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# Muscat: Yes to 'consensual modernisation' of the Constitution

**KARL STAGNO-NAVARRA**

OPPOSITION and PL leader Joseph Muscat has opened the door towards a national debate on the re-definition of Malta's neutrality status clause in the Constitution.

In exclusive comments to MaltaToday, Joseph Muscat stressed that the PL is "in favour of a consensual and more wide-ranging modernisation of this fundamental document in order to better reflect the aspirations of our society, and strengthen the Republic we are celebrating this Sunday."

While stressing the PL's disagreement that Malta should get involved in Afghanistan or in any other conflict - as suggested by the US Ambassador to Malta Douglas W. Kmiec, who recently asked Malta to contribute to US President Barack Obama's call to the international community to contribute to the stabilization of Afghanistan - Joseph Muscat qualified his statement that the PL "does not yet advocate other piecemeal and patchwork changes in our Constitution."

Joseph Muscat stressed that

"any Maltese involvement should only come within the context of multilateral action authorised by the United Nations and not in response to a call by any individual country."

In his comments, Joseph Muscat indicated the ways in which the AFM, government or any of its agencies, could contribute to overseas missions given Malta's neutrality status.

In response to MaltaToday's questions on whether the PL would consider accepting proposals or possibly propose itself updating the Constitution as to clearly define the AFM's role, especially in peace keeping missions or humanitarian assistance, Joseph Muscat's response could be considered as a step forward from the categorical 'no' stated by his predecessors Dom Mintoff, Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici and Alfred Sant in accepting any changes to the neutrality clause, he went a step further in commenting also on a mandate the AFM could have from within the European Union.

"Contributions to civilian development of societies can also be within the European Union's development policy framework."



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## 'Not my job to react to press reports' - Gonzi



**MATTHEW VELLA**

PRIME Minister Lawrence Gonzi has stated in parliament he will be not expressing his view on claims by a turnkey firm whose works in finance minister Tonio Fenech's house were allegedly "a favour" to the minister.

Gonzi was asked by Labour

MP Leo Brincat for "an official reaction" to the reports which featured in MaltaToday on the works carried out by mega-developers JPM Brothers in Fenech's house in Balzan, in return for the minister's intervention in a hotel sale.

According to the director of Rainbow Turnkey Projects, the firm sub-contracted by JPM to carry out the works, the job was "a

favour" to the minister for his alleged role in the sale of JPM Brothers's Jerma Hotel, to magnates Joe Gasan and George Fenech.

Gonzi categorically told parliament this week that "it is not (his) job to react to reports in the media. I remind the Honourable MP that the matter is subject to court procedures."

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