



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Government Position on Public Inquiries**

The Government notes the references by the Chief Justice today in his speech on the Opening of the Legal Year in respect of the appointment of judges in inquiries.

The Government has full confidence in the ability of the Gibraltar Judiciary to try and hear any matters independently.

In relation to public inquiries, however, the Government's policy has been that these should be headed by senior, retired, members of the judiciary.

The position of the Government is in keeping with the considerations of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Inquiries Act 2005, which addressed the issues of the appointment of retired and serving judges to head public inquiries in the United Kingdom. The Committee specifically recommended the appointment of a retired judge to head an inquiry in cases where there is a likelihood that matters of a political nature will be raised. The Government adopted this guidance in the appointment of Mr Justice Parker, a retired Lord Justice of Appeal and alternate member of the Court of Appeal, in appointing him to lead the 'Hernandez Inquiry'. The Government was in that case advised by the Hon Dr Keith Azopardi QC MP, now the Leader of the Opposition.

The Government has seen no reason to depart from precedent established in Gibraltar or to depart from the opinion of the House of Lords Select Committee in the matter raised this morning by the Chief Justice.

**ENDS**