



# INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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**Communiqué**  
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**Request for Interpretation of the Judgment of 11 June 1998 in the Case concerning the Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria (Cameroon v. Nigeria), Preliminary Objections (Nigeria v. Cameroon)**

**Court to announce its decision on Thursday 25 March 1999**

THE HAGUE, 22 March 1999. On Thursday 25 March 1999 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) will announce its decision on Nigeria's request for interpretation of the Judgment delivered by the Court on 11 June 1998 in the case concerning the Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria (Cameroon v. Nigeria), Preliminary Objections.

A public sitting will take place at 3 p.m. at the Peace Palace in The Hague, during which the President of the Court, Judge Stephen M. Schwebel, will read the Court's Judgment.

This is the first time that the Court is set to rule on a request for interpretation of a Judgment on preliminary objections while the proceedings on the merits of the case are still pending.

**Background information**

On 28 October 1998 Nigeria filed a request for interpretation of the Judgment delivered on 11 June 1998 by the Court on the preliminary objections raised by that State with regard to the jurisdiction of the Court and the admissibility of Cameroon's Applications in the case concerning the Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria (Cameroon v. Nigeria).

In its request, Nigeria stated that "one aspect of the case before the Court is the alleged international responsibility borne by Nigeria for certain incidents said to have occurred at various places in Bakassi and Lake Chad and along the length of the frontier between those two regions". Nigeria contended that Cameroon had made "allegations involving a number of such incidents in its Application of 29 March 1994, its Additional Application of 6 June 1994, its observations of 30 April 1996 on Nigeria's preliminary objections, and during the oral hearings held from 2-11 March 1998", and that Cameroon had also said that it "would be able to provide information as to other incidents" on some unspecified future occasion.

In Nigeria's view, the Court's Judgment of 11 June 1998 "does not specify which of these alleged incidents are to be considered as part of the merits of the case" and accordingly, "the meaning and scope of the Judgment requires interpretation" as provided by Article 98 of the Rules of Court.

The full text of Nigeria's submissions reads as follows:

"Nigeria requests the Court to adjudge and declare that the Court's Judgment of 11 June 1998 is to be interpreted as meaning that:

so far as concerns the international responsibility which Nigeria is said to bear for certain alleged incidents:

- (a) the dispute before the Court does not include any alleged incidents other than (at most) those specified in Cameroon's Application of 29 March 1994 and Additional Application of 6 June 1994;
- (b) Cameroon's freedom to present additional facts and legal considerations relates (at most) only to those specified in Cameroon's Application of 29 March 1994 and Additional Application of 6 June 1994; and
- (c) the question whether facts alleged by Cameroon are established or not relates (at most) only to those specified in Cameroon's Application of 29 March 1994 and Additional Application of 6 June 1994."

Nigeria's request was transmitted to Cameroon. Judge Oda, Senior Judge, acting President of the Court, fixed 3 December 1998 as the time-limit for Cameroon to file written observations. These written observations were filed within the prescribed time-limit.

In light of the dossier thus submitted to it, the Court, considering that it had sufficient information on the positions of the Parties, did not deem it necessary to invite them "to furnish further written or oral explanations", as Article 98, paragraph 4, of the Rules allows it to do.

Since the Court included upon the Bench no judge of the nationality of the Parties, each of them availed itself of the right to choose a judge ad hoc to sit in the case: Nigeria chose Judge Bola Ajibola and Cameroon Judge Kéba Mbaye. Both made the solemn declaration provided for in Article 20 of the Statute of the Court at a public sitting held on 17 February 1999.

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#### NOTE TO THE PRESS

1. The public sitting will be held in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. Mobile telephones and beepers are allowed in the courtroom **provided they are turned off or set on silent mode**. Any offending device will be temporarily retained.

2. Members of the Press will be entitled to attend on presentation of an admission card, which may be obtained upon application. The tables reserved for them are situated on the far left of the public entrance of the courtroom.

3. Photographs may be taken for a few minutes at the opening and at the end of the sitting. Television crews may film, but advance notice should be given to the Information Office (see paragraph 8).

4. In the Press Room, located on the ground floor of the Peace Palace (Room 5), the reading of the Court's decision will be relayed through a loudspeaker.

5. At the end of the sitting, a press release, a summary of the Judgment and its full text will be distributed in the Press Room.

6. All the above-mentioned documents will be simultaneously available on the Website of the Court (<http://www.icj-cij.org>).

7. Members of the Press who wish to make telephone calls may use the phone located in the Press Room or the public telephones in the Post Office in the basement of the Peace Palace.

8. Mr. Arthur Witteveen, Secretary of the Court (tel: 31-70-302 2336), and Mrs. Laurence Blairon, Information Officer (tel: 31-70-302 2337), are available to deal with any requests for information and for making arrangements for television coverage.