



## **I DON'T BELIEVE YOU ANYMORE**

### **VIII Antigone's Report on Italian Juvenile Justice**

The entire Report is available on the website [www.ragazzidentro.it](http://www.ragazzidentro.it) and consists of fact sheets on each Italian IPM (*Istituto penale per minorenni* i.e. Juvenile detention centre) accompanied by videos, thematic chapters for further reading, and a map of the communities that host boys and girls in the criminal justice system.

#### **WHY THE TITLE OF OUR REPORT**

"I don't believe you anymore": this is the sentiment expressed by young people who pass through our prisons today. These young men and women have lost all hope in the juvenile justice system. They no longer trust the adult world, which administers it with an increasing desire for punishment and revenge and less and less acceptance, listening and support. So we are losing them, instead of focusing on rehabilitation at all costs, which the justice system was able to achieve in the past.

#### **THE ANTIGONE OBSERVATORY**

What we are telling you is the result of processing official data and our direct observation. Since 2008, we have been consistently visiting juvenile detention centres – with the help of cameras – to ensure the transparency that every prison needs, especially if it holds minors.

#### **WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE JUVENILE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM?**

The criminalising and punitive rhetoric towards minors vigorously pursued by the current government and the resulting so-called security policies – which, as we shall see, have nothing to do with security – are responsible not only for destroying the lives of young boys and girls who we would once have rehabilitated into society, but also for destroying an ancient and deeply rooted tradition of Italian juvenile justice.

#### **IT'S ALL THE 2023 CAIVANO DECREE'S FAULT: FOR THE FIRST TIME, YOUTH DETENTION CENTRES ARE OVERCROWDED**

The so-called Caivano Decree of September 2023 constituted the most significant repressive shift in juvenile justice ever made since the introduction of the juvenile criminal procedure code in 1988. For the first time in Italian history, juvenile detention centers experienced overcrowding. Yet in 2023, there was a 4.16% decrease in reports against minors compared to the previous year. The data is always difficult to interpret, and we do not want to



resort to simplifications. However, it would seem clear that the explosion in numbers in juvenile prisons, and elsewhere, is due to the explosion in criminal reactions introduced by the new regulations and not, as is too hastily claimed, to a progressive increase in crime. The surge in numbers occurred with the introduction of the Caivano Decree. When the new regulations come into full effect in 2025, the system will stabilise.

### **CATTIVI - A PODCAST ABOUT JUVENILE JUSTICE**

"CATTIVI, le carceri dei ragazzi viste da dentro" (CATTIVI, juvenile prisons seen from the inside) is a podcast created by Antigone and produced in collaboration with Next New Media, as part of the 11DECIMI journalistic series. The podcast explores the juvenile justice system through the direct testimonies of those who experience it, offering a journey into the unfortunately unknown and often misunderstood world of juvenile prisons. "CATTIVI" aims to bring to the fore stories that normally remain untold, with the aim of promoting and encouraging public debate on a system undergoing profound change.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **JUVENILE CRIME STATISTICS AMID ALARMISM, CRIMINOGENIC CHOICES AND MISINTERPRETATIONS**

### **CRIME STATISTICS: AN ALARMIST AND UNFOUNDED NARRATIVE**

So is juvenile crime on the rise? This is what we have been told repeatedly, from many quarters and for a long time. But this chorus has now lost its meaning. Just think that this same chorus was also heard in the years when youth crime, judging by the most traditional indicators, was clearly on the decline.

### **MURDERS COMMITTED BY MINORS ARE NOT INCREASING**

The most recent and well-known case of "false alarm" involved the Ministry of the Interior, which in its report on intentional homicides committed in Italy reported that the percentage of minors who committed murder in Italy had almost tripled in one year. The news caused a great stir and increased alarm about minors and their dangerousness, but when we look at the percentages, which are subject to large fluctuations as they relate to very low numbers, and when it was discovered that the data referred to in the report for 2023 was actually incorrect, it became clear that reports of minors committing murder had remained essentially stable. There were 27 in 2022, 25 in 2023 and 26 in 2024, far fewer than between 2014 and 2017, for example, when there were an average of 33 per year. In short, much ado about nothing.

### **YET MINORS ARE INCREASINGLY CRIMINALISED, AS IS THE CASE IN THE NEW SECURITY PACKAGE THAT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED**

The legislative action inaugurated with the recent Security Decree 2026, approved on 5 February by the Council of Ministers and not yet published, is perfectly in line with a political programme aimed at redefining the boundaries of social control in Italy. Legitimised by a public narrative that, by exploiting isolated news stories and exaggerating minor disturbances on the fringes of large democratic demonstrations, has constructed an alibi for new legislation that promotes the concept of security: not oriented towards social security and rights, but as a mere justification for punitive power. Many of the regulations affect young people, as they are the ones at the forefront of the protests.

### **ITALY HAS ONE OF THE LOWEST RATES OF JUVENILE CRIME IN EUROPE. HALF THE EUROPEAN AVERAGE**

Let's start with an initial consideration, which is decidedly comforting. If, as we said above, we want to measure juvenile crime based on reports, regardless of their outcome, we can start with Eurostat data. The most recent data refer to 2023, but they still place Italy among the countries with the lowest rates of reported minors, with a rate of 363.4 reports per 100,000 inhabitants, which is almost half the European average, which in 2023 was 647.9.

## **REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS AGAINST MINORS. A FLUCTUATING TREND: THERE WERE 46,000 IN 1995. THERE ARE ABOUT 38,000 IN 2024, THIRTY YEARS LATER**

The number of reports has been declining for many years. In the 1990s, there were consistently over 40,000 per year, reaching 46,051 in 1995. Since then, after various fluctuations, the numbers have begun to decline and, as can be seen, this trend has continued until 2020, falling below 30,000 reports for the first time in the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. The trend then reversed, but without exceeding the figures for 2015, peaking in 2022 and then falling again in 2023. In 2024, the last year for which figures are available, reports began to rise again. The total number of reports increased by 16.7%, and for some crimes of great social concern, this increase is even more significant.

## **CRIME DATA BY TYPE OF CRIME. DRUG-RELATED CRIMES DECLINE, MURDERS REMAIN STABLE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE INCREASES**

Homicides remain stable, while attempted homicides increase by 26% and sexual violence by 25%. There is a slight increase in thefts (+6.2%) and a greater increase in robberies (+10.3%). Curiously, only crimes related to drug offences are down (-4.2%), continuing a trend that has been going on for many years, despite the 'crackdown' on small-scale drug dealing contained in the Caivano decree.

## **WHAT DOES REPORTING A MINOR TO THE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES MEAN? MORE CRIME OR MORE CRIMINALISATION?**

Reports of minors to the judicial authorities are not "crime"; rather, they are possible indicators of crime, and since they are reports, they are still hypotheses, clues that a crime may have been committed, in this case by a minor. Reports are followed by investigations, investigations may be followed by trials, and trials may be followed by convictions. And this is a simplification because, in juvenile proceedings, there are other possible outcomes besides conviction, even when the offence has actually been committed. So what is the increase in reports indicative of a rise in crime, or simply of the fact that we, and the police, are more inclined to report it? This is an entirely plausible hypothesis at a time when youth crime is being highlighted as one of the main emergencies: more fear, more reports. But is there more reliable data to help answer our question? Have only reports increased, or have crimes also increased? At present, we must acknowledge that there is no definitive data. However, below we will try to consider some sources of information, other than the trend in reports, that may help us better understand the context, or at least its complexity.

## **IN 2024, REPORTS TO THE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES INCREASED BY 16.7%, WHILE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN TAKEN INTO CARE BY THE SERVICES INCREASED BY ONLY 2.4%. DATA FOR 2025 IS NOT AVAILABLE.**

As we have said, between 2023 and 2024, there was a significant increase in reports to the judicial authorities: +16.7%. However, the number of minors and young adults reported by the judicial authorities to the Social Services for Minors (USSM) is much lower, both because, as we have said, not all reports are followed up by a referral to the services, and because the first figure relates to reports, while the second relates to individuals, and each individual may be the

subject of several reports. The increase in reports to the USSM between 2023 and 2024 was significantly lower in percentage terms than the increase in complaints: +12.7%. This was even more evident in the last figure presented above, that of cases taken on by social services, which increased by only 2.4% between 2023 and 2024. But how can this difference be explained? In 2024, reports to the judicial authorities increased by 16.7%, while cases taken on by the services increased by only 2.4%? A realistic hypothesis is that only reports have increased, not crimes, or at least that crimes have increased much less than reports, and for this reason the number of cases taken on has grown only slightly. Data for 2025 is not available.

**THE REAL CAUSES OF CHILD DISADVANTAGE ARE OTHER. HAS THE NUMBER OF YOUNG CRIMINALS INCREASED OR HAS POVERTY INCREASED? 1.28 MILLION CHILDREN LIVE IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY.**

Absolute poverty continues to affect children in particular, and has been on the rise for years. In 2024, there were 1.28 million children living in absolute poverty, 13.8% of all resident children, and this figure has grown significantly in recent years. It is a disheartening picture, not known to everyone, but unfortunately it is not the only indicator of how complex this period is when experienced from the perspective of young people.

**MORE AND MORE CHILDREN ARE SUFFERING. THE USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS DOUBLED BETWEEN 2016 AND 2024**

According to the Italian Medicines Agency's National Report for 2024, the use of psychotropic drugs in the paediatric population has essentially doubled between 2016 and 2024. It ranges from 31.49 packs per 1,000 children in 2020 to 59.3 packs per 1,000 children in 2024 (+88%).

**FROM 2023, THERE WILL BE FEWER AND FEWER RESOURCES TO TAKE IN UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS. THEY ARE BEING SET UP FOR A LIFE OF CRIME BY THROWING THEM OUT ONTO THE STREETS**

Recent years have seen a sharp increase in the number of unaccompanied foreign minors entering Italian juvenile detention centres. They are generally considered the most difficult young people to manage within the prison community, as they present behavioural problems linked to addiction or the emotional management of traumatic experiences. They are often the ones that authorities want to get rid of through sudden transfers between juvenile detention centres, removal from the juvenile justice system and placement in the adult justice system, and excessive use of medication.

**UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS IN ITALY: 17,011 AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2025. THERE WERE 23,226 IN 2023**

There were 17,011 UFM's present on Italian territory as of 31 December 2025. Among them, girls accounted for just 11.4%. Numbers peaked in 2023, with 23,226 minors as of 31 December, with a downward trend between 2024 and 2025. These are official figures which, of course, only reflect minors detected by the ministerial monitoring system, meaning that these numbers represent a conservative estimate of the actual numbers present. It should be noted that there is an unknown number of minors who are present in the country illegally or are in transit and who, by evading identification procedures, do not enjoy any form of protection, thus feeding

into a pool of invisibility that often precedes their entry into the world of crime.

