

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE CHIEF MINISTER  
ON TUESDAY 17th MAY 2011**

**RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE**

Just over a week ago the Island celebrated the 66th Anniversary of Liberation from the occupying forces, a day when we should especially recognise and remember that the war against the Nazis was fought, amongst other things, to oppose racial intolerance and persecution.

That was a theme addressed by Senator Le Main in his excellent speech in the States last Monday, and reiterated in the Bailiff's Address at the service in Liberation Square. It was also referred to in the speech at the ceremony that afternoon at the slave workers memorial at Westmount, a poignant and telling reminder of the terrible hardships suffered by those whose identities or beliefs caused them to suffer and often die at the hands of the misguided enemy.

The message from each and every Liberation Day is that we must never forget what happened in those dark days and we must never allow a repetition of those events.

It is in that context that I speak today to condemn publicly the actions of a small number of Jersey residents who misuse their freedom of speech, even to the extent of a death threat, to criticise the actions of the Minister for Planning and Environment, not on planning grounds, (which they are perfectly entitled to do), but purely on the basis that he is of the Jewish faith, a heritage of which he is justly proud and which should be acknowledged and respected by all, including those like myself, of a different persuasion.

Sir, the need to make this statement saddens me, but as Chief Minister I am not prepared to stand by and ignore manifestations of religious or racial prejudice. We have a moral duty to pursue the principles of freedom for which the Second World War was fought and to challenge immoral and abhorrent activities.

## **6. The Chief Minister - statement about racial intolerance in Jersey**

### **6.1 Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Chief Minister):**

Just over a week ago, the Island celebrated the 66th anniversary of liberation from the occupying forces, a day when we should especially recognise and remember that the war against the Nazis was fought, among other things, to oppose racial intolerance and persecution. That was the theme addressed by Senator Le Main in his excellent speech in the States last Monday and reiterated in your address at the service in Liberation Square. It was also referred to in a speech at the ceremony that afternoon at the Slave Workers Memorial at West Mount, a poignant and telling reminder of the terrible hardships suffered by those whose identities or beliefs caused them to suffer and often die at the hands of a misguided enemy. The message from each and every Liberation Day is that we must never forget what happened in those dark days and we must never allow a repetition of those events. It is in that context that I speak today to condemn publicly the actions of a small number of Jersey residents who misuse their freedom of speech - even to the extent of a death threat - to criticise the actions of the Minister for Planning and Environment. Not on planning grounds, which they are perfectly entitled to do, but purely on the basis that he is of the Jewish faith, a heritage of which he is justly proud and which should be acknowledged and respected by all, including those like myself of a different persuasion. The need to make this statement saddens me but as Chief Minister I am not prepared to stand by and ignore manifestations of religious or racial prejudice. We have a moral duty to pursue the principles of freedom for which the Second World War was fought and to challenge immoral and abhorrent activities. [Approbation]

#### **The Bailiff:**

Does any Member wish to ask questions of the Chief Minister? Yes, Deputy Jeune.

#### **6.1.1 Deputy A.E. Jeune:**

Would the Chief Minister please reassure Members, or can he please reassure Members, that he maintains his confidence in the Minister for Planning and Environment?

#### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Both I and the entire Council of Ministers have full confidence in the Minister for Planning and Environment in his very difficult and challenging role. [Approbation]

#### **6.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

We, of course, welcome the words of the Chief Minister, although we would prefer that they were not necessary. I would perhaps go one step further and say that personal abuse of any kind is also unacceptable on top of religious and racial, and I hope the Chief Minister agrees. The question relates to the Discrimination Law, perhaps inevitably. Seeing that £21 million of underspend has been found and that there seems to be some extra money perhaps available, will any of this money be going towards the implementation of the Discrimination Law to show that not only is such behaviour as this unacceptable but it will also become illegal?

#### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Yes, I do indeed share the views of Deputy Tadier - I hope we all do - that abuse of any form and discrimination of any form is wrong, whatever type of discrimination that may be. It does not need a law to make it wrong, it is wrong innately of itself and the law is simply there to impose, if needs be, punishment and ways of dealing with that wrong. My statement this morning is simply to emphasise the fact that we must not allow wrong matters to continue. The funding of the

Discrimination Law is a separate matter and this sort of activity may simply indicate a greater need than ever to ensure that that law is considered in the fullness of time in the best way.

