Press Release

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Serious PN leak exposes a policy against the participation of women and youth in politics

Further details have emerged about a serious leak within the Nationalist Party concerning proposed amendments to its statute, which appear to have been designed to accommodate few individuals within the party's inner circle. The details were revealed during a press conference addressed by Partit Laburista's Deputy Leader for Party Affairs and MEP Alex Agius Saliba, together with PL MP Francesca Zarb.

According to the amendments proposed by the Nationalist Party's own Secretary General, the term of office of party officials would be to two years, with the exception of the Secretary General, whose term would be extended to five years. However, the leaked amendments reveal a number of worrying proposals, including measures that would discourage the participation of women and youth in politics.

Under the previous statute, adopted in 2020, committees were required, as far as possible, to comprise 40% men and 40% women, with the remaining places allocated to youth. A co-option mechanism was also in place to ensure adequate representation of the under represented gender. The proposed changes would remove both the 40% quotas and the co-option mechanism. This would do away with the existing statutory safeguards for gender balance and weaken the commitment to ensuring adequate and equal representation of both genders.

This speaks volumes about how much the Nationalist Party values women's participation in politics. Instead of moving forward, it is taking a step backwards. It is even proposing to remove the specific representation of women and youth among the members elected to its Executive through the General Council.

Another proposed amendment concerns the voting rights of Nationalist Party members living in Gozo. Under the current statute, the Chairperson and six members of the Gozo Regional Committee are elected directly by party members residing in Gozo. However, according to the tracked changes in the proposed amendments, the Chairperson and the six members would instead be elected by Nationalist Party MPs elected from Gozo, PN mayors and local councillors in Gozo, and members of Gozitan committees. This would mean that ordinary Nationalist Party

members in Gozo would lose their right to vote directly for their representatives simply by virtue of being party members.

Reacting to these proposed changes, PL Deputy Leader Alex Agius Saliba said that the country was witnessing an Opposition preoccupied with internal manoeuvring, while remaining conspicuously absent when it came to fulfilling its expected role as an alternative government for the country. He noted that this was an Opposition that travelled abroad, including to the European Parliament, to undermine our country. This placed an even greater responsibility on the Government led by Robert Abela to continue addressing people's aspirations.

Meanwhile, PL MP Francesca Zarb said that the changes being pushed by the Nationalist Party, particularly those targeting women's participation in politics, were symptomatic of an Opposition that had lost its way. She contrasted this with a Labour Government that had presented a socially strong Budget, with investment aimed at improving the wellbeing of families.