



CHAGOS SOVEREIGNTY INITIATIVE

Explanatory and Justification Document

1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document explains and justifies the **Chagos Sovereignty Initiative** as proposed by ic3 Crime Scene Investigators (ic3csi). It is written so that Chagossian organisations, community members, lawyers, academics, and allies can clearly see:

- **What the plan is.**
- **Why it is necessary.**
- **How it can be implemented in practice.**

The core idea is simple:

The Chagossian people cannot win full justice while they remain legally “subjects” inside other states’ systems.

They need their own recognised sovereign entity – a Chagossian government-in-exile or similar international body – with its own symbols, register, and legal personality.

The orange–black–blue flag is presented as a **candidate “people’s sovereignty flag”**, in contrast to the existing British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) flag, which represents the occupying power.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

Step 1 – Reframe the problem.

Move from a narrow focus on “resettlement”, “citizenship”, or “compensation” towards the deeper question: **Who is sovereign over Chagos and the Chagossian people?**

Step 2 – Name the harm clearly.

Describe the depopulation of the Chagos Islands as an **ongoing hostage situation**, driven by **anti-Black racism** and strategic interests of IC1 White institutions (mainly the UK and the US), rather than a closed historical event.

Step 3 – Build a Chagossian sovereign international entity.

Support Chagossian communities to create a **Chagossian Sovereign International Entity** (CSIE) – effectively a **government-in-exile / national council** that:

- Represents Chagossians wherever they live.
- Speaks with one recognised voice on sovereignty, return, and reparations.
- Maintains its own registers, laws, and symbols.

Step 4 – Replace colonial symbols with people’s symbols.

Reject the BIOT flag (Union Jack + crown + waves) as the **occupier’s flag**.

Adopt an **orange–black–blue people’s flag** that expresses:

- The emergency and fire of the struggle (orange).
- The Chagossian people and land (black).
- The surrounding ocean and global diaspora (blue).

Step 5 – Use forensic, written, and lawful methods.

ic3csi assists as a **forensic, Black-led investigative body**, using:

- The UK’s race and ethnicity classification systems.
- The “five pillars” of identity (Birthplace, Lineage, Appearance, State of Mind, DNA).
- Written-only protocols to build a secure, auditable case.

Step 6 – Engage international and domestic systems from a position of sovereignty.

Once the CSIE exists, it can:

- Seek recognition or acknowledgement from states and international bodies.
- Negotiate with the UK, US, Mauritius, and others **as a sovereign counterpart**, not just as a displaced community petitioning for sympathy.
- Structure demands for reparations, resettlement, environmental repair, and security guarantees.

3. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

3.1 Removal and Dispersal

The Chagossian people were forcibly removed from their homeland to make way for a military base on Diego Garcia. They were scattered mainly to **Mauritius, Seychelles, and the United Kingdom**, and have spent decades struggling for:

- Recognition of what happened.
- The right of return.
- Compensation for the loss of home, culture, and livelihood.

These struggles have produced **court cases, campaigns, UN debates, and international sympathy** – but not full justice.

3.2 The BIOT Colonial Frame

The first flag you showed is the flag of the **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)**:

- **Union Jack in the corner**: marks the territory as belonging to the UK.
- **Blue and white wavy lines**: stylised ocean – “overseas territory”.
- **Palm with a crown at the base**: the natural life of the islands literally under the British Crown.

This flag is a **visual contract**: it states that Chagos is a **Crown possession** in the middle of the Indian Ocean. It represents the **administration that removed the Chagossians**.

3.3 Sovereignty Vacuum

At the time of removal **there was no recognised Chagossian sovereign structure**:

- No state with Chagossian nationality.
- No registered government of the Chagossian people.
- No independent flag or diplomatic voice.

Because the people were framed as “**subjects**” of the **UK colony of Mauritius** and **later as minorities inside other states**, they could be **moved, resettled, and administratively erased** without any Chagossian government to object.

This **sovereignty vacuum** is the core problem the plan seeks to address.

4. DIAGNOSING THE CORE PROBLEM: HOSTAGE CONDITION AND CLASSIFICATION

4.1 Hostage, Not Just Victim

In the ic3csi framework, Chagossians are not simply “victims of a past injustice”. They are treated as **ongoing hostages** of:

- Strategic interests (the military base).
- Administrative systems (citizenship, immigration, welfare).
- Narratives that frame them as unfortunate but small and expendable.

The **hostage** concept matters because a hostage situation is **ongoing and live**, demanding:

- Negotiation.
- Protection.
- A rescue plan.

