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“And truth – let us remember – is the one thing no institution, no narrative, no political preference can overturn” – Speaker Anġlu Farrugia

“And truth—let us remember—is the one thing no institution, no narrative, no political preference can overturn,” stated the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anġlu Farrugia, when this morning he presided over the 30th Anniversary Thematic Lecture of the Ombudsman Institution at the Parliamentary Chamber. In his opening address, Speaker Anġlu Farrugia reaffirmed that the Ombudsman must remain “a sentinel of the people, a bulwark of justice, and a mirror to the public administration it holds to account.” He emphasised that the guiding principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability are “not aspirational slogans. They are binding obligations”—a framework that reflects and reveals the health of democratic institutions.

Speaker Farrugia commended Parliamentary Ombudsman Judge Emeritus Joseph Zammit McKeon for his leadership in convening the thematic lecture and for advancing a clear vision of good administration. He noted that the Office has remained faithful to its core values while adapting to modern expectations. Cautioning against undue proximity to any political sphere, he remarked that institutional independence is best preserved through daily conduct and measured judgment. “Let us not pretend impartiality is guaranteed by statute. It is guaranteed by conduct,” he said, underlining the quiet strength of consistent, principled action.

The Speaker underscored that integrity in public service is not demonstrated through declarations but through consistent and principled action. “Integrity must be felt in every action, not claimed in every speech,” he remarked, emphasising that the credibility of institutions depends on how they carry out their work—not on how they are perceived or portrayed. In this context, he encouraged public authorities to remain mindful of their duty to serve without favour or fear.

The lecture was also addressed by Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka, Public Protector of the Republic of South Africa, and Judge Emeritus Joseph Zammit McKeon, Malta’s Ombudsman. Speaker Farrugia described Advocate Gcaleka as “a woman of exceptional legal stature,” highlighting her leadership in governance and human rights. Both speakers offered reflections on the enduring relevance of the Ombudsman’s role in defending citizen rights and promoting ethical, transparent, and accountable governance across diverse democratic systems.