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


Ghal bosta snin, il-Kumitat tal-Gurnalisti tenna l-argument li kontra kull sens ta’ trasparenza u kontabilità, il-habsijiet u l-postijiet ta’ detenzjoni baqghu totalment maghluqa għall-istampa, filwaqt li NGOs u awtoritajiet internazzjonali jithallew jidħlu sporadikament.

Ir-risultat huwa konfużjoni u stampa mħawda dwar x’inhi s-sitwazzjoni f’dawn il-postijiet fejn id-drittijiet tal-bniedem potenzjalment qegħdin jinkisru – anki skond raporti varji li johorġu kull tant żmien.

Il-Kumitat ghalhekk jilqa d-decizjoni sabiex tingqata’ din il-politika antikwata, specjalment wara li saret emfasizi fuq dan il-punt f’laqghat dwar il-proposti elettorali lill-partiti politici u f’laqgħa li zammet mas-segretarju parlamentari għall-informazzjni Chris Said.