



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

Unofficial

No. 2017/14
10 April 2017

Immunities and Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France)

Fixing of the time-limit for the filing by Equatorial Guinea of a written statement of its observations and submissions on the preliminary objections raised by France

THE HAGUE, 10 April 2017. By an Order of 5 April 2017, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, has fixed 31 July 2017 as the time-limit within which the Republic of Equatorial Guinea may present a written statement of its observations and submissions on the preliminary objections raised by the French Republic in the case concerning Immunities and Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France).

The subsequent procedure has been reserved for further decision.

In its Order, the Court recalls that, on 31 March 2017, France raised certain preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Court. In accordance with Article 79, paragraph 5, of the Rules of Court, the proceedings on the merits have therefore been suspended.

It is explained in the Order that the date of 31 July 2017 has been fixed taking account in particular of Practice Direction V, according to which the time-limit for the presentation of such a written statement shall generally not exceed four months from the date of the filing of preliminary objections.

History of the proceedings

The history of the proceedings can be found in paragraphs 263-270 of the Court's Annual Report for 2015-2016 and in Press Releases Nos. 2016/28 of 30 September 2016, 2016/33 of 19 October 2016 and 2016/38 of 7 December 2016, which are all available on the Court's website (under the headings "The Court"/"Annual Reports" and "Press Room"/"Press Releases").

The full text of the Order will be available shortly on the Court's website (www.icj-cij.org).

Note: The Court's press releases do not constitute official documents.

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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