



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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Vanuatu files an application with the Court concerning a dispute with France

THE HAGUE, 1 September 2026. Vanuatu yesterday filed an application before the International Court of Justice relating to a dispute between itself and France “concerning Vanuatu’s sovereignty over Umaenupne (Matthew) and Umaeneg/Leka (Hunter) Islands . . . and concerning the establishment of a single maritime boundary between the exclusive economic zones and continental shelf of Vanuatu and France (with respect to New Caledonia)”.

Vanuatu seeks to found the Court’s jurisdiction on Article 38, paragraph 5, of the [Rules of Court](#), which reads as follows:

“When the applicant State proposes to found the jurisdiction of the Court upon a consent thereto yet to be given or manifested by the State against which such application is made, the application shall be transmitted to that State. It shall not however be entered in the General List, nor any action be taken in the proceedings, unless and until the State against which such application is made consents to the Court’s jurisdiction for the purposes of the case.”

In accordance with Article 38, paragraph 5, of the Rules of Court, Vanuatu’s application has been transmitted to France. However, no action will be taken in the proceedings unless and until France consents to the Court’s jurisdiction in the case.

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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