



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

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House of Commons
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13 March 2026

Dear Lord Alton,

As the Minister responsible for Overseas Territories, I am responding to the letter you sent to the Prime Minister regarding the evidence session that your committee held on the human rights implications of the UK/ Mauritius Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia ("the Agreement").

I was disappointed that the Department was not invited to give evidence to share the Government's position on the issue. The Government put on record its strong objection to the decision of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which I understand was the motivation for the evidence session. We have serious concerns at the accuracy of UN Committee's decision and the process by which it was made. I or a Senior Official would have been happy to discuss the matter with the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

The UK Government has great respect for Chagossian communities, and we recognise there are a wide range of views within Chagossian communities in the UK and globally. We have been clear about our deep regret for the manner in which Chagossians were removed from the islands in the 1960s and 70s.

The safe and viable path to resettlement on the Archipelago is through the Agreement with Mauritius. This has been recognised and welcomed by a number of Chagossian groups. This permits Mauritius to undertake a programme of resettlement except on Diego Garcia and subject to security measures to protect the operation of the base on Diego Garcia

As I set out to Parliament in my statement of 15 December, the UK Government has been in talks with Mauritius to ensure that any programme of resettlement is open to all Chagossians, irrespective of their country of residence. The Mauritian Government has confirmed that eligibility to resettle will apply to all Chagossians who were born on the Archipelago before 31 December 1973 and their children. UK-based Chagossians who do not hold Mauritian citizenship and meet these criteria will be eligible for Mauritian citizenship, and therefore will be able to participate in any future programme of resettlement. The current pathway to

British citizenship for Chagossians remains in place. Chagossians will be able to hold both British and Mauritian citizenship.

The UK and Mauritian Governments recognise the importance of heritage visits to the Chagos Archipelago for the Chagossian community and remain committed to facilitating them, including to Diego Garcia. The UK Government is working to resume a programme of heritage visits for members of that community (which have been paused since 2020 due to Covid and ongoing negotiations with Mauritius).

Thank you once again for sharing the findings of your evidence session.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Stephen Doughty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen Doughty MP
Minister of State for Europe, North America and UK Overseas Territories