



ICJ

Specialized Committees

Case 1
Nuclear Tests
(New Zealand v. France), 1973

Case 2
Advisory Case on the
Western Sahara, 1974

www.gtmun.gatech.edu

October 5-6, 2026

Committee
International Court
of Justice

Georgia Tech
Model United Nations

Bridging technology and diplomacy.



Georgia Tech
Model United Nations

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#GTMUN2026



Letter from the Secretary General



Esteemed delegates,

My name is Henry Bui, your Secretary General for the 2026 edition of the Georgia Tech Model United Nations Conference, also lovingly known as GTMUN. As your Secretary General, I would like to give you all a warm welcome as you begin your journey this conference cycle.

Every year at GTMUN, we see hundreds of you delegates spend hours speaking about your ideas, deliberating with others about the efficacy of solutions, and collaborating with compatriots to draft extensive resolutions. It is always impressive to see each delegate's ability to tackle these very significant issues affecting the real world today, proposing novel solutions, creatively applying international policy, and synthesizing resolutions that solve these urgent questions comprehensively and on a global scale.

I am especially excited to see everything you all will achieve this October. With over 1,000 delegates attending, this will be the largest GTMUN to date, and with it, we are bringing you 18 diverse committees to further test your abilities. Each committee has been carefully crafted to open unique perspectives and to allow each delegate to apply their skills in possibly new, unique ways. I hope that in the midst of being lost in deep research rabbit holes and hours of debate in each session, you all are satisfactorily challenged and that you all leave with joy and excitement in the work you accomplish.

Outside of the Scheller building where you will debate for two days, you will find that many of the skills you have used will be applicable to other aspects of your professional career: your ability to speak publicly, to improvise and adapt, and to act diplomatically. As a computer science student and teaching assistant, I have found that my experience in Model UN has been some of my most valuable. It has taught me to be confident in what I say, and it has taught me how to work with people with all different kinds of backgrounds and perspectives. One of our core values at Georgia Tech is that we thrive on diversity, and that is something that shines strongly at GTMUN.

As you prepare for committee, I want you to remember the most important thing you should get out of GTMUN—even more important than demonstrating your abilities or honing your skills for your professional career—is having fun. Not every speech has to be perfect, and not every unmoderated caucus has to go your way! Take the opportunity to try eccentric things in your speeches and diplomatic approach, and take the opportunity to meet new people. Do not forget that you are surrounded by many others who have similar goals, aspirations, and interests as you do! You might find a future close friend. Though competing is quite fulfilling (and the prospect of awarding is exciting), it can also be very stressful, so it is critical to find joy in what you are doing.

Once again, we, the GTMUN Secretariat, are excited to see everything you will achieve.

Good luck & have fun,

Henry Bui

Secretary General of GTMUN 2026



What is a *Case Brief*?

Unlike a traditional position paper found in a General Assembly, a case brief is an ICJ specific document which aims to provide a condensed overview of a specific case. An ideal case brief will provide a description of the case with pertinent information and precedents, a case ruling, and the international implications of the case.

Case Brief Rubric

Expectations for your *Case Brief*

Instead of a traditional position paper, delegates of the ICJ committee will be expected to submit (modified) case briefs. Delegates are dealing with real cases so having written a case brief will better prepare delegates for the committee. Writing case briefs are also great practice for students who plan to go into law related fields. These briefs are also for delegates to reference throughout the committee. It is recommended that delegates bring their case briefs printed with them to committee. Each case brief will consist of 4 sections per case. You have a maximum of two pages per case.

In order to be eligible for awards, delegates must submit two case briefs (one for each case in the committee) and receive a total score of at least 30/50.

Our AI Policy

Delegates are expected to be drafting documents during the span of the conference using their own thoughts and ideas. As such, GTMUN *does not permit* plagiarism, pre-writing, or the use of generative AI during conferences.

- Plagiarism is the act of using another individual's work or writing and passing it as one's own without proper citation or credit. This includes writing from other delegates in the committee or from online sources.
- Pre-writing is the act of writing material for in-conference documents (e.g., working papers, draft resolutions, crisis directives) ahead of the conference. While doing prior research and bringing research notes is permitted (and encouraged), these notes should not contain text that is intended to be directly copied and pasted into a document. Suspicion of pre-writing is subject to the chair's discretion.
- Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini) cannot be used to partially or wholly write a conference document. GTMUN recognizes the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence engines as a tool for research. Though discouraged, GTMUN accepts the use of such tools to locate resources and brainstorm starting solutions. However, generative AI must not be used to generate content for the conference, such as in-conference documents and position papers. GTMUN encourages the development of creative, unique solutions in committee and knows delegates are more than capable of producing such ideas without relying on generative AI.

Delegates that violate the writing policy will face consequences that may include disqualification from awards.



Formatting Requirements

- 12-point font, double-spaced Times New Roman
- 1-2 pages per case (excluding Works Cited page)
- A Works Cited page with citations in MLA format
- Files submitted in .pdf format with title "GTMUN26_ICJ_{assigned position name}.pdf"
- e.g., "GTMUN26_ICJ_PeterTomka.pdf" or "GTMUN26_ICJ_RonnyAbraham.pdf"

Case Brief Formatting

Document Formatting

Start with each topic page with:

- Committee: International Court of Justice
- Delegation: [Name of delegation]
- Name: [Name of case/description]
- Court: [Name of court]
- Date: [Date(s) of case]

Case 1

1. Issue

- i. What question is the court trying to answer? (This sentence is essentially the thesis that you build the rest of the case brief on)
- ii. What is the legal significance of this case? What practical factors need to be con-sidered? How can this decision impact other situations?

2. Rules

- i. What are the broader international laws and conventions at play? What current agreements/treaties should be considered in this case? Is there a precedent?

3. Application

- i. Using the laws/treaties referenced in the previous section, what are your arguments? What would be your ruling? Does it differ from the actual ruling of the case?

4. Conclusion

- i. What are some areas you agree or differ from the case? Why is this case important in the setting to the countries involved and in greater international affairs? Do you agree with any of the judgements written?

[Repeat 1-4 for Case 2]

