

European Parliament
Committee on Petitions
The Secretariat
Rue Wiertz
B-1047 Brussels

Petition against the Resurgence of Fascism and Racism in Italy

Petitioners:



Muluwork Ayele Belay, presidente
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Racism and xenophobia are direct violations of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, principles upon which the European Union is founded and which are common to the Member States. (EU Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008)

On August 11, 2012, a ceremony was held in the presence of Italian dignitaries and a Vatican representative during which a memorial was opened draped in the Italian flag to “honor” Rodolfo Graziani, one of the most heinous figures of the Second World War. This event occurred at the “Rodolfo Graziani Park and Memorial” in the little town of Affile, 50 miles east of Rome.

Rodolfo Graziani was a major war criminal, imperialist, and fascist. He promoted racial inequality and hatred throughout Europe and Africa, first as the Military Governor of Libya and Ethiopia and later as the Minister of defence of the Republic of Salò. Graziani remained loyal to Mussolini until the end of that regime in 1945. In 1948, a military tribunal sentenced Graziani to 19 years' jail, as punishment for his collaboration with the Nazis; but he was released after serving only a few months of the sentence. Now a subdivision the Italian government honoured him with a mausoleum and memorial park, built at taxpayers' expense, in a village south of Rome

In 1937, Rodolfo Graziani directed a three day massacre of over 30,000 unarmed civilians in the capital of Ethiopia upon the orders of Benito Mussolini. Over 440 Christian monks were singled out and murdered. People were dismembered and soldiers took photos of the hangings, beheadings and torture proudly alongside their dead victims. The "Graziani Massacre" is well known to every Ethiopian and virtually and disgracefully unknown to the rest of the world. Graziani, prior to arriving in Ethiopia, was named "The Butcher of Libya." In Libya, Graziani presided over concentration camps, used chemical weapons and murdered thousands of innocents for Fascism.

In Ethiopia, one million Ethiopians perished as a result of the genocidal Fascist occupation. 2,000 churches as well as 525,000 homes were destroyed. The poison gas sprayed by numerous Fascists air planes also destroyed 14 million animals and the environment. Graziani later came to be forever known as the "Butcher of Ethiopia".

Italy's own Law N° 205/1993 prohibits the dissemination of ideas based on superiority or racial and ethnic discrimination.

1. A formal inquiry was initiated in the Italian Parliament inquiring as to who gave the authority to use public money to build the monument.
2. A lawsuit has been filed by a citizen of Italy calling for the dismantlement of the Graziani monument and the conviction under the law of the mayor of the small town of Affile who approved the opening of the Graziani monument in his town only 1,562 people. This lawsuit also names as defendants regional government officials who approved the money to build and open the monument. The lawsuit states that under the Italian constitution as well as its criminal laws, it is unlawful to build a monument in honour of a Fascist.
3. The President of the province of Rome, Nicola Zingaretti, has denounced the building and opening of the Graziani monument. He has promised to dismantle it and is now running for Governor of Lazio, the region where the monument was erected. Presently, Mr. Zingaretti is delegate to the European Union from Italy as well.