**MORE RECEPTION MEANS MORE SAFETY. THE RECEPTION SYSTEM AND GOVERNMENT FUNDS ARE IN PROGRESSIVE DECLINE. 50 MILLION LESS OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS. SO THE KIDS END UP ON THE STREETS, IN THE SHADOWS, IN THE HANDS OF CRIMINALITY**

Of crucial importance with regard to the issue in question is the so-called migrant reception system. In general, this system operates in two distinct phases, defined as first and second reception. Both phases are managed by local authorities. The first phase is essential for intervening in emergency situations and providing first aid and identification. The second phase operates through a more structured integration process which, in view of numerous regulatory interventions, essentially takes place through the so-called reception and integration system (SAI). The 2026 Budget Law (Law 199/2025) has allocated €115,548,130 for 2026, with the same amount allocated for 2027 and 2028, to be allocated to the fund for the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors. An analysis of the trend in this fund over the last ten years shows a sharp downward trend. While in 2016 it amounted to €170,000,000, in 2026, as we have seen, it has fallen to €115,548,130, a decrease of 32.03%. Although the contribution allocated to municipalities for each UFM has been slightly increased since 1 January 2023, now reaching a maximum of €100 per day for reception, resources remain severely insufficient. In fact, local authorities are having to make up for the shortcomings of the reception system with their own funds. Subsequent forecasts (from 2025 to 2028) predict a reduction of approximately 50 million. Precisely because of what has been outlined so far, one cannot help but express concern about this decision.

**11,000 UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS HAVE NO PLACE IN THE RECEPTION SYSTEM**

As of 31 December 2025, there were a total of 41,289 places available in the SAI system, of which 6,646 were made available for UFM. Although this represents a slight increase, it remains well below the needs of the UFM present on the national territory, which numbered around 17,000 at the end of 2025.

**IF THERE HAD NOT BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS IN IPMs, THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN DETAINEES WOULD HAVE DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEARS**

The reduction in funding for the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors has coincided with an increase in the number of unaccompanied foreign minors entering the criminal justice system and, in particular, juvenile prisons. During Antigone's visits to these institutions, we were able to verify that almost all of the young people from North Africa in particular are unaccompanied foreign minors. As of 31 December 2025, there were 572 minors and young adults in Italian IPMs; of these, 344 were aged between 14 and 17. There were 242 boys and girls of foreign origin. Of these, 191 (approximately 79%) came from North Africa, mainly Tunisia (74), Egypt (46) and Morocco (54).

## **NEVER SO MANY IN IPMs. THE NUMBERS OF A SYSTEM IN CRISIS**

### **BETWEEN 2023 AND 2024, THE NUMBER OF MINORS ADMITTED TO IPMs GREW BY 30.9%**

Between 2023, the year of the Caivano Decree, and 2024, the average daily number of young people detained in juvenile prisons rose from 425.1 to 556.3, an increase of 30.9%. Prison admissions increased by more than 10% between 2023 and 2024. Similarly, admissions to penal communities increased by 21% between 2023 and 2024. A look at the First Reception Centres (CPA) – which houses newly arrested children until their validation hearing and for a maximum of four days – confirms the situation: between 2023 and 2024, there was a 34.3% increase in admissions.

### **BETWEEN 2024 AND 2025, ONCE CAIVANO WAS FULLY OPERATIONAL, THE GROWTH IN ADMISSIONS DECREASED**

Between 2024 and 2025, when the average daily attendance was 587.8, the increase was 7.4%, less than a quarter of the previous one. Prison admissions decreased between 2024 and 2025. Admissions to communities remained stable between 2024 and 2025. There was a decrease in attendance at CPAs between 2024 and 2025.

### **THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF INMATES ADMITTED TO IPMs BETWEEN 2022 (THE YEAR BEFORE THE CAIVANO DECREE CAME INTO FORCE) AND 2025 IS 16.6%**

If we analyse the last two years and compare them to 2022 (the last year without the new regulations), we see that admissions to IPMs have grown by 16.6%, from 1,051 in 2022 to 1,258 in 2024 and 1,197 in 2025.

### **IPM ATTENDANCE INCREASES BY 50% BETWEEN 2022 AND 2025**

If we look at the data on admissions, we see that at the end of 2022, juvenile prisons housed 381 people, a number practically identical to that immediately before the pandemic (382 as of 31 December 2019), which led to a decline due to the emergency situation. At the end of 2024, there were 587 young prisoners, and at the end of 2025, there were 572, an increase of about 50% compared to the pre-Caivano period.

### **FLAWED DATA: MANY YOUNG PEOPLE END UP IN THE ADULT SYSTEM**

These figures are skewed by default, and would be much higher were it not for the significant increase in transfers to adult prisons of young people who have reached the age of majority while in IPMs after committing crimes as minors, a practice facilitated in a punitive manner by the Caivano Decree. We wanted to calculate the data for what we have called the 'Potential numbers', i.e. the numbers we would find in juvenile detention centres if the number of transfers to adult prisons had remained at pre-Caivano levels: at the end of 2024, the potential numbers would have been 671, while the number of young people in prison at the end of 2025



would have been 662. For the most difficult young people, who are often those who need the most psychological and social support, any educational path is abruptly interrupted and they are forgotten in the hellish circle of Italian prisons.

### **THE THRESHOLD CROSSED: AN IPM SECTION PLACED IN AN ADULT PRISON**

For the first time in history, a section of the juvenile criminal justice system has been placed within an adult prison. This happened in Bologna, at the Rocco D'Amato prison, known as Dozza, where from 24 March to 30 September 2025, a section was set up for young adults transferred there temporarily from various juvenile detention centres in Italy. A total of 52 young people passed through, all male, all over the age of 18, from IPMs in Bologna, Treviso, Milan, Florence, Palermo, Catanzaro and elsewhere. A symbolic threshold has been crossed, marking a significant shift from the principles that have historically distinguished juvenile justice from the ordinary prison system.

### **FIRST RECEPTION CENTRES ADMISSIONS INCREASE BY 45.5% BETWEEN 2022 AND 2025. THIS INCREASE OCCURRED ENTIRELY IN 2024**

While in 2022, the last year entirely without the Caivano Decree, there were 745 admissions to first reception centres, in 2024, the first year entirely under the new regulations, this figure rose to 1,144; in 2025, it will be 1,084, an increase of 45.5% compared to 2022.

### **AS OF 31 DECEMBER, THERE WERE 572 DETAINEES IN THE IPMs, INCLUDING 21 GIRLS. FOREIGNERS ACCOUNT FOR 42.3% OF THE TOTAL**

A look at the composition of the population detained in IPMs as of 31 December 2025 shows that out of 572 inmates, only 21 are girls, 6 of whom are foreign nationals. Overall, there are 242 foreign inmates, or 42.3% of the total.

### **FOREIGN MINORS AS A CRIMINAL PROBLEM? AN ARTIFICIALLY CREATED ALARM**

"There is a higher incidence of immigrants, especially illegal ones, in rapes and certain crimes. When you have nothing, you produce a degeneration that can lead anywhere. The fight against mass illegal immigration is part of this phenomenon." Giorgia Meloni, 25 November 2024. Before her, Carlo Nordio, 1 July 2024: "Our country's prison capacity has always been built and designed with a very significant minority of juvenile prisoners in mind. Then suddenly we found ourselves facing an invasion of minors who come mainly from other countries'. The general issue of 'foreign minors' and that of so-called *baby gangs* is dangerously mixed up, leading to misinformation, prejudice, sloganeering and stereotypical interpretations. Reality is always more complex than how it is represented in simplified form.

### **WHO COMMITS THE MOST SERIOUS CRIMES AMONG MINORS? ITALIANS. 63% OF PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND STALKING AND 86% OF PERPERTRATORS OF MURDERS ARE ITALIAN**

Among the most serious crimes against the person are undoubtedly sexual violence, stalking and murder. Let us look at the young people who entered IPMs in 2025. The number of young Italians who committed crimes of sexual violence and stalking (reasonably assuming that this

corresponds to the number of such crimes attributed to young people entering IPMs) totals 41, compared to 24 foreign adolescents, meaning that 63% of perpetrators of sexual violence and stalking are Italian and 37% are foreign. If we then look at the most serious crimes, of the 14 perpetrators of murder who entered IPMs (all males) in 2025, only 2 are foreign nationals, with the percentage of the latter falling to 14%. In other words, 86% of the murders attributed to young people who entered IPMs in 2025 were committed by Italians.

### **FOREIGNERS END UP IN JUVENILE DETENTION CENTRES FOR LESS SERIOUS CRIMES**

If we now look at the total number of crimes for which foreign youths were sent to IPMs in 2025, we see that they account for about 46% of the total crimes attributed to youths who entered prison. This means that foreigners end up in IPMs for less serious crimes than Italian youths. In general, crimes against persons attributed to Italian youths admitted to IPMs in 2025 account for 22% of the total crimes attributed to Italian youths, while the corresponding percentage for foreign youths is 17.9%. As regards less serious crimes against property, the percentages are reversed: they account for 42.6% of the total crimes attributed to Italian minors who entered prison and 60% of the total crimes attributed to foreign minors.

### **THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN MINORS IN THE CARE OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IS NOT GROWING AND IN ANY CASE ONLY ACCOUNTS FOR 0.52% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FOREIGN MINORS RESIDING IN ITALY**

Foreign minors under the care of the social services of the justice system, most of whom have committed minor offences, account for 0.52% of the total number of foreign minors residing in Italy. The absolute figures for 31 December 2025 show that the number of foreign children taken into care by the social services of the justice system was 5,524, while the total number of foreign minors residing in the country as of 1 January 2025 (latest census data) was 1,043,898. If we go back in time, the statistics more or less coincide. For example, in 2007 (when the centre-left was in power), there were 665,000 foreign minors, while 2,972 were taken into care by social services for committing crimes, i.e. 0.44%, which is close to the current figure. A social alarm has been created around the 'typical' image of foreign children committing serious crimes. However, there is no analytical evidence to support such a judgement.

### **LESS OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO FOREIGN CHILDREN IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM. IT IS EASIER TO USE CUSTODIAL MEASURES AGAINST THEM**

Foreign minors have fewer opportunities in the juvenile justice system. Some indicators clearly show that there is discrimination against foreign minors in terms of access to all alternative services to imprisonment in cases where criminal law has been broken. Looking at the total number of minors taken into care by the social services of the justice system in 2025, foreigners account for 23.14% of the total, while they rise to 41.69% of placements in communities, 41.98% of admissions to reception centres and up to 46.03% of admissions to IPMs. As the system moves towards more repressive and restrictive measures, the percentage of foreigners increases, despite the fact that, as seen above, the seriousness of the offences

they commit is not particularly significant.

