



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Alleged Smuggling of Migrants (Lithuania v. Belarus)

Poland files a declaration of intervention in the proceedings under Article 63 of the Statute of the Court

THE HAGUE, 30 June 2026. Poland, invoking Article 63 of the [Statute of the Court](#), today filed in the Registry of the Court a declaration of intervention in the case concerning *Alleged Smuggling of Migrants (Lithuania v. Belarus)*.

Pursuant to Article 63 of the Statute, whenever the construction of a convention to which States other than those concerned in the case are parties is in question, each of these States has the right to intervene in the proceedings. If a State exercises this right, the construction given by the judgment of the Court will be equally binding upon it.

In availing itself of the right of intervention conferred by Article 63, Poland relies on its status as a party to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the “Protocol”). Poland considers that the construction of Articles 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 15, 16 and 20 of the Protocol is in question in the present case.

In accordance with Article 83 of the [Rules of Court](#), Lithuania and Belarus have been invited to furnish written observations on the declaration of intervention.

The full text of [Poland’s declaration of intervention](#) is available on the Court’s website.

History of the proceedings

On 19 May 2025, Lithuania filed an [Application instituting proceedings](#) against Belarus with regard to a dispute concerning alleged breaches of the Protocol “in relation to the large-scale smuggling of irregular migrants from Belarus into Lithuania”.

According to Lithuania, Belarus has

“breached many of its obligations under the Protocol by: facilitating, supporting, and enabling the smuggling of migrants, and also failing to take necessary border measures to prevent and detect the smuggling of migrants and to ensure the security and control

of documents . . .; failing to exchange information to prevent, detect, and investigate the smuggling of migrants, strengthen cooperation with Lithuania's border control agencies, and cooperate in the field of public information to prevent potential migrants from falling victim to organised criminalized groups . . .; and failing to preserve and protect the rights of migrants and afford them appropriate assistance”.

Lithuania contends that

“[t]he smuggling of migrants through Belarus into Lithuania has caused serious harm to Lithuania's sovereignty, security, and public order, as well as to the rights and interests of the smuggled migrants themselves, who have been exposed to grave abuses in trying to reach Lithuanian territory”.

An earlier [press release](#) relating to this case is available on the Court's website.

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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