

## **THE SHADOW OF THE SPIES**

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### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

On Thursday, 16 October, Sigfrido Ranucci had just returned home when, at 10:17 p.m., a bomb detonated outside his residence. The explosion damaged two cars regularly used by his family, parked directly in front of the entrance gate.

### **MARCO BERNARDINI – FORMER SISDE AGENT**

He's always on the move — how could anyone know that on that day, at that precise moment, he would be arriving home? That's the question.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Ranucci has been under official security protection since August 2021. That evening, after being away for a few days, someone placed an improvised explosive device in front of his gate just minutes after his return, and then fled.

### **MARCO BERNARDINI – FORMER SISDE AGENT**

When the security detail arrives, they always perform thorough checks. They don't just show up, wave, and leave until the next morning. So, are you taking a risk? No. I'm convinced his phone was compromised. They installed tracking software on it, so his movements were monitored via GPS.

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

So you think Sigfrido Ranucci is being monitored?

### **MARCO BERNARDINI – FORMER SISDE AGENT**

In my opinion, yes.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Marco Bernardini served for twelve years as an agent of SISDE, Italy's former civilian intelligence service, now replaced by AISI. He later worked for Global Security Services, led by John Spinelli, former CIA station chief in Italy. Bernardini was ultimately sentenced to five years and eight months in prison for compiling illegal dossiers on behalf of Telecom-Pirelli's security division.

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

What operations were carried out that you were not authorised to conduct?

### **MARCO BERNARDINI – FORMER SISDE AGENT**

Collecting information and attempting to uncover details about the Data Protection Authority and the Communications Authority. Another case involved the investigation related to the Parmalat scandal concerning Tanzi, and later Della Valle. In fact, Berlusconi said at the Confindustria conference, when Della Valle criticised him: "You stay silent; you have skeletons in your own closet as well".

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

He was referring to Silvio Berlusconi's speech in March 2006 against Diego Della Valle,

delivered after Bernardini had completed the dossier on the Tod's president.

**19/03/2006**

**SILVIO BERLUSCONI – FORMER PRIME MINISTER  
CONFINDUSTRIA VICENZA ASSEMBLY**

Mr Della Valle, Let me tell you this: when I try to understand how an entrepreneur — unless he were out of his mind — could support the left, I think he must have many skeletons in his closet, many things to be forgiven, and that he seeks protection under the umbrella of the left and of Magistratura Democratica.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

At a certain point, you decided to spy on a journalist?

**MARCO BERNARDINI – FORMER SISDE AGENT**

Yes. This journalist wrote for *Corriere della Sera* and was kept informed of confidential information discussed during board meetings. Our task was to identify the insider who was leaking these details to him.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

The journalist Bernardini refers to is Massimo Mucchetti, later elected senator for the Democratic Party. Attempts were made to access his private e-mail and mobile number to monitor communications, with the assistance of intelligence service personnel in contact with Bernardini.

**MARCO BERNARDINI – FORMER SISDE AGENT**

Today it's a completely different world — everything is much easier, much simpler.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI - IN STUDIO**

They used to call them "dossiers". Today they're called "spyware implants".

In recent years, spyware scandals have shaken the European Union: Greece, Poland, and Spain have all been accused of using surveillance tools to hack and monitor critics, including journalists, activists, and politicians. The tools involved come from commercial spyware companies, often indirectly funded by EU programmes claiming to ensure "national security." Under the Prime Ministerial Decree of 30 April 2025, the government authorised the National Cybersecurity Agency to promote incentives for companies purchasing Israeli technologies in the fields of national security, cybersecurity reinforcement, and cybercrime prevention. Graphite, a sophisticated and very expensive software owned by the Israeli company Paragon, has been deployed by our intelligence services since 2023 — with a prohibition on use against activists and journalists. However, it appears to have gone beyond control, having been installed on the phones of journalists, priests, and activists, potentially even intercepting communications of the Holy Father. This remains at the centre of one of the most mysterious espionage cases in history. L.C.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

After his final greeting to the faithful in St Peter's Square, Pope Francis died at dawn on Easter Monday. His funeral was attended by 400,000 people, including heads of state from around the world.

**GIOVANNI BATTISTA RE – DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS**

It is significant that Pope Francis' first journey was to Lampedusa, an island symbolising the tragedy of the migrant emergency, where thousands have drowned at sea.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

From 2014 to today, 32,980 people have died or gone missing at sea. Don Mattia is the ship's chaplain aboard the *Mare Jonio*, operated by Mediterranea Saving Humans — the only civilian rescue vessel sailing under the Italian flag.

### **DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

We try to give real substance to solidarity and fraternity towards these people, because the non-negotiable point for us is that they are our brothers and sisters.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

In October 2018, the *Mare Jonio* set sail for its first rescue mission in the Mediterranean, where thousands of migrants had been dying for months in the attempt to reach Italy by sea. The mission was financially supported by several Catholic dioceses, thanks to the direct involvement of Pope Francis.

### **LUCA CASARINI – FOUNDER, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

He never asked whether we were Catholics, Buddhists, Muslims, laypeople, or agnostics. He asked what we needed, and he helped, because saving lives at sea is fundamental.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

This is one of the many rescues carried out in front of Libyan patrol boats, amid beatings and chases, as authorities attempted to force migrants back, in line with agreements signed with the Italian government.

