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Mauritius: LALIT calls for Diego Garcia military base Inspection by IAEA

Tuesday 22 December 2009, by [Lalit de klas](#) (Date first published: 3 December 2009).

With US military activities growing fast in Africa, including the setting up of Africom, and with the new African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (known as the Pelindaba Treaty) now in force, the huge base on Diego Garcia becomes a key issue.

We believe that the Mauritius government should act now. We know from experience that it makes out it will act on the Diego Garcia issue, but then capitulates. The Government is however sensitive to international pressure. Which is why we ask you to send an email to our Foreign Affairs Minister to support an action being taken here (text for cut-and-paste immediately after this intro). LALIT has already taken the initiative to call on him to act (in a 30-minute meeting on Thursday and in a letter - which you can read below).

PROPOSED TEXT for your email to Minister Boolell:

aboollell mail.gov.mu

Dear Dr. Arvind Boolell,

We write to request you in your capacity as Mauritian Minister of Foreign Affairs to take the steps necessary to get UN inspections under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) done on Diego Garcia, which is part of the Republic of Mauritius according to Section 111 of the Mauritian Constitution and international law. Such inspections become necessary now that the UN Treaty for an African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (known as the Pelindaba Treaty) has recently come into operation, because Diego Garcia, being part of Mauritius, is part of the African Union and must therefore be known to be free of nuclear weapons. Diego Garcia is known to stock nuclear materials and weapons.

Yours sincerely,

Name:

Organization (if any):

Country:

Copies to: lalitmail intnet.mu

primeminister mail.gov.mu

COPY OF LALIT letter to Minister Boolell:

3 December, 2009

Hon Arvind Boolell,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration & International Trade, 11th Floor, Newton Tower,
Sir William Newton Street, Port Louis.

Dear Sir,

Re: Initiative Concerning Pelindaba Treaty for African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

As you are aware LALIT has for many years been at the forefront of many struggles around the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, the re-unification of the Mauritian country and nation, reparations for all Chagossians, and for the closing down of the Diego Garcia military base and all other imperialist military bases. It is in this general context that we write to you.

However, we write to propose a specific initiative. We request that you, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, take the important historic initiative of contacting the new Director of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency who will replace Dr. M. Baradei. We request that you do so at the earliest possible time. We call on you to request that Diego Garcia, part of Mauritius under Section 111 of the Constitution, be inspected for illegal stocks of nuclear materials in contravention of the Pelindaba Treaty for a Nuclear Arms Free Africa, a treaty that came into force in July, 2009.

We draw your attention to the fact that in 2004, LALIT publicly called on the International Red Cross to do inspections for illegal rendering being done on Mauritian territory (see letter annexed [Contact us for copy]). The last Government, however, did nothing to support this previous initiative of ours. Had your predecessors given heed to our proposed initiative, Mauritius could today have held its head high in the international community, because Mr. Gordon Brown, UK Prime Minister finally 5 years later admitted that there had in fact been illegal prisoners held on what is, in fact, Mauritian territory. And he apologised. We hope you do not neglect your duty to take up this new LALIT initiative. This time, failure to do so may cause Mauritius to be in contravention of a binding Treaty.

The UK and USA are, we believe, right now in contravention of the Pelindaba Treaty. Their actions are causing Mauritius, in turn, to be in contravention. The UK and US are illegally occupying Mauritian territory and it is well known that they are stocking nuclear materials on it. The Treaty states at Article 4.1 that "Each Party undertakes to prohibit in its territory the stationing of any nuclear explosive device." Mauritius will need to call on the United Nations for help in respecting the Treaty. We point out for your interest, that the Protocol II of the Treaty (which has been signed by both the UK and USA, and also ratified and deposited by the UK) states that "Each Protocol Party undertakes not to contribute to any act that constitutes a violation of the Treaty." The opening statement of Protocol II enunciates the aim of the Treaty: a "world entirely free of nuclear weapons".

The procedure we suggest is as follows: The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) has recently been set up for complaints under the Treaty; the Government should therefore perhaps submit a formal and public complaint to this Commission at the same time as one to the Director of the IAEA for an inspection under the UN's auspices.

We are fully aware that there are "dotted lines" around Diego Garcia and the Chagos in Annex I to this Treaty, but we believe that the Mauritian government has the right to challenge the significance of these illegal dotted lines, and to demand an inspection. Mauritius must avoid being in contravention of this vital and binding Treaty. It is also important, at the very moment when there is

a confrontation with Iran on enrichment of nuclear material, that Mauritian territory be free of nuclear armaments.

We believe this initiative, if taken, will at the same time of course put into question the illegal nature of the UK-US occupation of the Chagos Islands.

Yours faithfully,

Alain Ah-Vee, for LALIT

Copies to: African Commission on Nuclear Energy,

UN IAEA,

Press in Mauritius & Abroad

Our Address: L A L I T

Main Road, GRNW,

Port Louis, Rep of Mauritius.

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www.lalitmauritius.org

P.S.

* Lindsey Collen is a member of LALIT (Lalit de klas, the Mauritian socialist organisation). Her novels include The Rape of Sita which won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the African region in 1994, Mutiny (2002) and Boy (2005).