

Embajada is delighted to announce it will host *The Chagos Embassy of Puerto Rico* from January 16 – March 19, 2016.

The Chagos Embassy works to promote Chagossian interests in Puerto Rico. In an effort to develop relations, friendship and common understanding, we invite visitors to the embassy with an aim of furthering the dialogue and exchange between Chagossians and Puerto-Ricans in all fields.

To mark the occasion of the establishment of diplomatic relations between The Chagos Islands and Puerto Rico, the Embassy presents work by Chagossian artist, Clement Siatous. Through personal memories, Siatous paints tableaux depicting the history of The Chagos Islands. Defying official record, Siatous acts as a radical historian, constructing an archive that reclaims a nations heritage and offers a counter narrative to an erased history.

The Chagos Islands are an isolated archipelago located in the Indian Ocean. The entire population was expelled by the British Government to make way for a US naval base in 1973. The base, on the island of Diego Garcia, also known as Camp Justice or Footprint of Freedom, has become one of the most strategic bases in the US global War on Terror and a known transit site for CIA rendition exercises. Since eviction, the Chagossian diaspora have lived between Mauritius, the Seychelles and more recently Britain.

The UK Government created a fiction that a permanent population never existed – a claim made easy to uphold due to sparse photographic documentation, which until recently, mainly existed in dispersed military and government archives. Photographic material obtained from a variety of sources, such as retired US Navy Seabees, military museums and WikiLeaks is displayed in the embassy, as an accessible record. We welcome and encourage visitors to explore the embassy, and hope you will come to better understand and appreciate the Chagos Nation, people, culture, and history.

This embassy is dedicated to the displaced Chagossian diaspora and all those who have helped tell their story. With special thanks to The Chagos Refugees Group for their dedication and support.

The Chagos Embassy is an exhibition curated by Paula Naughton, which takes the form of a diplomatic space. As a stateless nation the Chagossian diaspora are marginalized and invisible to the international political community. The exhibition seeks to highlight this disenfranchised status and interrogate archive material, bringing into question the power structures that establish our history, identity and the intertwined relationships between memory and state. The Chagos Embassy and its

programming is part of an on-going multi-media project called *The New Atlantis*,
newatlantisproject.com.

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