



# PRESS RELEASE

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

*Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, National Leader of Belarus and Head of the United Transitional Cabinet pays a courtesy visit on the Speaker of the House of Representatives*

The National Leader of Belarus and Head of the United Transitional Cabinet, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, called on the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dr Anglu Farrugia.

During the meetings both dignitaries exchanged views on a number of important issues, namely; the domestic situation on Belarus, the involvement of several stakeholders in the Russian/Ukraine war, relations between the European Union and the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus, the work done by the United Transitional Cabinet, and Malta's OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for 2024 and Belarus.

The Speaker expressed his deep concern at the continuing repressive approach adopted by the Minsk regime in Belarus and noted that the holding of the parliamentary and local elections in Belarus held in February 2024 were overshadowed by the violent clampdown on Belarusian civil society. Dr Farrugia also stressed the importance of the release of all political prisoners in Belarus and their effective rehabilitation.

The Speaker stressed that Malta remains firm in its support to the courageous work being done by the United Transitional Cabinet and lauds its commitment to safeguard the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights in Belarus.

The Head of the United Transitional Cabinet gave an overview of the current situation in Belarus and the involvement of Russia and other countries in the war on Ukraine. She also referred to Russia and Belarus' deportation of Ukrainian children, subjecting them to re-education and military training. The Belarusian opposition has called on the International Criminal Court to hold the Belarussian regime accountable for the illegal transfer of Ukrainian children.

In response, Dr Anglu Farrugia re-affirmed Malta's unwavering support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its inalienable right to defend it people. The Speaker welcomed the confirmation of the upcoming High-Level Conference in Switzerland this June, as another step in the process to reach a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine.