

July 2025

Q & A on Inter-State Cases¹

This document is a tool for the press. It does not bind the Court.

What is an inter-State case?

Most applications to the European Court of Human Rights are lodged by individuals, groups of people, companies or NGOs.

However, States may also lodge applications against each other in what are called “inter-State applications”.

This possibility is set out under Article 33 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which states that “any High Contracting Party may refer to the Court any alleged breach of the provisions of the Convention and the Protocols thereto by another High Contracting Party”.

Does this happen often?

There have been over 30 inter-State cases since the European Convention entered into force in 1953.

The first one was *Greece v. the United Kingdom*, lodged in 1956, concerning alleged violations of the Convention in Cyprus.

For the list of all inter-State applications, see [here](#).

What kind of complaints do States bring against another?

Most have concerned situations of crisis or conflict, such as the UK authorities’ interrogation techniques from 1971 to 1975 during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, Turkey’s military operations in northern Cyprus in 1974, the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia in 2008, the events in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014 and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020.

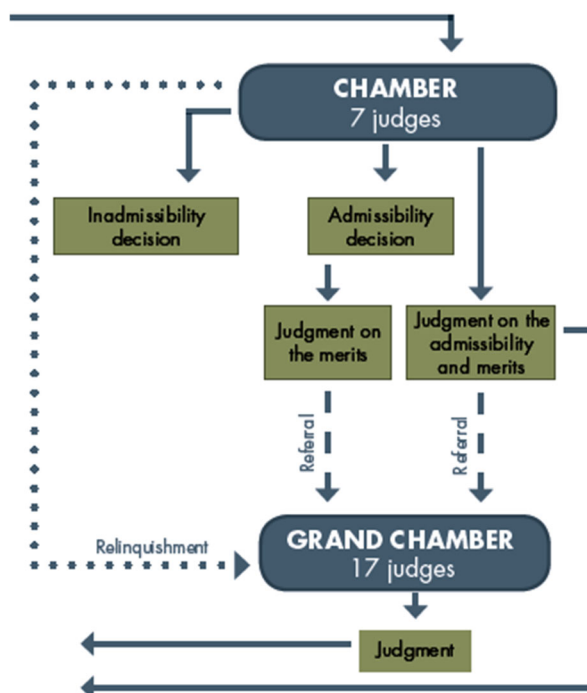
On the other hand, *Slovenia v. Croatia* related to proceedings brought by a Slovenian bank to collect debts owed by Croatian companies.

What is the procedure?

- Any State intending to bring a case before the Court against another State must lodge an application, setting out a statement of facts and alleged violations, with relevant arguments.
- When an inter-State application is made, the Court immediately gives notification of it to the other State and assigns it to one of the Sections.
- The judges elected in respect of the applicant and respondent States are part of the Chamber constituted to consider the case.
- The President of the Section invites the respondent State to submit written observations (“communicates the case”), which are then forwarded to the applicant State for observations in reply.

¹ There is a [Dutch version](#) of this document

- Then follows the usual procedure for a “communicated case”, as outlined below:



- Other procedural steps are:

a request for interim measures under Rule 39 of the Rules of Court. These are urgent measures which apply only where there is an imminent risk of irreparable harm. For example, the European Court granted such a measure in the inter-State case brought by Ukraine against Russia concerning events in the Kerch Strait (see [press release](#) of 4.12.2018);

A hearing on the admissibility or the merits or both, if one or more of the Contracting Parties concerned requests it or if the Chamber decides to hold one of its own motion, and a hearing if the case is referred or relinquished to the Grand Chamber.

Chamber and/or Grand Chamber hearings have been held in the following cases:

- [Cyprus v. Turkey](#)
- *Georgia v. Russia (I)* ([Chamber](#) and [GC](#)) and *Georgia v. Russia (II)* ([Chamber](#) and [GC](#)), witness hearings were also held in both cases
- [Slovenia v. Croatia](#)
- [Ukraine v. Russia](#) (re Crimea)
- [Ukraine and the Netherlands v. Russia](#)

- For more detail on procedure, see the Rules of Court, [Rules 46, 48, 51 and 58](#)

What are the consequences of rulings in inter-State cases?

