



# INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Peace Palace, Carnegieplein 2, 2517 KJ The Hague, Netherlands

Tel.: +31 (0)70 302 2323 Fax: +31 (0)70 364 9928

Website: [www.icj-cij.org](http://www.icj-cij.org)

## Press Release

Unofficial

No. 2014/20

9 May 2014

### **Official visit to the International Court of Justice of the Under-Secretary-General, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares**

THE HAGUE, 9 May 2014. Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, the Under-Secretary-General, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, today paid an official visit to the seat of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, at the Peace Palace in The Hague. The visit took place at the invitation of the President of the Court, Judge Peter Tomka.

Mr. de Serpa Soares was welcomed upon his arrival by the Registrar of the Court, Mr. Philippe Couvreur, who gave him a short tour of the state rooms of the Peace Palace, before introducing him to members of the Registry's Legal Department.

He then met privately with President Tomka and the Registrar, before being introduced to Members of the Court.

A working lunch with Members of the Court, the Registrar and senior Registry officials was organized in Mr. de Serpa Soares's honour. Views were exchanged regarding co-operation between the Court and the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, the role of international law in the modern world, the jurisprudence of the ICJ and other matters of mutual interest.

\*

Photographs of the event will shortly be available on the website of the Court ([www.icj-cij.org](http://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 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).

---

Information Department:

Mr. Andrey Poskakukhin, First Secretary of the Court, Head of Department (+31 (0)70 302 2336)

Mr. Boris Heim, Information Officer (+31 (0)70 302 2337)

Ms Joanne Moore, Associate Information Officer (+31 (0)70 302 2394)

Ms Genoveva Madurga, Administrative Assistant (+31 (0)70 302 2396)