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## **ANIMAL INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE PRAISES HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**

Referring to the news that four days ago, HM Government of Gibraltar banned the release of helium-filled balloons in Gibraltar, the Chief Minister and Minister John Cortes have jointly received praise from the Animal Interfaith Alliance, an international alliance of faith groups founded in Britain concerned about the welfare of animals.

The Alliance's member organisations and individual members include Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs who are united by their common concern for animals, based on their various faiths.

The Alliance has expressed its concerns as to the damage caused by plastics to the environment, especially the seas, and the destruction caused to vulnerable marine creatures.

The Alliance ends its letter with "Thank you for this enlightened advance and we hope that it will be emulated by many other governments, including that of the UK."

In response to the letter, Minister Cortes said, 'Surrounded as we are by sea, we accept that we have a responsibility towards marine life, both in our waters and beyond. It is gratifying to receive letters such as this as a result of our environmental policies.'

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo, said, 'On the same day that we have received this letter of thanks from an international animal charity, the New York Times has carried a story about Gibraltar banning helium-filled balloons on environmental grounds and our plans for Gibraltar's first-ever sewage treatment plant are again reported in the local press. For these and many other exciting environmental projects with international impacts, the Minister for the Environment should hold his head high.'