In 2000 there was a friendly settlement in the case [Denmark v. Turkey](#) concerning the alleged ill-treatment of a Danish national detained in Turkey. The settlement provided for *ex gratia* payment and expression of regret by the Turkish Government for the ill-treatment inflicted, provision of assistance in police training by the applicant Government and establishment of a continuous dialogue.

In the following inter-State cases, the European Court awarded compensation (“just satisfaction”):

[Cyprus v. Turkey](#) – concerning the situation in northern Cyprus since Turkey carried out military operations there in July and August 1974, and the division of the territory of Cyprus since that time. Turkey was ordered to pay Cyprus 30,000,000 euros (EUR) in respect of the non-pecuniary damage suffered by the relatives of 1,456 missing persons and EUR 60,000,000 in respect of the non-pecuniary damage suffered by the enclaved Greek-Cypriot residents of the Karpas peninsula.

[Georgia v. Russia \(I\)](#) – concerning the collective expulsion of Georgian nationals by the Russian authorities from October 2006 to January 2007. The Court held that Russia had to pay Georgia 10,000,000 euros in respect of non-pecuniary damage to be distributed to the victims, a group of at least 1,500 Georgian nationals.

[Georgia v. Russia \(II\)](#) – concerning administrative practices on the part of the Russian Federation entailing various breaches of the Convention, in connection with the armed conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation in August 2008. The Court ruled on the question of just satisfaction in a judgment delivered on [28 April 2023](#).

How many inter-State cases are pending?

There are currently **16 inter-State cases pending** before the Court:

- **Slovakia v. Belgium:** lodged on 27.02.2025. The case concerns the death of a Slovak national following an incident involving the Belgian police at the Brussels-Charleroi airport. See press release issued on [07.03.2025](#).
- **Ireland v. the United Kingdom (III):** lodged on 17.01.2024. The case concerns the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023, which was signed into UK law on 18 September 2023. See press release of [19.01.2024](#).
- **Georgia v. Russia (IV) on the question of just satisfaction:** concerning the human-rights toll caused by the hardening of the administrative boundary lines (known as “borderisation”) after the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia in August 2008. A judgment on the merits was handed down on [09.04.2024](#).
In addition to the inter-State case, there are around 200 individual applications before the Court against Georgia, against Russia or against both States concerning the armed conflict in 2008 and the subsequent hardening of the administrative boundary lines.
- **Four cases Ukraine v. Russia:**
 1. one before the Grand Chamber in respect of events in Crimea **on the question of just satisfaction**. A judgment on the admissibility and the merits was handed down on [25.06.2024](#).
 2. another before the Grand Chamber concerning Russian military attacks in Ukraine and human-rights violations in occupied Ukrainian territory other than Crimea between 2014 and 2022, **on the question of just satisfaction**. A judgment on the admissibility and the merits was handed down on [09.07.2025](#).
 3. One case before a Chamber concerning the naval incident in the Kerch Strait in November 2018, which led to the capture of three Ukrainian naval vessels and their crews. See press release issued on 30.11.2018.
 4. Another case lodged on 19.02.2021 concerning the Ukrainian Government’s allegations of targeted assassination operations against perceived opponents of the Russian Federation, in Russia and on the territory of other States. See press releases issued on [23.02.2021](#) and [14.04.2025](#).
- There are approximately 9,500 individual applications before the Court which appear to be related to the events in Crimea, eastern Ukraine and the Sea of

Azov and Russia's military operations on the territory of Ukraine since 24 February 2022.

