



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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**Canada and the Kingdom of the Netherlands jointly institute proceedings
against the Syrian Arab Republic and request the Court
to indicate provisional measures**

THE HAGUE, 12 June 2023. On 8 June 2023, Canada and the Kingdom of the Netherlands filed a joint application instituting proceedings against the Syrian Arab Republic before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, concerning alleged violations of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the “Convention against Torture”).

In their Application, Canada and the Netherlands contend that “Syria has committed countless violations of international law, beginning at least in 2011, with its violent repression of civilian demonstrations, and continuing as the situation in Syria devolved into a protracted armed conflict”. According to the Applicants, “[t]hese violations include the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment . . . , including through abhorrent treatment of detainees, inhumane conditions in places of detention, enforced disappearances, the use of sexual and gender-based violence, and violence against children”. The Applicants claim that “[t]hese violations also include the use of chemical weapons which has been a particularly abhorrent practice to intimidate and punish the civilian population, resulting in numerous deaths, injuries and severe physical and mental suffering”.

Canada and the Netherlands seek to found the Court’s jurisdiction on Article 36, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the Court and on Article 30, paragraph 1, of the Convention against Torture, to which both Applicants and Syria are parties.

Together with the Application, Canada and the Netherlands filed a Request for the indication of provisional measures, pursuant to Article 41 of the Statute of the Court and Articles 73, 74 and 75 of the Rules of Court, “to preserve and protect the rights owed to them under the Convention against Torture, which Syria continues to violate, and protect the lives and physical and mental integrity of individuals within Syria who are currently, or are at risk of, being subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.

Pursuant to Article 74 of the Rules of Court, “[a] request for the indication of provisional measures shall have priority over all other cases”.

The [Application](#) instituting proceedings and the [Request](#) for the indication of provisional measures are 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, through judgments which have binding force and are without appeal for the parties concerned, 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 agencies of the system.

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