Citations

	Great (5)	Good (4)	Adequate (3)	Poor (1)
Issues	- The issue statement completely encompasses central aspects of the case - Detailed description of broader case information (including practical impacts and considerations of the case)	- The issue statement mostly encompasses central aspects of the case - Basic description of broader case information (including practical impacts and considerations of the case)	- The issue statement is references some aspects of the case - Minimal description of broader case information (including practical impacts and considerations of the case)	- The issue statement does not reference central aspects of the case - Unclear, incorrect, or missing description of case specifics - Unclear or incorrect description of broader case information
Rules	- Detailed description of existing information pertinent to the case (including customary, treaty, case law) - Several references to statements from appropriate documents or officials - Detailed description of any relevant precedent(s)	- Basic description of existing international frameworks pertinent to the case (including customary, treaty, case law) - Some references to statements from appropriate documents or officials - Basic description of any relevant precedent(s)	- Minimal description of existing international frameworks pertinent to the case (including customary, treaty, case law) - Few references to statements from appropriate documents or officials - Minimal description of any relevant precedent(s)	- Unclear, incorrect, or missing description of existing international frameworks pertinent to the case (including customary, treaty, case law) - No references to statements from appropriate documents or officials - Incorrect or missing description of any relevant precedent(s)
Application	- Provides a clear ruling on the case - Arguments are clear and logical and provide support for given ruling - Supports reasoning for ruling by applying existing law and case facts in a logical and methodical manner	- Provides a clear ruling on the case - Arguments are mostly clear and logical and provide support for given ruling - Somewhat supports reasoning for ruling by applying law and case facts	- Provides a clear ruling on the case - Arguments attempts to provide support for given ruling - Attempts to support reasoning for ruling by applying existing law and case facts	- Missing or unclear ruling on the case - Arguments are irrelevant and do not support ruling - Missing or unclear reasoning for ruling
Conclusion	- Detailed explanation of country's stance on the case - Detailed description of the case's implications on international law overall	- Basic explanation of country's stance on the case - Basic description of the case's implications on international law overall	- Minimal explanation of country's stance on the case - Minimal description of the case's implications on international law overall	- Unclear or missing explanation of country's stance on the case - Unclear or missing description of the case's implications on international law overall
Mechanics	- No grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors - Numerous and diverse citations from appropriate sources	- Few grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors - Citations from appropriate sources	- Some grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes - One or two citations - Cites inappropriate sources	- Many grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes - No citations from appropriate sources

The History of the ICJ

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Its creation in 1945 marked the culmination of centuries of efforts to resolve conflicts between states through peaceful, rule-based mechanisms rather than war or coercion.

The idea of settling disputes peacefully is not new. It can be traced back to ancient civilizations. Mediation and arbitration, methods that involve neutral third parties helping to resolve conflicts, have been put into practice from the time of the first civilizations of the Indus Valley. Arbitration also featured in maritime customs in medieval Europe and was sometimes used by the Papacy to mediate between Christian states. These early practices laid the groundwork for more formal methods of dispute resolution. In the modern era, arbitration evolved significantly with the creation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in 1899, following the First Hague Peace Conference. This marked the beginning of structured international legal processes to settle disputes. However, the PCA was not a standing court and had limitations in terms of consistency and enforcement.

After World War I, the League of Nations established the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) in 1920, the first permanent international court with a defined set of rules and judges. Although the PCIJ made important contributions to international law, it was ultimately dissolved after World War II due to the collapse of the League of Nations. The ICJ was established in 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began functioning in 1946. It replaced the PCIJ and inherited much of its structure and jurisdiction, though under a new framework. The ICJ is based in The Hague, Netherlands, and settles legal disputes submitted by states and gives advisory opinions on legal questions referred by UN organs and specialized agencies. Article 33 of the UN Charter outlines peaceful methods for resolving international disputes, including negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, and regional arrangements. The ICJ employs judicial settlement, a process that—unlike arbitration—is governed by strict procedural rules and a permanent bench of elected judges.

Today, the ICJ plays a vital role in maintaining international peace and security through law, offering states a peaceful forum to resolve conflicts based on legal principles rather than political or military power.

Disclaimer

Model United Nations provides an opportunity for delegates to engage diplomatically with topics of global importance and explore possibilities for conflict resolution in a meaningful way. Many of the topics at hand may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter. We ask delegates to be respectful and professional when engaging with their committee and communicating with fellow delegates and GTMUN Conference staff. The content warning below is meant to warn you of potentially controversial topics that are present in the content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of the committee (e.g. debate, speeches, directives), so that you can prepare yourself before reading this background guide and participating in the committee. At GTMUN, we take equity violations very seriously and require delegates to fully comply with our equity guidelines. Failure to do so will result in an immediate disqualification from awards, and you may be asked to leave the conference. Please remain respectful in committee, and avoid overgeneralizations as well as take into account individual differences and contexts during your speeches. If you have any questions regarding our equity guidelines, we encourage you to contact one of our staff members. If, because of this committee's content warning, you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to our staff via email at gtmunconference@gmail.com.

Legal Disclaimer

This background guide is an academic compilation created for the sole purpose of supporting delegates in their preparation for this Model United Nations conference, GTMUN XXVII. It draws from a variety of doctrinal and non-doctrinal sources, including scholarly research, legal commentary, and accessible interpretations of international law. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and clarity, this document is not exhaustive and should not be treated as a comprehensive authority on the subject matter. Delegates are strongly encouraged to use this guide as a starting point for deeper, independent research. The information provided serves only as a foundational framework to help participants understand the key legal questions and context relevant to the committee. This document does not reflect the personal views or ideologies of the GTMUN Executive Board, the conference secretariat, the School of International Affairs, Georgia Tech, or any affiliated institution or individual. It is intended solely for educational purposes and has been prepared in the best academic interest of the conference.

Please note that any references to real-life individuals, governments, or organizations are made purely for the purpose of academic simulation. Additionally,

any statements attributed to real-world witnesses or experts are fictionalized and should not be interpreted as genuine. They are used only to facilitate legal analysis and debate within the scope of the simulation. Any fictional witnesses should not be interpreted as references to real-life individuals.

Key Terms and Acronyms

Advocate <i>ad·vo·cate</i> <i>noun</i>	A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy. In this committee, advocates will argue one side of our two cases. Advocates conduct direct examinations, opening statements, etc.
Affidavit <i>af·fi·da·vit</i> <i>noun</i>	A written statement confirmed by oath or affirmation, for use as evidence in court. In this committee, witnesses will come with an affidavit for use in court. This affidavit will be the sum of and whole knowledge of that witness, used to prepare direct examinations and cross examinations.
Applicant <i>ap·pli·cant</i> <i>noun</i>	The party in an ICJ hearing who brings a case against another party. In other words, the state who is suing another state is referred to as the applicant. See Respondent .
Objection <i>ob·jec·tion</i> <i>noun</i>	A formal protest raised by a party during a hearing, against the other party's evidence during direct examination or cross examination. In this committee, objections are to be made by advocates when they believe the other party's questions or testimony violate one of the rules of evidence as outlined in the Objections section of this background guide.
Overruled <i>o·ver·ruled</i> <i>verb</i>	An objection is overruled when the judge of a hearing, in this committee one of the delegates serving the role of judge, upon hearing an objection, believes the made objection is invalid and that the evidence presented does not violate the rules of evidence which the objection outlines. When an objection is overruled, the testimony stands. See Objection .

Respondent | *re·spond·ent* |
noun

The party in an ICJ hearing who the case is brought against. In other words, the state who is being sued by another state is referred to as the respondent. See **Applicant**.

Strike | *strike* | *verb*

In this committee, evidence from a witness will be stricken (past participle of strike) from the record if an objection is raised to said evidence and that objection is sustained. Evidence that is stricken from the record should not be taken into consideration when the judges decide which party to rule in favor of at the end of committee. See **Objection and Sustained**.

Sustained | *sus·tained* |
adjective

An objection is sustained when the presider of a hearing, in this committee the President of the ICJ, upon hearing an objection, believes the made objection is valid and that the evidence presented violates the rules of evidence which the objection outlines. When an objection is sustained, the offending testimony is stricken from the record. See **Objection and Strike**.