**THE MOST REPRESENTED NATIONALITIES ARE TUNISIA, EGYPT AND MOROCCO. THERE IS ALSO A DECREASE IN NUMBERS BETWEEN 2024 AND 2025 FOR ROMANIANS AND BOSNIANS**

There is a clear decline in the number of boys and girls of the following nationalities entering detention centres between 2024 and 2025: Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Bosnia and Romania. All the xenophobic rhetoric is contradicted by the figures below. These figures show that there is no emergency involving foreign juvenile crime. There was no increase in the number of foreigners in IPMs between 2024 and 2025. Unfortunately, there is a massive and growing presence of unaccompanied foreign minors due to the reduction in reception places. As of 31 December 2025, foreigners accounted for 42.3% of the total, in line with the past. This is a snapshot and not a moving flow like that of arrivals. At the end of 2025, there were 74 Tunisians, 54 Moroccans and 46 Egyptians in IPMs. The increase in the number of Italian and foreign minors in IPMs had occurred earlier, starting at the end of 2022, following the entry into force of the Caivano Decree with all its restrictive measures. The average daily number of foreign detainees in IPMs in 2022 was 184, while the average number of Italian detainees was 198. In 2025, these figures rose to 276 and 312 respectively. The absolute numbers of Italians and foreigners are growing, but the percentage of foreigners in the average total is falling from 48.1% to 46.9%.

**THE GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN OF ITALIAN DETAINEES. CAMPANIA PRODUCES JUST UNDER A THIRD OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE DETAINED IN IPMs**

Looking at Italian prisoners, as of 30 June 2025, 30.9% were resident in Campania, 17.4% in Sicily, 10.4% in Lombardy, 7.4% in Puglia, 4.4% in Lazio and 4% in Calabria. All other regions were less represented.

**44 CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 14 AND 15 ARE IN IPMs. TOO YOUNG TO GO THROUGH SUCH A DRAMATIC EXPERIENCE**

The age group most represented in prison is 16-17 year olds, with 300 inmates, which, added to the 44 in the younger age group (i.e. 14-15 year olds), gives a total of 344 juvenile prisoners, equal to 60.1% of the total number of inmates. Among young adults, 175 belong to the 18-20 age group and 53 to the 21-24 age group. It should be noted that at the end of 2022, minors accounted for 51.4% of the total prison population, an increase due to the effects of the criminalisation of minors under the Caivano Decree, in particular with the expansion of the possibilities for the use of pre-trial detention in prison.

**ALMOST TWO-THIRDS OF PRISONERS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT**

64.9% of young prisoners, equal to 370, are in prison solely on the basis of a pre-trial detention order. A total of 173, or 30.2% of the total, are awaiting trial. If we look at minors alone, we find that 83.1% of all minors in detention are in pre-trial detention and 39.5% are awaiting trial.

**PRISONERS TREATED LIKE PARCELS. TRANSFERS INCREASED BY 147.9%**

### **BETWEEN 2022 AND 2024**

Between 2022 and 2024, the number of transfers between institutions increased by 147.9%. Transfers prevent prisoners from putting down roots in the local area and any prospect of social reintegration. Prisoners considered difficult should be taken care of by the integrated services system and not sent spinning around Italy like tops.

### **THE BUDGET FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE DECREASES BY 1.07% DESPITE AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PRISONERS AND STAFF**

The investment planned for 2025 for the Department of Juvenile and Community Justice - amounting to €408,098,359, or 3.7% of the total funds that were allocated to the Ministry of Justice - saw a reduction compared to the previous year (-4.5%). Various expenditure items were reduced, first and foremost those relating to reintegration policies and staff welfare. The only items to increase were those relating to prison police personnel and the construction of new infrastructure and upgrading and renovation, in line with the project to open new prison facilities. The coming years will see a continuation of this trend. The total allocation for 2026 of funds earmarked for the Department has in fact undergone a further decrease of 1.07%, reaching €403,741,586 (3.54% of the total budget for Justice), a decrease that is confirmed for 2027 (€403,689,618) and 2028 (€401,376,709). Between 2026 and 2027, only the item relating to gross fixed investments and land purchases will increase, while the funds allocated for activities to be carried out in juvenile prisons and for staff will decrease.

### **FUNDS DECREASE, YET THE NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN THE CARE OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM INCREASES BY ABOUT 3,000**

It is worrying to see that the total number of boys and girls in the care of the juvenile justice system in December 2022 was 13,658, while at the end of 2024 it will reach 14,866 and at the end of 2025 as many as 17,027. This represents an increase of around 25% in the overall juvenile criminal justice system. The number of boys and girls in communities, in alternative or substitute measures, on probation, is growing. Every possible space available to the system is filled and swallowed up by the thirst for criminal justice.

### **THERE ARE 1,214 BOYS AND GIRLS IN COMMUNITIES, OF WHICH ONLY 18 ARE HOSTED BY PUBLIC MINISTERIAL ONES. THERE ARE 637 PRIVATE COMMUNITIES AND ONLY 3 MINISTERIAL COMMUNITIES. EVERY COMMUNITY IS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER. EVERY MEASURE IS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER**

The network of communities relies almost exclusively on private facilities. As of 30 June 2025, only 19 out of 1,214 young people were housed in ministerial communities. Private communities are classified according to a wide variety of types. The majority of young people, 79.3%, were housed in socio-educational communities. 3.9% lived in facilities classified as therapeutic communities for drug addicts and alcoholics, a percentage substantially similar to that of young people living in psychiatric therapeutic communities. This was followed by the percentages of young people who were housed in highly autonomous accommodation, educational communities with dual diagnosis (drug addiction or alcoholism and psychiatric disorders), socio-educational communities for minors with

psychiatric problems, therapeutic communities for dual diagnosis, family communities, emergency accommodation and socio-educational communities for drug addicts and alcoholics. As they are almost exclusively private facilities affiliated with the Ministry of Justice, each community differs from the other in several respects, primarily in terms of available resources. Compared to 637 private communities, there are only three ministerial ones, in Bologna, Catanzaro and Reggio Calabria. As of 31 December 2025, of the 1,258 minors and young adults placed in communities, only 18 were in the three public facilities. Of these, 14 were in Catanzaro and 4 in Reggio Calabria. None were in Bologna.

### **WHEN DOES PLACEMENT IN A COMMUNITY OCCUR? IN 64% OF CASES, AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE**

Placement in a community can take place in the context of various criminal measures. Among these, the vast majority are placements in communities as a precautionary measure, as provided for in Article 22 of Presidential Decree 448/1988. This is a specific tool of the juvenile justice system, designed to combine security requirements with educational programmes in contexts more suited to minors. Of all the boys and girls who entered communities in 2025, 64% did so as a precautionary measure. This is followed by 14.3% who entered communities to mitigate a detention measure in IPM (juvenile detention centres) and 12.5% who entered for a probation project. Admissions to carry out alternative measures to detention, i.e. during the sentence enforcement phase, accounted for only 2.8% of the total, sometimes arranged in cases where staying at home was hindered by fragile family relationships or the absence of a home.

### **TOO OFTEN, THE BOY IS SENT BY THE COMMUNITY TO THE IPM FOR A NON-TEMPORARY PUNISHMENT. IN AS MANY AS 216 CASES, THIS HAPPENED THROUGHOUT 2025**

The main change compared to the past is the drastic reduction in admissions to the community at the end of a period of aggravation in IPM, i.e. the measure whereby, in the event of a violation of certain rules in the community, a transfer to prison for a period of one month could be ordered, at the end of which a return to the residential facility was envisaged. The Caivano Decree abolished the time limit, theoretically allowing for longer periods of aggravation in IPM. This change has been interpreted largely as a complete abolition of temporary aggravation in favour of definitive transformations of the community measure into admission to IPM. In 2022 and 2023, before the Caivano Decree, the conclusion of an aggravation measure accounted for about 13% of the reasons for admission to community facilities. After Caivano, we are seeing a significant drop, reaching 6% in 2024 and 2.5% in 2025. While Antigone has always criticised the measure of aggravation as a tool for responding to breaches of community rules, providing for transfer to prison – always traumatic for young people and burdensome for IPMs – it did not imagine that the solution identified by the Government could be even more damaging, effectively resulting in an increase in prison populations. Data on admissions to IPMs confirm this trend. In 2022, there were 249 admissions to IPMs due to a temporary aggravation of the community measure, while there were 40 due to actual transformation. In 2025, there is a clear reversal: admissions to IPMs due

to aggravation are 167, while those due to transformation of the measure are 216. Finally, in other cases - statistically insignificant - placement in the community took place following arrest, detention or escort (34 cases in 2025), for the execution of the security measure referred to in Article 36 of Presidential Decree 448/88 (25 cases) and following the aggravation of precautionary measures of prescriptions and house arrest (11 cases in total).

### **CRIMES COMMITTED BY MINORS INCARCERATED IN IPMs: HALF INVOLVE CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY. LESS THAN A FIFTH ARE INCARCERATED FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON**

In conclusion, a look at the crimes attributed to young people who passed through IPMs in 2025 tells us that there were 2,302 crimes, or an average of almost two crimes (1.9) for each person admitted to prison. Half of these crimes are property crimes, while 20.8% are crimes against the person, 10.8% are drug offences, and 4.6% are weapons offences.

### **IN COMMUNITIES AND AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CARE OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM, CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY ARE ALWAYS PREVAILING**

Among the crimes attributed to those who entered the community during the year (an average of 1.6 per person), property crimes accounted for 45.3% of the total, crimes against the person for 21.2%, drug-related crimes for 14.5% and weapons-related crimes for 1.6%. Finally, among the crimes attributed to all boys and girls who were in the care of the juvenile justice system in 2025 (an average of 2.7 per person), 40.2% were crimes against property, 34.11% against the person, 9.4% related to drugs, and 1.1% related to weapons.

### **THE OVER-REPRESENTATION OF BOYS WHO COMMIT CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY IN IPMs IS A SIGN OF A SYSTEM THAT AFFECTS THE MOST VULNERABLE THE MOST**

It is surprising that the most serious crimes against individuals are less prevalent in prisons than in the community, and even less prevalent in the community than among young people in general. Conversely, less serious crimes against property show the opposite trend. Since imprisonment is a measure that should be reserved for the most serious cases, one would expect to find a higher concentration of such crimes in prisons. This is an indication of how often the system selects on the basis of life paths rather than the seriousness of behaviour. Young people without family support who live on the streets and commit petty crimes are more likely to end up in prison than one might expect.

