



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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First official visit to the International Court of Justice by the Mayor of The Hague and his Aldermen

THE HAGUE, 27 September 2011. The Mayor of The Hague, Mr. Jozias van Aartsen, together with his Aldermen, today paid a 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.

It is the first time that the entire Municipal Executive of The Hague has undertaken such a visit to an international organization.

The Mayor and his Aldermen were welcomed on their arrival by the Registrar of the Court, Mr. Philippe Couvreur. They were introduced to the President, Judge Hisashi Owada, and to the other Members of the Court.

The delegation was then taken to the room where the Court holds all its deliberations and which is only very rarely open to outside visitors. The visit continued with a working lunch in the judges' restaurant.

During their informal meeting, Members of the Court explained how the Court functions to the municipal officials, and the latter, in turn, were able to communicate to the Judges their international ambitions for the city of The Hague.

At the end of the meeting, the Mayor of The Hague signed the Court's Visitors' Book and a group photograph was taken of all those who had participated in the meeting.

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Photographs of the event are available on the Court's website at the following address: www.icj-cij.org (in the section "Press Room").

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 civil 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 institution 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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