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Opposition also rented out Government premises when in Government

The Opposition's criticism of the renting out of Government premises for private functions over the Christmas festivities is selective in its use of the facts.

The reality is that Government premises have been rented out for private functions since time immemorial. Private clubs and organisations have held Christmas Day, New Year's Eve Dances and other similar events at venues like the Central Hall for years. There is no difference between the use of the Central Hall and the use of the Tercentenary Hall.

It is important that events such as these are organised in Gibraltar in order to provide local entertainment for young people and in this way encourage them not to go across the border. This policy is in the wider interests of the youngsters, their parents and their families and it provides peace of mind for all concerned.

The Opposition should be aware that any entity can book the stadium, the Central Hall or any other venue upon payment of a fee and by meeting certain other conditions like insurance and security. Exactly this same system was in use when the Opposition were in Government.

It is also relevant to point out that the main complaint received against the functions taking place this year originated from a commercial entity based in Ocean Village. Persons linked to this same entity booked part of the stadium to organise their own private function barely a few months ago but now are complaining when someone else books it!

Therefore the Government is satisfied that the procedure followed was the same as that which has been used for many years for the allocation and rental of Government premises for private functions. The identity of the organisation that rented the premises is irrelevant to the debate.