



**FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT**

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**ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION  
WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE  
GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE OF 24**

**21 JUNE 2018**

***by* THE HONOURABLE IAN HANSEN**

**MEMBER OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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Mr Chairman, Honourable delegates, C24 members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to stand here to address this committee as a sixth generation Falkland Islander, and to speak on behalf of my fellow Islanders who wish to remain a free, confident and successful community. My colleague and I would like to give you a true description of our country, and to re-confirm that we are not a colony of the United Kingdom, but an internal self-governing Overseas Territory.

More than 3500 people from more than 60 countries live and work in the Falkland Islands, which proves beyond doubt that we have an inclusive and multicultural society. People have come to the Falklands over many, many years and made the Falklands their home. My own ancestors arrived over 175 years ago to settle. The name Hansen is of Scandinavian origin and there are many other families still in the Falklands today who can trace their ancestors back to many different countries of origin.

Our culture is based upon the diverse, shared heritages of the different nationalities who have settled in the Falkland Islands. We continue to grow and to welcome new people who share our values and democratic ideals.

Therefore, I find it impossible to comprehend how anyone could refer to us as an implanted population sent from the UK, as we are often described by the Government of Argentina. The Argentine claim to our Islands is unfounded and unwelcome.

We are a peaceful people who only wish to be left to our own devices to continue to develop our country. Indeed, our desire to do just that was highlighted in March 2013, when a referendum was held ( under international scrutiny) asking the people of the Falklands if they wished to remain as an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom. An overwhelming 99.8% of a 92% turnout voted to retain that status. Our relationship with the United Kingdom is modern one, based upon partnership, shared values and upholding our right to self-determination.

Our right to the principle of self-determination is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 1 of the Charter clearly draws the link between respect for the principle of self-determination and the strengthening of

universal peace. The right to self-determination is entrenched in article 1 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. In its practice the 4<sup>th</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly has upheld the applicability of the principle of self-determination. The United Nations has never explicitly stated that this fundamental right does not apply to Falkland Islanders.

It is difficult to even begin to understand why any country would wish to remove that fundamental right of self-determination from another territory. No people should be subjugated against their will, or have their people, their governance or their natural resources under the control of another country against their wishes. This is a fundamental human right.

The Falkland Islands Constitution Chapter 1 Section 1 contains the following:

- a) all peoples have the right to self-determination, and by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development, and may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources—
- b) the realisation of the right to self-determination must be promoted and respected in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Fundamental rights such as these are what you would expect to see in any well-developed democracy, under the rule of law.

Although relations between the United Kingdom and the Government of Argentina are arguably better than they have been for many years, our situation regarding Argentina's sovereignty claim over our country remains the same.

Mr Chairman, Honourable delegates, why would we wish to change our way of life? We make our own laws and directly regulate all industry activities within our territory.

For example, we have an Exclusive Economic Zone around our Islands to regulate and manage our offshore fisheries to the highest international standards. Our fisheries industry now contributes around 44% of GDP and over

£18 million annually to our Government revenues. This year saw the highest Loligo squid catch in the first part of the fishing season since 1995.

Income from wool and meat sales from the Agricultural sector continues to increase; we have just experienced the best summer for pasture growth in years and wool prices are at record levels. Tourism also continues to flourish with more cruise ships and passengers arriving to our shores annually. In the past season alone we saw an increase in leisure tourism of 14.9%, welcoming over 70,000 people to our shores.

Sensible and responsible legislation for hydrocarbons are in place to ensure that our environment is protected while any offshore exploration activities take place and we work closely with our scientific and conservation partners to help to preserve our natural resources for future generations.

Our population continues to increase and our expenditure this year on capital projects to benefit our community is of the highest level ever. We are investing £46.7 million in developing our infrastructure and essential services, so that we continue to prosper far into the future

The term 'colony' may have applied in the 1950's and 1960's but that is certainly not the case today. We receive no direct financial aid from the UK apart from defence. We would not require that if Argentina were to withdraw their unfounded claim over our country.

You will undoubtedly hear assertions later today that we, Falkland Islanders, are not a people and therefore not entitled to self-determination. This not only comes from Argentine politicians, but from speakers here today who have no real idea of what the Falklands Islands have achieved as a small country and will continue to achieve in the future. This contrived position is designed only to deny this most fundamental of human rights to Falkland Islanders.

My colleague and I stand here today to deliver our addresses to this Committee, supported by our electorate, not as puppets to a country which has aspirations to force another territory to yield to unreasonable demands. We have a right to live in peace, we have a right to our freedom and above all we have a right to determine our own destiny.

Mr Chairman, honourable delegates, I hope this brief address gives you the true picture of the Falkland Islands and the wishes of its people. I extend a formal invitation, to invite this Committee to visit our country and witness for yourselves the political, social and economic developments that I have described to you so that you can properly understand the subject matter before you.

In conclusion I again ask this Committee to ignore the false claims presented by Argentina, and support our wishes to remain an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom and not become a colony of the Government of Argentina, as is the correct role of this Committee.

Mr Chairman I thank you for this opportunity to make this address.