- See also press releases concerning prisoners of war captured during the recent hostilities: [16.06.2022](#), [30.06.2022](#), [01.07.2022](#) and [24.08.2022](#).
- See also press releases issued on: [26.11.2014](#); [09.05.2018](#); [17.12.2018](#); [15.07.2020](#).

- **Netherlands v. Russia on the question of just satisfaction** – concerning the downing of flight MH17. A judgment dealing with the merits of this application was handed down on [09.07.2025](#).

There are also four individual applications lodged by over 500 relatives of MH17 victims, awaiting examination of the admissibility and merits.

- **Liechtenstein v. the Czech Republic:** concerning the respondent State's classification of Liechtenstein citizens as persons with German nationality for the purposes of applying the Decrees of the President of Republic of 1945 (also known as the Beneš decrees), which, among other things, confiscated property belonging to all ethnic Germans and Hungarians after the Second World War. A summary of this case can be found in the press release published on [19.08.2020](#).
- **Seven inter-State cases**, the first three of which concern mainly the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan/Nagorno Karabakh which took place between 27 September 2020 and 10 November 2020 (the date of entry into force of a ceasefire agreement). The other four cases concern subsequent events in 2021-23, including criminal proceedings against Armenians captured by Azerbaijan, later military clashes and events connected to the exodus of Armenians leaving previously occupied territories.

The first four cases have been communicated, the others are pending.

These cases contain allegations of widespread violations of the Convention.

1. Armenia v. Azerbaijan (no. 1), no. 42521/20, lodged on 27 September 2020. Case before the Grand Chamber.

- Press releases of [28.09.2020](#), [30.09.2020](#) and [04.02.2021](#).

2. Azerbaijan v. Armenia no. 47319/20, lodged on 27 October 2020.

Case before the Grand Chamber.

- Press releases of [27.10.2020](#) and [04.02.2021](#).

- **Other press releases concerning these two inter-State cases (nos. 42521/20 and 47319/20):**

- Statement on requests for interim measures concerning the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan: [04.11.2020](#).
- The interim measure indicated in the case of *Armenia v. Azerbaijan* and Rule 39 proceedings with regard to alleged captives to remain in force: [16.12.2020](#).
- *Armenia v. Azerbaijan* and alleged captives: notification to the Committee of Ministers of interim measures indicated : [16.03.2021](#).
- Relinquishment in favour of the Grand Chamber in the two inter-State cases **Armenia v. Azerbaijan** and **Azerbaijan v. Armenia**: [11.05.2021](#).

3. Armenia v. Türkiye no. 43517/20, lodged on 4 October 2020.

Case before a Chamber.

- Press releases of [06.10.2020](#), [14.10.2020](#), [02.12.2020](#) and [18.05.2021](#).

4. Armenia v. Azerbaijan (no. 2), no. 33412/21, lodged on 29 June 2021

5. Armenia v. Azerbaijan (no. 3), no. 42445/21, lodged on 24 August 2021

6. Armenia v. Azerbaijan (no. 4), no. 15389/22, lodged on 24 March 2022.
See press release of [21.12.2022](#) concerning interim measures indicated in the case.

7. Azerbaijan v. Armenia (no. 2), no. 39912/22, lodged on 18 August 2022

The last three inter-State cases lodged by Armenia v. Azerbaijan (nos. 33412/21, 42445/21 and 15389/22) contain allegations of various violations under Articles 2 (right to life), 3 (prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment), 6 (right to a fair trial) and 8 (right to respect for private and family life).

The application *Azerbaijan v. Armenia* (no. 2), no. 39912/22, concerns alleged looting and destruction of houses, setting fire to trees and destruction of infrastructure by Armenians leaving the town of Lachin and the surrounding area, allegedly on the orders or with the encouragement of Armenia.

There are also individual applications pending before the Court in regard to individuals captured during the conflict in late 2020. Rule 39 of Rules of the Court (Interim measures) has been applied on numerous occasions in these cases.

Press contacts

echrpress@echr.coe.int | tel: +33 3 90 21 42 08