



Falkland/Malvinas Islands, Milei relaunches challenge to Great Britain 44 years after the war: naval base at Ushuaia and sanctions on oil

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Forty-four years after the Falkland-Malvinas war, Argentina is raising the tone again on the sovereignty of the archipelago. President Javier Milei has openly relaunched Buenos Aires' claim to the islands administered by the United Kingdom, while simultaneously announcing the strengthening of Argentina's strategic presence in the South Atlantic and new initiatives against companies engaged in the exploitation of oil resources in the area.

A move that inevitably brings to mind the **1982 conflict**, when Argentina and the United Kingdom clashed militarily for control of the archipelago. The war began on April 2 with the Argentine occupation of the islands and ended on June 14 with the surrender of Buenos Aires' forces after the British counteroffensive.

Since then the dispute has never truly been closed. London continues to administer the Falkland Islands and upholds the right to self-determination of the inhabitants, while Argentina considers the **Malvinas, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands** an integral part of its national territory.

Cadena Nacional del Presidente Javier Milei sobre la Causa Malvinas.

pic.twitter.com/tqghawtYq5

— Oficina del Presidente (@OPRArgentina) [September 4, 2026](#)

Milei: "The Malvinas are Argentine"

In his new statement, Milei has taken a particularly clear position:

"The Malvinas are Argentine, by history and by right. There is no discussion on this."

The Argentine government considers the recovery of full sovereignty over the archipelago a permanent objective provided for in the national Constitution and accuses the United Kingdom of maintaining a colonial situation since 1833.

The British response was not slow in coming. London reiterated that the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands have chosen to remain British and that the United Kingdom's commitment to defending the islands remains "absolute and unwavering."

More resources for the Ushuaia naval base

One of the most significant passages of the announcement concerns the **Integrated Naval Base of Ushuaia**, at the extreme south of Argentina.

Milei has ordered an increase in resources allocated to advance the construction of the infrastructure, which Buenos Aires assigns a strategic role in controlling and providing logistical support for activities in the South Atlantic.

This is not therefore the creation of a new military base from scratch: the project was already underway. The current government intends, however, to accelerate its development and

increase its relevance.

According to Milei, the facility should transform Ushuaia into the **main logistics hub of the South Atlantic** and represent a fundamental element for Argentina's geopolitical projection.

The city's position is particularly important. Ushuaia is located in Tierra del Fuego, on the Beagle Channel, in one of the most southern areas of the American continent and along strategic routes towards Antarctica.

The strengthening of naval presence thus assumes a significance that goes beyond the sole dispute over the Malvinas, fitting into Argentina's broader interest in the South Atlantic and in routes towards the Antarctic continent.

Oil reignites the conflict

But the real element that is bringing the Malvinas question back to the center of international attention is **oil**.

Buenos Aires opposes exploration and exploitation activities for hydrocarbons authorized by the authorities of the Falkland Islands in the waters surrounding the archipelago.

Particular attention is focused on the **Sea Lion** project, located north of the islands and considered one of the most important energy projects in the region. The field is being developed by Navitas Petroleum and Rockhopper Exploration and, according to estimates reported by Reuters, could contain approximately **1.7 billion barrels of oil**.

For Argentina, these activities are being carried out without authorization and therefore in violation of its sovereignty.

Milei has announced the intention to strengthen sanctioning tools and to prevent companies directly or indirectly involved in Falkland Islands projects from operating on Argentine territory.

Proceedings against 45 subjects

The Argentine government has already moved from declarations to initial measures.

On September 4, the Argentine Presidency announced the start of **sanction proceedings against 45 subjects**, including individuals and legal entities, suspected of participating in activities related to the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Malvinas.

In the crosshairs are not only the oil companies directly engaged in extraction, but also **shareholders, supplier companies and entities that contribute to operational activities**.

Milei's political message is clear: those who participate in the exploitation of the archipelago's resources without authorization from Buenos Aires could find themselves excluded from the Argentine market.

44 years after the war

The confrontation remains for the moment on the **political, economic and diplomatic** level and there are no indications of an imminent Argentine military option.

But the historical reference is inevitable.

In 1982 the Argentine military junta decided to occupy the islands, provoking a reaction from the British government led by Margaret Thatcher. London sent a powerful naval and amphibious task force to the South Atlantic, which, after weeks of fighting, recaptured the archipelago.

The war lasted a little over two months and resulted in the death of **649 Argentine military personnel, 255 British and three Falkland Islands civilians**.

Today the scenario is completely different. However, the strengthening of the Ushuaia base, sanctions against oil companies and the tone used by the Argentine president show how the Malvinas issue has returned to assume significant strategic dimensions.

And **44 years after the war**, Buenos Aires thus returns to launch the political challenge to London over one of the most sensitive dossiers in its national history.

Sources

[Argentine Presidency – Official Statement No. 157](#)

[Argentine Presidency – Official Statement No. 158, proceedings against 45 subjects](#)