

Lill-On Prim Ministru, Dr Robert Abela, u lill-Kabinett tal-Ministri

Aħna, il-firmatarji, individwi li jhaddnu valuri xellugin, progressivi u soċjalisti, qed niktbu din l-ittra fid-dawl tar-rapporti riċenti dwar il-possibbiltà li l-Gvern ta' Malta jidhol f'SOFA (Ftehim dwar l-Istatus tal-Forzi) mal-Gvern tal-Istati Uniti. In-negozjati ta' SOFA jitolqu mill-premessa li l-preżenza tal-forzi militari tal-Istati Uniti hija ta' benefiċċju għall-interessi tal-poplu Malti. Aħna nemmnu bil-qawwa li l-attivitajiet tal-forzi militari tal-Istati Uniti fil-gżejjer paċifiċi tagħna mhux se jkunu fl-interess ta' pajjiżna la fuq terminu ta' żmien qasir, lanqas fit-tul. Ir-raġunijiet għat-tfassib tagħna huma kif ġej:

1. SOFA mal-Istati Uniti, jew ma' kwalunkwe gvern ieħor, ixekkel is-sovranità, il-ġurisprudenza u n-newtralità tal-gvern ta' Malta. Kwalunkwe ftehim imur kontra l-ispiritu u l-ittra tal-Kostituzzjoni tar-Repubblika ta' Malta. Għalhekk, dan il-ftehim mhuwiex fl-interess tal-poplu Malti għalissa, u lanqas għal ġenerazzjonijiet tal-futur. SOFA jeħtieg li l-gvern ta' Malta mhux biss jikser l-Artikolu 1(3) kruċjali tal-Kostituzzjoni tagħna, iżda wkoll li jċedi l-awtorità tiegħu fuq kwistjonijiet bħalma huma d-dhul u l-ħruġ tal-forzi u l-persunal tal-Istati Uniti, il-possessjonijiet tagħhom, il-kundizzjonijiet tax-xogħol tagħhom, pretensjonijiet u kuntratturi, bejgħ, dwana u taxxi fuq id-dhul.
2. Kwalunkwe ftehim ta' din ix-xorta aktarx joħloq sistema legali *de facto* b'żewġ livelli li tiddiskrimina bejn membri tal-forzi armati tal-Istati Uniti u residenti Maltin. In-numru kbir ta' incidenti li jinvolvu forzi militari tal-Istati Uniti u ċittadini tal-lokal, f'postijiet diversi ħafna bejniethom bħall-Korea ta' Isfel, l-Italja u anke r-Renju Unit, jindikaw li dan l-arranġament legali ta' żewġ livelli huwa ta' detriment għall-interessi taċ-ċittadini.
3. L-istorja riċenti turi li l-interventi militari fir-reġjun tal-Mediterran u lil hinn kienu ta' ħsara għall-paċi, is-sigurtà u l-benesseri taċ-ċittadini, u wasslu anka għal krimini tal-gwerra.
4. Kwalunkwe ftehim ta' din ix-xorta jista' jittrasforma lil Malta f'insedjament tal-forzi armati militari tal-Istati Uniti sabiex ikunu jistgħu jipprojetaw il-forza militari fuq il-pajjiżi ġirien. Jekk dan iseħh, aktarx li l-pajjiżi ġirien jikkunsidraw lil Malta bħala għadu, b'riperkussjonijiet serji fuq il-ħajja, is-saħħa, l-għajxien u s-sikurezza taċ-ċittadini ta' pajjiżna. Preżenza militari qawwija hija wkoll ta' detriment għat-turiżmu u għall-investment barrani li sa issa kienu l-ikbar xprun tal-ekonomija tagħna.

Fid-dawl ta' dawn il-kunsiderazzjonijiet, qed nitolbu li l-gvern Malti jimpenja ruħu sabiex lanqas biss jikkunsidra, wisq anqas jidhol fi kwalunkwe diskussjoni li tista' twassal għal SOFA jew

kwalunkwe ftehim militari ma' kwalunkwe pajjiż ieħor. Malta għandha żżomm l-aħjar relazzjonijiet possibbli man-nazzjonijiet kollha. In-newtralità tagħna hija sagrosanta, u kruċjali għas-sigurtà tagħna.

