Press Statement – for immediate release **19.06.2009**

Jesuit Refugee Service Malta

Verżjoni bil-Malti iktar 'l isfel

People still need protection

In a statement issued to mark World Refugee Day, JRS Malta called upon the government to re-affirm its commitment to provide asylum to refugees and forcibly displaced people and to seek alternatives to detention.

"States are increasingly concerned with immigration and border control, often at the expense of protection. We need to realise that denying asylum seekers access to protection is to expose them to further violations of their human rights."

World Refugee Day is a stark reminder that today, more than ever, people are still forced to flee their homes and countries in search of safety, stability and protection.

Almost all people reaching Malta in search of protection arrive after enduring persecution or violence in their country, a harsh journey across the Sahara desert, hostility or even imprisonment in transit countries, and a dangerous sea journey. Asylum seekers do not deliberately place themselves outside the law; they are forced to use irregular means of entry because it is impossible for them to obtain protection in any other way.

"Today is a good time to ask ourselves what kind of protection we are providing to those fleeing persecution. Even those who manage to enter Malta and seek asylum are detained for many months in harsh conditions and, upon release, must live with discrimination, hostility and, at times, violence."

Jesuit Refugee Service Malta paid tribute to the refugee community in Malta, acknowledging "the extraordinary resilience of men, women and children" who overcame the most difficult of circumstances in their search for freedom and safety. "Far from being a burden, well integrated refugees become net contributors to their host countries."

It called upon the government to adopt alternatives to detention which respect asylum seekers as people. This will be far more in line with the values that Maltese society professes to be defined by.

Verżjoni bil-Malti iktar 'l isfel

In-Nies għadhom jeħtieġu l-protezzjoni

Fi stqarrija maħruġa biex tfakkar il-Jum Dinji tar-Rifuġjati, il-JRS Malta talab lill-gvern biex iġedded l-impenn tiegħu li jipprovdi l-asil lir-rifuġjati u lill-persuni mġiegħla jaħarbu minn pajjiżhom, u li jfittex alternattivi għad-detenzjoni.

"L-istati qegħdin kull ma jmorru jagħtu attenzjoni ikbar lill-immigrazzjoni u l-kontroll tal-fruntieri, bir-riżultat li l-protezzjoni tmur minn taħt. Irridu nindunaw li meta persuni li qed ifittxu l-asil ma jingħatalhomx aċċess għall-protezzjoni qed nesponuhom għal vjolazzjonijiet ikbar tad-drittijiet umani tagħhom."

Il-Jum Dinji tar-Rifuġjati jfakkarna li llum, iktar minn qatt qabel, in-nies għadhom imġiegħla jaħarbu minn djarhom u minn pajjiżhom biex ifittxu s-sigurtà, l-istabilità u l-protezzjoni.

Kważi n-nies kollha li jaslu Malta huma u jfittxu l-protezzjoni jkunu ġarrbu l-persekuzzjoni jew il-vjolenza f'pajjiżhom, vjaġġ qalil fid-deżert tas-Sahara, l-ostilità jew saħansitra l-ħabs fil-pajjiżi li jkunu għaddew minnhom, u vjaġġ perikoluż bil-baħar. In-nies li qed ifittxu l-asil ma jippruvawx jiksru l-liġi b'kapriċċ; huma kostretti jużaw mezzi ta' dħul irregolari għaliex huwa impossibli għalihom li jiksbu l-protezzjoni mod ieħor.

"Illum huwa mument tajjeb biex mill-ġdid nistaqsu lilna nfusna x'tip ta' protezzjoni qed nipprovdu lil dawk li jaħarbu l-persekuzzjoni. Ukoll dawk li jirnexxielhom jaslu Malta u jitolbu l-asil jgħaddu bosta xhur fid-detenzjoni f'kundizzjonijiet ħorox u, wara li jinħelsu, iridu jħabbtu wiċċhom mad-diskriminazzjoni, mal-ostilità u, kultant, mal-vjolenza."

Is-Servizz tal-Ġiżwiti mar-Rifuġjati sellem lill-komunità tar-rifuġjati f'Malta u rrikonoxxa "l-fibra straordinarja tal-irġiel, nisa u tfal" li għelbu l-eqqel ċirkostanzi fit-tfittxija tagħhom tal-libertà u s-sigurtà. "Iktar milli huma piż, ir-rifuġjati li jintegraw tajjeb isiru kontributuri pożittivi fil-pajjiżi li jilqgħuhom."

Il-JRS talab lill-gvern jaddotta alternattivi għad-detenzjoni li jistmaw il-persuni li qed ifittxu l-asil ta' nies li huma. Dan ikun jaqbel ħafna iktar mal-valuri li s-soċjetà Maltija tistqarr li tħaddan.