



# HM Government of Gibraltar

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Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Government to mark 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1967 referendum**

The Government has today announced a number of events that will take place in order to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 referendum. This was the first time that the people of Gibraltar were given the choice to remain British or to come under Spanish sovereignty.

The programme of events is being coordinated by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia and it will involve several Government Ministers and departments. An inter-ministerial committee has been set up chaired by Dr Garcia which includes the Minister for Heritage Dr John Cortes and the Minister for Culture Steven Linares, together with officials.

On 14 June 1967, UK Minister of State at the Commonwealth Office Judith Hart told the Westminster Parliament that a referendum would be held in Gibraltar on 10 September that year. There would be two options on the ballot paper open to the people of Gibraltar. The first to pass under Spanish sovereignty in accordance with the terms proposed by the Spanish Government to Her Majesty's Government on 18 May 1966. The second choice was to voluntarily retain the link with Britain, with democratic local institutions and with Britain retaining its existing responsibilities.

There will be an exhibition at the Casemates galleries which will open on 14 June this year. This will mark 50 years to the day when the United Kingdom Government announced that a referendum would take place in Gibraltar. The exhibition is being organised by the Government Archivist, who already holds a considerable number of media news reels, press cuttings and photographs of the time. However, members of the public who hold photographs, footage and memorabilia which relates to the 1967 referendum which may be suitable for displaying during the exhibition are invited to come forward and contact the Archivist so that an initial assessment can be made.

The exhibition will run until the first week of July.

The exhibition will be followed later in the year by a memorial event and concert. This is intended to bring together both the lighter and the more serious political message of the time.



There will be special coins minted to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the referendum and a set of stamps will also be issued.

A project is already in the pipeline, in conjunction with residents, for the re-painting of the steps at Devil's Gap in red, white and blue. This part of Gibraltar was an emblematic representation of the spontaneous actions taken by the people of Gibraltar to decorate the areas in which they lived in the colours of the Union Jack.

A commemorative booklet, similar to the one issued to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Evacuation in 2015, will also be published. This will be distributed to schools around Gibraltar in order to highlight the anniversary of this important event.

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia said:

“The referendum took place on 10 September 1967. On a turnout of 95.8%, 12,138 people voted to remain British and only 44 voted for Gibraltar to become a part of Spain. This was the first time that the Gibraltarians had been given the choice and encouraged to exercise it. They spoke with devastating clarity.

The Government considers that it is important to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this momentous occasion in the history of Gibraltar. The referendum represented, at a symbolic level, that fact that British sovereignty over Gibraltar had come to rest on the living wishes of the descendants of the people who had lived on this Rock since 1704.

The 10 September was later chosen as the date for Gibraltar National Day because it marks the anniversary of the day on which this referendum took place. This year promises to be extra-special.

The list of events published so far is not exhaustive. For now, I would remind anyone with referendum memorabilia that can be displayed during the exhibition to contact the Government Archivist on telephone 20079461.”