4.2 UK Race and Ethnicity Codes

The UK uses two connected systems:

- **Police “IC” codes (IC1–IC7)** – quick visual racial classification.
- **Census / government ethnicity codes** – detailed self-identification categories.

ic3csi treats these as a **linked classification system**, not separate, and uses them to:

- Identify who is making decisions (e.g. IC1 White institutions).
- Track which groups experience anti-Black racism (IC3 Black and IC6 Mixed-Black).
- Understand how **classification systems themselves** can be tools of control.

For Chagos, this helps show that:

- Decisions about the islands and military base have been dominated by **IC1 White institutions**.
- The **Black and mixed-Black Chagossian population** has been treated as movable labour and surplus people.

4.3 The Five Pillars of Identity

ic3csi uses **five pillars** to study identity and sovereignty:

1. **Birthplace** – where a person is born.
2. **Lineage** – family, clan, and ancestral lines.
3. **Appearance** – how a person is read racially in public.
4. **State of Mind / Culture** – language, religion, values, and political consciousness.

5. **DNA** – biological heredity and links to wider populations.

For Chagossians, these pillars show:

- A **shared island birthplace and lineage** now scattered across states.
- A recognisable **Black / Afro-descendant appearance** in many cases.
- A distinctive **Creole culture and memory of the islands**.
- Potential for **DNA links** to other African, Malagasy, and Indian Ocean populations.

Together, these pillars support the claim that **“Chagossian” is not just a loose identity but a recognisable people**, capable of claiming sovereignty.

5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: A CHAGOSSIAN SOVEREIGN INTERNATIONAL ENTITY

5.1 What Is the Entity?

The plan calls for building a **Chagossian Sovereign International Entity (CSIE)** – the exact name can be chosen by the people. It would be:

- A **constitutional body** created by Chagossians.
- Functioning as a **government-in-exile, national council, or provisional state authority**.
- Mandated by **clear, documented consent** from Chagossians across the diaspora.

5.2 Why Sovereignty Matters

With a CSIE in place, the struggle changes:

- From **“please give us rights”** to **“we, the Chagossian people, as a sovereign entity, assert and negotiate our rights”**.

Sovereignty brings:

- A **single, stable counterpart** for states and institutions to deal with.
- A **legal personality** that can sign agreements, retain counsel, and enter cases.
- A **home** for a Chagossian constitution, laws, and registers (citizenship, land claims, reparations beneficiaries).

5.3 Relationship to Existing Organisations

The CSIE does **not** erase existing Chagossian groups. Instead, it:

- Invites them to become **founding stakeholders**.
- Recognises their work and experience.
- Offers a structure where **disagreements can be managed internally**, rather than playing out in front of colonial powers.

ic3csi does **not** claim to rule or represent Chagossians. It proposes a **framework and support** to help the Chagossian people build and control their own sovereign body.

6. LEGAL AND NORMATIVE JUSTIFICATION

6.1 Right to Self-Determination

International law recognises the **right of peoples to self-determination**.

If Chagossians are accepted as a “**people**” – which their shared history, culture, and experience suggest – then they have:

- The right to **freely determine their political status**.
- The right to **pursue their economic, social, and cultural development**.

A CSIE is a **practical institutional expression** of this right.

6.2 Decolonisation Principle

The Chagos case is widely understood as a **decolonisation failure**:

- The islands were separated from Mauritius during decolonisation.
- The population was removed, preventing a **fair act of self-determination**.

By establishing a CSIE, the Chagossian people can:

- Assert that decolonisation is **not complete**.
- Demand a **true act of self-determination**, designed and overseen by their own sovereign body.

6.3 Governments-in-Exile as Precedent

History shows that **governments-in-exile and provisional authorities** have played legitimate roles when:

- Their territory is occupied.
- Their people are prevented from freely choosing their status.

A CSIE would stand in this tradition, aligning the Chagos struggle with:

- Wider **anti-colonial movements**.
- Other cases where peoples organised themselves before international recognition.

6.4 Reparatory Justice

The Chagossian case is a textbook example of **reparatory justice** needs:

- Forced displacement.
- Loss of homeland and livelihood.
- Pain, trauma, and anti-Black racism across generations.

A CSIE can:

- Keep a **central register of harms and claimants**.
- Negotiate for **financial compensation, land rights, environmental repair, and memorialisation**.
- Help ensure reparations are **transparent and fairly distributed**, rather than controlled by external governments.

