



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

# Press Release

(Issued by the Registrar)

## **APPLICATION FILED AGAINST FRANCE FOR RELEASE OF ARRESTED PANAMANIAN FISHING VESSEL *CAMOUCO* AND ITS MASTER**

HAMBURG, 17 January. Today, proceedings have been instituted before the Tribunal on behalf of Panama against France under article 292 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The dispute concerns the fishing vessel *Camouco*, which flies the Panamanian flag. The *Camouco* was arrested in September 1999 by a French frigate allegedly for unlawful fishing in the exclusive economic zone of Crozet (French Southern and Antarctic Territories). According to the application, the vessel and its Master are detained by French authorities in Réunion Island.

Panama requests the Tribunal to order the prompt release of the *Camouco* and its Master and to find that France has violated the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea concerning the prompt release of vessels and their crews. Panama maintains that the release should be effected without the payment of a bond. However, in the alternative, it requests the Tribunal to determine the amount, nature and form of the bond or financial security to be posted for the release of the vessel. It also submits that France should pay the costs of the proceedings.

In its application, Panama submits that France be requested to permit the Master to travel to Hamburg to testify in the case.

The Registry has transmitted a copy of the application to the Government of France, the respondent in the case. France may provide its response to the application no later than twenty-four hours before the opening of the hearing in the case.

Under the Rules of the Tribunal, the date for a hearing is to be set no later than ten days from the receipt of the application and each party will be accorded one day to present its evidence and arguments at the hearing. By an Order dated 17 January 2000, the President of the Tribunal has fixed 27 and 28 January 2000 as the dates for the hearing.

(more)

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The Tribunal will deliver its Judgment at a public sitting of the Tribunal, to be held no later than ten 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.

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