

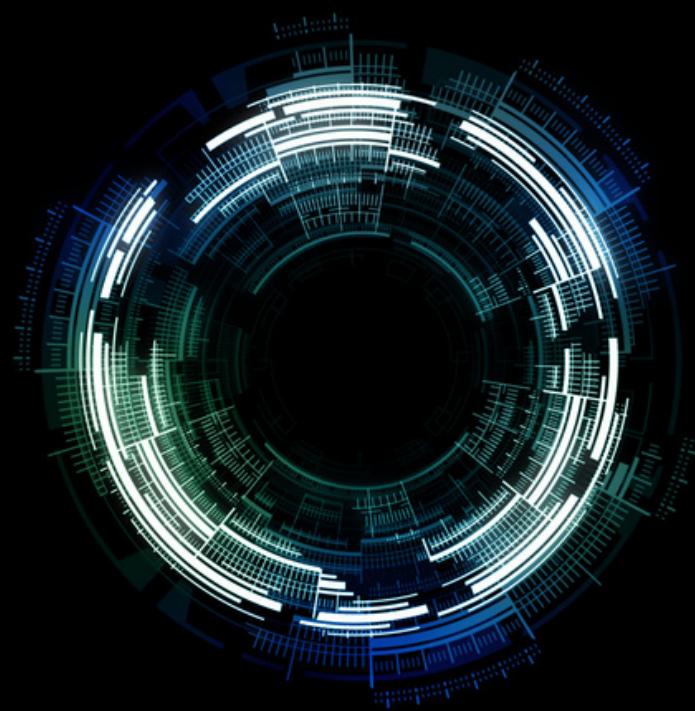
2023

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OSINT Report 8

# A RED CARD TO ANTISEMITISM

Soccer, stadiums and hooligans  
in the Italian context



## AN OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

DEVELOPED BY:

CDEC FOUNDATION'S OBSERVATORY ON  
ANTISEMITISM

CO-FUNDED BY:

European Commission Directorate General for  
Justice and Consumers

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# ABOUT THE REPORT

The report has been developed in the framework of the EU-funded project "STAND-UP: Standing up against hate in the EU". The project has received funding from the European Commission Directorate General for Justice and Consumers under Grant Agreement no. 101049532.

The OSINT Reports Series, of which this report constitutes the eight release, has been developed with the aim of providing an overview of the potential applications, on a European scale, of open-source research and analysis methodologies in prevention and mitigation activities directed against a range of potential threats. Each report in the OSINT Reports Series will provide insights, gathered through open source intelligence, concerning a potential threat identified by Agenfor International Foundation with the support of public and private partners.

The present report is a result of a mix of resources, both the manual monitoring conducted by the Observatory on Antisemitism and the use of the OSINT software. We will discuss the issue of antisemitism in soccer as a whole, both online and offline.

Author: Murilo Cambruzzi - CDEC Foundation's Observatory on Antisemitism

Coordination & Revision: Viviana Gullo, OSINT Analyst, and Sergio Bianchi, Director - Agenfor International Foundation



# INTRODUCTION

Soccer, and sports in general, are a great instrument for creating social cohesion and for community making, but stadiums have often been used for the expression of violence and hatred towards minority groups such as LGBTQIA+ people, Roma, people of colour, and Jews. Many ultras groups and/or their member, as the hooligan groups are known in Italian, are known to have connections with right-wing extremist groups and organized crime, and violence in or around the stadium is not rare.