**6.1.3 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:**

My question has almost been asked, so I will phrase it slightly differently. It is in respect of the Discrimination Law. I wonder if the Chief Minister can advise the House whether he thinks a fair society should, in fact, have a Discrimination Law in place?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

A fair society would not need a Discrimination Law. It is the fact that society is not always entirely fair that requires the need for laws such as this. To the extent that we fail to achieve the objective of changing people's attitudes then more is maybe necessary, but to me that is very much a second-best approach.

**6.1.4 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

Is the Chief Minister aware that racial discrimination has been meted out sometimes by local people to visitors from abroad, particularly those students attending language schools; that that problem has been ongoing at least for as long as I have been in the States? Is he aware that this problem is continuing? What practical steps is he taking and is the Council of Ministers taking to combat this problem?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Yes, I am aware that discrimination like this does occur from time to time; sadly it occurs at all. Perhaps more hopefully it is less prevalent or less obvious than it has been in the past. I would like to think that an enlightened and informed society, a society with a freedom of understanding and hearing things without any repression of that nature, will encourage a more open, more understanding situation and the absence of discrimination in whichever form it may be.

**6.1.5 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

It is very much a follow-on from Deputy Tadier, I think, about the Discrimination Law. Will the Chief Minister accept that the deplorable allegations made and insinuations made to the Minister for Planning and Environment is really only the tip of the iceberg? There is far more discrimination in the Island than probably the Chief Minister would like to accept. Would he not agree that not only should he be advancing the Discrimination Law but also setting up an anti-discrimination programme in our schools and in communities just to make people aware that discrimination is a very hurtful and spiteful thing to happen?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I welcome the comments of the Deputy of St. Martin and particularly the need to address this by a variety of means, not simply by legislation but also by encouragement, changing attitudes, as something which we all have to do as States Members and to show by example that we will not tolerate abuse or intolerance and discrimination of any form. The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture from an education perspective can do that, but we should not say that that is the responsibility for one person or another. It is the responsibility of all and every Member in this Assembly and every right-thinking person in the Island.

**6.1.6 Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

To return to the topic, have the perpetrators been identified and what sanctions do we have against them?

[12:45]

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Sadly, in the present climate it is very difficult to identify perpetrators who find it all too easy to maintain anonymity by a variety of means. So in that sort of situation one can only hope to change attitudes of mind.

**6.1.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister give us something significant to remember his time as Chief Minister by committing himself to reintroducing the Discrimination Law into the law drafting programme for 2012?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

That is a matter which is outside the context of this statement and clearly is a matter which would interest a number of Members. At the time of the Business Plan debate no doubt the issue will be raised.

**6.1.8 The Deputy of Grouville:**

This may be a question for the Attorney General that the Chief Minister may wish some assistance with, but I will put it to the Chief Minister anyway. We have Article 47 of the States of Jersey Law and I would like to know how this is being used to protect the likes of Senator Cohen or any States Member against appalling actions of this kind and how it is being used and if it is fully usable against these kind of actions when States Members are going about their duties?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

The Deputy has the better of me in that I do not know the wording of Article 47 of the States of Jersey Law offhand. That law applies primarily to us and the procedures within this Assembly and related matters and does not relate so much to the general public, so I am not sure whether it is particularly appropriate or useful in this particular situation. If the Attorney General ... he is not here so he cannot add anything anyway.

**6.1.9 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

As we all know, the key to challenging racism is education. Having been involved in a major project in the past, as other Members have, would the Minister perhaps consider trying to find some money somewhere so a project such as the young people's exchanges with Madeira could be provided on an annual basis? I am sure we could find what is actually a very small sum. Would he be prepared to investigate that?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I would agree with Deputy Pitman that education is one of the tools we can use to combat discrimination. In terms of the level of funding or the way in which education might apply resources in that respect, that would be a matter best left to the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, who I am sure is equally aware and understanding of the situation.

**6.1.10 Deputy A.E. Jeune:**

Does the Chief Minister consider that the media have a role in promoting anti-discrimination and sometimes, unfortunately, the way things are reported may lead towards discriminatory feelings?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Certainly, the media does have a role to play and I would hope that in that respect they would act in a very responsible manner and continue to do so.