

## ERITREA v ETHIOPIA

### BACKGROUND

On 16 February 1999 Eritrea applied to the International Court of Justice regarding a diplomatic dispute with Ethiopia. Eritrea alleged that Ethiopia had violated the premises and staff of Eritrea in Eritrea's diplomatic mission in Addis Ababa.

However, unless and until Ethiopia gives its consent to the Court's jurisdiction, the Court cannot take any action in the proceedings.

### ERITREA'S CLAIMS

In its Application, Eritrea contended that during the week of 8 February 1999, Ethiopia repeatedly violated the diplomatic immunities of Eritrea's accredited representative to Ethiopia and to the Organisation of African Unity, Ghirma Asmeron. Asmeron was finally declared *persona non grata* and had to leave Ethiopia on 10 February 1999.

Eritrea maintained that the premises of its Embassy in Addis Ababa was forcibly broken into on 11 February 1999 and remained occupied by Ethiopia since then. Eritrea also contended that Embassy staff members, including Eritrea's Chargé d'affaires in Addis Ababa, Saleh Omar, were being detained *incommunicado* or held hostage by Ethiopia.

In filing its Application, Eritrea stated that since it did not appear that Ethiopia had given its consent for the Court to be seised of jurisdiction in the case, Eritrea invited Ethiopia to accept the Court's jurisdiction. Eritrea's Application, which was accompanied by a request for the indication of provisional measures, had been transmitted to the Government of Ethiopia.