### **DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

Our mission extends further because a cry reached us from Libya — the cries of many people who began reaching out to us, particularly from 8 October 2021, when migrants in Libya organised themselves for the first time.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

They camped outside the UN High Commissioner for Refugees office in Tripoli, where many had been stranded for months. They suffered violence and torture in Libyan detention centres, often being crammed together to prevent departures by boat — a consequence of agreements between Italy and Libya, starting under the Gentiloni government with Interior Minister Marco Minniti.

### **DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

Since their cries went unheard, on 8 October they video-called me to ask that Mediterranea Saving Humans and other associations and movements become their brothers and sisters. From there began our support for refugees in Libya.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Responding to their call for help were associations, movements, and above all Pope Francis, during the Angelus of 24 October 2021.

### **25/10/2021 – VATICAN CITY, ANGELUS, ST. PETER'S SQUARE**

I express my closeness to the thousands of migrants, refugees, and others in need of protection in Libya. I never forget you; I hear your cries and I pray for you. Many of these men, women, and children are subjected to inhuman violence.

### **DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

On 10 January 2022, the militia led by Mohamed Al-Khoja, one of the Libyan mafia bosses, intervened and dismantled the camp. A few hundred were deported to the Ain

Zara detention centre, while others managed to escape. Over the years, some of these migrants reached Italy, including David Yambio.

#### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

David Yambio is one of the organisers of the protest. We met him in Germany, where he moved after spending several years in Italy, collaborating closely with Mediterranea.

#### **LUCA CHIANCA**

Was this the first time that so many people protested with such force?

#### **DAVID YAMBIO – PRESIDENT, REFUGEES IN LIBYA**

We realised that the systematic violence was not carried out solely by Libyans. It was supported, financed, trained, and perpetuated by European governments through agreements such as the Italy–Libya memorandum, which allows these detention centres to operate.

#### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

On 13 November 2024, two years after the Tripoli protest, Yambio received a message from Apple warning him that someone had accessed his phone. It was only in early June that the Parliamentary Committee for the Security of the Republic confirmed, in a report to Parliament, that our intelligence services had been monitoring him for nearly a year, between 2023 and 2024.

#### **DAVID YAMBIO – PRESIDENT, REFUGEES IN LIBYA**

In the months prior, I was collecting testimonies from victims of crimes against humanity in Libya, to present to various judicial bodies, including the International Criminal Court. At that time, I was working intensively on the Almasri case, and in November, my phone was hacked.

#### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Almasri, arrested last week in Libya, was the head of the Rada militia, the counter-terrorism and organised crime force at Mitiga, the main detention centre in the Tripoli area. In January, thanks in part to Yambio's contribution, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for crimes against humanity dating back to 2015, while Almasri was in Turin watching Juve–Milan. DIGOS arrested him, but the government released him, returning him to Libya on a state flight.

#### **LUCA**

#### **CHIANCA**

Did your phone also contain testimonies and accusations against Almasri?

#### **DAVID YAMBIO – PRESIDENT, REFUGEES IN LIBYA**

Yes, it did. An extremely serious issue was that my phone contained information about the victims.

#### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

The SIM card Yambio used in Italy was registered to Don Mattia, Mediterranea's chaplain. This gave rise to a strong suspicion that he might have been the actual target of our intelligence services.

#### **DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

It could have been him, it could have been me, it could have been both of us — in any case, we work together on this mission.

#### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Confirmation arrived only a few months ago, when the Graphite scandal broke — a sophisticated and extremely expensive software owned by the Israeli company Paragon, deployed by our intelligence services starting in 2023, with a prohibition on use against activists and journalists.

### **LUCA CASARINI – FOUNDER, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

Don Mattia Ferrari and I received the first notification from Meta/Facebook on 8 February 2024 — which, reading the Parliamentary Committee for the Security of the Republic (COPASIR) report, is exactly the day the Paragon Solutions contract was activated by Aise, the foreign intelligence service.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

In its report, COPASIR denied any surveillance activity by the intelligence services against Don Mattia. But thanks to the work of researchers at Citizen Lab, University of Toronto, who have studied these invasive applications for years, Don Mattia discovered a notification of an attack on his phone in Facebook's support centre — which he had never seen before.

### **JOHN SCOTT RAILTON – RESEARCHER, CITIZEN LAB, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

These notifications do not reveal the exact product used for the surveillance. This raises an important question: why were all these surveillance tools targeting the same group of people? In my view, this is only the tip of the iceberg — the surveillance could be far more extensive than we realise.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

It was only in early June that it emerged that Luca Casarini and Beppe Caccia, founders of Mediterranea, had been monitored from 2019 to May 2024 in two separate operations under the second Conte government, and later under the Draghi and Meloni governments — but these operations did not yet involve Paragon's Graphite spyware.

### **GIUSEPPE CONTE – PRIME MINISTER 2018–2021**

The intelligence services requested this monitoring at the end of 2019, in order to understand how the management of migration flows was being handled. From both a formal and substantive perspective, it was fully legitimate. I also want to clarify: we are talking about traditional telephone interceptions, nothing to do with Paragon spyware, which we only became aware of later.

