

# Athens weekly free press offices set ablaze by anarchist group

There were no injuries. The group claims Athens Voice paper is a willing participant in the 'establishment propaganda' that exploits workers. 'We will not be intimidated', states the paper

NEWSROOM  
Friday 7 November 2014

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Credit: Athens Voice

An anarchist group has claimed responsibility for the arson attack early on Thursday morning against the HQ of Athens Voice's free press weekly, in the capital's centre.

According to reports, the suspects apparently broke the glass entrance door and doused the offices with flammable liquid before setting it alight. Thankfully no one was injured.

As the paper's editor-in-chief, Yiannis Nenes, stated, everything happened around 6 o'clock that morning. "The building's front door, usually left closed, was open this time. The paper's website's newsroom is completely destroyed. In the beginning the Fire Department theorized it was due to a lit cigarette, but there were no editors near the spot the fire started from. There are broken glasses but we do not know yet if they are due to a break-in or whether they were shattered from the fire. The staff remains outside. The next issue will be out on time."

In a statement posted on an anti-establishment website Athens Indymedia (link in Greek), the group, with the admittedly wordy name, "Black Sundays-Red Nights. Anarchist Group of Anti-Capitalist Action", said it carried out the attack to highlight state-sponsored employer terrorism that has introduced 'humiliating wages, debilitating working hours and constant insecurity, which are making the lives of workers unbearable'.

The group also claimed that Free Press projects are creating 'apolitical masses' and accused the Athens Voice of being part of 'the establishment propaganda to ban the Sunday holiday and the enforcement of night working hours at commercial shops (White Nights)'.



The paper released a statement Thursday saying that "if the arson was an effort to intimidate us, the perpetrators achieved the opposite outcome. Athens Voice is an independent voice and it will continue as such. We do not want to live in a country where newspapers are burned and freedom of speech is threatened"

On Friday morning, Culture Minister Kostas Tasoulas paid a visit to the burnt-out 3rd floor office in central Athens and ordered a subscription in a symbolic act of support to the popular paper.

Deputy Prime Minister Evangelos Venizelos denounced the attack as an affront to democracy that 'undermines the sense of security citizens feel and the freedom of expression of journalists'. Government spokesperson Sofia Voultepsi said 'the press, nor democracy will be intimidated by such terrorist attacks'. Accordingly, all of the parliamentary parties as well as the mayor of Athens, condemned the attack.

Anarchist and far-left militant groups have, for decades, mounted attacks against state-run institutions and multinational company offices mostly in Athens and Thessaloniki.

*This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso and its partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union. The project's page: Safety Net for European Journalists. A Transnational Support Network for Media Freedom in Italy and South-east Europe*



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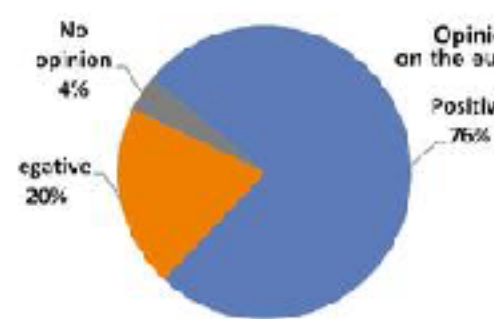
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