



PRESS RELEASE

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Chief Minister Meets Armed Forces Minister Rt Hon Mike Penning MP

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces, the Rt Hon Mike Penning MP called today on the Chief Minister of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP.

The visit was part of Mike Penning's extended visit to further familiarise himself with the Ministry of Defence's facilities in Gibraltar.

The meeting between the Armed Forces Minister and the Chief Minister was held after the peaceful demonstration to the Convent led by Unite to deliver a letter for the Minister.

The Chief Minister said: "I was so happy to see Mike Penning in Gibraltar as Minister for Armed Forces. He has been a good, true and long term friend of Gibraltar and it is fantastic news for all of Gibraltar as a whole that he has now become a Minister in the MoD. At a time when Unite have concerns about the proposed new operating model to be implemented and on which the MoD are consulting with the unions, we can be assured of a decision maker at a ministerial level who is not a fair weather friend but a genuine ally of Gibraltar and its people. I raised with Mike today the concerns which Unite have expressed to me and I can assure Unite members that he was very understanding of those concerns and issues we expressed to him. I also had a chance to discuss with him matters relating to the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and on the transfer to the Gibraltar Government of the Gibraltar Defence Police. We reflected on the excellent working relationship between my Government and the Ministry of Defence and the delivery by Gibraltar of the relocations agreed by the former administration. As ever, the meeting with Mike was positive and engaging and a demonstration of the close links and affection he has historically had with Gibraltar and which Gibraltar enjoys with the MoD. Today's demonstration by Unite was a show of concerns by the MoD's workforce that I am confident after my meeting with Mike will not escalate into a confrontation between Gibraltar and the MoD. Indeed, I believe there is considerable mileage for us to work together to deliver on the reasonable requirements of all parties in a way that is meaningful."