

# International Court of Justice Manual

## 1. What is the ICJ?

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. In the real UN system, it settles legal disputes between States and gives advisory opinions on legal questions referred by authorised UN organs and agencies. In MUN, the ICJ simulates this judicial function. Advocates argue law and facts; judges evaluate the admissible evidence and arguments, and deliver a reasoned judgment.

## 2. Who sits on the Court?

- President: Chairs proceedings, rules on points, motions, and objections, manages time, and, in case of a tie during judgments, casts the deciding vote.
- Deputy President: Assists and may chair when delegated.
- Registrar: Manages documentation and timekeeping; no vote.
- Judges: Impartial deciders of law and fact. Judges must not investigate cases on their own and should base their views only on the case file and the presentations/evidence admitted in court.
- Advocates: Applicant and Respondent counsel teams who submit memoranda, present evidence, examine witnesses, make legal arguments, and deliver openings/closings.
- Witnesses: Fact or expert witnesses called by either side; they testify under oath and are examined and cross-examined.

## 3. What must be submitted by advocates before the conference?

- Memorandum: Your memorandum sets out the case theory and legal argument.
- Evidence List: Submit a curated list of sources with, for each item, URL or citation, title, source, author credentials, publication date, and a 2–3 sentence summary. You may underline or highlight the exact passages you will rely on in oral argument.
- Evidence: Up to 10 pieces of real evidence per side, plus up to 5 rebuttal items introduced later strictly to rebut new arguments; no new factual lines may be introduced via rebuttal evidence. Evidence must be relevant, reliable, and authentic; the other side receives your list in advance.
- Witness List: List up to 3 witnesses (name/role, brief bio, what facts they will establish). Prepare direct examination outlines; ensure your witnesses have first-hand knowledge of the facts they will testify about or recognised expertise (for expert witnesses).
- Stipulations: Submit proposed stipulations of fact: neutral facts both sides accept, so the Court need not spend time proving them. Stipulations cannot contradict submitted evidence and are read into the record at the start of the trial.

## 4. Points & Motions

- Point of Personal Privilege – For audibility/comfort only; may interrupt.
- Point of Order – On a procedural error or to reference the rules; cannot interrupt a speaker unless the error is urgent.
- Point of Parliamentary Inquiry – To ask about the rules or procedure; non-debate questions.
- Point of Information to the Presidency – To seek factual clarification from the dais (not to the opposing side).
- Motion to Approach the Bench – For sensitive procedural issues or clarifications at the Presidency's discretion.
- Motion to Extend Time – At the Presidency's discretion.
- Motion to Enter/Exclude Evidence – When documentary items are contested (handled together with objections).

## 5. Objections

### A) Objections to Evidence

- Relevance – The document does not aid the Court on a material issue.
- Reliability/Authenticity – Source lacks credibility, bias not disclosed, or the document is not what it purports to be.

### B) Objections during Witness Testimony

- Leading Question (on direct) – Suggests the answer; allowed on cross, not on direct.
- Hearsay – The witness is repeating out-of-court statements to prove the truth of the matter asserted.
- Speculation/Opinion – The witness lacks foundation or expertise to conclude.
- Badgering – Harassing, argumentative, or repetitive questioning.
- Irrelevant / Beyond the Scope – Not tied to pleadings or prior testimony.
- Non-Responsive – Witness is not answering the question asked.

## 6. Judge questioning & deliberations

- Bench Questions are opportunities for judges ask questions to the advocates. Keep questions neutral and concise.
- Deliberations are confidential. Judges aim for consensus, but a majority decides the disposition; in a tie, the President has a casting vote.