

Law Expert: Greece Lost its Honor

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The International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment that Greece violated its obligations in line with the 1995 Interim Accord by preventing Macedonia's NATO accession is very clear. An international legal ruling always has an international political meaning and importance, and therefore EU and NATO should put pressure on Greece to alter its stance, says Olivier Ribbelink, expert in international law and ICJ judgments.

He told

Macedonian Television program "Porta" that the Hague ruling should influence developments at the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago, but added that organizations such as the Alliance have regulations for admission of members.

"If Greece continues to favor this stance, it will block Macedonia. But then there is another problem. Macedonia can turn again to the ICJ and ask the court to order Greece to respect Accord commitments, or it can address the UN Security Council with a request for a decision over Greece's obstacles to Macedonia's membership, despite the clear ICJ ruling", says the renowned professor.

Ribbelink says the ICJ is UN's highest court body and the most respected international judicial institution.

"ICJ

rulings have enormous effect, they are very important in the field of law, they are studied, interpreted and used by all states. However, one must not forget that ICJ sessions only refer to specific cases between specific states. The rulings are binding only for the parties concerned, in this case Macedonia and Greece, but not for other countries", he stresses.

Ribbelink believes that other states will take into account the judgment, including those in NATO and EU, whereas the pressure put on Greece will be much stronger.

"Greece's position will be unfavorable. The country has lost its honor", adds Olivier Ribbelink.