



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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PRESS RELEASE

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Chief Minister's National Day Message

National Day in Gibraltar, as in all other countries, is an annual opportunity to remember, celebrate and honour all important aspects of our country and our community, including of course political, social, economic, cultural and historical aspects.

Among the things we in Gibraltar do instinctively well as a community is to defend and uphold our political rights and aspirations as a people. It is right and necessary to do so. But, equally we must avoid allowing the position and attitudes of others towards us, which we reject, to dictate how we do things here in Gibraltar. The more that our national day celebrations resemble the normal way that other countries do it, the more Gibraltar will seem to others to be a normal country, and thus the more the position of others towards us will look abnormal. In the Government's judgement the continuation of the political rally in its old format risks condemning Gibraltar to a state of perpetual, defensive revindication, and thus oxygenates the theory of others that there is a problem that needs solving.

In fact, the reality is that we now have the non-colonial, but British Sovereignty relationship with the UK that we wanted, in which Gibraltar governs itself under the New Constitution. Our sovereignty position has never been more clear or more secure. We can therefore now afford to display an even greater degree of confidence and normality in the way we behave collectively as a community on our national day, and we should do so.

This is why the Government changed the format of the official National Day celebrations and does not participate in the old style political rally. We now come together as a community, in a less politically charged atmosphere, to celebrate all that is good about our country, to honour the memory of past generations without whose sacrifices and trailblazing we would not enjoy the very high quality of life we enjoy to-day, and to recommit to solidarity with the less fortunate and vulnerable in our community.

We declare our solidarity with and our determination to defend and uphold our political rights and aspirations as a people including our right to self determination and the sovereignty of our country.

Abroad, we express our commitment to being responsible and valuable members of the international community and to friendship. At home, we recommit to a society based on the highest principles of human rights, democracy and social justice.

And not least, we commit to be responsible with all the interests of future generations of Gibraltarians.

All of these are the values, qualities and characteristics of this great little country of ours. We celebrate and commemorate them all on National Day, with our fellow citizens, our families and our friends.

Have a wonderful Gibraltarian family day. Gibraltar is a wonderful place to live and enjoy life. Let's celebrate and enjoy that.

Note to Editors:

Attached is a copy of the Gibraltar National Day Declaration that the Mayor will read on behalf of all Gibraltarians and residents of Gibraltar at John Mackintosh Square on National Day.