



THIRD URGENT NOTICE: Complete Inaction on Illegal Smoking, Health Standards Violations & Institutional Abuse at Mount Carmel Hospital (in particular in Male Ward 1)

2 messages

Nicholas Grech <nicho.grech@gmail.com> Sat, 3 Oct 2026 at 12:24
To: sph.health@gov.mt, charmaine.gauci@gov.mt, pulizija@gov.mt, commissioner.police@gov.mt, glenn.bedingfield@gov.mt, bedingfieldg@gmail.com, clifton.grima@gov.mt, ian.borg@gov.mt

Dear Superintendent of Public Health, Prof. Charmaine Gauci,

CC:
Police,
Police Commissioner, Angelo Gafa,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health, Ian Borg,
Minister for Justice, Research and Innovation, Clifton Grima,
Minister for Home Affairs And Security, Glenn Bedingfield

I am writing to you for the third time following two previous formal complaints (submitted over two weeks ago and forwarded directly to your attention) regarding severe, widespread violations of the Tobacco (Smoking Control) Act (Cap. 315) and the Smoking in Public Places Regulations (S.L. 315.04) inside Mount Carmel Hospital (in particular in Male Ward 1).

To date, there has been zero intervention, zero enforcement, and no attempt to rectify these unlawful conditions.

1. Failure of Duty and Unenable Position

Your complete lack of response and failure to take enforcement action demonstrates that your Office is failing in its statutory duty to uphold public health standards. By ignoring clear, ongoing illegalities within a state-run healthcare facility, you are showing that your position is no longer tenable.

This total inaction highlights an undeniable conflict of interest: as a government employee, your office appears unable or unwilling to enforce the law against a public entity. Had these identical reports been made regarding a private restaurant or enterprise, enforcement officers would have acted swiftly. Holding a government hospital to a lower standard — at the direct expense of vulnerable patients — is an outrageous double standard. State authorities are once again showing themselves to be "strong with the weak, weak with the strong," existing merely for namesake while covering up institutional abuses.

2. Exploitation and Health Impact on Vulnerable Patients

This negligence directly damages the health of everyone in the ward:
— Non-smoking patients and those with respiratory conditions (such as myself, suffering from asthma): We are continuously forced to inhale hazardous second-hand smoke throughout corridors, dining areas, and ward toilets, with nowhere safe to go.
— Smokers and vulnerable patients: Instead of receiving proper support, patients are exploited by being offered cheap cigars on hospital grounds — products that carry even more severe health risks — acting as cheap bait to double their tobacco intake.

3. Culture of Cover-ups and Past Abuses

This failure to act is part of a broader, systemic pattern of impunity. In past correspondence, I have repeatedly drawn attention to historical abuses within this institution — such as the case of former Nursing Officer Alex Cilia at Male Ward 3B ([a](#), [b](#)) who, with Joe Sant as his Deputy Nursing Officer, engaged in selling contraband cigarettes to vulnerable patients at full price, only to later both be promoted to Senior Nursing Officers (SNOs). The current inaction further confirms that abuses by high-ranking officials and state entities continue to be shielded while victims are left to suffer in silence.

4. Direct Accountability of Responsible Ministers and Police

By copy of this email, I am formally escalating this matter to:
— The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health (Hon. Ian Borg)
— The Minister for Justice, Research and Innovation (Hon. Clifton Grima)
— The Minister For Home Affairs And Security (Hon. Glenn Bedingfield)
— The Police and the Police Commissioner Angelo Gafa

The Police, Police Commissioner, Ministry for Health, Ministry for Justice, and Ministry responsible for Law Enforcement must take joint responsibility for permitting a state healthcare facility to operate in blatant, continuous violation of public health legislation, hygiene standards, and basic human rights.

I demand immediate, unannounced inspection and strict law enforcement within Male Ward 1 to protect patients from ongoing harm.

