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The Fragility of Human Rights in the Face of Political Interests: the island
of Diego Garcia.

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Abstract

The island of Diego Garcia, situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean, is the biggest and the most important overseas military base of the United States. Until very recently, the existence of this island was not well-known to the public though it gained much attention when conspiracy theories wanted the lost Malaysian airplane to be connected with the US secret military base.

The island, which for approximately the last fifty years has been the “Footprint of Freedom” for the Americans, was the motherland of the Chagossians until 1968. Diego

Garcia as well as many other small islands in the Chagos Archipelago officially belonged to Mauritius. However, Mauritius at the time was a British Colony. Between 1968 and 1973 the whole native population of the islands was forcibly evicted by the British authorities as was indicated in the agreement with the US. Being in the center of the Cold War and given the geopolitical importance of the island, Diego Garcia seemed to be ideal in the eyes of the US for the pursuit of their interests.

In the world we live, human rights cannot keep up with the political interests of states let alone with those of the Great Powers. For the national security of the US and the UK, the Chagossians found themselves exposed to human insecurity and to chronic impoverishment.

Table of acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| BIOT | British Indian Ocean Territory |
| CA | Court of Appeal |
| DC | Divisional Court |
| HL | House of Lords |
| ICCPR | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| MPA | Marine Protected Area |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |

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