

31<sup>st</sup> May 2020

**Open letter to Prime Minister Robert Abela**

Dear Prime Minister,

This letter is in reaction to your televised statements on ONE this morning.

It is very clear that your announcement today of the premature lifting of measures was a unilateral decision, contrary to all sound and evidence-based advice offered over the past weeks and certainly contrary to the advice of the Superintendence of Public Health. The public health authorities have consistently explained how only a gradual lifting of restrictive measures would safely transition the country to a new normal. Allowing three weeks to pass between each progressive step to observe the effects and adjust accordingly was, and remains, the only way to ensure that we do not end up right back where we started, or worse. A comprehensive risk assessment was prepared by the public health authorities to guide the transition process and easing of measures. Unfortunately, the transition strategy and risk assessment has not yet been published by Government.

The public health authorities' expert advice on controlling the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak locally was heeded in February and March. It is only thanks to this collective effort and the sacrifice of the public and front liners that we are in the comfortable position we find ourselves in. Ignoring this advice halfway through the transition risks undoing all the hard work and the sacrifices that the country has made over the past months and will ruin the peace of mind that is necessary to restart business and tourism.

Furthermore, we are shocked by your comment about giving an amnesty to people who risked the lives of others and were fined for not following the law. The long term, negative impacts of such an amnesty are incalculable. You are compromising the health of the public and undermining the effectiveness of all fiscal deterrents that may need to be put in place in the future for the common good. Waiving it all away would be populist, short-sighted, and irresponsible. Apart from this, for all the 'wrongfully' charged persons there is a petition process, so there is no need for a carte blanche amnesty for everyone, which you are in no position to give as Prime Minister.

Dear Prime Minister, you are morally obliged to follow the scientific and professional advice that is being offered by the public health authorities. Publish the strategy and risk assessment that you quote to show us that you are following this advice. COVID-19 is not behind us. COVID will remain an important aspect of our lives for months to come. We and other healthcare professionals will continue working hard to protect the health of the public while placing the common good first and foremost. This is the leadership we expect from you as our Prime Minister.



Dr. Sascha Reiff

President – MAPHM



Dr. Alexia Bezzina

Honorary Secretary – MAPHM