



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Peace Palace, Carnegieplein 2, 2517 KJ The Hague, Netherlands

Tel.: +31 (0)70 302 2323 Fax: +31 (0)70 364 9928

Website: www.icj-cij.org

Press Release

Unofficial

No. 2016/35

28 October 2016

The President of the International Court of Justice assures the General Assembly that the Court “will continue to use all the resources at its disposal to fulfil its role as principal judicial organ of the United Nations”

THE HAGUE, 28 October 2016. H.E. Judge Ronny Abraham, President of the International Court of Justice, addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York yesterday on the occasion of the presentation of the Court’s Report for the period from 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016.

In his speech, the President gave a brief overview of the judicial activities of the Court. He pointed out that, during the period under review, up to 15 contentious cases had been pending before the Court, and that since 1 August 2015, hearings had been held in seven of these.

President Abraham further stated that, during the same period, “the Court ha[d] delivered seven Judgments [;] one of these [had] dealt with the merits of the joined cases concerning *Certain Activities carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)* and *Construction of a Road in Costa Rica along the San Juan River (Nicaragua v. Costa Rica)*, while the other six [had] settled preliminary questions relating to the jurisdiction of the Court and the admissibility of certain claims”.

The President also announced that this year the Court had decided, for only the second time in its history, to arrange for an expert opinion pursuant to Article 50 of its Statute, in the case concerning *Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*.

He then referred to the three new cases brought before the Court, concerning a *Dispute over the Status and Use of the Waters of the Silala (Chile v. Bolivia)*; *Immunities and Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France)*; and *Certain Iranian Assets (Iran v. United States)*.

Towards the end of his address, President Abraham observed that “[t]he diversity and complexity of the cases that the Court ha[d] dealt with over the course of this year [wa]s emblematic of its activities over the recent years”.

The President also noted that the Court had in addition reached an important milestone, having celebrated last April the seventieth anniversary of its inaugural sitting. He recalled that a formal sitting had been held in The Hague to mark the occasion, which had been attended by the Secretary-General.

“While the work achieved over the past 70 years ought to be celebrated, the Court has not lost sight of the necessity to continuously reflect on the need to adapt its working methods to respond to the increase of its workload and complexification of the cases submitted to it”, stated President Abraham.

Lastly, he assured the General Assembly that the Court “w[ould] continue to use all the resources at its disposal to fulfil its role as principal judicial organ of the United Nations”.

The full text of the address by the President of the Court to the United Nations General Assembly, as well as the Court’s Report for the judicial year 2015-2016, will be available on the Court’s website (<http://www.icj-cij.org>), under the heading “The Court” (click on “Presidency” or “Annual Reports”, respectively).

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established by the United Nations Charter in June 1945 and began its activities in April 1946. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York. The Court has a twofold role: first, to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States (its judgments have binding force and are without appeal for the parties concerned); and, second, to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and agencies of the system. The Court is composed of 15 judges elected for a nine-year term by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations. Independent of the United Nations Secretariat, it is assisted by a Registry, its own international secretariat, whose activities are both judicial and diplomatic, as well as administrative. The official languages of the Court are French and English. Also known as the “World Court”, it is the only court of a universal character with general jurisdiction.

The ICJ, a court open only to States for contentious proceedings, and to certain organs and institutions of the United Nations system for advisory proceedings, should not be confused with the other — mostly criminal — judicial institutions based in The Hague and adjacent areas, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY, an ad hoc court created by the Security Council), the International Criminal Court (ICC, the first permanent international criminal court, established by treaty, which does not belong to the United Nations system), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL, an international judicial body with an independent legal personality, established by the United Nations Security Council upon the request of the Lebanese Government and composed of Lebanese and international judges), or the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA, an independent institution which assists in the establishment of arbitral tribunals and facilitates their work, in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1899).

Mr. Andrey Poskakukhin, First Secretary of the Court, Head of Department (+31 (0)70 302 2336)
Mr. Boris Heim, Information Officer (+31 (0)70 302 2337)
Ms Joanne Moore, Information Officer (+31 (0)70 302 2337)
Mr. Avo Sevag Garabet, Associate Information Officer (+31 (0)70 302 2394)
Ms Genoveva Madurga, Administrative Assistant (+31 (0)70 302 2396)