WHY IS BRITAIN STILL ARGUING ABOUT THE CHAGOS ISLANDS?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The British government has put payments to Mauritius on hold while it reviews a deal over the Chagos Islands. The proposed agreement would transfer sovereignty of the islands to Mauritius, while allowing Britain and the United States to continue using the military base on Diego Garcia for 99 years. The deal has been delayed because US President Donald Trump does not support it in its present form. The argument has deep historical roots. In the 1960s, Britain separated the Chagos Islands from Mauritius shortly before Mauritius became independent. Chagossians were then removed from their homes to make way for the Diego Garcia base, and many have never been able to return. Britain now faces pressure over colonialism, the rights of displaced people and the strategic importance of the base. The latest disagreement shows how decisions made during decolonisation still affect international politics and real families today.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

This story connects directly to the end of the British Empire, decolonisation and the Cold War. It helps students see that empire did not simply disappear when colonies became independent. Questions about military bases, forced removal, sovereignty and the rights of local people remain part of international relations.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

“Who should decide what happens to the Chagos Islands?”

Source: The Guardian

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/sep/23/chagos-islands-diego-garcia-streeting-us-support