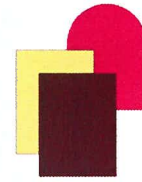




Din l-Art Helwa



Friends of the Earth Malta



Valletta Alive Foundation

**The Hon. Prime Minister
Auberge de Castille, Valletta**

28 January 2017

Honourable Prime Minister,

Open Letter Appealing for Urgent Action to Safeguard Valletta's Outstanding Universal Value

We the undersigned bodies, in the name of the citizens we represent, are writing to express our concern regarding ongoing developments in Valletta, and to appeal to you to lead an appropriate and timely response to these challenges.

The recent reports of illegal developments taking place in historic properties are only the tip of the iceberg. Over the past months and years, we have watched Valletta being subjected to an unprecedented barrage of new developments, many of which are not sensitive to the values and fragile nature of the historic setting. As a result, we are gravely concerned that the very qualities that give Valletta its distinctive character are under threat. While acknowledging the great strides that have been made in reviving the city, we must also recognize that this intensification in activity is giving rise to new threats to the liveability of the city and to the safeguarding of its Outstanding Universal Value, which is the basis of its World Heritage Status.

We are therefore very disturbed and alarmed by reports that the developer responsible for the illegal works, including unauthorised rooftop additions, is seeking retroactive sanctioning for these illegal interventions. If sanctioning were to be granted for such flagrantly abusive and inappropriate structures, it would make a mockery of the planning process and the rule of law.

We therefore taken this occasion to appeal to you to lead a robust and timely response to this as well as the wider threats that are endangering the liveability and fragile values of our cherished capital. Noting that the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, in decision 33 COM 7B.113 of 2009, requested Malta to:

b) Establish a declared buffer zone in accordance with Paragraph 103 of the Operational Guidelines, with height controls around the property as a means of protecting the skyline configuration of the city [Valletta] and prepare a "Views and Vistas Analysis" from strategic points within and outside the property,

c) Establish clear policies in relation to height controls within the property as a means of protecting the skyline configuration of the city, by means of a "Views and Vistas Analysis" covering key areas and streetscape;

and noting that these issues remain unaddressed, and of ever-mounting concern, we appeal to you to give appropriate direction to all the relevant Ministries and state organisations to take concrete and timely measures to address these requirements before more harm is done.

Thank you for your consideration,



Alexiei Dingli

Mayor, Valletta Local Council



Maria Grazia Cassar

President, Din l-Art Helewa



Martin Galea De Giovanni

Chairperson, Friends of the Earth



Geoffrey Pisani Bencini

Vice-Chairman, Valletta Alive Foundation