

Ferney-Voltaire Model United Nations

International Court of Justice

Official Rules of Procedure

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Preamble

The International Court of Justice and its Role

The International Court of Justice was created in 1945 through the Charter of the United Nations. It is the main judicial organ of the United Nations. Its seat is at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Netherlands. Its official languages are English and French.

The Court has a twofold role: to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States (contentious cases) and to give advisory opinions (advisory procedures) on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

The Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the International Court of Justice

The Charter of the United Nations is the founding document of the International Court of Justice. The Charter deals with the Court in Article 7, paragraph 1, and Article 36, paragraph 3, as well as in Chapter XIV, Articles 92-96.

The objective of the Statute of the International Court of Justice is to organise the composition as well as the functions of the Court. This Statute is an annex and a fundamental part of the United Nations Charter.

Chapter I: Roles and Functions

I.1 Lawyers

Article 1: There are two types of lawyers: lawyers for the prosecution and lawyers for the defense.

I.1.1 Lawyers for the Prosecution

Article 2: Lawyers for the prosecution have the task of proving the guilt of the accused, considering that the Court obeys the principle of presumption of innocence. In order to do this, their evidence must convince an absolute majority (more than 50%) of the judges.

I.1.2 Lawyers for the Defense

Article 3: Lawyers for the defense have the benefit of the doubt. Therefore, they have the task of creating doubt with respect to the arguments and the evidence of the prosecution. In order to do this, they will present evidence and arguments which contradict those of the lawyers for the prosecution.

I.2 Judges

Article 4: A judge must always remain impartial and objective.

Article 5: A judge must be addressed as “Your Honour”, or as “Judge” followed by their last name.

Article 6: It is necessary that judges take notes during the debate in order to be able to judge the arguments in an objective and accurate fashion. These notes will be useful for them during the deliberation phase and the writing of the verdict.

Article 7: The judges have the responsibility to verify the validity of the evidence by way of thorough analysis.

I.3 Stenographers

Article 8: Stenographers are responsible for keeping an accurate record of all statements made in the Court. In case of any disagreement over statements which may have been made in the Court, their record prevails as factual.

I.4 The Chair

Article 9: The Chair of the Court is responsible for managing the process of debate, and guarantees the respect of the present Rules of Procedure.

Chapter II: Documents

II.1 Memorandum

Article 10: A memorandum is a document of approximately 1500 words, written by each party in order to describe their point of view. It must be based on relevant facts and judicial principles. A memorandum must include a summary of the conflict and political context, as well as a description of the facts, the type of accusation, and the sentence required.

Article 11: Each memorandum must be submitted to the Chair prior to the conference.

II.2 Stipulations

Article 12: Stipulations are a list of facts on which the two parties have come to agreement prior to the conference. Their validity is therefore not disputed during the debate.

Article 13: All stipulations must be submitted to the Chair prior to the conference.

II.3 Evidence

Article 14: Evidence must be based on facts, such as a real event or a statement by a witness. It cannot be based on a moral or subjective judgement.

Article 15: Each party must present at least six and at most fifteen pieces of evidence to the Court.

Chapter III: Debate Procedure

Article 16: The Chair will determine the division of the debate into its various steps. At the beginning of each step, the Chair will announce the time allotted for that step.

Article 17: The debate will begin with opening speeches by the lawyers. Each party will give a presentation of the situation in the form of a speech.

Article 18: Following the opening speeches, the Court will proceed to the presentation of material evidence. Each party will present at least six pieces of material evidence. Material evidence consists of documents which may be of varied nature. Their validity will be determined by the judges.

Article 20: Once the lawyers have presented the evidence, this evidence will be examined by the judges.

Article 21: Following the examination of the material evidence by the judges, the lawyers will call upon witnesses. There will be an interrogation period followed by a counter-interrogation and so on until all witnesses have been entertained.

Article 22: A leading question is defined as a question which is not neutral or which presupposes, favours or tends toward a certain response rather than a different one. Lawyers are forbidden from asking leading questions at any point during the interrogation process. Leading questions are permitted during the counter-interrogation process. During the interrogation and counter-interrogation processes, it is forbidden to ask questions which are irrelevant or which may be qualified as harassment. If one of the lawyers considers that another lawyer has broken these rules, they may declare an objection. The Chair will then decide whether or not the question is authorized.

Article 23: A set time for rebuttals will be granted to each party in order to present exclusively evidence which directly opposes the arguments of the other party.

Article 24: Witnesses and rebuttals will be followed by a set time for deliberation by the judges.

Article 25: Following the judges' deliberation, they will ask questions to the lawyers in order to clarify any uncertainties. Judges may ask leading questions if they consider it useful to the pursuit of a fair verdict.

Article 26: The judges having finished the interrogation of the lawyers, each party will be allowed to give a closing speech. During this speech, each lawyer will summarise the situation and make some final comments on it.

Article 27: The closing speeches will be followed by a final period of deliberation in order to establish the verdict. The session will end when the verdict has been established by the judges.