

16 APRIL 2026

ORDER

**SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SAPODILLA CAYES/CAYOS ZAPOTILLOS
(BELIZE v. HONDURAS: GUATEMALA INTERVENING)**

**SOUVERAINETÉ SUR LES CAYES DE SAPODILLA/CAYES ZAPOTILLOS
(BELIZE c. HONDURAS ; GUATEMALA (INTERVENANT))**

16 AVRIL 2026

ORDONNANCE

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

YEAR 2026

**2026
16 April
General List
No. 185**

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SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SAPODILLA CAYES/CAYOS ZAPOTILLOS

(BELIZE v. HONDURAS: GUATEMALA INTERVENING)

ORDER

Present: *President* IWASAWA; *Vice-President* SEBUTINDE; *Judges* TOMKA, ABRAHAM, XUE, NOLTE, CHARLESWORTH, BRANT, GÓMEZ ROBLEDO, CLEVELAND, AURESCU, TLADI, HMOUD; *Registrar* GAUTIER.

The International Court of Justice,

Composed as above,

After deliberation,

Having regard to Articles 48 and 62 of the Statute of the Court and to Articles 44 and 85 of the Rules of Court,

Having regard to the Application filed in the Registry of the Court on 16 November 2022, whereby Belize instituted proceedings against the Republic of Honduras (hereinafter “Honduras”) with regard to a dispute concerning sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes (referred to by Honduras as the “Cayos Zapotillos”),

Having regard to the Application for permission to intervene in the case under Article 62 of the Statute of the Court filed by the Republic of Guatemala (hereinafter “Guatemala”) on 1 December 2023,

Having regard to the Judgment delivered on 19 March 2026, whereby the Court decided that Guatemala was permitted to intervene as a non-party in the case, pursuant to Article 62 of the Statute, to the extent and for the purposes set out in the Judgment,

Having regard to the Order of 19 March 2026, whereby the Court fixed 19 May 2026 as the time-limit for the submission of a written statement by Guatemala and 20 July 2026 as the time-limit within which the Parties may, if they so desire, furnish their written observations on the written statement of Guatemala;

Whereas, by a letter dated 24 March 2026, the Agent of Honduras communicated a request of his Government that the time-limit for the submission of written observations of the Parties under Article 85, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Court be extended by three months, namely until 20 October 2026; and whereas the Agent in that letter expressed the view that such an extension was necessary, *inter alia*, in order to correct a “procedural imbalance” created by the fact that Honduras would be, for the first time, responding to arguments regarding the intervening State’s sovereignty over the Sapidilla Cayes/Cayos Zapotillos while Belize and Guatemala had exchanged two rounds of written pleadings on that question in the case concerning *Guatemala’s Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim (Guatemala/Belize)*;

Whereas, on receipt of that letter, the Registrar immediately transmitted a copy thereof to Belize and Guatemala, in accordance with Article 44, paragraph 3, of the Rules of Court;

Whereas, by a letter dated 30 March 2026, the Agent of Belize stated that his Government opposed Honduras’ request, drawing attention to the significant amount of time that Honduras had had to study the written pleadings submitted in the case concerning *Guatemala’s Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim (Guatemala/Belize)*, having previously received access to them under Article 53, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Court; and whereas the Agent also observed that the Court’s Order of 19 March 2026 already had taken into account the positions of the Parties and Guatemala, as expressed during the hearings in November 2025, on the procedural timetable in the present case;

Whereas, by a letter dated 1 April 2026, the Agent of Guatemala stated that her Government considered that the extension requested by Honduras was “excessive” under the circumstances and that, in any case, all participants in the proceedings should be allocated an equal time for filing their written submissions on the substance of the intervention;

Taking into account the views expressed by the Parties and the intervening State,

Extends to 19 June 2026 the time-limit for the submission by the Republic of Guatemala of a written statement;

Extends to 21 September 2026 the time-limit within which the Parties may, if they so desire, furnish their written observations on the written statement of the Republic of Guatemala; and

Reserves the subsequent procedure for further decision.

Done in English and in French, the English text being authoritative, at the Peace Palace, The Hague, this sixteenth day of April, two thousand and twenty-six, in four copies, one of which will be placed in the archives of the Court and the others transmitted to the Government of Belize, the Government of the Republic of Honduras, and the Government of the Republic of Guatemala, respectively.

(Signed) IWASAWA Yuji,
President.

(Signed) Philippe GAUTIER,
Registrar.
