



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Visit to the International Court of Justice by the President of the Republic of Cape Verde, H.E. Mr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca

THE HAGUE, 12 December 2018. H.E. Mr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cape Verde, accompanied by his spouse Ms Lígia Dias Fonseca, and an important delegation, yesterday paid a visit to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, at its seat at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

Mr. Fonseca and his delegation were received by H.E. Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the Court, his spouse Ms Suad Yusuf, other Members of the Court and the Registrar. The meeting focused in particular on the role and work of the ICJ.

President Yusuf stressed the importance of the ICJ in resolving legal disputes between States in accordance with international law and talked about the different ways of accepting the jurisdiction of the Court. He noted that the Court's workload had increased considerably over the past few decades, adding that the Court enjoys the full confidence of States, which submit their disputes to it now more than ever. He informed the delegation that there were currently 16 contentious cases and one advisory proceeding on the Court's General List.

President Fonseca, in turn, pointed out that the Republic of Cape Verde had built a strong and stable democracy based on the rule of law, both in respect of the State's domestic affairs and its international relations. He further drew attention to the significance of his visit to the ICJ and expressed his country's support to the Court and to the extension of its jurisdiction. In conclusion, President Fonseca wished the Members of the Court every success in their "noble and important work".

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Fonseca signed the Visitors' Book and exchanged gifts with the President of the Court. He was also given a brief tour of the Great Hall of Justice where the ICJ holds its public sittings.

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Photographs of the visit are available on the website of the Court (www.icj-cij.org) in the “Multimedia” section (click on “Events-related videos, photos and audio files”).

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 Court (ICC, the only permanent international criminal court, which was established by treaty and 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), the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT, mandated to take over residual functions from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda), the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor’s Office (an *ad hoc* judicial institution which has its seat in The Hague), 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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