The Ministry of the Interior is reducing the effectiveness of inspections at repatriation detention centers, creating fertile ground for abuse and human rights violations.

With the Circular of 18 April 2025 (Accesso-ai-CPR-nota-18042025.pdf), the Ministry of the Interior introduced new restrictions on the inspection powers of parliamentarians and regional councilors, also limiting the ability of expert delegations, who monitor the conditions of the centers and report any critical issues, to access them.

Until now, this right of visitation was protected by law precisely because it was considered essential to ensuring respect for human rights and transparency regarding the conditions of persons deprived of their liberty. Article 67 of Law No. 354 of 1975 on the penitentiary system recognizes and guarantees the right to visit places of detention for certain individuals, even without authorization. These individuals include members of parliament, regional councilors, MEPs, magistrates, and Guarantors of the rights of persons deprived of their liberty. Since 2022, the so-called Lamorgese Directive has extended these guarantees to CPRs, precisely to ensure democratic oversight and prevent these facilities from remaining grey areas. This directive guarantees the right to enter without authorization, communicate with inmates, and inspect the material and health conditions of the centers.

However, the new circular from the Ministry of the Interior marks a significant change of direction. An administrative act introduces measures that severely restrict access to CPRs and verify their conditions. The main changes concern the following aspects:

- Visitors' companions must belong to the authorized visitor's office. This means that figures such as lawyers, journalists, independent experts, and associations who often accompany parliamentarians and councilors on visits to CPRs can only enter if they are part of the institutional staff;
- The powers of parliamentarians and councilors are significantly reduced, transforming inspections into mere formal visits. Actual inspection powers and the ability to conduct in-depth checks remain exclusively vested in the Guarantors of the Rights of Persons Deprived of Their Liberty;
- Visit management is left to the discretion of the police force and the management bodies, who can establish their timing and procedures. The circular establishes that visits cannot cause delays in the performance of official duties by the center's staff, thus granting these entities the power to

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regulate every aspect of the inspections.
- The person in charge of the surveillance service will decide whether individuals accessing the CPRs without authorization will also be able to conduct interviews with detainees.

With these measures, these places become even more isolated and distant from the external gaze of society.

In recent years, many abuses within the centers have come to light only thanks to the inspection work of parliamentarians and civil society organizations, who were able to document and report critical conditions and systemic violations of fundamental rights in the CPRs. Inspections of the CPRs have revealed filthy and overcrowded cells, inadequate healthcare, and the widespread use of psychotropic drugs to address detainees' mental distress. Numerous visits have been crucial in uncovering incidents of violence by staff and law enforcement, as well as suspicious deaths within the facilities, leading the judiciary and the public to question the management of these facilities.

These are not isolated cases: the picture is the same in all CPRs. In these places, where people who have committed no crime are detained, human rights violations are constantly being recorded. Faced with these realities, the logical response should be to close the centers and dismantle the system. Instead, the Ministry of the Interior chooses to close them to civil society, allowing it to continue unchallenged in its trampling on the dignity and rights of migrants. Restricting inspection powers reduces transparency and complicates monitoring of compliance by managers. Above all, it increases the daily risk of inhuman and degrading treatment. This circular is a serious and shameful act, confirming the government's hostility toward fundamental rights and its deliberate choice to prioritize silence and opacity over legality and transparency.

Source(s)

- Coalizione Italiana per le Libertà e i Diritti civili | Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (9 September, 2025), Ispezioni nei CPR a rischio: la circolare del Ministero dell’Interno [Inspections in CPRs at risk: the circular of the Ministry of the Interior], https://cild.eu/blog/2025/09/09/ispezioni-nei-cpr-a-rischio-la-circolare-del-ministero-dellinterno/

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