



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)

Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)

The Court fixes time-limits for the filing of written pleadings in the case concerning Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua) and joins the proceedings in the two cases

THE HAGUE, 7 February 2017. By an Order of 2 February 2017, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, has fixed 2 March 2017 and 18 April 2017 as the respective time-limits for filing of a Memorial by the Republic of Costa Rica and a Counter-Memorial by the Republic of Nicaragua in the case concerning the Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua).

By the same Order, the Court joined the proceedings in the cases concerning Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua) and the Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua).

It is recalled that, on 25 February 2014, Costa Rica instituted proceedings against Nicaragua with regard to a dispute concerning “the establishment of single maritime boundaries between the two States in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, respectively, delimiting all maritime areas appertaining to each of them, in accordance with the applicable rules and principles of international law” (hereinafter “the case concerning Maritime Delimitation”).

On 16 January 2017, Costa Rica instituted proceedings against Nicaragua with regard to a dispute concerning “the precise location of the land boundary separating the Los Portillos/Harbor Head Lagoon sandbar from Isla Portillos” and the “establishment of a military camp by Nicaragua on the beach of Isla Portillos” (hereinafter “the case concerning Isla Portillos”). In its Application, Costa Rica requested the Court to join the new proceedings with those in the case concerning Maritime Delimitation.

In light of the information obtained by the President pursuant to Article 31 of the Rules of the Court, and taking into account the nature of the case, the Court, by its Order of 2 February 2017, decided that the Parties should each have a period of one month and a half at their disposal, from the filing of the Application, in which to prepare their respective written pleadings in the case concerning Isla Portillos.

In view of the claims made by Costa Rica in the case concerning Isla Portillos and the close link between those claims and certain aspects of the dispute in the case concerning Maritime Delimitation, the Court decided that the proceedings in the two cases should be joined. As stated in

the Order, such a joinder will allow the Court to address simultaneously the totality of the various interrelated and contested issues raised by the Parties, including any questions of fact or law that are common to the disputes presented.

The full text of the Order will be available shortly on the Court's website.

Note: The Court's press releases do not constitute official documents.

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 seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York. The Court has a twofold role: first, to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States (its judgments have binding force and are without appeal for the parties concerned); and, second, to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and agencies of the system. 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. Independent of the United Nations Secretariat, it is assisted by a Registry, its own international secretariat, whose activities are both judicial and diplomatic, as well as administrative. The official languages of the Court are French and English. Also known as the "World Court", it is the only court of a universal character with general jurisdiction.

The ICJ, a court open only to States for contentious proceedings, and to certain organs and institutions of the United Nations system for advisory proceedings, should not be confused with the other — mostly criminal — judicial institutions based in The Hague and adjacent areas, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY, an ad hoc court created by the Security Council), the International Criminal Court (ICC, the first permanent international criminal court, established by treaty, which does not belong to the United Nations system), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL, an international judicial body with an independent legal personality, established by the United Nations Security Council upon the request of the Lebanese Government and composed of Lebanese and international judges), or the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA, an independent institution which assists in the establishment of arbitral tribunals and facilitates their work, in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1899).

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