IBA ICC MOOT COURT
Organised by the Grotius Centre

Frequently Asked Questions
Judges

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A. ABOUT THE COMPETITION

1. What is the IBA ICCMCC?

The International Bar Association International Criminal Court Moot Court Competition (IBA ICCMCC) is focused on international criminal law (ICL), and worldwide the largest of its kind in the English language. The IBA ICCMCC is organized by the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies of Leiden University, in partnership with the International Bar Association (IBA). The competition also receives support from the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is the permanent international court established to prosecute international crimes of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression.

Further information can be found on our website here: www.ibaiccmoot.com.

2. What is the objective of the Competition?

The Competition aims to simulate the proceedings of the ICC, providing participants with an opportunity to develop their skills in international criminal law and gain practical experience in courtroom advocacy. Participants in the IBA ICCMCC engage in both written and oral arguments, presenting their cases in the form of Memorials and Oral Arguments. The Evaluators of the Memorials and the Judges of the Oral Rounds assess their legal arguments, advocacy skills, and knowledge of international criminal law. The Competition thus offers a platform for law students from around the world to engage in rigorous legal analysis, develop critical thinking abilities, and network with legal professionals in the field of international criminal law.

3. What is the history of the Competition?

In 2004, professors at Pace University organized the world's first moot court competition based on the law and procedures of the International Criminal Court. The ICC has grown since then, and so has the Competition. In 2014, Pace partnered with the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, and the ICC, to form a new global competition: the ICC Moot Court Competition. The Competition is since then held annually in The Hague, Netherlands, with the final round judged at the ICC by its judges and legal officers. The annual competition at Pace now serves as a Regional Qualifying Round for that global competition.

In 2017, the ICCMCC started its collaboration with the IBA, and in 2020 the IBA became a name partner in the Competition, with its preliminary rounds now titled the IBA International Criminal Court Moot Court Competition (IBA ICCMCC). The Final Round still holds the original title of the ICC Moot Court Competition (ICCMCC).

4. What is the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies?

The Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies (Grotius Centre) is a leading academic research and teaching department housed within Leiden Law School, known for its expertise in public international law. Established at Leiden University, the Grotius Centre is named after the father of public international law and one of its most illustrious alumni, Hugo Grotius. The Grotius Centre currently hosts more than 30 scholars and almost 200 students of public international law from all over the world.

The Grotius Centre offers leading LL.M. programs (Masters of Law) in the field of international law, namely: Public International Law – Regular, Public International Law – Advanced (International Criminal Law, **or** Peace, Justice and Development), and International Dispute Settlement and Arbitration – Advanced. It furthermore organizes summer programs in Transnational Law, International Criminal Law, International Arbitration, International Humanitarian Law, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in International Law, and Dispute Resolution and Advocacy. More information about the Grotius Centre, its research and education programs, can be found here.

5. What is the IBA?

The International Bar Association (IBA) is the most prominent organization where international legal professionals, bar associations, and legal societies are brought together. The IBA seeks to aid global stability and peace through the administration of justice. More information on the IBA can be found here.

The IBA offers many resources for international legal practice. Additionally, opportunities are offered for education and internships as well as special memberships for students.

6. What is the ICC?

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the permanent international institution tasked with the prosecution of the gravest crimes that are the concern of the international community as a whole. Information about its organization, methods, and State parties can be found here. The ICC provides for a plethora of sources on international criminal law available for free in its Resource Library.

7. What is the setup of the Competition?

The Teams will present their arguments in the form of Memorials and Oral Pleadings. The written Memorials are evaluated by professionals who are elected to the International Panel of Evaluation (IPE). The Oral Pleadings will be judged by a selection of Judges during the Team's presentations in The Hague. The focus of the assessment are the Team's legal arguments, advocacy skills, and their knowledge of international criminal law.

8. Where can I find out more about this year's case?

The Case of the IBA ICCMCC is drafted every year by a panel of international criminal law professionals, led by Case Author Prof. Michael P. Scharf, Chair of the IBA ICCMCC Board of Advisors. Each year, the Case is inspired by a topical issue of international criminal law that challenges the participants to be creative in their arguments and presentations.

The Case is usually released in September of the previous calendar year, before the opening of the Registration for Teams.

