

Human Rights in Mauritius and the Chagossian People

**UPR Info
Pre-sessions**



**Chagossian
Voices**

Introducing Chagossian Voices

- Advocacy group and platform for the Chagossian diaspora
- Key locations: Mauritius, Seychelles, UK, France, Switzerland

The Chagossians

- Forcibly exiled indigenous people
- UK/US military base on Diego Garcia
- Exiled to Mauritius and the Seychelles
- Entire diaspora now mainly in Mauritius, UK and Seychelles
- All Chagossians are entitled to UK citizenship; most also citizens of Mauritius or Seychelles

Review of Key Issues -1

- Economic, cultural, structural, and informal disadvantages of Chagossians and Creoles in Mauritius persist (UPR Cycle 3 Haiti)
- Participation in government and education; status of Kreol Language still unsatisfactory (UPR Cycle 3 Trinidad and Tobago)
- Discrimination, marginalisation and racism (Special rapporteurs' letters 2021 AI MUS3/2020)

Review of Key Issues -2

- Lack of verifiable information or concrete data about the actual effects of any measures taken to support Chagossians in Mauritius (AI MUS3/2020)
- Chagossian Welfare fund under direct control of the Mauritian Prime Minister and Government: Chagossian voice is contained (CV)

Review of Key Issues 3

- Rights of Chagossians to return to their islands are in doubt (UPR Cycle 2 Mexico)
- ICJ and UNGA 2019 concerned only with Mauritian rights: Chagossians excluded
- Mauritius argues for rights of Mauritians, not Chagossians to “return” to Chagos
- Rights of Chagossians to self-determination and to identify as a people are rejected by Mauritius

Review of Key Issues

- Criminal Code Amendment 2021 forbids “misrepresentation” of Mauritian sovereignty
- Recent high profile cases also create an impression that public disagreement with the Mauritian Government is unwelcome and not risk-free
- Chagossians are uneasy about challenging the Government on issues of identity and sovereignty

Recommendations 1

1. That the Mauritian Government addresses the economic, cultural, structural and informal disadvantages of Chagossians and Mauritian Creoles by implementing policies conducive to their economic and human development and that an independent commission is created both to assess the causes of disadvantage and the effectiveness of any measures undertaken.
2. That the Mauritian Government recognises the rights of Chagossians to identify as an indigenous people.
3. That the Mauritian Government respects and recognises the right of all Chagossians to return to their islands on their own terms, wherever they live and whatever their current nationality

Recommendations 2

- 4. That the Mauritian Government makes no plans for the future of the Chagos Islands or the Chagossian people without the informed consent of the Chagossian people.
- 5. That the Mauritian Government withdraws legislation and ceases practices which Chagossians perceive as intimidatory, and which have the effect of restricting their free speech.
- 6. That the Mauritian Government makes efforts to restore confidence in the Police and the Government through transparent and accountable investigation of complaints against police and government and through Freedom of Information legislation.
- 7. That the Mauritian Government gives up its control of the governance mechanisms of the Chagossian Welfare Fund and creates an independent body, run for Chagossians by Chagossians where Chagossians can speak freely and make decisions on their own behalf.

Thank you

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