

**THIS IS TODAY'S FOOTBALL, DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!**

Over this last year we based our message on the difficulties that global football is facing from the ruthless and savage attacks of match-fixers. We cannot disassociate ourselves and ignore what is happening beyond our shores. We are exactly in the same negative situation that other countries are experiencing. The scale, approach and methods are identical. The amounts of cash ruining footballers' lives, exposing them to criminality, may vary slightly, depending on match levels. Some players are on a bonanza, and go about it unperturbed seeing the laissez-faire attitude of law enforcers. Some of the players go about their "business" with ease, in collaboration with match-fixers and colleagues. It is a well oiled system which is reaping excellent illicit rewards.

We have discussed the patterns adopted by foreign "investors". We have guided clubs to be aware of the tempting rewards that they have been promised. We have shown how club administrators are more concerned to outwit their opponents, not necessarily based on the game's technical requirements. In other words they are looking at football as a means to generate dubious financial opportunities. We know that some clubs have their own "special" way of meeting their salary commitments. Our football has been irreparably exposed to hardened criminals who are hell bent in milking the situation to the last drop. These guys are running circles round us, and some people from the football fraternity are actually assisting them unconcerned about the destruction that is taking place.

Do we honestly feel that we are doing our best to stave off match-fixing? The Malta Football Association has been doing its utmost within its available resources and powers to fight the scourge and educate all stakeholders. But we do not feel that the crucial stakeholders are pulling the same rope, and we can go further in stating that they are in fact creating every imaginable obstacle to complicate matters, ensuring that criminals have an open cheque to ruin the game. Can these "football" people honestly look in the mirror and feel satisfaction with what they are doing? Can these people feel that they are being fair to their own children and grandchildren? Can these people understand that with their shortsighted actions, they are going down a downward spiral to theirs and football's oblivion?

We are surrounded by ill meaning, crooked individuals who have been portraying themselves as honest football people. These people should not be part of our family. They are simply a disgrace and a big let down. They are manipulating the way football functions. We need to kick them out.

We need the necessary tools and powers to tackle the criminality that is taking place uncontrollably. Law enforcers and legislators have the responsibility to assist us in this. They cannot keep on turning an eye and ignoring our heartfelt pleas. They should initially try to understand the situation and learn what is going on around us.

Our efforts have never ceased and will become more intense. We appeal and expect others who have the obligation and authority, to join us and be part of this fight for survival.ft