

Press Release

Sunday, 6th September, 2026

Issued by the Labour Party Communications Office

“I chose maturity and prudence over populism and partisan politics” - Prime Minister Robert Abela

During an interview with journalist Reno Bugeja, Prime Minister and Labour Leader Robert Abela reiterated that, following the jury’s verdict in the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia, he chose the path of maturity and prudence rather than populism and partisan politics. Dr Abela stressed that political statements can have a negative impact on a judicial and investigative process, particularly at a sensitive stage such as the present one.

“I will not take sides. I will not be the Prime Minister whose words are used by one side or another to pursue their objectives in the courtroom”, Dr Abela said. He noted that the Office of the Attorney General could potentially be involved in a process that may lead to an appeal against the jury’s verdict. “The Office of the Attorney General needs support at this stage. Instead, we had a Nationalist MP resort to insults against the Attorney General, calling her ‘corrupt’,” the Prime Minister said, referring to comments made by PN MP Mark Anthony Sammut.

Dr Abela said that Opposition Leader Alex Borg had chosen a different path: one of partisanship and irresponsibility. He said this was evident in a number of ways, including the Opposition Leader’s immediate decision to take a position in favour of the jury’s verdict, effectively speaking out against the possibility of an appeal. The Prime Minister also referred to the Opposition Leader’s claim that he had no confidence in the Police investigation because Minister Glenn Bedingfield is responsible for the Home Affairs portfolio. Dr Abela said this appeared to imply that the Minister himself was conducting the Police investigation. Dr Abela went on to say that when the Nationalist Leader claimed there had been shortcomings in the investigation, he was effectively attacking the work of the Dutch forensic experts, the FBI and the Maltese investigators, professionals whose work, he noted, has the support of the Caruana Galizia family.

The Prime Minister assured that the Government would continue to provide investigators with all the resources they require to carry out their work in accordance with the directions given by the Court. While outlining a number of reforms implemented since 2020, including reforms concerning the appointment of the judiciary, the Police Commissioner and the President of the Republic, Dr Abela rejected the suggestion that Malta had returned to the situation of 2017 following the verdict. “In 2017, there was no one sentenced to 15 years in prison for involvement in the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia. Nor were there two brothers, considered to be the executors of this murder, serving lengthy 40-year prison sentences. And there were not two other individuals serving life sentences after being found guilty of supplying the bomb.”

Tender for investment in Malta Film Studios to be issued in the coming hours

The Prime Minister and Labour Leader was also asked about the first 100 days of the new Labour Government. He announced that, in the coming hours, a tender will be issued for the development of new sound stages at Malta Film Studios, with the aim of attracting further investment and creating new employment opportunities in the sector. He also announced that one of the projects the Government will undertake is to give Gozo an element of energy autonomy. A backup plant is therefore being planned in Gozo, which could be used in the event of a failure affecting two of the three electricity cables supplying the island.

Dr Abela reiterated that, in recent weeks, the Government had demonstrated its determination to continue translating economic strength into a better quality of life for families. He outlined a number of measures and initiatives already undertaken, including reforms in the IVF sector through the expansion of PGT-M and the reduction of bureaucracy, enabling more Maltese couples to become parents. “We have results that give us encouragement: last year, a record 254 babies were born through IVF, while more than 1,000 babies have been born since the service was introduced in Malta.” Dr Abela also referred to the €120 million investment to expand Mater Dei Hospital’s Emergency Department and develop new facilities for acute mental health care, projects which began last month.

He highlighted how, within the first 100 days, the Government had launched a reform of the appeals process in planning, initiated the process to protect White Rocks as a National Park, and introduced legislation to strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities. Asked about education, Dr Abela said that this week, Government had announced that it was working on a proposal for a vocational secondary school, which would be subject to further discussion. He recalled that it was a Nationalist Government that abolished these schools, “and to this day we continue to hear the person responsible for that decision trying to justify it.”

The Prime Minister also outlined the work being carried out to strengthen public safety, including the introduction of on-the-spot fines, which in certain cases may also lead to deportation. “The message is that we welcome those who visit our country or live here. But equally important is compliance with the rules.”

“The people have given us their confidence for a full term, and our responsibility is to ensure that every year, every Budget and every decision brings us closer to what we promised. The period ahead will therefore be one of more work, more implementation and, where necessary, courageous decisions”, Dr Abela concluded.

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