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RELEASED IN FULL

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EUR-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00
	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/005W			

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R 060712Z SEP 02  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8399  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
INFO JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//  
SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS PORT LOUIS 001041

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E:BPERRY

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: MARR, PHUM, PREL, PREF, IO, UK, MP  
SUBJECT: CHAGOSSIAN TRAVEL TO ARCHIPELAGO CANCELLED

1. ACCORDING TO A TELEVISION NEWS REPORT AIRED BY THE MAURITIUS BROADCASTING CORPORATION (MBC) ON SEPTEMBER 3, THE UK-SPONSORED VISIT OF A CHAGOSSIAN DELEGATION TO THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO, SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 5-17, 2002, HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

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2. MBC STATED THAT THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION IN PORT LOUIS INFORMED MBC THAT THE MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION INFORMED THEM THAT THE MAURITIAN VESSEL, THE M/V TROCHETIA, WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO UNDERTAKE THE TRIP IN OCTOBER. APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED CHAGOSSIANS PLANNED, ACCORDING TO PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED REPORTS, TO VISIT THEIR ANCESTORS' TOMBS ON SOME OF THE CHAGOS ISLANDS, BUT THAT A STOP AT DIEGO GARCIA WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE ITINERARY. THE HIGH COURT DECISION IN NOVEMBER 2000 GAVE THE RIGHT OF RETURN BY CHAGOSSIANS TO THE ISLANDS IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO, EXCLUDING DIEGO GARCIA.

3. THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES SAID, ACCORDING TO MBC, THAT THE

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VISIT COULD BE MOVED TO NEXT YEAR IF NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE. THE LEADER OF THE CHAGOS REFUGEES GROUP (GRC), OLIVIER BANCOULT, TOLD MBC HE WAS EXPECTING THIS DECISION, AS DIEGO GARCIA WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TRIP. HE PREVIOUSLY STATED THAT HIS GROUP, THE GRC, WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE TRIP THAT WAS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER. BANCOULT CONDEMNED WHAT HE DEFINED AS AN ATTEMPT OF GREAT BRITAIN TO DIVIDE THE CHAGOSSIAN COMMUNITY.

4. CONTACTED BY POST, THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AT THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION (HC) STATED THAT MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION (MSC) CONTACTED THE HC WITH THE UNEXPECTED NEWS THAT THE SHIP WAS NO LONGER AVAILABLE. THE HIGH COMMISSION HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHARTER SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. THE CHARGE MADE CLEAR THAT IT WAS THE MSC, NOT THE BRITISH HC THAT EFFECTED THE TRIP CANCELLATION.

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