



PRESS RELEASE

DISPUTE CONCERNING THE DETENTION OF UKRAINIAN NAVAL VESSELS AND SERVICEMEN (UKRAINE V. THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

THE HAGUE, 5 JANUARY 2026

Postponement of Hearing on the Merits

In the arbitration under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("UNCLOS") concerning the Detention of Ukrainian Naval Vessels and Servicemen, instituted by Ukraine against the Russian Federation, the Arbitral Tribunal postponed the hearing on the merits scheduled for 8 and 9 January 2026, following the withdrawal of Professor Alexander N. Vylegzhanin (Russian Federation) from the Arbitral Tribunal on account of health reasons.

The Arbitral Tribunal rendered its decision after inviting the views of the Parties.

Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Arbitral Tribunal provides that:

1. In the event of withdrawal, incapacity or death of an arbitrator during the course of the proceedings, the vacancy shall be filled in the manner prescribed for the initial appointment of the arbitrator in question in Article 3 of Annex VII to the Convention, with the understanding that the time periods stipulated in that Article should be calculated from the date of notification to the Parties of the withdrawal, incapacity or death of the arbitrator.
2. In the event that an arbitrator is replaced in accordance with paragraph 1, the proceedings shall resume at the stage where the replaced arbitrator ceased to perform his or her functions, unless the Arbitral Tribunal decides otherwise.

The new dates for the hearing will be determined in due course and will be fixed by the Arbitral Tribunal following the completion of the replacement procedure.

Background to the Dispute

The arbitral proceedings were instituted on 1 April 2019 when Ukraine served on the Russian Federation a Notification and Statement of Claim¹ under Annex VII to UNCLOS. The Notification and Statement of Claim refers to a dispute concerning the detention of Ukrainian naval vessels and servicemen.

The Members of the Arbitral Tribunal are Judge Gudmundur Eiriksson (Iceland), as President, Sir Christopher Greenwood (United Kingdom), Judge James L. Kateka (Tanzania) and Judge Kathy-Ann Brown (Jamaica).

Further information about the proceedings is available on the PCA website at <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/229/>. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the PCA, after consultation with the Parties, will from time-to-time issue press releases, concerning the status of the proceedings. Moreover, procedural orders and decisions of the Arbitral Tribunal will be made publicly available on the website of the PCA seven days after they have been notified to the Parties. Further, any award of the Arbitral Tribunal will be made public unless both Parties agree otherwise.

¹The full title of the document is "Notification under Article 287 and Annex VII, Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and Statement of the Claim and Grounds on which it is Based".

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Background on the Permanent Court of Arbitration

The Permanent Court of Arbitration is an intergovernmental organization established by the 1899 Hague Convention on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. The PCA has 126 Contracting Parties. Headquartered at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Netherlands, the PCA facilitates arbitration, conciliation, fact-finding, and other dispute resolution proceedings among various combinations of States, State entities, intergovernmental organizations, and private parties. The PCA's International Bureau is currently administering seven inter-state arbitrations, one other inter-state proceeding, 98 arbitrations arising under bilateral or multilateral investment treaties or national investment laws, 99 arbitrations arising under contracts involving a State or other public entity, and five other proceedings. More information about the PCA can be found at www.pca-cpa.org.

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