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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

***“It is the collective responsibility of the international community to advocate for and protect these principles both at home and on the global stage” – the Speaker of the House of Representatives***

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anġlu Farrugia, attended the Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum held in Washington, DC, USA, on December 7-8, 2023. The Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum is the leading international security forum, providing expertise and collaboration among parliamentarians and government officials aimed at increasing understanding of the current global security threats posed by adversarial nation states and terrorists while creating actionable solutions that counter these threats. Parliamentarians, who write the legislation and fund the government, are a critical player in this mission.

The forum addressed several issues, namely countering transnational threats and border insecurity, global security challenges, cyber security, illicit finance, democracy, human rights and trafficking, religious freedom, and African affairs. In his address under the heading “Democracy, Human Rights/Trafficking, and Religious Freedom,” Speaker Farrugia stressed that the three essential pillars of a just and equitable society – democracy, human rights, and religious freedom - are interlinked and an integral component of creating a world where individuals can live with dignity, freedom, and equality.

The Speaker outlined that democracy, human rights, and religious freedom are not abstract ideals but the cornerstones of a just and compassionate society. He stressed that it is the collective responsibility of the international community to advocate for and protect these principles both at home and on the global stage.

During the forum, Speaker Anġlu Farrugia was accompanied by Malta’s Ambassador to the United States of America, Dr Godfrey Xuereb.