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'PIG-HEADEDNESS HAS TAKEN CASTILLE BY STORM' – MP

Floriana MP Jean-Pierre Farrugia says he will not vote in primary health reform and accuses leadership of being driven by 'conflicts of interest'
PM's brother replies: 'Gonzi is king, without him it's game over'

KARL STAGNO-NAVARRA

PRIME Minister Lawrence Gonzi has been told he could be challenged as well as lose his parliamentary majority unless he restores a "social conscience" to his government, backbencher Jean-Pierre Farrugia warned in an email sent to the whole Nationalist parliamentary group, which hasn't met since 15 December.

The popular, three-times elected Floriana GP went as far as making it clear to Gonzi that he would vote against any bills on the upcoming primary health reform – a clear sign of upheaval in the wake of this week's Cabinet reshuffle.

In the email, Farrugia had harsh criticism of the treatment of backbenchers who had been outspoken in their criticism of the government, and expressed support for Franco Debono's absence during a crucial parliamentary vote last December.

In an email reply to his outburst, Michael Gonzi – brother to the prime minister – accused him of "playing God" and imparted a whimsical message: "In chess, the pawns win the battle through the strategic positioning of important pieces. But the King is always the King and if he falls, it's game over."

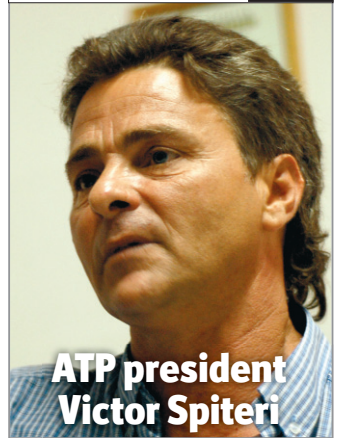
Gonzi's message then triggered a series of replies from other MPs, in defence of Farrugia's outburst.



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