Barra minn hekk, fid-dawl ta' dak li hemm minqux fil-Kostituzzjoni tagħna, infakkru lill-gvern bid-dmir tiegħu li jfittex, b'mod attiv, il-paċi, is-sigurtà, il-progress ekonomiku u soċjali għal pajjiżna u flimkien ma' dan, l-impenn fil-fond u għal dejjem li jirrifjuta li jidħol fi kwalunkwe alleanza militari jew SOFA ma' kwalunkwe nazzjon.

Aħna nistennew li l-Gvern Laburista jżomm l-unur tal-kelma u l-ispirtu tal-Kostituzzjoni tal-pajjiż, u li l-Kabinett jilqa' pubblikament din it-talba.

To the Hon. Prime Minister, Dr Robert Abela, and the Cabinet of Ministers

The undersigned, individuals holding Left-Wing and progressive, socialist ideals, are writing this letter in light of recent reports about the possibility of the Government of Malta entering into a SOFA (State of Foreign Forces Agreement) with the Government of the United States. Negotiating a SOFA begins with the assumption that the presence of US military forces is in the interest of the Maltese people. We strongly believe that the activities of US military forces on our peaceful islands would not be in our short- or long-term interests. The reasons for our concern are the following:

1. A SOFA with the US, and for that matter any other government, undermines the sovereignty, jurisprudence and neutrality of the Malta government. Any such agreement contravenes the spirit and letter of the Constitution of the Republic of Malta. Thus, it is not in the interest of the Maltese people now, nor for future generations. A SOFA requires that the Malta government would not only violate the vital Article 1 (3) of our Constitution, but would also cede its authority on such issues as the entry and exit of US forces and personnel, their belongings, labour conditions, claims and contractors, sales, customs and income taxes.
2. Any such agreement is likely to create a *de facto* two-tiered legal system which discriminates between members of the US armed forces and Maltese residents. Countless incidents involving US military and locals, from places as diverse as South Korea, Italy and

even the UK, indicate that such a two-tiered legal arrangement is detrimental to the interests of the locals.

3. Recent history has shown that military interventions in the Mediterranean region and beyond have been detrimental to peace, security and well-being and were catalysts for war crimes.
4. Any such agreement could turn Malta into an outpost for US armed forces to project military force into neighbouring countries. In doing so, we would likely make enemies of our neighbors with serious repercussions to the lives, health, livelihoods and safety of our citizens. A strong military presence would deter tourism and foreign investment which have been the main propeller of our economy.

In light of the considerations above, we urge that the Malta government commit, NOT to even consider, let alone enter into any discussion that might lead to a SOFA or any military agreement with any other country. Malta should retain the best relations possible with all nations. Our neutrality is sacrosanct and the key to our security.

Moreover, in light of what is enjoined by our Constitution, we remind the government of its duty to actively pursue peace, security, economic and social progress for our country and together with this - the diehard and indefinite commitment to refuse to embark on any military alliance or SOFA with any nation.

We expect the Labour Government to honour the word and the spirit of our country's Constitution and the Cabinet to publicly agree to comply with this request.

Dejjem tagħkom / Yours Truly

Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca
Dr Alfred Sant

President Emeritus Republika ta' Malta
MEP, eks-Prim Ministru u eks-Mexxej tal-Malta Labour
Party

Dr Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici
Dr Anne McKenna Mintoff
Dr Yana Mintoff

Eks-Prim Ministru u eks-Mexxej tal-Malta Labour Party
Voluntiera The Malta Trust Foundation
Attivista Soċjalista

Sammy Meilaq
Frederick Abdilla
Adrian Abela

Eks-Chairperson Malta Drydocks
Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Traduttur Kummissjoni Ewropea

