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Vatican, Jews rip Italian right for boycotting anti-Semitism investigation

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The Vatican has joined Jews in criticising Italian right-wing parties for boycotting a parliamentary commission to investigate anti-Semitism.

Driving the news

"I am worried, in the sense that on some things like fundamental values we should all be united", Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin told reporters after the far-right League, the Brothers of Italy and Forza Italia abstained on the vote for the commission Thursday.





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“There is a danger that all this gets politicised. We need to break clear of this”, the cardinal insisted.

Holocaust survivor and life senator Liliana Segre had proposed the creation of the commission after receiving a torrent of regular abuse on social media.

The ruling 5-Star Movement and center-left Democratic Party (PD) both backed the commission, which will go ahead despite the rightist abstentions.

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[German bishop blames Halle synagogue shooting on “brutalisation of language” in politics, social media](#)

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“The abstention of some parties is a bit dismaying. It’s a decision that we consider wrong and dangerous”, denounced Ruth Dureghello, president of Rome’s Jewish community.

“This abstention seems to legitimizes a culture of hatred that is reflected in society. It is a shameful page in our political life”, said 5-Star deputy Elisa Tripodi.

Even some members of Forza Italia criticised the center-right party’s abstention in the vote, lamenting that the group of ex-prime minister Silvio Berlusconi seemed to only want to keep up with the most extreme elements in Italian politics.

“We are betraying our values and changing our skin”, decried Forza Italia MP Mara Carfagna, widely touted as a possible future successor to Berlusconi.

“We are being dragged along without defending our identity”, Carfagna added, criticising Berlusconi’s pandering to controversial League leader and former deputy PM and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini.





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For the record

Both the League and the Brothers of Italy defended their absence in the vote for the commission.

The parties said the motion for the commission was ambiguous, in the sense in which it cited nationalism and ethnocentricity as driving forces behind racial hatred.

"By doing that you are outlawing Brothers of Italy", said party senator Giovanbattista Fazzolari.

"This is not a commission on anti-Semitism, as they want you believe, but rather a commission aimed at political censorship", Fazzolari insisted.

See too:

[Bishop blasts Salvini for "indecent" political "exploitation" of Catholic symbols](#)

Why it matters

Auschwitz survivor and proponent of the commission Segre said this month that she receives an average of 200 hate messages a day.

"They should be pitied or treated", she said this week of her abusers.

The senator's revelation came just a week after Chief Rabbi of Moscow and President of the Conference of European Rabbis, Pinchas Goldschmidt, warned that a resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe "poses an existential threat to the Jewish community".

The resurgence of the far-right in Italy, too, was on display last Sunday, when a joint League, Brothers of Italy and Forza Italia candidate beat a 5-Star and PD aspirant in local elections in Umbria, thereby sweeping the centre-left from power in the region for the first time in fifty years.

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