

# Alfredo Cospito's Struggle

## Against High Security Confinement

Fifth Estate Collective

2023

Alfredo Cospito is a 55-year-old incarcerated Italian anarchist who has been on hunger strike since October 2022, protesting the brutality of his imprisonment. As we publish in March 2023, his condition is uncertain. His comrades fear he is near death.

In 2012, Cospito and a comrade kneecapped Roberto Adinolfi, the CEO of Italy's main nuclear power company, shooting him in the leg three times. Cospito was apprehended and sentenced to 10 years in prison. While imprisoned, he was convicted for planting bombs at a school for Carabinieri, the Italian elite police force. Although no one was injured in the explosions, he was given a life sentence without parole. The government decided that Cospito should be permanently removed from society as a dangerous anarchist terrorist.

In May 2022, after six years in the general prison population, Cospito was transferred to high-security, solitary confinement, Italy's 41-bis regime. This involves being subjected to cruel, psychologically and physically destructive conditions. The regime mandates that prisoners are kept in small cells only a few feet square, deprived of even glimpses of the physical environment outside the prison, and prohibited from having books, magazines, radio, television or other forms of news about the outside world.

They only get exercise one hour per day in a small concrete-walled yard with no greenery.

41-bis inmates are forbidden all outside personal contact except for a closely-monitored one-hour monthly meeting with family members, through a partition with no physical contact possible.

Cospito felt it imperative to express his opposition to this regime in the only way open to him, a hunger strike, which he began on October 20, 2022.

He repeatedly made it clear that he was adopting this measure to demand the abolition of the 41-bis regime, not just for himself, but for everybody confined in these terrible conditions. A long hunger strike is very grueling and dangerous. As time goes on, Cospito's health continues to deteriorate. As of this writing he is very weak and cannot walk. Nevertheless, he continues to refuse all nourishment.

Cospito is an insurrectionist anarchist and a founding member of the Italian Informal Anarchist Federation. This organization is distinct from the Italian Anarchist Federation. The former advocates armed struggle against the state, capitalism, and Marxism.

The Italian Anarchist Federation and many non-affiliated Italian anarchists, on the other hand, oppose violence as a tactic.

Despite political and tactical disagreements with Cospito, many anarchists and others have expressed solidarity with him and the goals of his hunger strike. Increasing numbers of people have been engaging in a variety of protests and solidarity proclamations, inside and outside prisons, in Europe, and North and South America. Cars have been burned, banners hung, graffiti written on the walls of Italian embassies. People have been arrested, in some cases charged with terrorism. Prisoners in Italy and other countries have also gone on solidarity hunger strikes.

The neo-fascist Italian government, however, has not been responsive to criticism of 41-bis. They do not want to appear weak against a single anarchist who is willing to die in order to abolish an unjust law.

The 41-bis regime was supposedly introduced to isolate mafia kingpins with whom very few ordinary people have sympathy. But, little by little, first under the social-democrats and now under the neo-fascist government, the law is being applied to other categories of prisoners, mainly political.

Cospito's lawyers have appealed the conditions of his confinement to the European Court of Human Rights. They published a letter from the imprisoned anarchist in which he states:

"I am convinced that my death will be an obstacle to this regime and that the 750 who have been suffering from it for decades will be able to live a Life worth living, whatever they have done. I love life; I am a happy man. I wouldn't trade my life for anyone else's life. And it is because I love it that I cannot accept this hopeless non-life."

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