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Mar 25 · 20 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1639666538981601281](https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1639666538981601281)

In today's [#vatniksoup](#), I'll introduce an Italian businessman, politician and ex-PM, Silvio Berlusconi. He's best-known for his media empire, for his pompous politics, for his trouble with the law, and especially for his long-time friendship with Vladimir Putin.

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Berlusconi has been Prime Minister for a total of nine years, which in Italian politics can be considered an eternity - no other PM has served longer since WW2. He's also the controlling shareholder of Italy's largest commercial broadcaster in the country, Mediaset.

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According to The Economist (or The Ecommunist, as Silvio calls it), controlled 90% of all national broadcasting in Italy while also being the PM.

Silvio has been at the center of many scandals throughout the years. In Aug, 2013, he was convicted of tax fraud and was...

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...sentenced to four years in prison, but was exempted due to his old age and served his sentence by doing community service. He was also banned from holding public office, but refused to leave his leadership position at his political party, Forza Italia.

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Silvio Berlusconi

This article is more than **9 years old**


Silvio Berlusconi ousted from Italian parliament after tax fraud conviction

Senate votes to strip former prime minister of seat despite his claims that new evidence will exonerate him

Ups and downs of Berlusconi's career - timeline

Lizzy Davies in Rome
Wed 27 Nov 2013 16:57 GMT

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Silvio Berlusconi makes a speech in Rome on the day the Senate voted to expel him. Photograph: Tony Gentile/Reuters

Silvio Berlusconi suffered arguably the heaviest blow of his political career on Wednesday when the upper house of parliament voted to oust him following a conviction for tax fraud.

A hostile front of the centre-left and anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) voted against the former prime minister, who pulled his Forza Italia party from Enrico Letta's governing coalition and into opposition on Tuesday.

Berlusconi was not present for the Senate vote. But shortly before the chamber approved his expulsion he gave a defiant address to supporters outside his residence in central Rome, declaring a "day of mourning for democracy" and promising that he would remain on the political scene.

"Today they are toasting because they can take an adversary, they say a friend, in front of the executioner's squad," Berlusconi said. "It is the day they have been waiting for for 20 years."

After he could take part in elections again, he was chosen as a MEP in 2019 and returned to the Italian Senate in 2022.

He's been involved in several court cases, of which at least six has been altered to "no conviction" because of news laws passed by his own parliament.

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These crimes include bribery, embezzlement, perjury, tax evasion and false accounting. In Jun 2013, he was convicted of paying a 17-year-old prostitute called Karima El Mahroug for sex. The prosecution claimed that Silvio had paid over 4,5 million euros for ...

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A screenshot of a New York Post article. The page has a red header with the "NEW YORK POST" logo and navigation links. The article title is "How an underage belly dancer brought down Silvio Berlusconi" by Michael Day, dated July 19, 2015. A large portrait of Silvio Berlusconi is featured. The article text discusses his conviction for bribing an Italian senator. To the right, there are promotional sections for "TOP CONCERTS" featuring Vividseats and "WHAT TO SHOP NOW" with Samsung products.

...El Mahroug's "services". Berlusconi appealed, and was acquitted from these charges later next year. In 2019 one of the main witnesses of the case, Imane Fadil, died mysteriously, and even death by radioactive poisoning was suggested (but ruled out later).

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Society

'Bunga-Bunga Trial': New Investigations into Death of Moroccan Witness Imane Fadil

The new investigations aim to determine whether Fadil's death can be attributed to medical error.

Sanae Alouazen Jan. 04, 2021 5:49 p.m.

'Bunga-Bunga Trial': New Investigations into Death of Moroccan Witness Imane Fadil

Rabat - New developments have emerged in the long-standing investigation surrounding the death of Imane Fadil, a Moroccan model who was a key witness in Berlusconi's Bunga-Bunga Trial.

In March 2019, Italian magistrates opened a murder investigation following the mysterious death of [Imane Fadil](#). The Moroccan model had presented evidence in court against former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi during the infamous Bunga-Bunga Trial.

Berlusconi was accused of paying for sex with an underage sex worker. But the court acquitted Berlusconi in 2015 on the grounds that he did not know the real age of Karima El Mahroug, a then-17-year-old teenage girl.

