24/06/2021

Horrendous acid attack against Church hierarchs continues to shock public opinion



Wednesday's shocking and unprecedented attack at the Synodal chamber of the Petraki Monastery in central Athens, when a soon-to-be-defrocked priest threw acid at seven Metropolitans of the Church of Greece, the secretary of the Synodal tribunal, two attorneys and a responding police officer continued to reverberate around the world a day later.

All of the injured were immediately transported to Athens-area hospitals, with at least three Metropolitans remaining hospitalized on Thursday for precautionary reasons, namely, to ensure that no permanent harm was done to their eyesight.

The secretary of the tribunal, a type of ecclesiastical hearing, Archimandrite Sevastianos Somarakis, remained hospitalized, while three Metropolitans continued to receive treatment, with their condition is reported as non-threatening. The latter hierarchs are the Metropolitans of Goumenissa, Driinoupolis and Kifissia.

The 37-year-old perpetrator of the horrendous act was due to face a prosecutor in Athens today. In statements on Thursday morning to Greece's public television, his attorney merely said his client "…requires psychiatric care".

The offending clergyman was present at the Synodal tribunal to witness his legal appeal of a previous first instance decision to defrock him. He formerly served at the Holy Metropolis of Veria and Naoussa.



According to reports, he tried to flee from the scene after throwing the acid, which was contained in two bottles he had hid in his clerical vestments. The suspect was apprehended by police who were stationed outside the chamber.

Greek leadership, including the president of the republic, the prime minister and the health minister immediately contacted the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, to convey their best wishes for the speedy recovery of those injured and to offer any and all assistance. The relevant health minister, Vassilis Kikilias, also accompanied the Archbishop in visiting the victims immediately after their transport to hospitals.

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, also immediately contacted the Archbishop of Athens, personally conveying the compassion and solidarity of the Mother Church, and his own personally, to those injured in the cowardly attack.