



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Belize institutes proceedings against Honduras concerning sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes

THE HAGUE, 17 November 2022. Yesterday Belize instituted proceedings before the International Court of Justice against the Republic of Honduras with regard to a dispute concerning sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes.

In its Application, Belize recalls that, “[s]ince the early nineteenth century, the Sapodilla Cayes have formed part of the territory of Belize, initially as part of the settlement of Belize and later the colony of British Honduras, and since 1981 as part of the independent State of Belize”.

The Applicant argues that “[u]nder international law, Belize is sovereign over the Sapodilla Cayes” and that “[t]he Honduran claim to the Sapodilla Cayes, articulated in its 1982 Constitution, which remains in force as a matter of the internal law of Honduras, has no basis in international law”.

Belize requests the Court “to adjudge and declare that, as between Belize and Honduras, Belize is sovereign over the Sapodilla Cayes”.

The Applicant seeks to found the Court’s jurisdiction on Article XXXI of the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement, concluded at Bogotá on 30 April 1948 (known as the Pact of Bogotá), and on Article 36, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the Court.

Note: The Court’s press releases are prepared by its Registry for information purposes only and do not constitute official documents.

The Application instituting proceedings is available on the Court’s [website](#).

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 Court is composed of 15 judges elected for a nine-year term by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). The Court has a twofold role: first, to settle, in accordance with international law, through judgments which have binding force and are without appeal for the parties concerned, legal disputes submitted to it by States; and, second, to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and agencies of the system.

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