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Greece: Deputy Minister of National Defence Giannis Kefalogiannis Represents Government at Memorial Service for Vice Admiral Panagiotis Vlahakos HN in Piraeus



On Sunday 26 January 2025, the Deputy Minister of National Defence Giannis Kefalogiannis, representing the Hellenic Government, attended the memorial service of the Hero Vice Admiral Panagiotis Vlahakos HN, who fell for the country at Imia on 31 January 1996. The ceremony took place at Konstantinos Karamanlis Square in Piraeus, where his Statue stands.

After the memorial service, officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Serafeim of Piraeus, Faliro, Drapetsona, and Aghios Ioannis Renti, a wreath laying followed.

The ceremony was attended by MP Konstantinos Katsafados, representing the President of the Hellenic Parliament, the Deputy Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy Stefanos Gikas, MPs Ioannis Tragakis and Makarios Lazaridis, MP and

brother of the fallen Nikolaos Vlahakos, the Deputy Head of Region for Piraeus Stavroula Antonakou, representing the Head of the Region of Attica, the Mayor of Piraeus Giannis Moralis, the Mayor of Nikaia-Aghios Ioannis Renti Kostas Maragakis, and the Mayor of Perama Ioannis Lagoudakos.

The ceremony was also attended by the Chief/HNDGS General Dimitrios Choupis, the Chief/HNGS, Vice Admiral Dimitrios-Eleftherios Kataras HN, and the Chief of the Hellenic Coast Guard, Vice Admiral Georgios Alexandrakis CG, members of the family of the late P. Vlahakos, members of the Armed and Security Forces, representatives of the Regional and Local Government, Unions, and other Authorities.

The Deputy Minister of National Defence stated in his address:

“I feel especially emotional and honoured that I have the opportunity to attend, as representative of the Prime Minister, today’s ceremony, in the memory of Vice Admiral Panagiotis Vlahakos HN, in Piraeus; where he was born, where his statue stands.

We are here, 29 years later, in order to honour the memory of our three heroes, Vice Admirals Panagiotis Vlahakos and Christodoulos Karathanasis and Captain Ektoras Gialopsos HN. We are here to pay tribute to these three Officers, who, consciously, gave their life for their country. We are here and we owe it to them to be here in order to remind ourselves, but mostly to the younger generations, that in the modern globalised world, patriotism, self-denial, and the will to offer to the country and society are the highest moral values.

So, it is imperative, apart from remembering and honouring today’s anniversary, apart from the proper honors like the naming of the recently inducted into the Fleet Fast Patrol Boats “VLAHAKOS” and “KARATHANASIS” and the Coastal Patrol Boat “GIALOPSOS”, to do even more. This way we will instill into the new generations the same moral values and furthermore, we will equip our Armed Forces, in order for our personnel to be able, with the most modern assets, to perform what they know to do best, protect the integrity and interests of our Country.

I would like to point out that we live in a time of challenges, in an era in which fixed patterns like the respect of International Law and the Law of the Sea are in question. In a changing world, where internationally, but in our region as well, revisionary forces are on the rise. I hope no one makes the mistake to underestimate both our will and capabilities to defend with all means possible our national integrity and laws of our Country. In this world, it is everyone’s duty,

honoring essentially their memory, to keep up with everything we have to defend our national interests. In the above context, we must, and this is what we are doing, maintain and upgrade our deterrent power, through the respective upgrade and reinforcement of the three Services of our Armed Forces. With the upgrade and reinforcement of our Navy, in order to continue to constitute the leading naval power in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

With the construction of the three and soon four new Frigates, with the acquisition of state-of-the-art Anti-Submarine Helicopters, with the reinforcement of the domestic defence and shipbuilding industry, with the adoption of new ideas and technologies, in order to be competitive and not mere observers of the modern technological developments. In order to protect and reinforce our biggest weapon, which is the personnel of the Armed Forces. In order to acknowledge the sacrifice of our three heroes with actions. This is exactly what we are doing with the promotion of the necessary reforms and the implementation of the “2030 Agenda”.

Concluding, I want to address with great respect the relatives of our three heroes. We are here today to honour in front of Panagiotis Vlahakos’ statue, our three Officers, who belong to the pantheon of our Nation’s Heroes, who gave their life for the country. I would like to assure you that their life, their ideals, and their sacrifice lead us.

May their memory be eternal!”

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