



PRESS RELEASE

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HMGoG Statement Following Heavy Winds

A Civil Contingency meeting was held early this morning at No 6 Convent Place in the wake of heavy wind conditions experienced since Sunday afternoon. The Government inspected all its building sites to assess any overnight damage and to make the sites secure.

There has been damage to infrastructure and building sites. One minor, non-life-threatening injury has been reported to Accident and Emergency as a direct consequence of the winds.

School Closures

Overnight, large amounts of scaffolding fell from the Ocean Spa Plaza building site and caused some damage to St Anne's School. St Anne's School and Bayside School were closed as a result, as were Bayside Road and Glacis Road. Minister Licudi, who has ministerial responsibility for civil contingencies, has requested a full report on the scaffolding at Ocean Spa Plaza from the Health and Safety Inspectorate and a full investigation will be conducted.

Damage to trees and structures at St Martin's School and Notre Dame Schools meant that individual families were contacted and allowed to pick up their children from school early. In the early afternoon it was decided to close Bayside Comprehensive School, St Anne's School, Notre Dame School and St Martin's School on Tuesday 30th January in order for proper risk assessments to be conducted and for any necessary repair works to be carried out.

Road Closures

Road closures (in particular Bayside Road and Glacis Road) caused heavy traffic congestion throughout Gibraltar. As a result and in an attempt to not worsen the traffic situation the Commercial Gate at the Frontier was closed to vehicles entering Gibraltar. The Government understands that private vehicles and pedestrians were allowed to cross the frontier into Gibraltar freely, although there were delays due to the congestion within Gibraltar.

Bayside Road and Glacis Road are expected to re-open by the morning (Tuesday 30th January), subject to the Ocean Spa Plaza site being made safe.

Ministry of Tourism, Employment, Commercial Aviation and the Port

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A rock fall on Sir Herbert Miles Road caused the closure of the road from the MOT Test Centre to Catalan Bay. An update on this road is expected tomorrow afternoon (Tuesday 30th January). The re-opening of this road will be subject to further site inspections.

The Upper Rock Nature Reserve was closed this morning as a precaution, as was the Gorham's Cave interpretation centre. The Upper Rock will remain closed until tomorrow, except to residents of the area.

The Runway has been closed to inbound and outbound flights due to debris. Flights have been diverted to Malaga. It is expected that the Runway will re-open in time to service tomorrow afternoon's scheduled flights.

The Port

The Port instigated its adverse weather procedure overnight. Throughout the day eight vessels have been assisted by the Port in order to withstand the adverse weather conditions. No search and rescue assistance has been required.

The Cruise Liner Terminal has flooded, with some damage to the doors. There has also been damage to an adjacent building and to the roof of a storage building. This damage will be fully assessed once the adverse weather conditions subside.

The Minister with responsibility for civil contingencies, the Hon Gilbert Licudi QC, said: 'Today we have withstood the effects of very serious, abnormal wind conditions. I am grateful to the emergency services, teachers and technical staff for quickly working to mitigate the effects of these conditions and to keep Gibraltar safe. I would also like to thank the parents of the children at Bayside, Notre Dame, St Anne's and St Martin's schools for their co-operation and understanding, which in turn allowed the Government to make the necessary inspections and repair any damage as quickly as possible. Where there has been damage, I have requested full reports from the Health and Safety Inspectorate and a full investigation will be conducted with regards to the Ocean Spa Plaza site.'