Rainba Must live up to its name

As the largest sandy beach in Gaza, Rainba Bay should be given priority and due attention. It is now full of pebbles, rocks as well as seaweed. These are an eyesore and is creating great inconvenience to the visitors. They should be removed and is creating great dangers to the beach, as it is being invaded by some birds and others.

Rainba Bay should be kept in its original and natural state, that is, as a lovely beach. Rainba is gradually being a lowland to turn into a rocky beach. This will make it less popular with tourists, and thus affect tourism in Gaza. The entrance of Rainba Bay is barely not welcome, since it is scarred with rocks rather than sand.

The pebbles in the shallow waters of this bay come from the stones that were in the valley. This causes them to move towards the sea where the constant pounding by the waves reduces them to pebbles. This explains why most of the pebbles are found in the middle of Rainba Bay (as far from the valley).

Some of these are then dispersed to the sides of the bay by the waves and currents. The increase in the stones and pebbles changes the beach, making it a setting for a wall was built surrounding the Mediterranean, thus enabling stones to roll towards the sea more easily.

The pebbles and stones have occupied the space of the sand, which is being lost due to the wind. This lost sand ends up further up from the flora and can never return. Because of the ongoing loss of sand, Rainba is turning into a rocky beach as can be seen now. Thus, apart from being an eyesore, the rocks are also leading to the loss of sand.

A possible solution is to use a crasser at Rainba Bay itself to crush all the stones into sand.

Apart from the bay's natural beauty, the tourism services offered there are very limited. "Rainba has a lot of these, including restaurants, ice cream shops, hiring of sunbeds and umbrellas and a range of water sports."

The Rainba Bay has a major tourist attraction; let us not allow it to lose its character. After all, Gaza depends on local and foreign tourism.

Alfred Cini
Nadur

Birdlife's work is promoting eco-tourism

I am neither a hunter nor a birder; however, it is well known that hunters are highly interested in nature conservation - for their own benefit. Moreover, bird trapping is currently considered an illegal activity in the EU. Then who, beyond the rules, can compare and put these two activities on the same level? They should know the difference, since one is allowed by the EU and the other is illegal, so they cannot be put on the same level.

As a Spaniard, I was astonished when reading the name of my country, Spain, referred to as a good example of bad environmental practices.

Moreover, I could not believe that some people wanted to cast blame and criminalise an internationally recognised organisation, Birdlife, which works, as many other environmental NGOs, towards nature conservation. Environmental NGOs are supported and work with volunteers (people who work for promoting good in an altruistic way, that is, not for economic benefits but for better world).

If Malta is an EU member, should it not comply with laws and directives as other EU members do? Why are some people only interested in damaging the environmental organisation's reputation?

In recent years, nature travel and eco-tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing segments of this industry. Groups of tourists, young and old alike, look for peaceful eye-catching idylllands. They enjoy observing some of the rarest plants and animals found on earth.

It was this very reason that brought me to this beautiful islands of Malta. However, once there, I ask myself: where will the Maltese tourism sector end up?

I refuse to accept Paceville as the only place where young people can observe wildlife in Malta. Should nature and the environment not be an economic gain for Malta?

Jorge Gracia
Taz Xibiea

Paris embassy's 5-star service

I would like to publicly thank the Maltese ambassador in France, Mark Mifsud, and all his colleagues at the embassy in Paris for their prompt, professional and efficient services on April 20.

Having been stranded in London on a business trip, I attempted to make my way through France in order to catch a flight from Charles De Gaulle airport to Rome or Malta. I arrived in Paris Gare du Nord with the Eurostar train from London and while making my way on the RER train to the airport, a thief snatched a backpack off my back. I ran off with the bag, leaving me without a passport and money. Luckily I still had my mobile telephone and called the embassy in Paris with the hope of contacting my colleague in France.

The following day, the ambassador himself called to let me know he was on his way back to Malta. He arranged for me to meet him at the airport.

My colleague, the ambassador, helped me get the documents and help me with the check-in.

Their help has made all the difference. Heartfelt thanks to all the embassy staff from me and my family.

Moaia Heath

Mepa's no to bastion lift but yes to stilted parliament

I read with interest an article about the proposal for a pump house to service the Customs House area. This would be a positive move to ensure we have ferry services once again.

