



Sovereign Military Order of Malta

Status: Minor nation.

Description: Order of knights which previously ruled the Mediterranean island of Malta.

Grand Master: Lieutenant Andrea di Giovanni y Centellés (acting).

Delegate: Fra' Antonio Miari.

Background

The clumsily-named *Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta* was (and is) a direct continuation of the Knights Hospitaller from the Crusades. After the fall of Jerusalem, the Order moved to Rhodes, and later, Malta, ruling over the locals.



*Antonio Miari,
Delegate for the Order*

France invaded the island in 1798, which was initially welcomed by the populace until they started looting churches. A local rebellion, assisted by British forces, led to the French garrison's capitulation and the reconstitution of Malta as a British protectorate. Britain agreed to evacuate Malta in the 1802 Treaty of Amiens, but broke this promise when war resumed in 1803.

Shorn of their territory, the knights were dispersed into various places, including St. Petersburg, where Russian Emperor Paul I had himself declared Grand Master of the Order. By 1814, the office of Grand Master was vacant and the Order was governed by a series of Lieutenants based in the Sicilian city of Catania.

Objectives

The Order's top priority was to get Malta back, otherwise, to find another permanent home and source of income. The Order also wanted increased diplomatic recognition, particularly from the Pope, who alone had the authority to appoint a new Grand Master.