

COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION



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The Hon Robert Abela
Prime Minister of Malta
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Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to you to express the deepest concerns of the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation (CNMF) for the proposed action of the government of Malta to suppress the industrial directives issued by the Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses (MUMN) to its members. Issuing industrial directives is the legitimate role of the MUMN in fighting for the rights of its members. It is also the right of all workers to take industrial action to improve their conditions of work.

At a time when government and the community are so reliant on the care provided by nurses and midwives as a result of COVID-19, the punitive action by the government is hard to understand. Nurses and midwives have experienced the greatest impact on their daily duties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, risking their health and those of their families with the close contact 24/7 bedside care they provide to positive and potentially positive COVID-19 patients. The shortage of nurses and midwives in Malta exacerbates the increased workload brought about by the pandemic, causing more stress and burnout.

The CNMF strongly supports the position that there should be equity in remuneration, allowances, and working conditions for all regulated health professionals, and this includes nurses and midwives. In our view, it is unconscionable for one group of regulated health professionals to receive inferior remuneration, allowances or working conditions than any other. This is particularly so for nurses and midwives who the World Health Organisation rightly identify as the key health professionals in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and for countries to achieve universal health coverage and the sustainable development goals.

In this International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and the additional demands placed on nurses and midwives as a result of the pandemic, to which they have selflessly responded, they should be able to count on government support and respect. Nurses and midwives are the most numerous of the health professionals because they are the most necessary for an effective health system. There is absolutely no justification for denying them the same remuneration and allowances as other regulated health professionals simply because of cost.

The CNMF strongly condemns any government which restricts the legitimate role of a union to represent its members or to restrict the right of workers to take industrial action to improve their conditions of work. The CNMF urges the government of Malta to engage – genuinely, sympathetically and respectfully - with nurses and midwives in Malta and with the MUMN, their representative union, to address their legitimate claim for equity in remuneration, allowances and working conditions with other regulated health professionals in Malta.

The CNMF looks forward to a positive response to our concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Iliffe', written in a cursive style.

Jill ILIFFE
Executive Secretary
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cc: The Hon Christopher Fearne, Deputy Prime Minister Malta christopher.fearne@gov.mt; Mr Paul Pace, President MUMN president@mumn.org; Mr Colin Galea, Secretary General MUMN union@mumn.org; Mr Mario Cutajar, Principal Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, Malta mario.cutajar@gov.mt; Mr Joseph Rapa, Permanent Secretary Health, Ministry of Health, Malta joseph.rapa@gov.mt.