

Italy: Lega councillor shoots dead Moroccan migrant

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Dave Kellaway reports on the death of a 39 year old migrant, in an incident that has shocked Italy.

Outside a shop, by a cafe or pub, often next to the cashpoint, somebody the worse for wear due to alcohol, drugs, or both will be asking for money. If you fail to offer some loose change, the incoherent person shouting in your vicinity takes on a more menacing tone. The individual asking for the money is a little disheveled, often dirty, and smells of the street. Most of us will I'm sure have witnessed a scene similar to this. Often a local bar or cafe owner who knows the guy will try and sort it out - pacify him with some money or food. Failing that the police or social services are called up.

An incident just like this happened a couple of days ago in Voghera, a small town near Pavia, 50km south of Milan. We know the name of the person who was begging money from the people relaxing in a small bar -Youns El Bossettaoui, a Moroccan migrant who was homeless and was known in the town for his inebriated behaviour. He was 39 years old and had been given orders to leave Italy several times by the authorities. El Bossettaoui obviously had serious problems, but any luck he ever had was used up when in the crowd he was annoying, contained a local politician, a councillor from Salvini's Lega (League) party. The politician was Massimo Adriatici, ex-policeman and currently a teacher of law for police trainees. He liked to be known as the Sherriff - somebody who spent a lot of time on the council and with the local authorities expounding how to keep the good people of Voghera safe. His brief on the council was local policing and security.



Massimo Adriatici, Lega councillor

Adriatici went over to El Bossettaoui to try and deal with the situation. According to what appears to be his version, and reported in the Italian press, the Moroccan threw a bottle at Adriatici. Subsequently, some sort of shoving match started between Adriatici and El Bossettaoui. The Italian councillor fell to the ground and the pistol he was carrying was discharged, killing El Bossettaoui instantly. Adriatici it is claimed, that in the act of falling to the ground the pistol was fired accidentally. However, it appears he had already taken out his pistol and was using it to try and resolve the situation. What is quite astonishing is that the local councillor was legally allowed to wander around town with a loaded pistol and then in turn point it at an unarmed person. The local prosecutors are currently investigating the incident and it is reported they are looking at a charge of

legitimate self defence but with excessive violence, although this could be a preliminary position. Adriatici has not been detained but put under house arrest.

More or less immediately Salvini, leader of the rabidly anti-migrant Lega, went on television arguing that it looked like a question of legitimate self defence and that everyone should calm down and let the investigators get on with it. The hard right parties in Italy and elsewhere have regularly taken up the defence of people in this position. It fits perfectly into their narrative of the desperate situation of ordinary citizens faced with a rising tide of violence - linked to increased non-white immigration. This is not the first time a Lega member has been involved in lethal violence against migrants. There was the case in Macerata a few years ago when a local Lega activist (Traini) nearly killed a number of migrants with a weapon.

Other politicians from the social liberal, PD (Democratic Party) have been more critical. Laura Boldrini, a PD MP, said :

You have to ask why a lead councillor is going around armed. Above all you have to ask would it had finished like this if he had not had a pistol.

Il Manifesto, 22.7.21

The town itself seems divided between those who are appalled that one of their councillors can roam around with a loaded gun and those who sympathise with Adriatici. The area is strong Lega territory. The owner of the bar disputes the fact that El Bossettaoui is a victim and he defended Adriatici as a very fine person, echoing the Lega line that local people are not protected.

Adriatici's version of events will surely be questioned. There is talk (let us all hope) of CCTV coverage although Italy has a lot fewer cameras than there are in Britain. Even if his 'accidental discharge of a firearm' story proves to be true he will need to justify why he pulled a gun on a person who was drunk or high on drugs with no weapon. Surely the anti-migrant, harsh law and order ideology of his political party might just have had some influence on his behaviour.

Most worrying for anti-racists and progressive people in Italy is that all the recent polls give a clear majority to the right-wing coalition that is currently led by Salvini and the post-fascist Meloni with her Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy) party. At the moment there is a national unity /Covid recovery government but a general election will come around sooner or later. If Meloni - whose personal ratings are even higher than Salvini's - is jointly leading a government with Salvini we will see racist and anti-worker policies unleashed across the board.

Every week there are stories of the horrific conditions that migrant workers endure, ensuring the fruit and vegetable sector keeps functioning and supermarkets stocked with fresh produce. Just a couple of weeks ago a Malian migrant died of heat exposure in Puglia after working long hours in nearly 40-degree heat - he was being paid 24 euros a day in the undeclared, informal economy.



Youns El Bossettaoui

Youns was married with two children his sister summed up the truth:

He was shot in the square in front of so many people. The assassin is at home, sleeping peacefully in his bed at night. Where is the law in Italy? He had no gun, no weapon.

(Corriere della Sera 21.7.21)

Dave Kellaway

P.S.

• Anti*capitalistresistance. 22 Jul 2021:

<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/italy-lega-councillor-shoots-dead-moroccan-migrant/>