



Press Release 2006/38

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

Public hearings on the merits of the dispute to open on Tuesday 6 November 2007

THE HAGUE, 16 November 2006. The public hearings in the case concerning Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge (Malaysia/Singapore) will open on Tuesday 6 November 2007 before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

The detailed schedule for the hearings, which will be concerned with the merits of the dispute, will be published at a later date.

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, as well as their Replies, within the time-limits fixed by the Court, taking into account the provisions of the Special Agreement, in the Orders dated 1 September 2003 and 1 February 2005, respectively.

In a joint letter dated 23 January 2006, the Parties informed the Court that they had agreed not to submit Rejoinders. The Court having decided that no further written pleadings were necessary, the case became ready for hearing.