

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8332>



Italy

Hundreds sentenced in the maxi-trial of the 'Ndrangheta, the Calabrian mafia

- IV Online magazine - 2023 - IV586 - November 2023 -

Publication date: Thursday 30 November 2023

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

Comparable to the maxi-trial in Palermo, which exposed the workings of the Sicilian mafia, the first instance of the Rinascita-Scott maxi-trial in Vibo Valentia [1], which concluded on 20 November, finally broke the law of silence ("l'omertà") and revealed the complex web of relations between the State and the 'Ndrangheta, the Calabrian mafia.

Today, the 'Ndrangheta is considered to be the most powerful criminal organisation in the world. Its annual turnover is in the tens of billions of euros, and it has branches on every continent.

In Italy, the mafia has always been the other face of power, an instrument of control in the hands of the ruling classes. The mysteries of the Sicilian mafia were revealed through the testimonies of the first repentants, such as Leonardo Vitale in the 1970s and then, above all, Tommaso Buscetta, the key witness in the Palermo maxi-trial (1986-1987), who placed his knowledge in the hands of the magistrate Giovanni Falcone, assassinated in 1992 in the Capaci bombing.

The 'Ndrangheta: a mafia like no other?

Once again, the cooperation of several repentant members, including Emanuele Mancuso, one of the grandsons of the boss of Vibo Valentia, was decisive in uncovering this underground world. The strict observance of the omertà has long been its strength: between 1994 and 2007, out of a total of 794 justice collaborators, only 100 came from the 'Ndrangheta².

The 'Ndrangheta's organisational model is profoundly different from that of other Mafia organisations. Firstly, it is based on the strength and reliability of family ties, which has enabled it to maintain its secretive nature for longer. It operates on a local scale, with each 'ndrina being autonomous and holding a monopoly over its territory. It is governed by an aggregate of at least 40 "men of honour", with a hierarchical organisation, submission to the "head of the society" and common rules of loyalty³ that make it a kind of archaic franchise system. The other key element is its ability to dominate drug trafficking, by establishing its own men in the producing countries and by allying itself - including through the system of arranged marriages - with the heirs of the "cartel chiefs".

Finally, the 'Ndrangheta has been able to change its skin, moving from the 700 deaths of the second Mafia war (1985-1991) to a strategy of non-violent immersion in the institutions, keeping ambushes and assassinations to a minimum.

Mafia bosses, politicians and law enforcement officers convicted

No fewer than 388 defendants, more than 400 lawyers and 900 people called to testify: these are the figures with which the Vibo Valentia court, after 35 days in chambers, closed the first instance of a three-year trial against the city's mafia clans. It is one of the biggest trials against organised crime in Italy. A high-security courtroom has been specially built in Lamezia Terme to accommodate the defendants. Prosecutor Nicola Gratteri, a protagonist of the major Palermo trials, launched the investigation and represented the prosecution.

Heavy sentences were handed down to leaders and affiliates of 'Ndrangheta clans in the province of Vibo Valentia. Among those convicted were names from local politics and law enforcement with links to the Mancuso clan, including

Hundreds sentenced in the maxi-trial of the 'Ndrangheta, the Calabrian mafia

lawyer Giancarlo Pittelli, a former senator and regional coordinator for Forza Italia (the party founded by Berlusconi) who later joined Fratelli d'Italia (Giorgia Meloni's stronghold), the former marshal of the financial police and the commander of the municipal police. The offences charged are: misuse and disclosure of state secrets, Mafia association or external complicity, extortion, fictitious registration of assets, murder, receiving stolen goods, money laundering, drug trafficking and usury.

The investigation by the DDA (anti-mafia district directorate) in Catanzaro highlighted the collaboration of the criminal network with the Masonic lodges, but also the internal tensions within the cosche (gangs) that have led to dozens of murders in recent years.

So, thanks to its encounter with rogue Freemasonry, the 'Ndrangheta found a relational springboard that enabled it to enter the highest echelons of the country's apparatus. A secret network of unsuspected people - magistrates, journalists, politicians, businessmen, police - constituting the most obscene face of power.

30 November 2023

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

1.

Le nom du procès est dû à la renaissance souhaitée de la Calabre et au nom de famille de l'agent spécial américain Scott Sieben qui a collaboré avec la police italienne sur les liens entre la 'Ndrangheta et les cartels de la drogue colombiens.

2.

<https://www.filodiritto...>

3.

<https://www.filodiritto...>

PS:

If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.

[1] The name of the trial combines the desire for a renaissance of Calabria and the name of the American special agent Scott Sieben, who collaborated with the Italian police on the links between the 'Ndrangheta and the Colombian drug cartels.