



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Obligations concerning Negotiations relating to Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and to Nuclear Disarmament (Marshall Islands v. United Kingdom)

Conclusion of public hearings on the preliminary objections raised by the United Kingdom

THE HAGUE, 16 March 2016. The public hearings on the preliminary objections raised by the United Kingdom in the case of Obligations concerning Negotiations relating to Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and to Nuclear Disarmament (Marshall Islands v. United Kingdom) were concluded today. The Court will now begin its deliberation.

During the hearings, which opened on Wednesday 9 March 2016 at the Peace Palace, seat of the Court, the delegation of the United Kingdom was led by Mr. Iain Macleod, as Agent; and the delegation of the Republic of the Marshall Islands was led by H.E. Mr. Tony deBrum and Mr. Phon van den Biesen, Attorney at Law, van den Biesen Kloostra Advocaten, Amsterdam, as Co-Agents.

The Court's judgment on the preliminary objections will be delivered at a public sitting, the date of which will be announced in due course.

Submissions of the Parties

At the end of the hearings, the Agents of the Parties presented the following submissions to the Court:

For the United Kingdom:

“The United Kingdom requests the Court to adjudge and declare that:

— it lacks jurisdiction over the claim brought against the United Kingdom by the Marshall Islands

and/or

— the claim brought against the United Kingdom by the Marshall Islands is inadmissible.”

For the Republic of the Marshall Islands:

“The Marshall Islands respectfully requests the Court:

- (a) to reject the preliminary objections to its jurisdiction and to the admissibility of the Marshall Islands’ claims, as submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in its Preliminary Objections of 15 June 2015;
- (b) to adjudge and declare that the Court has jurisdiction over the claims of the Marshall Islands submitted in its Application of 24 April 2014; and
- (c) to adjudge and declare that the Marshall Islands’ claims are admissible.”

History of the proceedings

The history of the proceedings may be found in the Annual Report of the Court for 2014-2015 (paras. 218-223), available on the Court’s website (www.icj-cij.org).

Internal judicial practice of the Court with respect to deliberations

Deliberations take place in private in accordance with the following procedure. The Court first holds a preliminary deliberation, during which the President outlines the issues which, in his opinion, require discussion and decision by the Court. A full deliberation is subsequently held, at the end of which a drafting committee is chosen by secret ballot, taking account of the views expressed. That committee consists in principle of two judges holding the majority view of the Court, together with the President, unless it appears that his views are in the minority. The committee prepares a preliminary draft text, which is the subject of written amendments. Two further drafts are produced in turn, each of which is subject to a detailed reading. In the meantime, judges who wish to do so may prepare a declaration, a separate opinion or a dissenting opinion, which are communicated to the other judges. The final vote is taken after adoption of the final text of the judgment at the second reading.

Note: The Court’s press releases do not constitute official documents. The complete verbatim records of the hearings held from 9 to 16 March 2016 are published on the website of the Court (www.icj-cij.org).

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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