



# INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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## Press Release

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### **The Court commemorates the 75th anniversary of its inaugural sitting**

THE HAGUE, 19 April 2021. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, today commemorated the 75th anniversary of its inaugural sitting, which took place on 18 April 1946 in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace in The Hague.

The Court was set up in the aftermath of the Second World War as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The Statute of the Court forms an integral part of the Charter of the United Nations, which was signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945 and came into force on 24 October 1945. The first Members of the Court were elected on 6 February 1946 at the First Session of the General Assembly and the Court held its inaugural sitting at the Peace Palace, The Hague, on 18 April 1946.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Court, the President of the Court, Judge Joan E. Donoghue, made a statement which can be viewed on [UN Web TV](#). The text of the statement is also available on the Court's [website](#).

In her statement, President Donoghue noted that since the establishment of the ICJ, “States have submitted over 140 disputes to it”, adding that the Court has also received “over 25 requests for advisory opinions . . . referred to [it] by United Nations organs and specialized agencies”.

“The Court has demonstrated that it is equipped to tackle cases relating to new areas of international law that have emerged and developed since its first sitting”, she went on to say.

The President commended the fact that “in recent years . . . the Court has gotten high marks for the way it has handled scientific and technical aspects of environmental disputes” and that “the docket has also included cases arising under a number of important human rights treaties”.

President Donoghue spoke of her confidence that “the institution and procedures established in the Statute of the Court and in its Rules will continue to provide fertile ground for the peaceful settlement of inter-State disputes”.

While the Court had initially planned to commemorate its 75th anniversary by holding a solemn sitting at the Peace Palace, in the presence of distinguished guests, as noted by the President, “regrettably, due to the pandemic, the Court has found itself obliged to postpone the solemn sitting until such time as it can be held in a safe and fitting manner”. She expressed the hope that it would

be able to take place at a later date and that she would “be able to welcome guests in person in the Great Hall of Justice to reflect on this important milestone and to celebrate the Court’s promising future”.

This year, the Court has chosen to mark its anniversary in a number of ways. Apart from her video statement, the President of the Court has also written an [article](#) published in the *UN Chronicle*, the United Nations’ flagship online magazine. In addition, a new institutional video on the activities and role of the Court, aimed at students and the public at large, will soon be released; a virtual tour will be posted on the Court’s website, providing visitors with information on its activities and guiding them through the Peace Palace rooms used by the Court; and a book about the work and achievements of the “World Court”, written for the general public, will be published later this year.



Inaugural session of the International Court of Justice held on 18 April 1946 at the Peace Palace in The Hague (the Netherlands) (ICJ archives). Courtesy of ICJ. All rights reserved.

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*Note:* The Court’s press releases are prepared by its Registry for information purposes only and do not constitute official documents.

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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 Court is composed of 15 judges elected for a nine-year term by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). The Court has a twofold role: first, to settle, in accordance with international law, through judgments which have binding force and are without appeal for the parties concerned, legal disputes submitted to it by States; and, second, to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and agencies of the system.

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