



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

UN Human Rights Council – 61st Regular Session

Item 3:

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the environment

Statement by The Permanent Observer Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta

Mr Vice-President

The Order of Malta welcomes the Special Rapporteur's report. Alarming, its findings reveal that, while some progress has been made in high-income regions, air pollution continues to escalate in low- and middle-income countries, deepening global inequalities.

For the Order, these trends demand immediate action. The belief that every person has the right to live a healthy life with dignity is at the core of our work in healthcare, disaster response, and social services. Yet, we observe with grave concern that air pollution not only undermines health and well-being but also leads to forced displacement. When communities flee environmental degradation, they often end up in overcrowded camps or informal settlements, where their already dire conditions are further exacerbated.

Therefore, we stand firmly behind the Special Rapporteur's, call for urgent preventive and corrective action against air pollution. As the report states, prevention is a binding obligation under international law, one that requires acting with "due diligence" and using the "best available science" to avoid foreseeable harms.

In this context, we would like to ask: How can humanitarian actors like the Sovereign Order of Malta best support States in implementing the report's recommendations, especially in regions and refugee settings where air quality is severely compromised?

Thank you!