



HELLENIC AMERICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

ΕΛΛΗΝΟΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΙΚΟ ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟ • USA, CANADA & MEXICO

1220 16th St NW, Washington, DC 20036 • H A N C U S . O R G

Open Letter

The Greek expatriates have consistently in the past expressed their loyalty and support in all major issues concerning Greece and Hellenism. Sharing a sense of responsibility towards our Country, which is called upon to deal with a multitude of issues, our Council is resolved to bear the holy task of taking a stand on the burning Question of the Mountainous Zante with due seriousness and responsibility.

We have complete faith and trust in the Greek Justice, which is currently on the case. However, a great territorial expanse is still as we speak caught up in a deceitful contract of trading 14,500 acres, the alleged proprietor of which, according to a recent judicial decision, has at no time been the owner. This deceitful judicial act exhibits the sale of communal and ecclesiastical property of the mountain, as well as the ancestral properties of 200 families above and around the renowned gulf of Navagio. What is more, it is of great concern that the aforementioned expanse includes, classified as “sold”, relics of superlative and unrivalled cultural historical and Christian value such as **the Monastery of Agios Georgios Krimnon (15th century)**, **the Monastery of Panagia Anafonitria**, **the new monastery of Agios Georgios on Sourbi Hill (1562)**, **the Holy Temple of St Gerasimos Cave (1554)**, as well as the remains of the **Holy Monastery of All Saints (15th century) with its venetian Watchtower (1540) upon which the Holy Temple of Agia Polyxronia was built**. Apart from that, a feeling of indignation and resentment has been aroused in the bosoms of expatriates the world over, as for the last 6 years the historic monasteries of our Zante, namely

- i) the **Holy Monastery of Panagia Anafonitria** where St Dionysios, Patron Saint of Zante (1568 – 1622) lived as a monk, worked miracles and was sanctified absolving his brother’s murderer
- ii) the **Monastery of Agios Georgios Krimnon**, where Gerasimos Notaras, later Patron Saint of Kefalonia island, lived as a brother monk during the period 1549-1554

are tied up in court in order to salvage their stolen property, the holy soils that keep the spirit of our saints burning bright.

Regretfully, we received sad news regarding the destructive fire that broke out at noon on October 4, 2020 in the sold area at issue above Navagio, near the Monastery of Agios Georgios Krimnon. According to expert testimony, the fire broke out in a rough terrain, access to which is next to impossible on a day with strong winds. Unfortunately, the fire, which left 1,500 acres of scorched earth behind, came to add to a series of fires in the greater area at issue in recent years. This worries and saddens us immensely. To support the remarkable work of the local authorities with a view to clarifying this dubious, criminal action, the National Hellenic American Council can offer 20,000 euro to the testimony that will lead to the culprit's arrest. The amount will be legally bestowed to the person who will lead the authorities to the perpetrator or perpetrators, after charges have been pressed against them for the crime of the destruction of a natural environment of unrivalled and unique beauty.

Rising to the occasion once again, we regard the notorious Issue of the Mountainous Zante as a National Matter. Thus, the political forces of the island as a whole can rely on the Council for assistance to meet the threat posed to our beautiful island and its wonderful people. The local people, whose property is compromised, will have our full support. This is what we want Everyone to know!

Vasilis Mataragas

President of the Hellenic American National Council

bmataragas@yahoo.com

<https://hanc.us>

CC: Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Patriarchate of Moscow and Alexandria

Archbishop of Greece, America and Australia

The Greek President of the Republic and the Greek Prime Minister

The President of the Greek Parliament

The President of the European Parliament

The European Union Heads of State

Mass Media