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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**GSD's BULLYING PRESS RELEASES CONTRADICTIONARY**

The contradictory press release from the GSD is a futile attempt to compare the progress of the internal Civil Service investigation into allegations against Ms Joanna Hernandez and the factual assessment ordered by the Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, under section 15 of the Police Act.

In fact, in both instances the Chief Minister has acted with all due alacrity when the issues have been referred to him. In the Hernandez case, he immediately referred the matter to the head of the Civil Service, who has responsibility for such matters within the service and has constituted the necessary panel to investigate. In the RGP case, the Chief Minister requested the factual assessment from the Chairman of the Gibraltar Police Authority.

The fact that one investigation is taking longer than the other is no evidence of anything. But the fact that the Opposition have highlighted this in this way is evidence of an apparent desire by them to see Ms Hernandez somehow found wanting in some way. As the public are aware from earlier exchanges, Ms Hernandez has been away from Gibraltar due to ill health. This itself is likely to have impaired progress of the investigation in the matter which deals with the allegations made against her.

What is clear is that there is an indecent haste behind the desire of the Opposition to see the Hernandez case determined and in a manner which goes against her, given the clear slant of their press releases on this subject. Some might consider this is surprising, given her first advocate was Mr Daniel Feetham. Criticisms of the delay in this investigation are in effect criticisms of the Civil Servants running the case with care and diligence.

The Chief Minister is nonetheless grateful for the reflection that when it comes to bullying allegations, he certainly acts immediately to set in train such of the relevant procedures as may apply in each case.