JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE
SERVIZZ TAL-ĠIŻWITI MAR-RIFUĠJATI

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RESCUE OF MIGRANTS AT SEA

(Verżjoni bil-Malti iktar 'l isfel)

The latest rescue of migrants from a vessel in distress by the Maltese authorities highlights the lack of clarity of existing rules on rescue at sea and admission of survivors. JRS Malta calls upon the European Union to establish clear rules in this regard.

On April 30 the government decided to admit to Malta 66 irregular migrants rescued from their dinghy, even though they were a short distance away from the Italian island of Lampedusa.

"This incident underscores the need for a system that allows for effective responsibility sharing among Member States of the EU, to ensure that the states along the Mediterranean border are not left to deal with maritime arrivals single-handedly," said Fr Joseph Cassar SJ, Director Jesuit Refugee Service Malta.

"Many people making the crossing are in fact in need of international protection, which means that they will face serious harm if they are returned to their country. They use an irregular route because it is impossible for them to reach a place of safety in any other way."

JRS Malta commends the "courageous decision" to put people's needs first, in spite of possible misgivings regarding legal responsibility.

"We must highlight the significance of the decision. On the fifth anniversary of Malta's accession to the EU, this action sets out the true values that give us direction as a nation," Fr Cassar continued.

Mediterranean states cannot respond with solidarity to the human drama unfolding in the region without the support of other Member States. JRS is concerned that lack of adequate burden-sharing mechanisms could lead to situations where states refuse to grant admission to migrants, as witnessed in recent days or, worse, to refuse to save migrants in distress because of the implications of a decision to accept them.

JRS Malta also calls for the creation of effective burden-sharing mechanisms among EU Member States in order to ensure that the right to seek asylum is safeguarded.

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SALVATAĠĠ TAL-IMMIGRANTI FIL-BAĦAR

L-aħħar salvataġġ ta’ immigranti minn biċċa tal-baħar fil-periklu li twettaq mill-awtoritajiet Maltin jesponi n-nuqqas ta’ ċarezza tar-regoli eżistenti dwar is-salvataġġ fil-baħar u l-iżbark ta’ dawk salvati. Is-Servizz tal-Ġiżwiti mar-Rifuġjati (JRS Malta) jitlob lill-Unjoni Ewropea li tistabilixxi regoli ċari f’dan ir-rigward.

Fit-30 t’April, il-gvern iddeċieda li jdaħħal Malta 66 immigrant salvati minn fuq id-dinghy tagħhom, ukoll jekk kienu biss ftit ’il bogħod mill-gżira Taljana ta’ Lampedusa.

“Dan il-każ jissottolineja l-ħtieġa ta’ sistema li tipprovdi għall-kondiviżjoni tar-responsabilitajiet effettiva bejn l-Istati Membri tal-UE, biex tiżgura li l-istati tul il-fruntiera tal-Mediterran ma jitħallewx jitħabtu waħedhom mal-wasliet bil-baħar,” qal Fr Joseph Cassar SJ, Direttur tas-Servizz tal-Ġiżwiti mar-Rifuġjati.

“Ħafna min-nies li jaqsmu l-baħar Mediterran b’dan il-mod fil-fatt jeħtieġu l-protezzjoni internazzjonali, li jfisser li jsibu ruħhom f’periklu serju jekk jintbagħtu lura f’pajjiżhom. Huma jużaw rotta irregolari għax m’għandhom l-ebda mod ieħor kif jistgħu jaslu f’post li jiggarantilhom is-sigurtà tagħhom.”

Il-JRS Malta jfaħħar id-“deċiżjoni kuraġġuża” li tqiegħed il-bżonnijiet tal-bnedmin l-ewwel, minkejja dubji possibbli dwar ir-responsabbiltà legali.

“Irridu nisħqu fuq is-sinjifikat ta’ din id-deċiżjoni. Fil-ħames anniversarju tad-dħul ta’ Malta fl-UE, din l-azzjoni tesprimi l-valuri veri li jmexxuna bħala nazzjon,” tenna Fr Cassar.

L-istati tal-Mediterran ma jistgħux iwieġbu bis-solidarjetà għad-dramm umanitarju li qed iseħħ fir-reġjun mingħajr l-appoġġ ta’ Stati Membri oħra. Il-JRS huwa mħasseb li n-nuqqas ta’ mekkaniżmi xierqa ta’ kondiviżjoni tal-piżijiet jista’ jwassal għal sitwazzjonijiet fejn l-istati ma jħallux l-immigranti jinżlu l-art, bħal dawk li rajna f’dawn l-aħħar ġranet jew, agħar, ma jaċċettawx li jsalvaw l-immigranti fil-periklu minħabba l-implikazzjonijiet ta’ deċiżjoni biex jilqgħuhom.

Il-JRS Malta jitlob ukoll għall-ħolqien ta’ mekkaniżmi effettivi għall-kondiviżjoni tal-piżijiet fost l-Istati Membri tal-UE sabiex id-dritt li jintalab l-asil jiġi mħares.