

Statement from the Chagossian Community

To: **The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP**, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, **The Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith**, Minister of State (Overseas Territories, Commonwealth, Energy, Climate and Environment)

Date: Tues March 14th 2023

From: **Isabelle Charlot** (Chagos Islanders Movement) **Sabrina Jean** (Chagos Refugees Group UK) **Claudette Pauline** (Chagos Asylum People) **Frankie Bontemps** (Chagossian Voices) **Pierre Prosper** (Seychelles Chagossian Committee) **Louis Elyse** (Manchester Chagos Archipelago Community Group) **Mylene Augustin** (Chagossian Women's Welfare Group) **Jean-François Nellan** (Chagossian Voices and Trustee, Chagos Conservation Trust) **Bernadette Dugasse** (Chagossian Voices) **Pascalina Nellan** (Chagossian Voices) **Marie France Koo Hin Cheong** (independent Chagossian) **David Victoire** (independent Chagossian) **Marie Priscilla Eudocile** (independent Chagossian) **Sophie Romeo** (independent Chagossian) **Kareen Desperles** (independent Chagossian)

We write as members of the Chagossian community and as representatives and members of Chagossian groups across the world.

We agree that:

1. Chagossians are the belongers and indigenous population of the Chagos archipelago.
2. Chagossians have a right to self-determination, independent of any nation or state
3. That no change in the sovereignty of the islands should take place without the democratic consent of the Chagossians, of all generations and wherever they currently reside.
4. Full monetary reparations must be paid to the Chagossians and their descendants, irrespective of the existing terms or conditions of the ongoing negotiations between the UK and Mauritius

We make the following observations on the consultation with Chagossian groups on 9th Feb 2023 in connection with the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)/Chagos Archipelago:

1. The consultation session we attended has no formal relationship or input to the sovereignty negotiations and there appear to be no mechanisms in place by which the views expressed can influence the negotiations. This is unacceptable.
2. The Chagossian community is excluded entirely from the secret negotiations between the two governments. This is unacceptable.
3. No formal record was made of views expressed at the consultation and no feedback was given as to how the wishes and opinions of those present might be influence negotiations. This is unacceptable.
4. We have not been told about the purpose, progress and possible outcomes of the negotiations between Mauritius and the UK. This is unacceptable.
5. The consultation is tokenistic and has no purpose except to allow the negotiating parties to say they 'consulted' the community. This is unethical and unacceptable.
6. We expect a full democratic consultation of the Chagossian community in relation to our islands and will be obliged to withdraw from the consultations if they continue to be tokenistic and without any defined purpose. We require clarity from the UK Government as to how the outcomes of the consultations are recorded and how they are connected to and influence the negotiations between Mauritius and the UK.