



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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United Nations General Assembly and Security Council elect five Members of the Court

THE HAGUE, 7 November 2008. The General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations yesterday elected five Members of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a term of office of nine years, beginning on 6 February 2009.

Judges Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawneh (Jordan) and Ronny Abraham (France) were re-elected as Members of the Court. Messrs. Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade (Brazil), Christopher Greenwood (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf (Somalia) were elected as new Members of the Court.

The biographies of Messrs. Cançado Trindade, Greenwood and Yusuf can be found on the Court's website (www.icj-cij.org) as an annex to this press release. The biographies of Judges Al-Khasawneh and Abraham can be found under "The Court" on the same website.

In February 2009 the Court as newly constituted will proceed to elect from among its Members a President and a Vice-President, who will hold office for three years.

General

The International Court of Justice, which is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, comprises 15 judges, who are each elected to a nine-year term of office and may be re-elected.

In order to ensure a measure of continuity in the composition of the Court, one third of the membership is renewed every three years.

In accordance with Article 2 of the Statute of the Court, judges are elected "regardless of their nationality from among persons of high moral character, who possess the qualifications required in their respective countries for appointment to the highest judicial offices, or are jurisconsults of recognized competence in international law".

Article 9 of the Statute further requires that, "in the body as a whole, the representation of the main forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems of the world should be assured". This principle has been reflected in the following distribution of membership of the Court among the principal regions of the globe: three judges for Africa, two for Latin America, three for Asia,

five for Western Europe and other States (including States from North America and Oceania) and two for Eastern Europe (including Russia). In addition no two Members of the Court may be of the same nationality.

Election procedure

Members of the Court are elected by the General Assembly and by the Security Council (where no right of veto applies for the purpose of the election). These organs vote simultaneously but separately.

In order to be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes in both organs (that is to say, currently 97 votes in the General Assembly and eight votes in the Security Council).

Submission of candidacies

All States parties to the Statute of the Court (currently 192) have the right to propose candidates. However, candidates are not nominated directly by governments but by the national groups in the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) or, in the case of States not participating in the PCA, by similarly constituted national groups.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration, which is based in The Hague, was established under the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. Each State party to those Conventions (currently 108) has its own national group, that is to say a group of up to four jurists who can be called upon to serve as members of an arbitral tribunal under the Conventions.

When an election takes place to fill vacancies at the International Court of Justice, each national group can propose up to four candidates, not more than two of whom may be of its own nationality. The others may be from any other country. The names of candidates must be communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. A total of nine candidates were nominated for the purpose of the election held yesterday.

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