### **THE NUMBERS OF EXTERNAL AND NON-PRISON CRIMINAL ENFORCEMENT. 17,027 BOYS AND GIRLS TAKEN INTO CARE BY THE JUVENILE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

As of 31 December 2025, there were 17,027 minors and young adults in the juvenile justice system. In December 2022, there were 13,658. The statistics therefore show an overall increase of 25% in just three years. In 2025, the Social Services Offices for Minors (USSM) took charge of a total of 23,862 minors and young adults, of whom 2,190 were girls (9.2%). In 2024, 22,212 people were taken into care, in 2023 there were 21,824, and in 2022 21,551. Over the last three

years, there has been an increase of almost 11%. The further back in time we go, the greater the increase. Compared to ten years ago, the increase is 16.2%. Compared to fifteen years ago, it is 29.9%.

### **PROFILE OF THE MINOR TAKEN INTO CARE BY THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Analysing the main characteristics of the users taken on in 2025, we see that around half, 49.5%, are boys and girls aged between 16 and 17. This is followed by young adults between the ages of 18 and 24, accounting for 26% of the total. The smallest proportion is made up of minors between the ages of 14 and 15, representing 23.4%. During the year, the USSMs also took charge of 256 minors under the age of 14, presumably for social investigation, protection and socio-educational support. In terms of nationality, 23.2% of the boys and girls were of foreign origin. Considering the different areas of origin, the highest percentage is represented by North African countries, from which approximately 58% of foreigners in the juvenile justice system in 2025 originate. Breaking down the data by gender, the main countries of origin for boys are Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, while for girls they are Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Morocco.

### **3,273 MINORS PLACED ON PROBATION, EQUAL TO 19.2% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN TAKEN INTO CARE BY THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Among the measures in the area of external juvenile criminal justice, probation (Map) - provided for in Article 28 of Presidential Decree 448/88 - remains the main area of intervention for social services. Of the 17,027 minors and young adults in the care of the USSM as of 31 December 2025, 19.2% (3,273) were undergoing probation. Probation can be carried out in a residential community, but in the vast majority of cases (82% in 2025) requires the boy or girl to remain at home. Regardless of where they live, probation involves the suspension of criminal proceedings and the child being placed in the care of the Justice Services to carry out an educational programme. The contents of the programme vary, but generally include school or work obligations, social activities, volunteering and restorative justice actions. If the programme is completed successfully, at the end of the probation period the offence is considered expunged, with no criminal consequences for the minor.

### **PROBATION MEASURES ARE INCREASING OVER TIME. AS MANY AS 85.5% OF CASES HAVE HAD A POSITIVE OUTCOME**

Over the years, there has been an increasing use of this measure by the judicial authorities. In 2024, the last year for which we have complete data, 4,799 measures were recorded, the highest figure in the historical series, with an increase of 6.5% compared to the previous year. In 2024, the percentage of positive outcomes was 85.5%, in line with previous years. The high success rate recorded over time demonstrates the effectiveness of the measure, which focuses on creating programmes that are as individualised as possible, designed according to the specific needs of each minor and actively involving the local community. The private social sector is the main source of organisations collaborating on probation projects, taking in a large percentage of minors for social and voluntary activities, followed by local councils, local health

authorities and schools.

### **THE CAIVANO DECREE HAS ALSO HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON PROBATION**

Intentional personal injury and robbery are the offences committed by minors for which the judicial authorities most frequently ordered the suspension of proceedings and probation in 2024, followed by offences against drug laws and theft. Other offences include violence, resisting and insulting a public official, damage to property and threats. The Caivano Decree has had a significant impact on probation in juvenile criminal proceedings, introducing an automatic preclusion from access to this benefit in relation to certain particularly serious offences (such as aggravated murder, aggravated sexual assault and aggravated robbery). The reform has thus marked a reduction in the discretion of juvenile judges, who can no longer assess the suitability of rehabilitation programmes for specific cases on a case-by-case basis. This legislative choice has been widely criticised, as it conflicts with the principles of individualised treatment and rehabilitation that characterise juvenile criminal law. The Constitutional Court, in its ruling no. 8 of 4 February 2025, intervened at least to exclude the retroactive application of the new regulations, reaffirming the central importance of safeguarding minors.

### **THE REMAINING ALTERNATIVE MEASURES CONCERN 976 BOYS AND GIRLS SUBJECT TO PRESCRIPTIONS, 637 IN NON-DETENTIVE COMMUNITY MEASURES, 116 IN SECURITY MEASURES, AND 48 IN SUBSTITUTE SENTENCES**

With numbers significantly lower than probation, the remaining non-custodial measures issued by the judicial authorities consist of various types of criminal measures. In order of numerical importance, in the 2025 flow data, non-custodial precautionary measures such as prescriptions and house arrest are in first place, with 976 young people involved. These are followed by community-based criminal measures as an alternative to detention, with 637 applications. Finally, there are 116 boys and girls subject to a security measure, provided for minors who are not criminally responsible, in the form of probation or placement in a community. The external criminal measures are completed by sanctions and alternative penalties. The latter, introduced by the Cartabia Reform of the criminal trial (Legislative Decree No. 150 of 10 October 2022), provide that the judge, at the time of sentencing, may replace a prison sentence of no more than four years with semi-liberty or house arrest; a prison sentence of no more than three years with community service and a prison sentence of up to twelve months with a financial penalty. During 2025, 37 young people were taken into care by the USSM for alternative sentences. During the same period, 11 young people served an alternative sentence, which was eliminated by the Cartabia reform due to its limited use, but is evidently still in force for some convictions.

### **SCHOOL IN IPMs**

The IPMs collaborate with local schools to guarantee young detainees the right to education,



communicating their educational needs to the Provincial Adult Education Centre (CPIA) in the area and to secondary schools. All IPMs offer primary school, literacy and lower secondary school courses, while only some offer upper secondary school courses. In the 2024/2025 school year, 308 students enrolled in literacy courses, 234 in first-level courses and 195 in second-level courses. As for secondary school, 65 minors attended first-level courses, while 30 attended second-level courses. A total of 46 students followed courses aimed at obtaining a secondary school diploma. Three young people were enrolled in university courses.

### **POOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

Professional and work-related activities are very limited. Often, obstacles arise that are beyond the control of individual institutions, such as the activation of professional courses provided at regional level, which are only available in some IPMs. In the year 2024/2025, 42 young people throughout Italy were enrolled in professional courses and workshops. None of the four Sicilian institutions has offered any vocational training courses for over a decade. The same is true in Puglia. In Bari, the Region has not offered any vocational courses for about seven years. To compensate for this lack, individual institutions try to make do by offering training activities funded by the Department or private entities, which, however, do not issue official certifications and are therefore difficult to use once outside the institution.

### **THE USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS ON THE RISE**

The *Altreconomia* investigation describes the increase and widespread use of psychotropic drugs. At the Beccaria prison in Milan, the scene of alleged violence and abuse, the use of antipsychotics and benzodiazepines increased by 110% in five years (2020-2024). In 2023, the use of these drugs was 8.3 times higher than in Bologna and 3.3 times higher than in Florence, a gap that narrowed in 2024 (4.8 and 2.4 respectively) only because of the sharp increase in consumption in the other two cities. The refrain of mental fragility makes the corridors of San Vittore and Beccaria seem like a single place. As does the sound of batons. Because another point of contact between the two worlds, never experienced before, seems to be violence: the alleged violence perpetrated on at least 33 young prisoners between 2021 and 2024, which the Milan Public Prosecutor's Office is trying to shed light on, with the number of suspects rising to 51 at the end of October, including officers, commanders, directors and doctors. Overcrowding, psychotropic drugs and violence are a bad combination.

### **HIGH-INTENSITY THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES: THE ASYLUM-LIKE LOGIC OF SEGREGATION**

The experimental therapeutic communities for minors with mental health issues opened in Lombardy in March 2025 seem to be very popular with the executive. In fact, at the National Conference on Addiction convened by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in early November 2025, the government proposed the opening of similar facilities to relieve the prison system of the most problematic adult inmates. This is despite serious doubts about the outcomes of the experiment itself. In ten months of operation, the difficulty of managing young people in this way has become apparent. Tension and violent behaviour within the communities seem to be a constant feature of these places. In Casteggio, in the province of Pavia, there were even agents from a private security company. These 'vigilantes' are still

active in the facility in Botticino, in the province of Brescia. Grouping all the vulnerable individuals together in a single facility, creating a community of problematic young people as opposed to a community of normal young people, has a clear stigmatising effect that can only have a negative impact on the young person's life. Furthermore, as experts point out, it prevents the possibility of activating mechanisms of solidarity and mutual support that are the basis of community life. The problems of young people are solved by keeping them within the community, not by isolating and segregating them. However, two elements are already worth highlighting today: on the one hand, the proliferation, as mentioned, of facilities where 'those nobody wants' are placed, including minors and young adults; on the other hand, the presence among the candidates who initially applied to manage one of the Lombardy communities of a cooperative that in the past also managed a Centre for Permanent Repatriation (CPR). A circle seems to have already closed on a certain idea of care at the basis of social intervention.

### **PRISON STAFF WITHIN THE IPMs**

The organisation of the staff working within the Department of Juvenile and Community Justice is in line with the complexity that characterises the neighbouring Department of Prison Administration. An organisation which, as with adult detention facilities, is characterised by a cross-cutting fragmentation.

### **THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH DIRECTORS TO MEET THE NEEDS**

As at 31 December 2025, the total number of IPM directors and external criminal enforcement office managers (separate data are not available) was 40 (down from 2024, when there were 44 managers in service as at 31 December, including one magistrate). The planned staffing level was 52, a difference of 12. However, we know that as of 30 June 2025, there were seven managers on duty from other administrations, which is critical due to the lack of specific training for the juvenile sector. It should be noted that as of 31 December 2022, there were only 9 managers in total. During 2023, 37 successful candidates from competitions held between 2020 and 2023 took up their posts. Of the specific competition held in 2022 for IPM managers, which saw the appointment of five individuals, only one director remains in their original position two years later.

### **IN 12 IPM, NO MANAGERIAL POSITION IN THE STAFFING**

The staffing level envisaged exclusively for IPM prison managers is only 7, as highlighted in the Ministry's report on the administration of justice. In the remaining 12 IPMs, there is no managerial position in the staffing structure, which seriously compromises the proper functioning of the institution. In the past, IPMs have been managed by officials from other areas appointed on the basis of seniority or qualifications. Despite the incompatibility of the roles, many of the positions or regencies have been and are still held by USSM managers or DAP prison career managers.

