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## **Cypriots across Australia honour those who lost their lives in the EOKA struggle**



Cypriot communities across Australia have honoured the heroes and heroines of the EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) struggle against British colonial rule with a number of church services and wreath laying ceremonies.



On Sunday, April 4, Sydney's Cypriot community gathered at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of The Annunciation of Our Lady in Redfern to attend a memorial service, presided over by His Grace Bishop Emilianos, for all those who lost their lives during the struggle. This was followed by the laying of wreaths and a number of short speeches.

In attendance were a number of prominent members of Greek and Cypriot community organisations including, but not limited to, the High Commissioner of Cyprus in Australia, Martha Mavrommatis, the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Christos Karras, the President of the Cyprus-Hellene Club, Panicos Achileos, and the President of the Cyprus Community of NSW, Spiros Constantinou.



A number of similar events were also occurring at the same time in the cities of Melbourne and Adelaide, where wreaths were laid on behalf of Mrs Mavrommatis. A few days earlier on March 28 in Brisbane, the EOKA struggle was marked with another Divine Liturgy and memorial service at the Greek Orthodox Church of St George, followed by a wreath laying ceremony.





Some prominent members of the Greek and Cypriot community who laid wreaths at the event were the High Commissioner of Cyprus in Australia, Martha Mavrommatis, the President of the Cyprus Community of Queensland, Stathis Zambas, and other representatives of the Honorary Consulate General of Greece in Brisbane, among many others.



Immediately after the wreath laying, a luncheon was held to mark the occasion, with speeches, poems and traditional Cypriot dancing.





What is the EOKA struggle?

EOKA was an underground nationalist movement of Greek Cypriots dedicated to ending British colonial rule in Cyprus (achieved in 1960) and to achieving the eventual union (Greek enosis) of Cyprus with Greece.



EOKA was organised by Colonel Georgios Grivas, an officer in the Greek army, with the support of Makarios III, Orthodox archbishop of Cyprus.

Its armed campaign, begun early in 1955 and reached a climax in 1956, with the exile of Makarios to the Seychelles and the temporary depletion of British forces in the island because of the Suez Crisis.

By early 1957, however, a reinforced British army renewed attacks on the mountain hideouts of the considerably outnumbered EOKA. Violence subsided after Makarios' release from detention in exile in March 1957, though there were increased hostilities leading up to mid-1958, when EOKA clashed with Turkish Cypriot guerrillas.



In 1958, Makarios announced he would accept independence for Cyprus rather



than enosis. In February 1959, a compromise agreement was concluded between Turkish and Greek representatives at Zürich and endorsed by the Cypriot communities in London. The next month, EOKA disbanded.

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