

Blue Lagoon: told to leave a public beach?

*Testing Moviment Graffitti's account of
14 June 2026 against the authorities' response*

THE CLAIM UNDER REVIEW

***“...ordered them to leave and even threatened
to call the police.”***

Moviment Graffitti, press release, 24 June 2026.
Speaker's own words, English text of the release.

VERDICT: LARGELY SUPPORTED

Incident and public status consistent with the evidence read

Version 1.0 · 15 October 2026

Status: no right of reply needed

Prepared from public sources and the Laws of Malta.

Repository: github.com/leandergrech/Mizien

MIZIEN · AN INDEPENDENT FACT-CHECKING PROJECT

Contest a verdict, with evidence: github.com/leandergrech/Mizien/issues

TL;DR

On 24 June 2026 Moviment Graffiti released a video and a statement saying that Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) officials had ordered a group of friends off “a rocky part of the public Blue Lagoon beach”, where there were “no sunbeds or umbrellas”, and “even threatened to call the police”. We could not watch the video. We checked what the authorities said in response, and what the law says about the foreshore.

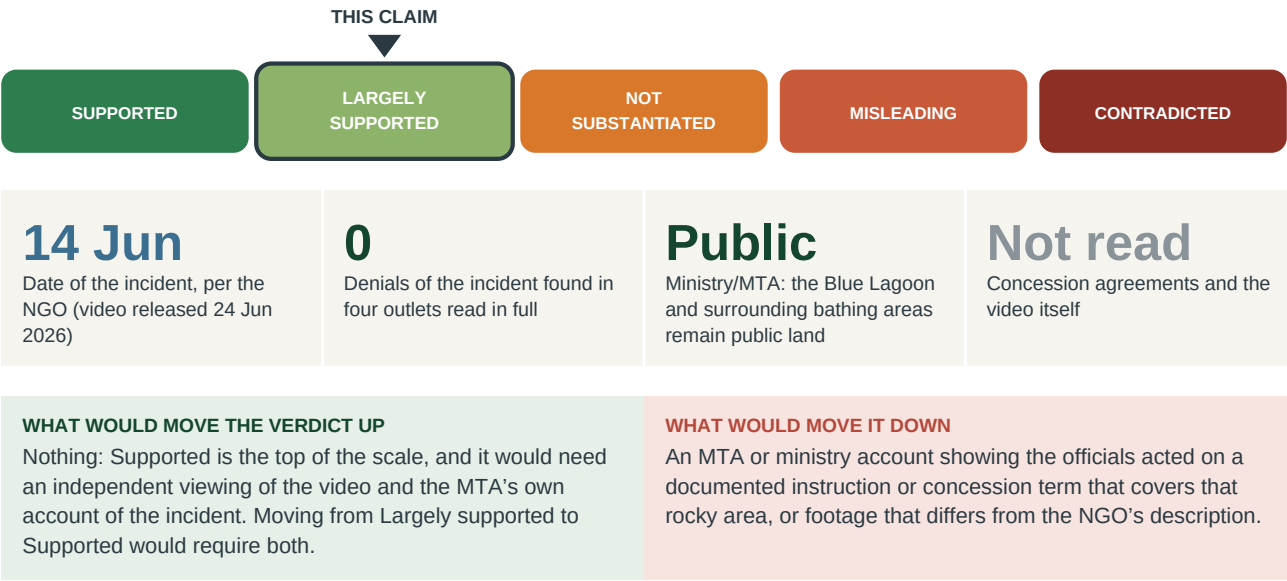
- 1

The account is not disputed. Three outlets describe the video as the NGO does, and a fourth reports the PN’s reaction. We found no denial: the Ministry for Tourism and the MTA answered that the area is public land, and the Prime Minister called it an “isolated episode” (Newsbook’s quotation).
- 2

The authorities’ own statement agrees the area is public. The ministry and the MTA said the Blue Lagoon and the surrounding bathing areas remain public land and are open to everyone (TVM News’s indirect speech, not a direct quotation). The Lands Authority Act lists foreshores and portbeaches as public domain.
- 3

The Prime Minister is reported as saying the opposite. Newsbook reports him as saying the area was “not public”. The two government positions, as reported, do not match; we could not read either in the original.
- 4

What we cannot tell. We did not see the video, the concession agreements, or any MTA instruction to its officers. Whether the concession gives operators any right over the rocky foreshore cannot be tested without those documents.



1

The claim and what we could verify

The claim record paraphrased an outlet’s account. We restated it from the NGO’s own release, published on its website on 24 June 2026 in English and Maltese [1]. We quote only words inside quotation marks in that release. The record’s locator, The Shift [2], is the outlet’s account of the release, not a separate source for the incident.