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

And don't you think it's serious that it went on for four long years?

### **GIUSEPPE CONTE – PRIME MINISTER 2028–2021**

As a private citizen, I am surprised that, if nothing relevant emerged from these phone interceptions, they continued to pursue them all those years.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

In December 2023, after one year of the Meloni government, while all were being monitored — officially by our services, like Casarini and Caccia, and by unknown parties, as Copasir effectively claims for Don Mattia — the Mediterranea group was received by Pope Francis.

### **20/12/2023 – POPE FRANCIS**

I also greet the group from Mediterranea Saving Humans who are present here. They

do excellent work, saving countless people.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

The relationship between Pope Francis and Don Mattia has been well known for some time, as has the Church's financial support under Pope Francis for Mediterranea, amounting to around €617,000 since 2021 for missions at sea.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

He has spoken about you several times, claimed to have spoken to you on the phone multiple times, and you have met in the Vatican on several occasions with the entire Mediterranea team.

**DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

Yes, yes, yes — all of this is public knowledge; it has already been reported in the media.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

But we cannot rule out the possibility that he has been monitored.

**DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

I don't know about that either. What is certain is that our work has irritated a particular group — the Libyan mafia. I hope, however, that institutions in our own country have not been disturbed by this activity, because that would be worrying.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Following the case on behalf of the Meloni government was the Undersecretary to the Prime Minister, Alfredo Mantovano, responsible for the security of the Republic.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Undersecretary, hello, Chianca from *Report*. Tell me, was the Pope possibly monitored as well?

**ALFREDO MANTOVANO – UNDERSECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

I said no. "No" meaning what?

**LUCA CHIANCA**

But it's important to know whether the Pope was also intercepted. Don't you think? Don Mattia is in close contact with Pope Francis.

**LUCA CASARINI – FOUNDER, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

On 5 September 2024, an event occurred whereby the Undersecretary with responsibility for the intelligence services, Alfredo Mantovano, signed an authorisation allowing the services to use Paragon against both me and Beppe Caccia. The previous operations authorised by all governments had ended; this is a new operation. Twenty days later, I attended the Synod.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Who were you in contact with during that time?

**LUCA CASARINI – FOUNDER, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

I was in contact with all the Synod participants, including Pope Francis.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

During the 2024 Synod, strongly supported by the Pontiff, among the eight special invitees from around the world, Francis personally invited Luca Casarini to attend, seating him at the table directly in front of the Pope.

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

Given that you were remotely monitored, is there a risk that whoever monitored you may have captured — not necessarily the Pope's voice, but the topics you discussed with him? What did you talk about with the Pope?

### **LUCA CASARINI – FOUNDER, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

Otherwise, why would they have put it there? I don't understand, but I think it's very likely.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

In June 2024, just three months before the Synod, Mantovano, during the "Umano tutto intero" Festival, while praising the government's Mattei Plan, criticised those who financially support NGOs operating at sea, in the presence of the Holy See's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

### **19 JUNE 2024 - "UMANO TUTTO INTERO" FESTIVAL**

#### **ALFREDO MANTOVANO – UNDERSECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

The Italian exception must also mean this: not supporting NGOs that position themselves at the edge of Libyan or Tunisian territorial waters to pick up those departing in small boats, because such support — even merely financial, even when driven by the best intentions — is an objective incentive to the trafficking of death.

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

At one point, you accused the Church of financially supporting NGOs — it was Pope Francis's Church that was supporting Mediterranea and other NGOs — because, you said, it encouraged the trafficking of death, Undersecretary.

### **DON MATTIA FERRARI – CHAPLAIN, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

It was clearly directed at those providing financial support to the NGOs, and therefore at the bishops, since they had been at the centre of that campaign just a few months earlier.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

He is referring to the media campaign carried out in December 2023. Drawing on documents from the Ragusa investigation — which today sees Luca Casarini and Beppe Caccia indicted for aiding and abetting illegal immigration — *Il Giornale* focused on the funding Mediterranea received from the Church.

### **LUCA CASARINI – FOUNDER, MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS**

They used the wiretap transcripts — bundles of interceptions carried out in Ragusa that should theoretically have been protected by investigative secrecy — and launched a campaign directly orchestrated against Pope Francis, against me, against Cardinal Zuppi, against the CEI, against the very idea that the Church might ally itself with a sea-rescue NGO.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

But among the activists who were spied on, two *Fanpage* journalists also emerged. The first to realise it was the editor, Francesco Cancellato, followed by Ciro Pellegrino.

**FRANCESCO CANCELLATO – EDITOR, FANPAGE.IT**

WhatsApp has stopped the activities of a spyware company that we believe attempted to attack your device.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

And since the intelligence services are, by law, prohibited from placing journalists under preventive surveillance, who injected Graphite into Cancellato's phone? Undersecretary for Intelligence Alfredo Mantovano told COPASIR that it had categorically not been used against journalists.

