

2 July 2025

EMBARGOED TO 830PM WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2025**Delivery of Principal Auditor Report to Opposition Being Blocked – Accountability Delayed is Accountability Denied**

It is clear once again that the GSLP/Lib Government is delaying the presentation of the latest 2018/19 Principal Auditor's report. The circumstances that give rise to this conclusion are nothing short of a scandalous abuse of power and an obstruction of the constitutional work of the Principal Auditor as well as public access to it.

The Principal Auditor has confirmed to the Opposition in writing today that his predecessor concluded his report on 31 May 2025 and delivered this to the Clerk of Parliament on 13 June 2025 addressed to the Speaker so that this could be laid in Parliament. The first available moment to do so was 23 June 2025 when the Parliament next met. Nearly three weeks after delivery the Report has not been laid in Parliament and a copy has not been provided to the Opposition. This seems clearly intended to delay and obstruct accountability at precisely the time that our Parliament is debating Gibraltar's finances and the state of the nation. What is it that the Government want to hide?

What makes matters worse is that the Chief Minister answered a question from Roy Clinton on the delays of the Principal Auditor reports as recent as last week in Parliament. Additionally, in answer to a precise question from the Leader of the Opposition last week the Chief Minister was unwilling to confirm whether he had received a copy of the Report.

After that question and answer session was over the GSD received credible informal information that the Principal Auditor's report had actually been delivered to Parliament. On Thursday 26 June 2025 the Leader of the Opposition wrote to the Speaker asking her to investigate this (in light of the information received) and confirm whether the Report had been received and asking that it be tabled in Parliament. Mr Azopardi pointed out that the standing orders of Parliament provide that the Principal Auditor's Report can be tabled by the Clerk. No reply has been received from the Speaker.

The practice from the passage of the new Constitution in 2007 to 2014 had been that the Speaker laid the Report in Parliament. After 2014 the Chief Minister has done so but standing orders also allow the Speaker to do so via the Clerk.

On Monday 30 June 2025 in his Budget speech the Leader of the Opposition made clear that delays in the delivery of the Principal Auditor's reports are unacceptable when they are contrived by the Government to slow down scrutiny and awareness of the independent audit. As Mr Azopardi said then "accountability delayed is accountability denied." S74 of the constitution makes clear that the Principal Auditor should not be subject to the exercise of control by any person. That extends to his work that should not be obstructed by anyone.

Today, Wednesday 2 July 2025, the Principal Auditor confirmed to the Opposition in writing that the 2018/19 Report was actually delivered to Parliament almost 3 weeks ago on 13 June 2025. It is completely unacceptable that not only has this not been laid in Parliament so far but that the Opposition has not had answers to its straight questions in Parliament to the Chief Minister or to Parliament from the Speaker as to whether the report had been received.

Mr Azopardi said: “We now have clear written confirmation by the Principal Auditor of the information we had already informally received from other sources. Other papers have been laid in Parliament over the last few days but this Report has not. It is scandalous that the Government should be delaying the tabling of this Report. This can be the only conclusion to be reached given that they refused to confirm they had it and we put to them last week that they wanted to bury this till after the Budget debate.

It is also disappointing that the Speaker has not replied to the Opposition following the request for confirmation of last Thursday as to whether the Report had been received by Parliament. Plainly this was the case and the Parliamentary Office’s silence on the matter up to the moment of issue of this press release raises concerns on an important question like this.”