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Toronto on brink of a mob war, Italy warns

Mobsters around Toronto are on the brink of warfare in a brewing feud between some of the world's most powerful gangster clans, according to wiretaps recorded in Italy

Adrian Humphreys

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Mobsters around Toronto are on the brink of armed warfare in a brewing feud between some of the world's most powerful and wealthiest gangster clans, according to wiretaps secretly recorded in Italy.

Friction between Mafia families in Canada has already triggered one brazen murder, an unsolved shooting last year outside a café in Woodbridge, north of Toronto, authorities in Italy warn after listening to private conversations between an accused mafioso who returned to Italy from Toronto.

The allegations on the inner workings of Ontario-based mob families are revealed in documents prepared by prosecutors in Italy in a sweeping anti-Mafia case targeting the "elite" of the underworld.



Last month, dozens of accused mobsters were arrested in Europe as part of Operation Acero-Krupy — the very name demonstrating the Canadian connection: acero is Italian for “maple,” while Krupy is a purposeful misspelling of the name of a family under investigation.

Prosecutors claim hidden microphones captured conversations between two men: Vincenzo Crupi, 50, who had recently returned to Italy from Canada, and his brother-in-law, Vincenzo Macri, 50.

“Crupi, coming from Canada, provided a detailed report to Vincenzo Macri about the outcome of his meetings in Canada with members at the top of the ’Ndrangheta operating in that territory,” prosecutors wrote, summarizing their allegations, translated from Italian by National Post.

(The ’Ndrangheta is the proper name of the Mafia that formed in Italy’s region of Calabria.)

The conversations, authorities say, “seriously highlight the danger of an escalation of an armed conflict within the coterie of ’Ndrangheta clans, operating for a long time in Canadian territory ... particularly among the Coluccio and the Figliomeni (clans).”

A transcription of the actual words the men spoke was not publicly released and the evidence has not yet been tested in court. Arrest warrants for both were issued on Sept. 28 in Italy as part of the Acero-Krupy probe.

Inter-clan friction in Canada sharply increased after the 2014 murder of Carmine Verduci, the prosecutors say. Verduci, 56, was an important mobster in the Toronto area, described as a transatlantic go-between for gangsters in Italy and Canada, until he was shot dead outside Regina Sports Café in Woodbridge in April 2014.

The prosecution documents claim Crupi also spoke about Verduci's unsolved murder, calling it an "assassination," and alleging it was "planned and determined" by two brothers from Vaughan, Ont., who are considered fugitives in Italy for Mafia association.

The information from Italy has been shared with Canadian law enforcement, sources in both countries say.

Requests for comment from York Regional Police and the RCMP's anti-organized crime unit went unanswered Tuesday.

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‘People seem to be getting along, everyone is shaking hands and kissing each other. It is either really good or really bad’

There would be hurdles faced by Canadian police in using the wiretaps to lay charges in the murder, however, especially if the legitimacy of the information was challenged in court. Judicial authorization for a wiretap is far easier for police to obtain in Italy than in Canada.

On the streets of Toronto and north of the city in Vaughan, where many of the suspected mobsters live and work, police say there is no palpable sense a war is brewing.

“Whatever the problem was between these groups, it looks like, somehow, it's may have been worked out,” said an officer familiar with local 'Ndrangheta figures.

“It looks like business as usual with these groups,” he added, asking his name not be used as he is not authorized to comment on the cases. In the 18 months since Verduci’s slaying, police are not aware of any dramatic retaliation.

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