Format of Committee

Introduction

This section of the background guide will outline and explain the format of our committee and what you will actually do as an advocate and judge during our ICJ committee. It's important that you understand this section well and conceptualize what will be expected of you during the conference! Our committee will hear two cases, the details of which can be found later on in

this background guide (See Case 1 and Case 2). Based on your position assignments, you will serve as an advocate for one of these cases and a judge for the other case. In the role of advocate, you are to present the argument for one of the parties in your case. Which party you will represent is also determined by your position assignment. As part of your presentation of your party's argument, you and your fellow advocates representing that party must work together to present an opening statement, direct examinations of your party's witnesses, cross examinations of the other party's witnesses, and a closing argument. As an advocate, your party will have 2 witnesses for your side. These witnesses are who you will conduct a direct examination on and the opposing party will conduct a cross examination on. More details on the role of advocate are included later in this section. In the role of judge, you are to listen to the evidence offered by the advocates from either party and prepare an opinion at the end of the committee ruling in favor of one party over the other. When preparing this opinion, you will collaborate with other judges to write an opinion while other judges may collaborate to write an opinion that favors the other party. The standing decision of the court will be the opinion which has more judges as co-authors. While listening to the evidence offered by the advocates of a case, you will also have to rule on objections that the advocates make. It will be your job to sustain or overrule an objection upon hearing one or two back and forth arguments from either side. Your decision on the matter is important since it impacts whether or not the said evidence can be used in the decision of all the judges. More details on the role of judge are included later in this section.

Committee Timeline

Before we further explain the role of advocates and judges, here's a timeline of what our committee is intended to look like. You will spend the first committee session preparing direct examinations and cross examinations as well as opening statements and closing arguments. The advocate who will present the opening statement and the advocate who will present the closing argument must be made clear to the chair by the end of the first committee session. The first committee session will also decide the hearing order. Committee session II will hear the first case on the

hearing order and committee session III will hear the second. Committee session IV will be where the judges of both cases will collaborate to prepare an opinion as well as FunMUN! See the more detailed timeline below.

Committee Session I

- Open the ICJ
- Decide Hearing Order
- Split advocates for both cases and both parties per case into their respective teams
- Advocates prepare direct examinations with the witnesses present and cross examinations with using the affidavits of opposing party's witnesses
- Decide which delegates will perform the opening statement and closing argument

Committee Session II

- Opening statement from applicant of first case on the hearing order (3 mins)
- Opening statement from respondent of first case on the hearing order (3 mins)
- Direct examination of applicant's first witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of applicant's first witness (5 mins)
- Direct examination of applicant's second witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of applicant's second witness (5 mins)
- Direct examination of respondent's first witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of respondent's first witness (5 mins)
- Direct examination of respondent's second witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of respondent's second witness (5 mins)
- Closing argument from applicant of first case on the hearing order (4 mins 30 seconds)
- Closing argument from respondent of first case on the hearing order (4 mins 30 seconds)

Committee Session III

- Opening statement from applicant of second case on the hearing order (3 mins)

- Opening statement from respondent of second case on the hearing order (3 mins)
- Direct examination of applicant's first witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of applicant's first witness (5 mins)
- Direct examination of applicant's second witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of applicant's second witness (5 mins)
- Direct examination of respondent's first witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of respondent's first witness (5 mins)
- Direct examination of respondent's second witness (5 mins)
- Cross examination of respondent's second witness (5 mins)
- Closing argument from applicant of second case on the hearing order (4 mins 30 seconds)
- Closing argument from respondent of second case on the hearing order (4 mins 30 seconds)

Committee Session IV

- Split judges for both cases
- Judges draft their opinions in groups for ruling in favor of one party over the other
- Explanation of decision is presented by one judge from every opinion, in hearing order
- Decision of the court in both cases is published
- FunMUN!

Role of Advocate

As an advocate, your job will be to present evidence that supports your party's claim in the case. You must use the witnesses to show why the evidence supports a ruling in favor of the applicant or respondent. Advocates will work together in teams to present a case. These teams will be assigned based on your position designations, not chosen during committee. Within these teams, you will have four ways to present your argument: opening statements, direct examinations, cross examinations, and closing statements. From your team, one advocate will present the opening statement, one advocate will present the closing argument, and every

advocate will ask questions as part of direct and cross examinations.

Opening statements will have 3 minutes allotted per statement for the advocate from either party. There are two opening statements per case the committee will hear (so four total opening statements throughout the conference). The advocate who will perform the opening statement for each party should be made clear to the chair of the committee, formally the president of the ICJ, at the end of **Committee Session I**. An opening statement should be an introduction of the case your team of advocates is about to present. You should use future tense throughout your statement to achieve this effect. EX. "Today, we will show you...." Your goal during opening statements is to prepare a continuous speech that introduces which witnesses you will call and what those witnesses will show the court through their direct examinations.

Direct examinations will be the core of your case during this committee. To prepare a direct examination, conference staffers will serve as witnesses for you to ask questions. Each witness will be a member of the GTMUN XXVII staff, NOT another delegate. These witnesses will come with something called an affidavit, which is a sworn statement fictionally written by that witness. It's important to note that if the witness is a real individual or has a real-life counterpart, none of the statements in their affidavit are actual representations of that person. This affidavit will be what you should draw your direct examination questions from. It will be the sum total of that witnesses' knowledge. If you ask the witness something that isn't in their affidavit, that is subject to an objection. Direct examination is a series of questions you will ask the witness. They should be open-ended, meaning you let the witness answer a whole sentence or even paragraph based on your question. Open-ended questions include:

- "What did you see?"
- "Could you introduce yourself?"
- "What did that tell us?"

Direct examination should be roughly scripted during **Committee Session I** so that the witness is aware of what questions you will be asking them. Direct examination questions are your party's chance to get out the evidence that supports your claim. The witness affidavits will contain carefully chosen information that can harm or help your side, direct examination questions should bring out the information that helps your case and possibly preemptively address the information that hurts your case. Each party will have 2 witnesses on their side. These are the witnesses your team of advocates will direct examine and the team of advocates from the opposing party will cross examine. You will have 5 minutes per direct examination. Time is stopped for objections and resumed when the objection has been sustained

or overruled.

Cross examinations will be your primary tool to discredit the witnesses of the opposing party. Although you will prepare cross examinations during **Committee Session I**, you will not have the witness themselves to do so. Since cross examinations are meant to be a surprise to the witness, you will have the witness's affidavit only. The goal of cross examination is to catch the witness off guard and attack their credibility, which is why your cross examination questions shouldn't be shared with the opposing party or the person playing the witness you will cross examine. Cross examination questions are closed-ended or "leading" questions. This means they will ask for a yes or no answer. Based on the affidavit, you should already know the witness's response to a question, allowing you as the advocate to do most of the talking. Leading questions include:

- "You lied to the authorities, didn't you?"
- "You knew this was happening?"
- "You'd lose your investment if this law passed, right?"

