



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Questions relating to the Seizure and Detention of Certain Documents and Data (Timor-Leste v. Australia)

Fixing of time-limits for the filing of the initial pleadings

THE HAGUE, 7 February 2014. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, has fixed time-limits for the filing of initial pleadings in the case concerning Questions relating to the Seizure and Detention of Certain Documents and Data (Timor-Leste v. Australia).

By an Order of 28 January 2014, the Court fixed 28 April 2014 and 28 July 2014 as the respective time-limits for the filing of a Memorial by the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and a Counter-Memorial by Australia.

The subsequent procedure has been reserved for further decision.

History of the proceedings

On 17 December 2013, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste instituted proceedings against Australia with regard to the seizure and the subsequent detention by “agents of Australia of documents, data and other property which belongs to Timor-Leste and/or which Timor-Leste has the right to protect under international law”.

Timor-Leste also filed on 17 December 2013 a Request for the indication of provisional measures to “protect [its] rights . . . in the documents and data seized, and . . . to prevent their use by Australia contrary to the rights and interests of Timor-Leste, and . . . to end the unlawful impediment to the conduct by Timor-Leste of its affairs caused by the seizure and detention of the documents and data, in particular (but not exclusively) in relation to the conduct of the pending Arbitration under the Timor Sea Treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia”.

Further details can be found in Press Releases Nos. 2013/41, 2013/42 and 2014/1, available on the Court’s website (www.icj-cij.org) under the heading “Press Room”/“Press Releases”.

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

The full text of the Order will be available shortly 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 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 independent judicial body composed of Lebanese and international judges, which is not a United Nations tribunal and does not form part of the Lebanese judicial system), 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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