

Hundreds Flock to Church to Mourn Italian Policeman Allegedly Murdered by 2 U.S. Teens

Hundreds of mourners, including Italian political leaders, packed a provincial church on Monday for the funeral of a policeman allegedly murdered by two American teenagers in Rome.

There were emotional scenes as six policemen carried the coffin of Mario Cerciello Rega out of the church, where the 35-year-old policeman had married less than two months ago in his home town of Somma Vesuviana, near Naples.

The killing of Cerciello Rega on Friday has shocked Italy and also focused world attention on its judicial system after a photo emerged of one of the Americans in police custody with a blindfold and his hands handcuffed behind his back.

“Enough with mourning servants of the state, children of a nation that seems to have lost those values for which they sacrifice their lives,” archbishop Santo Marciano told the gathering, which included the government’s powerful deputy prime ministers, Luigi Di Maio and Matteo Salvini.

The archbishop made no reference to the accused Americans.

A giant picture of Cerciello Rega was held aloft on a banner before the coffin, which was covered with an Italian flag and a shirt of Napoli, his favorite soccer team. After the ceremony, the crowd outside released white balloons into the sky.

Cerciello Rega was stabbed to death in a central neighborhood

of the Italian capital early on Friday, while trying to arrest the two Americans, now in jail.

Judicial sources have named the accused as students Finnegan Lee Elder, 19, and Gabriel Christian Natale-Hjorth, 18, both from San Francisco. Court-appointed lawyers for the pair could not be reached for comment.

In the order for them to be kept in jail, seen by Reuters, a judge said the two Americans showed “a total absence of self-control and critical capacity,” describing them as dangerous to society. {eoa}

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