

PRESS RELEASE

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JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

- *The wishes of the people must be paramount*

The Governments of Gibraltar and of the Falkland Islands take note of the meeting and joint press conference that took place in Buenos Aires yesterday between the Foreign Minister of Argentina Susana Malcorra and the Caretaker Foreign Minister of Spain Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo.

A call was made for an end to the “two colonial situations of the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar through bilateral negotiations with the United Kingdom, in order to give effect to the mandate of the United Nations.”

The two Foreign Ministers have displayed a remarkable lack of knowledge about the complexities and the differences between Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. They have wrongly proceeded order to target our countries as if the historical background and legal issues were one and the same when clearly they are not.

Moreover, Mr Margallo and Ms Malcorra need to understand that both Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands are on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories held by the United Nations. The mandate of the United Nations, as reflected in the Charter and in the Covenants, is that the only way in which we can be removed from that list is through the freely and democratically expressed wishes of the people of Gibraltar and of the Falkland Islands respectively. The wishes of the people must be paramount.

It is a fundamental principle of international law that the right to self-determination comes first with regard to territories on the list and this has been the criteria that the United Nations has applied throughout the post-War history of decolonisation. This cannot be changed overnight on the whim of the Foreign Ministers of Spain and Argentina.

It also does not say much for the democratic credentials of two large countries that they should seek to gang up in this way in order to bully two very small territories and in the process completely ignore the right of their people to choose what they want to be. Referenda held in both Gibraltar and in the Falkland Islands have made those wishes abundantly clear.