



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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

Extension of the time-limits fixed for the filing of written pleadings

THE HAGUE, 16 March 2001. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has extended the time-limits fixed 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 a letter dated 5 March 2001, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) asked the Court to postpone until the second fortnight of April 2001 the time-limit for the filing of its Memorial and indicated the reasons for that request. By a letter dated 12 March 2001, Belgium indicated that it did not object to the extension of the time-limit sought by the DRC and requested that the time-limit fixed for the filing of its Counter-Memorial be extended to 31 July 2001.

By an Order of 14 March 2001, the Court, taking account of the reasons given by the DRC and of the agreement of the Parties, extended to 17 April 2001 the time-limit for the filing of the DRC's Memorial and to 31 July 2001 the time-limit for the filing of Belgium's Counter-Memorial.

The subsequent procedure has been reserved for further decision.

History of the proceedings

On 17 October 2000 the Democratic Republic of the Congo 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 Mr. Abdulaye Yerodia Ndombasi", the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of the DRC, 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 15 votes to 2 that the circumstances, as they then 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".

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

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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