Martin Abela	President Żmienijietna
Perit Ruben Abela	Attivist
Noel Agius	Lettur
Damien Attard	Attivist
Dr Desiree Attard	Avukat
Fr Ivan Attard O.P.	Sacerdot
Matthew Attard	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Dr Michelle Attard Tonna	Lettur u attivista
Prof Andrew Azzopardi	Dekan u Letteru
Matthew Bonanno	Kittieb
Victor Bonanno	Traduttur Kummissjoni Ewropea
Petra Helene Bonello	Ambjentalista
Profs Carmel Borg	Lettur
Dr Kurt Borg	Lettur
Matthew Borg	Attivist Alleanza Kontra l-Faqar
Conrad Borg Manché,	Sindku tal-Gżira
Tina Braxton	Attivista Żmienijietna u Storiku
Dr David Buhagiar	Lettur
Martina Cacopardo	Attivista
Profs Colin Calleja	Dekan u Lettur
André Callus	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Mark Camilleri	Chairperson Eżekuttiv Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb
Christine Cassar	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Lara Calleja	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Andrew Camilleri	Edukatur
Jeremy James Camilleri	Opinjonista
Raymond Camilleri	Attivist Soċjalist
Anna Caruana	Self-Employed
Josianne Cassar	Ġurnalista free-lance
Eric Castillo	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Bernard Cauchi	Edukatur
Ruth Cauchi	Edukatur
Jacqueline Chircop	Edukatur
Dr Louise Chircop	Lettur
Joanna Ciantar	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Antontio Dato	Attivist Soċjalist
Dr Daniela DeBono	Lettur
Martin Galea De Giovanni	Attivist
James Debono	Ġurnalist

Lidia Demontis	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Dr Angele Deguara	Lettur u Attivista
Dr Andrea Dibben	Lettur Social Policy
Aleksandar Dimitrijevic	Attivist
Dr Lara Dimitrijevic	Attivista
Maya Dimitrijevic	Attivista
Noah Fabri	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Profs Ray Fabri	Lettur
Aleks Farrugia	Awtur
Mark Farrugia	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Robert Louis Fenech	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Wayne Flask	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Emily Galea	Studenta tal-Master
Maria Graziella Galea	Traduttur Kummissjoni Ewropea
Martin Galea De Giovanni	Attivist
Raisa Galea De Giovanni	Attivista, u editur ta' Isles of the Left
Patrick Galea	Ġardinar
Jean Paul Gove`	Traduttur Kummissjoni Ewropea
Joseph Gravina	Lettur
Michael Grech	Edukatur
Profs Adrian Grima	Lettur u Attivist
Nathalie Grima	Attivista
Rafel Grima	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Samwel Grima	Attivist
Johanna MacRae	Attivista Malta Tenant Support
Ċetta Mainwaring	Konsulent fuq l-immigrazzjoni u Awtriċi
Daniel Mainwaring	Konsulent fuq Affariet Barranin
Mario Mallia	Kap ta' Skola
Prof Peter Mayo	Lettur
Nicole Meilak	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Ruth Mercieca	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Alfred Micallef	Eks-Membru Kunsill tat-Tarzna
Jacob James Micallef	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Dr Francois Mifsud	Lettur
Dr Immanuel Mifsud	Awtur
Fr Mark Montebello	Sacerdot
Caroline Morales	Negozjanta
Walid Nabhan	Awtur
David Pisani	Attivist Xellugi

Dr Robert Portelli	Tabib tal-Famija
Dr Maria Pisani	Lettur u Attivista
Arthur F. Quintan	Artist u Ambjentalist
Omar Rababah	Ħaddiem Soċjali
Jacqueline Rotin	Lettur
Karin Rotin	Edukatur
Dr George Saliba	Ambaxxatur Irtirat
Kevin Saliba	Awtur
Miriam Sargent	Ċittadina
Erica Schembri	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Karl Schembri	Awtur u Ħaddiem Umanitarju
Dr Andrew Sciberras	Attivist
Prof. Edward Mallia	Ambjentalist
Dr James Scicluna	Attivist Moviment Graffiti
Anna Spiteri	Residentia Port il-Kbir
Diane Sultana	Traduttur Kummissjoni Ewropea
Dr Mario Tabone Vassallo	Attivist
Karen Tanti	Attivista Moviment Graffiti
Dr Joseph Tonna	Tabib tal-Familja u President Għaqda Barklora u Sajjieda Dilettanti
Alex Vella Gera	Awtur
Dr Mary Gace Vella	Attivista u Lettur
Fra Ġwann Xerri .O.P.	Sacerdot
Anna Zammit	Lettur
Desmond Zammit Marmarà	Edukatur Irtirat u Opinjonista