



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Peace Palace, Carnegieplein 2, 2517 KJ The Hague, Netherlands

Tel.: +31 (0)70 302 2323 Fax: +31 (0)70 364 9928

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Press Release

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Lithuania institutes proceedings against Belarus

THE HAGUE, 19 May 2025. Lithuania today filed an Application instituting proceedings against Belarus before the International Court of Justice with regard to a dispute relating to alleged breaches by Belarus “of its obligations under the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (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”.

The Applicant seeks to found the Court’s jurisdiction on Article 36, paragraph 1, of the [Statute of the Court](#) and on Article 20, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, to which both Lithuania and Belarus are parties.

The [Application](#) instituting proceedings 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 agencies of the system.

Information Department:

Ms Monique Legerman, First Secretary of the Court, Head of Department: +31 (0)70 302 2336
Ms Joanne Moore, Information Officer: +31 (0)70 302 2337
Email: media@icj-cij.org