

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Italy: Avert another humanitarian crisis and desist from summary removals

Amnesty International has addressed a set of recommendations to the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and the Minister of Interior Roberto Maroni, following a recent research visit by delegates of the organization to the island of Lampedusa and the “Village of Solidarity” in the environs of Mineo (Catania province). Among other things, Amnesty International has expressed profound concern in relation to the ongoing collective summary removals of Tunisian nationals from Lampedusa to Tunis, following the signing of an agreement between the Italian and Tunisian governments.

Through letters sent on 20 April 2011, Amnesty International urged the Italian government to put in place a clear plan to avoid any further humanitarian crisis in Lampedusa and elsewhere in Italy and ensure the full respect of the human rights of those arriving. The individual needs of anyone arriving in Italy, including those landing on Lampedusa, should be promptly and adequately assessed, including through effective screening on arrival. Necessary resources to ensure access to information, for example on the right to seek asylum, should be provided promptly, and the principle of *non-refoulement* should be respected at all times.

With regard to the centre in Mineo, to which asylum-seekers have been transferred from other locations in Italy, Amnesty International has urged the Italian authorities to establish, without delay, adequate asylum procedures. The organization has also called on the Italian authorities to end immediately the transfers of any asylum-seekers from other regions of Italy with established community ties in their present location, and/or whose claims are already being processed and/or who have already secured legal assistance. In those circumstances, transfers should only take place after the individuals concerned have given their full and informed consent.

Disturbed by the lack of transparency around the removals, Amnesty International has also called on the Italian government to make public the agreement reached by Italian and Tunisian authorities that is the basis of the summary removals of Tunisian nationals since 7 April. The Italian authorities should immediately desist from any further summary removals and ensure that anyone arriving on Italian shores is adequately screened to assess any potential protection needs. Any new people arriving should be guaranteed access to fair and effective asylum procedures, as well as access to procedures to challenge removal on other grounds, if they wish to do so.

Prompted by ongoing and widespread reports of a humanitarian crisis unfolding on the island, an Amnesty International delegation visited Lampedusa between 29 March and 1 April 2011. The delegation also visited the “Village of Solidarity” centre in Mineo, Sicily on 2 April.

See also:

[Italy: Amnesty International findings and recommendations to the Italian authorities following the research visit to Lampedusa and Mineo](#)

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