



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 30, 2002

Mr. Cassam Uteem, GCSK  
Bikon Street  
Mare Gravier  
Beau Bassin  
Mauritius

Dear Mr. Uteem:

Thank you for your letter of August 5 on behalf of the "Chagos Refugees Group (Mauritius)" which seeks permission to visit ancestral graves on Diego Garcia. The White House has asked me to respond to your request.

As you know, the United States recognizes British sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. The United States utilizes an important military facility located on Diego Garcia pursuant to an agreement with Her Majesty's Government. Because of the vital role the facility plays, including in the Global War on Terrorism, tight control is maintained over its security. I understand that in exercise of their sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, British authorities have denied permission for the "Chagos Refugees Group (Mauritius)" to visit Diego Garcia. While I regret the disappointment this may cause for the members of the "Chagos Refugees Group (Mauritius)", we concur and support the decision.

Sincerely,

*Lauren Moriarty*

Lauren Moriarty  
Director  
East African Affairs

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