

International Court of Justice Rules in Favor of Costa Rica Against Nicaragua



The Hague, December 16 (RHC-teleSUR-English) -- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a final ruling on Wednesday regarding two cases raised by Nicaragua and Costa Rica over disputes along the border between the two Central American countries. The ICJ has yet to rule on an environmental damage complaint by Managua.

In the case of the disputed area of Calero Island, as Costa Rica calls it -- or Harbor Head, its Nicaraguan name, the ICJ ruled that the island belongs to Costa Rica. Both countries had previously accepted to respect the court's decision.

Costa Rica and Nicaragua asked the ICJ to recognize their sovereignty over the island, while Nicaragua also claimed before the court that Costa Rica caused environmental damage when building a road leading up to the island for security reasons.

In 2010, Costa Rica sued Nicaragua for allegedly invading and destroying a small wetlands area that both countries claimed as their own. The Costa Rican government argued that Nicaragua tried to modify the map at the border where the disputed area lays. They said Nicaragua opened up three pipes that diverted

the course of the San Juan River, a natural border between the two countries.

The Nicaraguan government in 2011 filed a complaint against Costa Rica for environmental damage on its territory for the construction of a 120 kilometer-highway that runs parallel to the river.

The Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border has historically been a site of serious tensions. During the Nicaraguan Revolution, U.S.-backed "Contra" forces used bases in Costa Rica, and the San Juan River border region was one area where Sandinistas and Contras clashed during the 1980s.

Currently, both countries face what has been described by Managua as a "humanitarian crisis" with Cuban immigrants on the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border, trying to reach the United States.

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