7. ETHICAL AND POLITICAL JUSTIFICATION

7.1 Addressing Anti-Black Racism

ic3csi names the system that displaced Chagossians as a **White Supremacist system** and recognises the role of **anti-Black racism**:

- A small Black island population was treated as disposable to make way for a strategic base.
- Their suffering has often been minimised or framed as an unfortunate side-effect.

By building a CSIE:

- Chagossians assert their **full human dignity**.
- They refuse to remain an “**administrative detail**” within other states.
- They join a broader struggle against **global anti-Black racism** and racialised dispossession.

7.2 Intergenerational Responsibility

Many of the people directly removed have passed away or are elderly.

A CSIE ensures that:

- **Their descendants** have a **formal, legitimate institutional home** for the struggle.
- Memory, testimony, and evidence are **preserved and organised**.
- Young Chagossians can **inherit more than just pain** – they inherit a **sovereign project**.

7.3 Political Clarity and Unity

Without a CSIE:

- States can pick and choose which Chagossian voices to listen to.
- Divisions and rivalries between organisations can be exploited.

With a CSIE:

- Differences can be handled inside a legitimate political structure.
- External actors must face **one organised sovereign body** rather than a fragmented field.

8. SYMBOLIC JUSTIFICATION: FLAGS AND VISUAL SOVEREIGNTY

8.1 Why the BIOT Flag Cannot Represent Chagossians

The BIOT flag:

- Places the **Union Jack** in the position of honour.
- Crowns a **palm tree**, symbolically marking the land and nature of Chagos as **Crown property**.
- Was created to represent the **territorial administration that depopulated the islands**, not the people who were removed.

For Chagossians, using this flag would mean:

- **Accepting the coloniser's story** about who owns the islands.
- Treating themselves as **“subjects” inside BIOT** rather than as a sovereign people.

Therefore, the BIOT flag is appropriate for **British official buildings and military use**, but **not** for Chagossian self-representation.

8.2 The Orange–Black–Blue People’s Flag

The second flag (orange–black–blue) is proposed as a **candidate people’s flag** for the Chagossian sovereign project.

A possible official meaning:

- **Blue (bottom band)** – the **Indian Ocean** and the global spread of Chagossians across water to Mauritius, Seychelles, the UK, and beyond. It also represents **depth, memory, and continuity**.
- **Black (middle band, thin)** – the **Chagossian people and land**: a narrow strip of land and life between water and sky, symbolising:
 - A people under pressure, but unbroken.
 - The Black identity of many Chagossians and the wider African diaspora links.
- **Orange (top band)** – **emergency and fire**:
 - The **ongoing distress signal** of a people still waiting for justice.
 - The **sun and heat** of the islands.
 - The **energy and determination** of the struggle.

Key differences from the BIOT flag:

- **No Crown, no Union Jack.**
- **Simple, bold colours** that any Chagossian child can draw.
- Easy to reproduce on banners, digital media, and clothing.

Symbolically, the new flag says:

“We are the Chagossian people – a thin Black line of land and life between sea and sky, in a constant state of emergency, but still here and still sovereign.”

The final choice and confirmation of the flag is, of course, for **Chagossians themselves**. The point is that **a decolonised flag is necessary** for a decolonised sovereignty project.

9. ROLE OF ic3 CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATORS (ic3csi)

9.1 What ic3csi Is

ic3 Crime Scene Investigators (ic3csi) is a **Black-led investigative initiative** that:

- Studies how **race, classification systems, and power** interact.
- Treats historical and current injustices as **ongoing crime scenes**.
- Uses **forensic methods, written protocols, and classification tools** to build cases.

9.2 Offer to Chagossians

In the Chagos context, ic3csi offers to:

- Help **document the case** in a structured, evidence-based way.
- Provide an **external analytical framework** that names anti-Black racism and White supremacy clearly.
- Assist in designing the **identity architecture** (registers, codes, safeguards) for the CSIE.

ic3csi:

- **Does not claim sovereignty** over Chagos.
- **Does not replace** Chagossian leadership.
- Acts as a **technical, investigative ally**, especially on questions of race, classification, and global patterns.

9.3 Written-Only Protocol and Audit Trails

To protect all parties and preserve evidence, ic3csi:

- Prefers **written communication only** (email, letters).
- Keeps **clear audit trails** of all exchanges.
- States openly that this is also a safeguard against **anti-Black racism** and misrepresentation.

This discipline can strengthen the Chagossian case by creating a **well-organised archive** of negotiations, agreements, and disputes.

10. IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

10.1 Phase 1 – Listening, Mapping, and Consent

- Identify and contact **all major Chagossian organisations and community leaders**.
- Hold **listening sessions** (written summaries, recorded minutes).

