



The proposal to create a marine protected area in the Chagos Archipelago

Questions & Answers on IUCN's position

March 2010 The Chagos Archipelago is located in the centre of the Indian Ocean about 500 km south of the Maldives. The archipelago comprises seven atolls with more than 60 islands. Claimed by France in the 18th century and used for coconut plantations, Chagos became a dependency of Mauritius from 1814, when France ceded Mauritius and its Dependencies to Britain, until 1965

The Chagossian population was originally brought to the archipelago two centuries later, between 1967 and 1971, their descendants were forcibly removed from the area and relocated mainly to Mauritius in preparation for the construction of a military facility on Diego Garcia.

The legality of this has been challenged in UK courts and is currently being considered by the European Court of Human Rights. Chagos is today, with the exception of Diego Garcia, occupied by a military base, uninhabited.

The marine ecosystems of Chagos are considered unique and of high biodiversity value for the Indian Ocean. As such it has high conservation priority.

In 2009 the UK government announced a consultation on the establishment of a marine protected area in the Chagos Archipelago, inviting stakeholders to comment on three possible scenarios as well as more generally on alternative management and benefits of protection, and other measures to protect the area. The consultation ended on 5 March 2010.

Is the establishment of a Marine Protected Area in Chagos

IUCN has provided recommendations with respect to conservation of the area during the consultation and with the aim of securing the greatest

archipelago. A

- 4.045 Accelerating progress to establish marine protected areas and creating marine protected ar