congregating on the Nevsky Prospekt, the principal avenue in the centre of the Russian capital, Petrograd," writes Orlando Figes, author of *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution*. On the following day, protesters had scaled the statue of Alexander III in Znamenskaya Square, calling for the downfall of the monarchy. And a week later, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne. The women's march had become a revolution.

In September 1981, 36 women chained themselves to a fence at a US military airbase in Berkshire, England. They were protesting the decision of the British government to allow nuclear cruise missiles to be sited at RAF Greenham Common - and they established a peace camp that remained there for 19 years.



In 1982, it was decided that the camp should involve women only, creating a collective identity as mothers to protest in the name of all future generations. On 12 December 1982, 30,000 women held hands around the 6 miles (9.7 km) perimeter of the base (pictured); a year later, 50,000 women attended.