



## British Stamps Banned from Chagos Islands

### Why in News

Recently, the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) has **banned British stamps** from being used on the **Chagos archipelago**.



### Key Points

#### ▪ About:

- Now the UPU (Universal Postal Union) will stop registering, distributing and transmitting stamps bearing the words **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)**, the name given by Britain to the archipelago.
  - **UPU** is a **United Nations specialized agency** and the postal sector's primary forum for international cooperation.
- **Chagos archipelago** is an island group in the **central Indian Ocean**, located about 1,600 km south of the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent.

#### ▪ Background:

- In the **19<sup>th</sup> century**, **Chagos were governed from Mauritius**, which was a **British Colony**.
- **Mauritius became independent in 1968**, but the Chagos archipelago remained under British control. The U.K. government refers to it as **BIOT**.

- That Sparked protests by Chagossians, who accused London of carrying out an **“illegal occupation”** and barring them from their homeland.
- The UK retained possession of the Chagos archipelago, which **includes the strategic US airbase of Diego Garcia**, after Mauritius gained its independence by paying Mauritius more than 4 million pounds for the islands.
  - About 1,500 native islanders were deported from the Diego Garcia island in Chagos archipelago so that it could be leased to the US for the airbase in 1971.
- **Since 1975, Mauritius** has made a concerted legal **effort to secure the archipelago's return to its fold.**
- **Recent developments:**
  - In 2019, the **International Court of Justice** (ICJ) ruled that **Britain should give up control** of the islands.
  - Later in 2019, the **UN General Assembly** adopted a resolution recognising that **"the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius"** and urged UN agencies **"to support the decolonisation of Mauritius"**.
- **India's Stand:**
  - India has supported Mauritius' stand on the Chagos Archipelago. India in its submission to ICJ has said that the **Chagos Archipelago has been and continues to be with Mauritius** and demanded sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago from Britain.
  - India stayed **committed to its Indian Ocean neighbor Mauritius**, as well as its anti-colonial credentials.

**Source: TH**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/british-stamps-banned-from-chagos-islands>

