



## Deal reached with Bonnici Brothers over €13 million shooting range debacle



The Shift Team

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Documents tabled in parliament indicate that the government has reached a deal with Burmarrad's Bonnici Brothers over claims of shoddy work carried out in 2017 as part of a €13 million shooting range project at Ta' Kandja.

The government negotiated an out-of-court settlement agreement with Sportmalta and Bonnici Brothers, the details of which were not made public.

Both parties have withdrawn their court cases against each other claiming hundreds of thousands of euro in compensation.

Meanwhile, there is no information on any action that will be taken to address the shortcomings in the project.

When asked for an explanation and details of the deal, including a copy of the out-of-court settlement, [Mark Cutajar](#), the government-appointed CEO of Sportmalta and a former ONE TV sports reporter, did not reply.

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Kawża 731 / 2020 - BONNICI BROS SERVICES LIMITED vs SPORTMALTA				
Nru.	Data	Stat	Eżitu	Verbal (Magħluq)
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Sportmalta and Bonnici reached an out-of-court settlement last February.				

The documents presented in parliament to PN MP Carm Mifsud Bonnici confirmed the out-of-court settlement, although no further details were divulged.

The only aspect of the deal made public was that the settlement was reached through the mediation of architect Valerio Schembri, who was paid €10,000 for his efforts.

The CEO of Sportmalta also refused to reply when asked by The Shift to state who would be footing the bill for the [work](#) carried out by Bonnici Brothers. The poor standards were confirmed in a [technical report](#) by architect Robert Musumeci's firm.

Mark Cutajar also did no reply to questions on Prime Minister Robert Abela's intervention to settle the dispute.

Education Minister Clifton Grima is responsible for SportMalta.





The Ta' Kandja shooting range is in disuse after a 13 million project.

Disgraced former prime minister Joseph Muscat announced the shooting range project during the last days of the 2017 electoral campaign. The project was marred by corruption claims, bad workmanship, and a raft of direct orders.

[A National Audit Office \(NAO\) report](#) published in 2020 described the project's execution as an exercise in maladministration.

The project was initially estimated to cost €7 million but totalled €13 million by the time it was completed.

Almost all the work was obtained through irregular direct orders, 60% of which were awarded to the Bonnici Brothers.

Works valued at more than €4 million were not even covered by an obligatory performance guarantee, and no approval was sought from the Department of Contracts to cover spiralling costs.

At the time, [Chris Bonett](#), now promoted to Transport Minister by Robert Abela, was in charge of the project.

The NAO audit also found that Bonnici Brothers were contracted to build foundations for the shooting range, a shooting tunnel, and other works for an extra €2.3 million and started the work even before a contract was signed.

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