



CANADIAN HELLENIC CONGRESS
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΚΑΝΑΔΙΚΟ ΚΟΓΚΡΕΣΟ
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**Canadian Hellenic Congress Statement on April 6, 1941: Nazi Invasion of Greece
We Must Remember... and Never Forget the Rape of Greece**

April 6, 2026 – Eighty-five years ago, on April 6, 1941, Nazi Germany invaded Greece to secure its Balkan flank and rescue its ally, Italy.

The attack was swift, brutal, barbaric and savage. Despite the heroic fierce resistance of Greece's forces at the Metaxa Line, the superior German troops broke through the line and within a few days occupied Thessaloniki and Athens. In one case, Metaxa Line defenders were executed by the Nazis upon surrender.

Greece surrendered on April 20, 1941, and a harsh, destructive and brutal occupation began by Germany, Italy and Bulgaria. The invasion and occupation caused severe devastation and loss of life, including a famine that killed approximately a quarter of million Greek civilians.

The world and our generation must know that Greece's occupation by Nazi Germany and its allies – Italy and Bulgaria – was marked by forced famine, resource depletion, economic ruin, atrocities and massacres. The Germans applied a policy of "collective responsibility" as a justification that enabled them to execute Greek civilians at random in retaliation of resistance acts.

Atrocities and massacres included:

- Kondomari & Kandamos Massacre (June 1941)
- Viannos Massacre (September 1943)
- Kaisariani Executions (May 1944)
- Kalavryta Massacre (December 1944)
- Distomo Massacre (June 1944)
- Thessaloniki Jewish Holocaust – killings, forced deportations to death camps

In addition, more than 800 communities – villages and towns – were destroyed or damaged. The country's infrastructure and roads were left in ruins. Significant archaeological treasures were looted with over 8,500 items taken or destroyed by 1946.

"Successive German governments have turned a blind eye and there have been no significant reparations or repatriation of the stolen treasures" said George Manios, President of the Congress. "Still outstanding is Hitler's wartime Greek loan", he added.

We call upon the German government to honour its debts, repatriate the stolen treasures and repay the wartime loan with interest to the Greek people.

The Canadian Hellenic Congress is a national democratic communal institution that represents, advances, advocates and promotes the interests and concerns of Canadians of Hellenic descent and Hellenism in general. The Congress is the national voice of Hellenes and their communities and/or organizations across Canada.