Fadil lost her life on March 1, 2019, while working on a memoir that threatened to reveal more damning evidence against Berlusconi. The model spent a month in a hospital in Milan, suffering from an undiagnosed serious illness.

In September 2019, the investigations into Fadil's death concluded that she suffered from bone marrow aplasia associated with acute hepatitis, an extremely rare and serious disease.

In a recent development, the judge for preliminary investigations, [Alessandra Cecchelli](#), rejected the request for dismissal of the case by the Milan Public Prosecutor's Office. The judge has set "a deadline of six months" for the completion of further investigations into the death of Imane Fadil. The new investigations will aim, in particular, to determine whether medical error was the main cause of death.

The team of experts, commissioned by the Milan Public Prosecutor's Office, explained that the therapeutic choices the doctors made did not align with Fadil's diagnosis. The course for treatment could possibly be the cause of a gastroesophageal hemorrhage that led to the

He's also been connected to the Sicilian Mafia, and for example the Mafia boss Giuseppe Guttadauro was heard stating that "Berlusconi, to solve his problems, has to solve ours" in a wiretapped conversation. Several informers and turncoats have suggested that Silvio has...

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Silvio Berlusconi

This article is more than 5 years old

Accusations about Berlusconi's ties to Sicilian mafia revived

Alessandro di Battista, main rival in Italy's election, launches scathing attack on former PM

Stephanie Kirchgaessner
in Rome
Tue 20 Feb 2018 13:24 GMT



Accusations about Silvio Berlusconi's historic ties to a close associate of the Sicilian mafia are being revived by his main political rival as Italy heads into the final stretch of campaigning before the general election on 4 March.

Alessandro di Battista, a top official in the Five Star Movement, asked followers on Twitter to share his scathing takedown of the former prime minister, delivered at a rally earlier this month, in which he cited a court ruling against a former longtime aide to Berlusconi and the founder of Forza Italia, Marcello Dell'Utri, who is in jail because of his ties to the Cosa Nostra.

The attack against Berlusconi's links to organised crime reflect the battle for votes in southern Italy that is under way between his centre-right coalition and the populist Five Star Movement, which has previously won strong support in the south but appears to have lost ground to the former prime minister.

Di Battista accused Berlusconi of "making the mafia stronger" at a time in the 1990s when it was at war with the Italian state and had murdered Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, two high-profile judges revered in Sicily.



...connections to the top echelons of the Italian Mafia, but Berlusconi's never been charged for any of this.

Berlusconi has a long history with Putin. The first scandal where the two were connected to each other was in 2007, when Italy's state-owned energy company...

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...Eni made a deal with state-owned Gazprom to build natural gas pipeline, South Stream, from Russia to Europe. The biggest beneficiary in the deal turned out to be Berlusconi's friend, Bruno Mentasti-Granelli. The deal was eventually blocked by the Italian Parliament.

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Berlusconi, Centrex, Hexagon 1 and 2 and Gazprom

Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 5 Issue: 228

December 1, 2008 05:42 PM Age: 5 yrs

By: Roman Kupchinsky

Sergio Berlusconi, the billionaire Italian Prime Minister, arrived in Moscow on November 6 to meet with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and sign an Italian-Russian deal that will involve Russia in constructing third and fourth generation nuclear reactors in Italy. The head of Russia's Rosatom (the state nuclear energy corporation), Sergei Kiriienko, stated after the signing ceremony, "Italy faces the task of returning to a leading position in the European nuclear power industry" (Moscow Times, November 7).

Expanding the Russian-Italian energy relationship has always been a priority for governments led by Berlusconi. In November 2007 Eni, Italy's major gas company, signed a 50-50 percent agreement with Gazprom to build the controversial \$10 billion South Stream pipeline, seen by the Russian leadership as a means of torpedoing the Nabucco pipeline, a project intended to diversify gas supplies to Europe. The gas relationship between Eni and Gazprom has not, however, always been transparent and in recent years has come under scrutiny by Italian parliamentarians.


In May 2005 Eni signed an agreement that would have allowed Gazpromexport, headed by Gazprom deputy CEO Alexander Medvedev, who is also allegedly one of the "unseen cardinals" of the murky Centrex Group in Europe, to participate in selling Russian gas to Italian domestic consumers. Almost immediately the contract came under investigation by a commission of the Italian parliament, Bloomberg reported on October 18, 2005.

