



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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“[T]he activities of the International Court of Justice continue to play a prime role in the peaceful settlement of inter-State disputes”, the President of the Court declares before the United Nations General Assembly

THE HAGUE, 5 November 2015. Today, H.E. Judge Ronny Abraham, President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), told the United Nations General Assembly that, over the last 12 months, “the Court has devoted every effort to responding, as speedily as possible, to the expectations of its international subjects”.

President Abraham was addressing representatives of the United Nations Member States meeting in New York on the occasion of the presentation of the Court’s Report for the period from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015.

During his speech, the President gave a brief overview of the judicial activities of the Court. He pointed out that, during the period under review, “up to 14 contentious cases [had] been pending before the Court, in three of which it [had] held hearings”.

“Currently, all of the cases in which the Court has held hearings are under deliberation, with the exception of the proceedings between Bolivia and Chile in which, on 24 September last, the Court has already delivered a judgment, where it found that it has jurisdiction in the case, and the proceedings on the merits have accordingly been resumed”, President Abraham added.

Towards the end of his address, President Abraham affirmed that “the activities of the International Court of Justice continue to play a prime role in the peaceful settlement of inter-State disputes”. He noted that “the Court w[ould] continue with its endeavours to make optimum use of the modest resources at its disposal, with a view to achieving prompt resolution of the disputes submitted to it”. “To do so, it will not hesitate to continue its practice of dealing with several cases concurrently” he added, recalling that “four cases are currently under deliberation — witness to the Court’s concern, as it approaches its seventieth anniversary, to discharge its noble and uplifting judicial mission within a reasonable time-frame”. “It knows that it can rely . . . upon [the] constant support” of the United Nations Member States, the President stated, before going on to note that the Court, which took up its functions just months after the entry into force of the Charter, will be marking its seventieth birthday in April 2016. “This event will represent an opportunity both to celebrate what has been achieved over the past 70 years and to reflect on the new challenges facing [the Court]”, he concluded.

The full text of the address by the President of the Court to the United Nations General Assembly, as well as the Court's Report for the judicial year 2014-2015, are available on the Court's website (<http://www.icj-cij.org>), under the heading "The Court" (click on "Presidency" or "Annual Reports", respectively).

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 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), 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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