

TIMELINE OF THE CHAGOSSIAN EXILE AND THE BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA

- 1783—First inhabitants arrive in Chagos Archipelago as enslaved Africans; after emancipation, indentured Indians arrive helping to form new, unique society and a people first known as the *Ilwa*.
- 1960—US Navy approaches Britain about building a base on Diego Garcia. Secret negotiations begin.
- 1964—During secret US/UK talks, US indicates desire for “exclusive control” of Diego Garcia “without local inhabitants.” UK officials agree.
- 1965—At US urging, UK pressures its colony Mauritius to cede Chagos and creates the *British Indian Ocean Territory*. This violates UN decolonization rules forbidding the division of colonies.
- 1966—“Exchange of Notes” gives US access to Diego Garcia for 50 years with automatic 20-year renewal. UK secretly agrees to remove Chagossians for \$14 million hidden from Congress, Parliament.
- 1968—Chagossians in Mauritius for vacations or medical treatment barred from returning home and stranded in Mauritius. Britain limits supplies of food, medicines to help depopulate the islands.
- 1970—US Navy tells Congress Chagos has no permanent population as part of UK/US plan to “maintain the fiction” that Chagossians are transient workers and not indigenous to the islands.
- 1971—Construction begins on Diego Garcia. British agents and US Navy personnel gas and burn Chagossians’ pet dogs. Chagossians on Diego Garcia deported to Mauritius and Seychelles.
- 1972—UK pays Mauritius £650,000 to resettle Chagossians. UK, US admit newly independent Mauritius cannot resettle newcomers with this sum. Chagossians see no money for more than five years.
- 1973—Last Chagossians deported from other Chagos islands to Mauritius.
- 1975—*Washington Post* breaks the story in Western press, describes Chagossians living in “abject poverty” in Mauritius. One day of Congressional hearings held before interest fades.
- 1982—Chagossians hold hunger strikes, protests, and UK agrees to £4 million compensation. Some Chagossians receive ~\$6,000 total. US spends hundreds of millions expanding Diego Garcia base.
- 2000—Chagossians challenge their exile in UK High Court. The court rules the expulsion was illegal.
- 2001—Diego Garcia base plays key role in US-led war in Afghanistan and, later, in the 2003 war in Iraq.
- 2004—After briefly allowing a return following 2000 ruling—but doing nothing to rebuild Chagossian society—the UK again bars them from returning, effectively overturning the 2000 victory.
- 2008—Chagossians challenge the new ban and win twice more in High Court. On the British government’s last appeal, the UK’s highest court overturns the lower courts, upholding the exile and colonial law.

- 2010—UK creates Chagos Marine Protected Area (MPA) with exemption for Diego Garcia base. Wikileaks cable shows UK, US officials agreed MPA was best way to prevent Chagossians from going home.
- 2015—UK releases study confirming the feasibility of Chagossians resettling Chagos. UN Permanent Court of Arbitration rules UK acted illegally in creating an MPA.
- 2016—UK responds, again denying a return, but offering £40 million in assistance projects over 10. CRG refuses the compensation and the attempt to get them to drop their demand to go home.
- 2017—CRG supports the Mauritian Government at the UN, where General Assembly votes 94-16 to have the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rule on Mauritius's challenge to UK sovereignty over Chagos.
- 2018—ICJ set to hear Mauritius-UK case. Three Chagossian suits proceed, challenging 1) UK denying resettlement; 2) the MPA; and 3) the exclusion of Chagossians in Seychelles from compensation.