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Chagos Islands

US military base on Diego Garcia must be closed!

- News from around the world -

Publication date: Wednesday 13 June 2018

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For 42 years now, LALIT has mobilized on the three closely intertwined demands on this issue:

- Decolonization of the Chagos Islands, illegally split off from Mauritius by Britain at Independence in 1968.
- Closure of the US military base on one of the islands, Diego Garcia.
- The right of return, heads held high, of all Chagossians, as Mauritians, with proper reparations.

Our mass mobilizations of the 1970s and 1980s have helped keep the struggle against military occupation on the agenda until now. Lalit never gave up on any of the three. Why should we?

And finally, on 22 June, 2017, the Mauritian State, under the decades of pressure, took the issue of de-colonization to the UN. There it won a resolution 94-15 – on the basis of an argument developed over decades by LALIT – “for the de-colonization of Africa”. In fact, it was the African Union that presented the Resolution.

The Chagos Refugees Group was part of the Government delegation to the UN, finally uniting the right to return struggle with the de-colonization struggle. This process of integrating the struggles ought to have been initiated by previous Governments from the very day of Independence in 1968 – including Labour, MMM, PMSD and MSM Governments.

LALIT has, over the years, constantly worked with both the CRG, as well as the Chagossian Social Group, in all our struggles, with the relationship often being conflictual. The conflict has been, in every case, over the importance LALIT gives constantly to the unity of the three struggles. Close personal ties born of hunger strikes, demonstrations, arrests and trials, have linked LALIT women militants with Chagossian women very closely. The August 79 strike bound us closely to Chagossians in the sectors concerned. Some Chagossians have also, over the years, been active in LALIT branches, in adult education courses our members run, with our members in the women’s movement and the union movement. We have worked with the CRG in the Rann Nu Diego! committee, in the No Bases Conference in Mumbai, and with Chagossians at the grassroots in Komite Diego. The GRC and Chagossians participated in both our International Conferences in 2010 and 2016.

Anyway, finally there is to be an ICJ case on 3 September. One of the Cold War’s tightly kept secrets is finally exposed to the light of day.

But, getting or even “winning” an Advisory Opinion through a United Nations body, though important, is not in itself “the victory”. The process is part of changing the balance of forces against the colonizers, the 2 imperialists and the war-mongers.

And, in any case, we have, so far, only had Governments (Labour, PMSD, MMM, MSM) wildly in favour of maintaining the US military base – even if Chagos is returned to the Republic – and only too keen to collect rent. This, despite the logic Mentor Minister Sir Aneerood Jugnauth correctly employs, when he says that the purpose the British gave was to set up a “communications station”, and that nobody told them to “stick a base there”.

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So, the present Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth, openly reassures the USA and UK that the base will remain.

Even after B-52's took off from this Mauritian territory, for which we are responsible, as part of bombing Baghdad in what is now universally accepted to have been an illegal war, he says this?

Even after the lies, then admission, that torture and illegal renderings took place on Diego Garcia, Mauritian land, he says this?

Even after the whole of Africa and most of Latin America and Asia's leaders give him support on principle, he says this? He looks for rent money?

LALIT is mobilizing today for support for base closure – Diego Garcia and all military bases abroad. We are mobilizing support for an end of the arms industry. We are mobilizing support to dismantle all nuclear arms, without turning a blind eye to US nuclear weapons, or worse still, to totally illegal Israeli, nuclear weapons. We need to prevent war on the earth, under the earth, on the sea, under the sea, in the air, and in space. And LALIT is mobilizing against capitalism, the system that creates the need for war and destruction in its greed for markets, for raw materials, for money money money as profits.

Our program does not demand too much – we just want democratic control of planet earth and outer space. That's all!

Source **LALIT Newsletter CHAGOS DIEGO GARCIA** [Editorial](#).

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