

Japanese law professor elected new judge at the International Court of Justice

An international law professor from Japan has been elected to serve with the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, following the resignation of a sitting judge, earlier this month.

Dr Yuji Iwasawa, 63, will join the 14 judges at the International Court of Justice ([ICJ](#)), following separate but simultaneous voting processes in the General Assembly and the Security Council on Friday.

He will replace Judge Hisashi Owada, 85, also of Japan, who resigned this month, citing old age and the fact that his daughter Masako, Crown Princess of Japan is set to become the country's Empress next year, according to media reports.

The ICJ settles legal disputes between states in addition to providing UN entities with advisory opinions on legal matters.

Located in The Hague, in the Netherlands, it is one of the six principal organs of the UN and the only one not situated in New York.

The others are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Secretariat.

ICJ judges are elected by both the General Assembly – where all 193 UN Member States are represented – and the 15-member Security Council.

Candidates are required to obtain an absolute majority of votes in both chambers: that is 97 in the General Assembly and eight in the Security Council.

Representatives from 189 countries took part in the General Assembly vote on Friday, with five abstaining.

Mr. Iwasawa obtained all 184 votes and was elected unanimously by the Security Council.

The 15 ICJ judges serve for nine-year terms. However, the election was called as Mr. Owada resigned before the end of his term in 2021, which Mr. Iwasawa will complete.

The new judge is a law professor at the University of Tokyo. He is also the current chairperson of [the UN Human Rights Committee](#), a group of independent experts which monitors countries' compliance with the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#).

The 1966 treaty is among the core instruments of international human rights law, calling on states to ensure that the rights of all people in their jurisdictions are respected, regardless of their race, sex, religion, national or social origin, or other distinctions.