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PRESS RELEASE

ICJ Decision on Guatemala's Application to Intervene in Belize v. Honduras Case

Belmopan, March 19, 2026.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), in a sitting at the Hague today, delivered its decision on Guatemala's application to intervene in the Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes/Cayos Zapotillos (Belize v. Honduras) case.

The Court adjudged that Guatemala does have a legal interest in the case and, pursuant to Article 62 of the Statute of the Court, is permitted to intervene as a non-party. Guatemala's intervention is limited to the issue of sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes, including fishing rights in the waters surrounding them.

Belizeans will recall that Guatemala filed its Application for permission to intervene in the Belize/Honduras case on 1 December 2023. Belize did not object to Guatemala's application to intervene, but Honduras did.

Today's decision is a step forward that advances the process leading to finality of the two sovereignty cases before the ICJ involving Belize, i.e., Guatemala's Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim (Guatemala/Belize) and Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes/Cayos Zapotillos (Belize v. Honduras).

Today's decision does not in any way affect the legal rights or claims of any of the parties. It allows only for each party's claims and counterclaims to be aired as part of the hearings. The Court's judgment that Guatemala has a legal interest to participate in the case does not affect any of the substantive issues that the Court is yet to rule on.

Following today's judgment, the Court has fixed 19 May 2026 as the deadline for the submission of Guatemala's written statement as a non-party and 20 July 2026 as the deadline for Belize and Honduras to file their respective written observations to Guatemala's statement.

Ends