Antisemitism in stadiums is not a new phenomenon in Italy, antisemitic chants[1] have been registered at least since the 80s, for ex, Verona-Milan '87-88: “Fuori c’è un forno, venite ebrei che vi bruciamo...”[2] (Outside there is an oven, come here Jews so that we burn you), and it has been present since then. The use of the term "Jew" as an insult hurled against the opposing team or opposing fan base has become commonplace; the trivialization of the Shoah is also commonplace in the antisemitic tropes of soccer fans; one only needs to think about the several incidents related to the use of the image of Anne Frank or the chants using “Jew” in a derogatory way. Another historical example is that of the Roma - Lazio match in November 1988, when the Lazio North Curve displayed a huge banner that read: “Auschwitz your homeland, the ovens your homes”, or in the match between Lazio and Tottenham in 2012 where Lazio ultras chanted “Juden Tottenham” while waving Palestinian flags.[3] More recently, we have seen increasing contamination of different forms of hatred, especially in chants and graffiti, for example in Fiumicino (a city on the outskirts of Rome) a graffiti read “Laziale ebreo, Laziale fr\*ccio” (Laziale Jew, [swastika] Laziale F\*ggot”[4], and in a match in November AS Roma fans were recorded chanting “Our midfielder is an Iranian [Sardar Azmoun], he does the Roman salute, blows up an airplane, hates Negr\*es and Jews, trans women and gays. In AS Roma there are no Jews.”[5]



X/Twitter, “some root for Lazio and some for Kippah Roma”. An example of how Judaism is used for making fun of adversaries.



“The new Lazio’s jersey designed by Anne Frank.”[6]



Following is a list of other relevant historical incidents:

- “In 1990, antisemitic threats (“go to the oven,” “away with the Jews”) by ultras of Udinese induced Israeli footballer Ronnie Rosenthal, then on trial at the Friulian bianconeri, not to sign for the Italian team and to go and play in England.
- In 1992, the Israeli-born Dutch footballer Aaron Winter, then on Lazio, was forced to conceal his origins for fear of retaliation by Biancocelesti extremists.
- In January 2006, in the week in which Shoah Remembrance Day is commemorated, during a match against Livorno, Roma's curva Sud displayed the banner: ‘Lazio Livorno Same initials, same oven.’[7]
- In 1994, in a match between Milan and Inter, some Inter ultras came to the stadium with a scarf showing a picture of a rabbi (inspired by Rome’s Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff) and with the slogan “Rossoneri [Milan fan] ebrei [Jews]”.



Source: Osservatorio Antisemitismo’s archive

When discussing antisemitism in stadiums it is important to mention a sentence published by the Italian Court of Cassation (Corte di Cassazione) in 2017 that stated that using “Jew” as an insult is not punishable as it “remains confined within the framework of a sports rivalry.” ‘Although the juxtaposition Giallorossi [AS Roma fans] with Jew may have taken on, in the intentions of the pronouncer, a denigrating value, which can be linked to concepts of race, ethnicity or religion,’ the judge continued in his motivations, ‘the manner of externalization does not constitute any concrete danger of spreading an idea of racial hatred

and ethnic superiority. The chant, in essence, ‘beyond the scurrility’ the ruling reads, ‘expresses mere sporting derision.’[8]

Great attention has been paid by the media and policymakers in the past two years (2022-2023) regarding antisemitic incidents in sports, mostly in soccer, and our Antisemitism Hotline has recorded dozens of incidents since 2012.[9]

The Italian institutions and FIGC (Italian Soccer Federation) have recently undertaken some measures to try to solve the problem of antisemitism in stadiums, but so far the problem persists. A recent report published by NOA - “National Report Card on Government Measures to Counter Antisemitism and Foster Jewish Life”- evaluated the policies undertaken by the Italian institutions and FIGC (Italian Soccer Federation) and it found that:

“In 2020, it [the government] ratified the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218). The same year, UNAR established the National Observatory against Discrimination in Sport in collaboration with CSOs, including the Italian Union of Sport for All (UISP) and Lunaria, to prevent and combat discrimination through research, training, workshops and awareness-raising activities. [...] In June 2023, the Coordinator for the Fight against Antisemitism, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Sport and Youth, the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and other partners signed a non-binding letter of intent to combat antisemitism in football and to foster a safer and more inclusive environment. The signing parties committed to incorporating the IHRA definition in their ethical codes, banning Nazi or antisemitic symbols by fans, promoting discrimination-free language, implementing immediate match interruptions for antisemitic incidents, and using technology to identify offenders. The letter expresses the intent to impose penalties for antisemitic incidents and for the penalties to remain in place during subsequent championship matches to deter recidivism. However, at present, there are no mechanisms in place to monitor these commitments.” [10]

## DATA ANALYSIS

The present report is a result of a mix of resources, both the manual monitoring conducted by the Observatory on Antisemitism and the use of the Tangles software. We will discuss the issue of antisemitism in soccer, both online and offline. The data was collected over 2023 through the use of several word combinations on Tangles such as “giallorosso ebrei”, “juve ebrei”, “laziale ebreo”, and so on, with content being found in several platforms.