### **179 EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS FOR 572 INMATES**

Educational professionals, formerly known as educators, play a central role in the educational

path of young prisoners, performing a variety of tasks. In fact, these officers coordinate the scientific observation of minors and draw up individualised educational plans, plan and monitor school, work and treatment activities, acting as an essential link between young people, the multidisciplinary team and external youth services to facilitate reintegration. According to data provided by the DGCM in mid-2025, the total number of educators working in IPMs is 179 (an increase of 58 compared to 2022, when there were 121), compared to the 158 planned in the workforce (a figure that will be updated to include the new institutes in L'Aquila, Rovigo and Lecce). The national average number of young prisoners per officer is 3.2, a slight increase compared to 2022 when there were 3.14 prisoners per educator. The institutions with the lowest prisoner-officer ratio are the IPM in Cagliari and the IPM in Caltanissetta, with 2 young prisoners per officer (6 officers for 12 prisoners in the former, 5 educators for 10 prisoners in the latter). The IPMs with the highest ratios are: the IPM in Pontremoli, with 6 inmates per officer, i.e. 12 inmates per 2 educators, and the IPM in Turin, with 4.7 inmates per officer, i.e. 74 inmates per 11 educators.

### **THE PRISON POLICE FORCE NUMBERS 1,529 OFFICERS, OF WHOM ONLY 979 ARE EMPLOYED IN IPMs AND CPAs, I.E. ON THE FRONT LINE**

The Prison Police, assigned to the Department of Juvenile and Community Justice, and specifically to IPMs, performs functions which, while maintaining their focus on ensuring order and security, should be inseparably integrated with the educational purpose at the heart of the juvenile system. Unfortunately, the use of uniforms has been reinstated in recent years, creating a divisive barrier with users and redefining the role in terms of traditional police functions. In July 2025, the Prison Police Corps operating in the various services and offices of the Department of Juvenile Justice had a staff of 1,529, compared to a planned staffing level of 1,615 (1,010 for IPMs alone). There was therefore a shortfall of 86% of staff. Of these, 1,053 worked in juvenile services, 410 in the USSMs and 66 in the central administration. As of 31 July 2025, based on available data, the ratio between all prison police personnel assigned to IPMs and First Reception Centres (CPA) and the number of inmates, including those held in CPAs, is 979 operational officers for 560 inmates: one inmate for every 1.7 officers. The institutions with the lowest ratio of officers to inmates are: the IPM in Catania, where there are 46 officers for 39 inmates, including 2 in CPA, with a ratio of 1.17 officers per inmate, and the IPM in Naples, where there are 83 officers for 79 inmates, including 5 in CPA, with a ratio of 1.05 officers per inmate. The highest ratios are recorded in Pontremoli with 3.5 officers per prisoner, 12 prisoners for 42 officers, and in Caltanissetta, where the ratio is 3.75, 30 officers for 8 prisoners.

## **DIRECT OBSERVATION BY ANTIGONE PRISON BY PRISON**

### **THERE ARE NOW 19 IPMs OPEN AND OPERATIONAL**

Following the opening of two new IPMs in Lecce and L'Aquila, there are now 19 juvenile prisons in Italy. The most crowded are the one in Nisida, which housed 74 young people as of 31 December 2025, and the one in Milan named after Cesare Beccaria, which housed 72 and was severely overcrowded. Next, in terms of number of inmates, are the IPM in Rome (the only one with a female section, in addition to the IPM in Pontremoli, which is entirely for girls) and the one in Turin.

### **THE TWO NEW INSTITUTIONS IN L'AQUILA AND LECCE ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES, AND TWO MORE IPMs ARE EXPECTED TO OPEN: ROVIGO AND SANTA MARIA CAPUA VETERE**

The one in Rovigo, which became operational on 24 February 2026, and the one planned for Santa Maria Capua Vetere. The current government's only strategy seems to be to increase the number of detention centres.

### **FROM A IN AIROLA TO T IN TREVISO. A JOURNEY THROUGH THE IPMs**

Antigone has visited all IPMs over the last two years, some of them several times. If we were to identify a common trend from these visits, we could say that the system experienced its most tragic moment in 2024, as a result of overcrowding that led to enormous increases in tension within the institutions. The management remains committed to keeping internal activities alive. No institution has complied with the prison law that provides for extended visits with family members. Disciplinary isolation is used too often and should be banned as it is harmful.

### **AIROLA: SCHOOL FOR EVERYONE**

It is easily accessible by public transport. Funding from the PNRR fund has been allocated to carry out works worth €18 million. At the time of the visit, there were 24 young prisoners, 10 of whom were adults. The reduction in the prison population has fostered more relaxed relations between the young people and the educational and prison police staff. The range of activities on offer is wide and varied, although the conditions of the facility do not allow access to many spaces. All the young people present are enrolled in school courses. A new second-level course has recently been launched with the Hotel Management School and an agreement has been signed for two vocational courses: one in mechatronics and one in creative writing. One young person is enrolled in the Faculty of Economics and Commerce. In the field of sport, there is a project that includes both practice of various sports (football, volleyball, gym) and training of assistant coaches.

### **BARI (FORNELLI): AT THE THEATRE WITH KISMET**



The institute is located within the city. The cells are spacious, well lit and have large windows with screens. There are two boys in each cell, and each has more than 3 square metres of space. The TVs are flat screen with Sky connection (TV, cinema, sports and entertainment). Some cells in the first section accommodate up to four boys, but there are no bunk beds or mattresses on the floor. For sports, there are football pitches and a well-equipped gym. The cells are opened at 7 a.m., breakfast is at 8 a.m., and school starts at 9 a.m. and continues until 12.30 p.m. This is followed by lunch in the refectory, after which the children return to their cells. Activities resume at 2.30 p.m. At 4:00 p.m., there is outdoor time. The children return to their cells at 7:30 p.m. At 11:00 p.m. (the time seems to be flexible), it is time for bed. The staff report that they work as a team, preferring to avoid imposing sanctions. There are many activities, including theatre in the 'Per Aspera ad astra' workshop with the city's historic Kismet theatre.

### **BOLOGNA (PRATELLO): A PREVIOUS CASE. THE TEMPORARY OPENING OF A SECTION IN THE ADULT PRISON**

2025 was a year of transition for the Prateello IPM. Among the factors that had a negative impact was the opening of a juvenile section at the city's adult prison, which remained active for six months, from 24 March to 30 September, a practice that conflicts with a system that should treat minors with great care and look only to their best interests. In the second half of 2025 alone, there were 32 incidents of self-harm, 29 incidents of fights between inmates and 5 incidents of hunger strikes. It was not possible to find detailed information on how the young people are disciplined within the institution. However, transfers to other institutions, for minors or adults, seem to be used with some frequency. Various activities are organised. After our visit, we had to report very serious problems in terms of hygiene and sanitation.

### **CAGLIARI: ONCE A MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON. STRUCTURALLY UNSUITABLE FOR CHILDREN**

The Cagliari Institute is housed in a building designed as a maximum security prison, which is therefore unsuitable for accommodating young people. At the time of the visit, there were nine young people present, five of whom were Italian and four foreign. Of the nine young people present, six were enrolled in school courses, three were attending a literacy course and three were in the upper two years of secondary school. There is a small gym with equipment and a larger gym with five-a-side football goals. Outside, there is a football pitch, a five-a-side football pitch and a pitch used for both basketball and tennis. The green space for visits with family members has two gazebos and a wooden walkway. At the time of the visit, the library was unusable, but no renovation work was planned. For serious offences, isolation is imposed as a punishment.

### **CALTANISSETTA: THE SMALLEST IN ITALY**

It has a capacity of 12 places, reduced to 8 at the time of the visit due to one room being closed because it was unusable. There is a single detention section. Thanks to the small size of the institute in general, the atmosphere is calm and it is noted that moments of tension are rare. The main disciplinary response is through restorative justice actions. At the institution, it is possible to attend literacy courses, middle school and the two-year preparatory course for high



school. Foreign children make video calls, while Italian children make both video calls and face-to-face visits. Telephone calls are often authorised, in addition to those provided for by law.

**CATANIA: THE EXTERNAL COMMUNITY TAKES CHARGE OF SPORT. THE CRITICAL ISSUES ARE RELATED TO UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS**

It has a maximum capacity of 52 places. The average attendance for the period is 45, of which about two-thirds are Italian. A project called Drive is operational in collaboration with a driving school, which has provided a tutor and materials for face-to-face and remote lessons. In the 2024/2025 school year, 26 students attended the literacy course, 15 attended the middle school course and 15 attended the two-year high school course. One young man is attending the first year of the Faculty of Education and works at a retail chain store, and another is attending the second year of the Aeronautical Institute of Catania. There are many sports activities, thanks to funding from external projects (football, gym, volleyball, badminton, basketball). The main critical issues concern the presence of unaccompanied foreign minors who have been removed from other institutions mainly for security reasons and who have complex developmental needs linked to their traumatic experiences during their journey to our country and to the abuse of drugs and medicines.

**CATANZARO: TOO OFTEN USED TO HOST CHILDREN ARRIVING FROM OVERCROWDED INSTITUTIONS IN THE NORTH. FOUR CHILDREN WORK OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTION, ONE OF THEM AT MCDONALD'S**

The institution receives a constant flow of young people from various institutions in Italy, mainly in the north, following displacement measures. There has also been an increase in cases of mental distress, often linked to a history of drug addiction. It is easily accessible by public transport. Its capacity is reported to be at a maximum of 35 places spread over two floors. The young people are responsible for cleaning the cells themselves. Among the courses available at the time of the visit were a pizza-making workshop and a tattoo workshop. Most of the young people carry out work within the prison, including cleaning, food transport, gardening and building maintenance. At the time of the visit, four young people were working outside the prison. One of them worked at McDonald's.

**FLORENCE (MEUCCI): FREQUENT ACTS OF SELF-HARM. DISCIPLINARY ISOLATION IS NOT USED. SCHOOL YES, BUT NOT FOR EVERYONE**

It is located a short distance from Santa Maria Novella station. The library is rather untidy. The basketball and volleyball courts are unusable due to renovation work. There is a large football pitch. There are three classrooms, a music room, an art room and a multi-purpose room. The gym is quite large and well equipped. The church is unusable. At the time of the visit, the IPM housed 22 young people, who had numbered 29 just 15 days earlier, out of a regulatory capacity of 17 places. Disciplinary isolation is not applied. There are young people who are drug addicts and acts of self-harm are frequent. Seven to eight young people are involved in school courses. Vocational training is not guaranteed. At the time of the visit, a bartending workshop had just ended, an ice cream-making workshop was about to end, and a bread-making workshop was scheduled to start. The theatre workshop was on hold.

