



PRESS RELEASE

No: 436/2017

Date: 12th July 2017

The Most Important Voice in Dialogue is Gibraltar's

The comment about Gibraltar made by the King of Spain in his address in Westminster Hall places the focus on bilateral dialogue between London and Madrid as the way forward to address Spain's differences with the UK over the Decolonisation of Gibraltar. This approach is undemocratic as it completely ignores the existence of the people of Gibraltar and the democratic requirement in this day and age to act only in accordance with our wishes. There are therefore not two relevant Governments, but three. Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is the most important voice of all as it represents the views, wishes and choices of the British people of Gibraltar.

The plain fact is that Spain lost Gibraltar over three hundred years ago and that Gibraltar has been British ever since. Spain ceded Gibraltar in perpetuity in 1713. In two referenda held in 1967 and 2002 the people of Gibraltar voted to remain British.

Madrid must come to terms with these facts of history and move on.

The Chief Minister of Gibraltar, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "The people of Gibraltar want normal, friendly relations with Spain on the same basis as with any other country. However, we have no desire to form part of Spain or to come under Spanish sovereignty in any shape or form. In the times in which we live, territories cannot be traded from one monarch to another like pawns in a chess game. The concept of human rights and democracy means that the wishes of people must come first, as much of His Majesty the King of Spain's address to Westminster Hall rightly identified. But those principles are not just abstract ones; they apply to Gibraltar and its people too. In Gibraltar the people have spoken loud and clear. Our freely expressed democratic wishes must be respected and that means understanding Gibraltar will remain 100% British."