



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

Unofficial

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Sovereignty over Pulau Ligitan and Pulau Sipadan (Indonesia/Malaysia)

Fixing of time-limit for the filing of a Reply by each of the Parties

THE HAGUE, 20 October 2000. The President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Judge Gilbert Guillaume, has fixed 2 March 2001 as the time-limit for the filing of a Reply by each of the Parties in the case concerning Sovereignty over Pulau Ligitan and Pulau Sipadan (Indonesia/Malaysia).

The President took this decision by an Order of 19 October 2000, taking into account the provisions of the Special Agreement by which the Parties had submitted the case to the Court and a joint letter from the Parties dated 14 October 2000. In that letter, the Parties stated that they intended to file Replies, and requested the Court to extend by three months the time-limit prescribed in the Special Agreement for such filing. They stressed that the Special Agreement otherwise remained unchanged.

The subsequent procedure has been reserved for further decision.

History of the proceedings

Indonesia and Malaysia jointly seized the Court on 2 November 1998 of their dispute concerning sovereignty over Pulau Ligitan and Pulau Sipadan, two islands in the Celebes Sea. They did so by notifying the Court of a Special Agreement, which was signed between them on 31 May 1997 at Kuala Lumpur and entered into force on 14 May 1998.

In the Special Agreement, the Parties requested the Court "to determine on the basis of the treaties, agreements and any other evidence furnished by [them], whether sovereignty over Pulau Ligitan and Pulau Sipadan belong[ed] to the Republic of Indonesia or to Malaysia". They expressed the wish to settle their dispute "in the spirit of friendly relations existing between [them] as enunciated in the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia" and declared in advance that they would "accept the Judgment of the Court given pursuant to [the] Special Agreement as final and binding upon them".

By Order of 10 November 1998, the Court, taking into account the provisions of the Special Agreement concerning the written pleadings, fixed 2 November 1999 and 2 March 2000 as respective time-limits for the filing of a Memorial and Counter-Memorial by each of the Parties. The Memorials were filed within the time-limit fixed.

By Order of 14 September 1999, the Court, at the joint request of the Parties, extended to 2 July 2000 the time-limit for the filing of the Counter-Memorials. By Order of 11 May 2000, the President of the Court, at the joint request of the Parties, further extended to 2 August 2000 the time-limit for the filing of the Counter-Memorials. The Counter-Memorials were filed within the time-limit as thus extended.

The full text of the Order will shortly be available on the Court's website (<http://www.icj-cij.org>).

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