



# INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

Unofficial

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## Frontier Dispute (Benin/Niger)

### Special Chamber to hold its first public sitting on Thursday 20 November 2003

THE HAGUE, 27 October 2003. The five-Member Chamber formed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to deal with the case concerning the Frontier Dispute (Benin/Niger) will hold its first public sitting on Thursday 20 November 2003 at 10 a.m. in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace in The Hague, seat of the Court.

The aim of this public sitting is to enable the two judges ad hoc to make the solemn declaration required by the Statute and the Rules of Court.

As announced in Press Release No. 2002/41 of 20 December 2002, the Chamber is composed of three Members of the Court and two judges ad hoc chosen by the Parties:

President	G. Guillaume;
Judges	R. Ranjeva, P. H. Kooijmans;
Judges <u>ad hoc</u>	Mohammed Bedjaoui (chosen by Niger), Mohamed Bennouna (chosen by Benin).

### History of the proceedings

By joint letter of 11 April 2002, filed in the Registry on 3 May 2002, Benin and Niger notified to the Court a Special Agreement, which was signed on 15 June 2001 in Cotonou and entered into force on 11 April 2002.

In the Special Agreement, the Parties requested the Court to:

- “(a) determine the course of the boundary between the Republic of Benin and the Republic of Niger in the River Niger sector;
- (b) specify which State owns each of the islands in the said river, and in particular Lété Island;
- (c) determine the course of the boundary between the two States in the sector of the River Mekrou.”

By an Order of 27 November 2002, the Court acceded to the request of Benin and Niger expressed in Article 1 of the Special Agreement that it should form a Special Chamber of five judges to deal with the case. By the same Order, it fixed 27 August 2003 as the time-limit for the filing of a Memorial by each of the Parties, taking into account the provisions of Article 3 of the Special Agreement. The Memorials were filed within the prescribed time-limit. By an Order of 11 September 2003, the President of the Chamber fixed 28 May 2004 as the time-limit for the filing of a Counter-Memorial by each Party.

In the Special Agreement the Parties agreed in advance to accept as final and binding upon them the judgment to be rendered by the Chamber.

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