Source	What it says	Our access	Status
Moviment Graffiti, release, 24 Jun 2026 [1]	The incident “took place on Sunday, 14 June 2026”; officials were “forcing a group of friends, who were lying on a rocky part of the public Blue Lagoon beach, to move away”; “there were no sunbeds or umbrellas in the area where they were sitting”; officials “ordered them to leave and even threatened to call the police”; concessions “in no way grant sunbed operators a permanent right of occupation, let alone the authority to use public officials to remove beachgoers from a public beach”.	Full text read, 15 Oct 2026. The video it links was not viewed.	The claim (speaker’s own words)
Ministry for Tourism and MTA, as reported by TVM News, 24 Jun 2026 [3]	The Blue Lagoon and the surrounding bathing areas remain public land and are accessible to everyone (TVM’s indirect speech, no quotation marks). Also that managing the site requires ongoing decisions and that any protocols must respect the public’s right of access (TVM’s paraphrase).	Full text read.	Response (outlet’s paraphrase)
Prime Minister Robert Abela, as reported by Newsbook, 25 Jun 2026 [4]	Newsbook says he dismissed the video as an “isolated episode”, said the area was “not public”, and praised the MTA for upholding “discipline” (the quoted words are Newsbook’s; no transcript read).	Full text read.	Response (outlet’s report)
Lands Authority Act (Cap. 563), art. 7(2)(c) [5]	The Authority administers “all land that form part of the public domain such as the coastal perimeter, foreshores, harbours, quays, wharfs, pontoons, portbeaches, landing places”.	Consolidated text read, 15 Oct 2026.	Primary (law)
The Shift, Lovin Malta [2, 6]; MaltaToday and PN statement [3, 7]	Describe the video and the NGO’s account in their own words. PN asked who gave the instruction and on what basis the area was said not to be public [3].	The Shift, Lovin Malta, TVM read in full; MaltaToday 403 (titles only) ♦.	Context

WHAT WE COULD NOT READ

The video itself; the concession agreements for sunbeds and umbrellas at the Blue Lagoon; any MTA protocol or instruction for its officers; the ministry statement as issued; any transcript of the Prime Minister. Routes tried are in *literature/CC-098/README.md*; the search log is in *notes.md*.

2

Method

Questions. (A) Did the incident happen as the NGO describes? (B) Is the rocky area part of a public beach? (C) Do sunbed and umbrella concessions confer a right to remove people from public foreshore?

Evidence. For A we compared the NGO’s release with every readable report and with the authorities’ responses, looking for any denial or different account. For B we read the authorities’ response and the Lands Authority Act. For C we looked for the concession terms and found none published. Dates are in *data/cc-098/checks.csv*. A video is a record of events, but we did not watch it, so A rests on an NGO account that is consistent across outlets and uncontested by the authorities.

Grades. Law and primary statements are grade C; reports are grade D; this is a case with no experiment or dataset to test. **Verdicts** follow Appendix A.

3 What the evidence shows

The incident. The NGO says officials of the MTA told a group lying on rocks at the Blue Lagoon to leave, although they were not on sunbeds or umbrellas, and threatened to call the police [1]. The Shift, Lovin Malta and Newsbook give the same account as the NGO's [2, 4, 6]. The PN asked the Government and the MTA to explain who gave the instruction and on what basis the area was said not to be public [3]. The ministry and the MTA did not deny the incident in the statement TVM carries [3]. Reports of the Prime Minister's reply call it an "isolated episode" [4]. We found no account that the incident did not happen.

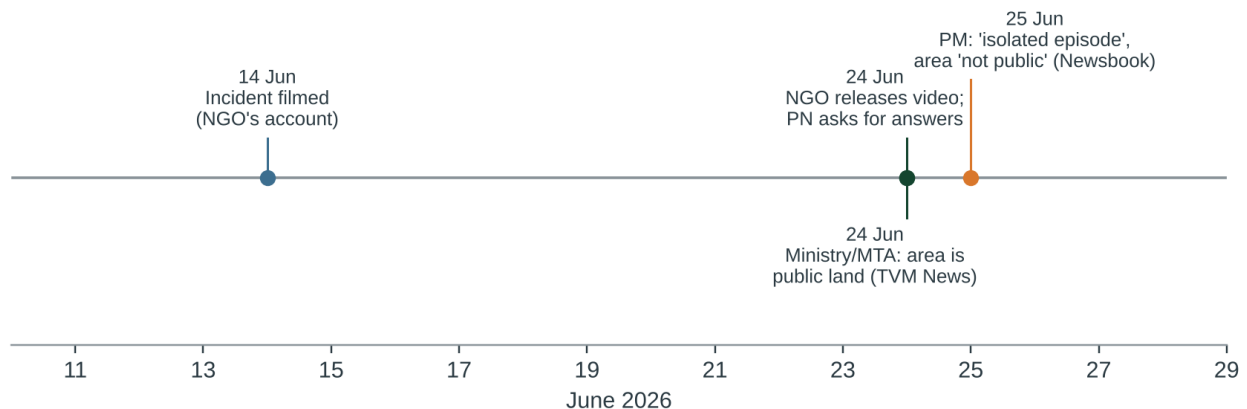


Figure 1. Public record, 14 to 25 June 2026. Sources: Graffiti [1], TVM News [3], Newsbook [4]. Quotation marks are the outlets'.

