



# INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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## Press Release

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**The President of the International Court of Justice tells the General Assembly of  
“the confidence that the international community continues to place in the  
Court by submitting to it a wide variety of disputes”**

THE HAGUE, 26 October 2017. Today, H.E. Judge Ronny Abraham, President of the International Court of Justice, addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York on the occasion of the presentation of the Court’s Report for the period from 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2017.

In his speech, the President first gave a brief overview of the judicial activities of the Court. He pointed out that, during the period under review, up to 19 contentious cases and one advisory proceeding had been pending before the Court, and that since 1 August 2016, hearings had been held in six of these.

President Abraham further stated that, during the same period, “the Court ha[d] also delivered four Judgments and three Orders indicating provisional measures”, noting that the first three Judgments concerned questions of jurisdiction and admissibility raised in the cases regarding Obligations concerning Negotiations relating to Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and to Nuclear Disarmament (Marshall Islands v. India), (Marshall Islands v. Pakistan) and (Marshall Islands v. United Kingdom), and that the fourth addressed the preliminary objections raised in the case concerning Maritime Delimitation in the Indian Ocean (Somalia v. Kenya). The Orders, the President explained, were made, in turn, in the case introduced by Equatorial Guinea against France, in the case brought by Ukraine against the Russian Federation and in the case introduced by India against Pakistan.

President Abraham also referred to six new cases brought before the Court between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017, namely the contentious cases concerning, respectively, the Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua), the Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Ukraine v. Russian Federation), the Application for Revision of the Judgment of 23 May 2008 in the Case concerning Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge (Malaysia/Singapore) (Malaysia v. Singapore), the Jadhav Case (India v. Pakistan) and the Request for Interpretation of the Judgment of 23 May 2008 in the Case concerning Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge (Malaysia/Singapore) (Malaysia v. Singapore), as well as the request for an advisory opinion regarding the Legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965 made by the United Nations General Assembly.

Speaking about the budgetary requests submitted to the General Assembly for the biennium 2018-2019, the President emphasized that the Court was “fully aware of the financial difficulties

faced by the Organization and its Member States and of the need . . . to exercise the budgetary restraint required in this context”. Accordingly, “[t]he resources requested by the Court this year, which have increased slightly, are vital to ensure the sound administration of international justice and to enable the Court to fulfil its mandate under the United Nations Charter”, he explained, before concluding that “[t]he Court is convinced that it can count on the understanding and support of the [General] Assembly in this regard”.

President Abraham noted “the confidence that the international community continues to place in the Court by submitting to it a wide variety of disputes, each raising important legal questions concerning numerous areas of international law”. He further observed that “[b]eyond the clear role the Court has played — and continues to play — in consolidating and developing the law governing ‘traditional’ issues, such as territorial and maritime delimitations”, it was increasingly called upon “to decide on questions at the heart of the international community’s current concerns, relating to the conservation of the environment, for example”. He also pointed out that “[t]he substantive questions referred to the Court for resolution are often supplemented by incidental proceedings, meaning that the Court is constantly required to deal with several cases at the same time”.

“The increase in the number of requests for the indication of provisional measures shows that States do not hesitate to turn to the Court in times of crisis, when their rights are at risk of irreparable harm”, the President continued. “The Court can then mobilize all its resources to offer a timely and appropriate response to urgent situations”, he emphasized.

Lastly, President Abraham assured the General Assembly that “[w]hatever the mission entrusted to it by States, the Court never loses sight of its primary concern, which is to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security through the application of the law”.

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The full text of the address by the President of the Court to the United Nations General Assembly, as well as the Court’s Report for the judicial year 2016-2017, will be available on the Court’s website (<http://www.icj-cij.org>), under the heading “The Court” (click on “Presidency” or “Annual Reports”, respectively).

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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 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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