I remember how useful it was in my time as a water taxi driver. I was especially handy when we used to cross from Emma to Valletta to deliver mail.

It is said Mepa could not accept any drawings submitted because they clash with the Valletta master plan.

Does Parliament House on the Grand Harbour or St John's Gate building need a pump house? Surely the government should apprise themselves before finalising the plans accepted whichever houses are involved.

Maureen German
Shilma

Grandiose projects burden taxpayers

I wish the best of health to the President, who does us proud time and again, but in his efforts for the disadvantaged in our society, by the year-round fundraising campaign for the Community Chest Fund, as well as with his unrelenting welcome address during the Papal visit. I see that his, at times, physical frailty helps him be more at one with the weaker members of our society.

While it is right and honourable to lend a shoulder to the weaker elements, at the same time one is justifiably angry when administrative measures are undertaken which place unreasonable burdens on taxpayers. For example, though so many Chinese live very poor lives, the Chinese communist leaders have spent more than $3.2 billion for the six-month long Shanghai World Fair.

Another similar amount has been spent on infrastructural structure - yet the Chinese communists seem to be cap in hand begging for international donations for the relief effort in Tibet. I say this as the current nationalist and previous Socialists administrations have been close friends of the Chinese communists and seem to emulate the same wrong thoughts for expensive grandiose projects while burying the middle class, working class and poor pensioners with some savings with an ever-heavily tax-burden.

Louis Vella
Silvana

Christians and Muslims in Malta and Gozo

Godfrey Wignall's latest defence of his position on the discontinuity of Christianity in Malta (The Sunday Times, May 2) should merely have been the end of his tether with no other real arguments to put forward.

Clutching at straws, he resorts to adding as proof of the ethnic discontinuity the Hauccard 18th-century description of an uninhabited island abounding in wild dovecotes and wild sheep. As far as I'm concerned, you can't invent anything but integrity on his part. I can't, nonetheless, help thinking that he has forgotten what he himself wrote 20 years ago (The Sunday Times, September 30, 1990) about Ibn Hauccard.

Summarising his argument in Anthony Luttrell's succinct exposition: The various descriptions of an abandoned island have been explained, quite convincingly - and here Mr Luttrell cites precisely Wignall's St Cotton book - by textual confusion with another place with a similar name of Goleta.

This interpretation has until now been held by all who wrote on the subject: Brettink, Dryburgh, Dalby Redjila, besides Mr Luttrell and, of course, Prof Wignall himself.

Mr Luttrell continues to expand this point in the context of Al-Himyar, a 6th-century description: It may be that Al-Himyar, faced with evidence for a total abandonment before 1503 and of a community on Malta in that year, sought to revise his former version by inserting a slightly earlier re-population.

Suddenly now, 20 years later, it has become very convenient to prove Ibn Hauccard as a deus ex machina, and so is new evidence.

Wignall changes track and starts pontificating about how Sinussa (have) tended to discover Ibn Hauccard.

On one important point, Prof Wignall misrepresents me when he writes "Unaccountably, he believes I think... that rephrasing what I have already written, I mean that the 'pact of old' is what Prof Wignall is referring to. Instead, I mean that it is the 'pact between the Chinese communists and the nationalist Mepa party' which is being used as a smokescreen.

That what I never said was that they converted to Christianity, after 1099. I am not sure what Mr Wignall and the letter were Christians at all in 1099, as I believe that the abrogated pact has been nothing what Prof Wignall claims it has been.

This, of course, hinges on the rhetorical distinction between Malta and Gozo's vassalates, which I consider the so-called pact and Gilberto Abela's report (which Prof Wignall keeps being away from) point towards. But that just too is a matter.

Having said all of this, Prof Wignall's round-up of his position on the whole matter, by way of concluding this exchange of views, in spite of what I am supposed to have written, is a little bit too swallow.

Has it not been said by Prof Wignall in this correspondence that the idea of any such division is, on any view, the idea which is not the idea that Mepa (Sinnus) and Isla (Mepa) in the idea that the situation in 1503.

Nothing has been said by Prof Wignall in this correspondence and in any view the idea which is not the idea of any such division is, on any view, the idea which is not the idea of any such division.

Prof Stanley Fiorini
San Gwann