



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

**PRESS RELEASE**

No: 226/2014

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014

**GSD's VENDETTA AGAINST HERNANDEZ KNOWS NO DECENT LIMITS**

- *Opposition fails to understand proper procedure to pursue complaint of bullying.*
- *Such further unsolicited and unprompted attacks on Joanna Hernandez betray gross vendetta being waged against her by elements within the GSD who are too cowardly to put their name to the party's statement.*
- *Government acting entirely properly by allowing independent administrative process to proceed without interference.*

It is incredible that the GSD continues in Opposition to pursue its grossly unhealthy vendetta against Joanna Hernandez.

Helpfully, however, the continuation of this obsessive campaign against Ms Hernandez helps to remind the public that the GSD as a party are quite happy - for what they see as their partisan gain - to pursue individuals vindictively and relentlessly.

In fact, the latest statement from the GSD has been issued in a remarkably cowardly fashion without attributing the attack to any individual spokesperson but under cover of the party's initials alone. Whoever the author of the press release was seems to want conveniently to forget that Mr Feetham himself was also Joanna Hernandez's lawyer at the beginning of her claims.

The Government, however, is acting entirely properly in allowing the matter of the complaints made against Ms Hernandez to be dealt with in keeping with its published policy and procedure for allegations of the type made. This is a procedure which is established for all civil servants, such as Ms Hernandez, whenever any similar allegations have been made. An internal investigation has already begun, led by senior Civil Servants, not by Ministers - which is as it should be.

The Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo MP, who received the original complaints in a meeting with trainees and graduates and immediately took action to get the appropriate process going, said: "It is just plainly ridiculous for Mr Feetham, or whoever else in the GSD put poison pen to paper on this latest attack on Ms Hernandez, to suggest that an

internal disciplinary investigation into the conduct of a civil servant should be 'open and transparent.' Our procedures are modelled on those in the UK public sector and are designed to provide independence in decision-making, for the benefit of both the person against whom the allegations are made and those making them. That is the right way to proceed, in keeping with the policies and procedures in place and agreed with unions. Or is it that the GSD is saying that Civil Service investigations and disciplinary proceedings should all be turned into public inquiries or that it should just happen in the case of Ms Hernandez for whom they cannot conceal their unreasonable hatred? In the circumstances, the cowardly stirring by the GSD will not change any aspect of the correct and proper manner in which the administration, under the leadership of the Chief Secretary, is dealing with this matter."