

## ***Holocaust memorial destruction angers Rome officials, Jewish leaders***

January 15, 2012

ROME (JTA) – The destruction of a newly installed Holocaust memorial in Rome must be "condemned with absolute firmness," the city's mayor said.

Gianni Alemanno called the vandalism, in which three memorial "stumbling stones" were removed just two days after they had been installed in downtown Rome, a "vile" and "shameful" gesture.

Stumbling stone memorials are special cobblestones with brass tops bearing inscriptions citing the names of Holocaust victims. They are placed in streets outside the place where the people commemorated lived or worked. Placing such memorials started in Germany and has spread to other countries in recent years.

The unknown vandals in Rome removed three of the memorial stones placed Jan. 10 and substituted them with normal cobblestones.

"It is an outrageous theft," said Adachiara Zevi, who heads the Rome stumbling stone project. "It was certainly premeditated because whoever carried this out certainly brought normal cobblestones with him to substitute the brass ones. It's an incredible episode."

The vandalism came in the wake of several recent high-profile incidents of anti-Semitism and racism in Italy, including several incidents of anti-Semitism on the Internet.

"We have run out of patience," said Riccardo Pacifici, president of the Rome Jewish community.

Pacifici said that every year at around the national Holocaust Memorial Day, Jan. 27, "we witness outrages and provocations that we cannot tolerate anymore, and we will respond in a decisive way."

Click to login and [write a letter](#) to the editor or sign up for the Daily Briefing.

This article was made possible by the support of readers like you. [Donate to JTA now.](#)