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Public may present written observations to Caruana Galizia inquiry, board says

NGO Repubblika files written observations

National Daphne Caruana Galizia Court

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File photo

The board conducting the public inquiry into the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia reconvened on Friday with an open invitation to all those wishing to file written observations to step forward.

The three judges handling the inquiry tasked with determining whether any act or omission by the state could have avoided the journalist's murder made this announcement after being informed by the family's lawyers that NGO Repubblika wished to file its written observations on the case.

"This is a public inquiry... the first inquiry of its kind in Malta," the judges said, pointing out that they were willing to accept similar submissions by any interested members of the public, much in the same way as public inquiries are handled under the UK system.

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Repubblika president Robert Aquilina took the witness stand presenting a lengthy document, describing the assassination as a "terrorist act 'di stampo mafioso'" intended not only to terminate the journalist's life but also to silence her activism.

The organisation also called for the "desperately urgent" need to address the "extensive mafia infiltration into our country" through "vulnerable" economic activities, as a result of which Malta has become a "dangerous place for people resisting organised crime".

Repubblika was set up as a result of the journalist's assassination and thus presenting its observations before the public inquiry was deemed opportune, Aquilina said.

The board also invited the state to make its submissions but State Advocate Chris Soler said the state was not in a position to comply since the board itself, in earlier pronouncements, had said that the terms of reference of the inquiry gave no *locus standi* to the state.

The government was to have an observer status, unlike the victim's family, and so, it was "very late in the day to grant such right to the state," Soler pointed out.

"We have not been treated as a party," he went on, explaining that his office, also under his predecessor Victoria Buttigieg, had not been allowed access to the inquiry records and even to

certain testimonies heard behind closed doors.

“Repubblika has no rights here and yet it has filed a note,” the judges pointed out.

“Point taken,” came the reply.

“This is an inquiry not a fully fledged lawsuit. It is unprecedented in terms of law and what happens in England is irrelevant,” the State lawyer declared.

The rest of the hearing proceeded in private, as the family lawyers wished to update the board on certain matters including the long-awaited data from Yorgen Fenech’s phone.


“Do you have that officially?” Madam Justice Abigail Lofaro asked.

“We’d rather speak about that behind closed doors,” lawyers Therese Comodin Cachia and Jason Azzopardi replied.

The inquiry continues on February 8 when Mark Anthony Sammut will testify. Sammut has challenged the veracity of Joseph Muscat’s declaration that he never tried to incite hatred against Caruana Galizia.

Repubblika's submissions can be read in the pdf link below.

Attached files

 [Repubblika's submissions](#)

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