



IRENE CHRIST

Interview - page 8 ▶

Wednesday, 19 September 2007 – issue 23

www.maltatoday.com.mt

TV House to make way for flats

JAMES DEBONO

TELEVISION House, the broadcasting landmark in the nation's collective memory, is set to make way for apartments, garages and penthouses as the Public Broadcasting Services is to be physically downsized to operate from a part of Rediffusion House on St Luke's Road.

The proposal emerges from two applications presented

by PBS chairman Joe Fenech Conti to the Malta Environment and Planning Authority last week.

The first application is for the demolition of Rediffusion House and the construction of a ground level and mezzanine commercial space, as well as flats on the first, second and third floors, and penthouses and underlying garages.

The second application is for the demolition of Television

House and the construction of apartments and penthouses.

According to the Ministry for Investments and Information Technology, the development of apartments is set to generate the money for the construction of the new PBS headquarters on part of the existing Rediffusion House.

Although PBS is applying to construct the apartments, the state broadcaster will not involve itself in the sale of apart-

ments as the site will be sold before the development takes place.

This emerges from a second and final reply sent to MaltaToday by the ministry yesterday afternoon. In an earlier reply, the government dissociated itself completely from PBS's application to develop apartments.

When first contacted, a ministry spokesperson claimed that as soon as PBS announced

its intention to include a residential component in the migration project, "the Ministry had immediately rejected this proposal and directed PBS to remove any form of residential element from the project."

"Moreover, it is pertinent to point out that the project has as yet not been approved by the Ministry," the spokesperson told MaltaToday.

After MaltaToday contacted an incredulous Joe ▶ page 6

Women exposed to threat of rape and violence in detention centres - NGOs



Government's policy to segregate vulnerable persons in detention, including single women, has not been implemented, NGOs claim (file photo)

RAPHAEL VASSALLO

NGOs have shed light on the "precarious situation" of women and other vulnerable persons in closed detention centres, claiming that the current practice of housing women together with single men in camps such as the Lyster Detention Centre in Hal Far is "not acceptable".

Detention Services commander Colonel Brian Gatt yesterday confirmed there are currently 125 women, most of whom are unaccompanied, in detention at the Lyster Centre. According to agencies such as the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), many of these women have to share their living space – including bathrooms – with men.

There are no locks on toilet doors, nor any shower curtains to provide even a modicum of individual privacy. Sleeping quarters are often mixed, and there are no locks (in some cases, no doors) for the protection of vulnerable persons.

As a result of all this, both JRS and UNHCR believe that women in detention are exposed to the constant threat of serious physical and psychological harm, and that they are occasionally victims of physical, and possibly

also sexual, violence.

These are among the details supplied by JRS lawyer Dr Katrine Camilleri, and confirmed separately by UNHCR's Malta representative, Mr Neil Falzon.

However, Col. Gatt has emphatically denied these allegations, claiming that single women are housed separately from men, that the toilet doors all have locks, and that "there have been no reports of any women hurt during violent incidents in detention centres."

It is the second case of utterly conflicting reports by official authorities and aid agencies regarding detention practices, after an allegation of children in detention was similarly rebutted, this time by the Department of Information, in June 2006.

Dr Katrine Camilleri stands by her view that single women are exposed to domestic violence during detention. "There have been occasions where women claim to have been hurt during violent incidents," she confirms. "I have never been ▶ page 6

Lm1 million of your taxes pocketed by the parties

MATTHEW VELLA

MALTA'S two political parties have been handed the handsome sum of Lm1,092,602 over the last 14 years – all taxpayers' money which has never been accounted for, sources confirmed with MaltaToday.

Yesterday, party whips Joe Mizzi (MLP) and Mario Galea (MLP) said they had no problem with presenting audited statements of the cash they received from the budgetary vote for the House of Representatives, effectively confirming they had never been obliged to account for the use of this money.

But both whips also confirmed the money had been used to finance party operations and even handed to the political party functionaries – confirming that part of the cash from the parliamentary vote was used for activities or operations not directly related to parliamentary work. ▶ page 4

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