

12th June 2018

55/2018

STATEMENT BY THE MALTESE BISHOPS REGARDING THE SHIP AQUARIUS

We have been following the immigration phenomenon which is unfolding in the Mediterranean Sea for years. This phenomenon highlights the desperate situation of people who are forced to flee their country because of war or hunger. On the other hand, this phenomenon also brings to our attention the suffering, the concerns, and the sacrifices of the people of host countries that offer refuge to these migrants.

The evolving story of the ship Aquarius also underlined both the complexity and sensitivity of the problem and the possible solutions.

Therefore, we urge the political authorities in Europe to persist in finding humanitarian solutions for these migrants, without overlooking the realities faced by the citizens of the host countries. In the past Europe had faced other similar challenges but never lost hope in finding remedies in line with the principles of justice, law, and solidarity.

While appreciating the fact that the Maltese Government offered medical help and other assistance to the migrants on board this ship, we pray that God will guide our politicians to ensure that their future decisions, whilst keeping in mind our limitations, are in line with the same extraordinary humanity shown by our ancestors as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

✠ **Charles J. Scicluna**

Archbishop of Malta

✠ **Mario Grech**

Bishop of Gozo

✠ **Joseph Galea-Curmi**

Auxiliary Bishop-elect of Malta