The area. Under the Lands Authority Act the Authority administers land forming part of the public domain, including foreshores and portbeaches [5]. The ministry and the MTA said the Blue Lagoon and the surrounding bathing areas remain public land and are accessible to everyone, and that any protocols must respect public access [3]. The Prime Minister is reported as saying the area was "not public" [4]. If he meant the area occupied by sunbeds, the two statements could be reconciled; Newsbook's text does not say, and we did not hear the remarks.

The concessions. The NGO says concessions permit sunbeds and umbrellas in "certain parts" of the beach but give no right of permanent occupation [1]. We found no published concession text or legal notice setting the boundaries of the concession areas at the Blue Lagoon (search log in *notes.md*). The Act we read does not itself set beach concession limits [5]. This part of the claim is an argument about legal rights; we can say the authorities' own statement is consistent with it, but not test it against the concession terms.

WHAT THIS DOES AND DOES NOT SHOW

It shows that the account is consistent across outlets, uncontested in what we could read, and in line with the authorities' statement that the area is public. It does not show what the officials were told, where the concession boundary lies, or what the video contains beyond the descriptions.

4

Where the evidence points different ways

Was the rocky area public?

GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS DIFFER

EVIDENCE THE AREA IS PUBLIC

The Ministry for Tourism and the MTA said the Blue Lagoon and the surrounding bathing areas remain public land, accessible to everyone [3]. The Lands Authority Act lists foreshores and portbeaches as public domain [5]. Graffitti says the area is public and that concessions confer no right of occupation [1].

EVIDENCE FOR 'NOT PUBLIC'

The Prime Minister is reported as saying the area was “not public” and as praising the MTA for upholding “discipline” [4]. Newsbook says the officials insisted the area was private property [4]; MaltaToday’s title has them saying “It’s not public” [7♦]. The NGO’s release does not report what the officials said about status [1].

WHY THEY DIFFER, AND WHAT IT MEANS HERE

The ministry/MTA statement and the law, as we read them, support Graffitti on public status. We did not see the concession map or any rule that would put that rocky area outside the public foreshore.

5

Testing the claim

Sub-claim	Said by	What the evidence shows	Rating
A. On 14 Jun 2026 MTA officials ordered a group on a rocky part of the Blue Lagoon beach, with no sunbeds or umbrellas, to leave, and threatened to call the police	Moviment Graffitti [1]	Same account in The Shift, Lovin Malta and Newsbook; PN asked for an explanation; no denial in the ministry/MTA statement or in the Prime Minister’s reported reply [2, 3, 4, 6]. Video not viewed by us.	CONSISTENT
B. The Blue Lagoon beach is public	Moviment Graffitti [1]	Ministry/MTA say the Blue Lagoon and surrounding bathing areas remain public land [3]; the Lands Authority Act treats foreshores as public domain [5]. The PM is reported as saying the area was “not public” [4].	ACCURATE
C. Concessions grant no permanent right of occupation and no authority to use officials to remove beachgoers	Moviment Graffitti [1]	A legal argument. The ministry/MTA statement says protocols must respect the public’s right of access [3]. Concession texts not published or not found; not tested.	NOT TESTED
D. “Government-sponsored web of commercial interests”	Moviment Graffitti [1]	Opinion; the carrying-capacity study and visitor caps are context, not rated.	NOT RATED

6

Verdict and requests for evidence

VERDICT

LARGELY SUPPORTED

The incident and the public status of the beach are consistent with the evidence we could read; the legal argument on concessions is not testable here. Confidence: moderate.

Why. (1) The account of the incident is the same in every outlet we read and the authorities’ responses do not dispute it. (2) The ministry/MTA statement and the Lands Authority Act agree with the NGO that the area is public. (3) We rate *Largely supported* rather than *Supported* because we did not see the video, the concession terms or the MTA’s own account, and the claim on concession rights is a legal argument we could not test. (4) Confidence is moderate because the support is the consistency of reports and an official statement we read second-hand. The rating applies to

the statement, not to the officials involved; the NGO itself does not call for action against them.

Evidence we are asking for

- ☐ The video, or the MTA's account of the 14 June 2026 incident, and any instruction given to its officers.
- ☐ The concession agreements for sunbeds and umbrellas at the Blue Lagoon, with a map of the permitted areas.
- ☐ The ministry's and the MTA's statement of 24 June 2026 as issued, and the Prime Minister's remarks in full.

