



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Arbitral Award of 3 October 1899 (Guyana v. Venezuela)

Public hearings on the merits to be held from Monday 4 to Monday 11 May 2026

THE HAGUE, 23 April 2026. The International Court of Justice will hold public hearings in the case concerning *Arbitral Award of 3 October 1899 (Guyana v. Venezuela)* from Monday 4 to Monday 11 May 2026.

It is recalled that, on 29 March 2018, Guyana filed an [Application instituting proceedings](#) against Venezuela with respect to a dispute concerning “the legal validity and binding effect of the Award regarding the Boundary between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela, of 3 October 1899”.

As basis for the jurisdiction of the Court, the Applicant invoked Article IV, paragraph 2, of the Agreement to Resolve the Controversy between Venezuela and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland over the Frontier between Venezuela and British Guiana, signed at Geneva on 17 February 1966, and the decision of 30 January 2018 by which the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in accordance with that Agreement, chose the Court as the means to be used for the settlement of the controversy.

On 18 June 2018, Venezuela informed the Court that it considered that the Court manifestly lacked jurisdiction to hear the case and that it had decided not to take part in the proceedings. The Court then decided to address first the question of its jurisdiction.

In a [Judgment delivered on 18 December 2020](#), the Court found that it had jurisdiction to entertain the Application filed by Guyana in so far as it concerns the validity of the Arbitral Award of 3 October 1899 and the related question of the definitive settlement of the land boundary dispute between Guyana and Venezuela.

Further to the filing of a preliminary objection by Venezuela on 7 June 2022, the Court, in its [Judgment of 6 April 2023](#), rejected that preliminary objection and found that it could adjudicate upon the merits of Guyana’s claims, in so far as they fall within the scope of the Court’s jurisdiction as defined in the operative clause of its Judgment of 18 December 2020.

On 30 October 2023, Guyana filed a [Request for the indication of provisional measures](#), expressing concern about the Government of Venezuela’s stated intention to hold a “Consultative Referendum” on 3 December 2023 regarding the purported creation, within Venezuela, of the State of “Guayana Esequiba”, comprising the territory at issue in the current proceedings.

In its [Order of 1 December 2023](#), the Court stated that, in light of the high level of tension that characterized the relations between the Parties, it considered that the conduct of Venezuela — in organizing such a referendum and asserting that it would take concrete action on the basis of the results of that referendum — presented a serious risk of Venezuela acquiring and exercising control and administration of the territory in dispute. The Court therefore directed Venezuela to refrain from taking any action, pending a final decision in the case, which would modify the situation that currently prevails in the territory at issue, whereby Guyana administers and exercises control over that area. The Court further instructed both Parties to refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute or make it more difficult to resolve.

On 6 March 2025, Guyana filed a further Request for the indication of provisional measures, which, it contended, was prompted “by Venezuela’s announcement that it w[ould] soon hold elections *in Guyana’s sovereign territory*, which Venezuela ha[d] purported to annex in violation of the Court’s Order of 1 December 2023 and fundamental norms of international law”.

In its [Order of 1 May 2025](#), the Court concluded that the change in the situation justified modifying the decision set out in its Order of 1 December 2023, by further specifying its scope. It reaffirmed the provisional measures previously indicated and added that, pending a final decision in the case, Venezuela must “refrain from conducting elections, or preparing to conduct elections, in the territory in dispute, which Guyana currently administers and over which it exercises control”.

Earlier [press releases](#) relating to this case are available on the Court’s website.

The hearings will be devoted to the merits of the case.

Schedule for the hearings

The schedule for the hearings is as follows:

Monday 4 May 2026	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.: First round of oral argument (Guyana)
	3 p.m. - 6 p.m.: First round of oral argument (Guyana)
Wednesday 6 May 2026	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.: First round of oral argument (Venezuela)
	3 p.m. - 6 p.m.: First round of oral argument (Venezuela)
Friday 8 May 2026	3 p.m. - 6 p.m.: Second round of oral argument (Guyana)
Monday 11 May 2026	3 p.m. - 6 p.m.: Second round of oral argument (Venezuela)

A. Practical information and admission procedures

There will be no parking on the Peace Palace grounds.

1. Members of the diplomatic corps

Members of the diplomatic corps who wish to attend the hearings are requested to kindly fill out an [online registration form](#) by 12 noon (The Hague time) on Thursday 30 April 2026. **Requests submitted after this deadline will not be considered.** Seats in the Great Hall of Justice will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. On presenting a confirmation of registration from the Information Department and valid diplomatic ID at the main gate of the Peace Palace on the day of the session they wish to attend, diplomats will be given a badge providing access to the Great Hall of Justice.

2. Members of the public

Only 15 seats will be available in the public gallery for members of the public on a first-come, first-served basis. There will be no advance registration procedure, and admission requests submitted beforehand will not be considered. Members of the public wishing to attend the hearings are requested to present themselves at the main gate of the Peace Palace at least 40 minutes before the start of the session they wish to attend. They will be given a badge providing access to the public gallery upon presentation of valid ID. The security officers at the gate will notify those concerned once all available seats have been filled.

3. Media representatives

Media representatives who wish to attend the hearings are requested to kindly fill out an [online accreditation form](#) by 12 noon (The Hague time) on Thursday 30 April 2026. Requests submitted after this deadline will not be considered. The Court's press room can accommodate only a limited number of people. Accreditation requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. **No requests received by phone or email will be accepted.**

B. Further practical information for the media

1. Entry to the Peace Palace

Only duly accredited individuals with valid identification will be permitted to enter the Peace Palace grounds. Accredited media representatives must bring with them their personal ID and press card. They are asked to arrive at the Peace Palace gates 30 minutes before the start of each session (morning and afternoon).

2. Access to the courtroom

A limited number of professional photographers and camera operators will be permitted to enter the courtroom for a few minutes before the start of the first round of oral argument of each Party on 4 and 6 May 2026. They will be accompanied by members of the Information Department. Other media representatives will not have access to the courtroom.

3. Press Room

The hearings will be transmitted live in the two official languages of the Court, English and French, in a press room equipped with shared internet access (Wi-Fi and Ethernet). TV crews can connect to the Court's PAL (HD and SD) and NTSC (SD) audiovisual system, and radio reporters to the audio system. The press room will be open one and a half hours before the start of each session and will close one hour after the session concludes.

4. Multimedia

The hearings will be streamed live and on demand (VOD), in the two official languages of the Court, on the [Court's website](#), on the section of the [Journal of the United Nations](#) dedicated to the ICJ and on [UN Web TV](#). High-resolution cover shots and still photos produced by the Registry during the hearings will be available free of charge and free of copyright for editorial, non-commercial use, on the Court's website (to download, click on [Multimedia](#)), [LinkedIn account](#) and X feed (@CIJ_ICJ).

Note: The Court's press releases are prepared by its Registry for information purposes only and 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 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, 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 specialized agencies.

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