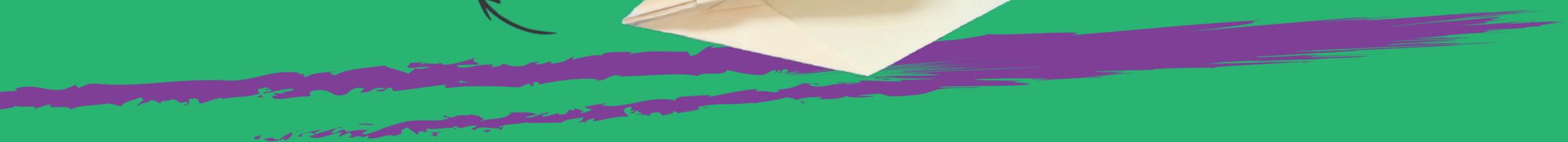


**MILD**

More **correct** Information. Less Discrimination

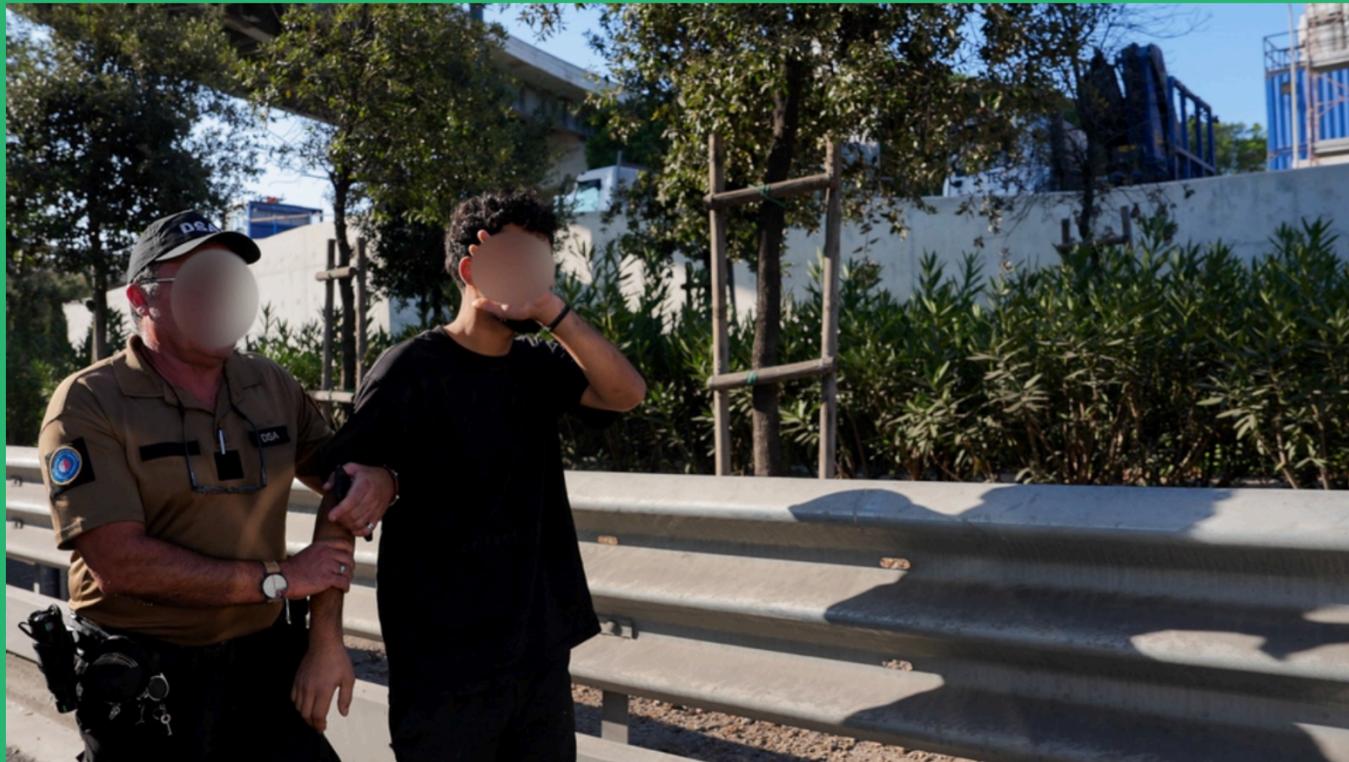


# DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES



## Immigration police checks lead to several arrests

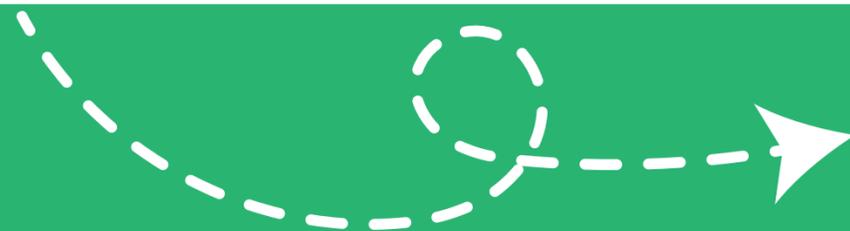
Joint inspections lead to detention of irregular migrants, vehicle fines and an impounded car



The inspections were carried out jointly by the police, officials from JobsPlus and Identità, Detention Services personnel and Transport Malta enforcement officers.

- Migrants are framed as lawbreakers. coverage prioritises illegality, arrests, and charges over humanity, protection or asylum.
- Police and courts are central, reinforcing migration as a crime issue.
- Language of control, raids, and detention normalises coercion.
- Criminal procedures are portrayed as routine. little questioning of whether criminal law is appropriate.
- Root causes are sidelined. EU policies, rights, and state responsibility are largely absent.

## What is the narrative?



Taking benefits, using free public services, exploiting tax breaks – a 2023 study shows these are the accusations most often levelled at migrants on social media in Malta.

**“WE PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO ARE REFUGEES, BUT TAKE A FIRM STANCE AGAINST THOSE WHO ABUSE THE SYSTEM AND RETURN THEM TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.”**



- Social media claims suggest migrants get benefits, services, or support not equally available to locals.
- State generosity is emphasised and the government is depicted as overly supportive or lenient toward migrants.
- Equal access to services is presented as preferential treatment.
- Welfare, housing, and healthcare are framed as scarce goods diverted to migrants.

**What is the narrative?**



*We have been here for many many years in Malta but the fear is still here. Twelve years ago I came living in Gzira. I asked for a glass or something. The first thing he said is 'are you terrorist?' I said I am terrorist of love. He didn't know, then after a few days we got to know each other."*