**FRANCESCO CANCELLATO – EDITOR, FANPAGE.IT**

But then he needs to explain who used it and how, because if that software is sold only to governments and not to private actors, then either another government was behind it — which is possible — or that tool somehow escaped the control of the Italian government. The third possibility, of course, is that Mantovano lied.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Undersecretary, can you at least tell me whether you've managed to do anything — to understand who hacked the *Fanpage* editor's phone?

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Among the targeted numbers were also some of the most prominent figures in Italian banking and finance: Francesco Gaetano Caltagirone; Andrea Orcel of UniCredit; and Flavio Cattaneo, CEO of Enel and member of the Generali board.

**RECONSTRUCTION  
CONSULTANT**

I believe that if something like Paragon had happened ten years ago, governments would have fallen. Someone within the government had the idea of handing this kind of capability over to private companies — and it's clear that when you think that way, a case like Paragon is bound to happen. When I was working in the government, we pursued the concept of a national interception system.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

So not outsourcing it to an Israeli company?

**CONSULTANT**

Absolutely not — how could you? They would hold you hostage.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Our source worked for years in close contact with Italy's intelligence services, at a time when the goal was to retain full control over preventive interceptions conducted for crimes linked to organised crime and terrorism. Under the nationalist government, according to the source, the decision was made to outsource such an invasive tool abroad.

**RECONSTRUCTION  
CONSULTANT**

These tools are essentially weapons. They must stay in constant contact with their vendor in order to survive in a hostile environment — the phone itself. Every time the device updates, the spyware has to reconfigure itself to avoid detection.



**LUCA CHIANCA**

So our intelligence services don't handle the software updates themselves?

**ANONYMOUS**

Of course not. And here's the paradox: Paragon ended its contract with us after it emerged they were spying on people beyond the limits set out in the agreement.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Did this get out of control, or were these deliberate attacks?

**ANONYMOUS**

They were given a toy, and they probably didn't know how to use it.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

And the toy, it seems, slipped out of their hands. At the end of January last year, Francesco Gaetano Caltagirone received a notification of an intrusion attempt on his phone. He chose not to report it.

**GIANNI DRAGONI – FINANCIAL JOURNALIST**

Caltagirone was the driving force behind the most significant financial operation in recent months: Monte dei Paschi — once the Cinderella of the banking world and still partly state-owned — launched a public exchange offer for Mediobanca. An operation that seemed impossible, yet ultimately succeeded.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Did he have the full backing of the Meloni government?

**GIANNI DRAGONI – FINANCIAL JOURNALIST**

He did. The government supported and facilitated the operation.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

A friendly government monitoring the very financier helping it achieve its objectives?

**GIANNI DRAGONI – FINANCIAL JOURNALIST**

Who monitored Caltagirone — especially if it was the intelligence services — remains classified. In the world of espionage, however, there are often actors pursuing their own agendas.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

On 29 April, Apple detected another mercenary spyware attack — this time on the phone of UniCredit CEO Andrea Orcel. He too chose not to file a report. Flavio Cattaneo, however, after receiving the same alert from Apple, reported everything to the Postal Police. The three men are linked by major financial operations that have been reshaping Italy's banking system — operations in which the government has acted as a leading player.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN STUDIO**

Who were the targets? UniCredit CEO Andrea Orcel had clashed with the Italian government, particularly when he attempted to take over the Banco Popolare di Milano — an operation the government blocked by exercising its veto power. At the same time, a "third banking pole" was being built through the Monte dei Paschi takeover of Mediobanca — effectively a move on Generali, the country's key financial stronghold, safeguarding the savings of millions of Italians. One of the central figures in that

operation was shareholder Francesco Gaetano Caltagirone — an ally of the government, and also a victim of the Graphite spyware. While neither Caltagirone nor Orcel filed complaints, Flavio Cattaneo, Enel CEO and member of Generali's board, did.

Among the first to report attempted infections were *Fanpage* editor Francesco Cancellato and reporter Ciro Pellegrino. They had produced the "Lobby Nera" investigation — into illegal funding linked to FdI MEP Fianza — as well as a probe into extremist infiltrations in Fratelli d'Italia's youth wing. Other attempted spyware infiltrations targeted Roberto D'Agostino, founder of Dagospia, often highly critical of the government. This week, another name surfaced: Francesco Nicodemo, founder of the communications firm Lievito and former communications director of the Democratic Party. He too was allegedly spied on in the Paragon affair. Following the scandal, the Israeli company Paragon — which developed the Graphite spyware injected into journalists' and executives' phones — unilaterally terminated its contract with the Italian government. Founded by former Israeli intelligence officers, Paragon publicly states it sells Graphite only to "democratic governments and law enforcement agencies", under the explicit condition that it not be used to target journalists or activists. But what does Paragon have to do with Italy's repatriation of Almasri — the head of the Rada militia, Tripoli's main anti-terrorism and organised-crime unit operating out of the Mitiga detention centre?

