



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Statement re Grace 1: Chief Minister Speaks to Foreign Secretary

The Chief Minister spoke early this afternoon with the Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt MP, about the political issues surrounding the detention of the Grace 1 last week.

Mr Picardo said: *"I was pleased to discuss with the Foreign Secretary the political issues surrounding our initial detention of the Grace 1, the investigation that is ongoing and the extended period of detention presently ordered by the Gibraltar Supreme Court.*

*Mr Hunt called me ahead of speaking with the Foreign Minister of Iran, Mr Javad Zarif.*

*I therefore asked the Foreign Secretary to clarify to the Iranian authorities on my behalf that all the decisions made by Gibraltar in respect of the detention of the Grace 1 were made exclusively with a view to the Syrian destination of the vessel, the Baniyas oil refinery which is subject to EU sanctions, and without any regard to the origin of its cargo.*

*That was the exact basis on which the United Kingdom Armed Forces, through a detachment of Royal Marines, were deployed to provide military assistance to our authorities last week.*

*I also asked that the Foreign Secretary should communicate to the Iranian authorities that Gibraltar remained determined to enforce the EU sanctions against Syria through our Court processes but that we would be prepared to facilitate the release of the detained assets to a rightful claimant if we were satisfied that we had received guarantees that it would not be going to Syria or to any entity sanctioned under the relevant EU regulations.*

*I emphasised that the Foreign Secretary should feel free to say that I would be happy to meet any relevant officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran who wished to discuss or clarify matters further either in London or Gibraltar. I consider this may be a useful way of avoiding any further misunderstandings as to the motivations of our actions in respect of the Grace 1 and its cargo.*

*I have spoken again this evening to Foreign Secretary Hunt after his call with Foreign Minister Zarif and have been pleased to hear of Iran's constructive approach and their wish also to resolve this situation, which comes at a time of heightened international tensions."*

**Ends**