

The Greek military junta of 1967–74

The Greek military junta of 1967–74 ruled Greece following the 1967 Greek coup d'état led by a group of colonels on 21 April 1967. The dictatorship ended on 24 July 1974.

As soon as the *coup d'état* was announced over Greek radio, martial music was continuously broadcast over the airwaves. This was interrupted from time to time with announcements of the junta issuing orders, which always started with the introduction, "We decide and we order".

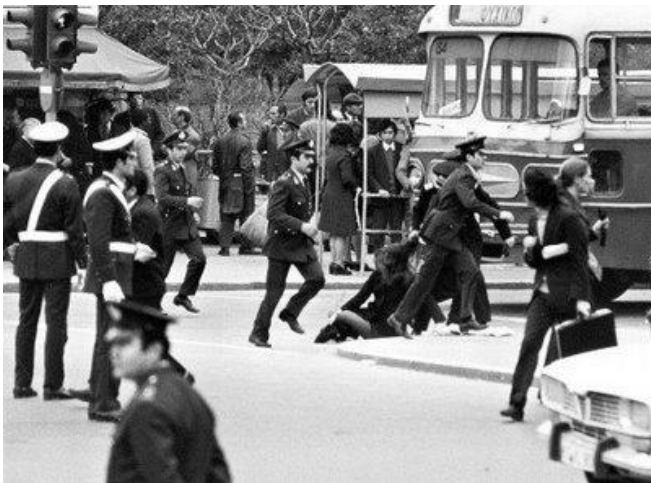
Long-standing political freedoms and civil liberties, that had been taken for granted and enjoyed by the Greek people for decades, were instantly suppressed.

Article 14 of the Greek Constitution, which protected freedom of thought and freedom of the press, was immediately suspended.

Military courts were established, and political parties were dissolved.

Legislation that took decades to fine tune and multiple parliaments to enact was thus erased in a matter of days. The rapid devolution of Greek democracy had begun.

In fact, the junta crackdown was so fast that by September 1967, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands went before the European Commission of Human Rights to accuse Greece of violating most of the human rights protected by the European Convention on Human Rights. Following the coup, 6,188 suspected communists and political opponents were imprisoned or exiled to remote Greek islands



Under the junta, torture became a deliberate practice carried out both by the Security Police and the Greek Military Police, with an estimated 3,500 people detained in torture centers run by ESA. Examples of the types of torture commonly used include (amongst others): beating the soles of people's feet with sticks and pieces of metal pipe, sexual torture, choking people and shoving rags soaked in urine and excrement down their throats, ripping out hair from the head and pubic regions, jumping on people's stomachs, pulling out toenails and fingernails etc.

Furthermore, the Special Interrogation Unit of Greek Military Police (EAT/ESA) used a combination of techniques that included:

- continuous standing in an empty room
- sleep deprivation
- food deprivation
- drink deprivation
- brutal beatings
- loud sounds

According to a human rights report by Amnesty International, in the first month of the 21 April coup an estimated 8,000 people were arrested.



The citizens' right of assembly was revoked and no political demonstrations were allowed. Surveillance on citizens was a fact of life, even during permitted social activities.



Complete lack of press freedom coupled with nonexistent civil rights meant that continuous cases of civil rights abuses could neither be reported nor investigated by an independent press or any other reputable authority. This led to a psychology of fear among the citizens during the dictatorship.

