



*Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
Sixteenth session 17-21 July 2023*

**Tuesday 18th July 2023**

**Speaker: Mylene Augustin**

**Item 9: Interactive dialogue with UNPFII, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples**

Honoured delegates, ladies and gentlemen. We, the Chagossian people were forcibly removed from our islands against our will in the 1960s and 1970s to make way for a joint UK/ US military facility. We now live in exile in Mauritius, the Seychelles and the UK. We continue to live with the pain of loss and separation, the trauma of enforced exile and the poverty and marginalisation of life in exile.

At no stage have the indigenous rights of the Chagossians been respected. At no stage have the Chagossians been consulted about their future or the future of their islands. The United Kingdom, the United States and Mauritius have been allowed to neglect our rights and now the UK and Mauritius are deciding the future of our islands without consulting us. Chagossians can reasonably wonder: where is the monitoring of indigenous human rights in our case?

In our experience there has been no monitoring of indigenous rights at a local, national or international level. We have been failed by nation states and by the international community. The constitution of Mauritius does not recognise the Chagossians as a people. We are described as “Mauritians of Chagossian Origin”. How is that possible?

The United Kingdom does not recognise our indigenous status. Even the institutions of the United Nations such as the ICJ and the general Assembly are allowing two nations to decide the future of the island without consulting us, the indigenous population.

We urge nation states and the United Nations to effectively apply and embed the monitoring of indigenous rights at every level of decision making, from the local to the international