

International Court of Justice

Organization: International Court of Justice

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Date Entered: 2005-03-30

Description The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), replacing the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) in 1946. It is located at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. The ICJ operates under the Statute of the International Court of Justice, an integral component of the UN Charter. It has two primary functions: (1) to settle disputes between states in accordance with international law and (2) to provide advisory opinions to other UN organs (such as the Security Council) and specialized agencies (such as the International Labour Organization).



The Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands

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The ICJ is composed of fifteen elected and independent judges, selected to reflect the main forms of civilization and the principal legal systems of the world. Judges do not represent their respective governments but are independent magistrates (officers of the court). Only states may access the ICJ, and they must consent to its jurisdiction. In this and other fundamental respects, the ICJ is distinct from the International Criminal Court (ICC). Its

jurisdiction comprises all matters provided for in the UN Charter or in international treaties. The ICJ has delivered judgments concerning land frontiers, diplomatic relations, and nationality of persons. Judgments are final and without appeal.

The ICJ is intended to provide a peaceful settlement of disputes, reflecting a central purpose of the UN to maintain international peace and security. The UN requires states to resolve disputes through the ICJ or other peaceful means of their own choice (such as negotiation and arbitration). Large-scale warfare is potentially catastrophic in an era of unprecedented global military capabilities, the ICJ significantly contributes to the global legal order as a vital guardian of fundamental UN values.

Suggested Reading: **International Court of Justice website.** www.icj-cij.org (accessed 16 March 2005).

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