Nicholas Grech
I.D. no.: 435076M
Male Ward 1, Mount Carmel Hospital

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nicholas Grech** <nicho.grech@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, 24 Sept 2026, 15:57

Subject: URGENT & SECOND FOLLOW-UP: Ongoing Unlawful Smoking & Health Hazard at Mount Carmel Hospital (in particular Male Ward 1)

To: <charmaine.gauci@gov.mt>

Dear Superintendent of Public Health, Prof. Charmaine Gauci,

I am forwarding to your direct attention the correspondence below, which was submitted six days ago to the Superintendence of Public Health and the Environmental Health Directorate regarding severe, illegal smoking infringements inside Mount Carmel Hospital (Male Ward 1).

To date, I have received no tangible response, and no action whatsoever has been taken on the ground. The unlawful indoor smoking, lack of enforcement, and exposure of non-smoking patients to hazardous second-hand smoke continue unabated.

This lack of intervention raises a serious concern: Is your Office finding it difficult or hesitant to take enforcement action simply because the offender is a state/public entity?

Had a similar report been made regarding a private restaurant, establishment, or commercial venue violating the Smoking in Public Places Regulations (S.L. 315.04), enforcement officers would have intervened swiftly. It is unacceptable and deeply troubling that a government healthcare facility — where vulnerable patients are admitted to recover — is held to a lower standard, leaving patients to suffer the consequences with their own physical health.

Furthermore, it remains appalling that cheap cigars (see attachment) — which pose even greater health hazards — continue to be sold on hospital premises, exploiting vulnerable patients for whom cheaper access to tobacco means double the intake and damage.

As the Superintendent of Public Health, I urge you to personally intervene to ensure:

1. An immediate, unannounced inspection of Male Ward 1 by the Environmental Health Directorate;
2. Direct enforcement of the law banning indoor smoking across the ward, corridors, dining area, and toilets; and
3. Protection for non-smoking patients who are currently being subjected to severe, daily health risks.

I look forward to your urgent response and direct intervention in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Grech
I.D. no.: 435076M
Male Ward 1, Mount Carmel Hospital

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Administration - EHD at ODPM - Health Regulation** <admin.ehd@gov.mt>

Date: Tue, 22 Sept 2026, 08:37

Subject: RE: Urgent Formal Complaint & Inquiry: Non-Compliance with Tobacco Legislation and Air Quality Standards at Mount Carmel Hospital (particularly in Male Ward 1)

To: Nicholas Grech <nicho.grech@gmail.com>, Tobacco Products Directive at ODPM - Health Regulation <tpd.ehd@gov.mt>, Complaints at ODPM - Health Regulation <complaints.ehd@gov.mt>

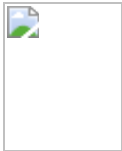
Cc: SPH at ODPM <sph.health@gov.mt>

Good morning, and thank you for your email

Kindly note that your complaint is being referred to the Tobacco Surveillance Unit and the Complaints Unit within the Environmental Health Directorate for the necessary registration, investigation, and subsequent feedback.

Kind Regards

Elvie Debono
Higher Environmental Health Practitioner
Environmental Health
Department for Health Regulation



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From: Nicholas Grech <nicho.grech@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, 18 September 2026 16:27
To: SPH at ODPM <sph.health@gov.mt>; Administration - EHD at ODPM - Health Regulation <admin.ehd@gov.mt>
Subject: Urgent Formal Complaint & Inquiry: Non-Compliance with Tobacco Legislation and Air Quality Standards at Mount Carmel Hospital (particularly in Male Ward 1)

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE the Government Email Infrastructure. DO NOT CLICK LINKS or OPEN attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Superintendence of Public Health,
Environmental Health Directorate,

I am writing to formally bring to your attention severe, ongoing non-compliance regarding smoking regulations and air quality control within Mount Carmel Hospital, specifically inside Male Ward 1, where I am currently confined.

Upon reviewing the Tobacco (Smoking Control) Act (Cap. 315) and the Smoking in Public Places Regulations (S.L. 315.04), which explicitly prohibit smoking within healthcare facilities, I request your urgent clarification and intervention regarding the following critical issues:

1) Legal Basis for Indoor Smoking in Healthcare Facilities

Under Cap. 315 and S.L. 315.04, smoking in enclosed public areas and healthcare institutions is strictly illegal. Could you clarify the specific statutory provision or legal exemption that permits indoor smoking inside enclosed rooms within the wards of Mount Carmel Hospital?

