



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE



# Statement on the death of Dr Lila Ammouri and Susan Frazier

Sisters Lila Ammouri 54, and Susan Frazier 49, from Arizona, US travelled to Basel Switzerland and died at the Pegasos clinic in Liestal on February 11, 2022.

The sisters were members of Exit International, having joined the organization in October 2020. They subsequently joined Pegasos in March 2021.

They sought information from Exit on ending their lives. Although they had a number of health problems, they were not terminally ill. They expressed a strong wish to die together.

They initially researched in detail possible DIY options described in the Exit Peaceful Pill Handbook. Fear of possible failure led them to then consider travelling to Switzerland. Pegasos was chosen because neither was terminally ill, and they felt Pegasos would be better able to serve their needs.

They also realised that their desire to die together, when not terminally ill, could not be accommodated by any of the right to die legislative changes introduced into a number of US states.

Both sisters were medically reviewed in Switzerland and their mental capacity to make such a decision assessed by independent professionals.

Pegasos Director Reudi Habegger stated:

Pegaso's Swiss Association is committed to ensuring that adults capable of judgement can exercise their right to a self-determined, humane death. After careful clarifications and within the framework of the official rules, we respectfully accompany people with unbearable suffering on their last journey. Please understand that we cannot comment on individual cases for data protection reasons.

What we can say, however, is that for each individual assisted suicide by Pegasos Swiss Association, a careful and preliminary clarification is required. Of course, we work closely with medical professionals and local authorities.

A majority of our supporters attach great importance to involving family members and selected friends in the preliminary clarifications and bringing them along on the day of VAD (Voluntary Assisted Dying). We strongly support this approach and actively recommend this and encourage the persons concerned. In the end, however, how they proceed corresponds to their own free will.

Exit Director Philip Nitschke stated:

Exit International believes that all rational adults should have access to a peaceful death at the time of their choosing. This is a fundamental right, one that is not determined by the degree of sickness or suffering.

Exit provides accurate information to their members and supporters who wish to pursue this option. Many reject the need for medical oversight and opt for a DIY solution. Concern over possible failure with a DIY strategy leads many to then obtaining assistance to end their life in Switzerland.

There is a growing demand for such assistance from people with social reasons for making this choice. This includes couples who wish to die together, often when one is facing death from terminal illness, but where their partner may be well.

The decision by two sisters to die together is extremely rare. Exit has only seen one previous occasion when in 2017 in Gold Coast, Australia, mother Margaret Cummins, 78, and her daughters Wynette and Heather, aged 53 and 54 all decided to end their lives together.

END\_\_\_\_\_ 27 March 2022

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