



PRESS RELEASE

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HMGoG: Law Abiding Small Boat Owners Must Be Free To Lawfully Enjoy

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is pleased to note the increased activity of Gibraltar registered pleasure craft in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters.

The sharp increase in activity clearly relates to the recent growth in the ownership of small boats which has arisen as a result of the opening of the magnificent 700 berth small boats marina in the Mid Harbour area.

In addition, the national Tuna Fishing season is presently also in full swing so that those licenced to fish are rightly enjoying the opportunity to exercise their unhindered right to fish, in keeping with law, within the legal limits of BGTW as provided for under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In order to ensure the safety and security of all those law abiding citizens who are exercising their right to enjoying boating in BGTW, all the sea borne agencies of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar are coordinating with the Royal Gibraltar Police to give as wide a coverage as possible within BGTW. Coordination will also include the RGP working with the Royal Navy Squadron and the Gibraltar Defence Police where appropriate.

There have been several incidents over the past week alone involving the Guardia Civil: in one instance the arrest and detention of a Gibraltarian British Citizen in international waters, and on the other the interference with the lawful right of a Gibraltar licenced pleasure fisherman. Both these incidents highlight the importance of law abiding citizens who are lawfully enjoying their pleasure craft sticking to BGTW or understanding the risks they face once in international waters or Spanish waters and the laws and rules which govern activity outside BGTW. It is also important that boat owners understand the importance of fully registering their vessels under the Gibraltar Red Ensign flag and, perhaps most importantly, that they should understand and obey the rules of navigation and the importance of stopping and following other instructions when asked to do so by Gibraltar's law enforcement agencies.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "We have and are assisting the family of the Gibraltarian detained in Ceuta through legal channels and by ensuring liaison with British Consular authorities in Spain. That individual is now subject to the Spanish judicial process which



must be respected as we expect the Gibraltar judicial process to be respected when nationals of another state are lawfully detained here by our law enforcement agencies. The Royal Gibraltar Police and the Attorney General's office are already investigating what occurred in that incident, where exactly it occurred and what evidence may be available within Gibraltar's jurisdiction that might assist the judge in that matter to quickly determine the issues in that case and which may be relevant to bail or otherwise. We share the concerns of the family, of course, for the wellbeing of the individual in question and have ensured that all appropriate and legitimate assistance that can be given is promptly provided. Separately and more generally, the Government is genuinely pleased to see law abiding Gibraltarian families enjoying the sea more easily than ever before as a result of the creation by the GSLP-LIBERAL government of the magnificent 700 berth Small Boat marina. It is not acceptable to us, however, that people should feel anything other than entirely safe when lawfully enjoying themselves at sea within BGTW. I am very happy that Commissioner Yome has reassured the Community by advising of the work the RGP is doing in coordinating the seaborne assets of all relevant agencies to ensure that all those within BGTW will feel that all that can be done is being done to curtail any attempts to improperly interfere with law abiding citizens enjoying access to the sea in their pleasure craft. I fully support this initiative and the use it will give to the great investment in marine assets which this Government has provided to the RGP and all other seaborne agencies of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar."