

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF MAURITIUS

I, Seewoo Sankar MANDARY, a Chief Technician, of Vacoas, Mauritius, holding National Identity Card Number M041243410148E,

MAKE SOLEMN AFFIRMATION AS A HINDU AND SAY THAT

1. I am presently employed as a Chief Technician at the Meteorological Services under the Prime Minister's Office, Government of Mauritius. I have been in employment with the said services since 1963.
2. In or about July 1970, I was posted at Diego Garcia and remained there until March 1972. My duties were, *inter alia*, to observe and report weather to Mauritius by HF (High Frequency) Radio.
3. During the said period, I have witnessed the removal of all inhabitants of Diego Garcia and what follows is my recollection of the events :
 - (a) the inhabitants were informed, on or about 23rd January 1971, that they would have to be removed from the island. This was announced to them by Mr. Todd, the BIOT Commissioner, in the presence of Mr. Paul Moulinie and Commander White of the U.S. Navy. The announcement took place near the 'Manager's Office' where all inhabitants had been convened to in order to take cognizance of the message. In that respect, I have annexed herewith six photographs which I have personally taken with my camera and I have marked them Photographs A, B, C, D, E and F ;
 - (b) Photograph A shows the said Messrs. Todd, Moulinie and Commander White addressing themselves to the crowd ;
 - (c) Photographs B, C, D and E are other photographs of the crowd present on that day ;
 - (d) As soon as the inhabitants were informed of the forced removal, they got very upset. Since I spoke english, they asked me, in despair, to request Mr. Todd to allow them stay on the other side of the island, i.e from East Point to North East Point inasmuch as same was not going to be used by the U.S personnel, who had decided to settle at North West Point (also known as 'Norwa' in local dialect) ;
 - (e) The vessel ('MV Nordvaer') which had brought Mr. Todd, also transported Commander White and the Reconnaissance Party, who then made a survey at North West Point ;
 - (f) The request of the inhabitants was turned down immediately ; Mr. Todd stated that the decision of removal was taken at 'higher level' and there was nothing he could personally do to change things ;
 - (g) The MV Nordvaer left the island on the 29th January 1971 with Mr. Todd and the Reconnaissance Party on board ;

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- (h) In or about May 1971, a vessel named 'Graham County' or 'Vernon County' brought the first contingent of SEABEES Construction Battalion (U.S Navy) and they immediately started setting up their camp at North West Point ;
- (i) Sometime thereafter, they reached the part of the island where the inhabitants lived, i.e 'the plantation' and required the manager, Mr. Payet, to start evacuation and removal of the inhabitants ;
- (j) The first step was to kill all the dogs. There were around a hundred of dogs which were put into the 'calorifer' (the 'calorifer' is seen in Photograph F) and poisoned with carbon monoxide from the exhaust of a jeep. This naturally was very emotional and upsetting for the inhabitants ;
- (k) Sometimes later, the vessel 'Isle of Farquar' arrived and started collecting the inhabitants. They were taken to Peros Banhos and Salomon Island, found at about 100 miles away from Diego Garcia ;
- (l) By the 28th September 1971, all inhabitants had been removed, except for the five meteorological assistants, including myself ;
- (m) The inhabitants were made to believe that it was only a move from Diego Garcia to Peros Banhos and Salomon Island ;
- (n) However, we learned later that for economic reasons, the islands of Peros Banhos and Salomon Island would have to be closed down ;
- (o) Sometime later, they were removed from these islands too.
- (p) I remember the above as a very sad and traumatic experience and still have nightmares about it.

Solemnly affirmed by the abovenamed]
 Deponent at Supreme Court, Port-Louis]
 this 14th day of July 2000]

Drawn up by me



Sivakumaren MARDEMOOTOO
 Attorney at Law

Mandary

Before me

CHIEF COURT OFFICEP
 Chief Registrar
 Supreme Court





