**UPR46 – Viet Nam**

**7th May 2024**

Statement by H.E. Christopher Grima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malta to the UN, Geneva

*Check against delivery*

Thank you, Mr. President.

Malta welcomes the delegation of Viet Nam to this UPR session. We remain concerned on the explicit reports of human rights violations and crack downs on various population groups in the country, in particular independent journalists, activists, religious practitioners and other government critics, both online and offline.

Freedom of expression remains an area of particular concern. Articles 117 and 331 of the 2015 Criminal Code are frequently used to detain persons, including human rights defenders, who criticize government or state institutions. Recent legislation designed to control civil society actors includes vague provisions that enable state authorities to close down NGOs without a specific reason. Frequent reports of ill treatment in places of detention is also of serious concern.

Malta would like to recommend the following:

1. Abolish the death penalty in all instances.
2. Amend legislation to allow NGOs and other civil society actors to operate freely in the country.
3. Ratify Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
4. Ensure that all reprisals by state authorities against all individuals who cooperate with the United Nations on human rights issues end immediately.
5. Introduce new, and strengthen existing, legislation to combat online grooming of children to protect them from online sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

Thank you, Mr. President.