



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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**Maritime Delimitation between Nicaragua and Honduras in the Caribbean Sea
(Nicaragua v. Honduras)**

Public hearings on the merits of the dispute to open on Monday 5 March 2007

THE HAGUE, 19 July 2006. The public hearings in the case concerning Maritime Delimitation between Nicaragua and Honduras in the Caribbean Sea (Nicaragua v. Honduras) will open on Monday 5 March 2007 before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

The detailed schedule for the hearings, which will be on the merits of the dispute, will be announced in due course.

History of the proceedings

On 8 December 1999 Nicaragua filed an Application instituting proceedings against the Republic of Honduras in respect of a dispute concerning the delimitation of the maritime zones appertaining to each of those States in the Caribbean Sea.

In its Application, Nicaragua states *inter alia* that it has for decades “maintained the position that its maritime Caribbean border with Honduras has not been determined”, but that Honduras’s position is that “there in fact exists a delimitation line that runs straight easterly on the parallel of latitude from the point fixed [in an Arbitral Award of 23 December 1906 made by the King of Spain concerning the land boundary between Nicaragua and Honduras, which was found valid and binding by the International Court of Justice on 18 November 1960] on the mouth of the Coco river”.

According to Nicaragua, “the position adopted by Honduras... has brought repeated confrontations and mutual capture of vessels of both nations in and around the general border area”. Nicaragua further states that “diplomatic negotiations have failed”. It therefore requests the Court “to determine the course of the single maritime boundary between areas of territorial sea, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone appertaining respectively to Nicaragua and Honduras, in accordance with equitable principles and relevant circumstances recognized by general international law as applicable to such a delimitation of a single maritime boundary”.

As a basis for the Court's jurisdiction, Nicaragua invokes Article XXXI of the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement (officially known as the "Pact of Bogotá"), signed on 30 April 1948, as well as the declarations under Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute of the Court, by which the two States have accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court.

By Order of 21 March 2000 the Court fixed 21 March 2001 as the time-limit for the filing of a Memorial by Nicaragua and 21 March 2002 as the time-limit for the filing of a Counter-Memorial by Honduras. The Memorial and Counter-Memorial were filed within the prescribed time-limits.

By Order of 13 June 2002 the Court authorized the submission of a Reply by Nicaragua and a Rejoinder by Honduras and fixed as the time-limits for the filing of those pleadings 13 January 2003 for the Reply and 13 August 2003 for the Rejoinder. Nicaragua's Reply and Honduras's Rejoinder were filed within the time-limits fixed.

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