



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

The Rt Hon. Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Affairs

King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Rt Hon. Emily Thornberry DBE MP
Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

25 August 2026

Dear Emily,

Further to the letter sent by my predecessor, The Rt Hon. David Lammy MP, in February 2025, I am writing to update the Committee on the United Kingdom's campaign to support the election of Professor Dapo Akande as a judge on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the term 2027-2036. The election will take place on 3 November 2026 in New York. There are currently eight candidates competing for five seats.

The United Nations Secretary General has now published the formal list of nominations.¹ I am pleased to report that Professor Akande secured 43 nominations from national groups across every United Nations region, the highest number received by any candidate in this election. This is a strong endorsement of his candidacy and a clear reflection of the respect he commands across the international legal community. While this provides a strong foundation for the campaign, we remain focused on securing the broad support required for election in November.

Professor Akande's candidacy reflects the UK's longstanding commitment to international justice, human rights and the international rule of law. As part of the campaign, he has met legal experts, senior government representatives and other key stakeholders across all regions of the world to discuss the role of the Court and issues relating to international law and the administration of international justice. His campaign has benefited from strong support across His Majesty's Government, with Ministers endorsing and engaging international partners on his candidature. The FCDO's global network has been actively supporting campaign engagement overseas.

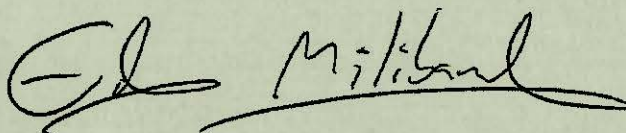
The Committee has previously taken a close interest in the UK's participation in elections to international courts and tribunals, including following the 2017 ICJ election. As previously advised, the campaign is overseen by a Senior Oversight Board chaired by Sally Langrish, FCDO Legal Director General, and is supported through close coordination between the FCDO, the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Justice.

¹ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4120640?v=pdf>

Given the Committee's longstanding interest in this area, I would be very happy for officials to provide a private briefing on the campaign and the forthcoming election, should that be helpful to the Committee.

I am confident that Professor Akande would make an outstanding judge of the ICJ and I look forward to keeping the Committee updated as the campaign progresses.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Miliband', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

THE RT HON. ED MILIBAND MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs