



# INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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

**Hearings to open on 2 March on the issue of the jurisdiction of the Court**  
**and the admissibility of Cameroon's claims**

THE HAGUE, 23 February 1998. The hearings in the case concerning Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria will open on Monday 2 March 1998 at 10 a.m. before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

The hearings, which will last until Wednesday 11 March 1998, 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 in the matter and that the claims of Cameroon are not admissible. It maintains *inter alia* that for at least 24 years both States have accepted a duty to settle all boundary questions through existing bilateral machinery.

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

The programme of the hearings (which will all take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) is the following:

**First round of pleadings**

Monday 2 March: Nigeria  
Tuesday 3 March: Nigeria  
Thursday 5 March: Cameroon  
Friday 6 March: Cameroon

**Second round of pleadings**

Monday 9 March: Nigeria  
Wednesday 11 March: Cameroon

The delegation from Nigeria will be led by H.E. Mr. Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, agent, and the delegation from Cameroon by H.E. Mr. Laurent Eso, Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, agent.

**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, which it claimed was in part militarily occupied by Nigeria, 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 signed by the Cameroonian and Nigerian Heads of State in 1975.

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 an additional application filed on 6 June 1994, Cameroon extended 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 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 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. Public hearings 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".

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#### NOTE FOR THE PRESS

1. The public hearings will be held in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace in The Hague, The 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 on presentation of an admission card, which may be obtained upon application. The tables reserved for them are situated on the far left of the public entrance of the courtroom.

3. Photographs may be taken for a few minutes at the opening and at the end of the hearings. Television crews may film, but advance notice should be given to the Information Office (see paragraph 7).

4. In the Press Room, located on the ground floor of the Peace Palace (Room 5), the Court's proceedings will be relayed through a loudspeaker.

5. The verbatim records of the hearings will be available on a daily basis on the Website of the Court (<http://www.icj-cij.org>).

6. Members of the Press who wish to make telephone calls may use the phone located in the Press Room for collect calls or the public telephones in the Post Office in the basement of the Peace Palace.

7. Mr. Arthur Witteveen, Secretary of the Court (tel: 31-70-302 2336), and Mrs. Laurence Blairon, Information Officer (tel: 31-70-302 2337), are available to deal with any requests for information and for making arrangements for television coverage.

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