

PETITION TO BRITISH GOVERNMENT

We, the inhabitants of Chagos Islands - Diego Garcia, Peros Banho Salomon, have been uprooted from those islands because the Mauritian Government sold the islands to the British Government to build a base. Our ancestors were slaves on those islands, but we know that we are the heirs of those islands. Although we were poor there, we were not dying of hunger. We were living free. Before we were deported from the islands, the Military Chief who came there told us: "Don't be discouraged: there is a large compensation that the British Government will give to the Mauritian Government to give you". Here, in Mauritius, when animals are debarked, an enclosure with water and grass is prepared for them. But we, being mini-slaves (human), we don't get anybody to help us. We are at a loss, not knowing what to do. The boat captain tells us that we have to get off his boat. When we debarked, there were Mauritian Government officials who came to tell us: "Don't worry. The Government is going to take care of everything as soon as possible". But up to now, we don't see anything. Many times we have written letters to explain our situation. We have received no answer. Many times we have seen in newspapers that the Mauritian Government will build a housing estate for us. According to us, it seems that the Mauritian Government is fooling us, giving us a consolation. Since we are human, we have a life, we know that consolation is not food.

We have decided to write to you, British Government, to let you know our situation. We are not against your having bought the islands. We are not against your constructing a base there. We don't want to blame you. But we want you to do something about our situation. You, British Government, you must act on our behalf with the Mauritian Government. We would be happy to meet a British Government representative so that we could tell him in what misery we are living. Here in Mauritius, everything has to be bought and everything is expensive. We don't have money and we don't have work. We have tried to get work. Here many Mauritians are unemployed. We have increased the number of unemployed. To get work, we have to compete with Mauritians. We might get into fights with them. We have many kinds of problems that we would like to talk to you about. That's why we would like to meet a British representative so that we can explain our problems. We let the British Government know how many people have died through sorrow, poverty and lack of food and care. We have at least 40 persons who have died. We ask the British Government to urge the Mauritian Government to give us

- (1) First request: A piece of land and a separate house for each family so that we can raise our chickens and grow a few vegetables. We must have our contract and not pay any tax and after our death, our children become heirs.
- (2) Second request: A job that we know how to do and that will allow us to earn our living and support our families.

We let you know that if we don't get a piece of land with its house, and a job, it is preferable that we be sent back to our islands. We request an early answer from the British Government.

*n.d. - Off. Hawing, unity & Sept. 1975
said it believed about 6 me earlier*

We, the inhabitants of Chagos Islands, thank you in advance and hope to receive a favourably reply.

(sd) R. Saminaden	Sd. F. Vencatassen
Rosemond Saminaden	Fleury Vencatassen Christian Ramdass
	Committee members

Date

Adresse for reply: 23, Shand Street, Roche Bois, Port Louis, Mauritiu

The others w o come from Chagos who add their names to this request.
(Signatures follow)

NAMES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL IN MAURITIUS

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Villiers Vencatassin | 17. Ceylon Molia | 33. Charlie Mandan |
| 2. Olivier Jean Louis | 18. Andrea Immouche | 34. Edmee Isaie |
| 3. Gabriel Uranie | 19. Willie Codor | 35. Eugene |
| 4. Isidor Alexie | 20. Juliana Raouls | 36. Joassin |
| 5. Orel Izaie | 21. Renee Marcelin | 37. Teasse Bellepe |
| 6. Ivana medor | 22. Caya | 38. Gabriel |
| 7. Milie Lam | 23. Beng | 39. Michel Izaie |
| 8. Sabine Barome | 24. J. Besage | 40. Israel Fabier |
| 9. Leonide Philogene | 25. Mlle Claire | |
| 10. Rose Augustin | 26. Melle Mardaille | |
| 11. Elmon Immouche | 27. Caroline Nestor | |
| 12. Louis Sagai | 28. Juliana Omo | |
| 13. Charles Selmour | 29. Aresride | |
| 14. Madame Sambrane | 30. Suzanne | |
| 15. Georgina Lemaitre | 31. Rea Bontemps | |
| 16. Leonide Izaie | 32. Bertine | |

Note: For each dead person in Mauritius we have to spend about Re 300.- for a coffin and Rs 27.50 for a piece of land to bury him.

We, the inhabitants of Chagos Islands, come once more to ask the British Government a favour to decrease our unemployed. Allow two or three persons from amongs us to go clean the cemetery at Diego Garcia where our forefathers, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers are buried, and to enable us to take care of the Diego Church where we were baptised.

We ask the British Government to give us satisfaction.

Thank you.