

Her excellency Natasha Meli Daudey
Ambassador
Republic of Malta
Vienna

16 October 2019

The assassination of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia

Your excellency,

The International Press Institute, Reporter Ohne Grenzen Österreich and Presseclub Concordia are extremely concerned over the slow pace of investigation into the assassination of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was killed in a car bombing on this day two years ago.

While three people have been formally charged in the case, the Government of Malta has not made sufficient efforts to find the masterminds who ordered the killing and bring them to justice. This is unacceptable, and the government's prevarication raises suspicion that there is no real will to prosecute those responsible for the assassination.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has called for a thorough investigation and in 2017, appointed special rapporteur Pieter Omtzigt to scrutinize the investigation. His subsequent draft report raised concerns about the wider rule of law in Malta. The European Parliament, the Council of Europe's Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission have been joined by several international press freedom organizations and journalists' associations in calling for a fully independent enquiry.

We welcome the Maltese government's move in September, following much vacillation and pressure from the international community, to establish an inquiry into the murder. However, we support the call of the Caruana Galizia family to ensure that this inquiry be fully independent and impartial. At the same time, the establishment of this important inquiry does not replace the need to prosecute those responsible for this crime and prevent impunity.

Meanwhile, we remain profoundly concerned by the ongoing harassment of the Caruana Galizia family. Numerous libel cases against Daphne Caruana Galizia are still pending in the courts despite calls by the Council of Europe to drop them. Many of those cases have now been transferred to Daphne Caruana Galizia's heirs. The Maltese authorities have taken no steps to prevent the removal of a memorial to Daphne Caruana Galizia in Valletta while press freedom defenders have also been harassed.

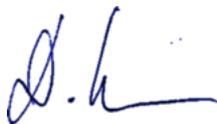
We urge your government to ensure that the inquiry is fully impartial and those who ordered the assassination of the journalist are arrested and brought to justice, all libel cases against Daphne Caruana Galizia and her family are dropped, and the harassment of her family and all those seeking justice is immediately stopped.

Where the killing a journalist goes unpunished, press freedom ceases to exist. As an EU member state, Malta should protect human rights and uphold the rule of law instead of undermining it.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Barbara Trionfi in blue ink.

Barbara Trionfi
Executive Director
International Press Institute

Handwritten signature of Daniela Kraus in blue ink.

Dr. Daniela Kraus
Generalsekretärin
Presseclub Concordia

Handwritten signature of Rubina Möhring in blue ink.

Dr. Rubina Möhring
President
Reporters without Borders Austria (Reporter Ohne Grenzen Österreich)