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## **SLOVENIA ACCUSES TAJANI, SALVINI OF WORLD WAR II REVISIONISM**

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Tajani and Salvini had spoken at the event on Sunday in Basovizza, near the Slovenian border, close to where many of the victims were killed by Titos Yugoslav partisans.

The victims were often thrown alive into deep sinkholes known as foibe.

Salvini made a direct comparison between the children who died at Auschwitz and the children who died at Basovizza.

There are no first- or second-class martyrs, he said.

Im deeply concerned by inadmissible statements by senior Italian officials suggesting that the foibe (killings) represented ethnic cleansing, Slovenian President Borut Pahor said in a letter sent on Monday to his Italian counterpart Sergio Mattarella.

Its unprecedented historical revisionism. Fascism was a fact and its objective was destroying the Slovenian people, Slovenian Prime Minister Marjan Sarec said in a tweet on Monday.

Speaking at the same event as Salvini on Sunday, Tajani had said thousands of innocent victims (were) killed for being Italians... by soldiers wearing a red star on their heads.

He ended his speech by saying Long live Italian Istria, long live Italian Dalmatia, referring to what had been Italian territories between the two world wars and which are today part of Slovenia and Croatia.

During Mondays session of the European Parliament, Tajani said: Im sorry if the meaning of my words was misinterpreted. It wasnt my intention to offend anybody.

He explained that his reference to Italian Istria and Dalmatia was in no way a territorial claim.

I was referring to Istrian and Dalmatian Italian-speaking exiles, their children and grandchildren, many of whom were present at the ceremony, he went on.

The massacres have long been a source of contention between Italy and Slovenia.

The two countries disagree on the total number of victims of the killings, with figures ranging from the hundreds to over 10,000.

The memory of the killings has also been controversial within Italy.

In the decades after the war, Italys attempts to turn the page on its Fascist history, and the crimes committed by its own forces in Yugoslavia, meant that the foibe massacres were largely commemorated only by the far-right.

It was only in 2004 that the right-wing government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi initiated a national day of remembrance for the massacres.

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2019/news/slovenia-accuses-tajani-salvini-of-world-war-ii-revisionism/>

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