



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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“The Government rejects Mr Bossano’s accusation of pettiness and says that his continuing visits to the Committee of 24 damage Gibraltar”

The Government rejects the Opposition’s suggestion of “pettiness” in not agreeing to change the Parliament’s Order of business as it appears on the order paper, to accommodate Mr Bossano’s (and Mr Picardo’s) absence from Gibraltar to address the UN Committee of 24.

Requests to alter the Parliamentary order of business are decided by the Chief Minister, as leader of the Government and as leader of the House. At no time has Mr Bossano made any such request of Mr Caruana to delay his questions. Instead he made his request to the Speaker who is not empowered to accede to such a request.

Mr Bossano has developed the practice of seeking accommodation of his personal diary commitments from the Speaker. The Speaker has rightly informed him that he must address the request to the Chief Minister privately. Mr Bossano appears to be unwilling to do that, and that is the issue. Not pettiness on the Government’s part.

Furthermore, Gibraltar’s position abroad is formulated and presented by its Government, not by its Opposition. Mr Bossano and Mr Picardo are members of the Opposition. They are paid reasonably well to hold the Government to account in Gibraltar. Their primary political responsibility lies in the business of Parliament. If the Opposition chooses to usurp and to undermine the position of the Government and of Gibraltar, by travelling to the United Nations to address the Committee of 24 in preference to attending the Gibraltar Parliament, they cannot expect the Parliament to alter its order of business, without even a request from the Leader of the Opposition to the Leader of the House.

A spokesman for No 6 Convent Place added:-

“Mr Bossano is the architect of his own difficulties as a result of his refusal to ask anything of Mr Caruana. He cannot then complain afterwards of the natural consequences of his own actions. Whatever anyone may think of Mr Bossano going to the Committee of 24 in contradiction of the Gibraltar position as established by its Government, it is not clear what function Mr Picardo carries out at the Committee of 24 that would justify accommodating his absence as well.

The Government's (and therefore Gibraltar's) position is that, following the new Constitution and the Referendum, Gibraltar is now in a non-colonial relationship with the UK, in the context of our desired British Sovereignty and constitutional links with Britain. This does not depend on recognition by the C24.

Removal by the C24 from its list of non-self Governing territories is prevented by the UN's anachronistic delisting criteria, which prevents acceptance by the UN of our new relationship with the UK as being insufficiently independent for delisting. In practice, the C24 current delisting criteria require a Constitution on the basis of which Britain would not be willing to allow us to retain British Sovereignty and Constitutional links with Britain. These anachronistic criteria are thus unacceptable to the Gibraltar Government (and the UK) which is why both Governments call for their change. Mr Bossano then goes to the UN to undermine that position by saying that the criteria are fine and simply need to be applied. This view can only be based on a misunderstanding of the criteria as read with the Constitution and the UK's position.

In the meantime, continuing to go to the UN Committee of 24 to seek decolonization serves the purpose only of sustaining Spain's position that Gibraltar remains a colony pending decolonization and that that can only be achieved in negotiations between the UK and Spain that result in a transfer of sovereignty to Spain.

The Government is powerless to prevent Mr Bossano from going to the UN Committee of 24 to undermine the Government's and thus Gibraltar's position, policy and interests. But he should certainly not expect the Government's spontaneous help to do it.