



PRESS RELEASE

No. 595/2015

Date: 29th August 2015

Incident of 22nd August 2015: Position of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar

The unacceptable events of Saturday 22nd August have led to exchanges at the highest levels in the days since the incident in question.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar cannot accept that there was any valid reason which could have justified the firing of live shots, which has now been officially confirmed, and which created a risk of danger to life. It should never have happened.

The express commitment by Spain to operate with safety of lives at sea as a priority should always be a sine qua non of law enforcement at sea in the Bay of Gibraltar and elsewhere.

For that reason, recognition, even on a without prejudice basis, of the need to step up co-operation will be welcomed by all law abiding citizens in the UK, Spain and Gibraltar. The additional statement reflecting the need for timely notifications of pursuits at sea is potentially also highly significant.

The further commitment to the mutual provision and exchange of evidence in order to better facilitate the successful prosecution of criminals in the relevant courts and tribunals is potentially also a step forward.

Nonetheless, what will really matter will be how these stated commitments will work in practice. We shall wait and see whether after these statements by the three governments anything changes operationally. Gibraltar's excellent law enforcement agencies will as ever continue to work to ensure that organised criminals are thwarted whenever they may enter our jurisdiction, whether on land or at sea and stand ready as always to cooperate with the law enforcement agencies of all nations operating around BGTW.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

UK Statement

- *We have now received a full explanation of the incident on Saturday 22 August.*
- *We remain deeply concerned at the fact that live shots are now confirmed to have been fired during this incident and we have been reassured by the Spanish Government that safety of lives*



at sea is a top priority for all concerned and their law enforcement agencies will operate with the utmost respect for this principle in order that this is fully upheld in the future.

- Without prejudice to our respective positions on questions of sovereignty and jurisdiction, it has been agreed to step up law enforcement cooperation in the fight against organised crime, including through timely co-operation and notification by the various seaborne agencies of pursuits of vessels involved in illegal activities to ensure effective action against criminals and a commitment to a mutual provision and exchange of evidence in order to better facilitate the successful prosecution of criminals in the relevant courts and tribunals.

Spain Statement

En relación con los hechos que tuvieron lugar el pasado 22 de agosto en aguas cercanas a Gibraltar, el Gobierno español ha podido intercambiar información sobre este asunto con el Gobierno británico.

Sin perjuicio de las respectivas posturas en temas de soberanía y jurisdicción, se ha acordado explorar fórmulas para mejorar la cooperación en la lucha contra el crimen organizado en esa zona, lo que podría incluir la cooperación oportuna y notificación apropiada por parte de las autoridades competentes en casos de persecución de embarcaciones involucradas en actividades ilegales con vistas a garantizar la acción conjunta en la lucha contra los delincuentes, así como mantener el compromiso de un intercambio mutuo de pruebas de cara a facilitar el enjuiciamiento efectivo de los mismos en los juzgados y tribunales competentes