



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

Office of the Deputy Chief Minister
No 6 Convent Place
Gibraltar

PRESS RELEASE

No: 85/2015

Date: 16th February 2015

‘Evacuation was watershed in our development as a people’, says Garcia

The Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia, has said that the Evacuation of the civilian population of Gibraltar during the Second World War was a watershed in our development as a people. This has come with the announcement that the Government will be commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Evacuation in a number of different ways.

On 22 May 1940, women, children, the elderly and the infirm were evacuated to French Morocco. After the fall of France they were brought to Gibraltar and then evacuated onwards to London, Jamaica, Madeira and later Northern Ireland. A series of events is planned for 22 May 2015, the 75th anniversary of the first sailings from Gibraltar bound for French Morocco. More events will follow throughout the year, including a commemoration service, a book, a memorial film and a reception. There will also be an exhibition.

The website of the National Archives has already initiated this commemoration through the incorporation on-line of details of the vessels and names of the evacuees who sailed on them. There is more material to follow.

In order to assist the Government, and for the purposes of historical record, the Gibraltar National Archives are now conducting a register of living evacuees in order to measure the size of this population and to inform the planning of commemorative events.

Gibraltarians who were evacuated during the Second World War may register themselves by filling in a simple online form at the web address:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gi/gna/LivingEvacueesUp.aspx>

It is important that people keep a note of the unique registration number that will display on screen after registration is successful. This number is personal to each evacuee and acts as a registration receipt. This number may also be printed via the 'print your receipt' button at the bottom of the registration page.

The online form should take no more than five minutes to complete. The Government encourages all members of the public to assist their family and friends, some of whom may not be familiar with computers or have access to the internet, in accessing and completing the online form. The registrations will enable us to collect and preserve this historical data on an important part of our heritage.

Alternatively, it will be possible to register by visiting the Gibraltar National Archives offices at Convent Courtyard on Secretary's Lane, where a member of staff will be happy to help you register.

For further information or assistance contact the Gibraltar National Archives via the telephone number 200 79461 or by emailing archives@gibraltar.gov.gi.

Commenting on the matter the Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia, said:

“The wartime evacuation of civilians during the Second World War was a landmark in the history of Gibraltar and in the development of our identity as a people. That sense of identity strengthened among both the persons who were evacuated and among those who stayed behind to help man the fortress. It was fundamental to the demands for greater self-government that followed the War. It is therefore entirely fitting that the Government of Gibraltar should commemorate the sacrifice that those men, women and children were called upon to make for the War effort. There will be more details made available in the weeks to come. I also want to take the opportunity to thank the Government Archivist, Anthony Pitaluga, for his assistance with and enthusiasm for this project.”