

Prominent Argentines Sign Letter Against Macri Malvinas Policy



Buenos Aires, September 22 (RHC)-- Eighty artists, intellectuals and activists in Argentina signed a letter Monday denouncing President Mauricio Macri's policy in the dispute with the U.K. over the Malvinas Islands, criticizing his change in approach which basically drops the demand of sovereignty over the islands and the protection of its natural resources.

Both governments recently agreed to lift restrictions on oil and gas extraction and transportation, as well as increase commercial flights to and from the Malvinas. "We need to remind the government that the renewable and non-renewable resources that he aims to give away cheerfully to British hands, belong to 40 million Argentines," said the letter.

According to the letter, Macri would need to lift "all legislative, administrative and judicial measures taken by Argentina to protect their natural resources from illegal exploitation."

The limited flights to the islands were part of former President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner's strategy to increase Argentinean control over the disputed islands. Among those who signed the letter are Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel, former ambassador to the U.K., Alicia Castro and the head of

Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, Estela de Carlotto.

The letter also criticized the agreement to work together with the U.K. armed forces, without denouncing the U.K. military base in Malvinas, the presence of thousands of military officers, and the continued increase in resources aimed at supplying those forces with equipment.

"The defense of our sovereignty in Malvinas is not just an Argentine cause, it's a regional cause, a global cause, of all those who reject the existence of a colonial territory south of our continent," the letter stated.

Argentina has claimed sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands since 1833, when the U.K. first occupied the territory. In April 1982, the military dictatorship of Argentina tried to recover the land but was met by a U.K. armed force that defeated the Argentine military.

Argentina fought for the sovereignty of the islands in an historic 10-week war, surrendering after 74 days that claimed the lives of 649 Argentine soldiers, more than twice the death toll suffered by U.K. forces, that lost 255 soldiers.

A United Nations ruling in March said the Malvinas Islands, known in the U.K. as the Falklands, are in fact in Argentine waters, but they continue to be a self-governed U.K. overseas territory.

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