Vatican



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Vatican City — October 2, 2019
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The head of the Vatican's financial watchdog authority and four staffers of the Secretariat of State office have been suspended from work and prohibited from re-entering Vatican territory as a precaution on suspicion of financial impropriety, according to an Italian report Oct. 2.

News of the suspensions comes one day after the Vatican announced that its police force had raided the two offices suspected of involvement, searching for "documents and electronic devices" related to the alleged transactions.

In an explosive report, L'Espresso magazine published a photo of an order sent that morning to all Vatican police personnel and the Swiss Guards that control access to the walled city-state. It says the five staffers are "precautionarily suspended from service" and should not be granted entry except for healthcare needs.

Among those named is Tommaso di Ruzza, the head of the watchdog agency. Also named is Msgr. Mauro Carlino, head of the information and documentation office at the Secretariat of State. The other three named are mid-level officials at the Secretariat.

The order preventing their re-entry to the Vatican is signed by the head of the Vatican Gendarme Corps, Domenico Giani.

The Vatican press office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In its Oct. 1 announcement of the police raid, the Vatican press office provided few details about the matter being investigated.

Its release said only that the raid was authorized by the Vatican's chief prosecutor, following a report on the matter from the Vatican's auditor general and officials at the Institute for the Works of Religious, commonly known as the Vatican bank.

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Vatican prosecutors raid Secretariat of State in financial transaction investigation

L'Espresso reports Oct. 2 that the investigation concerns "apparently irregular financial transactions in the millions" regarding the buying and selling of Vatican property holdings.

The report also alleges that police have identified concerns about the cash flow of Peter's Pence, the program for Catholic faithful around the world to offer donations for use in the pope's charitable efforts.

The Secretariat of State office has for centuries been the premier Vatican office, concerned with all the diplomatic and political functions of the Holy See.

The financial watchdog agency, known formally as the Financial Information Authority, was created in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI in hopes of putting an end to Vatican financial scandals and bringing the city-state's financial dealings up to accepted international standards.

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