**L'AQUILA: OPENED IN OCTOBER 2025 AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE. SERIOUS LACK OF SPACE. AS EVERYWHERE ELSE, NO SPACE FOR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS**

The accelerated opening meant that the institute became operational despite many areas still undergoing renovation and others being unusable because they did not meet safety criteria. This resulted in a serious shortage of space for outdoor activities. At the time of the visit, there were 12 young people present, many of whom came from the Abruzzo region. The rooms are in good condition, clearly the result of the recent overall renovation, and are all equipped with small desks, wardrobes and bedside tables. The bathrooms are equipped with a shower, sink and toilet. The area designated for walks was still undergoing renovation. An Arabic-speaking mediator operates thanks to Arci and a CGIL help desk for issues related to residence permits. The recent opening has not yet allowed for the launch of structured religious programmes. The healthcare staff consists of about 6-7 doctors who are present throughout the week, including Saturdays and Sundays, for 12 hours a day. The atmosphere is peaceful, with some difficulties related to the presence of two young people with mental health issues. Only primary and secondary school courses are available. At the time of the visit, there were no sports activities. The Institute has a large football pitch that still needs to be made safe and is therefore unused. I am awaiting authorisation to identify a space for the gym. Contact with family members takes place in two shifts on Wednesdays and Fridays, plus one Saturday per month, usually the first. No special spaces have been provided for either extended or intimate visits.

**LECCE: IT WAS INAUGURATED ON 20 NOVEMBER 2025. IT IS STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS, WITH WATER LEAKS IN THE CELLS. HOWEVER, THE AREA IS LIVELY**

At the time of the visit, the Institute was still empty except for the staff. The first arrival was on 15 December 2025, when a boy from the IPM in Catania but originally from Puglia was transferred there. The regulatory capacity is 27 places. The Institute still looks like a construction site. The structure, owned by the DAP, has been granted on loan for use to the Department of Juvenile Justice for only 18 months. The Institute was initially intended to house inmates on day release from the nearby adult prison, but its purpose was then changed. The ground floor houses a series of rooms dedicated to treatment, training, education and contact with the outside world. Numerous contacts have been made with local organisations in order to provide the young people with cultural, sporting and recreational activities. Some cells have leaks, which are also found on the ground floor near an entrance. There is a shortage of rooms for socialising and there are no spaces for extended visits with family members, as provided for by the juvenile prison system.

**MILAN (BECCARIA): ONE OF THE MOST OVERCROWDED INSTITUTIONS IN**



## **THE COUNTRY. A DIFFICULT, AT TIMES TRAGIC, HISTORY**

With a total of 72 inmates, Beccaria is one of the most crowded institutions in the country, second only to Nisida. But what is striking is not only the absolute number, but also the age composition. The vast majority of those present in Milan are concentrated in the 16-17 age group (46 boys), while the number of younger children (5 between 14 and 15 years old) and young adults (21 in total, of whom 19 are between 18 and 20 years old and 2 between 21 and 24) is relatively small. It should be noted that, not only because of overcrowding, there is no place to separate the accommodation of adolescents from that of young adults, and this does not help either the young people or the staff in the rehabilitation process. It is an institution highly specialised in the detention of adolescents of school age, i.e. in the most delicate phase from an evolutionary, educational and relational point of view, with a constant presence of unaccompanied foreign minors, who represent two-thirds of the population. Milan thus appears to be a veritable criminal hub. A combined reading of the quantitative data and the qualitative conditions already documented allows us to affirm that Milan is an emblematic case of the pathological functioning of the juvenile penal system. To cope with the shortage of places, in almost all sections the detention cells had mattresses on the floor. Some cells in unusable sections continued to be used. All common rooms are empty and inhospitable. Most of the furniture has been removed to prevent vandalism. The beds are fixed to the floor. When additional beds are needed, mattresses are placed on the floor, as mobile beds are considered potential weapons. The detention sections have been cyclically damaged. During our visits, we observed that some destroyed sections are kept as reserve spaces for various forms of isolation. As for the ordinary sections, the only common areas are a canteen and a room with a sofa for phone calls. Several boys reported a lack of toilet paper and towels. The trial for the torture of boys has marked the recent history of the Institute.

## **NAPLES (NISIDA): MANY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE HISTORICAL ENHANCEMENT OF THE BUILDING BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE**

The maximum capacity is 74 places, which has been slightly reduced due to ongoing works and the unusability of some spaces. At the time of the visit, there were 78 young people present, a number never recorded before, confirming the worrying trend of overcrowding. The facility is divided into three departments with a treatment progression mechanism. The conditions of the disciplinary isolation cells are not good: although the interiors had just been repainted, there was a total lack of furniture. The common areas for activities, on the other hand, are in excellent condition. Within the sections, there are social rooms of about 20 square metres, equipped with table football and furnishings. The institute has a library, classrooms dedicated exclusively to school and training, spaces for craft workshops and spaces for manufacturing. In terms of sports, the Institute has one volleyball court, one football pitch and two basketball courts, which are also used for activities involving external organisations. In 2024, the educational area had 11 educators, a number that almost doubled in 2025. The presence of a cultural mediator is guaranteed. Approximately 80 volunteers access the institute each year. School activities include literacy courses for uneducated foreign children, first-level courses for obtaining a middle school diploma and the acquisition of subsequent training credits. The link with the local area is very strong, with the involvement of foundations, cooperatives and associations that manage a wide range of activities. On a psycho-educational level, there is a



workshop on managing violent behaviour (6 young people), a workshop on caring for emotional and parental relationships (6 young people) and a workshop on recovery from addiction (10 young people). There are also occupational therapy activities aimed at achieving autonomy in daily life (6-8 young people) and social regeneration activities – cleaning and recycling in common areas (15 young people). Interviews with family members can be held on Saturdays, as is appropriate.

**PALERMO (MALASPINA): RAP AS A FORM OF LIBERATION AND EMANCIPATION. THERE IS A SWIMMING POOL BUT IT IS NOT USED. THE BISCUIT FACTORY IS HISTORIC. CRITICAL INCIDENTS INCREASE WITH OVERCROWDING**

It is located in a residential area. The interior, which is quite cramped in some parts, includes some common areas as well as rooms with one, two or three beds. There were 26 young people, including 10 foreigners, all unaccompanied foreign minors from the north. By the end of 2024, the number of young people had risen to 35. The institute has a library, a music room, a multipurpose room with a large screen used for film forums, two recreation rooms (one of which is equipped with table football and table tennis), a barber's room and three classrooms. There is also a kitchen used as a biscuit factory. Two young people currently work in the biscuit factory. There is an air-conditioned gym which the young people can access twice a week on a rota basis. The young people also enthusiastically attend a rap music workshop. The institute has a five-a-side football pitch and an outdoor swimming pool, which is not in use this year. There are two psychologists, working 38 and 27 hours per week respectively. The staff report that the increase in critical events coincided with the increase in attendance; when the institute was overcrowded, there was approximately one fire per week.

**PONTREMOLI: THE ONLY ALL-GIRLS SCHOOL IN ITALY**

It houses girls from all northern regions. There were nine girls at the time of the visit. Two are of legal age and the youngest is 14. All are Italian nationals except for one girl who is Moroccan. It is reported that almost no treatment is administered except at very low levels (for example, none are drug addicts and methadone has been administered only a couple of times in the last year). On this point, it is important to highlight a 2023 resolution by the Tuscany Region which provides for a reduction in the administration of psychotropic drugs. In 2024, a woman gave birth in prison without the support of adequate medical staff. With regard to schooling, there is a single class and there are girls from middle school and the first year of high school who follow parallel courses with the teachers. Compared to the past, there seems to be a more open atmosphere and a daily schedule full of activities. Sports activities (boxing, football, karate, yoga, gym and calisthenics), cultural and recreational activities (rap workshop, music listening, emotional education, guitar course, narrative writing) are carried out. The alarm clock is set for 7.30 a.m.; morning activities last until 12.30 p.m. From 12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m., there is a so-called 'closure', during which the girls remain inside their cells. Activities then continue until 6.30 p.m., followed by dinner and, finally, evening therapy.

**POTENZA: BRIGHT AND SPACIOUS ROOMS. GYM CLOSED AT THE TIME OF**



### **THE VISIT, AS WAS THE BAKERY LABORATORY**

It is easily accessible by public transport. The facility is in good condition both externally and internally, with clean, bright bedrooms equipped with en-suite bathrooms. The Institute acts as a buffer zone with respect to neighbouring regions, mainly welcoming young people who have been transferred for reasons of treatment opportunities, overcrowding or safety. The small number of inmates promotes high-quality relationships between the young people and the staff. Inside the detention section, there is a multi-purpose room with table football, table tennis and other board games, as well as a television. The recently renovated gym is currently closed due to a lack of courses. The bakery workshop is temporarily inactive. The classrooms are equipped with computer stations with compensatory software designed for young people with specific learning disabilities. Since the beginning of 2025, approximately 10 disciplinary isolation measures have been imposed. Literacy courses for foreigners, middle school and the first two years of high school are available. The Institute does not have the specially equipped accommodation units required by Article 19, paragraph 4, of Legislative Decree 121/2018 for extended visits, nor does it have a space dedicated to emotional well-being.

### **ROME (CASAL DEL MARMO): IN 2024, 188 CASES OF SELF-HARM AND 17 SUICIDE ATTEMPTS WERE RECORDED**

It is the only facility in the country to house both male and female detainees. At the time of the visit, there were 57 inmates in total, 51 boys and 6 girls. More than half were foreigners, most of them unaccompanied foreign minors. While today the number of inmates is in line with the regulatory capacity, until a few months ago the institution had to deal with significant overcrowding, reaching a total of 70 boys and girls at the end of 2024. Such high numbers meant that beds had to be added to most of the cells, significantly reducing the common areas in the male sections, which were already cramped and, in some cases, dilapidated. The overcrowding had a strong negative impact on both the conditions of detention and the internal climate of the Institute, which now seems to have returned to a less complex phase. Inside the building dedicated to activities, there is a theatre, two small workshops for metalworking and hairdressing, a long corridor with classrooms, a computer room and a library, which can be accessed for organised activities or on request together with an operator. There is a gym with a fitness room in good condition, and air conditioning has recently been installed. There is also a football pitch and a concrete basketball court. All the buildings have a canteen where meals can be eaten together. However, the men's canteen is not always used. In total, 188 incidents of self-harm and 17 attempted suicides were recorded in 2024. With regards to the disciplinary system, 214 sanctions were imposed, including 132 exclusions from communal activities. Education includes literacy courses, middle school, a two-year hotel management course and an advanced group. One girl is enrolled at an online university and sometimes goes outside to take her exams. At the time of the visit, the 'Progetto Accordi' was in place with the Traffic Police for risky driving behaviour; a rap music course; and a decorative arts workshop. These activities are carried out in a mixed format, involving both boys and girls.

