



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Peace Palace, 2517 KJ The Hague. Tel.(31-70-302 23 23). Cables: Intercourt, The Hague.
Telefax (31-70-364 99 28). Telex 32323. Internet address : <http://www.icj-cij.org>

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**Case concerning Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria
(Cameroon v. Nigeria)**

**Hearings to be held from 2 to 11 March 1998 on the issue of the jurisdiction
of the Court and the admissibility of Cameroon's claims**

THE HAGUE, 5 December 1997. Hearings in the case concerning Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria will be held before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from Monday 2 to Wednesday 11 March 1998 in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace in The Hague, seat of the Court.

The public sittings will be exclusively dedicated to the oral arguments of the Parties concerning certain preliminary objections raised by Nigeria. Nigeria contends that the Court has no jurisdiction to deal with the case and that the claims of Cameroon are not admissible.

Pursuant to Article 79 of its Rules, the Court has to decide on preliminary objections before proceeding to the merits of the case.

History of the dispute

On 29 March 1994 Cameroon filed an application instituting proceedings against Nigeria in a dispute concerning the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula, and requesting the Court to determine the course of the maritime frontier between the two States in so far as that frontier had not already been established by the Maroua Declaration. This Declaration was signed on 1 June 1975 by the Cameroonian and Nigerian Heads of State after years of diplomatic negotiations to solve the dispute peacefully.

As a basis for the jurisdiction of the Court, Cameroon referred to the declarations made by both States by which they accept that jurisdiction as compulsory (Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute of the Court).

In its Application Cameroon accused Nigeria of militarily occupying the Bakassi Peninsula. It therefore asked the Court to adjudge and declare that this occupation is an unlawful act, that Nigeria has the duty to withdraw immediately and unconditionally its troops from the Cameroonian peninsula and that Nigeria is due to pay reparation for the damage caused.

On 6 June 1994 Cameroon filed an additional application to extend the case to a further dispute with Nigeria over "a part of the territory of Cameroon in the area of Lake Chad", which it claimed was also occupied by Nigeria.

Cameroon consequently asked the Court to specify definitively the frontier between itself and Nigeria from Lake Chad to the sea, to enjoin the withdrawal of Nigerian troops from Cameroonian territory and to determine reparation for the material and non-material damage inflicted.

On 13 December 1995 Nigeria filed certain preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Court and to the admissibility of the claims of Cameroon, contending inter alia that for at least 24 years both States have accepted a duty to settle all boundary questions through the existing bilateral machinery.

On 12 February 1996, Cameroon requested the Court to indicate provisional measures after "serious armed incidents" had taken place between Cameroonian and Nigerian forces in the Bakassi Peninsula on 3 February 1996. Cameroon asked the Court to declare in particular that both Parties should abstain from all military activity along the entire boundary until the judgment of the Court on the merits is given.

Public sittings were held between 5 and 8 March 1996, and on 15 March 1996 the Court delivered an Order indicating that "both Parties should ensure that no action of any kind, and particularly no action by their armed forces, is taken which might prejudice the rights of the other in respect of whatever judgment the Court may render in the case, or which might aggravate or extend the dispute before it". The ICJ also ruled that they "should observe the agreement reached between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Kara, Togo, on 17 February 1996, for the cessation of all hostilities in the Bakassi Peninsula".

Website address of the Court: <http://www.icj-cij.org>

Information Office:

Mr. Arthur Witteveen, Secretary of the Court (tel: 31-70 302 2336)

Mrs. Laurence Blairon, Information Officer (tel: 31-70 302 2337)