RIGHT OF REPLY

No right of reply is needed for this verdict (maintainer rule of 5 October 2026). Corrections and further evidence are welcome through the contest form.

7 Limitations

- We did not watch the video. Sub-claim A rests on the NGO's account as repeated by outlets, several of which may rely on the same release.
- The ministry/MTA response is read through TVM News's indirect speech, and the Prime Minister's remarks through Newsbook's quotation marks. We did not read either in the original.
- MaltaToday's pages returned 403 to scripts; we saw only their titles in search results ♦ and use none as evidence.
- Our statement that no denial and no concession text were found covers the four outlets read in full and the web searches listed in notes.md, on 15 October 2026. The MTA's own site and the e-tenders portal were not searched.
- The Lands Authority Act is cited for the public-domain status of foreshores only. We did not read other laws, policies or concession terms that could apply to this site, and we offer no legal opinion.

References

- [1] Moviment Graffiti (24 Jun 2026). VIDEO: Public officials enforce illegitimate private interests at the Blue Lagoon. Press release (EN/MT). <https://movimentgraffitti.org/2026/06/24/video-public-officials-enforce-illegitimate-private-interests-at-the-blue-lagoon/>
- [2] The Shift Team (24 Jun 2026). Visit Malta officials filmed telling citizens to leave deckchair-occupied beach in Comino. The Shift News. <https://theshiftnews.com/2026/06/24/visit-malta-officials-filmed-telling-citizens-to-leave-deckchair-occupied-beach-in-comino/>
- [3] Spiteri M. (24 Jun 2026). PN demands answers over Blue Lagoon incident and calls for publication of Comino Capacity Study. TVM News. <https://tvmnews.mt/en/news/pn-demands-answers-over-blue-lagoon-incident-and-calls-for-publication-of-comino-capacity-study/>
- [4] Newsbook (25 Jun 2026). Graffiti warns PM over Comino abuse: 'This is only the tip of the iceberg'. <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/graffitti-warns-pm-over-comino-abuse-this-is-only-the-tip-of-the-iceberg/>
- [5] Lands Authority Act, Cap. 563, Laws of Malta, art. 7(2)(c). Consolidated text, retrieved 15 Oct 2026. <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/563/eng>
- [6] Lovin Malta (24 Jun 2026). Watch: Officials order people off public Blue Lagoon beach. <https://lovinmalta.com/news/local/watch-officials-order-people-off-public-blue-lagoon-beach/>
- [7] MaltaToday (June 2026). WATCH: 'It's not public': MTA officials tell beachgoer to leave Comino area occupied by sunbeds ♦ (title only; page returns 403). https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/142752/watch_its_not_public_mta_officials_tell_beachgoer_to_leave_comino_area_occupied_by_sunbeds_
- [8] Miżien. Calculation script and outputs: tools/cc-098-report/calc.py; data/cc-098/checks.csv.

Appendix A: series standards and verdict scale

Every investigation in this series follows the same rules so that verdicts are comparable and challengeable.

Verdict	Meaning
SUPPORTED	Evidence consistently backs the claim as stated.
LARGELY SUPPORTED	Backed by the evidence, with minor caveats that do not change the substance.
NOT SUBSTANTIATED	Stated more strongly than the evidence offered or available allows. May be true in some conditions but has not been shown.
MISLEADING	Omits material facts so that the overall impression is inaccurate, even if individual statements are defensible.
CONTRADICTED	The available evidence points against the claim.

Confidence

High: multiple independent lines of evidence agree. **Moderate:** evidence is relevant but incomplete or indirect. **Low:** evidence is thin, second-hand or conflicting.

Evidence grades

A experiment · B observational study with a control or gradient · C review, guidance or official statistics · D assertion or anecdote. ♦ marks a source known only second-hand.

Standards

- **Quote the speaker, not the headline**, with outlet and date, and link the original where possible.
- **Separate the claim from the evidence offered for it**, and say who made which statement.
- **Grade the evidence** and show differing views side by side where the evidence is unsettled.
- **State what we could not access or verify**, and what would change the verdict either way.
- **Ask for the missing evidence** in specific, answerable requests.
- **Offer a right of reply** where a check finds a claim Not substantiated, Misleading or Contradicted (or a pledge Not measurable, Off track or Missed), before wider circulation, and append responses.
- **Correct errors openly** with a version number and change log.
- **Whistle-blow only on evidence:** a verdict of *Misleading* or *Contradicted* requires documents or data that can be shown, not inference.
- **Check every side.** Government, opposition, NGOs and developers are held to the same standard.

Appendix B: revision log

Version	Date	Change
1.0	15 Oct 2026	First issue. Verdict Largely supported (moderate confidence); no right of reply needed.