
The Journalists' Committee welcomes the decision to open migrants' detention centres to journalists

The Journalists' Committee welcomes the decision taken by the Justice and Home Affairs Minister Carmel Mifsud Bonnici to open migrants' detention centres to journalists.

Committee chairperson Karl Schembri said this was a positive development for journalists in Malta and recalled the role of the Journalists' Committee in calling for open access to detention centres:

"As the Journalists' Committee, we organised a 100-signature petition from all journalists which was presented to the Prime Minister and European Commissioner Franco Frattini. Today, the new minister has finally taken on board our appeal and open up detention centres to journalists."

The Journalists' Committee has for years argued that detention centres and prisons were kept closed to journalists against all sense of transparency and accountability, while NGOs and international authorities were given access on an ad hoc basis.

The result has been a confusing picture of the real situation inside these places where potential human rights breaches occur. The Committee welcomes the reversal of policy, especially after having stressed this point in its electoral proposals to the political parties ahead of the election and in its meeting with parliamentary secretary for information Chris Said.

"Previously, there was no way of independently corroborating government's allegations that asylum seekers in detention were being kept in dignified conditions. This new policy is a step forward for transparency," Schembri said.

Il-Kumitat tal-Gurnalisti jilqa d-decizjoni biex jinfethu ic-centri maghluqa tad-detenzjoni ghall-immigranti

Il-Kumitat tal-Gurnalisti jilqa d-decizjoni mehuda mill-Ministru ghall-Gustizzja u ta' l-Intern Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, sabiex jaghti l-access lill-gurnalisti fic-centri tad-detenzjoni maghluqa ghall-immigranti irregolari.

Ic-cermen tal-Kumitat, Karl Schembri, qal li dan kien zvilupp pozittiv ghall-gurnalisti Maltin u spjega r-rwol tal-Kumitat tal-Gurnalisti sabiex ikun hemm access ghall-istampa f'dawn ic-centri tad-detenzjoni.

"Bhala Kumitat tal-Gurnalisti, ipprezentajna petizzjoni ta' l-fuq minn 100 firma mill-gurnalisti kollha lill-Prim Ministru u l-Kummissarju Ewropew Franco Frattini. Illum, il-ministru l-gdid ghall-intern sa fl-ahhar ta widen lil din l-ghajta taghna biex jinfethu c-centri tad-detenzjoni ghall-iskrutinju pubbliku."

Għal bosta snin, il-Kumitat tal-Gurnalisti tenna l-argument li kontra kull sens ta' trasparenza u kontabilità, il-ħabsijiet u l-postijiet ta' detenzjoni baqghu totalment magħluqa għall-istampa, filwaqt li NGOs u awtoritajiet internazzjonali jithallew jidhlu sporadikament.

Ir-riżultat huwa konfużjoni u stampa mħawda dwar x'inhi s-sitwazzjoni f'dawn il-postijiet fejn id-drittijiet tal-bniedem potenzjalment qeghdin jinkisru – anki skond rapporti varji li joħorġu kull tant żmien.

Il-Kumitat għalhekk jilqa d-decizjoni sabiex tinqata' din il-politika antikwata, speċjalment wara li saret emfasizi fuq dan il-punt f'laqgħat dwar il-proposti elettorali lill-partiti politici u f'laqgħa li zammet mas-segretarju parlamentari għall-informazzjoni Chris Said.

“Qabel, ma kien l-ebda mod biex jigu kkoroborati indipendentament l-allegazzjonijiet tal-gvern li l-immigranti irregolari kienu qeghdin jinzammu f'kundizzjonijiet dinjitużi. Din d-decizjoni huwa pass il-quddiem għat-trasparenza,” qal Schembri.