

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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ITALY: Bombing targets Jehovah's Witnesses' place of worship

ITALY: More violence against Jehovah's Witnesses: Bombing in front of a Kingdom Hall

See pictures on <https://news.italy24.press/local/450079.html>

By Raffaella Di Marzio

LIREC (11.04.2023) – A bomb exploded in front of the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in San Salvo where, overnight, a person with a covered face cut through a fence and placed the bomb in front of an entrance door. The damage, yet to be precisely quantified, is extensive. According to investigators, this was not a stunt but an actual bombing.

The council groups San Salvo Città Nuova, Lista Popolare, Noi San Salvo, San Salvo è, issued a statement in which they affirm that

"In relation to the attack of which the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in San Salvo was the object, we express our solidarity and closeness with them and strongly condemn this inconceivable gesture that undermines the foundations of civil and religious living, which is rooted in concord and respect for every belief and every position aimed at building and developing an integrated and supportive society. In reiterating our rejection of any gesture of affront and disrespect for civil coexistence, we trust the work of the police who will certainly identify those responsible for this unspeakable gesture."

A similar incident had occurred on July 27, 2017 when another bomb was planted in front of the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Asti.

In this context it is also important to remember what happened on January 18, 2023, on a Saturday morning in Viverona, in the province of Biella, where a man fired into the air at two Jehovah's Witnesses who had gone to knock on his door.

These are very disturbing incidents because they are alarm bells that should not be underestimated. They do not, in fact, appear to be gestures of deranged people, but rather clear and conscious manifestations of religious hatred against a particular denomination, often labeled as a "sect" by the media.

This same hatred, **on March 9, 2023**, in Hamburg, claimed the lives of eight Jehovah's Witnesses and injured eight others, including a seven-month pregnant mother who lost her baby. The gunman, who took his own life, was a former member of the congregation.

The widespread dissemination of hate speech contributes to a climate of hostility in which real **hate crimes** are generated, and sometimes materialize, from which our country is certainly not immune.

Hate speech used as a useful strategy to stigmatize religious or spiritual minorities is now a rampant and almost unstoppable phenomenon, despite the constant efforts of numerous civil society organizations and institutions themselves to prevent or curb it.

Several times our Study Center, including through **dedicated projects**, has helped to denounce the phenomenon and indicate useful tools to counter and prevent it, involving the media and institutions.

Despite the recurrence of these episodes of violence, we will not cease to be vigilant and report to the authorities any form of labeling and stigmatization that could easily become incitement to religious hatred.

Our goal remains to prevent hate crimes starting with countering hate speech through correct information and objective knowledge of the phenomenon.

Photo: lirec.net

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