

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Italy - Lampedusa: Another crisis of the Italian government's own making

In the wake of the violent incidents that occurred on the island of Lampedusa in the past few days, Amnesty International calls on the Italian government to respond in a way that ensures respect for the human rights of everyone. The Italian government should take all necessary steps to guarantee that its response to arrivals from North Africa does not lead to another predictable and avoidable crisis on the island or elsewhere in Italy.

On 20 September, the media reported that a fire had been started by people held in the overcrowded first aid and reception centre of Lampedusa in protest at their detention there and because of the fear of being forcibly repatriated by the Italian authorities. The fire destroyed most of the facilities in the centre. On 21 September some of those evacuated, protested on the streets of Lampedusa. Clashes with the Italian police and some inhabitants of the island broke out and resulted in several people sustaining injuries. In response to these events, the Italian authorities resumed transferring people to other locations in Italy.

The recent events in Lampedusa should not be used to justify the recourse to measures that violate the human rights of anyone, including those of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. Amnesty International stresses that the crisis was predictable and avoidable since they took place after the Italian government had for months been violating its international and domestic human rights obligations towards those who had arrived on Lampedusa.

Abusive measures taken by the government in recent months include prolonged unlawful deprivation of liberty, including of children, collective summary expulsions, and appalling conditions falling short of international standards in the centres where people were held.

Amnesty International, whose delegates visited the island of Lampedusa earlier this year, reiterates its call on the Italian Government to respect the rights of all migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. In particular, the organization urges the Italian authorities not to resort to detention, particularly of children and not to carry out collective and summary expulsions. On the contrary, authorities must ensure that reception facilities are operational and adequately equipped to provide assistance to migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, with particular attention to children and other groups facing specific risks. Authorities shall also ensure access to information, including on the right to seek international protection.

See also:

Q&A: NORTH AFRICA MIGRANTS IN ITALY
ITALY URGED TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEE RIGHTS IN RESPONDING TO
MIGRANT AND ASYLUM SEEKER FLOWS FROM TUNISIA
THOUSANDS STRANDED IN 'APPALLING' CONDITIONS ON ITALIAN ISLAND
ITALY: AVERT ANOTHER HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AND DESIST FROM SUMMARY
REMOVALS

***ITALY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
ITALIAN AUTHORITIES FOLLOWING THE RESEARCH VISIT TO LAMPEDUSA AND MINEO
ITALY: NEW LEGISLATION VIOLATES RIGHT TO LIBERTY FOR MIGRANTS***

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