**28/01/2025**

**GIORGIA MELONI – ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER**

So, here's today's news: Public Prosecutor Francesco Lo Voi — the same one behind the, let's say, unsuccessful trial against Matteo Salvini for kidnapping — has just sent me a notice of investigation for aiding and abetting and embezzlement, in relation to the repatriation of the Libyan national Almasri. A notice also sent to Ministers Nordio and Piantedosi and to Undersecretary Mantovano — presumably following a complaint filed by lawyer Luigi Li Gotti, a former left-wing politician close to Romano Prodi, known for defending informants such as Buscetta, Brusca and other mafia figures.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Why did you decide to report such an incident?

**LUIGI LI GOTTI – LAWYER**

A man charged with 34 murders, torture, mutilations, forced labour — and the sexual assault of a five-year-old child — and we release him? Who were we bowing to?

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

We meet Luigi Li Gotti at his home in Rome. The first thing he stresses is his family's political background.

**LUIGI LI GOTTI – LAWYER**

This was my father — federal secretary of the Fascist Party. We were raised in the myth of fascism.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

That upbringing led him to become a youth leader of the MSI in Crotone. He later became a lawyer, taking on major cases such as the Piazza Fontana bombing. In the late 1980s he defended one of the first mafia informants, Marino Mannoia — whose mother, sister and aunt were murdered by Cosa Nostra after he began collaborating with Giovanni Falcone.

**LUIGI LI GOTTI – LAWYER**

I started because Falcone asked me to — and it led to the arrest of many people.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

In that minute-and-a-half video, were there several incorrect statements made by the Prime Minister?

**LUIGI LI GOTTI – LAWYER**

In my view, all of them. She even said it was a formal notice of investigation — and it wasn't. As for being "a man of Prodi": yes, I served as Undersecretary for Justice in his government. In fact, Prodi appointed me with the wrong surname — Ricotti.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

After the opening of the investigation by Chief Prosecutor Francesco Lo Voi — and Meloni's video attacking him — confidential 2023 documents were aired on TG1. In them, Lo Voi appealed against a ban imposed by Mantovano preventing him from using the state aircraft to return to Palermo, deemed too expensive for the Security Undersecretary.

**FRANCESCO CANCELLATO – EDITOR, FANPAGE.IT**

It's an attempt to delegitimise someone who has placed you under investigation for a matter as serious as the Almasri case.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

The investigation continued. On 9 October, the Chamber of Deputies met to vote on whether to authorise proceedings against Ministers Nordio and Piantedosi and Undersecretary Mantovano. Prime Minister Meloni had already been cleared in early August by the Tribunal of Ministers.

**09/10/2025 – CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES**

**MATTEO ORFINI – DEMOCRATIC PARTY MP**

We had understood something else entirely: that the overriding public interest of this country was to pursue human traffickers across the entire globe. You had one of them, he was in prison, and you sent him back to continue trafficking human beings — thereby putting our country's interests at risk.

**ANGELO BONELLI – GREEN AND LEFT ALLIANCE MP**

Minister, have you ever seen these images? Have you ever seen them? No, look at them, Minister — don't turn your head away. Have you seen these images? Minister? Have they shown them to you? They are attached to the file at the International Criminal Court.

These are men and women brutally tortured and killed — and you released a man like this. Shame on you.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Meloni arrives in the chamber to rally her ranks. She enters a few minutes before the vote that effectively buries the criminal proceedings. The chamber votes, by secret ballot, against granting authorisation to proceed — thanks also to the helpful hand of a few opposition defectors.

But the conclusion of this affair comes a month after the vote in the chamber. On Wednesday, 5 November, Almasri is arrested in Libya, likely due to the new balance of power between his Rada militia and the Government of National Unity. It all begins

on 2 October 2024, when the International Criminal Court issues an arrest warrant for Almasri. The process speeds up only once the judges establish that the Libyan national entered Italy on 6 January before travelling on to London and Germany, from where he is believed to have gone to Turin to attend Juventus–Milan at the Stadium on the evening of 18 January.

**05/02/2025**

**MATTEO PIANTEDOSI – MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**

The International Criminal Court acted on that request by issuing the arrest warrant only on Saturday, 18 January, when Almasri was already on Italian territory. I would also highlight that, before coming to Italy, Almasri had travelled through several European countries, which he appears to have visited regularly in the past as confirmed by the travel documents in his possession.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

When the DIGOS arrested him on the morning of 19 January in a hotel in Turin, they found in his suitcase €5,455, a Turkish identity document, a passport from Dominica, several credit cards and numerous business cards identifying him as the general manager of various foreign companies.

**CHANTAL MELONI – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CRIMINAL LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**

On 18 January, the judges finally signed a complex arrest warrant — and he happened to be entering Italy. There is no strange backstory here. In cases like this, the difficult part is actually managing to arrest the person. In this instance, Italy's police forces succeeded in doing something complicated.

**28/01/2025**

**GIORGIA MELONI – ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER**

The request for arrest from the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court was not transmitted to the Italian Ministry of Justice as required by law, and for this reason the Rome Court of Appeal decided not to validate it. At that point, with this individual free on Italian territory, rather than allowing him to remain at liberty we decided to expel him and repatriate him immediately, on security grounds, with a dedicated flight — as happens in other similar cases.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Yet Meloni, when she waves the document she calls the 'notice of investigation', says that the communication never reached Nordio — and that this is why the Court of Appeal released him, prompting Piantedosi to send him back to Libya for national security reasons.