4. Two public demonstrations in the town of Affile and one in the capital of Rome have taken place to denounce the Graziani monument. The group includes Ethiopians in Italy as well as veterans who fought against Mussolini and Graziani in Italy.
5. The Graziani monument has been forced to close on several occasions due to opponents writing on the walls denouncing its construction and urging all to remember the victims of Fascism and not to honour a war criminal. One recent artist posted hanging cardboard figures around the Graziani monument with each figure detailing the crimes against Ethiopians, Libyans and fellow Italians committed by Graziani.
6. In Bologna, a town in northern Italy, a public toilet was satirically “converted” into the Graziani monument meaning that the only worthwhile dedication to this war criminal is for using it as a toilet.
7. Many major Italian publications online and in print have denounced the building of the Graziani monument.
8. The largest Jewish organization in Italy has denounced the building of the Graziani monument and has called on the government to dismantle it.
9. Here in America, a gathering of Italians during late January and early February of 2013 in New York City will remember all victims of Italian Fascism with a special panel discussion on January 31 specifically focused on the Graziani monument. Leading Italian journalists will join an Ethiopian scholar on that panel.
10. Also in America, activists of Italian heritage have teamed up with Ethiopians, Jews and all people who seek justice to denounce the Graziani monument and have it dismantled. One of those Italian-Americans is Nicola Antonio DeMarco, J.D of New York who works with the Global Alliance for Justice, the Ethiopian Cause. He previously served with Dr. Richard Pankhurst on the Axum Obelisk Return Committee. On February 19, 2013, the 76th anniversary of the Graziani massacre, Italians will join Ethiopians and people of good will in front of the Italian mission to the United Nations in New York City to denounce the opening of the Graziani monument. Thirty other cities worldwide will hold similar demonstrations.
11. The Ethiopian Community in Italy, headed by Ms. Muluwork Ayele has been active in denouncing the Graziani monument. She has also met with Jewish descendents of victims of Fascism in Italy to discuss their common goal to dismantle the Graziani monument. Ms. Ayele communicates daily with Italian-American activists as well updating all on the latest.
12. After the Graziani monument was opened, the entire regional government of Lazio where the small town of Affile lies, was forced to resign due to a massive corruption scandal. The former governor, Polvernini, who was also part of that mass resignation later, claimed she was against the authorization of public money to build the Graziani monument and that if she could have

done anything to stop its opening, she would have. Very few people believe her story but even in her lying we can see that there is no public official in Italy, except the mayor of Affile, willing to defend using over 130,000 Euros to build a monument to a convicted war criminal and Fascist.

13. Associations including the Anti-Fascist Committee of Affile (comitato affile antifascista) ANED (Italian Association of Deportees), ANPI (Association of Resistance Partisans) and UCEI (Union of the Italian Jewish Communities) have made formal requests to remove the monument.

14. Anti fascist demonstrations are scheduled to continue in America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and Europe to protest the Graziani Memorial.

Despite our demand the President of Italy and its Prime Minister refuse to act to close this disgraceful xenophobic and racist monument to one of the leading fascists and imperialists of the 20th Century.

Italy must also fulfil its obligations to restore all looted Ethiopian properties, specifically the Italian government has refused several reasonable request to account for the The Ethiopian Aeroplane "Tsehai" commonly known as the "The Aeroplane of the Negus" and its associated records. The Tsehai is the property of the Ethiopian Crown and was looted from Ethiopia circa 1937 by Italian forces during the occupation of that country and subsequently came into the possession of the Italian National Air Force Museum.

Pursuant to Article 37 of the Italian Peace Treaty of 1947, this property ought to have been restored to the Ethiopian Crown but was overlooked by both Ethiopian and Italian authorities. The Crown however has never relinquished its claim to this property which we have learned is now in storage at the Museo Storico di Vigna di Valle.

The airplane in question is not only the property of the Ethiopian Crown but holds historical and cultural significance to Ethiopia and for all Africans as it was the first airplane assembled in Africa by an independent African state.

Our repeated requests to the Italian government have gone unheeded.

Finally several ancient Ethiopian manuscripts were deposited with the Vatican Library for safekeeping by Enrico Cerulli, a scholar but also a former fascist governor in Ethiopia. These manuscripts were looted by Cerulli during the Italian occupation thus he could not have obtained legal title to them. The Vatican Library catalogue lists these items thusly: Osvaldo Raineri, "Enrico Cerulli: Inventario dei Manoscritti CerulliEtiopici," (Studi e Testi, no. 420) Citta del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2004.

The Vatican Library has refused our requests for an accounting of these cultural artefacts.

We call upon the European Parliament to denounce the resurgence of fascism, xenophobia and racism in Italy and to request that Italy takes measures to close down the Graziani memorial and

return Ethiopian cultural property from the Museo Storico di Vigna di Valle and assist with the resolution of the stolen artefacts at the Vatican Library.

DATE: 14-02-2013

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Jonathan Levy'. To the right of the signature is a blue circular stamp. The stamp contains a central emblem of a scale of justice. The text around the perimeter of the stamp reads 'JONATHAN LEVY ESO' at the top and 'BUREAU PENAL' at the bottom.

Dr. Jonathan Levy
Legal Representative for Petitioners