

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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The claim by the Government that a demonstration planned by Waterport Terraces owners next week is “politically orchestrated” is nothing more than a red-herring designed to distract people from the central issue. It is a sad reflection of Mr Caruana’s paranoia and suspicious state of mind that he should always find somebody else to blame for his own shortcomings.

The true position has been made public this afternoon by one of the organisers who told GBC radio that Mr Louis Bruzon and the GSLP had nothing to do with it and that the protest is led by home-owners waiting for their flats to be finished and those who support them. The spokesperson for the organisers also placed Mr Bruzon’s contributions in Facebook in their proper context.

It will be recalled that at the last meeting of Parliament, Mr Caruana was asked by Shadow Housing Minister Charles Bruzon to apologise to the purchasers in Waterport Terraces for the delays in completion and he refused to do so. What Mr Caruana should do now is apologise to the organisers

of the protest for imputing motives to them which are false.

The central issue is that purchasers in this development are completely fed up at both the delays to the project and at the manner in which the issue is being handled. This is the thrust of the criticisms of the GSD Government that appear on Facebook over the past few months. The Government raised expectations about the delivery date of these properties as a vote-catching exercise before the elections just like they promised people in the rental development at Rooke that there would be a ballot to allocate their non-existent flat before the end of last year.

The additional cost that people have incurred in the delay they have suffered and the fact that they have had to pay for their new home and their existing home has meant that many purchasers are justifiably angered and now feel cheated and let down.

The decision to hold a demonstration in order to vent their frustration and put pressure on the Government into taking some action clearly comes from the purchasers themselves and is not “politically orchestrated” in any way. Indeed, one would think that the composition of purchasers is a matter totally independent of their political affiliation and if it were biased it would hardly be in favour of those who support the Opposition parties.

The Government must understand that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Gibraltar. Their warning that purchasers “should be aware of the party political involvement in this demonstration” can only be seen as an attempt to mislead the public and scare people away so that they do not take part. This is a repeat exercise of what they tried to do with the SDGG National Day rally at Casemates.

It is deeply regrettable that ordinary citizens should be subjected to this kind of treatment and it is even more regrettable that Mr Caruana should now seek to censor the internet, as well as everything else, when he does not agree with what is being said about him and his Government.

ENDS