



# 1Voice4All

## Civil Society stands up for human rights

### NGO Statement on International Human Rights Day

*Hon. Member of Parliament,*

The undersigned organisations would like to take the opportunity offered by International Human Rights Day (10<sup>th</sup> December) to jointly stand up for human rights for all in Malta, and invite you to do the same. On the anniversary of the adoption of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** we want to remind you of the core values and principles enshrined within it.

Malta has come a long way in the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights. Strong **standards** are in place, various **mechanisms** have been established to provide redress to victims of human rights violations, and it seems that human rights **awareness** in Malta is on the rise. We are pleased to note the significant plans for the coming years, in particular the establishment of a **National Human Rights Institution** and the strengthening of existing complaints mechanisms.

Yet serious efforts remain necessary in order to fully and truly acknowledge the fundamental human rights of all persons. In our work with various groups of persons and themes we regularly encounter the severe impact of **forgotten human rights**, an impact that extends far beyond any individual victim and encompasses the entire nation in its violation.

Through this **joint statement**, supported by civil society organisations covering an extremely wide range of themes, we want to reiterate that all human beings are born equal in dignity. We want to stress that all human rights are indivisible: civil, political, economic, social and cultural. We feel it is imperative to highlight the central role we play in not only supporting those forgotten human rights, but also in monitoring the way you include or fail to include human rights in your own daily Parliamentary activities.

We therefore strongly urge you to revisit the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and:

1. Establish a **National Human Rights Institution** in accordance with the Paris Principles;
2. Establish a true and effective **mechanism for regular consultation** with human rights civil society organisations, on the basis of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to human rights;
3. Establish and publish procedures to **monitor all new legal measures** for compliance with human rights obligations;
4. Appoint a **human rights focal point** in all Ministries, with the necessary powers and authority to ensure and monitor internal observance of relevant obligations and with regular reporting obligations;
5. Commit to a **zero tolerance policy** of any form of attack, bullying, harassment or denigration of volunteers, interns and staff of civil society organisations;
6. Introduce effective, proportionate and dissuasive **sanctions** when human rights are breached, including the possibility of victims to claim adequate **compensation**.

*Honourable Member of Parliament*, you are uniquely placed to take Malta to its next generation of human rights protection. Such initiatives should underline the **equal dignity of all persons**, and the **universality and indivisibility of all human rights**.

We reiterate our own commitment to supporting these efforts, and to continue reminding you of the spirit of 1Voice4All.

Yours sincerely, the undersigned organisations:

*aditus foundation*

*African Media Association Malta*

*Breaking Limits*

*Caritas Malta*

*Deaf People Association*

*Din L-Art Helwa*

*Inspire*

*Integra Foundation*

*Jesuit Refugee Service (Malta)*

*KOPIN*

*KSU*

*Libya Foundation for Rehabilitation*

*Living Ability not Disability*

*Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations*

*Malta Gay Rights Movement*

*Migrant Offshore Aid Station*

*Movement Graffiti*

*Organisation for Friendship in Diversity*

*People for Change Foundation*

*Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta*

*Richmond Foundation*

*Right2Smile*

*SOAR – St. Jeanne Antide Foundation*

*SOS Malta*

*The Critical Institute*

*Troupe 18:45*

*UpBeat Music House*

*Victim Support Malta*

*We Are*