9. Where does the Competition take place?

The Written Round of the Competition, when the Teams have to turn in Memorials, is held completely digitally. Submission of the Memorials will be done via the official e-mail address of the Competition: ICCMCC@law.leidenuniv.nl.

The Oral Round of the Competition takes place on location in The Hague, The Netherlands, at Leiden University Campus The Hague, Spui & Wijnhaven. Specific locations might be subject to change. The Preliminary Rounds of the oral stage will be held at Spui, as well as the Quarter-Finals and the Semi-Finals. Social and academic events, as well as the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, will be held at Spui & Wijnhaven, depending on the nature of the event.

When possible, the Final Round will be held at the International Criminal Court, at Oude Waalsdorperweg 10, 2597 AK The Hague, The Netherlands.

Both venues can be reached easily with public transport and are accessible for people with disabilities.

10. When does the Competition take place?

The upcoming edition of the IBA ICCMCC will take place in 2027, with the Oral Rounds taking place from **Friday 4 June to Friday 11 June.**

B. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY

11. How can I become a Judge?

The IBA ICCMCC Organizing Office will extend the invitation in **January** to all contacts in their database, as well as the database of the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies. In addition, the IBA will extend an invitation to their database. Invited individuals may share the invitation with their network.

The IBA ICCMCC Organizing Office also welcomes spontaneous applications from individuals interested in participating in the Competition via the digital application form found on our website.

12. Can I participate as a Judge via Zoom?

No. Remote participation as a judge in the Oral Rounds is not possible. However, you may register as a memorial evaluator.

13. I received an invitation. What should I do next?

The invitation to apply as a Judge includes a link to the digital application form. You need to fill out and submit the form by **10 March 2027**.

14. I did not receive an invitation, but I am interested in participating as a Judge. What should I do next?

If you have not received an invitation, you are still welcome to apply for the role of the Judge. You can do so via the digital application form found on our website.

15. Can I apply to become both an Evaluator in the Written Round and a Judge in the Oral Round?

Yes, you are welcome to apply as both an Evaluator and as a Judge.

16. What is the deadline to apply to become a Judge in the IBA ICCMCC?

Applications for the role of Judge are accepted until **10 March 2027**. No applications will be accepted after the deadline, unless it is exceptionally extended.

17. I submitted my application. What should I do next?

Once we receive your application, we will assess it based on the eligibility criteria and will inform you of the outcome via email. This process may take up to 14 working days.

18. Who can be a Judge?

A person may act as a Judge if they hold at least a Master's degree in international law. Experience in the practice of international law is accepted in lieu of a Master's degree. Duly qualified persons include, but are not limited to, lawyers, academics in the field of law, legal advisors, legal officers, and court personnel.

The Organization will determine the eligibility of persons to serve as Evaluators in the Competition. Teams are responsible for assessing the eligibility of their nominees themselves.

19. How does the IBA ICCMCC Organizing Office determine the eligibility of a Judge?

If you have participated as a Judge in previous editions, you are (almost) guaranteed a judging seat in the new edition.

You are requested to attach your current CV to the digital application. The Organizing Office will then determine your eligibility based on your CV, taking into consideration: academic qualifications and practical experience. The field of law you practice in, and your experience (both academic and professional) with (international) criminal law and human rights cases will be taken into account.

20. I am an alumnus of a university participating in the competition, can I be a Judge?

Yes, having graduated from a university participating in the competition does not constitute a conflict of interest as long as you are not involved in the preparation of this university's team.

21. I am an (assistant) coach, can I be a Judge?

No, (assistant) coaches may not act as Judges.

22. I work at a university participating in the competition, can I be a Judge?

If you are an employee of one of the schools participating in the Moot where such employment is sufficiently remote from the activities of the Team as to dispel any reasonable suspicion of partiality, you may act as a Judge.

23. I was accepted as a Judge. What should I do now?

Your acceptance email will include a link to a new online form where you can provide us with your availability for the Oral Rounds. The form includes the schedule of every day of the Preliminary Rounds. You can choose as many or as few sessions to participate you as your agenda allows you to. You will be scheduled for all sessions you select, unless last-minute changes require cancellations.

In the meantime, we encourage the Judges to become familiar with the IBA ICCMCC Case and the Rules of Procedure of the Competition.

