

**STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION
71/2008**

17 July 2008

The Opposition is seriously concerned at the continuing traffic problems which are being exacerbated by the industrial action taken by Spanish Police at the border.

It is important to point out that that the industrial action alone is not what gives rise to the problem. The problem arises out of the bottleneck that is created by all cars having to proceed to one green channel on the Spanish side. The industrial action is simply making the problem more acute.

Traffic congestion is now occurring not just on Winston Churchill Avenue but on Line Wall Road, Queensway, Waterport Road, Corral Road, Devil's Tower Road and Sir Herbert Miles Road.

The Opposition have previously highlighted the problems faced by beachgoers and residents on the east side of Gibraltar with the continuing closure of Dudley Ward Tunnel. The gridlock most days is such that it would be impossible for emergency vehicles to be able to go through Sir Herbert Miles Road without a great deal of difficulty and delay.

Passengers traveling from and to the airport have also voiced their concerns with delays in both directions. One passenger who arrived from England on Tuesday took one and a half hours to go from the airport to the ICC at the beginning of Main Street having been redirected along Queensway which was gridlocked. Passengers traveling to the airport have the benefit of the third lane but this only starts at the sun-dial roundabout. This means that those passengers caught in traffic in Line Wall Road, Corral Road, Queensway or Winston Churchill Avenue have no way of avoiding the queues of cars traveling to Spain.

Whilst we acknowledge the efforts of the Royal Gibraltar Police in attempting to keep the traffic flowing, the situation is now unacceptable and intolerable. It is a disaster for Gibraltar to continue

with an endless stream of cars into Gibraltar when these are, effectively, prevented from leaving Gibraltar by action at the frontier and by the ineffective arrangements with regard to the red and green channels. These matters do not only affect the quality of life of those who live and want to go about their normal business in Gibraltar, there are also public health and security issues at stake.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister for Traffic matters Gilbert Licudi said:

“It is both negligent and incompetent for the Government not to have had the foresight in their discussions with the Spanish authorities to make the point that the arrangements for traffic flow have to be the same on the way in and on the way out if bottlenecks were not to result.

The Government have admitted in Parliament that they have no effective short-term measures to redress the traffic problems. Not only have they lacked the planning and foresight to avoid the problem, they now seem to lack all political will to take appropriate steps to remedy and correct the chaos on our roads that Gibraltar continues to experience.”

ENDS