

UN court rejects UK rule over Chagos Islands

The UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) has backed Mauritius in a colonial-era dispute over the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean, saying Britain's handling of the decolonisation was "unlawful"

■ **1814:** Britain takes possession of Chagos Islands after capturing French colony of Mauritius

■ **1965:** Mauritius sells Chagos Islands to Britain, three years before country gains independence. Islands become **British Indian Ocean Territory**

■ **1966:** Britain leases largest island, **Diego Garcia**, to U.S. for creation of military base

■ **1968-73:** Entire population of islands – around 2,000 people – moved to Mauritius and Seychelles to make way for base, which is leased until 2036

■ **1975:** Chagos islanders living in Mauritius launch legal proceedings against their eviction, with some receiving compensation from Britain in 1982

■ **2017:** UN General Assembly adopts resolution presented by Mauritius and backed by African countries asking ICJ to examine legal status of Chagos Islands

■ **Feb 25, 2019:** ICJ says UK carved up Mauritius illegally and should end rule over Chagos Islands as soon as possible – ruling is non-binding but puts pressure on UK to act



■ Land □ Shallow reef (0-2m deep)
■ Submerged reef (2-20m deep)



B-52 bombers at Diego Garcia – base has played key strategic role in U.S. operations in Indian Ocean