



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **HMS Ambush: HMGoG immediately informed by CBF & receives direct assurances from Armed Forces Minister**

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar yesterday received information directly from the Ministry of Defence in Gibraltar, via the Commander of British Forces, Mike Waliker, about the incident involving HMS Ambush in international waters off Gibraltar. CBF was in touch throughout the day with the Deputy Chief Minister, the Hon Dr Joseph Garcia MP who liaised directly with the Chief Minister who is away from the Rock attending the pre-JMC meeting of heads of Government of the Overseas Territories. Later in the day the CBF also spoke directly to the Chief Minister.

The Government has today also received assurances from the Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom that the presence of HMS Ambush in Gibraltar, after the submarine collided with a merchant vessel yesterday, does not in any way pose a danger to the population of Gibraltar. The damage to the vessel is external and does not involve any damage to the nuclear reactor.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces Rt Hon Mike Penning MP called the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo this morning in order to convey those assurances personally.

The Chief Minister said: "Mike Penning is a good, long term friend of Gibraltar and I am very happy to see him appointed to the role of Minister for the Armed Forces. I have spoken to him today to receive his assurances that the vessel's reactor is undamaged and that there is therefore no danger to Gibraltar from its presence at the South Mole. I am satisfied of his assurances and his explanations of the incident. I reiterated to the Minister that Gibraltar has proudly served as a port of call to provide shelter to the Royal Navy for centuries and this latest visit is no different. HMS Ambush is therefore as welcome today on the Rock as ever. In more modern times, Gibraltar has often played host to nuclear submarines, something which the Government welcomes as it helps to demonstrate the strategic importance of the United Kingdom and to the Royal Navy in particular. This week the UK has rightly renewed it's commitment to a permanently at sea nuclear deterrent which is hosted aboard submarines."