



GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Environment and Tourism
Joshua Hassan House
Secretary's Lane
Gibraltar

PRESS RELEASE

No. 270/2008

Date: 6th November 2008

GIBRALTAR BARBARY MACAQUES

The Government rejects the accusation of “secret culling of apes in Gibraltar” made by Ms Helen Thirlway, Director of the International Primate Protection League UK. The Government has always made it publicly known that it acts on the advice of local experts who, acting under contract to the Government, are responsible for ape management in Gibraltar. Government policy, based on this advice, is that the exportation of monkeys is always the preferred option and the first to be considered when there is a need to reduce the Macaque population. When such exportation is not possible and the Government is advised that more immediate action is necessary to correct a given situation and that, regrettably, the only action available to it is that of culling, then the Government has always made it public that it will authorize such a course of action to be taken.

In answer to a recent Parliamentary Question the Government announced that it was not in the best interests of Gibraltar to publicly provide further information on this subject.

It is not true for Ms Thirlway to allege that the IPPL and others in a coalition of animal welfare and conservation groups “had succeeded in finding a home for the condemned primates back in May and we are still discussing the terms of a relocation plan with the Gibraltar Government”. No such discussions have taken place between the Gibraltar Government and the IPPL.

It is true that proposals were made by the IPPL to GONHS, who are responsible for the Ape Management Plan under contract to the Government, which identified a possible home for a number of monkeys on an island in an AAP rescue centre. However, agreement by IPPL to coordinate the exportation of these monkeys was subject to a set of preconditions demanded by the IPPL in respect of Gibraltar's Ape Management Plan. These proposals have not been formally presented to the Government by IPPL or GONHS pending the successful conclusion of the ongoing discussions between them.

The Government reiterates its willingness to work with the IPPL and any other Animal Welfare Group in respect of the exportation of Gibraltar Apes. The Government is, as has always happened in the past, prepared to finance the cost of such relocation. However, the Government is not prepared to allow the IPPL or any other entity to set preconditions before cooperating in such an exportation when these preconditions are, in effect, an interference with the autonomy of the Government or any local entity contracted by it in respect of ape management in Gibraltar.

The scurrilous remarks made by Ms Thirlway in her Press Release final paragraph imputing improper behaviour by the Government in respect of Government finances and in protecting the interests of “wealthy property developers” are potentially libelous and the Government reserves all its rights in this respect. In addition they serve to put into context the credibility that should be afforded to Ms Thirlway's statements' and views generally.