



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Hon Joe Bossano to be Knighted**

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is delighted to note the decision of Her Majesty the Queen to confer on the Hon Joe Bossano MP the honour of a Knighthood in the New Years Honours List for 2018.

Sir Joe Bossano has been appointed as a Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.

As a former trade unionist, Member of the House of Assembly and Parliament, Leader of the Opposition, Chief Minister and now Father of the House and Minister for Economic Development, Joe Bossano has dedicated his professional life to the cause of Gibraltar and its people.

He has been an elected member of the House of Assembly or the Parliament for longer than any other individual in our history, with a political career in Gibraltar spanning forty five years so far. He is one of the longest serving Parliamentarians in the Commonwealth and would today match Denis Skinner and Ken Clarke as the longest currently serving Parliamentarians in the present House of Commons.

Sir Joe started his political career in Gibraltar in 1972 in the House of Assembly, elected into opposition as part of the Integration With Britain Party. He formed the Gibraltar Democratic Movement, which became the Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party in 1976. In 1984, he led the GSLP to take all the Opposition seats in the House of Assembly. Four years later, he led the GSLP to victory in the 1988 General Election and became Gibraltar's fourth Chief Minister. He was Chief Minister for eight years until May 1996. From that year, he assumed the post of Leader of the Opposition for fifteen years until April 2011. After the 2011 General Election, he became Minister for Employment and Economic Development.

At the age of 78, he remains a Minister today, with responsibility for Economic Development and the Savings Bank. In the eight years in which he was Chief Minister, Sir Joe is credited with having returned the Gibraltar economy to viability after the double challenge of the closure of the dockyard and the full opening of the frontier. Even before becoming Chief Minister, Sir Joe was leading the economic development of Gibraltar with his leadership of the successful battle for wage parity. Amongst his many innovations, he introduced affordable home ownership and the 50/50 scheme that allowed many Gibraltarians to own their own homes and the concept of mandatory



scholarships grants for thoseGibraltarians who chose to pursue University studies. He was instrumental in the establishment and defence of the Community Care Charity that pays all Gibraltar-resident pensioners a “household cost allowance” to supplement pensions, as well as assisting in the establishment of The Calpe House Trust that assists GHA patients who require care in the United Kingdom.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: “The whole of Gibraltar will want to join me in congratulating Sir Joe Bossano on the granting by Her Majesty the Queen of this distinguished honour on my ministerial colleague and former Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition. I lead the Cabinet, and no doubt the whole Parliament and the rest of our community in extending our most sincere congratulations to Sir Joe. Indeed, I am sure that our political opponents will want to join us in extending their genuine congratulations also. His contribution to public life in Gibraltar is unrivalled in its duration and effect and, perhaps most importantly, he is still going strong and will be for many years. From self-determination and parity to affordable home ownership and the mandatory scholarship scheme, through so many other groundbreaking innovations and battles, Joe Bossano has led this community in the trade union movement, in the House of Assembly and in the Parliament. He is now Father of the House as well as being a Minister. He is a man whose commitment to Gibraltar is without question. A man whose integrity, intelligence and logic has won battles for Gibraltar that others would have abandoned. He led the emergence of Gibraltar into a post-colonial constitutional reality after the 1988 General Election.

This recognition by Her Majesty is richly deserved for one of the men who has fought the hardest for Gibraltar to remain entirely British. Sir Joe Bossano is a Gibraltarian patriot and a hero of the working classes and now also a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in recognition of his life’s work.'