

FORUM: General Assembly 4 - Special, Political, and Decolonisation

QUESTION OF: Decolonisation of the Chagos Archipelago

SUBMITTED BY: European Union

CO-SUBMITTERS: Costa Rica, United Kingdom, Mauritius, United States, Sri Lanka, Cape Verde, Ireland, Norway, Guatemala, Serbia, France, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, World Bank, Egypt, Colombia, Russia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovenia, Azerbaijan, Austria

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

Recognizing that the dispute between the United Kingdom (UK) and Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, a series of islands in the Indian Ocean, originally began in 1968, during which time the UK was in the process of decolonizing Mauritius, of which the Chagos Islands were a dependency before the UK cleaved the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius,

Aware that although this action of separating the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius and deeming it a part of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) has resulted in an ICJ advisory opinion that “the process of decolonization... was not lawfully completed,” the UK currently and for the last several decades has been exercising de facto sovereignty over the Archipelago,

Understanding that island Diego Garcia on the archipelago is an important military base for both the UK, whose Foreign Office spokesperson stated that, “The defense facilities on the BIOT help to protect people here in Britain and around the world from terrorist threats, organized crime, and piracy,” and the United States (US), to which the UK leased the Archipelago, which has since been used by NASA, the US Navy & Air Force, and houses 1,000 troops,

Keeping in mind that military analysts have predicted that the Chagos Archipelago is unlikely to evict a military base, though they will not necessarily continue to lease Diego Garcia to the same countries and that conflict might ensue over the use of this island,

Noting that the UK has returned surrounding islands of Aldabra, Farquhar, and Desroches to Seychelles and spokespeople have made promises to do the same with the Chagos Archipelago and Mauritius when the islands are no longer needed for defense and protection,

Noting with concern that the UK forcibly evicted Chagossians, who have been campaigning to no avail for their return to the Archipelago for decades, and that decolonization paves the way for their repatriation from Mauritius and the UK, where most of them fled,

Emphasizing that the ICJ, at the request of the General Assembly has so far issued a non-binding advisory opinion, suggesting that the UK decolonize the Chagos Archipelago and return it to Mauritius as soon as possible and within the next 6 months, but that such an opinion, because it was given without the UK’s consent, could set a dangerous precedent of settling bilateral disputes through advisory opinions without the consent of both parties involved,

1. Calls upon member-states to authorise the USA and the UK to maintain control of the Chagos Archipelago, with further support from the government of the Republic of Mauritius, until the 20-year lease extension expires in 2036, after which:
 - a) the UK is to act in accordance with the Republic of Mauritius’ claim of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago as part of a worldwide effort to end colonialism
 - b) the Republic of Mauritius is to act leniently towards the United States of America’s presence as a result of its participation in the global war on terror
 - c) in the event that negotiations between the Republic of Mauritius and the countries concerned fail to materialise, the UK and the US will be granted a 5-year time-frame to cease military operations in the Chagos Archipelago, during which they will be expected to withdraw all military and civilian personnel employed at the base as well as any military

equipment;

2. Encourages all involved countries to respect the lease of the island Diego Garcia from the United Kingdom to the United States until the 20-year lease expires and encourages negotiations between the Mauritius and the nations concerned, about the possibility of continuing the lease that will:
 - a) try to find a solution that doesn't compromise international security
 - b) allow for more concessions to be payed to Mauritius
 - c) give Mauritius the final say over the lease of the island after the 20 years expire
 - d) guarantee that all negotiations on matters regarding the possibility of a further leasing of the Diego Garcia base would be led exclusively by the Republic of Mauritius, overlooked by the ICJ to advise both parties concerned and ensure that the process is conducted lawfully;
3. Fully endorses the gradual return of the surrounding islands of the archipelago to Mauritius over the course of the 20 years such that:
 - a) the islands are at a sufficient proximity to Diego Garcia so that:
 - i. their inhabitants are not in danger
 - ii. the inhabitants do not hinder military proceedings at Diego Garcia
 - iii. their safety has been determined by negotiations
 - b) the UK returns one of the seven atolls that make up the archipelago of its choosing to Mauritius every 2-3 years, ensuring gradual resettlement
 - c) islands deemed unsafe will be resettled once the lease is over, after which the base would no longer be active
 - d) along with each island, 12 nautical miles of surrounding water, the internationally accepted distance, will be considered Mauritian water;
4. Urges the United States of America and the United Kingdom to provide concessions to the Republic of Mauritius in the form of:
 - a) substantial economic aid in grants offered to displaced Chagossians to escape their diminished economic status by the governments of the UK and the US during their stay in the UK, Mauritius, and any other country in which they sought refuge and continued support during later resettlement of the island
 - b) scholarship programs to study in a university offered by the aforementioned countries to displaced Chagossians, many of whom have currently suffered financially as a result of their forced relocation
 - c) further compensation for the continued lease of the island that would be determined during negotiations between the UK and the US,
 - d) The United Kingdom opening another period of granting UK citizenship to Chagossians born between 1982 and 1995;
5. Suggests the return of the Chagossians to the Chagos archipelago, with the exception of Diego Garcia, from the UK, Mauritius, and any other location to which they might have been displaced to, by:
 - a) immediately lifting the UK's ban on Chagossians living in the UK on returning to the Chagos Archipelago to either live or visit
 - b) offering all returning Chagossians who choose to live on a Mauritius-owned island legal status as citizens of Mauritius if they so desire
 - c) granting returning Chagossians who wish to remain a citizen of the country they fled to while living on the Chagos Archipelago status as a legal resident of the Archipelago;
6. Asks that the UK will be responsible either through funding or directly for the development of the following infrastructure in the Chagos Archipelago in an effort to resettle native Chagossians including:
 - a) suitable housing that provides occupants with:

- i. access to clean, drinkable water
 - ii. the recommended amount of 25sqm of liveable space per person
 - iii. electricity from reliable and environmentally sustainable sources
 - b) functioning vehicular transport systems as well as supporting infrastructure possibilities including but not limited to trams, buses, and road and railroad systems
 - c) limited autonomy for the Chagos Archipelago, enabling it to set their own corporation tax, encouraging businesses in the South Asian region to relocate;
 - d) Necessary infrastructure for the development of fisheries and the proper usage of other natural resources such as coconuts in order to preserve the unique environment of the islands,
 - e) Hotels and other infrastructure necessary for the development of tourism in order to:
 - i. Create more employment opportunities
 - ii. Need the economy of the Chagos Archipelago to be developed;
- 7. Calls for the establishment of a training programme for Mauritian Nationals of Chagossian origins by UNESCO-UNEVOC, in cooperation with the states of the UK and Mauritius, that will, inter alia:
 - a) Assess the employment potential of Chagossians having declared their interest in resettlement
 - b) Provide training for gainful employment opportunities in agriculture, fishing, handicrafts and administration, including internet registration.