



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

Unofficial

No. 2005/3
3 February 2005

Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge (Malaysia/Singapore)

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

THE HAGUE, 3 February 2005. By an Order of 1 February 2005 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) fixed 25 November 2005 as the time-limit for the filing of a Reply by each of the Parties in the case concerning Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge (Malaysia/Singapore).

The Court took this decision taking into account the provisions of the Special Agreement between the Parties, by which it was seised of the case.

The subsequent procedure has been reserved for further decision.

History of the proceedings

On 24 July 2003, Malaysia and Singapore jointly submitted to the Court a dispute concerning sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge. They did so by notifying the Court of a Special Agreement between them which was signed on 6 February 2003 at Putrajaya and entered into force on 9 May 2003.

In the Special Agreement, the Parties request the Court “to determine whether sovereignty over: (a) Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh; (b) Middle Rocks; (c) South Ledge, belongs to Malaysia or the Republic of Singapore”. They agree in advance “to accept the Judgment of the Court . . . as final and binding upon them”.

The Parties filed their Memorials and Counter-Memorials within the time-limits fixed by the Court by an Order dated 1 September 2003, taking into account the provisions of the Special Agreement.

Procedure

Contentious proceedings before the Court consist of two phases: written and oral. When the proceedings are instituted by way of a special agreement, as in the present case, the number and order of the written pleadings is governed by the provisions of that agreement, unless the Court, after ascertaining the views of the parties, decides otherwise. Upon the closure of the written phase, public hearings are organized. The Court then delivers its judgment. The written pleadings remain confidential during the written phase of the proceedings. They are made accessible to the

public only on or after the opening of the oral proceedings, subject to a decision to that effect by the Court after it has consulted the parties.

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

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