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UN Vote: “Gibraltar Government welcomes the Fourth Committee’s support in one of the Government’s fundamental disputes with the Special Committee on Decolonisation (“C24”)

The Government welcomes the formal rejection by the UN Fourth Committee of the view promulgated by the Committee of 24 that territories affected by a Sovereignty dispute are excluded from the principle of self-determination.

It will be recalled that for several years now the Chief Minister has argued that there is no principle at the UN that Sovereignty disputes override the principle of self-determination, and that the Committee of 24 had no right to adopt that position.

Earlier this month, the Chief Minister once again made this one of the central elements of his address to the Fourth Committee and told them that the C24 was inventing the doctrine that where there is a sovereignty dispute affecting the Territory the principle of self determination does not apply to the process of its decolonisation.

The Chief Minister again argued that Sovereignty disputes and decolonisation were different things. He warned the Fourth committee that some countries appear to believe not only that the mere existence of a Sovereignty dispute cancels the right to decolonisation by the application of the principle of self determination, but still further that the acquisition of such sovereignty against the wishes of the people of the territory is a valid method of decolonisation. The Chief Minister pointed out that this view violates every applicable principle of the UN Charter and every established principle of international law, and that the adoption of these positions by C24 does not reflect any known, applicable principle of the Charter, but rather it reflects the disproportionate influence wielded over the Committee and its proceedings by member states interested in a particular territory.

The 4th Committee’s vote vindicates these arguments repeatedly put over several years by the Chief Minister, and represents a valuable decision for Gibraltar.