



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria (Cameroon v. Nigeria)

Equatorial Guinea requests permission to intervene in the proceedings

THE HAGUE, 30 June 1999. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea today filed an Application for permission to intervene in the case concerning Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria (Cameroon v. Nigeria).

In its Application, Equatorial Guinea states that the purpose of its intervention is "to protect [its] legal rights in the Gulf of Guinea by all legal means" and "to inform the Court of Equatorial Guinea's legal rights and interests so that these may remain unaffected as the Court proceeds to address the question of the maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria". Equatorial Guinea makes it clear that it does not seek to intervene in those aspects of the proceedings that relate to the land boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria, nor to become a party to the case. It further states that, although it would be open to the three countries to request the Court not only to determine the Cameroon-Nigeria maritime boundary but also to determine Equatorial Guinea's maritime boundary with these two States, Equatorial Guinea has made no such request and wishes to continue to seek to determine its maritime boundary with its neighbours by negotiation.

In support of its Application, Equatorial Guinea stresses that one of the claims presented by Cameroon in its Memorial of 16 March 1995 "ignore[s] the legal rights of Equatorial Guinea in the most flagrant way" because it disregards the median line (the line dividing maritime zones between two States of which every point is equidistant from the coasts of each of those States) and that, moreover, "in the bilateral diplomacy between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon . . . never once hinted that it did not accept the median line as the maritime boundary between itself and Equatorial Guinea". Observing that "the general maritime area where the interests of Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria and Cameroon come together is an area of active oil and gas exploration and exploitation", Equatorial Guinea maintains that "any judgment extending the boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria across the median line with Equatorial Guinea [would] be relied upon by concessionaires who would likely ignore Equatorial Guinea's protests and proceed to explore and exploit resources to the legal and economic detriment" of that country.

Under Article 83 of the Rules of Court, Equatorial Guinea's Application was immediately communicated to Cameroon and Nigeria, and the Court fixed 16 August 1999 as the time-limit for the filing of written observations by those States.

It will be for the Court to decide whether the Application for permission to intervene submitted by Equatorial Guinea should be granted. Should an objection be raised to the Application, the Court will hear the Parties and Equatorial Guinea before deciding.

Equatorial Guinea's Application for permission to intervene will shortly be available on the Court's website (<http://www.icj-cij.org>).

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