
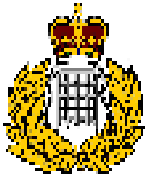


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|  | <p><b>HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR</b><br/> <b>HM CUSTOMS</b></p> <p><b>Custom House</b><br/> <b>Waterport</b></p> |  |
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## PRESS RELEASE

No: 352/2012

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012

### Cigarette seizures at Eastern Beach – Officers assaulted in a serious incident

Officers of HM Customs came under attack by a large group of men in an incident at 2.15pm today. Two Customs Officers apprehended two Spanish men in the process of conveying bags of cigarettes toward the frontier fence.

During the course of detaining the men and recovering the cigarettes a group of about fifteen men entered Gibraltar from Spain via a hole in the frontier fence. They began shouting abuse and threats at the officers and then armed themselves with stones with which they began to attack the officers.

Other officers arrived on the scene and also came under attack. Assistance was requested from the Royal Gibraltar Police who attended and the group made their way back through the fence to Spain after some ten minutes of continuous missile-throwing.

One RGP officer suffered a minor wound, but fortunately nobody was seriously injured. One of the patrol cars of HM Customs was seriously damaged in the attack.

16,200 cigarettes (81 cartons) have been seized by HM Customs. Investigations into the incident are ongoing.

This has been the most serious incident in a succession of seizures in recent years which has seen an escalation of violence by cigarette smugglers against Law Enforcement officers.

The Chief Minister and Collector of Customs attended the scene of the incident. The Collector of Customs has authorised, with immediate effect, that all trained Customs Officers be armed with a baton under the provisions of S9A of the Imports and Exports Act.

Works have started this afternoon to repair the fence and other security measures are being implemented. Both HM Customs and RGP are maintaining a presence in the area.

The Chief Minister expressed his concern for the safety of all law enforcement agents in Gibraltar and has authorised works to commence immediately to redress the breaches in security at the frontier which have not been addressed for years.