EN (MT Version below)

<u>Press Statement - 04/10/2021</u>

Stability, not Uncertainty

Migrant community in Malta highlights urgent basic needs and presents them to Home Affairs Ministry.

As Malta's community of migrants and asylum seekers, we are gathered here today, Monday 4th of October 2021, in peaceful protest to draw attention to the brutal manner in which we are systemically treated by Malta's public authorities, particularly the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement's Identity Malta. This "gravely inhuman treatment of migrants and asylum seekers in Malta", according to the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor's February 2021 statement, requires "immediate intervention from the European Commission." Migrants and asylum seekers gathered today in protest are first hand evidence of unsustainable and inhumane conditions we repeatedly face at the hands of Maltese public authorities, dire conditions which the Maltese government fails to address and continues to deny. We hope that through this protest our voices are heard and the necessary action is taken. These are our demands:

1. The legal framework regulating asylum and migration in Malta is extremely complex and in no way centralised. It is close to impossible for most migrants to understand their rights and also the procedures they are required to follow in order to obtain documents and other services. We believe we should have access to information that we can understand, either through the internet, published information documents or through the creation of a migrant-friendly information hub.

2. In October 2020, Identity Malta announced that as of December 2020, no new applications for Specific Residence Authorisation (SRA) will be received. We ask the government of Malta to reintroduce the SRA policy, and to give the many migrants and asylum seekers, who lost their SRA status due to Identity Malta's change of policy, their SRA back. SRA made it possible for failed asylum seekers and holders of temporary humanitarian protection, who have lived and worked in Malta for a number of years, to access basic rights including healthcare, education, training and the right to travel. The termination of the SRA policy has thrown hundreds of migrants and asylum seekers, including many children, in a dark limbo of marginalisation and poverty, with no papers to show for themselves and the impossibility to access basic fundamental rights.

3. We ask the government of Malta to make very public the fact that, irrespective of how we arrived in Malta, we, the migrants and asylum seekers of Malta, pay taxes like other citizens and residents of Malta. This is our contribution to the country and it needs to be recognised, acknowledged and met with access to the corresponding rights.

4. Our children have the right to a name and the right to acquire a nationality. This right is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). We therefore ask the government of Malta to do its very utmost to help children of migrants and asylum seekers regularise their status via the official documentation necessary. We also draw attention to the fact that children of migrants and asylum seekers are repeatedly denied Children's Allowance even though their parents pay taxes. This situation needs to change to eradicate the marginalisation and poverty of migrant and asylum seeker children in Malta.

5.We have very serious concerns about the ways in which Identity Malta staff and personnel address, treat and discriminate against migrants and asylum seekers whose security, livelihood and future depend on their

services. We therefore ask that Identity Malta staff and personnel receive training in anti-racism, anti-discrimination, hate speech and productive intercultural communication practices.

Following this peaceful protest we shall be posting our letter with the above demands to the Minister for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement, Dr Byron Camilleri.

MT

Stqarrija għall-Istampa - 04/10/2021

Stabilità, mhux Inċertezza
Il-komunità tal-migranti ta' Malta tipprotesta favur il-bżonnijiet bażiċi tagħha u tippreżentahom lill-Ministeru għall-Intern.

Aħna, il-komunità tal-migranti u l-applikanti għall-ażil ta' Malta, inġbarna flimkien illum, it-Tnejn 4 ta' Ottubru 2021, fi protesta paċifika biex niġbdu l-attenzjoni għall-mod brutali ta' kif qegħdin jitrattawna l-awtoritajiet pubbliċi ta' Malta, b'mod partikolari l-Aġenzija Identity Malta fi ħdan il-Ministeru għall-Intern, is-Sigurtà Nazzjonali u l-Infurzar tal-Liġi. Skont stqarrija tal-Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor fi Frar 2021, dan "it-trattament inuman tal-migranti u l-applikanti għall-ażil f'Malta jitlob l-intervent immedjat tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea." Il-migranti u l-applikanti għall-ażil miġbura hawn illum huma xhieda tal-kundizzjonijiet koroh li jsofru taħt idejn l-awtoritajiet pubbliċi ta' Malta, li la huma sostenibbli u l-anqas umani u li l-gvern ta' Malta mhux talli ma jindirizzax iżda jkompli jinnega. Bis-saħħa ta' din il-protesta, nixtiequ li tisimgħu il-vuċi tagħna u tieħdu l-azzjoni li hemm bżonn. It-talbiet tagħna huma dawn:

1. Il-qafas legali li jirregola l-ażil u l-immigrazzjoni f'Malta huwa estremament kumpless u bl-ebda mod ma huwa ċentralizzat. Huwa kważi impossibbli għall-biċċa l-kbira tal-migranti li jifhmu d-drittijiet u l-proċeduri li għandhom isegwu biex jakkwistaw id-dokumenti u s-servizzi li jeħtieġu. Nemmnu fl-aċċess għal informazzjoni li nistgħu nifmuha permezz tal-internet, il-pubblikazzjoni ta' dokumenti ta' informazzjoni jew permezz ta' ċentru ta' informazzjoni akkoljenti.