As previously mentioned, in the Italian soccer world the words “Jew” (ebreo) and “Rabbi” (rabbino) are used in a derogatory way to offend and make fun of the adversaries. Over the years there have been several incidents related to it in stadiums, especially in the form of chants and banners; on the streets, with offensive graffiti and stickers; and online, with the use of Jew and Rabbi as an insult.

 88  
ROMANISTA EBREO



8:01 PM - Apr 10, 2023 - 396 Views

1 Quote 1 Like

A hooligan with a Fascist eagle as its profile picture and 88 [heil Hitler] as part of their username posted a picture of a well-known incident from the 90s where hooligans from the Lazio held a banner saying “Auschwitz your motherland, the ovens your house” together with the text “romanista Jew”.

 @ [redacted]

UNA SQUADRA DE NEGRI  
UNA CURVA DE GIUDEI  
QUESTI NON SONO CUGINI MIEI

-AS ROMA JUDEN CLUB

[Translate Tweet](#)

12:46 PM · May 11, 2013

Another example from X/Twitter, “A team of nigg\*rs, Jewish fans, these are not my cousins – AS Roma Juden Club”



 @ [redacted]

Quella puttana de tu madre romanista ebreo giudeo der cazzo spero che tu madre fa la fine de anna frank

[Translate Tweet](#)

5:36 AM · Mar 1, 2023 - 41 Views

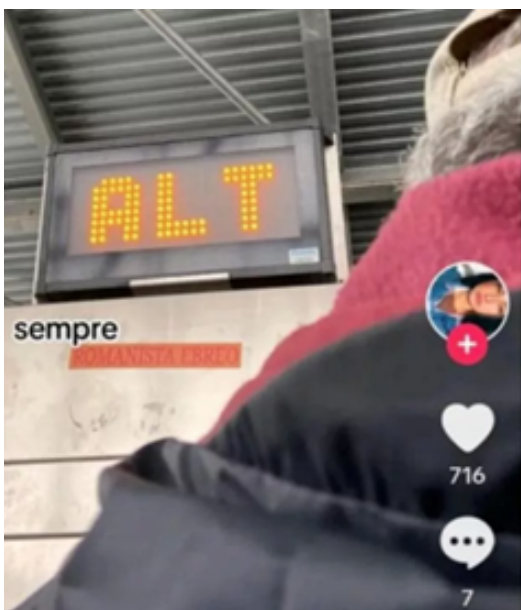
In another post from X, an user says “that fucking wh\*re of your mother, your fucking Jewish romanista, I hope that your mom ends up like Anne Frank”.

Following are two comments related to an antisemitic incident that took place in March 2023, when a Lazio fan went to a match with a jersey with the number 88 [Heil Hitler] and the name Hitlerson written on it.



“Don’t worry, the Netherlands are big but we will find Anne [Frank]...”

“@Dureghello [Ruth Dureghello was then the president of the Jewish community of Rome] why don't you go pray in the Synagogue?”



Also relevant was the incident involving two Lazio fans who have a great following on TikTok and posted a video where you can see them holding a sticker that says “Romanista Jew”.<sup>[11]</sup>

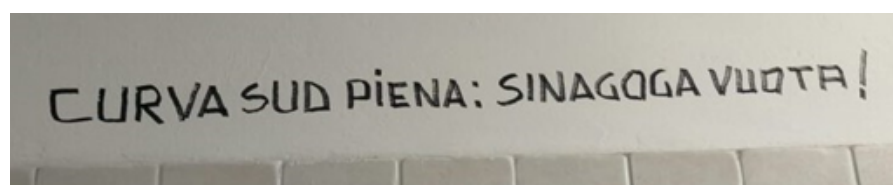
This kind of violent and insulting rhetoric is easily found online, not only related to Jews. For example, here you can see a video of a chant published by a user on TikTok:



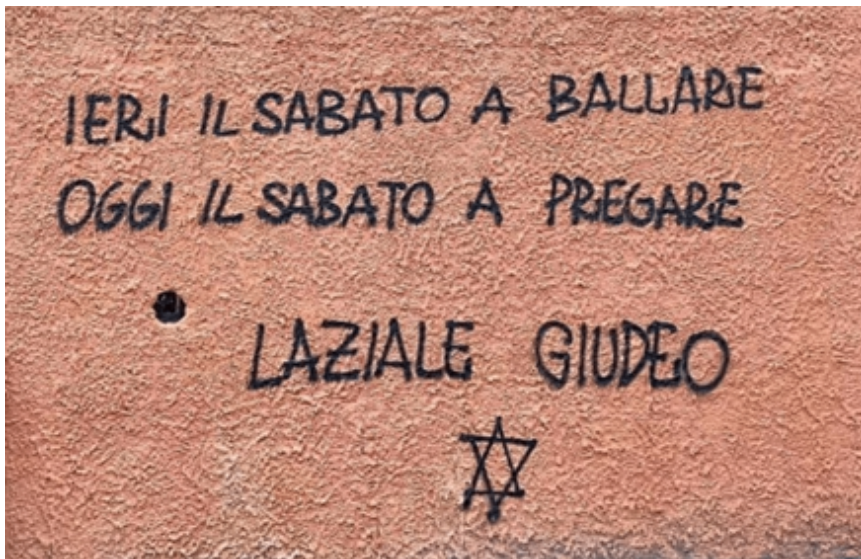
“You pretend to be Italian, but to me your are a gypsy, I know that sooner or later I will find you.”

Following are some examples of antisemitic graffiti found throughout Italy:

“South section full: empty synagogue”, found in a bathroom of an University in Rome







“Yesterday, Saturday dancing,  
Today, Saturday praying,  
Lazio Jewish”



“Lazio homosexual  
+ star of David”



“[SS symbol] Anne Frank  
roots for Trapani”

# CONCLUSION

The problem of antisemitism and discrimination is well-rooted in soccer culture in Italy, and it does not seem that it will go away soon. While the measures undertaken by Italian institutions and the soccer association are welcomed, more should be done to ensure that stadiums are safe and free from hatred and that ultra culture let go of its “need” to use offensive terms against rival fans. More training and counter-speech measures should be taken, as the EU-funded projects Changing the Chants [12] and MONITORA[13], to combat discrimination in sports and promote a more inclusive environment.

# REFERENCES

- [1] There are several chants available in this website: <https://www.coridastadio.com>.
- [2] Viganò, G. (1994), “Tranquilli: oggi non vi picchiamo – gli slogan degli ultras negli stadi”.
- [3] [https://www.repubblica.it/sport/calcio/serie-a/lazio/2012/11/22/news/cori\\_antisemiti\\_contro\\_tottenham-47215281/](https://www.repubblica.it/sport/calcio/serie-a/lazio/2012/11/22/news/cori_antisemiti_contro_tottenham-47215281/).
- [4] <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/scritte-omofobe-e-antisemite-contro-i-laziali-a-fiumicino/>.
- [5] <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/roma-nuovo-coro-antisemita-e-razzista-dei-tifosi-giallorossi/>.
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- [7] See more at Osservatorio Antisemitismo (2014), “Antisemitismo nei gruppi ultras delle tifoserie calcistiche italiane ed europee”, available at [https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/05./Ossant\\_lettera\\_n2\\_aprile\\_2014\\_AM\\_football.pdf](https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/05./Ossant_lettera_n2_aprile_2014_AM_football.pdf).
- [8] <https://www.retidigiustizia.it/leggi-e-diritto/romanista-ebreo-cassazione-non-e-reato-ma-semplice-rivalita-sportiva>.
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- [11] <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/tiktok-ultra-della-lazio-mostrano-adesivo-antisemita-romanista-ebreo/>.
- [12] <https://changingthechants.eu/>.
- [13] <https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/monitora-eng/>.



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