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Mauritius

# The will for change in Mauritius

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**The opposition Progressive Alliance defeated the outgoing government's Lepep coalition in the Mauritian elections held on 10 November 2024. The results are indisputable. With 62% of the vote, the opposition parties won almost all the seats in the assembly, in accordance with the “winner takes all” rule.**

## Shameless manoeuvres

These elections were marked by a wiretapping scandal where the government organised a large-scale spying system targeting dissident voices, journalists, lawyers and community activists. This authoritarian drift was amplified when the government prepared to cut off the internet. In a country known for its democratic stability, the government changed its mind in the face of the outcry.

Pravind Jugnauth, the outgoing Prime Minister, thought that the agreement reached with Great Britain on the Chagos Islands would give him a bonus. This agreement, presented as the return of Mauritius's sovereignty over the archipelago, is open to criticism. It was drawn up in the absence of the Chagossians, despite their repeated requests to be involved. They were driven off their island by the British government in the late 1960s. In addition, Great Britain retains sovereign rights over the main island of Diego Garcia, with a ban on the return of the inhabitants to their land and the maintenance of a military base granted to the United States.

At the same time, the economic situation is marked by weakening growth, a level of inflation impacting the poorest populations, a youth unemployment rate of almost 20% and a high level of inequality.

## Dynasty and ecosocialism

The vast majority of Mauritians rejected the government and voted Navin Ramgoolam to power, a politician who has twice been Prime Minister and who has himself been accused of money laundering. Politics in Mauritius is primarily dominated by two dynasties, the Jugnauth and Ramgoolam families, who have presided over the country's destiny since independence. Their policies are similar in that they have accompanied the country's transformation from a sugar-based economy, followed by manufacturing and the garment industry, to an economy focused on finance and tourism.

The country's two radical left-wing organisations, Lalit and Rezistans ek Alternativ (ReA), have made different political choices. Lalit fielded six candidates on its own, while ReA joined the progressive alliance by negotiating three mandates as MPs. Its leader, Ashok Subron, has been appointed Minister for Social Affairs. One of his first official speeches was on International Disability Day. On this occasion, he advocated a change of approach by targeting the social, economic and environmental causes that contribute to disability, such as poor diet, occupational illnesses and accidents, pollution, and so on.

An eco-socialist Minister for Social Affairs in a government is sufficiently rare in Africa to be cause for celebration, although vigilance is still called for.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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