

## Terrorism: the threat to the Vatican is real

"The threat is real. This is what has emerged from meetings with my Italian and foreign colleagues. But the existence of a threat is one thing and an attack being planned is another. At the moment, we are not aware of any plot against the Vatican or the Holy Father," said Domenico Giani, the commander of the Vatican Gendarmerie, in an interview for the March edition of Poliziamoderna, the monthly magazine of the Italian National Police.

"The alert level is constantly high, always in line with the situation" he said. "There is not only the threat posed by ISIS, but also the risk of lone wolf operators, which is even more dangerous, because it's unpredictable. I'm talking about mentally unstable people, mythomaniacs, or simply people who may try to carry out an act of violence at the Vatican because it would guarantee them maximum media coverage."

Asked how Pope Francis is living this dangerous situation, the Vatican's head of security said: "The Holy Father is well aware of the threats against him, but his only concern is for the faithful. The Holy Father is not abandoning the style of his pontificate, which is based on proximity, that is on a direct encounter with the greatest number of people. Even as a Pontiff, he has remained a priest who does not want to lose touch with his flock. Therefore, those of us entrusted with his security have to adjust to him and not the other way around. We must do everything we can so that he can continue to carry out his ministry as he wants and believes is best."

Giani said that the Vatican security is also cooperating with intelligence services of Muslim countries. "Many Islamic countries not only give me valuable information, but also express esteem and admiration for the Holy Father. I can say that today the Pontiff is seen and respected by Islam as the most influential moral authority in the world, on the part of both religious and civil authorities."

Italian

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