

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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The latest incident involving a Spanish Civil Guard launch in Camp Bay yesterday raises a number of questions which have not been answered.

Eyewitnesses have told the Opposition that a Civil Guard launch, approached Camp Bay from the South chasing two jet-skis. The Civil Guard followed them into the bathing area designated by demarcation buoys and proceeded to encircle one of the jet-ski's two times. The other jet-ski left the area.

It has been claimed that the jet-ski in question was in distress and that is why the Civil Guard launch came in. This is not the impression of people who were watching from the shore. The Opposition has been told that the life-guard rescue launch was already in attendance near the jet-ski when the Civil Guard launch arrived and that its presence for this purpose was therefore not required. Moreover, the Civil Guard had actually been following and chasing the jet-ski in Gibraltar waters already before it came to a standstill in Camp Bay.

The Opposition has been told that the Royal Gibraltar Police arrived on the scene about ten minutes later on two separate vessels and a conversation ensued between the Civil Guard and the RGP. The Civil Guard launch

remained inside the demarcation buoys while the conversation took place much to the annoyance of people on the beach.

The Civil Guard launch then proceeded to leave the area of Camp Bay by moving slowly just outside the demarcation buoys. It was shadowed by the small life-guard rescue launch which travelled inside the demarcation buoys parallel to the Civil Guard launch until it got to the area of Little Bay when it left. The RGP remained in Camp Bay for a short while and then left the area as well but according to eyewitnesses did not escort the Civil Guard out.

Another different eyewitness who was on the east side of the Rock has told the Opposition that at about 7.15pm, a Civil Guard launch, presumably the one that had left Camp Bay, was moving close to Gibraltar in the area past the lighthouse. It was approached by two RGP launches, one stopped beside it and the other in front. After a conversation between the officers the Civil Guard launch moved further away from Gibraltar and proceeded in the direction of Spain, though still inside our waters.

It is bad enough for the Spanish Civil Guard to behave as if Gibraltar's waters belonged to them, it is arguably even worse for them to come inside the bathing demarcation buoys thereby posing a potential risk to the safety of swimmers and other people in the sea.

These continuing acts of hostility put the existence of the so-called new climate in relations between Gibraltar and Spain further into doubt. Coupled with the designation of Gibraltar's waters as Spanish in an EU directive, the incidents show that Madrid behaves in a two-faced and underhand manner and that they cannot be trusted. Their actions speak louder than words.

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