# UK-Mauritius Chagos deal sparks outcry over national security and historical justice



The recent agreement between the UK and Mauritius concerning the Chagos Islands has sparked considerable outrage, with critics rightfully denouncing it as a reckless capitulation of Britain's strategic interests in the Indian Ocean. Under the terms of this controversial deal, which involves a staggering £30 billion payment from the UK for the transfer of sovereignty over the archipelago, Britain is now ostensibly required to keep Mauritius in the loop about any military actions originating from Diego Garcia, the largest of these islands. This obligation raises serious concerns about national security, offering potential leaks of sensitive information to adversaries, especially China, which has keenly been strengthening its ties with Mauritius.

Descriptions of this clause as 'grotesque' and 'absurd' are utterly justified, as alarm bells ring across political circles. Former Defence Secretary Sir Grant Shapps expressed his outrage, stating, “We’ve effectively signed away the right to act there without their say-so.” His sentiment reflects a growing anxiety over Britain's loss of autonomy regarding a military base that has historically been vital to national defense. Sir Gavin Williamson reinforced these apprehensions, warning that this arrangement could unwittingly hand China valuable insights into Britain’s military operations, setting a dangerous precedent for the future.

While officials from the newly installed Labour government, including Armed Forces Minister Luke Pollard, defend the deal as "good value," the eye-watering total payments—projected to reach £30 billion with inflation considered—have drawn accusations of fiscal irresponsibility and gross misrepresentation to taxpayers. The figures touted by the Prime Minister's office, suggesting a net cost of only £3.4 billion, starkly contrast with the opposition's calculations that account for long-term economic impacts, further fueling concerns about transparency and accountability in governmental negotiations.

The history of the Chagos Islands reveals a painful legacy rooted in colonial governance. Nearly 2,000 Chagossians were forcibly evicted from their homes in the 1960s to facilitate the establishment of the military base, an injustice whose repercussions continue to resonate with their descendants today. The UN’s International Court of Justice has already ruled that Britain’s detachment of these islands from Mauritius was unlawful, leading to intense pressure on the UK to resolve the sovereignty issue in a manner that genuinely respects the rights of the displaced.

The current Labour administration, following the recent political upheaval, has found itself in a challenging position, seeking to reassure allies of Britain's military presence amid escalating tensions involving China. However, these discussions have been marred by claims of insufficient consultation with the Chagossians, who have voiced vehement opposition and are now calling for a referendum on the proposed arrangement as a means to reclaim their homeland and address their historical grievances.

As the situation develops, the newly elected Prime Minister of Mauritius, Navin Ramgoolam, has raised his own reservations about the terms of the agreement. His call for an independent review indicates that many aspects were inexplicably unfamiliar to his government, casting doubt on the transparency and thoroughness of negotiations led by the previous administration. These unfolding events underscore the precarious balance of power in the region and Britain’s increasingly uncertain role in an area that has long held strategic military importance.