These questions will build on top of one another in order for you to bring out the information in the other party's witness's affidavit that supports your side and attacks their witness's credibility. A build-up of cross examination questions can follow a structure similar to:

- You invested 20 million dollars into this oil pipeline?
- "Yes"
- That was a lot of money for you?
- "I guess, yes"
- If pipelines were outlawed, you'd lose that money right?
- "I thought so"
- And you voted against outlawing them?
- "Yes I did"
- Even though you knew it might destroy the national park?
- Yes"

These questions are rough in nature but hopefully illustrate the flow of a cross examination, where you lay the foundation for why a witness acted in a certain way and then call them out on it. The ideal response to a cross examination is a simple yes or no. Cross examination should also explore why a witness might be

biased, reasons can include personal relationships, monetary loss or gain, and past experiences. You will have 5 minutes per cross examination. Time is stopped for objections and resumed when the objection has been sustained or overruled.

Example of Direct and Cross (Marty McCulloch)

This is a good example of the direct and cross examination of a witness from an old Mock Trial case. Pay attention to how they ask questions and the difference between direct and cross examination. Don't mind the substance of the objections they make in this video, since we will use a different format. What you should notice is how objections interrupt the witness and are argued to the judge. As a reminder, direct examination should be open-ended questions and NOT include leading questions whereas a cross examination should be leading questions and NOT include open-ended questions that allow the witness to respond with more than just a yes or no.

Closing arguments will have 4 minutes and 30 seconds allotted per statement for the advocate from either party. There are two closing arguments per case the committee will hear (so four total closing statements throughout the conference). The advocate who will perform the closing argument for each party should be made clear to the chair of the committee, formally the president of the ICJ, at the end of **Committee Session I**. A closing argument should be a recap of the case your team of advocates just presented. As the advocate delivering a closing argument, you have the important job of recapping and connecting the dots between every piece of evidence. It's encouraged that you use emotion and persuasive language throughout your closing argument. You should use past tense throughout your statement to achieve this effect. EX. "Today, we showed you...." Your goal during closing arguments is to prepare a continuous speech that convinces the judges to rule in favor of your party when considering the cumulative evidence presented. Draw upon what your side showed through both direct examinations and the cross examinations of the other side's witnesses. Closing arguments also offer you the unique chance to directly critique the other party's argument and point out its logical flaws. Feel free to directly contend the other party's statements and evidence. Keep in mind that you should only critique their evidence, not the advocates themselves.

Objections are an important aspect of our committee's hearings. In the next section, you will find a list of objections which you can make during the other party's testimony. For example, if the other side is conducting a direct examination of their own witnesses, you can make an objection. If the other side is conducting a cross examination of one of your party's witnesses, you can also make an objection. The nature of each specific objection will be made clearer in the **Objections** section of this background guide, but how to actually make one is consistent. If you believe

some part of the other party's evidence violates one of the rules set out in the objections, you are to stand up and shout "Objection, _____" with the blank being which specific objection you're making. For example, "Objection, need for personal knowledge." At this point, the time is stopped for the direct or cross examination and one of the judges (selected from those who raise their placard) will hear out why you believe something was objectionable and hear a response from the advocate who asked the direct or cross question as to why it was not objectionable. The back and forth explanations between the advocate making an objection and the advocate who asked the objected question as to why certain evidence is or isn't in violation of a rule of evidence is known as an objection battle. If an objection is sustained by the judge—i.e., the evidence was objectionable—then that piece of evidence will be removed from the record and not taken into consideration. If an objection is overruled, it will stay in. It's important to make objections when you see them and to be confident in your objections! As a reminder, objection arguments should be directed to the judge, not your opposing advocate. You cannot make objections during opening statements or closing arguments.

Exhibits are another important part of being an advocate. Each witness will have certain pieces of evidence that they're familiar with and can testify about. It is up to you whether or not you want to use these exhibits to build your case. An exhibit could include a photograph, a police report, or even a social media post. Exhibits are physical evidence and are subject to the rules of evidence. You can bring in evidence during direct or cross examination. When bringing in evidence, you must first ask the witness to identify the piece of evidence and confirm that they know what it is. Each witness affidavit will include a section where the witness lists out each exhibit they are familiar with. You must say something along the lines of "Party moved exhibit 1 into evidence." Time will be stopped and the chair will ask if any of the advocates from the opposing side have an objection to the exhibit being admitted. If there is an objection according to the rules of evidence, a judge will rule on whether that exhibit should be allowed in. Exhibits not let in on one witness can still be admitted on a different witness later. Exhibits not admitted by the end of a hearing shall not be considered in deliberations and for all purposes will be constructively not known to the judges.

Although you do have formal position assignments for ICJ, they will NOT factor into your role as advocate. For the case in which you are an advocate, you should not bring in the background or political stance of your assigned position.

Role of Judge

As a judge for one of the cases, you will have the important role of deciding the final ruling of the court. However, before that happens, all the judges will sit on a panel and hear out the advocates present their case. During either **Committee**

Session II or **Committee Session III**, you will have to intently listen to every part of the hearing from opening statements all the way to closing arguments. During this time, you should make notes and record any facts you deem relevant. You must use those notes at the end of the session to form your decision. You will also have to rule on objections made during direct or cross examinations. When an objection is made, time on that direct examination or cross examination will be stopped and all judges who wish to rule on that objection will raise their placards. The chair of the committee, formally the President of the ICJ, will pick one of the judges to rule on the objection. As a judge chosen to rule, you must ask either side for their argument and allow back and forth before ruling as to whether you want to sustain or overrule the objection. It's important to hear out both sides and earnestly listen to their arguments. You'll start with the side who made the objection before going back and forth. Your best tool when hearing an objection battle is the phrase "Response from the applicant/respondent?" to further the back and forth. Do not let more than two or three responses from either party be heard before you sustain or overrule. Objections should not take too long.

Committee Session IV is where you will do most of your work as a judge. In the final session, everyone will assume the role of judge and work on drafting an opinion on the case they heard as judge in the previous committee sessions. You will split up into two sections of the room so that your decision as a panel of judges is not known to the other panel, who served as advocates in the case you will judge. As a group of judges, you will come together to write an opinion on the case. This document should be formatted like an ICJ Judgement and will not have a page limit or minimum requirement. Decide which side you will rule in favor of and work with the judges ruling in a similar fashion to draft your judgement. At the end of the opinion writing period, the chair will announce which party the court ruled in favor of. This will be the party with more judges as co-authors on the judgement ruling for them.

Expectations

Delegates are expected to come to committee with an understanding of the arguments presented in the actual case but also separate research and arguments that they plan to present in committee. Delegates are NOT allowed to just present the arguments used in the case previously. As judges, delegates should also write original judgements based on what is said in committee. The rulings that were given on the cases in real life do NOT impact the rulings given in committee. Each case will take place in the time that the application was filed and the arguments were presented in real life. Do NOT reference future "unknown" events.

This committee is classified as advanced and preparation heavy. Delegates will be expected to have a good grasp on the correct use of objections prior to arriving at

committee. Delegates are also expected to have researched past what is mentioned in the background guide, having good understanding of the background information and other relevant international law at play.

As a reminder, the case descriptions in this background guide are purposefully sparse. For the case brief, you are expected to do outside research. Evidence you will use during committee will be provided during the conference. This background guide is designed to help you understand the flow of an advanced committee and become familiar with the process of a hearing.

Objections

When evidence is presented before any court, it must adhere to a set of rules. These rules ensure that evidence is authentic, verifiable, and understandable to the jury or judges. This principle will carry on to our committee in the form of set rules of evidence and the objections mechanic.

