

ERITREA ETHIOPIA BOUNDARY COMMISSION

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission held a private session at the premises of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Peace Palace in The Hague on 20 November 2006 to consider further the procedures to be followed in connection with the demarcation of the boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Parties declined the Commission's invitation to attend the meeting, but the meeting was attended by representatives of the following Witnesses of the Algiers Agreement of December 2000: the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Algeria. The Algiers Agreement concluded between Eritrea and Ethiopia on 12 December 2000 established the Commission to delimit and demarcate the international boundary between the two countries. The Boundary Commission issued its Decision on delimitation on 13 April 2002.

In view of the subsequent lack of necessary cooperation by the Parties, extending over more than four years, preventing the Commission from fixing boundary pillars on the ground, the Commission decided that it would instead use modern techniques of image processing and terrain modelling, combined with high resolution aerial photography, as well as knowledge acquired on the ground by the Commission field staff, to identify the locations where the line of the boundary changes direction and where boundary pillars would otherwise be located.

These boundary points have been marked on 45 large scale maps (1:25,000) which have been given to the Parties. They have thus been informed in precise detail of where the demarcated boundary will run. However, the Commission has suspended the effect of this final identification of the boundary line for 12 months. During this period the Parties are at liberty to agree between themselves to fix pillars at the identified locations or to request the Commission to resume demarcation operations. The Commission will only do this if both Parties undertake to cooperate and provide necessary security. If, at the end of the 12 month period, neither of these alternatives has been implemented, the locations now established by the Commission will take legal effect and will constitute the final demarcation of the boundary. The 1:25000 scale maps which consist of 45 sheets may be consulted at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague at the discretion of the Registrar to the Commission. A copy of the 1:1000000 scale index map may be obtained through the UN Cartographic Section by contacting cartog@un.org.

The Commission issued a detailed Statement on 27 November 2006 setting out the details of this procedure. The Statement is available on the website of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, <http://www.pca-cpa.org>.

The Members of the Commission are Sir Elihu Lauterpacht CBE QC (President), Prince Bola Adesumbo Ajibola SAN KBE CFR, Professor W Michael Reisman, Judge Stephen M. Schwebel and Sir Arthur Watts KCMG QC. The Permanent Court of Arbitration serves as Registry for the Boundary Commission, and the Chief of the Cartographic Section of the Secretariat of the United Nations acts as the Commission's Secretary.

No further information is available.