

## First Mafia-free supermarket opens in Sicily

DAILY NEWS STAFF

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It's an offer honest shoppers in Sicily couldn't refuse.

Sicily's first racket-free supermarket is opening in the capital city of [Palermo](#) - on an island which has long been known as the stronghold of organized crime and the birthplace of the Mafia.

The store will only sell products from firms which - like his shop - refuse to pay the Mafia protection money, says owner [Fabio Messina](#). It's part of a larger campaign by a group called Addiopizzo - or "Goodbye Pizzo" (the local term for mob protection money) - that started as a student group pasting flyers across the city exhorting shop keepers to resist the Costra Nostra.

"Even the tiniest purchase, no matter how inexpensive, is enough to send out a signal so that things can change," [Messina](#)'s partner, Valeria Di Leo, told the AFP.

Pizzo has long been a major part of Sicilian culture - where the average store owner is forced to pay an estimated \$200 to \$600 to avoid having their stores or restaurants vandalized or even firebombed.

A study published in January found that the local economy loses almost \$1.5 billion dollars to Mafia graft each year, equal to 1.3 percent of Sicily's gross domestic product.

"For too long ordinary citizens of Palermo and business people have been held to ransom, and now we are fighting back" said [Pasquale Masucci](#), one of the store's first customers, told Britain's [Daily Mail newspaper](#).

With wire reports