Objections are how an advocate draws the court's attention to a piece of evidence violating the aforementioned rules. In plain terms, "calling out" the other party for violating the rules of evidence. Objections are made by an advocate during the other party's conduction of direct examination or cross examination. An advocate should make an objection when they believe the testimony of the opposing party's witness or the form of the opposing advocate's question violates one of the rules of evidence.

Objections are made in our committee by standing up and interrupting the opposing party's direct or cross examination with a loud "Objection, your honor!" When an objection is made, the time remaining for the current direct or cross examination is stopped until a judge has ruled on the objection and the questions resume.

Objections should be made in a timely fashion, close to when the offending testimony was actually spoken. An objection made too long after the offending testimony may be considered untimely at the chair's discretion. As explained in the Key Terms and Format of Committee sections, objections in our committee will be ruled upon by a judge and may be ruled as sustained or overruled. The former favoring the party making the objection and the latter favoring the party conducting the direct examination or cross examination. More details on how objections will be debated can be found in the "Role of Advocate" part of Format of Committee. Now we get to what the rules of evidence are and which objections this committee will use. This committee will not draw from ICJ official procedure, but instead opt to use a modified version of the United States Federal Rules of Evidence for the purposes of objections. This is due to the Federal Rules of Evidence's clarity and relative ease of access. See below the rules of evidence for this committee and a provided example of objections to be made for each. These will be in the form of

comments that explain the rules and what might violate them. Any vague or unclear language in these rules is largely purposeful and designed to allow more than one interpretation for whether or not a piece of evidence violates said rule.

Rules of Evidence

Rule 101. Definition of Evidence

Evidence is defined as any testimony that a witness produces on stand during the course of a hearing. No weight imbalance should be granted to evidence produced during direct examination over cross examination or in the opposite fashion. Should evidence be admitted;

- a. Its weight should be decided alone by the judges of a hearing;
- b. It cannot later be retracted except by discretion of the chair;
- c. It need not be wholly or partially taken into account in a judge's decision.

Rule 102. Purpose

These rules of evidence should be construed so as to administer every proceeding fairly, eliminate unjustifiable expense and delay, and promote the development of evidence law, to the end of ascertaining the truth and securing a just determination.

Rule 103. Ruling on Evidence

- A. A. Admitted Evidence. In the case of evidence being contested by means of objection, it may be admitted the record;
 - i. if the ruling admitted evidence by overruling an objection;
 - ii. a party, on the record, timely objects or moves to strike; and
 - iii. states the specific ground, unless it was apparent from the context;
- B. Excluded Evidence. In the case of evidence being contested by means of objection, it may be excluded from the record;
 - i. if the ruling excluded evidence by sustaining an objection;
 - ii. a party, a party informs the court of its substance; and
 - iii. provides an offer of proof or otherwise states the specific ground, unless it was apparent from the context;
- C. Preventing the Judges from Factoring Inadmissible Evidence. To the extent practicable, the court must conduct a hearing so that inadmissible evidence is not suggested to the judges in any way to be a relevant factor in their decision.

EXPLANATION ON EVIDENCE: These rules explain what evidence actually is in our committee. Evidence can be excluded from the record through objections. Excluded evidence shouldn't factor into the judges' decision. In our committee, the three rules above typically won't be used during actual objection battles. They are simply to introduce the concept of evidence and provide a formal definition.

Rule 401. Test for Relevant Evidence

Evidence is relevant if:

- A. it has any tendency to make a fact more or less probable than it would be without the evidence; and
- B. the fact is of consequence in determining the action.

Rule 402. General Admissibility of Relevant Evidence

Relevant evidence is admissible unless any of the following provides otherwise:

- A. these rules;
- B. the chair at their discretion; or
- C. the background guide case materials.

Irrelevant evidence is not admissible.

Rule 403. Excluding Relevant Evidence for Prejudice, Confusion, Waste of Time, or Other Reasons

The court may exclude relevant evidence if its probative value is substantially outweighed by a danger of one or more of the following: unfair prejudice, confusing the issues, misleading the judges, undue delay, wasting time, or needlessly presenting cumulative evidence.

EXPLANATION ON RELEVANCE: These rules explain that in order for evidence to be admitted into the court, it must be relevant. This means evidence must relate to the case and make a fact more or less likely. There will be things in a witness's affidavit that have nothing to do with the case. It's up to you to object when something like that gets brought in during direct examination. Rule 403 clarifies that even though something is relevant, it can still be objected to and not brought into court. Examples include when something is more prejudicial than probative, meaning it would influence the judges by being overly graphic or emotional more than it would help determine the truth and needlessly cumulative, when evidence repeats something already been said and provides no new information.

Rule 404. Character Evidence; Crimes or Other Acts

A. A. Character Evidence.

- i. Prohibited Uses. Evidence of a person's character or character trait is not admissible to prove that on a particular occasion the person acted in accordance with the character or trait.
- ii. Exceptions for a Witness. Evidence of a witness's character may be admitted under Rules 607 and 608.

B. Crimes, Wrongs, or Other Acts.

- i. Prohibited Uses. Evidence of a crime, wrong, or other act is not admissible to prove a person's character in order to show that on a particular occasion the person acted in accordance with the character trait.

EXPLANATION ON CHARACTER EVIDENCE: This rule explains that evidence of a person's, usually a witness, character trait can't be used to say that they acted in accordance with that character trait on any particular occasion. For example, if evidence is brought into court to say that someone is clumsy, you can't insinuate that they caused an accident due to that character trait. As with most things in law, there's exceptions to this principle found in rules 607 and 608 found later in the rules of evidence. To explain briefly, rules 607 and 608 say that the character trait of truthfulness can be brought under question for any witness.

Rule 602. Need for Personal Knowledge

A witness may not testify to a matter unless evidence is introduced sufficient to support a finding that the witness has personal knowledge of the matter. Evidence to prove personal knowledge may, but need not, consist of the witness's own testimony.

EXPLANATION ON NEED FOR PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE: This rule explains that for a witness to testify about something, they need to have personal knowledge on the matter. For example, a witness can't talk about the legislative process of a neighboring country if they've never visited, never done research, or don't know anyone from that country. This is the core of the "Need For Personal Knowledge" objection. The second part of the rule also clarifies that you need to provide evidence showing how a witness knows about something. For example, an eyewitness to a crime can't say they saw the murderer before first providing evidence that they were there at the scene of the crime and were clearly able to

see what happened. This leads to another, very common objection known as “Lack of Foundation” where a witness must first lay foundation as to how they know something before testifying about it.

Rule 607. Who May Impeach a Witness

Any party, including the party that called the witness, may attack the witness’s credibility.

Rule 608. A Witness’s Character for Truthfulness or Untruthfulness

- A. Reputation or Opinion Evidence. A witness’s credibility may be attacked or supported by testimony about the witness’s reputation for having a character for truthfulness or untruthfulness, or by testimony in the form of an opinion about that character. But evidence of truthful character is admissible only after the witness’s character for truthfulness has been attacked
- B. Specific Instances of Conduct. Extrinsic evidence is not admissible to prove specific instances of a witness’s conduct in order to attack or support the witness’s character for truthfulness.

