



PRESS RELEASE

No: 564/2015

Date: 6th August 2015

Positive meeting with Armed Forces Minister Penny Mordaunt MP

Accompanied by the Commander British Forces, Commodore Ian McGhie, the UK Minister for the Armed Forces Penny Mordaunt MP paid a courtesy call this morning on the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who is Acting Chief Minister. The Chief Minister Fabian Picardo interrupted his annual leave to join the meeting by video-link.

The Armed Forces Minister has been in office for only a few weeks and chose to prioritise her fact-finding visit to Gibraltar which is something that the Government both appreciates and welcomes.

The incursions by Spanish state vessels into British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, MOD locally employed civilians, defence and land transfers were among the topics that were raised during the meeting. The intention is that there should be a further meeting in the autumn.

"The Government very much welcomes Penny Mordaunt's visit to Gibraltar. She has served in the Royal Navy and has been to Gibraltar before in that capacity which means that she is well placed to appreciate the strategic value of Gibraltar in a rapidly changing world. The meeting was friendly and positive and the Government hopes to continue these discussions in the same vein in the future," said the Acting Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia.

The Chief Minister added: "I was very happy to have the chance to speak directly to Penny Mordant, by video link, whilst she is in Gibraltar in order, in particular, to raise the concerns of all of Gibraltar about repeated Spanish state vessel incursions. We also discussed the terms, conditions and remuneration of the MoD's civilian workforce and the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. I was very pleased that the Minister agreed with me that it is essential that we start working on what will happen post-2017 and the period of validity of the current Global Agreement. She agreed that we must do that in a way that provides certainty to the locally employed civilians who are the backbone of the MoD in Gibraltar and whose corner I am ready to defend and to fight for in terms of job security, terms and conditions of employment and proper remuneration. The MoD is an important partner for Gibraltar and we are an important, strategically valuable asset to the MoD. That symbiotic relationship can only improve with goodwill and common understanding to mutual benefit. The protection and enforcement of sovereignty over British Gibraltar Territorial Waters is an essential part of that relationship. I am very pleased we have agreed to meet again soon, in the autumn, to progress all these matters."