

## Restoration starts on Valletta bastions

Juan Ameen



Scaffolding has been put up near Biago Steps for restoration works to be done.  
Photo: Jason Borg.

An ambitious two-year restoration project, described as the biggest in a century, has been started on the Valletta bastions.

The works will focus on the stretch of fortifications between St Andrew's Bastions, next to Biago Steps, and those below Castille.

The project is in the hands of an Italo-Maltese venture, Cooperativa Archeologica and its Maltese partners Recoop and CTC.

The financing comes out of a €36 million package, co-funded by the EU, that will also be used to restore sections of fortifications in Mdina, Vittoriosa and Ċittadella in Gozo. A total of six kilometres of bastions will be restored in all.

Resources Minister George Pullicino said this amounted to one-tenth of the 60 kilometres of fortifications around the islands. The whole job would generate about 120 new jobs ranging from draftsmen to restorers, he said.

Land Parliamentary Secretary Jason Azzopardi praised the Valletta project, saying it involved parts of the city that might not have been given their due importance.

In preparation for the restoration works, the Land Department evicted squatters from St Michael's Bastions at Biago Steps two weeks ago.

Abuse of public land would not be tolerated, especially if it was vital to the country's cultural heritage, Dr Azzopardi said.

"We are on the verge of witnessing the birth of a new Valletta. This is the largest and most ambitious project in the past century," he said.

Some of Malta's prized fortifications are in dire need of restoration and repair. In October, the wall of a bastion collapsed beneath the Argotti Gardens, in Floriana, while the bastions at Fort St Elmo, the scene of the Great Siege, are also at risk.

## Comments

Jesmond Micallef (7 hours, 16 minutes ago)

Raymond Sammut, what you mention is very interesting indeed, and do see your point . No wonder its called "The Island Fortress of Malta" !!

The complete Maltese islands are beautifull and that includes the people too.

S. Zammit (7 hours, 45 minutes ago)

@Kevin Zammit: I think that 1/10th isn't in terms of what needs to be restored but in terms of total, i.e. there are already some parts which are restored of those 60km, the 1/10th is just an addition. However I agree with your statement, I'd rather see all fortifications restored to their original glory rather than a new city gate/ theater project.

Rita Camilleri (8 hours, 23 minutes ago)

Better late than never !!!!

Raymond Sammut (8 hours, 41 minutes ago)

"Resources Minister George Pullicino said this amounted to one-tenth of the 60 kilometres of fortifications around the islands." I pointed out in an earlier article that Malta's fortifications amount to approximately 1/100th of the Great China Wall (not including trenches) in total length. I find this architectural and historical fact to be extremely extraordinary. This considering that Malta's land area is 0.000035 that of China.

The part of Malta's fortifications that I find most fascinating are the Victoria Lines (12 kms in length) built by the British in anticipation of a sea (later paratroop) invasion in the northern section. (Luckily, the German army decided on a combined sea and paratroop invasion in Crete rather than Malta during WWII. No similar fortifications -- as far as I know -- had been built there by the British). It is most unfortunate that the Victoria Lines are mostly forgotten -- and at times disrespected -- because they are not as visible and never played a direct role in Malta's defense systems.

Jesmond Micallef (9 hours, 22 minutes ago)

Interesting photograph indeed. People of Malta, do you know how this place used to look like before it was heavily modified, and by whom ?? Grand Bastions go hand in hand with Grand Entrances too, right. How many entrances did Valleta have ??

Very well done indeed. With my very best wishes.

Kevin Zammit (11 hours, 49 minutes ago)

"The financing comes out of a €36 million package, co-funded by the EU, that will also be used to restore sections of fortifications in Mdina, Vittoriosa and Ċittadella in Gozo. A total of six kilometres of bastions will be restored in all. Resources Minister George Pullicino said this amounted to one-tenth of the 60 kilometres of fortifications around the islands."

Yet we're goin to spend 80million ... twice that sum ... to build a parliament building and we after all is said and done the palace and houses within the city walls are crumblin.

Pray the wisdom in all of this blows me over ....

What will happen when tourists will only have a brochure picture and 1/10th of the bastions to look at?

Ma andate a farvi lavare l'cervello va!

Joe Morana (11 hours, 50 minutes ago)

Very good news indeed. The magnificent Maltese fortifications were crying out for this long overdue investment in the form of the restoration project which may as well serve as the rebirth of Valletta and other locations to their original splendour .

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