# Spain’s renewed claims on Gibraltar deepen UK political divisions



The sovereignty of Gibraltar has once again become a flashpoint, particularly following alarming comments from Spain’s Foreign Minister, José Manuel Albares. In an interview on BBC Newsnight, Albares insisted that the status of Gibraltar is still up for grabs and called for a so-called resolution to mend ties between the UK and the EU. He suggested that future relations should involve some form of partnership rather than a straightforward defense of British interests. This rhetoric has prompted outrage from British politicians, particularly as the new Labour government under Keir Starmer’s leadership faces valid scrutiny for its handling of this sensitive issue.

Critics, including former Home Secretary Priti Patel, have harshly condemned Starmer’s diplomatic approach, arguing that it reveals a dangerous weakness that emboldens foreign claims over British territories. Patel, in no uncertain terms, declared, “Gibraltar is British, end of, and we will remind the government exactly where the sovereignty of Gibraltar lies.” This robust response reflects growing anxieties across the UK about the Labour party’s stewardship over national integrity, especially following dubious concessions on matters like the Chagos Islands.

The long shadow of past negotiations led by Labour continues to fuel concern. David Lammy, the current Foreign Secretary, faced a firestorm of criticism for even suggesting the possibility of a “deal” concerning Gibraltar with the EU. Such implications have stirred fears that British territories might be negotiable commodities, particularly in light of the recent surrender of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius—a decision that raises legitimate concerns about the sovereignty of other Overseas Territories, Gibraltar included.

Although Starmer has attempted to reassure constituents by stating that both Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands are firmly British and off the table for negotiation, many remain unconvinced. In October 2024, he attempted to link his commitment to Gibraltar with personal ties from the Falklands Conflict, but that emotional appeal fails to mitigate the underlying anxieties. His assertions come across more as damage control than an actual commitment to protecting British sovereignty.

Still, concerns about Gibraltar persist unaddressed. The relationship with the EU remains fraught as the UK attempts to define its post-Brexit identity. Starmer’s Europe Minister, Stephen Doughty, echoed the leader’s commitment to unfaltering British sovereignty over Gibraltar. Yet, the troubling history of conceding control over the strategically vital Chagos Islands continues to raise doubts about how viable the protections for remaining territories truly are.

The implications of these discussions extend beyond mere territorial disputes; they reveal deep-seated tensions in the evolving political landscape of Europe and showcase a stark divergence in national sentiment toward British identity and autonomy. Gibraltar stands as a bastion of British resolve but also underscores the precarious balance required in today’s diplomacy, where historical legacies must contend with contemporary political realities. The need for a strong, assertive stance against foreign encroachments has never been more crucial, a message that resonates with those advocating for a robust and unapologetic defense of British sovereignty.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2054204/keir-starmer-spain-gibraltar> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2y9yrnprro> - In October 2024, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer reaffirmed that both the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar will remain British. He emphasized that sovereignty over these territories is 'not up for negotiation,' addressing concerns raised after the UK's decision to cede sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius. Starmer's pledge was personal, referencing his uncle's service during the Falklands conflict, and aimed to reassure citizens of Gibraltar and the Falklands about their continued British status.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/10/09/falklands-will-remain-british-sir-keir-starmer/> - In October 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer pledged that the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar will remain British, stating that sovereignty over these territories is 'not up for negotiation.' This commitment addressed concerns following the UK's decision to transfer sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius. Starmer's personal connection to the Falklands, through his uncle's service during the 1982 conflict, underscored the significance of the pledge.
4. <https://www.chronicle.gi/starmer-gibraltar-and-falkland-islands-are-british-and-will-remain-british/> - In October 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer assured that both Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands will remain British, emphasizing that their sovereignty is 'not up for negotiation.' This statement aimed to alleviate concerns following the UK's decision to cede sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius. Starmer highlighted his personal connection to the Falklands through his uncle's service during the 1982 conflict, reinforcing the commitment to these territories.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/10/04/starmer-refuses-rule-out-signing-away-gibraltar-falklands/> - In October 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer faced criticism for not ruling out ending British control of Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. When questioned about the future of these territories, Starmer focused on securing the use of the military base on Diego Garcia, a part of the Chagos Islands, without directly addressing concerns about Gibraltar and the Falklands. This response raised fears about the UK's commitment to these territories.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/10/03/fears-gibraltar-falklands-starmer-chagos-handover/> - In October 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's decision to cede sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius sparked concerns about the future of Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. Critics feared that this move could signal a willingness to negotiate the sovereignty of other British Overseas Territories. The Chagos Islands, which host a joint UK-US military base, were transferred despite strategic concerns, leading to questions about the UK's commitment to Gibraltar and the Falklands.
7. <https://www.chronicle.gi/sovereignty-of-gibraltar-and-other-ots-not-up-for-negotiation-doughty/> - In October 2024, Europe Minister Stephen Doughty stated that British sovereignty over Gibraltar and other Overseas Territories is 'not up for negotiation.' This declaration aimed to reassure citizens of these territories following the UK's decision to cede sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius. Doughty emphasized the UK's commitment to its Overseas Territories, despite concerns raised by the Chagos Islands agreement.