24. Can I cancel my participation as a Judge in the Competition?

Yes, should you no longer be able to participate as an Evaluator in the Competition, please inform the IBA ICCMCC Organizing Office via email at ICCMCC@law.leidenuniv.nl as soon as possible.

25. Do you offer any monetary compensation for Judges traveling from outside the Netherlands?

Much to our regret, unfortunately, we are not in a position to provide funding or accommodation to Judges for their participation in the Competition. All Judges participate on a voluntary basis, using their own means.

26. Does the Organizing Office provide an invitation letter in support of the visa application?

Yes, we are happy to provide Judges with an invitation letter in support of their visa application. If you need a visa to travel to The Hague and participate as a Judge in the IBA ICCMCC, please send us the details listed below via email to ICCMCC@law.leidenuniv.nl by **1 April 2027**. Upon receipt of the details, we will provide you with a letter in support of your visa application.

- Full name as appears on the passport;
- Date of birth;
- Nationality;
- Passport number;
- Full address of the embassy you will be applying at for the visa.

Please keep in mind we are not able to schedule appointments on your behalf. We have no influence on the application process of obtaining a visa, or the embassies' timelines.

27. Where can I find practical information about my visit to The Hague?

To assist you in this regard, we have drafted a booklet with useful information about getting to the Hague, places to stay and eat, as well as information about the venues and their accessibility. The booklet is available here.

C. The Role of the Judge

28. What am I expected to do as a Judge?

Judges serve as members of a panel during the Oral Round of the Competition. During the 2-hour session, judges assess the validity of the participants' arguments, the persuasiveness of their presentation, their poise and advocacy skills, and the thoroughness of their preparation. The Organization shall invite duly qualified persons to act as members of the Judging panels during the Preliminary, Quarter-final and Semi-final Rounds.

29. Do I receive any preparation materials in advance of the Competition?

You will receive an email with final information, as well as the Judge's package in the beginning of May via email. The Judge's package includes the Case, the bench memorandum, the Judge's Guide, the Rules of Procedure, and your personal schedule. The personal schedule will reflect the sessions that you selected to be assigned to. Please keep in mind that some sessions might be cancelled due to the number of registered judges, and last minute cancellations by teams.

30. Do I receive the teams' memorials in advance?

No. As a judge, you must score the teams solely on their oral presentations. This decision relies on the fact that a Team's oral pleadings are not limited to the scope of the Team's Memorial, as well as from a practical perspective: the schedule is very frequently changed (even on the spot, 5 minutes before the start of the session), so it may happen that judges will see different teams from those in the initial schedule.

31. I arrived at the Competition Venue. Where do I go?

When you arrive at the Competition venue, it is necessary to complete your check-in process with the Organizing Office located in the Judges' Room before your first session. Clear signage will be provided to assist you in finding your way. We kindly request that you arrive with ample time to spare, allowing for a smooth registration process and ensuring that each session starts promptly. Your punctuality is greatly appreciated.

32. I completed my check-in at the Competition venue. What do I do now?

You may now have a seat in the Judges' Room, help yourself to a coffee, and get to know the other judges. Five minutes before your session starts, the Organizing Office will give a briefing to remind you of the most important rules of procedure of the Oral Rounds, as well as answer any questions you may have. After the briefing, each judging panel will be called in turns to the front of the room to meet the Bench Clerk who will escort you to the Courtroom.

33. How many judges are in a courtroom?

There are three judges per courtroom with one of them acting as a presiding judge. The Organizing Office may also appoint a fourth judge. In the absence of a judge, the Organizing Office may also appoint only two judges per courtroom.

34. Who is the presiding judge? What do they do?

The Organizing Office will appoint a presiding judge per session. The Presiding Judge is tasked with:

- Opening and closing the session;
- Inviting the Speakers to take the floor;
- Moderating the feedback session.

A judge may be appointed presiding judge for one session but not for another.

35. I am a presiding judge. What should I say in the opening/closing of the hearing?

- Example text of opening: *Please be seated. Good morning /Good afternoon and welcome to the hearing of the Appeal of the Pre Trial Chamber's Confirmation of Charges in the case "The*

Prosecutor v. …, in the Situation …". My name is… and I will be presiding today's session. I am joined by my colleagues, … and …. I shall now give the floor to the Counsel for the Defense.

