

PRESS RELEASE



The NGOs that turned to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to stop the deportation of Somali migrants to Libya are fully committed to working with the government to seek further support from the European Union and to engage in strategic dialogue on the treatment of migrants in Malta.



We commend the government's decision to commit to respect the ruling of the ECHR and to refrain from deporting the migrants who arrived on 9 July.



We understand the pressure created by the arrival of irregular migrants and fully support the government's calls for greater solidarity among member states of the EU and increased understanding of Malta's particular situation. But resorting to unlawful and harmful means and using innocent people as pawns for a political end is unacceptable.



We will do our utmost to support the government's efforts to secure greater support from the EU through political means but not if it is at the expense of people's lives and safety.



Referring to countries such as Libya as part of the solution to the problem of irregular migration is at best premature. Libya is still struggling to recover from decades of authoritarian rule and build a democratic state in a context of instability and lawlessness. It is positive that Libya has shown willingness to sign up to international conventions but that alone certainly does not guarantee full and effective respect for human rights.



We call upon the government to refrain from entering into agreements with Libya about the readmission of migrants until the country is in a position to guarantee their rights effectively. We also urge the government to make the terms of such agreement public so that it may be subject to democratic scrutiny.



We also urge the President of the European Council, Mr Herman Van Rumpoy, who is visiting Malta today, to work to ensure that the Member States of the EU put solidarity into practice by providing effective support for Member States facing particular pressures, such as Malta, to fulfil their obligations to provide protection to all who need it.



Date: 11th July 2013



aditus foundation, Jesuit Refugee Service (Malta), Migrant's Network for Equality, SOS Malta, Malta Emigrants' Commission, KOPIN, Integra Foundation, Foundation for Shelter and Support of Migrants, Organisation for Friendship in Diversity, People for Change Foundation