



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

Press Release

**NEW ARBITRATOR APPOINTED IN THE ARBITRAL PROCEEDINGS
INSTITUTED BY UKRAINE AGAINST THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**PCA CASE NO. 2019-28, *DISPUTE CONCERNING THE DETENTION OF
UKRAINIAN NAVAL VESSELS AND SERVICEMEN*
(UKRAINE V. THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION)**

On 6 February 2026, the President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Judge Tomas Heidar, appointed Mr Nguyen Hong Thao (Viet Nam) as arbitrator in the arbitral proceedings instituted by Ukraine against the Russian Federation under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (PCA Case No. 2019-28, *Dispute Concerning the Detention of Ukrainian Naval Vessels and Servicemen (Ukraine v. the Russian Federation)*).

By letter dated 20 January 2026, the Agent of Ukraine, Mr Anton Korynevych, informed President Heidar of the withdrawal of an arbitrator from the arbitral tribunal. The letter stated that “on 20 December 2025, the Permanent Court of Arbitration notified the Parties that Professor Vylegzhanin, Russia’s party-appointed arbitrator, had withdrawn from the arbitration for health reasons.” The letter also stated that following the withdrawal of Professor Vylegzhanin from the arbitral tribunal, “the Russian Federation has failed to appoint a replacement arbitrator within the timeframe allotted under Article 3(c) of Annex VII to the Convention.” In the letter, Ukraine requested President Heidar to “appoint an arbitrator within 30 days of receipt of this request”, pursuant to article 3, subparagraphs (c), (e) and (f) of Annex VII to the Convention.

Under article 3, subparagraph (f), of Annex VII to the Convention, any vacancy in the arbitral tribunal must be filled “in the manner prescribed for the initial appointment.” The President was therefore required to make the appointment to fill the vacant seat within a period of 30 days of receipt of the request and in consultation with the Parties, as prescribed under article 3, subparagraph (e), of Annex VII to the Convention. Further to consultations by correspondence with the Parties on the matter, Mr Nguyen Hong Thao was appointed to serve as a member of the arbitral tribunal.

The composition of the five-member Annex VII arbitral tribunal is now as follows: Gudmundur Eiriksson, president (Iceland), Christopher Greenwood (United

Kingdom), James Kateka (United Republic of Tanzania), Kathy-Ann Brown (Jamaica) and Nguyen Hong Thao (Viet Nam).

Note: The press releases of the Tribunal do not constitute official documents and are issued for information purposes only.

The press releases of the Tribunal, documents and other information are available on the Tribunal's website (<http://www.itlos.org> and <http://www.tidm.org>) and from the Registry of the Tribunal. Please contact Ms Julia Ritter or Mr Robert Steenkamp at: Am Internationalen Seegerichtshof 1, 22609 Hamburg, Germany, Tel.: +49 (40) 35607-227; Fax: +49 (40) 35607-245; E-mail: press@itlos.org