

FALZON ON THE WARPATH

NO SPACE FOR JASON MICALLEF IN MLP WITH FALZON AS LEADER

KARL SCHEMBRI

LABOUR'S deputy leader for party affairs and contender for the leadership election yesterday hinted there would be no space for secretary-general Jason Micallef within the party if he is elected to the helm.

Speaking to journalists in the wake of the publication of the damning defeat analysis report, Falzon unleashed his most scathing attack ever on his own party and on the commission that wrote the document, calling

it "a smokescreen" and lambasting the 99-page document for "blatant lies".

Even the number of journalists attending his press conference at Melita restaurant, Attard, yesterday afternoon was indicative of the bombs he was about to detonate.

Quoting chapter and verse from the analysis report – as well as from his own notes and correspondence, which were left out of the analysis despite having provided them to the commission – Falzon made it clear he was not responsible for the "gaffes

that were made" in the campaign, bar his singing romp at the Granaries that ended up on Youtube.

"I loved reading it," he said with a smirk, "it made interesting bedtime reading."

He actually accused the commission of "throwing mud" at the MLP electoral office in order to get at him, while exonerating "a high official" whom Falzon never mentioned by name, although it was amply clear by the end of the press conference that he was referring to Jason Micallef.

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Michael Falzon claims he was targeted by the MLP commission's defeat report

Contact made with Maltese hostage

RAPHAEL VASSALLO

GOVERNMENT yesterday said contact had been made between the Maltese oil worker kidnapped in Nigeria and his employer, Lonestar.

George Scerri, 62 from Birkirkara, was kidnapped on Friday 23 May while driving to an oil rig with a Pakistani colleague.

Government said this was the first confirmation that Scerri

was still alive.

Foreign Minister Tonio Borg is in direct contact with the Nigerian government and Lonestar, as efforts continue to secure the Maltese hostage's release. Scerri's family were being updated with all developments in the case.

The Niger Delta is a region notorious for kidnappings of foreign oil workers. Scerri has been a tool pusher with Lonestar for the past eight years.

A Nigerian website claims

the attack occurred at 12.30pm outside Omuku town, where a convoy transporting Scerri and his colleague was waylaid by armed militiamen off the East-West road between Ikioi and Obagi. An eyewitness account claimed the "kidnappers armed with automatic weapons overcame the security men attached to the expatriates."

No militant group has claimed responsibility for the abduction.

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Who's boarded out? 15% are from Gozo

JAMES DEBONO

THE island of Gozo, which constitutes less than 8% of the Maltese population, accounts for 15% of all those who are currently receiving an invalidity pension, statistics released in parliament show.

In numbers, it means that 1,053 from 6,969 recipients of

the pension awarded to so called "boarded out" workers, who are certified to be invalid for work by a government medical board, are from Gozo.

And 10 Gozitan localities also top the list of towns with the highest percentage of their population receiving an invalidity pension.

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