



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

Press Release

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES INSTITUTES PROCEEDINGS AGAINST SPAIN REGARDING THE VESSEL *MV LOUISA*

TRIBUNAL ALSO SEIZED OF A REQUEST FOR PROVISIONAL MEASURES

Hamburg, 24 November 2010. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has instituted proceedings against Spain in a dispute concerning the *MV Louisa*, flying the flag of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, arrested on 1 February 2006 by the Spanish authorities and held since that date.

According to the Applicant, the *MV Louisa* was involved in conducting sonar and cesium magnetic surveys of the sea floor of the Bay of Cadiz in order to locate and record indications of oil and methane gas. The Applicant states that the vessel was arrested for alleged violations of Spain's historical patrimony or marine environment laws, that various members of the crew were also arrested but have since been released and that the vessel is being held without bond in the port of El Puerto de Santa Maria.

The Applicant maintains that the vessel was involved in scientific research with a valid permit from the coastal State. The Applicant claims that Spain has violated articles 73, 87, 226, 245 and 303 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and requests the Tribunal to award damages in the amount of "not less than \$10,000,000".

The Application instituting proceedings before the Tribunal includes a request for provisional measures under article 290, paragraph 1, of the Convention, in which the Tribunal is requested, *inter alia*, to order the Respondent to release the *MV Louisa* and return the property seized.

Both Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Spain have made declarations under article 287 of the Convention, recognising the competence of the Tribunal as a means for the settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention. The case has been entered in the List of cases of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea as Case No.18.

The press releases of the Tribunal, documents and other information are available on the Tribunal's websites: <http://www.itlos.org> and <http://www.tidm.org> and from the Registry of the Tribunal.

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