EXPLANATION ON CREDIBILITY AND CHARACTER FOR TRUTHFULNESS:

These rules explain that any party in a case may attack any witness’s credibility. In other words, provide evidence that a witness has lied in the past or may not be telling the truth in court. This can be done by showing a witness’s motive to testify, past actions, or general character. The second part of rule 608 says that extrinsic evidence, something outside of the witness’s statement, isn’t admissible for this purpose.

Rule 701. Opinion Testimony by Lay Witnesses

For a witness, testimony in the form of an opinion is limited to one that is:

- A. rationally based on the witness’s perception;
- B. helpful to clearly understanding the witness’s testimony or to determining a fact in issue; and
- C. not based on scientific, technical, or other specialized knowledge

EXPLANATION ON OPINION TESTIMONY: This rule says a witness can’t provide an opinion during their testimony. Witnesses can tell the court what they saw, what happened to them, or even what they think happened – but they can’t provide a direct opinion. Unless that opinion is based on a rationally based perception, helpful to understand the witness’ testimony, and not based in specialized knowledge, it

can't be admitted as evidence. If you're familiar with rules of evidence, you might recognize that we've excluded rules on expert witnesses. For the purposes of the ICJ, expert witnesses are not recognized and are not awarded special privileges.

Rule 801. Definitions That Apply to This Article; Exclusions from Hearsay

- A. Statement. "Statement" means a person's oral assertion, written assertion, or nonverbal conduct, if the person intended it as an assertion.
- B. Declarant. "Declarant" means the person who made the statement.
- C. Hearsay. "Hearsay" means a statement that:
 - i. the declarant does not make while testifying at the current hearing; and
 - ii. a party offers into evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted in the statement.

Rule 802. The Rule Against Hearsay

Hearsay is not admissible unless any of the following provides otherwise:

- A. these rules; or
- B. a ruling from the chair that permits specific hearsay for the purpose of constructive debate.

Rule 803. Exceptions to the Rule Against Hearsay

The following are not excluded by the rule against hearsay:

- A. Present Sense Impression. A statement describing or explaining an event or condition, made while or immediately after the declarant perceived it.
- B. Excited Utterance. A statement relating to a startling event or condition, made while the declarant was under the stress of excitement that it caused.
- C. Then-Existing Mental, Emotional, or Physical Condition. A statement of the declarant's then-existing state of mind (such as motive, intent, or plan) or emotional, sensory, or physical condition (such as mental feeling, pain, or bodily health), but not including a statement of memory or belief to prove the fact remembered or believed unless it relates to the validity or terms of the declarant's will.
- D. Statement Made for Medical Diagnosis or Treatment. A statement that:
 - i. is made for – and is reasonably pertinent to – medical diagnosis or treatment; and

- ii. describes medical history; past or present symptoms or sensations; their inception; or their general cause.
- E. Recorded Recollection. A record that:
 - i. is on a matter the witness once knew about but now cannot recall well enough to testify fully and accurately;
 - ii. was made or adopted by the witness when the matter was fresh in the witness's memory; and
 - iii. accurately reflects the witness's knowledge.
- F. Records of a Regularly Conducted Activity. A record of an act, event, condition, opinion, or diagnosis if:
 - i. the record was made at or near the time by – or from information transmitted by – someone with knowledge;
 - ii. the record was kept in the course of a regularly conducted activity of a business, organization, occupation, or calling, whether or not for profit;
 - iii. making the record was a regular practice of that activity;
 - iv. neither the source of information nor the method or circumstances of preparation indicate a lack of trustworthiness.
- G. Absence of a Record of Regularly Conducted Activity. Evidence that a matter is not included in a record described in paragraph (f) if:
 - i. the evidence is admitted to prove that the matter did not occur or exist;
 - ii. a record was regularly kept for a matter of that kind; and
 - iii. neither the possible source of the information nor other circumstances indicate a lack of trustworthiness.
- H. Public Records. A record or statement of a public office if it sets out:
 - i. the office's activities;
 - ii. a matter observed while under a legal duty to report, but not including, in a criminal case, a matter observed by law-enforcement personnel; or
 - iii. in a civil case or against the government in a criminal case, factual findings from a legally authorized investigation; and
 - iv. neither the source of information nor other circumstances indicate lack of trustworthiness.
- I. Absence of a Public Record. Testimony – or a certification under Rule 902 – that

a diligent search failed to disclose a public record or statement if the testimony or certification is admitted to prove that:

- i. i. the record or statement does not exist; or
- ii. ii. a matter did not occur or exist, if a public office regularly kept a record or statement for a matter of that kind.

J. Market Reports and Similar Commercial Publications. Market quotations, lists, directories, or other compilations that are generally relied on by the public or by persons in particular occupations.

K. Reputation Concerning Character. A reputation among a person's associates or in the community concerning the person's character.

Rule 807. Residual Exception

Under the following conditions, a hearsay statement is not excluded by the rule against hearsay even if the statement is not admissible under a hearsay exception in Rule 803:

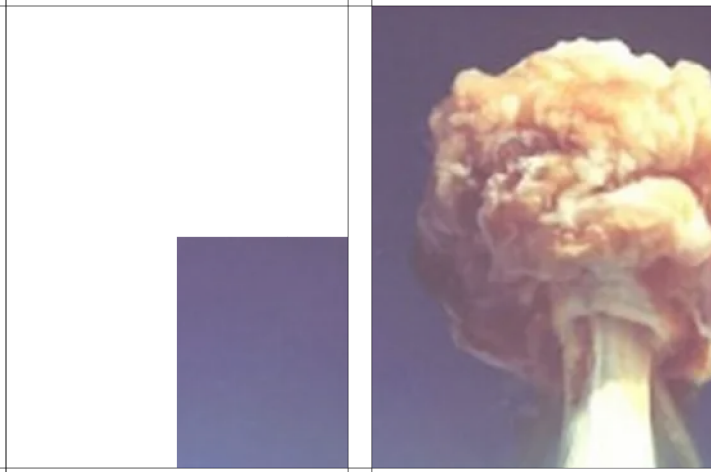
- A. The statement is supported by sufficient guarantees of trustworthiness—after considering the totality of circumstances under which it was made and evidence, if any, corroborating the statement; and
- B. It is more probative on the point for which it is offered than any other evidence that the proponent can obtain through reasonable efforts.

EXPLANATION ON HEARSAY: Take a deep breath. These rules define the concept of hearsay, an out of court statement brought into court for the truth of the matter asserted. Let's break that down into three parts:

- 1. An out of court statement
- 2. Brought into court
- 3. For the truth of the matter asserted

For something to be hearsay it must meet all three of those prongs. An out of court statement is one that isn't said or produced by the witness currently on stand. It could be something overheard, said to the witness by an associate, or read in a book. The point is, the witness in court didn't produce that statement. For that statement to be brought into court, the witness must testify about it. "I heard Bob say ____", "The paper said ____" are examples of this. Finally, it must be brought in for the truth of the matter asserted. The party who brings in the statement must be arguing that in fact what was said or written or produced was true. If Bob said to a witness, "The senator took a bribe", it's only hearsay if the party who brings that

into court is trying to prove that the senator did, in fact, take a bribe. The reasoning is that something produced by someone outside of court isn't trustworthy since that person didn't have to swear an oath unlike someone in court. Rule 801 defines hearsay, 802 says it's not allowed in court, and 803 provides exceptions where something that is hearsay can still be admitted as evidence. There will be out of court statements in our two cases, it's up to you to determine whether something is hearsay and if it is, whether it falls under one of the Rule 803 exceptions. Rule 807 is a residual exception to the rule against hearsay. It explains that if something is generally trustworthy and can be backed up, it should still be allowed in despite it being hearsay.

