



# INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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## Press Release

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**The International Court of Justice is “committed to fulfilling its high judicial mission impartially and effectively”, declares the President of the Court to the United Nations General Assembly**

THE HAGUE, 31 October 2014. His Excellency Judge Peter Tomka, President of the International Court of Justice (“the ICJ”), declared yesterday to the United Nations General Assembly that the Court “always strives to ensure that the disputes submitted to it are settled promptly”, emphasizing that “hearings have been held and deliberations are underway in every case on the Court’s General List in which the written procedure has closed”.

In his address, the President gave a brief overview of the Court’s judicial activities. He recalled that, during the reporting period, the total number of contentious cases pending before the Court had been 13 (and now stood at 14); in four of these the Court had held hearings.

Three of these hearings had dealt with requests for provisional measures: in October 2013 in the case concerning Certain Activities carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua); in November 2013 in the case concerning Construction of a Road in Costa Rica along the San Juan River (Nicaragua v. Costa Rica); and in January 2014 on Questions relating to the Seizure and Detention of Certain Documents and Data (Timor-Leste v. Australia).

In addition, in March 2014 the Court had held hearings on the merits in the case concerning the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia). The President explained that the Court was now deliberating the case, and was in process of drafting its Judgment, which it planned to deliver ahead of the triennial renewal of its composition next February.

President Tomka went on to inform the Assembly that the Court had handed down three Judgments during the reporting period, the first in the case concerning the Request for Interpretation of the Judgment of 15 June 1962 in the Case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand) (Cambodia v. Thailand), the second in the Maritime Dispute (Peru v. Chile) and the third in the case concerning Whaling in the Antarctic (Australia v. Japan); it had also issued three Orders on requests for the indication of provisional measures.

The President then summarized the cases submitted to the Court since August 2013, including the proceedings instituted on 28 August last — and thus after the end of the Court’s reporting period — by the Federal Republic of Somalia against the Republic of Kenya with regard to a dispute concerning the delimitation of the two countries’ respective maritime areas in the Indian Ocean. The President observed that this case had brought to 14 the total number of cases currently entered on the Court’s General List.

The President concluded by reiterating his invitation to States for increased recognition of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction, as a means of "achieving peaceful resolutions to international conflicts and promoting more harmonious inter-State relations".

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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 2013-2014, are available on the Court's website ([www.icj-cij.org](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 independent judicial body composed of Lebanese and international judges, which is not a United Nations tribunal and does not form part of the Lebanese judicial system), 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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