

Transparency International EU

The global coalition against corruption

Civil society organisations urge Maltese government to protect journalists

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Tuesday, October 15th, 2024

The following letter was submitted by Transparency International EU and the undersigned organisations to the Prime Minister of Malta. Access it as a PDF file [here](#).

15 October 2024

Dear Prime Minister Abela,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing in advance of the anniversary of the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia to strongly urge you to recommit to creating an enabling environment for the Maltese journalist community.

Our organizations welcomed the move by the Maltese authorities to set up a separate public inquiry in 2019, after pressure from the Caruana Galizia family, to independently examine the responsibility of the Maltese state in the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia.

The public inquiry found in its report published on 29 July 2021 that her assassination was both predictable and preventable, and pointed to the responsibility of the state for her death, a collapse in the rule of law, and the failure of the authorities to take measures to protect her.

Your government then embarked on several reforms, including proposed legislation on journalist safety and Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation. However, our organizations have voiced concern that these legislative texts were not effectively open to scrutiny from media experts or did not meet international standards, rendering them potentially ineffective at protecting journalists who need support in the future. We additionally note that the state has not taken any action on implementing many of the recommendations of the public inquiry.

In October 2022, our organizations welcomed the conviction of two hitmen and acknowledged that, so far, seven people have admitted to or were sentenced for complicity in her killing and that criminal proceedings are underway against three suspects. We continue to closely follow the legal proceedings against the alleged mastermind of the killing and the alleged bomb suppliers.

The judicial completion of the case by the Maltese authorities, in tandem with actions taken by your government to improve the space for Maltese journalists, will have a wider resonance in Europe, including with press freedom groups, and the institutions of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation has repeatedly denounced how the failure of Maltese authorities to address the corruption and abuse of power that Daphne and other Maltese journalists investigated, and continue to investigate, still contributes to an environment of insecurity and uncertainty for journalists.

To mark the anniversary of Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder, we hope that you can recommit to fully implementing the recommendations from the public inquiry and guarantee that pending legislative measures will at minimum meet international standards, and that reforms will be conducted transparently and with the technical assistance of international media experts and the full participation of civil society.

Signed:

ARTICLE 19 Europe

Committee to Protect Journalists

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

International Press Institute (IPI)

Media Diversity Institute

OBC Transeuropa (OBCT)

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)

Society of Journalists, Warsaw

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