2) Compliance & Certification of Designated Smoking Areas

Have the designated indoor smoking rooms in Mount Carmel Hospital (including Male Ward 1) been officially inspected, certified, and licensed by the relevant health and safety authorities?

Presently, the room in Male Ward 1 is an enclosed space equipped only with a small, basic extractor fan. It fails to meet fundamental technical requirements – such as minimum air exchange rates (10–15 ACH), continuous negative pressure differential, 100% direct outdoor exhaust, proper exhaust discharge points, and hermetic physical separation. As a result, smoke accumulates, trapped inside the room, causing intensified exposure and health hazards for patients using it.

3) Sale and Distribution of Cigars On-Site

It has been observed that cheap cigars are sold within the hospital premises at approximately half the price of standard cigarettes. This price disparity acts as an incentive for vulnerable psychiatric patients, allowing them to purchase double the volume of tobacco products for the same cost. Given the severe health risks associated with tobacco consumption and second-hand smoke exposure, allowing cheap and even more toxic tobacco sales on hospital grounds directly contradicts public health policy.

4) Widespread Unenforced Smoking Bans & Second-Hand Smoke Exposure

Despite 'No Smoking' signage throughout the building, smoking routinely occurs outside designated areas – specifically in ward corridors, dining rooms, and toilets. Staff supervision is lacking in enforcing these prohibitions, leading to continuous passive smoke inhalation across the entire ward. I invite the Environmental Health Directorate to conduct independent air quality, surface residue, or nicotine testing on the ceiling tiles/soffits in the dining area and toilets to confirm these ongoing violations (especially in Male Ward 1).

5) Impact on Non-Smoking Patients and Living Conditions

As a life-long non-smoker who suffers from asthma, the pervasive second-hand smoke has triggered respiratory distress and severely compromised my physical health. To avoid smoke inhalation, I am forced to continually move around the ward searching for breathable air. The supposedly non-smoking communal spaces in Male Ward 1 offer inadequate amenities, forcing patients to sit on backless benches in the dining area, aggravating physical discomfort and posture-related issues.

Given the serious health implications and statutory breaches outlined above, I request:

- An immediate inspection of Male Ward 1 by the Environmental Health Directorate;
- Formal clarification on the legal status and technical certification of the ward's smoking facilities; and
- Urgent enforcement measures to protect non-smoking patients from second-hand smoke exposure.

I look forward to your prompt acknowledgement and response detailing the actions being taken.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Grech

I.D. no.: 435076M

Male Ward 1, Mount Carmel Hospital

3 attachments

 **image003.jpg**
1 KB

 **image001.jpg**
23 KB



JockeyCigars2~2.jpg
1.2 MB

SPH at ODPM <sph.health@gov.mt>

Wed, 7 Oct 2026 at 17:37

To: nicho.grech@gmail.com <nicho.grech@gmail.com>

Cc: Info at POLICE <pulizija@gov.mt>, Commissioner at POLICE <commissioner.police@gov.mt>, Bedingfield Glenn at MHS <glenn.bedingfield@gov.mt>, bedingfieldg@gmail.com <bedingfieldg@gmail.com>, Grima Clifton at MJRI <clifton.grima@gov.mt>, Borg Ian at ODPM <ian.borg@gov.mt>

Dear Mr Grech,

Thank you for your correspondence.

Please be informed that your complaint has been referred to the management of MCH for their attention and review. We will be following up on the matter and will revert accordingly once further information is available.

Thanks and regards

Prof Charmaine Gauci
Superintendent of Public Health, Director General
Department for Health Regulation



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<https://health.gov.mt> | publicservice.gov.mt | fb.com/servizzpubbliku

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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AND MINISTRY FOR HEALTH
Office of the Superintendence of Public Health,

252, Level 1,

Triq Misraħ il-Barrieri,
Santa Venera SVR 1759

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