News



Pope Francis listens as Gian Piero Milano, promoter of justice at the Vatican City state court, speaks during the opening of the 91st judicial year of the court during an audience in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Feb. 15, 2020. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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Vatican City — February 18, 2020
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Vatican police seized documents and computers at the home and office of a former official at the Vatican Secretariat of State in their continuing investigation into financial mismanagement.

In a statement published Feb. 18, the Vatican said the operation, which was authorized by Gian Piero Milano, Vatican chief prosecutor, and his deputy, Alessandro Diddi, led to the confiscation "of documents and electronic devices at the office and room of Msgr. Alberto Perlasca," the former head of the Vatican Secretariat of State's administrative office.

"The measure, taken as part of the investigation into financial and real estate investments of the Secretariat of State, is linked — while respecting the principle of the presumption of innocence — to what emerged from the first interrogations of the officials under investigation and suspended from duty," the Vatican said.

Vatican police conducted a raid on offices in the Secretariat of State and its financial oversight office Oct. 1 after suspicions of financial mismanagement were raised "by the Institute for the Works of Religion (Vatican bank) and the Office of the Auditor General, concerning financial transactions carried out over time," the Vatican press office said.

The following day, the Italian magazine L'Espresso published an internal notice from the Vatican police about the "cautionary suspension" of several individuals.

The report also alleged the raid was part of a Vatican investigation into how the Secretariat of State used $200 million to finance a property development project in London's Chelsea district in 2014.

The announcement of the seizure of documents from Perlasca came a day after Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, defended the property investment and vehemently denied that the money used in

the purchase came from the annual Peter's Pence collection and was earmarked for helping the poor.

"I want to deny this because we did not use that money," Becciu said during a book presentation Feb. 17. "Peter's Pence was not affected; an investment was made on a building. It was a good and opportune occasion, which many people envy us for today."

Perlasca served at the Vatican Secretariat of State from 2009 until Pope Francis named him as a prosecutor in the Vatican's highest court, the Apostolic Signatura, in July 2019.

He also serves as a member of several managing boards that handle Vatican City State's health care and pension funds, as well as Vatican-run Bambino Gesu Pediatric Hospital. Additionally, he is an auditor for the Vatican's Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Foundation.

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