

Sexual abuse cases

by Joseph Sacco

I refer to the article by Annaliza Borg appearing in your newspaper, TMID 1 June, under the title 'Priestly sexual abuse – victims satisfied at once weekly hearings'. In the said article it was stated that "the court has started to hear (the) case in weekly sessions rather than once every eight months."

I am directed to inform you that from a perusal of the relevant court record it is clear that at no stage was there ever any eight month interval or intervals between one sitting and another, not even during the periods when the presiding magistrate was seriously ill. Indeed, to date, more than 60 sittings have been held by the court, and simple arithmetic disproves the eight month interval assertion. Some of these sittings took several hours, and during other sittings the video-conferencing technique, which is necessarily more time-consuming than the ordinary procedure, was also used.

The article also stated that "it seems that a good amount of pressure was exerted from some authority," suggesting that this authority was the President of the Republic, who had a meeting with the alleged victims of abuse before the Pope's visit in April. Please be advised that at no stage was any contact made, much less any form of pressure exerted, by the President of Malta or his Office. In the instant case, as in all other cases, dates for sittings are determined by the court depending on, among other things, the nature of the case, how long it has been pending, and the myriad other duties of the presiding magistrate or judge, as the case may be.

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