# Falkland Islands’ leader condemns Argentina’s sovereignty claims as neo-colonialism at the UN



At a recent seminar on decolonisation, Teslyn Barkman, a leading member of the Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Islands, delivered a forceful message to the United Nations regarding the protracted territorial dispute with Argentina. Barkman emphatically characterised Argentina's claim over the Falkland Islands as overt colonialism, declaring that the islanders refuse to be treated as “a political toy.” This strong assertion reflects the deep frustrations of the islands' residents, who number around 3,000, and have consistently voiced their unwavering determination to chart their own destiny amid Argentina's relentless claims.

In her address, Barkman highlighted the unique identity and democratic ambitions of the Islanders, underscoring their economic independence—pointing out their successful management of finances without reliance on UK aid. Their right to govern themselves has been solidified by a 2013 referendum in which an astonishing 99.8% of residents chose to remain a British Overseas Territory, a decision observed by international monitors. This overwhelming endorsement of British sovereignty is a powerful testament to the Islanders' dedication to their political and cultural identity and their entitlement to self-determination.

Despite this clear mandate, Argentina continues to pursue its claims, actions that many Falklanders view as a neo-colonial challenge. Barkman condemned any proposals to treat the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands as leverage in negotiations between the UK and Argentina, arguing that such discussions dismiss the voices of those most affected, further marginalising the islanders. “Ignoring us is dehumanising,” she emphasised, spotlighting the violation of the UN Charter’s fundamental principle of self-determination.

For the Falklanders, sovereignty is a practical matter with real-world implications. The Islands have established themselves as leaders in environmental stewardship, particularly in sustainable fisheries management and ocean governance. These initiatives not only protect vital marine ecosystems but also highlight the Falklands' commitment to global environmental efforts—a stark contrast to Argentina’s territorial ambitions. Their resolve reflects a desire not only for political recognition but also for the acknowledgment of their contributions to pressing global issues.

Barkman’s fervent appeal at the UN was a demand for respect: “We do not want to be a colony again,” she insisted, reiterating the need for the international community to honour their autonomy and democratic choices. The Falklands' aspirations extend far beyond political status; they encompass a vision of self-governance that integrates environmental stewardship and sustainable development, allowing them to secure their future free from external encroachments.

As the recently formed Labour government grapples with pressing domestic issues, including the consequences of its policies on British sovereignty, Barkman reflected on the ongoing challenges presented by Argentina’s claims and international efforts to undermine the islands' status. The relentless pressure from Buenos Aires—comprising economic sanctions and assertive rhetoric—only serves to strengthen the resolve of Falklanders in asserting their identity and autonomy.

In summary, Barkman’s powerful statements at the United Nations encapsulate the broader aspirations of the Falkland Islands’ inhabitants: the right to self-determination, validation of their democratic choices, and recognition of their vital contributions to global sustainability. The future of the Falkland Islands is not a remote political issue; it is profoundly entwined with the will and voice of its people, who remain steadfast in their refusal to be silenced.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2060362/falkland-islands-argentina-united-nations> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/06/19/un-decolonisation-committee-accused-colonialism-falklands/> - In June 2024, the United Nations decolonisation committee was accused of colonialism by Falkland Islands representatives after suggesting the UK and Argentina should resume talks over the islands' sovereignty. Falkland Islanders, including MLA Teslyn Barkman, argued that such discussions were colonial in nature, emphasizing their right to self-determination and rejecting any negotiations that did not include their consent. They highlighted the 2013 referendum where 99.8% voted to remain a British Overseas Territory, underscoring their desire to remain British and control their own future.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/07/20/rishi-sunak-eu-regrettable-choice-of-words-falkland-islands/> - In July 2023, the European Union referred to the Falkland Islands as 'Islas Malvinas' in a summit declaration, prompting criticism from the UK government and Falkland Islanders. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman stated that any suggestion the islands were not British was 'entirely unacceptable.' MLA Teslyn Barkman expressed disappointment over the EU's decision to use a name given by Argentina, emphasizing the importance of respecting the islanders' right to self-determination and their choice to remain a British Overseas Territory.
4. <https://www.thenational.scot/politics/23697617.teslyn-barkman-self-determination-right-falkland-islanders/> - In an opinion piece, MLA Teslyn Barkman emphasized the Falkland Islanders' right to self-determination, referencing the 2013 referendum where 99.8% voted to remain a British Overseas Territory. She criticized efforts to undermine this right, highlighting the challenges faced due to Argentina's claims and international campaigns questioning the islands' status. Barkman underscored the importance of respecting the islanders' choice to remain British and control their own future, expressing concern over the impact of external pressures on their sovereignty.
5. <https://www.mercopress.com/2024/06/19/requesting-uk-and-argentina-talk-bilaterally-about-falklands-future-is-entirely-colonial-mla-teslyn-barkman> - In June 2024, MLA Teslyn Barkman addressed the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation, stating that requests for the UK and Argentina to engage in bilateral talks over the Falkland Islands' future were colonial. She emphasized the islanders' right to self-determination and rejected any negotiations that excluded their consent. Barkman highlighted the Falklands' achievements in environmental sustainability and fisheries management, asserting that the islands have much to offer the world and should not be treated as a political pawn.
6. <https://www.mercopress.com/2023/11/30/mla-barkman-the-uk-government-stood-behind-our-freedom-and-our-right-to-decide-our-own-future> - In November 2023, MLA Teslyn Barkman reflected on the UK's support for the Falkland Islands' freedom and self-determination following the 1982 conflict with Argentina. She discussed the UK's backing of the islanders' right to decide their own future and criticized Argentina's ongoing efforts to challenge this right through economic sanctions and international campaigns. Barkman emphasized the importance of the UK government's continued support in defending the islanders' sovereignty and self-determination.
7. <https://ukota.org/2023/02/the-falkland-islands-take-over-presidency-of-the-uk-overseas-territories-association/> - In February 2023, the Falkland Islands assumed the presidency of the UK Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA), with MLA Teslyn Barkman serving as President of the Political Council. This role involved chairing the council's annual meeting of political leaders in London ahead of the Joint Ministerial Council between the Overseas Territories and the UK Government. The presidency aimed to advance and defend the collective interests of the Overseas Territories in the UK over the forthcoming year, building upon the Falklands' successful 40th anniversary year in 2022.