- Map **priorities, fears, and red lines**.
- Seek **written expressions of interest** in exploring a CSIE.

10.2 Phase 2 – Provisional Working Group

- Establish a **Provisional Working Group (PWG)** with representatives from different Chagossian communities (islands of origin, age groups, places of residence, etc.).
- Define **basic rules of procedure** (how decisions are made, how disagreements are handled).
- Agree on the **scope**: designing a CSIE and people's constitution.

10.3 Phase 3 – Drafting the Chagossian Constitutional Framework

- Draft a **Foundational Charter** that answers key questions:
 - Who is a **Chagossian citizen** or rights-holder?
 - How are **leaders elected or selected**?
 - What are the **core rights and duties** of the CSIE?
 - How does the CSIE relate to other states (Mauritius, UK, Seychelles, etc.)?
- Use the **five pillars** and UK classification system carefully, making sure the framework is:
 - **Inclusive** of diverse Chagossian experiences.
 - **Clear** enough to stand up in legal and political arenas.

10.4 Phase 4 – Establish Registers and Symbols

- Create:
 - A **Chagossian citizenship register**.
 - A **land and reparations claims register**.
 - A **hostage survivors register** (with consent and privacy safeguards).
- Officially adopt:
 - The **name** of the CSIE.
 - The **flag** (e.g. the orange–black–blue design or a variant chosen by the people).
 - Other symbols (seal, anthem, motto) as desired.

10.5 Phase 5 – External Engagement

- Notify relevant actors in writing:
 - United Kingdom.
 - United States.
 - Mauritius, Seychelles, relevant African and Indian Ocean states.
 - United Nations bodies, regional organisations, and NGOs.
- Seek:
 - **Meetings and acknowledgment**, even if not full recognition.
 - **Advisory opinions and legal support** from international lawyers and scholars.
 - **Alliances** with other displaced or colonised peoples.

10.6 Phase 6 – Negotiation, Reparations, and Long-Term Safeguards

With the CSIE established and operating:

- Enter **negotiations** about:
 - Return and resettlement rights.
 - Land and resource rights.
 - Environmental protection.
 - Security arrangements around the base.
- Pursue **reparations packages** that can include:
 - Financial compensation.
 - Development funds.
 - Health, education, and cultural programmes.
- Establish **monitoring and review mechanisms** so the CSIE can:
 - Track progress.
 - Call out failures.
 - Adjust strategy.

11. RISKS, CRITICISMS, AND RESPONSES

11.1 “This Will Upset Powerful States”

Risk: UK, US, and others may dislike a sovereignty-based approach.

Response:

The Chagossian people already live with the consequences of powerful states’ decisions. A CSIE gives them **more structured leverage**, not less. The initiative emphasises **lawful, written, non-violent methods**, which are harder to criminalise.

11.2 “It Will Divide the Movement”

Risk: Some might fear that creating a CSIE will increase division.

Response:

Division already exists. A CSIE offers a **formal arena** where different views can be negotiated **inside a shared sovereign project**, instead of in front of colonial powers.

11.3 “We Are Too Small / Too Poor”

Risk: People may feel that Chagossians are too few and too dispersed to create a sovereign entity.

Response:

History shows that **small peoples can assert sovereignty**, especially when supported by clear evidence, strong organisation, and international allies. A CSIE is a **tool to overcome smallness**, not a denial of it.

11.4 “This Sounds Too Radical”

Risk: The language of “White Supremacist system” and “hostage situation” may seem radical or frightening to some potential supporters.

Response:

The initiative can use **two levels of language**:

- Internal analytical language (hostage, White supremacy, IC codes).
- External diplomatic language (self-determination, decolonisation, reparatory justice).

Both describe the same reality in different registers.

12. CONCLUSION

The Chagos Sovereignty Initiative rests on a simple but powerful insight:

The Chagossian people were displaced partly because they had no recognised sovereign voice and no state of their own.

As long as this remains true, even good court cases, sympathetic reports, and partial political gestures will be **fragile and reversible**.

By building a **Chagossian Sovereign International Entity**, adopting a **decolonised people's flag**, and using **forensic, written, and lawful methods**, the Chagossian people can:

- Turn a scattered, traumatised community into a **self-conscious political subject**.
- Move from **petitioners** to **sovereign negotiators**.
- Create a living structure that can **carry the struggle for justice across generations**.

ic3csi's role in this is to:

- Provide **investigative tools, classification analysis, and written protocols**.
- Name **anti-Black racism** and racial power structures clearly.
- Support – but never replace – **Chagossian leadership and decision-making**.

