



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Opposition clearly does not know its Maritime Regulations**

HM Government of Gibraltar notes the Opposition's Press Release seeking assurances regarding recent incidents at sea. Given the inaccuracies of the allegations, the Government takes this opportunity to reassure the public and clarify the facts of both incidents.

Regarding the collision between a bunker barge and the MT DUZGIT INTEGRITY which took place on 21st July, a full investigation is being carried out by the Marine Accident Investigation Compliance Officer (MAICO) under procedures laid down in the Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012. The Gibraltar Port Authority has already conducted its own initial investigation and provided its findings to the MAICO. The MAICO's report will be made public in due course.

Everything the Opposition is asking for is already being done! Mr Hammond would have known all of this if he had any knowledge of the work of the Gibraltar Port or of standard maritime regulations, or had bothered to ask the Government before attempting to make political capital through a misleading press release.

Regarding the HMS Ambush collision of 20th July, the submarine collided with a Panamanian-registered merchant vessel outside British Gibraltar Territorial Waters and therefore outside the remit of the Gibraltar Port Authority. This is public information and has been for two and a half weeks. The Opposition's calls for the Minister of the Port and Captain of the Port to conduct an investigation are sorely misplaced. The Opposition's eagerness to criticise this Government without bothering to learn the publicly available facts reveals just how irresponsible they can be when they believe that there are party political points to be scored. Such an attitude is not in the best interests of Gibraltar.

The Government has been informed that the HMS Ambush collision was a result of human error during a training exercise and not the fault of the operating procedures of the Gibraltar Port as the Opposition has attempted to mislead the public into believing.

This Government welcomes the Ministry of Defence and its use of Gibraltar as a base for training. The Government is also grateful to the Rt Hon Mike Penning for his personal assurances that the HMS Ambush was safe and posed no threat to either military personnel stationed in Gibraltar or to the public. Mr Hammond, on the other hand, seems all too eager to jeopardize Gibraltar's historic relationship with the MoD by not getting his facts straight



before jumping to publicly criticise the work of the Gibraltar Port, who were at no fault in the HMS Ambush case, in order to push his own tired, irrational and obstinate LNG agenda.

Today's press release represents another totally irresponsible and thoughtless reaction by the Opposition.