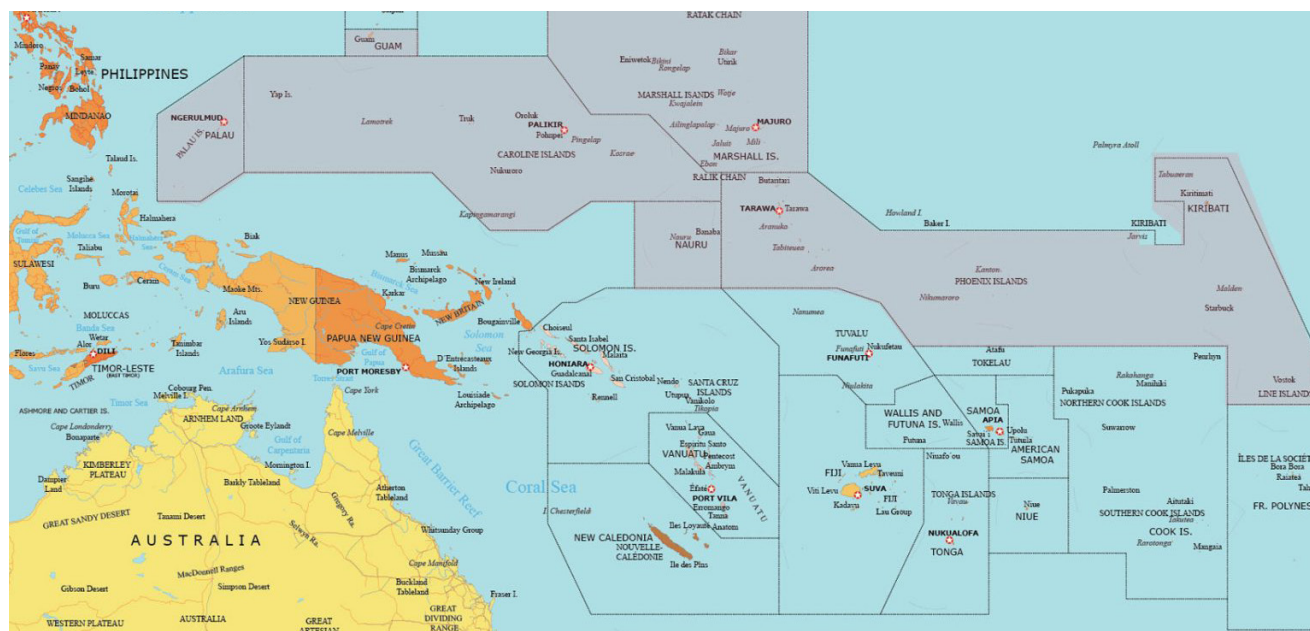


Case 01

**Nuclear Tests
(New Zealand v. France)
1973**

WWII fostered an interest in the development of nuclear weapons around the world. France, who were invaded by the Third Reich during this time, gained a vested interest in expanding their force de frappe, their nuclear deterrence program aimed at boosting their national security and self-sufficiency. From 1958 to 1962, through the height of the Cold War, New Zealand sponsored several resolutions in the General Assembly to sunset nuclear testing. These resolutions and proposals were voted against by France, US, and UK (New Zealand Government, 1995).

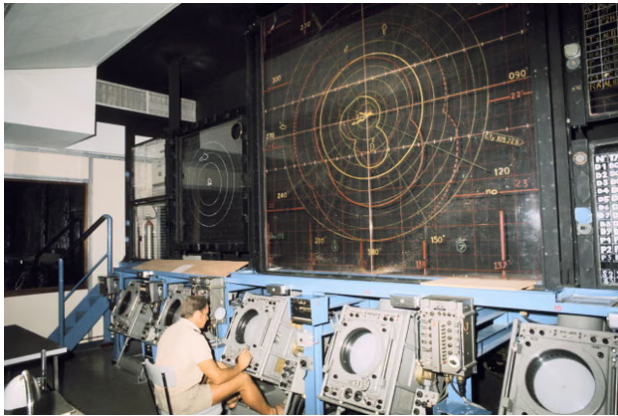
While France was initially performing nuclear tests in the Algerian desert, Algeria's independence in 1962 forced the French government to search for alternatives, selecting two uninhabited islands in Polynesia known as Mururoa and Fangataufa. To protect the interests of New Zealand, but also the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau, New Zealand filed a case against France on May 9th, 1973, on the basis that French atmospheric nuclear testing has created nuclear fallout which has violated the international law of New Zealand.



A map of New Zealand and the surrounding islands

The result of this case was the Order of June 22nd, 1973. The Court stated that both sides should not "...aggravate or extend the dispute" and recommended France to "avoid nuclear tests causing the deposit of radio-active fall-out" (Correspondence, 1973). The court also said the evidence does not exclude the possibility of irreparable damage, granting interim protection. The court also stressed that this did not decide the final jurisdiction, admissibility, or the merits.

France, however, issued a statement that the court was 'not competent' and did not appear in the hearings (Correspondence, 1973). ICJ recorded France's absence, and later proceedings noted France had not filed any counter-memorial and failed to appear for any hearings in 1974. New Zealand had notified the Court that France



Nuclear testing site at Mururoa in Polynesia in 1970

had continued their nuclear testing in 1973 and 1974, regarding these tests as a breach against the 1973 order. They also emphasized that France had ignored the interim ruling and continued the testing until France moved the testing underground (Nuclear Tests (New Zealand v. France), Interim Protection, Order of 22 June 1973, 1973).

The final judgment came on December 20, 1974. The Court did not decide whether

French atmospheric nuclear testing was lawful under merits. Instead, the Court decided to rely on France's official statement that atmospheric testing in the South Pacific would stop. The Court held that unilateral declarations by a state can create legal obligation and decided the dispute had effectively disappeared, meaning that New Zealand's claim "no longer has any object."

Later in 1995, France announced a new series of underground testing in the land of Mururoa and Fangataufa. Alarmed by this announcement, New Zealand tried to revive the matter by paragraph 63 of the 1974 judgment, where it stated that ICJ can 'examine' the situation again "if the basis of this Judgment were to be affected." However, ICJ has ruled this dilatory, as the paragraph 63 of the 1974 judgement only mentioned atmospheric nuclear testing, not underground testing.

This case matters for two major reasons. First, it was one of the first and important international litigations in environmental harm, especially nuclear fallout. Second, it was a classic case of 'unilateral declarations,' where France's public statement has created a manifestation of legal bound. It was also controversial as it appeared as ICJ avoiding direct confrontation with France, which left many unsatisfied.

Your task as the ICJ is to debate the questions posed by this case, setting a precedent on nuclear testing in the region and even internationally.