This complexity surrounding the Chagos Islands highlights not only the intricate dynamics of international relations and national sovereignty but also the enduring impact of historical injustices. As the UK navigates a shifting geopolitical landscape, it is imperative for critics to challenge this ill-advised agreement, advocating for a political environment that prioritizes national interests and genuine consultation with those most affected. The fallout from the Chagos deal will undoubtedly reverberate well beyond immediate financial concerns, influencing the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean for years to come.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14744665/Chagos-outrage-Extraordinary-pledge-help-enemies-buried-smallprint-30billion-surrender-deal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/key-facts-about-chagos-islands-deal-be-signed-by-uk-mauritius-2025-05-22/> - The UK is set to sign a multi-billion dollar agreement with Mauritius regarding the sovereignty of the Chagos Islands, following the overturning of a last-minute legal injunction. The Chagos Archipelago, comprising over 600 islands in the Indian Ocean, has been a source of contention since Britain forcibly displaced nearly 2,000 Chagossians in the 1960s and 70s to establish a U.S.-UK military base on Diego Garcia. The new deal, initially agreed in October, involves Britain transferring sovereignty to Mauritius in exchange for a $4 billion payment, while retaining control of Diego Garcia through a 99-year lease. The base holds strategic military importance for both the UK and the U.S., hosting operations from the War in Afghanistan to recent deployments in Yemen and Gaza. The UN’s International Court of Justice declared Britain’s 1965 detachment of the islands from Mauritius unlawful, increasing international pressure. However, the agreement has drawn criticism from displaced Chagossians, UK opposition leaders, and the new Mauritian Prime Minister for lack of consultation and national interest concerns. The deal proceeds with U.S. support, despite warnings from Secretary of State Marco Rubio about regional security threats, especially from China’s influence. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/key-facts-about-chagos-islands-deal-be-signed-by-uk-mauritius-2025-05-22/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/2f6032c4-4c53-4b7c-97bc-46a93a3c0bd5> - The UK's Labour government is facing backlash over its plan to transfer sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, following international pressure and a UN advisory ruling. Critics warn this move could jeopardize the UK-US military base on Diego Garcia, potentially facilitating Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean. A delay in finalizing the deal aims to secure approval from the UK's key allies and fix some issues. Historically, the Chagos Islands' inhabitants were forcibly displaced in the 1960s without proper compensation. Mauritius has challenged the UK's sovereignty over the islands since its independence, leading to the recent agreement to grant Mauritius sovereignty while allowing Chagossians the right of return. Nonetheless, concerns persist over Mauritius potentially terminating the Diego Garcia lease in favor of China. The Labour government likely rushed the deal before the potential US administration change, with a new pause providing an opportunity to address critical lease and consultation issues. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/2f6032c4-4c53-4b7c-97bc-46a93a3c0bd5?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/chagossians-want-say-uk-mauritius-deal-faces-fresh-scrutiny-2024-12-10/> - Chagossians residing in Britain are voicing strong opposition to a UK-Mauritius deal that proposes the transfer of sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, excluding the Diego Garcia military base which will remain under British-U.S. control for 99 years. This situation has reignited hope among the Chagossian diaspora, forcibly removed from the archipelago over five decades ago to allow for the establishment of the military base, to demand their right to be consulted and to potentially alter the agreement. The Chagossians are preparing to protest at the British parliament, with plans including sit-down protests and possible hunger strikes. They advocate for a referendum on the matter. The proposed agreement allows Mauritius to manage a resettlement program, excluding Diego Garcia. The Chagossians emphasize the importance of their cultural heritage and the injustices they faced, expressing determination to secure a meaningful say in the destiny of their homeland. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/chagossians-want-say-uk-mauritius-deal-faces-fresh-scrutiny-2024-12-10/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://apnews.com/article/c8a4911f76e1ce2be4d4fdbcaa23786a> - Dos mujeres originarias de las Islas Chagos buscan llevar al gobierno británico a los tribunales por un acuerdo propuesto para transferir la soberanía del archipiélago a Mauricio. Los abogados de estas mujeres argumentan que fue ilegal excluir a los chagosianos de decidir el futuro del archipiélago, hogar de una base naval y de bombarderos estratégica del Reino Unido y Estados Unidos. El gobierno británico anunció en octubre su intención de transferir las islas a Mauricio, manteniendo el control de Diego García, la mayor isla y sede de la base. Sin embargo, las negociaciones están en suspenso a la espera de un acuerdo con el gobierno del presidente estadounidense Donald Trump. El acuerdo incluye la creación de un fondo de reasentamiento para los isleños desplazados, aunque los detalles son inciertos. La Corte Internacional de Justicia había dictaminado previamente que el Reino Unido actuó ilegalmente al dividir Mauricio en 1965 antes de su independencia. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/c8a4911f76e1ce2be4d4fdbcaa23786a?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/29/mauritian-pm-asks-for-independent-review-of-chagos-island-deal-with-uk> - The Mauritian prime minister has asked for an independent review of the Chagos Islands deal with the UK, according to parliamentary records. According to the Mauritian parliament Hansard record, the new prime minister, Navin Ramgoolam, said during a session on Friday: “I wish to inform the house that I have asked for an independent review of the confidential draft agreement agreed so far.” The deal to cede sovereignty over the archipelago to the Mauritian government was announced earlier this year and officials have said it secures the UK-US military base on Diego Garcia. Under the terms of the deal, the UK-US military presence on the island is expected to run for 99 years with an option to renew and Britain paying a regular annual sum of money. The Mauritian PM, a critic of the deal before he took office, reportedly expressed continued reservations after a meeting with the UK’s national security adviser, Jonathan Powell, on Monday. Ramgoolam – who has been prime minister of Mauritius twice before – was elected earlier this month, and told his parliament that “contents of the negotiations between Mauritius and the United Kingdom during the past two years were unknown to the new government”. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/29/mauritian-pm-asks-for-independent-review-of-chagos-island-deal-with-uk?utm_source=openai))