- Example text of closing: *This concludes our hearing today. Thank you to all parties who presented their arguments before us today.*

36. May I reveal my affiliation/nationality/employer during the opening of the session?

No, please refrain from revealing any information about your affiliation or nationality during the opening of the session. You may do so if you wish after the closing of the session, unless you will be judging in the Quarter-Final or Semi-Final sessions.

37. What is the role of the Bench Clerk?

Bench Clerks support the Judges during the Oral Rounds in matters of organization. Such responsibilities include escorting Judges to the Courtroom and back to the Judges' Room, briefing and advising the Bench Members of the Rules of Procedure during the session as necessary, and generally keeping order during the session. They are also responsible for keeping time for the Bench and the participating Teams during the sessions.

38. Can I participate as a Judge in the Quarter-final and/or Semi-final rounds?

Judging seats in the Quarter-final and Semi-final rounds are reserved for veteran judges who have been involved in the Competition for more than 5 years. Judges with less years of involvement may also be invited granted that they have outstanding experience/education in the field of law, judging, and/or international law. The Organizing Office reserves the right to appoint Judges to the Quarter-final and Semi-final rounds based on these factors.

39. How many sessions is it advisable to participate in per day?

We advise judges not to participate in more than three (3) sessions per day. However, it is entirely up to each individual to decide how many sessions they wish to be involved in.

40. What is the bench memorandum? Can I share the bench memorandum?

The bench memorandum is a document prepared for judges to provide them with a concise summary of the key issues, arguments, and relevant legal authorities related to the case at hand. The purpose of the bench memorandum is to assist judges in quickly understanding the case before them, facilitating more efficient evaluation of memorials and oral pleadings.

The bench memorandum is strictly confidential, and judges must not share the entire memorandum or excerpts of it.

41. How long does a session take?

The Organizing Office reserves two (2) hours for a full session. The two hours include the opening of the session by the presiding judge, the teams' presentations and rebuttals, and the Judges' feedback.

42. What is the order of appearance and the time division?

The order of the pleadings in each Hearing is:

- Presentation by Defense Counsel: up to twenty (20) minutes.
- Presentation by Prosecution Counsel: up to twenty (20) minutes.
- Presentation by Victims' Counsel: up to twenty (20) minutes.
- Rebuttal by Defense Counsel: up to ten (10) minutes.
- Rebuttal by Prosecution Counsel: up to ten (10) minutes.
- Rebuttal by Victims' Counsel: up to ten (10) minutes.

43. On the basis of what criteria are oral submissions graded?

An overview of the grading criteria used to evaluate oral submissions is found in Annex 2 of the Rules of Procedure. Annex 2 is also the template of the scoresheet the Judges will be required to fill out at the end of the session.

44. What kind of questions am I expected to ask?

The questions you ask play a pivotal role in assessing the participants' legal acumen and advocacy skills. You may consider a range of questions:

- Clarification Questions: Judges seek to clarify specific points, facts, or legal principles presented by participants.
- Counterargument Questions: Judges may present opposing viewpoints and ask participants to respond effectively.
- Policy Questions: Depending on the case, judges may inquire about policy implications.
- Precedent Questions: Judges may ask about relevant legal precedents and their application.
- Procedural Questions: Questions about procedural aspects, such as jurisdiction or standing, may be raised.
- Factual Questions: Judges may inquire about case-specific details to assess participants' grasp of the facts.

The Bench Memo also provides judges with questions that may be asked. We do encourage judges to formulate questions beyond those provided to them, so to avoid teams receiving the same questions multiple times.

45. Are my questions part of the team's speaking time?

Yes. Your questions form an integral part of the team's allocated speaking time. While teams anticipate and are prepared to incorporate your questions into their presentations, **we kindly urge judges to exercise discretion and avoid excessive disruptions,** particularly if there are less than two minutes remaining. Please be aware that no questions should be posed after a speaker's allotted time has concluded.

Please keep your questions short and concrete. This will allow students to answer your question, as well as continue their presentation.

46. What kind of feedback should we provide the teams with at the end of the session?

Each panel of judges is requested to provide teams with 10 minutes of feedback (in total, not per judge), right after the closing of the pleadings.

