



No: 546/2019

Date: 19th July 2019

Chief Minister Statement to Parliament on London Meetings, July 2019

Mr Speaker I rise to update the House on meetings I have held in London in the past 48 hours relating to matters of interest to all Honourable Members and no doubt also to the wider community.

Mr Speaker, on Wednesday afternoon I met with the Prime Minister Theresa May in 10 Downing Street.

I was accompanied at that meeting by the Deputy Chief Minister the Hon Dr Joseph Garcia and the Attorney General Michael Llamas QC.

The discussion centred around the tanker “Grace 1” and Brexit issues.

I was also able to thank Mrs May for her unwavering and solid support for Gibraltar during her time in office. I recalled that she had received me and Dr Garcia for the first time on the day that she was appointed Prime Minister only hours before meeting Her Majesty the Queen.

I told the Prime Minister that I would not have kept that appointment with me if I had a meeting fixed with Her Majesty the Queen immediately afterwards.

The fact that she did set the tone of unwavering, stalwart and staunch support that was to follow in Mrs May’s three years in power.

On Thursday morning the Deputy Chief Minister and I met with the Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP.

The meeting with the Foreign Secretary centred on a discussion of the “Grace 1” situation and on preparations for our departure from the European Union.

We subsequently met also with Boris Johnson MP for a more general and convivial and positive discussion of matters of mutual interest and Gibraltar, in particular the challenges of a so-called hard Brexit and how to mitigate them.

Mr Speaker the Government considers it is highly significant that within 24 hours we have been able to meet with the current but outgoing UK Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Theresa May MP, and with the two candidates contesting an election to succeed her.



Mr Speaker we consider that this reflects the success of the ongoing policy of the Government to put across the Gibraltar point of view to decision-makers in the UK as quickly and as directly as possible.

The Gibraltar Government has developed and continues to develop a close working relationship with Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom from across the political spectrum and on all sides of the Brexit argument.

The relationship is one based on promoting understanding and support for Gibraltar's cause and not on buying influence.

This sensible and methodical strategy has allowed Gibraltar issues to be properly understood across the board.

It has also built a solid base of support for our position now and into the future based on these personal relationships and the persuasive nature of the arguments we advance for Gibraltar.

Needless to say, both the Deputy Chief Minister and I wished both candidates to succeed Mrs May all the best for next week.

Mr Speaker, I also met late on Wednesday whilst in London with Iranian officials, as I had asked the Foreign Secretary on Saturday to offer the Iranian Foreign Minister, His Excellency Javad Zarif.

The meeting was held, at my request, in the Foreign Office.

We discussed with our Iranian interlocutors matters related to the detention of Grace 1 in a spirit of seeking to de-escalate all aspects of the issues arising.

I am happy to report to the House that the meeting was both constructive and positive.

At every stage we emphasised the distinct nature of Gibraltar's jurisdiction and the independence of the Supreme Court of Gibraltar as well as the importance of the due process of law being followed in a state governed by the rule of law.

The matter will be before the Supreme Court once again this afternoon.

We look forward to continuing to work constructively and positively with officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran to facilitate the release of the Grace 1 pursuant to the satisfaction of all legal requirements.