Directives / QARMAs

On what legal basis should the ICJ hear the case if France says the Court has no jurisdiction?

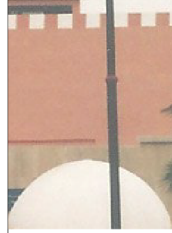
How much proof of radioactive risk should be considered dangerous enough that ICJ has to intervene?

What exact rights of New Zealand are threatened? Is it territorial integrity, environmental safety, or freedom from transboundary harm?

Can a state legally conduct nuclear testing if it controls the land even if it affects the bordering countries?

Should France's public statement about ending the atmospheric nuclear testing be treated as legally binding promises?

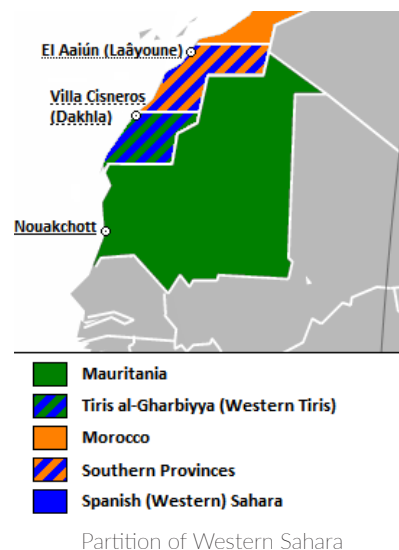
Should the ICJ avoid such rulings and let countries solve these situations using diplomacy, or should it set precedence for the future of international cases?



Case 02

**Advisory Case on the
Western Sahara
1974**

Crucial to understanding the Advisory Case on the Western Sahara is considering the post-colonial context in which the case took place. The Western Sahara was one of the last African states to gain independence from a European colonial power, with the Spanish government maintaining control over the region until Franco's death in 1975 (Britannica Editors, 2026b). Even before the Spanish finally withdrew from the area, however, other newly independent African States already possessed interests in the area.



The Kingdom of Morocco to the north of West Sahara, despite gaining independence in 1956, had a rocky transitional period from colonial protectorate to fully independent state. An unstable political situation between factions such as supporters of the King and conservatives like those of the Istiqlal Party led to a rise in nationalist sentiments, and in particular support for a “Greater Morocco” (Jowiya, 2013). These internal tensions showed their head multiple times on the regional geopolitical sphere, particularly during Mauritania’s independence from France and the decolonization of Western Sahara by Spain (Gerteiny et al., 2026).

Moroccan ambitions for a “Greater Morocco,” spearheaded both by nationalists and by the King, resulted in temporary occupation of portions of Mauritania by the Moroccan government. As Mauritania gradually managed to stabilize its internal political situation and assert its independence from both the French and

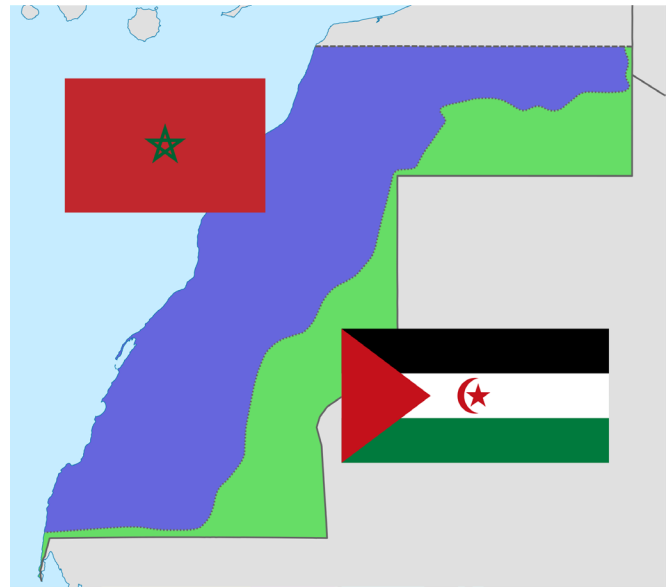
the Moroccans, the ambitions of the Moroccan government began to reverse in favor of a mutual agreement between both nations. With the Western Sahara being a prime candidate in the eyes of both nations for partitioning, the Madrid Accords would eventually be signed in late 1975 declaring Spain’s withdrawal from the territory, and its subsequent partitioning between Morocco and Mauritania (Declaration of Principles on Western Sahara, 1975).

Western Sahara’s partitioning was seen by many within the territory as a blatant violation of their sovereignty, with the Polisario Front that had formed in 1973 fighting for Western Saharan liberation



Greater Morocco as claimed by the Istiqlal Party, 1956

soon developing a government-in-exile in Algeria, later known as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in 1991 (Britannica Editors, 2026a). This government supplied by Algeria later made peace with Mauritania in 1979 gaining their portion of the territory, but was subsequently re-occupied by Moroccan forces who unilaterally annexed the Mauritanian portion of the territory.



Map of the conflict in Western Sahara.

When the ICJ case itself was held in 1974, there were two main questions posed to the court: Firstly, was the territory of the Western Sahara unoccupied prior to Spanish colonization (In legal terms, was the territory terra nullius)? If the answer to this was no, then secondly what were the legal ties between this territory and both the Kingdom of Morocco and the Mauritanian entity? (Summary of the Advisory Opinion of 16 October 1975, 1975)

Ultimately, the decision by the court for the first question was unanimous and straightforward: the territory was indeed occupied prior to Spanish colonization, and was therefore not at that time terra nullius. The court's decision for the second question was much more muddled, paving way for future tensions: certain tribes historically living in the region did present legal ties to the Moroccan sultan and therefore the modern Moroccan state. However, certain other tribes living in the region also showed legal ties to a Mauritanian entity, and therefore the modern Mauritanian state. In conjunction with these statements, the court established that the territory did not share any tie of territorial sovereignty with the Kingdom of Morocco or the Mauritanian entity. (Summary of the Advisory Opinion of 16 October 1975, 1975)

While this decision did maintain support for the existence of an independent Western Saharan state, it at the same time established a precedent that both the Kingdom of Morocco and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania maintained legal ties to portions of the fledgling African state. This precedent would ultimately lead to the Madrid Accords, and the subsequent partitioning of the territory.

Your task as the ICJ shall be to once more debate these crucial questions, setting a new course for the region and the fledgling state of the Western Sahara.

Directives / QARMAs

Was the territory of the Western Sahara occupied by native peoples before the conquest and subsequent colonization by the Spanish crown (Was the territory terra nullius)?

Did the native peoples of the Western Sahara hold legal ties to a previous Moroccan or Mauritanian political entity?

Do either Mauritania or Morocco hold a legal claim to the territory of Western Sahara?

What is the ICJ's role in preserving self-determination of post-colonial territories?

Is it the ICJ's responsibility to decide the legal ties between independent groups and separate national entities, and subsequently is it the ICJ's role to determine subsequently determined national borders?

Do Morocco or Mauritania hold a legal right to the territories to be controlled by an independent Western Saharan state?

How did the ruling handed by the ICJ case affect the geopolitical situation of the region, and how could different wording affect the actions of national entities with interests in Western Sahara?

How was the ruling influenced by French and Spanish decolonization, and in what ways did the ruling ultimately lead to the Madrid Accords partitioning the region?

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