



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

Unofficial

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Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes/Cayos Zapotillos (Belize v. Honduras)

Guatemala's Application for permission to intervene in the case

The Court to deliver its Judgment on Thursday 19 March 2026 at 3 p.m.

THE HAGUE, 5 March 2026. On Thursday 19 March 2026, the International Court of Justice will deliver its Judgment on Guatemala's Application for permission to intervene in the case concerning *Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes/Cayos Zapotillos (Belize v. Honduras)*. A public sitting will take place at 3 p.m. at the Peace Palace in The Hague, during which Judge Iwasawa Yuji, President of the Court, will read out the Court's Judgment.

It is recalled that on 16 November 2022, Belize [instituted proceedings](#) against Honduras with regard to a dispute concerning sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes, which it describes as a group of cays lying in the Gulf of Honduras at the southern tip of the Belize Barrier Reef. Belize requests the Court "to adjudge and declare that, as between Belize and Honduras, Belize is sovereign over the Sapodilla Cayes".

On 1 December 2023, Guatemala, referring to Article 62 of the [Statute of the Court](#), filed an [Application for permission to intervene](#) in the case. According to Guatemala, Belize's submission in this case overlaps with its submissions in another case pending before the Court, the case concerning *Guatemala's Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim (Guatemala/Belize)*. In the latter case, both Belize and Guatemala claim sovereignty over the Sapodillas. In its Application for permission to intervene, Guatemala contends that it has "a clear interest of a legal nature [in the *Belize v. Honduras* case] since . . . it has a longstanding claim of sovereignty over the Sapodillas, which is part of the subject-matter of the pending *Guatemala/Belize* case before the Court", and which may be affected by a decision of the Court in the present case.

Public hearings on Guatemala's Application for permission to intervene were held from 24 to 26 November 2025. Earlier [press releases](#) relating to this case are available on the Court's website.

Members of the diplomatic corps, the public and the media will find below practical information regarding the organization of the reading.

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 reading are requested to kindly fill out an [online registration form](#) by 12 noon (The Hague time) on Monday 16 March 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 sitting 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 reading are requested to present themselves at the main gate of the Peace Palace at least 40 minutes before the start of the session. 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 sitting are requested to kindly fill out an [online accreditation form](#) by 12 noon (The Hague time) on Monday 16 March 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 no later than 30 minutes before the start of the sitting.

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 sitting. They will be accompanied by

members of the Information Department. Other media representatives will not have access to the courtroom.

3. Press room

The reading 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 the sitting and will close one hour after it concludes.

4. Multimedia

The reading will be streamed live and on demand (VOD), in the two official languages of the Court, on the [Court's website](#), 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 reading 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](#)) 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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