



Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Gibraltar to Mark 50th Anniversary of Border Closure 1969-2019**

The Government will mark the 50th anniversary of the closure of the land frontier next year. The closure was the culmination of a series of events by the Franco regime in Spain which was designed to bring Gibraltar to its knees.

The policy of General Franco and his Foreign Minister Castiella failed dismally as the people of Gibraltar united in their defiance to the dictator and in their determination never to become part of Spain.

There will be an exhibition in Gibraltar to mark the event and a booklet will be produced for distribution to schoolchildren. It is important that the younger generation is fully aware of their history and of the sacrifices made by their forefathers.

The format will follow as far as possible the events that took place to mark the 75th anniversary of the wartime evacuation of civilians in 2015 and the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum throughout last year. These were all coordinated by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia.

The final programme of events is yet to be determined. However, the Mayor of La Linea has proposed one joint event which could take the form of a seminar looking at the impact of the closure on either side of the border, or a reception. The exact shape that this will take is yet to be agreed.

The closure of the land frontier was an important moment in our evolution as a people. It served to cement together our identity as Gibraltarians and to move us even closer to the United Kingdom at a time when our links with Spain were completely cut off.

It symbolised the determination of the people of Gibraltar not to surrender their birthright no matter what pressure was exerted upon them by Madrid.