

COMMUNIQUE

A meeting of the Committee of Parliamentarians on the Chagos Archipelago chaired by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister was held on 14 October 2016.

The Committee, which was set up following the Award delivered on 18 March 2015 in the case brought by Mauritius against the United Kingdom in respect of the Chagos Archipelago, comprises the Hon. Leader of the Opposition as well as a representative of each political party represented in the National Assembly.

The Committee had an exchange of views on latest developments relating to the Chagos Archipelago. It noted that an item entitled ***“Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965”*** had been included in the agenda of the current session of the United Nations General Assembly. It was understood that consideration of the item by the plenary of the General Assembly would only be taken up in June 2017 in order to give time to Mauritius and the UK to engage in discussions with a view to reaching a resolution of the matter, without thereby implying, in any manner whatsoever, that the matter is other than one of direct interest to the United Nations.

The Committee reiterated that Mauritius has sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and does not recognise the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” which is a relic of the colonisation era.

The Committee expressed its deep sadness over the demise of Mr. Fernand Mandarin, one of the prominent leaders in the struggle of the Chagossian community, and directed that its condolences be conveyed to the bereaved family in particular and to the Chagossian community in general.

Prior to the meeting of the Committee, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister met Mr. Olivier Bancoult, O.S.K., Chairman and Leader of the Chagos Refugees Group, to exchange views on the Chagos Archipelago issue. The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister reiterated that the Government of Mauritius recognises the legitimate right and claim of the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago, as Mauritian citizens, to be resettled in the Chagos Archipelago.

Mr. Bancoult thanked the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister for having included him as the representative of the Chagossian community in the official delegation of Mauritius to the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly. This gave him an opportunity to express the voice of the Chagossian community to the UK Government at the meeting which the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister had with the Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on 22 September 2016 in New York. This also allowed him to expose the plight of the Mauritians who were forcibly removed by the United Kingdom from the Chagos Archipelago. He reaffirmed the support of the Chagossian community to Government

action with regard to the completion of the decolonisation process of Mauritius and the effective exercise by Mauritius of its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

Both the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister and Mr. Bancoult reiterated that the long-standing struggle of Mauritius for the completion of its decolonisation process and the effective exercise of its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and the right of Mauritian citizens, including those of Chagossian origin, to return and resettle in the Chagos Archipelago cannot be dissociated.

Prime Minister's Office
14 October 2016