- The feedback should only refer to oral skills: speed of presentation, intonation, and body language. Feedback on the substance of the arguments is completely prohibited.
- When providing feedback to teams, please keep in mind most of the participants are non-English native speakers, therefore, please do not make any language remarks.
- Please provide generalized feedback, as opposed to spotlighting a specific speaker.
- The panel of judges may not take a deliberation break before providing teams with feedback.

47. The session has finished. What do I do now?

Upon the closing of the session of the presiding judge, the Bench Clerk will escort you and the rest of the panel members to the Judges' Room. Here, you will have the opportunity to deliberate with your fellow judges about the scores and the performance of the teams.

48. How does the scoring of teams work?

Each judge will receive three scoring sheets, one for each team (the template can be found in Annex 2 of the Rules of Procedure). Even though we encourage deliberation and discussion with the other panel members, each judge must submit an independent score sheet for each team in their session. Once you fill out all three of your score sheets, please hand them over to one of the members of the Organizing Office.

49. I already provided feedback to the teams after the session. Should I still fill out the 'Comments' session on the score sheet?

Yes. The teams will receive all scoresheets upon the cessation of the Competition. Therefore, we ask judges to provide written feedback as well, from which students can learn and implement in their future studies/careers. This is also an opportunity to provide students with substantive feedback on their arguments.

D. Practical Questions

50. Is there a dress code for Judges?

There is no strict dress code for Judges, but we recommend smart-casual attire as a starting point. Teams will be wearing formal attire, such as suits. Past experience shows that most judges wear business/formal clothing, while others will wear a judge robe. Please do not wear jeans, shorts, flip flops, or any other informal attire of the sort.

51. What amenities are provided during the Competition?

Throughout the Competition, judges will have access to the following amenities: a reception featuring beverages and snacks, following the opening ceremony and the awards ceremony, in addition to a farewell party. Each day at the venue, complimentary coffee, tea, and water will be provided.

52. Can I attend the Final Round?

Yes, you may watch the Final Round from the Public Gallery of the ICC Courtroom. **However**, the Public Gallery has limited seating. Spots in the Public Gallery have been offered on a first-come, first-served basis in previous editions. Judges and teams will be informed of updates regarding availability to watch the Final Round in person closer to the date.

If you are not able to attend the Final Round in person, you can watch the livestream on the Court's website.

53. Do I receive a certificate as a Judge?

Yes. The Organizing Office will provide you with a hard-copy of the certificate after your last session. If you also wish to receive a digital copy, please send an email to ICCMCC@law.leidenuniv.nl after the Competition.

54. How will my contribution be recognized?

Your name and affiliation will be published on our digital and paper Competition booklet.

55. Can I participate in side-events as a judge?

Yes. You are invited to join side-events as a judge. While some events may be exclusive to either judges or students, any such distinctions will be clearly indicated in the competition's schedule for your convenience. All side-events will be communicated to you previous to the Competition and require registration in advance.

56. Can I bring my partner/child/friend to the Competition?

Leiden University does not allow external visitors to enter its premises if they are not an official Judge of the Competition. If you wish to bring someone with you, please inform us at ICCMCC@law.leidenuniv.nl with sufficient time.

57. How can I find out who won the Competition?

Once the Oral Round of the Competition is completed, the Organizing Office will send out an official email to all Judges with the results of the Competition, as well as pictures from the Oral Round.

E. Contact

58. How can I get in touch with the Organizing Committee and Organizing Office?

You can reach out to the Organizing Committee and Organizing Office at ICCMCC@law.leidenuniv.nl. Please keep in mind that while we are active on various social media platforms, our primary focus is on responding to inquiries sent via email. During the Oral Rounds of the Competition, you can also approach the Organizing Office HQ for any pressing issues and emergencies.

59. What constitutes an emergency?

For example, sudden and unforeseen situations that may disrupt the normal proceedings of the competition and require the immediate attention of the Organizing Committee.

Emergencies include, but are not limited to, participants' misconduct, delay in attending a hearing, medical emergencies, security concerns, natural disasters, and exposure to fire or hazardous materials.

60. What if I have not yet received a reply to my email?

While we make every effort to promptly address emails, please understand that due to the significant volume of emails we receive, it may take a few days before you receive a reply.