

THE HAGUE INTERNATIONAL CITY OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

WHAT INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS DO FOR THE WORLD

In The Hague, the international city of peace and justice, over 19,500 people at some 160 organisations work to create a better world. Their efforts can be felt in many different places. On the island of Sipadan for example, where the International Court of Justice prevented a potential war between Indonesia and Malaysia. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose war criminals have been tried in The Hague by the International Criminal Court and in Liberia, whose war criminal was tried by the Special Court of Sierra Leone. And in Albania, which thanks to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has destroyed its entire stock of chemical weapons.

Peace in divers' paradise safeguarded
During the second half of the 20th century, the tropical island of Sipadan risked becoming the object of a war between Indonesia and Malaysia. Both countries had laid claim to the island, located in the Indo-Pacific region, since 1969. Tensions came to a head in 1995, in a violent incident in which two Indonesian soldiers were killed. Malaysia and Indonesia then submitted the matter to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the United Nations' most important judicial body, which had already resolved more than 150 conflicts between states. Neither country wanted to give up its claim, nor did they want to risk a war. In 2002, following lengthy proceedings, which included an

investigation of the island's history, the Court ruled that Sipadan belonged to Malaysia. Although disappointed by the judgment, Indonesia accepted it and as a result conflict was avoided. Since then, residents, tourists and diving fanatics have been free to enjoy Sipadan's treasures: the island's waters are home to more than 3,000 species of fish and over 100 types of coral, making it one of the world's best locations for diving.

War criminals tried

Thanks to the International Court of Justice, conflict over Sipadan was avoided. But when conflicts do occur and human rights violations take place, The Hague can be relied on to lend assistance. Individuals who are charged with crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes can be tried at the International Criminal Court in The Hague if proceedings in their own country would be impossible. For instance, Thomas Lubanga, a former rebel leader from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was charged and tried in The Hague for enlisting and conscripting children and using them to participate actively in hostilities in his own country.

Syria free of chemical weapons

On 23 June 2014, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which is located in The Hague's International Zone and Nobel Prize winner in 2013, announced that no more raw materials are available for manufacturing chemical weapons in Syria. The UN and the OPCW transported the last part of Syria's arsenal out of the country on that same

WORKING TOWARDS A BETTER WORLD

The Hague is the international city of peace and justice. Here, every day, tens of thousands of people jointly pursue a more peaceful, just and secure world. They work in around 160 organisations, hundreds of companies and various knowledge centres. And also in the Peace Palace, the symbol of international justice for more than 100 years. The Hague is the place where conflicts are prevented and peacefully solved. It is, furthermore, the host city for international conferences and a meeting place for dialogue and debate. For everyone; both now and in the future.



#peacejustice

“The Hague is recognised globally as the home of international justice.”

- Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

day, and the chemicals were destroyed in Finland and the United States.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had said a month previously that they would probably not be able to meet the 30 June deadline due to fighting between the government leader and the rebels. But they still managed to meet this deadline thanks to factors such as the Syrian authorities' cooperative attitude.

Tackling cross-border crime

Europol, the European agency for tracking cross-border crime, tackles international computer crime, fraud, corruption, money laundering, environmental and other offences. Established in 2002, the agency facilitates cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of the member states, making it easier to track down and tackle international criminal networks. The European Union is a safer place for its citizens as a result. In 2013, one of the issues being targeted by the agency is match fixing in football, focusing on illegal gambling and bribery.

Peace conferences

The Hague is not only the place where peace treaties are drafted and signed; it also hosts peace conferences. One example is the International Conference on Afghanistan of 2009, chaired by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, which brought the leaders of 73 countries to the World Forum in The Hague to discuss the country's future. They agreed to make funds available to strengthen Afghanistan's army, policy and other security services. Investment in training public office holders and civil servants was also agreed, in order to tackle corruption and ensure that the country has a reliable government.

Increasing influence of NGOs

The Hague is home to around 135 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are active in various areas, especially international legislation, peace and global security. These NGOs are often able to achieve a great deal. For instance, the CICC (Coalition for the International Criminal Court) brings together 2,500 organisations working in 150 countries to improve cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC). The CICC was originally founded in 1995 to pursue the establishment of the ICC. This goal was achieved in 2002, and in the decade since then a number of war criminals have been charged and tried. Now the CICC targets its efforts at ensuring fair, effective and independent justice throughout the world. Other well known NGOs based in The Hague, such as the Red Cross, work to create a better world in which human rights matter and everyone has access to food, healthcare and education.

International Court of Justice bans Japanese whaling

On Monday 31 March 2014, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) officially banned Japan from continuing its whaling activities for the time being. In its defence Japan pointed out that whaling was necessary for scientific research. But the ICJ, which has been located inside the Peace Palace in The Hague since 1946, ruled that there is no scientific justification for the large number of minke whales that Japan catches.



“The Hague is a fascinating city to work in.”

- Abi Williams, president of The Hague Institute for Global Justice

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For more information on The Hague, International City of Peace and Justice, please visit the website:

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