



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Aerial Herbicide Spraying (Ecuador v. Colombia)

Case removed from the Court's List at the request of the Republic of Ecuador

THE HAGUE, 17 September 2013. The case brought by the Republic of Ecuador against the Republic of Colombia on 31 March 2008 before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in respect of a dispute concerning “Colombia’s aerial spraying of toxic herbicides at locations near, at and across its border with Ecuador” was removed from the Court’s List on 13 September 2013 at the request of Ecuador.

By a letter dated 12 September 2013, the Agent of Ecuador, referring to Article 89 of the Rules of Court and to an Agreement between the Parties dated 9 September 2013 “that fully and finally resolves all of Ecuador’s claims against Colombia” in the case, notified the Court that his Government wished to discontinue the proceedings in the case.

A copy of that letter was immediately communicated to the Government of Colombia, which, by a letter of the same date, informed the Court, pursuant to Article 89, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Court, that it made no objection to the discontinuance of the case as requested by Ecuador.

According to the letters received from the Parties, the Agreement of 9 September 2013 establishes, *inter alia*, an exclusion zone, in which Colombia will not conduct aerial spraying operations, creates a Joint Commission to ensure that spraying operations outside that zone have not caused herbicides to drift into Ecuador and, so long as they have not, provides a mechanism for the gradual reduction in the width of the said zone; according to the letters, the Agreement sets out operational parameters for Colombia’s spraying programme, records the agreement of the two Governments to ongoing exchanges of information in that regard, and establishes a dispute settlement mechanism.

In consequence, the President of the Court, on 13 September 2013, made an Order recording the discontinuance by Ecuador of the proceedings and directing the removal of the case from the Court’s List.

The full text of the Order is available on the Court's website in the documentation for the case, under the heading "Contentious cases".

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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