



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Arrest Warrant of 11 April 2000 (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Belgium)

Fixing of time-limits for the filing of written pleadings

THE HAGUE, 15 December 2000. The President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Judge Gilbert Guillaume, has fixed time-limits for the filing of written pleadings in the case concerning the Arrest Warrant of 11 April 2000 (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Belgium).

By an Order of 13 December 2000, the President, taking into account the agreement of the Parties, has fixed 15 March 2001 as the time-limit for the filing of a Memorial by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 31 May 2001 as the time-limit for the filing of a Counter-Memorial by Belgium.

As agreed by the Parties at a meeting held on 8 December 2000 between them and the President, the written pleadings will address both issues of jurisdiction and admissibility and the merits of the dispute. The subsequent procedure has been reserved for further decision.

History of the proceedings

On 17 October 2000 the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) filed in the Registry an Application instituting proceedings against Belgium in respect of a dispute concerning an "international arrest warrant issued on 11 April 2000 by a Belgian investigating judge... against the Minister for Foreign Affairs in office of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Abdulaye Yerodia Ndombasi [who has in the meantime ceased to exercise those functions and has been charged with those of Minister of Education]... for 'serious violations of international humanitarian law'".

On the same day the DRC also filed a request for the indication of a provisional measure, asking the Court inter alia to make an order for the immediate discharge of the disputed arrest warrant. Hearings were held from 20 to 23 November 2000. By an Order of 8 December 2000 the Court unanimously rejected Belgium's request that the case be removed from the List and found by fifteen votes to two that the circumstances, as they now presented themselves to it, were not such as to require the exercise of its power to indicate provisional measures, as the DRC had wished. It added that "it [was] desirable that the issues before the Court should be determined as soon as possible" and that "it [was] therefore appropriate to ensure that a decision on the Congo's Application be reached with all expedition".

The full text of the Order will shortly be available on the Court's website at the following address: <http://www.icj-cij.org>.

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