### **TURIN (FERRANTE APORTI): THE PROTESTS OF 2024 HAVE LEFT THEIR**

### **MARK ON THE FACILITY, SEVERE OVERCROWDING**

It was originally an indigo processing factory, and some of the large spaces currently in use for activities clearly show its industrial origins. The institute underwent major renovations after the protests of summer 2024, during which several areas, particularly the library, were set on fire and damaged. While the common areas are now back in fairly good condition, the detention sections are dilapidated, dirty and neglected. Conditions have deteriorated significantly since visits in previous years. During 2025, there was recurrent overcrowding. Some rooms house four people (when there are only two or, at most, three places available), which means that the mattresses take up practically the entire surface area of the room. Among the critical issues reported by staff is the continuing serious lack of external educational and therapeutic communities to which young people can be referred, with the result that they are often sent to the south. In the detention sections, there is a strict distinction between minors and young adults. The Institute offers literacy courses, lower secondary school and the first two years of upper secondary school. The Institute has a multi-sport project and a project to set up a football team to participate in youth tournaments. Theatre and rap courses are also available, as well as 'legality days'.

### **TREVISO: THE DRAMA OF A SUICIDE THAT SHOCKED THE COMMUNITY**

Historically, it has been severely inadequate in terms of space. As of 31 January 2026, it housed 10 children. In the first half of 2025, there was an average of 22 children (183% overcrowding), with peaks reaching 28 (233% overcrowding). The cells (single, double or triple) are in rather dilapidated condition, as is the entire institution. The bathrooms, in particular, are inadequate: there are squat toilets equipped with a lowerable grate to allow for showering. The lack of space also makes it very difficult to carry out work activities, which are effectively non-existent within the prison. The outdoor spaces available to the young people are also rather limited, confined to a small outdoor courtyard and a football pitch shared (on a rota basis) with the adjacent adult prison. The only other common space is a gym: at the time of the visit, the room was completely empty and devoid of equipment. Fires caused by protests have been quite frequent in recent times. There are literacy courses, a secondary school specialising in hospitality, a vocational training centre for mechanics and the possibility of attending a scientific high school course and a tourism course. Last summer, one young man obtained his diploma. In the summer, courses in bricklaying, pastry making and plumbing are offered. There are several obstacles to extended visits and autonomy in internal life, so these are not currently available.

### **THE SPACES OF THE IPMs. A PROPOSAL: HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE AS A DEVICE FOR FREEDOM**

The analysis of the case studies – Pratello, Meucci, Malaspina, Airola and Nisida – highlights how historic prisons intended for the detention of minors constitute an architectural and cultural heritage of extraordinary importance, which is still only partially recognised and valued today. Despite the diversity of their typological structures – monastic complexes, noble residences, defensive architecture – and subsequent transformations, these institutions share some fundamental characteristics: their location in prestigious historical contexts, the presence of large spaces of high architectural quality (cloisters, courtyards, vaulted rooms,



reception rooms, theatres), and a functional stratification that bears witness to a long tradition of care, education and control. It would be important for young people to take care of the space as a proactive way to transform an environment, whether physical or emotional, into a place of well-being, growth and autonomy, not limiting themselves to simple maintenance, but creating a context that actively supports life and health.

### **RESEARCH: 'THE SMALL-SCALE DETENTION MODEL FOR MINORS AND YOUNG ADULTS. THE ITALIAN CASE STUDY'**

Throughout 2025, Antigone was engaged in research, supported and funded by Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, entitled '*The small-scale detention model for minors and young adults. The Italian case study*'. The project analyses the system in light of the principles of small-scale detention, recently identified by the Council of the European Union as good practice to be implemented at European level. The small-scale detention model is based on three fundamental principles: the small size of detention facilities, which favours an individualised and relational approach; the differentiation of pathways according to the specific needs of the individual; and permanent integration with the local area and community. The empirical analysis conducted through 50 semi-structured interviews with operators and young people detained in various IPMs, three Piedmontese communities and various USSMs, together with a focus group attended by 11 actors from the Turin system, revealed profound critical issues but also possible proposals for action.

### **THE VIRTUOUS EXPERIENCE OF THE HOUSE OF OPPORTUNITIES IN TURIN**

A particularly virtuous experience in Turin, aimed at young people in the post-detention phase, is represented by the Casa delle Opportunità in Turin. The project aims to promote the acquisition of autonomy and to experiment with a sustainable housing model, in line with the actions of the NOMiS operational project of the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, aimed at foreign young people who, having completed a criminal sentence, have not yet achieved sufficient economic, emotional or psychological self-sufficiency to access and maintain adequate housing. This initiative is consistent with the small-scale detention model: although it intervenes in the post-detention phase, it reflects the three key principles of *small-scale detention*.



## PROTESTS, TORTURE AT BECCARIA, DANILO RIAHI COMMITTS SUICIDE AT 17

### CHRONOLOGY OF TWO YEARS OF CRITICAL EVENTS IN THE IPMs

This sequence of critical events highlights how life in IPMs has deteriorated over time, to the point of becoming tragic. Let us remember that these are very young people who are still developing. Protests, fires, escapes, a suicide. This should not be the life of very young people, adolescents, boys and girls. It is a sign of the failure of an institution from which they want to escape, which produces anger and protests. It is a sign of young people who bring their discomfort, their struggles and their previous suffering into prison.

**5 February 2024 Airola Juvenile Detention Centre:** two young people cut their arms in protest and repeatedly hit the armour plating of their sleeping quarters.

**13 April 2024 IPM Caltanissetta:** during recreation time, two 17-year-old boys escape from the juvenile prison in Caltanissetta. Both are brought back inside after a few hours.

**22 April 2024 IPM 'Cesare Beccaria' in Milan:** 13 prison officers are arrested for torture and violence against juvenile detainees, while another 8 officers are suspended from duty. The alleged offences date back to 2022 and involved repeated conduct over time.

**6 May 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** a fire breaks out, probably caused by a mattress set alight in protest. The flames are quickly extinguished, but the boys refuse to return to their cells, where the air is unbreathable due to the smoke from the fire.

**18 May 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** a young man escapes from the Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan, climbing over the fence in the late afternoon. His escape is short-lived, as he is immediately intercepted by a prison police patrol passing through the area.

**28 May 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** some young inmates at the Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan barricade themselves in a section of the facility, while others refuse to leave the courtyard. The protest ends after a few hours without violence and without any injuries to either the young inmates or the officers.

**30 May 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** a young man escapes during a transfer.

**9 June 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** following a number of protests, the institution is evacuated due to a fire.

**14 June 2024 IPM 'Cesare Beccaria' in Milan:** two boys escape from prison. They are tracked down within two days while using public transport to flee.

**2 July 2024 Pietro Siciliani Juvenile Detention Centre in Bologna:** a young man escapes by climbing over the perimeter wall. Ten days later, the young man voluntarily turns himself in to the Carabinieri, accompanied by his lawyer.

**6 July 2024 IPM in Nisida:** two boys start a fire in one of the cells in the observation ward.

**7 July 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** in the second wing of the prison, some young inmates set fire to their personal belongings to spark a protest, leading to several hours of tension. The protest is quelled and the young inmates are moved to another section.

**7 July 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** a young man attempts to start a fire, triggering a violent protest among the other inmates.

**21 July 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** three young people escape, two aged 17 and one aged 15. One young person is spotted shortly afterwards in a supermarket trying to steal food, while the other two are arrested in the following two days.

**26 July 2024 IPM 'Cesare Beccaria' in Milan:** a fire is started.

**1 August 2024 IPM "Ferrante Aporti" in Turin:** for several days, protests continue to denounce the unliveable conditions inside the facility: due to overcrowding, at least ten young people are forced to sleep on the floor or on camping beds due to a lack of available beds. Over the course of a few hours, cells, sections and some offices are damaged.

**3 August 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** three young detainees attempt to escape during an altercation that broke out in the section. They are stopped before they reach the outer wall.

**16 August 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** the young people refuse to take psychopharmacological therapy and oppose returning to their sleeping quarters.

**19 August 2024 IPM 'Cesare Beccaria' in Milan:** during the night, following the failure to provide medical assistance to a detainee, a mattress is set on fire and, after clashes with officers, some detainees seize the keys and attempt to escape, but are quickly stopped.

**20 August 2024 Pietro Siciliani Juvenile Detention Centre in Bologna:** a young detainee resists transfer, clashing with officers and damaging a cell.



**25 August 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** a young man attempts to escape by not returning from activities outside the prison.

**30 August 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** inmates set fire to mattresses and furnishings. The protest is quelled by prison police in riot gear. The reasons for the protest are unknown.

**31 August 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** a violent protest breaks out involving all juvenile inmates, who set fire to their cells and try to reach the gatehouse to escape. During these protests, three inmates attempt to escape but are tracked down that same night while hiding within the prison perimeter, without even crossing the boundary wall.

**2 September 2024 IPM 'Fornelli' in Bari:** protests break out among the young inmates.

**8 September 2024 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** following a protest involving mattresses being set alight, two young people escape from the Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan. One of the two minors is found at his home.

**8 September 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** a protest takes place with the burning of several cells.

**11 September 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** the young people protest by setting fire to some of the cells in the institution. One of the young people was rushed to hospital for having swallowed glass.

**15 September 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** some young people barricade themselves in a section, setting fire to some mattresses to protest against the conditions in the severely overcrowded institution, at the height of several days of clashes. The institution is barricaded and cordoned off, and the protest is suppressed.

**16 September 2024 IPM in Airola:** a young man sets fire to sheets.

**23 September 2024 IPM in Rome Casal del Marmo:** another fire breaks out to protest against chronic overcrowding.

**26 September 2024 Pietro Siciliani Juvenile Detention Centre in Bologna:** a young inmate taken late in the evening to Sant'Orsola Hospital in Bologna for tests following an assault escape a few weeks before the end of his sentence. He is arrested the following afternoon at Bologna railway station.

**28 October 2024 IPM Casal del Marmo in Rome:** following the unrest of the previous days, an



inmate attempts to escape but is stopped before he can even get past the fence.

**28 November 2024 IPM Casal del Marmo in Rome:** two female prisoners attempt to break down a gate using a camp bed and clash with police officers who intervene.

