

# Three more deaths add to Italy's rising toll of workplace fatalities

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28 March 2025

The workplace has become a battleground for Italian workers, where safety is sacrificed at the altar of profit. In just one day, three workers lost their lives in horrific accidents that underscore the criminal negligence of both corporate interests and the political establishment. These deaths are not isolated incidents, but part of an ongoing massacre enabled by decades of deregulation and the dismantling of workers' protections.

Daniel Tafa had just celebrated his 22nd birthday a day earlier when he was killed on the job in Maniago, Pordenone. He had followed the path dictated to workers: he attended school, secured employment, and was even hired by the same company where his father worked, STM. Yet all the diligence and dedication in the world could not protect him from the reckless disregard for safety in Italian workplaces.

Tafa was struck in the back by an incandescent splinter from a mold operating at excessively high temperature. His life was extinguished in an instant, the result of a system that places cost-cutting over human lives.

Tafa's death was only one of several in the span of 24 hours. In Sant'Antonio Abate, Naples, 50-year-old Nicola Sicignano met a gruesome fate as his arm and head were trapped in a conveyor belt at the waste management company where he worked. In another part of the country, a 38-year-old worker was struck and killed by a heavy vehicle while conducting maintenance work on the Autosole motorway near Orvieto, Terni.

To add to the horrific day, another worker fell from a height of four meters at the Cumbidanovu dam in Orgosolo, Nuoro, while working in a harness. The dam, a symbol of Italy's incomplete infrastructure projects, has been under construction since 1989.

In addition, a 70-year-old retired farmer lost his life

in Roverbella while assisting at a nursery. Though he had left the workforce, he continued to labor—until a heart attack struck him down at the wheel of a tractor. His death speaks to the grinding demands placed on workers even after retirement.

Within the same time span, a fire broke out at the Perfetti factory in Lainate, Milan, burning production waste. No injuries were reported, but the area was closed and some houses were evacuated. Firefighters contained the flames and investigations are ongoing. The company confirmed that operations remain unaffected.

These cases are only the latest in an unending wave of workplace deaths and serious accidents in Italy. The numbers are staggering. A report released last month by the Osservatorio Sicurezza sul Lavoro e Ambiente Vega—an Italian research center that monitors workplace safety and environmental issues—revealed that in 2024, 1,090 workers died on the job, an increase of 49 fatalities (plus 4.7 percent) over the previous year.

In 2024, 22 percent of workplace fatalities involved immigrant workers, whose death risk was nearly three times that of native workers (74.2 vs. 29.7 per million workers). The highest mortality rate was among workers over 65 (138.3 per million), followed by those aged 55-64 (54.5 per million). The 55-64 age group also had the most fatalities, with 279 deaths. Injury on the job claims are also on the rise (plus 0.7 percent), with a staggering 589,571 claims filed in 2024.

Every factory, construction site and highway project is a potential death trap, yet the government and corporations remain indifferent, concerned only with maintaining their profit margins.

For decades, workers have fought for safer conditions and job security, but their hard won victories have been

systematically dismantled. Successive governments, from the so-called center-left to the far-right, have prioritized “flexibility” and “competitiveness” over safety. The infamous Jobs Act, introduced by Matteo Renzi in 2014, accelerated the erosion of worker protections.

While the fascist government of Giorgia Meloni has been quiet on these tragic events, showing its contempt for the working class, the trade unions have issued empty statements lamenting the “infinite massacre” of workers and decrying cost-cutting and lack of oversight. Yet these very unions have been complicit in the destruction of workplace protections. They enabled and supported every center-left government that stripped away regulations in favor of privatization and free market “reform.”

Francesca Re David, speaking on behalf of the CGIL union, had the audacity to claim, “These tragedies, which stem from cost-cutting at any price, haste, lack of investment, and lack of inspections, cannot be stopped by bureaucratic interventions.” But where was the CGIL when laws were passed that gutted workplace protections? Where was their opposition when successive center-left governments deregulated industry after industry?

The Democratic Party (PD), which played a central role in this disaster, now issues hollow statements of outrage. PD leader Elly Schlein declared, “It is unacceptable to die like this at work. We have long offered to work with the government to take effective action, but we have received no response.” But the PD was the very party that pushed through measures that made work more precarious, supporting short-term contracts, subcontracting, and the casualization of labor.

This feigned concern is an attempt to deflect blame from those who orchestrated the current state of affairs. The ruling class—both in business and politics—has blood on its hands.

The reality is that workplace safety will never be a priority in a capitalist system driven by profit. Regulations, inspections and safety measures are seen as burdens to be minimized or ignored. The deaths of workers are calculated into business models, written off as acceptable losses in pursuit of maximum efficiency and profitability.

This is not a purely Italian phenomenon. Fatal

occupational injuries in the US have reached record levels. In 2023, 5,283 workers lost their lives. In Spain, workplace accident deaths increased more than 10 percent in 2024, while in France, on average more than two work-related deaths occur per day.

The only solution is a fundamental transformation of society, one that places human lives above corporate profits. Workers must organize independently of the pro-capitalist trade unions and political parties that have betrayed them. They must fight not only for stronger safety measures, but for a complete restructuring of society, where those who produce the wealth control its distribution.

The working class must take matters into its own hands. Lives depend on it.



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