

9th January 2019

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STATEMENT BY THE MALTESE BISHOPS ON THE RESCUE AND RELOCATION OF MIGRANTS

The Bishops of Malta and Gozo express their appreciation to the Government of Malta, the European Commission and the eight European countries, for the solidarity finally shown with the 49 migrants, most of which were stranded at sea for 18 days onboard two NGO rescue vessels. We are also grateful to all the organisations that have promoted concrete solidarity with the people involved.

We recognise that Malta, the smallest European Union member state, was neither the responsible authority nor the nearest port of safety when these migrants were rescued, and laud the efforts made by all parties involved to ensure that human life prevails over every other interest.

We join the Prime Minister of Malta in thanking the European Commission for providing a European solution for this crisis by co-ordinating the initiative of the relocation of migrants, including the 249 persons rescued at sea by the Armed Forces of Malta.

✠ **Charles J. Scicluna**
Archbishop of Malta

✠ **Mario Grech**
Bishop of Gozo

✠ **Joseph Galea-Curmi**
Auxiliary Bishop of Malta