



PRESS RELEASE

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Protection of the marine environment is a priority for the Government

The enforcement of our laws is paramount and it is shocking that the Opposition party should suggest that citizens should not comply with the law.

The protection of the marine environment is a priority for the Government, as it is, increasingly, for governments around the world. The importance of our oceans is more in the public eye than ever before across the globe and HM Government of Gibraltar remains committed to maintaining its waters – British Gibraltar Territorial Waters – as a marine protected area. This is even more important today when international evidence is mounting on the need for marine protected areas, an example being the UK Government’s Blue Belt initiative.

The success of HM Government of Gibraltar’s marine strategy has seen a considerable increase in the presence of marine life in our waters. This may be part of the reason why, in recent weeks, Spanish commercial fishermen have increased their illegal incursions. Politically motivated provocation could be another reason.

Law enforcement by the RGP is not a matter for the Government. However, the Department of the Environment’s Environmental Research and Protection Unit (EPRU) remains active in deploying to challenge commercial fishermen and others who break our nature protection laws. Recent examples include an initiative to deter ‘pulperos’ from La Linea on the east side, many of whom have successfully been chased away and prevented from fishing. In addition, EPRU officers have made frequent approaches to suspected spearfishermen and others coming in to our waters.

Especially in the context of Brexit, showing the world that Gibraltar is committed to continuing to maintain environmental standards and protection of the sea is key in this. Therefore, without interfering in police matters, the Government will remain steadfast in defending BGTW’s marine protected status, now and in the future.