

Argentina blasts UK military drills on disputed Malvinas Islands

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The file photo shows a general view of the the Malvinas Islands, also known in the UK as the Falkland Islands.

Buenos Aires, December 11 (RHC)-- Argentina has blasted Britain's military exercises in the disputed Malvinas Islands, summoning the UK's ambassador to Buenos Aires in protest at the drills. Argentinean Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero called in Kirsty Hayes to protest a series of military drills carried out near the Malvinas Islands, also known in the UK as the Falkland Islands, an archipelagic territory that Argentina considers its own.

In a statement on Thursday, Cafiero expressed his "categorical rejection" of Britain executing military exercises in the Malvinas Islands and said the archipelago is "an integral part of the Argentine territory illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom." Cafiero also pointed to a protest note by Claudio Rozenywaig, the Argentine undersecretary for Foreign Policy, which indicated that the British actions are an "unjustified show of force."

Rozenywaig said the rejection note to the UK ambassador demonstrated that the military exercises represented an "unjustified show of force," adding that the move goes against the United Nations' request to find a peaceful resolution to the territorial sovereignty dispute.

Rozenywaig stressed that the drills violate resolution 31/49 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), mandating parties to avoid making unilateral decisions concerning the Malvinas. "The extra-regional military presence on the islands is categorically opposed to the permanent will of the Argentine Republic to resolve the dispute by peaceful means, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions," said Rozenywaig.

Both Hayes and Rozenywaig ensured Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas, South Georgia, South Sandwich Islands, and the surrounding maritime territories.

Back in February, British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said that the Falklands Islands are "part of the British family" after China backed Argentina's claim over the islands. Truss tweeted that "China must respect the Falklands' sovereignty" after a meeting that brought together Argentinian President Alberto Fernandez and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

The Malvinas Islands are situated just over 480 km from the Argentine coast in the South Atlantic Ocean. The UK has occupied the archipelago since 1833. Argentina and the UK fought a 10-week war over the archipelago in April-June 1982, with the UK eventually prevailing with the help of its allies, notably Chile, which at the time was deeply hostile to Argentina. The Argentinean government has periodically stepped up efforts to regain control of the islands.

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