

# *Argentinean minister defends demand for sovereignty over Malvinas*

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Buenos Aires, February 8 (RHC)-- Argentinean Defense Minister Agustin Rossi defended his country's demand for sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, a territory seized by the United Kingdom, and described that occupation as inadmissible colonialism.

In a lengthy interview with the Russian news agency Sputnik, Rossi noted that the British presence in the Malvinas, which London has turned into a nearly military fortress, has less to do with fishing and the exploitation of hydrocarbons than the geostrategic location of that strait and about Antarctica.

"Having a possession thousands of kilometers from where the country constitutes an act of inadmissible colonialism," he added. Rossi also lauded the role played at the time by a mechanism such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and its Defense Council, which contributed to an important multilateral relationship in the region.

He underlined that the Council worked hard and allowed creating a framework of multilateral relations with the Armed Forces and the ministries of Defense in the entire continent, something that does not exist today, he concluded.

Known to the British as the Falkland, the Malvinas have been held by the U.K. since 1833, when British warships seized the archipelago. Argentina has long disputed British claims to the islands. In 1982, tensions boiled over into a short war that claimed close to 900 lives and ended with the U.K. holding on to the islands.

In 2016, the United Nations decided to allow Argentina to expand its maritime territory in the South Atlantic Ocean by 35 percent, taking in the waters surrounding the long-disputed Malvinas. Yet the U.N. commission's decision acknowledges the unresolved diplomatic dispute between the two countries.

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