



CHAGOS ISLANDS - GEOGRAPHY

NEWS: *The United Kingdom recently returned the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius.*

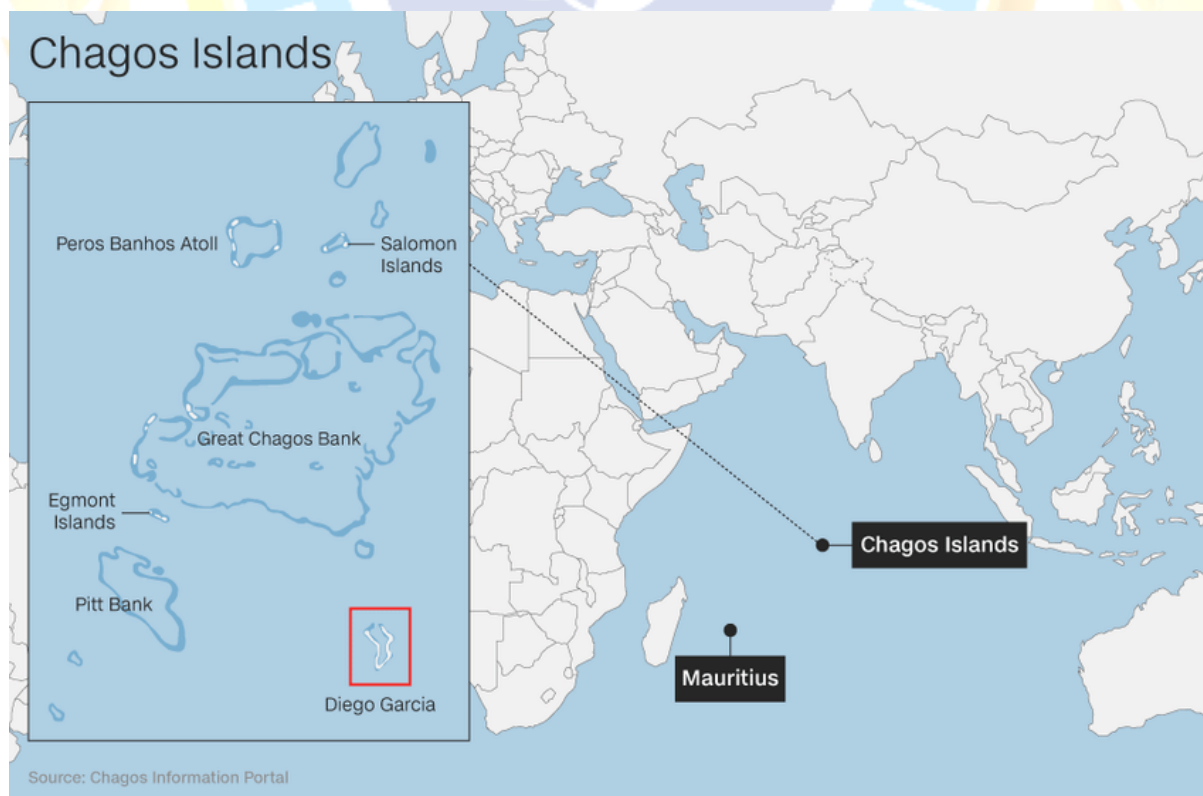
WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Key-details of the Agreement

- This agreement resolves a **long-standing dispute that dates back over 50 years**, primarily surrounding the forced removal of the **indigenous Chagossian population** and the establishment of a crucial U.S. military base on **Diego Garcia**.
- The agreement allows Mauritius to implement a **resettlement program for the Chagossians**, supported financially by the UK.
- Operations at the **Diego Garcia military base** will continue for at least the next 99 years, with the UK providing annual payments and financial support to ensure the base's effective operation.
 - The U.S. military base on Diego Garcia is crucial for military operations in **Africa, West Asia, and Southeast Asia**. It serves as a staging ground for naval and air operations, making it a key asset in U.S. military strategy.
- The agreement aims to maintain regional security while addressing historical grievances.

About Chagos Archipelago

- The Chagos Archipelago is located in the Indian Ocean, about 1,000 miles south of India.





PL RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

MAKING YOU SERVE THE NATION

- It is an isolated atoll of tiny islands in the middle of the **Indian Ocean**, between **Africa and Western Australia**.
- The chain includes the **Salomon Islands, Peros Banhos, Nelson's Island, Three Brothers Islands, Eagle Islands, Danger Island, the Egmont Islands and Diego Garcia**, a strategically important US military base.
 - Diego Garcia is the **largest island** of the **Chagos cluster** and is also located on **major international trade routes**.
- **Historical Background:**
 - The islands were part of Mauritius until the UK separated them in the 1960s during Mauritius's path to independence.
 - Prior to their eviction, the Chagossians lived on the islands for generations, relying on fishing and small-scale agriculture.
- **Forced Eviction:** The UK and U.S. established a military base on Diego Garcia in the 1970s, leading to the forced removal of over 1,000 Chagossians. The eviction process involved relocation to Mauritius and the Seychelles.
- **Legal and Diplomatic Developments:**
 - **ICJ Ruling (2019):** The International Court of Justice ruled against the UK's control over the islands, stating that the forced evacuation was unlawful. It called for the UK to withdraw its presence.
 - **UN Resolution:** A UN General Assembly resolution demanding the UK's withdrawal received support from 116 countries, indicating broad international condemnation of the UK's actions.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/why-chagos-islands-matter-why-uk-keeps-diego-garcia-base-9602682/>