



Communiqué: for the implementation of freedom of correspondence with the outside world and provision of a wi-fi network at the Lampedusa hotspot

We are organizations that for years have been involved in search and rescue at sea, in struggles for the rights of people on the move and the creation of support infrastructures and solidarity with migrants.

After having approached the competent authorities - by means of a letter addressed to the Prefecture of Agrigento and for information to the Ministry of Interior - we intend to highlight the obstacles to the access to the freedom of communication with the outside world that people encounter during their stay at the Lampedusa hotspot and, at the same time, to urge an intervention to guarantee the exercise of this right, through the provision of a freely accessible wi-fi network.

Communicating is today, for each of us, an essential need, which becomes fundamental in situations of limitation of personal freedom. This is the case of the people who pass through the Lampedusa hotspot after surviving the crossing of the central Mediterranean, an extremely dangerous journey, during which they lose all contact with their families and friends.

In a situation of extreme uncertainty, where people feel stranded and abandoned with no chance of living a normal and satisfying life on Lampedusa, the hotspot is an environment that puts a strain on those who cross it.

The hotspot continues to have to receive thousands of people in transit, far exceeding its theoretical capacity of 389 places. This means that the material and social conditions in which they live fall short of the minimum standards of dignity, health, and protection. This is aggravated by the fact that, for the migrants who pass through it, personal freedom is in fact restricted: it is not possible to leave the hotspot either independently or by requesting authorization.

Transfers by sea or air, when active, are in any case insufficient, and overcrowding becomes a structural condition for many months of the year. In addition, people with special needs are often forced to stay in the center longer than others, even for considerable periods of time, due to the failure to find adequate reception solutions. This represents one of the paradoxes: greater vulnerability often implies a longer stay in a space that should accommodate people for the shortest possible time.

Being able to communicate with the outside world in this context becomes indispensable. Yet, on Lampedusa, not only is it not possible to leave the center; it is in fact impossible to have communication with the outside - as should be guaranteed by the [hotspot's internal regulations](#) and

by the [Convention](#) between the Prefecture of Agrigento and Badia Grande, the cooperative society that manages the center.

Having access to an internet connection, on the other hand, would be a healing tool, capable of providing momentary relief to people still traumatized by the crossing: an exchange of messages on instant messaging apps or a brief video call with friends and relatives to communicate that they have arrived could significantly improve people's psychological wellbeing and help them to move on despite the difficulties they are going through. For shipwreck survivors, who have also had to endure the trauma of the death of friends or relatives, being able to talk/see with their loved ones or the loved ones of the deceased can be of enormous help.

Access to an internet connection would also be essential to have contact with civil society and/or legal advisors, and thus to be informed about one's rights, including the right to asylum, in a context where the information received is often limited and/or only partial, and the cultural mediation service often appears to be insufficient or guaranteed only in vehicular languages. Lack of information in this regard can determine the outcome of the migration path or jeopardize the possibility of remaining in Italy altogether.

Having an internet connection also provides, more broadly, the possibility to conduct research on the opportunities that lie ahead, and to develop plans for a brighter future based on the information that can be found online.

Exchanged data and devices that, in reality, correspond to thousands of reassuring messages between separated families, familiar voices that help survivors cope better with a difficult situation and make important decisions for their future.

This connection gives people the feeling of being connected to the outside world, of being alive, in stark contrast to the sense of abandonment and isolation felt by every person who has to challenge borders.

What the signatories of the communiqué are asking the competent authorities to do - set up a wi-fi network at the Lampedusa hotspot - is a measure that would be easily implemented, even at a modest cost, but which would bring about a significant improvement in the protection of people arriving on Italian soil.

ASGI – Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'immigrazione
Cledu – Clinica Legale dei Diritti Umani
FTDES – Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Économiques et Sociaux
Louise Michel
Maldusa
Mediterranea Saving Humans
Mem.Med – Memoria Mediterranea
Refugees in Libya
R42-Sailtraining
Sea Watch
Watch the Med – Alarm Phone