

Our Mission:
To work for fair trials based on international standards of justice and defend the rights of those facing charges in a country other than their own.

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TRIAL DATE SET FOR ANDREW SYMEOU

March 17 2010

For Immediate Release

17 March 2010

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The Greek authorities have finally set a trial date for Andrew Symeou from Enfield (North London) who was extradited to Greece in July last year. The trial will begin on 4th June 2010. On the first day of his trial, Andrew will have been imprisoned in Greece for 316 days, just over 10 months, waiting for an opportunity to clear his name.

Jago Russell, Chief Executive of Fair Trials International, said:
“After nearly eight months in a Greek jail, it is a great relief that a date for Andrew’s trial has finally been set. We hope that justice will ultimately prevail and that Andrew is given a fair opportunity to present his defence and test the questionable evidence against him.”

Despite serious flaws in the case against him, British courts ordered Andrew’s extradition to Greece under a European Arrest Warrant. Andrew, who has twice been refused bail on the grounds that he is not a Greek national, is now being held in a maximum security prison despite the fact that he has not yet been tried or convicted of any crime.

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Notes to editors

- Andrew is a 21 year old British young man from Enfield in North London. In July 2007, he went on holiday with friends to Zante, Greece. While Andrew was staying in Zante another young British man, Jonathan Hiles, fell off an unguarded stage platform in a night-club, became unconscious and, tragically, died two days later from his head injury. Andrew is accused of having struck Mr Hiles causing him to fall. But Andrew is adamant that he was not even in the night-club at the time. Statements given by witnesses in the UK state that he only arrived at the nightclub 3 hours after the incident

which led to Jonathan Hiles' death.

- Two of Andrew's friends were interviewed by Greek police after Andrew himself had left Zante. These young men reported that they were subjected to brutal treatment by the police, who held them for 8 hours without food or water. While in custody they were beaten, punched, slapped and threatened by the officers until they gave statements implicating Andrew in Mr Hiles' death. Andrew's friend immediately retracted the statements on their release and informed consular officials about the treatment they received.
- There is strong evidence that witness statements were manufactured by Zante police. The same police officers were reported as taking statements in two different places at the same time and witnesses gave word-for-word identical statements. CCTV footage showing those involved in the incident leaving the nightclub has mysteriously disappeared and is not available to use in Andrew's defence. A criminal complaint has been filed against the police involved in the investigation for fabrication of evidence and lying under oath.

Extradition

- Andrew was extradited to Greece on 23 July 2009 under a European Arrest Warrant ("EAW"). Despite the serious flaws with the case against him, the British courts refused to stop Andrew's extradition and on 1 May, the High Court decided that Andrew Symeou be sent to Greece to face trial. Andrew applied for leave to argue in the House of Lords that he should not be extradited as the main evidence against him was obtained through police brutality. Although the High Court agreed that the case raised a point of public importance, the House of Lords refused to hear the appeal, ending any chance of the British courts protecting Andrew against extradition.

Denial of Bail and Discrimination on Grounds of Nationality

- The investigating magistrate on the Greek Island of Zante denied Andrew Symeou's first application for bail on 27 July 2009 on the grounds that he has no permanent address in Greece. Andrew filed an appeal against this decision which was not decided until 14 September 2009, leaving Andrew behind bars for a further two months without a review of his pre-trial detention.
- On appeal, the Judicial Council in Zante decided to deny Andrew bail as he is not a Greek resident. The Council also decided to refer the case to trial, however the reasoning provided in the judgement makes it clear that none of the defence arguments were considered by the panel and they made the decision to refer the case to trial on the basis of the prosecution's submissions alone. With the support of the AIRE centre, Fair Trials International has made an application to the European Court of Human Rights to challenge the refusal of bail.

Prison Transfer

- On 2 December 2009, Andrew was transferred from a Young Offenders Institution in Avlona to Korydallos prison, a maximum security facility, having recently turned 21 years of age. Previously described by Amnesty as the worst prison in Europe, last year a British man, David Daubney, was found dead in Korydallos prison. The European Court of Human Rights, in a 2001 judgement, condemned the prison conditions at Korydallos as being degrading and inhumane.

Further Information

- [Read more about Andrew's case.](#)
- Fair Trials International has serious concerns about the European Arrest Warrant. In practice, the system has been interpreted as leaving no scope for the British courts to prevent an extradition even where, as in this case, it would lead to clear injustice: [Read about other cases of injustice involving the European Arrest Warrant.](#)