

COMMUNIQUE

The Government of Mauritius has noted with concern that the UK Government purports to organise a significantly expanded programme of visits to the Chagos Archipelago as part of the purported £40 million package which it announced last November. This purported package is said to be intended to support improvements to the livelihoods of members of the Chagossian community.

The Government of Mauritius reiterates that the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, has always formed and continues to form an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, and that it does not recognise the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory”.

Mauritius is the only State which has the lawful authority to determine issues relating to the Chagos Archipelago. Mauritius does not recognise the legality of any acts that the UK has purported, or is purporting, to take in respect of the Chagos Archipelago as they are in breach of international law. This includes, but is not limited to, the purported £40 million package and the purported programme of visits to the Chagos Archipelago.

The Government of Mauritius strongly objects to the programme of visits to the Chagos Archipelago which the UK Government purports to undertake. In this regard, it welcomes the position taken by Mr. Olivier Bancoult, O.S.K., Chairman and Leader of the Chagos Refugees Group, on the matter.

The Government of Mauritius deplores that the UK Government’s purported unilateral initiative has been taken hardly three weeks after the last round of talks between Mauritius and the UK. These talks are aimed at completing the decolonisation process of Mauritius and enabling Mauritius to exercise its full sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, following the understanding reached in New York last September to defer the consideration of item 87 of the agenda of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly (entitled “Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965”). The UK Government’s purported unilateral initiative is also in manifest breach of the Award delivered in the case brought by Mauritius against the UK under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and it contradicts the UK’s own call for confidence building.

The Government of Mauritius reiterates that the denial of the right of Mauritians, particularly those of Chagossian origin, to settle in the Chagos Archipelago is a manifest breach of international law and a blatant violation of their human rights.

The Government of Mauritius remains fully sensitive to the plight of the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago who were forcibly removed by the UK from the Chagos Archipelago in total disregard of their human rights, and is committed to ensuring their well-being. The Government of Mauritius also supports their legitimate claim, as Mauritian citizens, to be resettled in the Chagos Archipelago. Once Mauritius is able to exercise its full sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, Mauritian citizens of

Chagossian origin who choose to return to the Chagos Archipelago will be able to do so and live there in full respect of all their rights and dignity.

The Government of Mauritius will relentlessly pursue its initiatives in conformity with international law to complete the decolonisation process of Mauritius, thereby enabling Mauritius to exercise its full sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

Minister Mentor's Office

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