

Italy: ASGI statement over Lampedusa video highlights

Following the shocking images of naked migrants being sprayed with disinfectant that was aired on the Rai 2 evening news programme, ASGI has issued a statement (translation, below).

Lampedusa: on migrants' day, a rip in the veil over reception practices

Associazione studi giuridici sull'immigrazione (A.S.G.I.) expresses its disdain for the practices – documented by the national media – that migrants from both sexes were subjected to in the first aid and reception centre (CPSA) in Lampedusa.

They are inhuman and degrading treatments, forbidden by the Convention for the protection of human rights and which constitute possible criminal offences that, beyond their judicial categorisation, are symbolic of living conditions in the administrative detention centres: they are a further reason to forcefully call for their immediate closure.

In fact, it is not by chance that using mobile phones equipped with cameras is forbidden in CIEs (identification and expulsion centres). This is not for the purpose of protecting privacy, but rather, it is a precise political will to prevent documentation of what happens there to emerge. It is not the first time that the Lampedusa CPSA is the focus of news reports about the illegal acts that are committed there, and already in 2011 - at the time of the “Arab spring” - hundreds of migrants were held there illegally for weeks without any judicial control and denied any form of legal protection.

Today, the courage of the young Syrian man who documented the “disinfestation” rips through the veil of silence that pretends not to see and allows - even if it is only through the omission of supervision duties - treatments that are inhuman and degrading for people's dignity to be perpetrated with impunity. The responsibility for such illegal practices does not just lie with the material authors of such conduct, but also with the political and administrative authorities who, thanks to the management of CIEs through a regime involving agreements between the prefecture [the prefect is the government representative in charge of security] and private management bodies, enable the *de facto* privatisation of administrative detention in Italy, removing it from private control and separating it from civil society.

ASGI deems that the best and least hypocritical way to celebrate “migrants' day” – which falls today, 18 December – is that of closing CIEs and radically reforming the Italian expulsion system, making it compliant with international treaties and conventions, with the [European] Union's norms and with the Republican Constitution.

The original statement, in Italian, is available at: http://www.asgi.it/home_asgi.php?n=3021&l=it

Rai 2 evening news, video showing naked migrants being disinfected in the centro di primo soccorso e accoglienza in Lampedusa, 16.12.2013

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=XL7M3ykTci0