The commission discovered that a Viennese company called Central Energy Italian Gas Holding (CEIGH), a part of the Centrex Group, was to play a major role in the lucrative contract. The investigation also revealed that a prominent Italian businessman named Bruno Mentasti-Granelli, known to be a close friend of Silvio Berlusconi, owned 33 percent of CEIGH through two companies, Hexagon Prima and Hexagon Seconda, both registered at the same address in Milan. Russian state-controlled Gazprom held 25 percent of the shares of CEIGH through ZMB, the German-registered subsidiary of Gazpromexport, while Vienna-based Centrex Europe Energy and Gas AG held 41.6 percent. Italian lawmakers promptly blocked the agreement, accusing Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of having a personal interest in the contract through Granelli's participation.

Is it possible that Gazpromexport's Alexander Medvedev did not know that Berlusconi's close friend, Granelli, owned 33 percent of CEIGH? Did (now-president) Dmitry Medvedev, the chairman of the board of Gazprom at the time, not know? After talks in Moscow on October 20, 2005, Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller and Paolo Scaroni, Eni's chief executive, declared under pressure from the Italian media, that the agreement had been cancelled. The joint press release stated that the two officials had "agreed to remake the earlier achieved accords on gas and consider possible cooperation in oil projects and in oil supplies in Europe" (Kommersant on-line, October 21, 2005).



After Russia invaded Crimea in 2014, Silvio accused the US and the EU for "a ridiculously and irresponsibly sanctioning approach to the Russian Federation, which cannot but defend Ukrainian citizens of Russian origin that it considers brothers". He visited Crimea in 2015.


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WORLD NEWS SEPTEMBER 11, 2015 / 7:23 PM / UPDATED 8 YEARS AGO

Italy's Berlusconi rubs shoulders with Putin in Crimea

By Vladimir Soldatkin 2 MIN READ  



Slideshow (4 images)

YALTA, Crimea (Reuters) - Former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi became the most prominent Western politician to visit Russian-annexed Crimea when he strolled beside the Black Sea on Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Western visitors have been rare since Russia seized Crimea from Ukraine in March 2014. The takeover drove relations between Moscow and the West to their lowest point since the Cold War era, and prompted the United States and European Union to slap economic sanctions on Russia.

Putin and Berlusconi, known for their warm rapport going back more than a decade, laid flowers at a monument commemorating soldiers who fell in a

Berlusconi was also the first Western leader to visit Belarusian dictator and potato man Lukashenko in 2009. He clearly had no idea who Lukashenko was, as he concluded the trip by saying: "Good luck to you and your people, whom I know love you".

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After Russia's full-scale invasion in Feb, 2022, Silvio condemned his old friend, saying that he was deeply disappointed by Putin's behavior. This didn't last long, and already in Sep, 2022, he defended Vladimir Putin, saying that he invaded Ukraine only because he...

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Europe

2 minute read · April 9, 2022 8:51 PM GMT+3 · Last Updated a year ago

Italy's Berlusconi 'deeply disappointed and saddened' by Putin

Reuters



Former Italian Prime Minister and leader of the Forza Italia (Go Italy!) party Silvio Berlusconi attends a rally in Rome, Italy, April 9, 2022. REUTERS/Remo Casilli

MILAN, April 9 (Reuters) - Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said on Saturday he was deeply disappointed and saddened by the behaviour of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The tycoon, who for years enjoyed a close friendship with the Russian leader, said Putin had to take full responsibility in the eyes of the world over the invasion of Ukraine.

"I got to know him 20 years ago and he had always seemed to me a man of democracy and peace... what a pity," Berlusconi said, addressing a convention of his conservative Forza Italia party in Rome.

...wanted to replace the "Kyiv regime" with "decent people". In Oct, 2022, Italy's LaPresse news agency published a secretly taped recording where Berlusconi stated that he's recently "reconnected" with Putin. Putin had sent him 20 bottles of vodka, a clear violation...

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Silvio Berlusconi


This article is more than 5 months old

Berlusconi said he received vodka from Putin for birthday, reports say

La Presse agency publishes audio suggesting 20 bottles arrived for 86th birthday after pair 're-establish' ties

Angela Giuffrida in Rome
Tue 18 Oct 2022 19:34 BST

f t e



📷 Silvio Berlusconi reportedly said he returned Putin's gesture by sending him bottles of Lambrusco wine. Photograph: Francesco Fotia/Rex/Shutterstock

Silvio Berlusconi has allegedly said Vladimir Putin gave him 20 bottles of vodka for his birthday after he "re-established" relations with the Russian president.

