



FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

**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
23 JUNE 2022**

***by* THE HONOURABLE GAVIN SHORT
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Chair, Honourable delegates.

My name is Gavin Short and I am a democratically elected representative of the Government and people of the Falkland Islands and my family have lived there for 173 years.

The Falklands are an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom. Our desire to retain the status quo was demonstrated clearly in the March 2013 referendum when 99.8% voted to remain just that.

I represented the Falklands at the C24 regional conference in St Lucia and was heartened to hear the vast majority of C24 members who spoke, say that they were fully supportive of the rights of all people to self-determination.

But 24 hours later, I listened to those who had been espousing self-determination do a complete U-turn on the principal when it came to the Falklands – even though it is a cornerstone of the UN charter.

It is my belief that this Committee needs to look inwards and reflect on its core principals as some seem to have lost sight of them.

You will hear speakers today who will unashamedly support Argentina's colonial ambition to override the wishes of the people of the Falkland Islands (and we are a people) and force themselves upon us. They wish to see real colonialism return to the South Atlantic.

During the meeting in St Lucia I listened to an Argentine speaker say we did not have the right to self-determination because we are an implanted population. Let me be clear, our European roots are no different to that of our neighbours and I challenge them to show me proof that my family was implanted.

I know that there are members among you today who will feel uncomfortable this morning as you understand deep down that self-determination is the fundamental principal of this Committee – but please do not remain silent.

I was saddened to hear two C24 countries say in St Lucia that their recommendation would be that a C24 fact-finding mission should never set foot on the Falklands. Why are you so afraid of seeing the truth in the Falklands?

Once again, I issue an invitation for a C24 delegation to visit the Falklands. Please come and see our islands, our country, our people.

You will probably hear calls today for talks to find a peaceful solution. We have had peace in the Falklands for the past 40 years. But Argentina's constitution states that any negotiations can only have one outcome – the Falklands and its people become Argentinian irrespective of the wishes of its people.

In the Falklands, we practice self-determination. Argentina do their best to attack us via diplomatic and economic means; they refuse requests for overflight permissions even for humanitarian flights and refuse to engage in work to create a regional fisheries management zone in the South West Atlantic.

They would rather see the ecosystem ruined by irresponsible fishing rather than sitting down (as we wish to) to try and conserve life in the seas for the benefit of all.

The Falklands are forging ahead, a good strong and growing economy, we applied for and were this year granted City status for our capital Stanley.

Finally we will practice self-determination, we will manage our natural resources responsibly, we will build a stronger future for our people I don't care how much Argentina flex their muscles – it will be the people of the Falkland Islands and only the people of the Falkland Islands who decide their political future and I invite you to walk with the us on the journey that we are making – and at the core of that journey will be self-determination.