



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Avena and Other Mexican Nationals (Mexico v. United States of America)

The Court will hold public hearings from 15 to 19 December 2003

THE HAGUE, 25 July 2003. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), principal judicial organ of the United Nations, will hold public hearings in the case concerning Avena and Other Mexican Nationals (Mexico v. United States of America) from Monday 15 to Friday 19 December 2003 at the Peace Palace in The Hague, seat of the Court.

History of the Proceedings

On 9 January 2003 Mexico initiated proceedings before the Court against the United States of America in a dispute concerning alleged violations of Articles 5 and 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 24 April 1963 with respect to 54 Mexican nationals who had been sentenced to death in certain States of the United States.

Pending final judgment in the case, Mexico further asked the Court to indicate provisional measures, and in particular to order the United States to take all measures necessary to ensure that no Mexican national was executed, and that no action was taken that might prejudice the rights of the United Mexican States or its nationals with respect to any decision the Court might render on the merits of the case.

On 5 February 2003, the Court unanimously adopted an Order indicating provisional measures. In that Order, it decided that the "United States of America shall take all measures necessary to ensure that Mr. César Roberto Fierro Reyna, Mr. Roberto Moreno Ramos and Mr. Osvaldo Torres Aguilera, [of Mexican nationality], are not executed pending final judgment in these proceedings"; that the "United States of America shall inform the Court of all measures taken in implementation of this Order"; and that the Court would remain seised of the matters which formed the subject of the Order until it had rendered its final judgment.

By a separate Order, also dated 5 February 2003, the Court, taking into account the views of the Parties, had fixed 6 June 2003 as the time-limit for the filing of a Memorial by Mexico and 6 October 2003 as the time-limit for the filing of a Counter-Memorial by the United States of America. By an Order of 22 May 2003, the President of the Court, at the joint request of the Parties, extended those time-limits to 20 June 2003 for the Memorial and to 3 November 2003 for the Counter-Memorial. Mexico filed its Memorial within the time-limit thus extended.

NOTE TO THE PRESS

1. The public hearings will be held in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. **Mobile telephones and beepers are allowed in the courtroom provided they are turned off or set on silent mode.** Any offending device will be temporarily retained.

2. Members of the Press will be entitled to attend the hearings on presentation of a press card. The tables reserved for them are situated on the far left of the public entrance of the courtroom.

3. **Photographs and TV shots may be taken in the Great Hall of Justice for a few minutes at the opening of the sittings.** The Court's proceedings will be displayed live and in full on a large TV screen in the Press Room, located on the ground floor of the Peace Palace (Room 5). There, TV crews may connect their recording devices directly onto the new video system of the Court, but advance notice should be given to the Information Department. Journalists wishing to make sound recordings of the proceedings may connect their recording devices directly onto the Court's own audio system, also in the Press Room.

4. Telephone calls (collect calls only) may be made from the phone located in the Press Room. Public telephones are located in the Post Office in the basement of the Peace Palace.

5. The verbatim records of the public hearings will be published daily on the Court's website (www.icj-cij.org) with an appropriate delay for on-line publication of translations.

6. Mr. Arthur Witteveen, First Secretary of the Court (Tel.: +31-70-302-2336), as well as Mrs. Laurence Blairon and Mr. Boris Heim, Information Officers (Tel.: +31-70-302-2337; e-mail address: information@icj-cij.org), are available to deal with any Press requests.