Berlusconi turned 86 on 29 September, four days after a coalition including his Forza Italia party won the general election.

Italy's three-time former prime minister, an old friend of Putin's, is reported to have told a meeting of Forza Italia parliamentarians in Rome on Tuesday that the shipment of vodka was accompanied by a "very sweet letter".

Forza Italia denied he made the comments, but [an audio clip published by La Presse news agency appeared to suggest otherwise](#).

In the audio reported by La Presse, Berlusconi said he returned Putin's gesture by sending him bottles of Lambrusco wine.

...of the ongoing sanctions, and a "really sweet letter" for 86th his birthday. He had also sent Putin some Italian sparkling wine, Lambrusco. In the same tape he also suggested that the "West was already at war with Russia" because it is "giving Ukraine weapons and money".

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He also blamed Ukraine for Russia's invasion, referring to the 2014 Minsk agreement and saying that "Ukraine throws this treaty to hell a year later and begins attacking the borders of the two republics [referring to puppets states of DPR and LPR]".

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Comments trigger outrage

On Wednesday, LaPresse news agency had published portions of an audio recording of [Berlusconi](#) speaking to members of his Forza Italia party the day before.

In the recording, Berlusconi claimed that Ukraine had broken the terms of the 2014 Minsk peace accord by "attacking" the "newly created republics in Donbass."

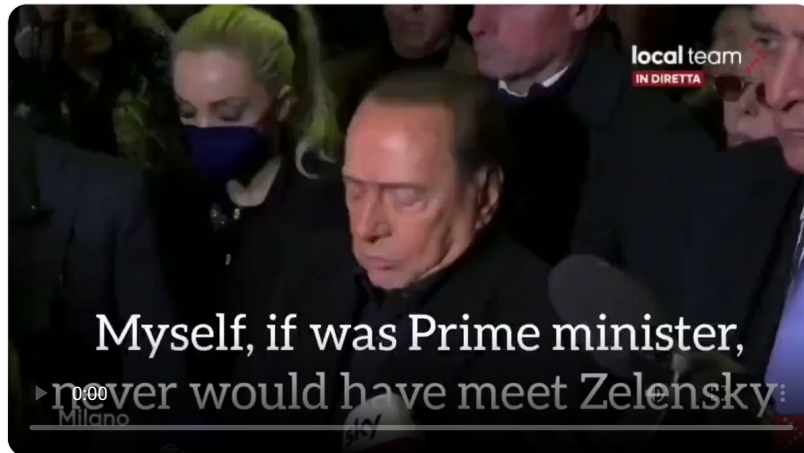
This put immense pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin when these regions asked for help, said Berlusconi. Putin caved and dispatched Russian troops only to be met with "unexpected and unpredictable situation of resistance from the Ukrainians, who received funds and weapons from the West from the third day," he said.

The comments triggered immediate outrage, particularly considering [Forza Italia is set](#) to be a member of Italy's new coalition government.

Giorgia Meloni, widely expected to be Italy's next prime minister, reacted to the comments on Wednesday saying that her new administration would support NATO and fully a part of Europe.

On 12 Feb, 2023, Berlusconi blamed Zelenskyy for the war in Ukraine, saying that "All [Zelenskyy] had to do was to stop attacking the two autonomous republics of the Donbas and this would not have happened".

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He added that "I judge, very, very negatively the behavior of this gentleman", referring to Zelenskyy. He also criticized Meloni for going to dinner with Zelenskyy, saying that he wouldn't have done the same.

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It seems that at the moment the only person who's holding down the pro-Kremlin and pro-Putin bloc led by Matteo Salvini and Silvio Berlusconi is Giorgia Meloni, whose fiery speech on 23 Mar, 2023, is clear evidence that she still stands for Ukraine.

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In today's [#vatniksoup](#) we'll do our first trip to Italy as I introduce an Italian politician and Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, Matteo Salvini ([@matteosalvinimi](#)). He's best-known for his Russia-related funding scandals, and for his Euroskeptic and pro-Putin views.

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10:37 AM · Mar 15, 2023 

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