



INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA
TRIBUNAL INTERNATIONAL DU DROIT DE LA MER

Press Release

(Issued by the Registrar)

APPLICATION FILED ON BEHALF OF BELIZE AGAINST FRANCE FOR RELEASE OF ARRESTED FISHING VESSEL

HAMBURG, 21 March. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea today received an application filed on behalf of Belize against France for the prompt release of the fishing vessel "Grand Prince", under article 292 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

According to the application, the "Grand Prince", which flies the flag of Belize, was arrested by the French authorities in the exclusive economic zone of the Kerguelen Islands in the French Southern and Antarctic Territories on 26 December 2000. The applicant maintains that, at the time of its arrest, the vessel had on board approximately 16-18 tons of toothfish and 200 kilograms of lobster. The vessel was accused of illegal fishing in the Kerguelen exclusive economic zone.

The applicant states that, by an order of 12 January 2001, the Court of first instance of Saint Paul, in Réunion, confirmed the seizure of the vessel, the fishing gear and materials, as also the fish on board and fixed a bond for release of the vessel in the amount of 1,737,918.70 Euros. The application further states that, on 23 January 2001, the Tribunal Correctionnel of Saint Denis decided to confiscate the vessel and that the said decision was provisionally executed.

The Tribunal is requested, *inter alia*, to declare that the bond set by France for the release of the vessel in the amount of 1,737,918.70 Euros is not reasonable and to release the vessel upon the posting of a bond or other security in the amount of 206,149 Euros.

The Registrar has transmitted a copy of the application to the Government of France, the respondent in the case.

By virtue of the recent amendments made to the Rules of the Tribunal relevant to cases for prompt release of vessels and crews, the hearing is to be fixed within a period of 15 days commencing with the first working day following the date on which the application

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is received; and the respondent could file a statement in response not later than 96 hours before the hearing (see Press Release No. 44).

By Order dated 21 March 2001, the President of the Tribunal fixed 5 and 6 April 2001 as the dates for the hearings.

The Tribunal will deliver its Judgment at a public sitting of the Tribunal, to be held no later than fourteen days after the closure of the hearing.

The Press Releases of the Tribunal, documents and other information are available on the United Nations website: <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/> and from the Registry of the Tribunal. Please contact Mr. Robert van Dijk at Am Internationalen Seegerichtshof 1, 22609 Hamburg, Germany, Tel.: (49) (40) 35607-227/228, Fax: (49) (40) 35607-245/275; or United Nations DC-1, suite 1140, New York, NY 10017, Tel.: (1) (212) 963-6480, Fax: (1) (212) 963-0908, E-mail: press@itlos.org

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