2. F'Ottubru 2020, l-Aġenzija Identity Malta ħabbret li minn Diċembru 2020, mhix se tilqa' applikazzjonijiet ġodda għall-Awtorizzazzjoni ta' Residenza Speċifika (SRA). Nitolbu lill-gvern ta' Malta li jintroduċi mill-ġdid il-politika tal-SRA u li l-bosta migranti u applikanti għall-ażil li tilfu l-SRA tagħhom sforz it-tibdil fil-politika li ħabbret Identity Malta, jingħataw l-SRA tagħhom lura. L-SRA tippermetti lil dawk li għadhom qed jippruvaw japplikaw għall-ażil u dawk li kienu jibbenefikaw mill-Protezzjoni Umanitarja Temporanja, u li ilhom jgħixu u jaħdmu Malta għal ċertu ammont ta' żmien, li jaċċessaw id-drittijiet bażiċi tagħhom bħall-kura tas-saħħa, l-edukazzjoni, it-taħriġ u d-dritt tal-ivvjaġġar. It-terminazzjoni tal-politika tal-SRA tefgħet lil mijiet ta' migranti u applikanti għall-ażil, fosthom bosta tfal, f'limbu iktrah ta' marġinalizzazzjoni u faqar, mingħajr dokumenti uffiċċjali li jistgħu jużaw u b'hekk l-impossibbiltà li jaċċessaw id-drittijiet bażiċi u fundamentali tagħhom.

3. Nitolbu lill-gvern ta' Malta li jirrikonoxxi pubblikament il-fatt li, irrispettivament mill-mod kif aħna l-migranti u l-applikanti għall-ażil wasalna f'Malta, aħna nħallsu t-taxxi daqs iċ-ċittadini u r-residenti l-oħra ta' Malta. Dan huwa l-kontribut tagħna fil-pajjiż u nemmnu li għandu jiġi rikonoxxut bl-aċċess għad-drittijiet assoċjati miegħu.

4. It-tfal tagħna għandhom id-dritt tal-isem u tan-nazzjonalità. Dan dritt imnaqqax fil-Konvenzjoni dwar id-

Drittijiet tat-Tfal tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti (1990). Nitolbu lill-gvern ta' Malta biex jagħmel l-almu kollu tiegħu favur ir-regolarizzazzjoni tal-istat tat-tfal tal-migranti u tal-applikanti għall-ażil sabiex dawn jiksbu d-dokumentazzjoni uffiċċjali li jeħtieġu. Niġbdu l-attenzjoni wkoll għall-fatt li t-tfal tal-migranti u l-applikanti għall-ażil spiss mhumiex jingħataw ic-Children's Allowance. Dan minkejja li l-ġenituri tagħhom iħallsu t-taxxa. Din is-sitwazzjoni għandha tiġi rimedjata minnufih biex inkunu nistgħu nindirizzaw il-marġinalizzazzjoni u l-faqar fost it-tfal tal-migranti u l-applikanti għall-ażil f'Malta.

5. Inressqu hawn it-tħassib serju tagħna fir-rigward tal-mod li bih il-persunal tal-Aġenzija Identity Malta jindirizza, jitratta u jiddiskrimina kontra l-migranti u l-applikanti għall-ażil li jiddependu mis-servizzi tagħhom għas-sigurtà, l-għajxien u l-ġejjieni tagħhom. Nitolbu għalhekk li l-persunal tal-Aġenzija Identity Malta jirċievu taħriġ kontra d-diskriminazzjoni, ir-razziżmu, id-diskors ta' mibegħda u favur prattiċi produttivi fil-qasam tal-komunikazzjoni interkulturali.

Wara din il-protesta paċifika ser nibagħtu l-ittra tagħna b'dawn it-talbiet lill-Ministru għall-Intern, is-Sigurtà Nazzjonali u l-Infurzar tal-Liġi, Dr Byron Camilleri.