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Chief Minister Statement to Parliament on Passing of William Serfaty

Mr Speaker,

It is with great personal sadness and, indeed, that of the members of my Government, no doubt also members of this House and, in particular, members of my Party, that I wish to record the sudden passing of a staunch Gibraltarian patriot, William Serfaty, a few days ago.

As the House is well aware, Willie has been an energetic hardworking member of our community, both in his private capacity as a successful businessman – principally from the iconic Red House – and as a political activist, where he was really in his element.

Willie has contributed extensively to the business community through the Boards of the Chamber of Commerce and campaigned in all initiatives to promote the democratic rights of the Gibraltarians, including the right to vote in European Elections, the struggle against Joint Sovereignty, amongst others.

Indeed, he was also an important contributor to law enforcement in our community via his contribution to the Police Complaints Board.

Willie was strongly opposed to the Brussels Agreement and helped to carry the Brussels Coffin symbolically paraded by the SDGG to Parliament in defiance to the British Government and the Gibraltar Government of the day.

Perhaps Willie's greatest contribution was his membership of the Self Determination for Gibraltar Group. He became a founder member and took over from its first Chairman Dennis Mathews, when Dennis stepped down.

Willie led the group for nine years, addressing the mass rallies at Casemates and spoke before the United Nations Committees on decolonisation. I fondly remember those trips to New York on which we coincided.

Willie's family and, indeed, all of us Gibraltarians can justly feel proud at the contribution he has made to develop a Democratic British Gibraltar.