**LUIGI LI GOTTI – LAWYER**

No, Nordio received the communication when he was arrested.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

On 18 January, the International Criminal Court sends the arrest request to the Italian Embassy in the Netherlands — as per protocol — which then forwards everything to Rome. On the morning of 19 January, DIGOS arrests Almasri in the Turin hotel where he is staying after attending Juve–Milan. That same day, DIGOS sends a report of the arrest to the Ministry of Justice and to the Rome Court of Appeal. On 20 February, the Court of Appeal contacts the Minister — the only authority legally empowered to act on the arrest — but the Minister does not reply.

**LUIGI LI GOTTI – LAWYER**

The ruling states it clearly: he doesn't reply, doesn't make himself heard — deaf, mute and blind, like the three little monkeys.

**CHANTAL MELONI – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CRIMINAL LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**

And he also asked for total silence on the matter, which, let us recall, became public only because journalists reported on it.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

The first to break the news, at 4:17 p.m. on 20 January, is Nello Scavo of *Avvenire*. The following day, as reconstructed by Radio Radicale's Sergio Scandura, a Falcon 900 takes off from Ciampino at 11:14 a.m. and lands in Turin at 12:15 p.m. Only afterwards, at 4:04 p.m., does Nordio issue a statement claiming to have received the communication authorising Almasri's arrest and to be assessing the ICC's request before forwarding it to the Rome Court of Appeal. By that time, however, Almasri has already boarded an Italian intelligence aircraft and is flown to Tripoli, where at 9:42 p.m. dozens of Libyans are waiting to greet him with celebrations.

**05/02/2025**

**MATTEO PIANTEDOSI – MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**

The expulsion that the law assigns to the Minister of the Interior was, in my view, the most appropriate measure to safeguard both the security of the State and the protection of public order.

**CHANTAL MELONI – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CRIMINAL LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**

Certainly Almasri was dangerous — but dangerous for whom? Almasri is dangerous for the victims of his crimes, who are in Libya. I believe what Italy has done is very serious.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Among the witnesses who suffered violence at the hands of Almasri is also David Yambio, the president of Refugees in Libya. After attempting to reach Italy by sea, David was detained for seven months in the Misurata prison; after escaping and attempting the crossing again, he was arrested once more.

**DAVID YAMBIO – PRESIDENT, REFUGEES IN LIBYA**

And then I was sold to Almasri as a slave, and from there I was taken to Mitiga to fight alongside the mercenaries.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

These are the photos Yambio managed to take when he was inside the military base and command center of Almasri's men in Mitiga. In this unpublished video, he shows the consequences of a heavy bombing. And this is the Toyota Almasri used to travel on.

**DAVID YAMBIO – PRESIDENT, REFUGEES IN LIBYA**

He hit me with a pipe and ordered us to work as slaves.

**LUCA**

Did you see people die next to you?

**CHIANCA**

**DAVID YAMBIO – PRESIDENT, REFUGEES IN LIBYA**

Yes, I saw it. In April 2020 in Mitiga, when two people tried to escape, they were brought back and then Al-Masri shot those two people in front of me.

**CHANTAL MELONI – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CRIMINAL LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**

Victims arriving from Libya to Italy recognized Almasri as their torturer — they were direct witnesses of extremely serious acts of violence.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

The same witnesses intercepted by our intelligence services?

**CHANTAL MELONI – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CRIMINAL LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**

In some cases, there are strange coincidences.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

Coincidences that also involve another Libyan activist fighting corruption in his country. We meet Husam El Gomati in Stockholm, where he found refuge years ago. Like the other activists, at the end of January he received an alert from Apple stating that someone had accessed his phone. El Gomati is also very active on social media, so much so that *Il Giornale* dedicated an article to him, claiming he had a plan against Italy through the dissemination of documents leaked from the Libyan Attorney General's Office — documents that would reveal unspeakable ties, dating back to 2017, between Italian intelligence and human traffickers.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

*Il Giornale* claims you are linked to the French intelligence services, who supposedly give you these documents.

**HUSAM EL GOMATI – LIBYAN ACTIVIST**

I think this is a form of propaganda meant to avoid discussing the main issue: why is Italian intelligence giving money and weapons to militias accused of human rights violations, militias that are killing Libyans and migrants?

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Almasri's release is linked to the relationship between our intelligence and the militia.

**HUSAM EL GOMATI – LIBYAN ACTIVIST**

Yes, that's what the militias tell everyone. We'll bring him back. We'll ensure Meloni sends him back thanks to our relationship. They blackmailed her with a tone like: "Come on, don't make us start talking."

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

The intelligence services and the government deny any ties with the militias, but El Gomati lets us hear an audio message from a member of a movement close to Almasri's Rada militia. The message, sent the day before his arrival in Libya, reassures the militiamen about the imminent release of their leader.

**HUSAM EL GOMATI – LIBYAN ACTIVIST**

"Osama is coming home. This is from yesterday. When he returns, we'll let you know. Don't do anything. Listen to me. I swear to God everything is fine, we were talking to them. Everything is fine. This was on the 20th, okay? He's just finishing a few things

and he's coming back."

