



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Swearing-in of Mr. Gaja and Ms Sebutinde, new Members of the Court

The Court will hold a public sitting on Monday 12 March 2012 at 10 a.m. before the public hearings in the case concerning Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (Belgium v. Senegal)

THE HAGUE, 8 March 2012. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) will hold a public sitting on Monday 12 March 2012 at 10 a.m., during which Mr. Giorgio Gaja and Ms Julia Sebutinde, new Members of the Court, will make the solemn declaration provided for in Article 20 of the Statute of the Court.

Article 20 stipulates that “[e]very Member of the Court shall, before taking up his duties, make a solemn declaration in open court that he will exercise his powers impartially and conscientiously”.

Mr. Gaja (Italy) and Ms Sebutinde (Uganda) were elected Members of the Court by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations on 10 November 2011 and 13 December 2011 respectively. The biographical note and official photograph of each Member of the Court can be found on the Court’s website (www.icj-cij.org) under the heading “The Court/Members of the Court/Current Members”.

After the sitting, the Court will retire briefly. It will return to the Great Hall of Justice shortly afterwards to begin the public hearings in the case concerning Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (Belgium v. Senegal).

It should be noted that the Court is currently composed of only 14 Members, following the resignation of Mr. Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawneh (Jordan), former judge and Vice-President of the Court. It is recalled (see also Press Release No. 2012/1) that the United Nations Security Council has fixed Friday 27 April 2012 as the date for the election, by the Security Council and the General Assembly, of a successor to Mr. Al-Khasawneh.

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. It is assisted by a Registry, its international secretariat, whose activities are both judicial and diplomatic, as well as administrative. The official languages of the Court are French and English.

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 institution founded in 1899, which is independent of the United Nations).

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Note: The Court's press releases do not constitute official documents.