**12 December 2024 IPM Casal del Marmo in Rome:** inside an overcrowded facility, some detainees barricade themselves in a section, protesting by banging loudly and starting a fire.

**27 January 2025 at the Casal del Marmo Juvenile Detention Centre in Rome:** the young inmates set fire to mattresses and blankets in the corridor of the section.

**21 February 2025 IPM Casal del Marmo in Rome:** in the afternoon, several people sustain injuries and are taken to hospital. Later, in the same section, other young people barricade themselves inside the facility and start a fire. The action is quelled by the GIO, the prison police's anti-riot task force.

**9 March 2025 IPM 'Fornelli' in Bari:** there is a protest in the Fornelli juvenile prison in Bari, where inmates occupy a section, setting fire to sheets and breaking cameras. Some people attempt to steal keys to escape. The reasons for the protest are not disclosed.

**13 March 2025 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** some inmates set fire to mattresses in protest, causing a blaze.

**24 March 2025 Cesare Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre in Milan:** a fire is started, burning mattresses and sheets in protest against transfer to another institution. Nine of the same youths are then found to be suffering from smoke inhalation.

**13 April 2025 IPM 'Malaspina' in Palermo:** three youths escape using sheets from the Malaspina juvenile prison in Palermo. The three are tracked down shortly afterwards not too far from the institution.

**18 April 2025 IPM 'Pietro Siciliani' in Bologna:** a protest breaks out and the young inmates refuse to return to their cells, rebelling against their transfer to the new young adult section set up at Dozza prison, which is unsuitable for their needs. Following these events, one of the young people involved is placed in solitary confinement for five days in a room without windows or a mattress as a form of punishment, in clear violation of the rules on disciplinary isolation.

**1 June 2025 IPM in Bari:** a 17-year-old inmate escapes from the IPM in Bari by climbing down with sheets. He is found two months later at the home of an acquaintance and arrested.

**5 June 2025 IPM in Bari:** young inmates at the juvenile detention centre in Bari set fire to one

section of the building following a period of particular tension, making a hole in the wall to reach the refectory.

**8 June 2025 IPM in Treviso:** three youths attempt to start a fire in their section. One of the minors, who is intoxicated, is taken to the infirmary. The director and commander downplay the significance of the critical events: the small fires that occurred during the summer are described as tactics aimed at leveraging the need to evacuate the section, thus allowing the youths to spend a few hours in the courtyard in the evening (also as a way to seek cooler temperatures than those in the section).

**8 July 2025 IPM 'Cesare Beccaria' in Milan:** a group of young inmates refuse to return to their cells in protest at the lack of certain services. Part of the facility is damaged, in particular furniture, lights and cameras, and some officers are injured. Prison police intervene to quell the protest.

**27 July 2025 IPM 'Cesare Beccaria' in Milan:** a 17-year-old boy escapes from the Beccaria juvenile prison in Milan by climbing over the bars. He had only recently arrived at the institution: admission, in fact, is, together with release, the most critical moment in detention.

**13 August 2025 Treviso Juvenile Detention Centre:** a person dies in hospital in Treviso after attempting suicide in the city's juvenile detention centre. The boy, an unaccompanied foreign minor, had been arrested on 9 August 2025 after several attempted thefts and an escape from the police, in an obvious state of agitation. Immobilised with a taser, he was transferred to the CPA within the Treviso IPM, where he attempted suicide a few hours later. Taken to hospital in critical condition, he died a few days later. The last time someone took their own life in a juvenile prison was in 2003. On 18 August 2025, Justice Minister Carlo Nordio announced the closure of the Treviso facility and the future opening of a new facility in Rovigo.

**28 August 2025 Potenza Juvenile Detention Centre:** a boy escapes from the Potenza Juvenile Detention Centre, failing to return to the facility after being granted leave. He was found that same night.

**11 October 2025 Treviso IPM:** following an argument between several youths, two mattresses are set on fire, forcing the evacuation of the facility. At the time of the incident, the IPM was housing 17 youths for 12 available places.

**22 October 2025 Rome Casal del Marmo IPM:** a 21-year-old boy detained at the Casal del Marmo IPM leaves the San Filippo Neri hospital where he was being treated.

**27 October 2025 Pietro Siciliani Juvenile Detention Centre in Bologna:** a boy escapes by

climbing over scaffolding erected for building work. He is quickly tracked down and returned to the centre.

**17 November 2025 IPM 'Ferrante Aporti' in Turin:** a boy escapes from the Ferrante Aporti IPM in Turin by climbing over the wall on the side of the sports field.

**18 November 2025 Pietro Siciliani Juvenile Detention Centre in Bologna:** two minors escaped in the late afternoon by climbing over scaffolding used for construction work on the adjacent juvenile court to cross the courtyard where they were being held. They were caught a few hours later while still inside the court grounds.

**31 January 2026 IPM "San Francesco d'Assisi" in L'Aquila:** in the new IPM in L'Aquila, some young people staged a protest, refusing to return to their cells. The department command and the institute's management intervened, applying the necessary security measures and calling in reinforcements. This persuaded the young people to desist and the protest ended without the use of force.

## **THE BECCARIA CASE IN MILAN. THE TRIAL FOR THE TORTURE OF 8 YOUNG PEOPLE. 42 STAFF MEMBERS UNDER INVESTIGATION**

*"One of them grabbed my head and started smashing it against the toilet (...) after punching me in the face and kicking me all over (...) after treating me like that, they pulled down my trousers, gave me an injection, handcuffed me from behind (...) covered in blood, they left me like that on the floor for four hours (...) no one listened to me, they looked at me and walked away as if I were a thing."*

On 22 April 2024, the investigating magistrate ordered precautionary measures for 13 officers along with eight others for alleged events that took place at the Beccaria juvenile detention centre between 18 November 2022 and 19 March 2024. The preventive custody order identified eight different episodes of violence, perpetrated against eight young people, often by the same group of prison police officers. The charges were numerous and very serious: torture, aggravated assault, ideological falsehood (for having fabricated false reports on the events) and, in one case, attempted sexual assault. Witness accounts reported beatings, genital injuries and young people left naked for days in solitary confinement. In all cases, two aggravating circumstances are contested: cruelty and the young age of the victims. According to the public prosecutor, this was a case of outright 'torture'. If confirmed in court, these acts would represent events of unprecedented gravity. They would be tragic in themselves, but would take on even more tragic connotations because they occurred while the victims were in state custody. On 8 August 2025, the Public Prosecutor's Office sent notices of investigation to 42 suspects holding various positions within the Institute: agents, doctors, nurses, operators, and three people including directors and former directors. This notice of investigation not only increased the number of suspects, but also increased the number of children identified as victims, from 8 to 33, and the time frame of the events, which dates back to 21 April 2021, thus recounting almost three years of alleged uninterrupted violence in the institution.

Among the most interesting aspects, the documents describe a systemic form of abuse perpetrated by the institutional actors themselves against the children. On 30 October 2025, the first preliminary hearing was held before the Milan magistrate in the trial of 42 prison officers. At that hearing, the Antigone association asked to take part in the trial as an injured party. On 19 December 2025, the second hearing of the preliminary investigation took place as part of the proceedings for violence at the Beccaria Juvenile Detention Centre. During the hearing, the preliminary question of the Antigone Association's status as an injured party was raised. The investigating magistrate accepted the association's participation. While trusting in justice, and aware that we are still in the preliminary investigation phase (and therefore any conclusion would be premature), it is nevertheless possible to state that the material that has already emerged in court and in the preliminary hearing documents paints a picture of violence that cannot be dismissed as episodic or marginal. The testimonies collected – given in cross-examination and destined to be 'crystallised' – describe repeated practices, a climate of systematic humiliation and widespread institutional involvement. "One of them grabbed my head and started smashing it against the toilet (...) after punching me in the face and kicking me all over (...) after treating me like that, they pulled down my trousers, gave me an injection, handcuffed me from behind (...) covered in blood, they left me like that on the floor for four hours (...) no one paid any attention to me, they looked at me and walked away as if I were a thing." These are dramatic passages from one of the testimonies that the 33 victims of beatings, torture and ill-treatment, allegedly carried out in the Beccaria juvenile prison in Milan, are giving, starting in December and with hearings scheduled until at least the end of March, in a maxi preliminary hearing before the investigating magistrate, to 'crystallise' statements already made in the investigations. At a hearing, a young man aged almost 18, born in Italy to Moroccan parents and now detained in an adult prison, recounted the violence he allegedly suffered in January 2024, when he was 16 and had been arrested for the first time. There was 'a kind of team of officers who beat up the boys' and then other officers 'didn't do those things (...) but they always defended them, even the doctors were on their side'. And, he added, 'I could see the fear in the educators' eyes when I talked about them'. When he was left on the floor for hours after that assault in his cell, he explained, 'the others saw it, there were lots of female educators (...) I asked for help, for a glass of water'. Another passage highlights how the practice was part of a power dynamic: "We were involved in a game with the guards, a game of provocation (...) because they always deliberately tried to get us to react to them, so that they could then humiliate us, because they humiliated us so many times."

During one of the preliminary hearings, the young man described beatings, slaps, kicks, psychological abuse and heavy use of drugs: "I took many, many types, I took Valium, Tavor, Talofen (...) Delorazepam." "I felt so bad," he explained, "as if I had lost my identity as a person." The psychological distress was such that "the boy opposite my cell cut his testicles with glass (...) he drank from glass cups, the other ate batteries, it was just inhuman."

Another young man reported being beaten "to a pulp." "Even the doctors were on their side," he said, adding that the reports "do not mention that he was beaten." Also on 9 January, a 17-year-old Tunisian boy was interviewed and reported: "They broke my ribs."



**ANTIGONE**

PER I DIRITTI E LE GARANZIE NEL SISTEMA PENALE

### **THE SUICIDE OF DANILO RIAHI AT ONLY 17 YEARS OLD**

Danilo Riahi is a 17-year-old boy born in Tunisia. He arrived in Italy in 2024, facing the long crossing of the Mediterranean alone, leaving behind his family, language and emotional ties. On 9 August 2025, he was arrested in Vicenza for several attempted thefts. After fleeing from the police, officers immobilised him with a taser. Several witnesses reported that he was in an obvious state of agitation. Without being examined at a health centre, which is strongly recommended after the use of an electric weapon, especially on a minor, he was transferred to the Juvenile Detention Centre in Treviso. A few hours later, according to the authorities' version of events, Danilo Riahi hanged himself in the bathroom of one of the two cells in the Reception Centre (CPA), where the boys are placed following their arrest. Rescued in very serious condition, he died on 13 August at the Ca' Foncello Hospital in Treviso.