



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
PRESS OFFICE
No.6 Convent Place
Gibraltar
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057

PRESS RELEASE

No: 548/2013

Date: 25th July 2013

‘The waters are as much a part of Gibraltar as Main Street,’ says Chief Minister

The Government condemns the interference by Spanish fishing boats with the work being carried out near the western end of the runway.

This morning, the tug Elliott and the barge MHB Dole had resumed their task of constructing an artificial reef in the sea off the runway, when they were approached by three Spanish fishing boats. There were as many as three Guardia Civil vessels in the area at the time. The crews of the fishing boats tried to stop the work going ahead but they were prevented from doing so by the combined efforts of RGP and GDP vessels and by HMS Scimitar. There are conflicting reports of the part played by the Guardia Civil boats but, ultimately, the barge was able to empty its full cargo of concrete blocks into the sea and to return to the port to collect further supplies. During this afternoon, the tug and barge were able to carry out their work without interference.

‘The waters off the runway are as much a part of Gibraltar as is Main Street,’ said the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo. ‘And I emphasise again that a fully licensed Government contractor cannot be prevented from going about its perfectly legal work in our sovereign waters.’

‘I am delighted that the Government has been able to provide the RGP with more senior assets than they ever had before, the value of which becomes evident on occasions such as this.’ said Mr Picardo. ‘Whilst I would like to see similar upgrades to the Royal Navy’s assets here on the Rock, it would also be useful for the Navy to review its Rules of Engagement. No-one likes to see the Navy ignored and disrespected by foreign state vessels as has been the case on so many occasions. It does nothing for the international reputation of the Navy or of Her Majesty’s Armed Forces generally.’

Mr Picardo added, 'One thing is very clear; the Royal Navy, the RGP and the GDP have done an excellent job of ensuring that the Government's contractor has been able to go about its business as required. The community as a whole will be delighted to know that that the work has now been completed. The area will now benefit from the creation of this artificial reef.'