### **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN STUDIO**

That member of Almasri's Rada militia was right. Just hours after that audio, the Libyan criminal landed in Tripoli to celebrations. For the failure to "arrest and surrender" Almasri — accused of war crimes, murder, torture, and rape — the International Criminal Court found that Italy's conduct prevented securing the suspect's presence before the Court. And the fact that Italian authorities did not respond after notification of the arrest, coupled with the immediate repatriation, made any institutional dialogue impossible. When asked for clarification, Italy sent a letter to the ICC explaining its position: Italy "reaffirms its firm intention to cooperate positively with the International Criminal Court," but will do so "within the framework of national security interests and constitutional and domestic legislation." Which can mean everything and nothing. On 2 November, Italy renewed the memorandum with Libya "on cooperation in the field of development, the fight against illegal immigration, human trafficking, smuggling, and strengthening border security." It was renewed without a parliamentary debate, and Libyan migrant detention centers will continue to exist. In exchange for money, equipment, and training. A deal. Action Aid in 2024 quantified the total amount of resources (national and EU funds managed by Italy) aimed at remote control of migration flows in countries of origin and transit — from 2015 to the end of 2020. Libya was the main beneficiary: €210 million allocated to projects in the country, 44% of which was destined for border control, including strengthening Libya's maritime authorities. In short: more money, fewer human rights.

### **LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

In May, Italy submitted its defense documents to the ICC regarding the accusation of releasing Almasri. Among them emerged a letter from the Libyan Attorney General addressed to Foreign Minister Tajani, requesting that Almasri be handed over to Libyan authorities for arrest. Is this a genuine pursuit of justice — or a legal "assist" helping Italy justify his urgent repatriation?

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

Can such a request from the Attorney General justify not executing the arrest warrant issued by the Court?

### **CHANTAL MELONI – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CRIMINAL LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**

This is the key point: no. What is surprising, however, is that this request has never been mentioned until now — not by Minister Nordio, nor by Minister Piantedosi.

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

Minister, good morning — Chianca from *Report*. The letter from the Libyan Attorney General, which surfaced only in May — neither you nor Nordio ever mentioned it in Parliament.

### **MATTEO PIANTEDOSI – MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**

Well evidently these were things that... now the Tribunal for Ministers will clarify.

### **LUCA CHIANCA**

Why did this letter never come out? Where does this letter from the Libyan Attorney General come from?

### **MATTEO PIANTEDOSI – MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**

I don't know, I don't know if it had confidential characteristics... excuse me, thank you.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Thank you.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

To better understand how that letter — used by the Italian government to send Osama Almasri back home — came about, we meet Khalil Elhassi, a Libyan journalist who has lived in Geneva for ten years after exposing the role and ties of militias with the government and Libyan judges.

**KHALIL ELHASSI – JOURNALIST**

Osama Almasri headed the judicial police — essentially the operational arm of the Libyan Attorney General. There is no doubt: the militias use the Attorney General as one of their instruments.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

So the Italian government may have responded to the request of a Libyan judge aligned with Almasri — rather than to the International Criminal Court.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Minister, speaking of relations with other countries — the Almasri case. At a certain point you receive the letter from the Attorney General...

**MAN**

One question for the Indian colleagues first.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Please, go ahead.

**ANTONIO TAJANI – MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Let's talk about other... let's talk about matters concerning this meeting, otherwise...

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

After waiting for the Indian journalists' questions, we try again.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Minister, just a quick comment—

**ANTONIO TAJANI – MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

This is not the right moment to...

**LUCA CHIANCA**

And when would it be? I can wait.

**WOMAN**

But you have to wait.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

I'll wait as long as you want — but let's do it.



**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

We waited — but the interview never happened.

**TRIPOLI, 29/01/2023**

**GIORGIA MELONI – ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER**

We are determined to reaffirm our constant commitment to supporting the Libyan authorities in managing migration flows, and of course today's signing of the agreement between ENI and NOC is a very important step — historic, one might say — in our long and fruitful cooperation.

**KHALIL ELHASSI – JOURNALIST**

We must not forget that on the very day Almasri was captured, his Rada militia threatened all parties with shutting down the gas pipeline that connects Italy to Libya. And we must take into account that, in order to keep ENI's interests in Libya safe, ENI clearly has to rely on relationships with the militias.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

And it was the former Prime Minister who, in Parliament, without mincing words, accused the government of not telling the truth about the real reason that led to sending Almasri back to Libya.

**05/02/2025**

**MATTEO RENZI – ITALIA VIVA SENATOR**

If there had been an act of courage on the part of the cowardly Prime Minister, she would have come here and said that there is a national interest. The national interest in Libya in this country is not about migrants. I was Prime Minister and I never signed a memorandum with the Libyans — until 2016, none had been signed. The national interest of this country in Libya has three letters: it's called ENI. If Meloni had wanted to defend the national interest, she would have come to say so. Instead, she ran away.

**IGNAZIO LA RUSSA – PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

You need to conclude.

**MATTEO RENZI – ITALIA VIVA SENATOR**

Because she has no courage at all, she releases child torturers and relies on the Cat and the Fox rather than speaking the truth of the matter. Shame.

