

Argentinean President Says He Will Negotiate Malvinas Islands with New British Prime Minister



Buenos Aires, August 12 (RHC)-- Argentina's Foreign Ministry confirmed it has begun talks with the U.K. over the Malvinas Islands in an effort to allow the European country to begin direct air travel to the South American territory it claims as its own.

The announcement follows the administration of Mauricio Macri saying they would continue to demand sovereignty over the Malvinas, termed the Falklands in the U.K. "The disagreement we have about the Malvinas is part of our constitution and important to the Argentine people, we cannot deny its existence," said Susana Malcorra, Argentina's foreign minister.

But, she added: "We continue to think the link between Argentina and the United Kingdom is important in our integration with the world."

British Prime Minister Theresa May sent a letter to Macri last week, asking him to "move the relationship between the U.K. and Argentina into a more productive phase."

"Where we have differences, these can be acknowledged in an atmosphere of mutual respect and with the intention to act in a way that benefits all those concerned. This includes making progress towards new airlinks between the Falkland Islands and third countries in the region and the removal of restrictive hydrocarbon measures."

Only Chile currently has an approved air route to the Malvinas after the government of Nestor Kirchner banned charters flights passing through Argentine airspace. Under the previous administration of Cristina Kirchner the Argentine Congress approved a law that penalizes companies that explore and exploit hydrocarbons without authorization from Buenos Aires.

In her letter, May also commented on Malcorra's bid of becoming secretary-general of the U.N.

"As I am sure you appreciate, the U.K. has a long standing policy of not revealing its voting intentions in U.N. secretary-general elections. I can assure you, however, that we will judge all candidates on their merits and we will carefully consider Ms. Malcorra's bid."

Malcorra confirmed late Wednesday that Macri and May could hold a first meeting during the G20 set to take place in China in September. "We think it is a good opportunity for a first conversation," the foreign minister said.

Former U.K. Prime Minister David met Macri in Davos, Switzerland in January during the World Economic Forum, where Cameron reportedly told the Argentine leader in no uncertain terms that the Malvinas would remain in British hands.

Located 480 kilometers off Argentina's southeast coast, the Malvinas Islands and have been under British rule since 1833.

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