**Growing up Muslim in Malta. But people still ask 'where are you really from?'**



- Islam is framed as culturally incompatible – Muslims are portrayed as unwilling or unable to integrate into Maltese society.
- Security and extremism are subtly linked to Islam. religious identity is conflated with risk, even without evidence.
- Visibility is problematised. mosques, hijabs, and Muslim practices are framed as disruptions to social norms.
- Cultural anxiety is normalised. Fear of demographic or cultural "change" is presented as common sense rather than prejudice.

**What is the narrative?**

# **NGO RESCUE MISSIONS ACT as a pull factor for migrants**

**Sea rescue NGOs 'facilitating human trafficking' - government**

- Humanitarian action is reframed as criminal intent. Human rights NGOs are portrayed not as enablers or accomplices of smuggling networks, shifting them from moral actors to suspicious ones.
- Human rights are framed as obstacles. Legal advocacy, monitoring, and rescue are depicted as interference with border control, feeding the idea that human rights protections undermine state sovereignty and security.
- Public trust is redirected by questioning NGO motives. The narrative encourages audiences to trust state enforcement narratives over independent witnesses, reducing scrutiny of state practices.

**What is the narrative?**



**“Lengthy age assessments mean children claiming minor status are often treated as adults and detained for long periods!”**

**Malta treats “non-Maltese children” as migrants first, and only secondly as children**

- Public and media discourse often shifts quickly to doubting their age, framing them as adults pretending to be minors.
- Age assessments are frequently discussed in terms of fraud prevention rather than child welfare, reinforcing the idea that unaccompanied minors are a system to be exploited, not children to be safeguarded.
- Care arrangements (housing, guardianship, education) are often described implicitly as costly or overstretched, feeding a narrative that these minors place pressure on state resources.

**What is the narrative?**