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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Government will not tolerate interference with our jurisdiction**

The Government announced the creation of reefs in different parts of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW) as part of its marine protection strategy when it published the fishing report.

These reefs will increase biodiversity and provide refuge for many marine species.

Contractors licensed by and working for the Ministry for the Environment were laying concrete blocks this morning in order to create one such reef between the western tip of the runway and the North Mole. The initial works were programmed to end at mid-day with the arrival of a cruise liner.

Seventeen minutes before mid-day, a Guardia Civil patrol boat obstructed the contractor and prevented the completion of the work, with only a proportion of the concrete blocks having been laid. The contractor was questioned by the Guardia Civil inside BGTW. This amounts to executive action being taken by the Guardia Civil in BGTW.

Given that it had to stop working by midday anyway, the contractor stopped carrying out the works.

The Government takes a most serious view of this incident. It is totally unacceptable that a fully licensed Government contractor going about a lawful activity should be questioned and prevented from working by a law enforcement agency of a foreign country. The United Kingdom Government is aware of the incident and the HMGoG expects that they should take the matter up at the highest level.

The Government will take whatever action is necessary in order to ensure that its policies are not interfered with in this or any other way. Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar will not tolerate any attempt to impede its jurisdiction and control over any part of Gibraltar on land or at sea. Works will continue as and when required.