

Press Statement: Need for soul-searching after racially motivated murder

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) expresses its grave concern at the arraignment of two members of the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) charged with the racially motivated killing of Lassana Cisse Souleymane and the wounding of two other African migrants in Hal Far on the 6th April.

The NCPE considers this to be a most heinous crime, where a person was murdered because of his skin-colour; a crime that has instilled fear in communities in Malta. Cases of murderous racism, wherever they happen, are never isolated incidents but always connected to a context of inequality and normalized behaviour of hatred. We should also bear in mind that the potential victims of this hatred are numerous, including Maltese citizens of a different skin colour and all those viewed as different and inferior by people harbouring such dangerous sentiments.

Maltese society and institutions should embark on a soul-searching exercise to see where they have failed and take the necessary action to ensure that all social groups in Malta are considered and treated as equally valuable members of society. All cases of racism, discrimination and intolerance are an affront to a democratic society and as such they should be treated with the utmost seriousness.

We envisage that the planned strengthening of the NCPE through the establishment of a Human Rights and Equality Commission (HREC) will enhance its ability to address cases of racism and discrimination, including hate-speech.

The NCPE augurs that the widespread sadness and alarm surrounding this incident engenders a transformative process towards a better and more inclusive country by everyone for everyone.