**IGNAZIO LA RUSSA – PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

Thank you.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

The Director of AISE, Giovanni Caravelli, on the very day of Almasri's arrest, during a meeting with Mantovano, Piantedosi and Tajani, clarified that our intelligence services have a very productive collaboration with Almasri's Rada militia and that they had received no threats of reprisals against Italian citizens. He emphasised that the Rada also cooperated with the security forces operating in the area of ENI's Mellitah facility. To demonstrate that the relationship between the militias and ENI dates back around ten years, there is an email from the Italian oil company's security department — which *Report* can show you exclusively — documenting a reconciliation meeting between militias from four cities, organised in June 2015 at ENI's Mellitah headquarters.

**RECONSTRUCTION  
CONSULTANT**

The meeting, which lasted approximately seven hours, involved armed commanders entering the site while armed vehicles were parked outside the complex. On various occasions, conflicting militias chose the ENI site for their meetings, considering it a neutral location.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

ENI maintains that it did not take part in the 2015 meeting, also because staff at the time had been evacuated to Malta for security reasons. But it is precisely regarding the ENI Mellitah site that colleague Khalil Elhassi published on social media a completely overlooked report on the ties between the Almasri family and ENI, through the company Mellitah.

**KHALIL ELHASSI – JOURNALIST**

It is well known that the oil company Mellitah has relations with Almasri's father through a logistics services company with which he supposedly has a contract. This is confirmed to me by sources within Mellitah and within the marketing office of the National Oil Corporation.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Repatriating Almasri also means protecting ENI and our interests.

**MATTEO PIANTEDOSI – MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**

That too, certainly, that too certainly...

**LUCA CHIANCA**

Are you aware that the Almasri family — the father — has financial relations with one of ENI's companies there?

**MATTEO PIANTEDOSI – MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**

I don't know. This is a figure I, as I said, have never met.

**LUCA CHIANCA – VOICE-OVER**

ENI wrote to us stating that it has no relations with Almasri or his family, neither financial nor of any other nature. ENI's role, maintaining good relations with Libyans, also emerges in the case of the ship Asso 28, a support vessel for the Libyan oil platform Sabratha. On 30 July 2018, the ship rescued 101 migrants at sea, but instead of bringing them to Italy as required by law, it returned them all to Tripoli.

**LUCA CHIANCA**

What does it mean — and what did it mean — to return a migrant to Libya?

**LUCA MASERA – PROFESSOR OF CRIMINAL LAW, UNIVERSITY OF BRESCIA**

It means exposing them to the certainty of being tortured. Those rescued by the Libyan Coast Guard are usually returned to torture centres, where they remain until relatives manage to send money. So the Libyan Coast Guard can obviously make use of having 101 more people to send back to torture camps.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN STUDIO**

ENI never entered the trial, but the ship's captain did, and he was convicted because since 2012 it has been prohibited to return migrants found at sea to Libya — they should be brought to safe zones.

From the trial, it emerged that the platform had placed a so-called Libyan official on board the Asso 28, whose identity was never clarified, and he instructed the ship's

captain to return them all to Libya — which was done. Regarding this case, ENI wrote to us that offshore platforms, which are effectively Libyan territory, always have a national official present. In 2018, Libyan authorities assumed command of maritime rescue operations (SAR) in their areas of competence, employing their personnel and assets, including on oil sites and support vessels such as the Asso 28.

Since 1998, Italy has never incorporated crimes against humanity, genocide, or war crimes into its criminal code. We were approaching this with a prestigious commission of jurists; it was scheduled for the Council of Ministers but then shelved in 2023. Without these tools, Italy cannot hold state leaders accountable, as in the cases of Netanyahu or Putin, nor identify responsibilities for crimes committed in Libya.

But there are other contradictions. The news of Osama Almasri's arrest in Libya shattered the framework on which Palazzo Chigi built its public defence. Sources close to the executive explained that Palazzo Chigi was "well aware of the existence of an arrest warrant" from the Tripoli Prosecutor's Office against Almasri, "as of 20 January 2025." And that on that date the Foreign Ministry had received an extradition request from Libya "almost simultaneously" with the issuance of the Hague arrest warrant. Even if Tajani claims he did not see it. Some questions raised by the excellent journalist Nello Scavo of *Avvenire* remain open:

1) The government claims to have known of the arrest warrant for Libyan General Almasri since 20 January. So why did it return him free and triumphant to his supporters rather than to the Libyan judicial authorities?

2) If Palazzo Chigi was aware of the Libyan arrest warrant on the 20th, why did Italian intelligence agents at the Tribunal for Ministers provide a different, highly detailed version?

3) If the government received the arrest request from Tripoli, why was it not mentioned immediately?

Today, the government implies that Almasri's repatriation followed the spectacular Libyan arrest warrant. Then why did Minister Piantedosi speak in Parliament of expulsion for security reasons and not extradition? And our country, according to previous final rulings, could not extradite citizens to countries where they risk the death penalty for certain crimes. Unless Libya guaranteed to Italy that the Libyan general, accused of war crimes, murder, torture and rape, would go unpunished.

**COMMERCIAL BREAK**