



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

PRESS RELEASE

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BARBARY MACAQUES

The Government condemns the GSLP for continuing to give bad publicity to Gibraltar by raising matters which are against Gibraltar's best interests in respect of the Ape Management Plan.

The Government would also like to congratulate GONHS and the Gibraltar Veterinary Clinic for the very good work that they do in managing, feeding and looking after the health of the Barbary Macaques in Gibraltar.

As Government has publicly stated on many occasions, the Ape Management Plan and the policies contained therein, were not invented or initiated unilaterally by the Government. These policies have been developed over the years in close consultation with local experts in the field such as, GONHS and the Gibraltar Veterinary Clinic who have the practical on-hand experience in ape management. It is on the advice of such local experts and others who co-operate with them, that the Government approves ape management policies and consequential ape population management measures.

Therefore, it is an inescapable fact that when the GSLP criticise the Ape Management Plan they are, in fact, criticising those same local experts who advise the Government. This only serves to demoralise and discourage them in their efforts and shows a despicable lack of respect for local expertise on a subject about which the GSLP itself has little or no knowledge and experience.

To add insult to injury, the GSLP have now publicly stated that they are committed to supporting the work of the International Primate League in respect of Gibraltar's Macaques. What the GSLP are really saying is that they neither trust the advice given by local experts nor give any value to such advice and therefore that they would go outside Gibraltar to seek advice from outsiders in preference to these local experts on how Gibraltar's monkey population should be managed. This is the opposite of the position that the GSLP normally takes when the Government brings in outside expertise. This is a further example of Mr Picardo's political style.

The Government reiterates that public health is a priority issue when considering policies under the Ape Management Plan. For the GSLP to waive aside such considerations of human public health with smokescreens about refuse collection shows not only a complete disregard for the welfare, health and safety of residents of Gibraltar but also an alarming degree of ignorance on this matter. It is unfortunately typical of the GSLP to voice public criticisms which are based on either partial or not fully researched information of a subject as well as interweaving red herrings within that public criticism.

The reality is that however the GSLP seek to criticise the Government's Ape Management Plan, the current methodology for managing the ape population, for feeding them, for looking after their welfare and for caring for their health is a vast improvement of the system in place when the GSLP were in Government. In fact, GONHS are proud to claim that the Macaques

are in better shape and better cared for today than at any time in the past. If the GSLP had not ignored the well established advice of experts to control the size of the monkey population and had not allowed it to increase from about 80 in 1988 to 275 in 1996, then many of the problems that Gibraltar is currently enduring from the large size of the monkey population would not exist.

History will judge who is right and who is wrong on this issue. This judgement will be made by Gibraltarians who have lived in close proximity to the Macaques for many years and who understand the challenges and risks faced by adults and children alike in many parts of Gibraltar and who appreciate the Government's efforts.

In the meantime, the Government holds the GSLP entirely and solely responsible for any incident, at international or local level that their continuing provocative and explicit public statements on ape management may cause, either in the context of public disorder through the actions of animal activists or of direct or indirect harm to Gibraltar's economy or international reputation.