



Limits in the Seas

No. 8

Mauritania *Straight Baselines: Mauritania*

(Country Codes: MR)

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LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 8

MAURITANIAN STRAIGHT BASELINE

This paper is one of a series issued by The Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State. The aim is to set forth the basis for national arrangements for the measurement of the territorial sea or the division of the continental shelf of maritime nations.

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MAURITANIAN STRAIGHT BASELINE

The Government of Mauritania has decreed a straight baseline for the measurement of the territorial sea extending from Cap Blanc, in the extreme north, to Cap Timiris.

The law creating the straight baseline was passed on January 21, 1967. It reads as follows:

Mauritania

Law No. 67.023 of the 21st of January 1967. Modifying Law No. 62.038 of the 20th January 1962 on the code for the Merchant Marine and Maritime Fisheries.

The National Assembly has ruled on and adopted

The President of the Republic proclaims the law whose context follows.

First Article - The first article of Chapter IV of Book VII of Law No. 62.038 of the 20th of January 1962 on the code for the Merchant Marine and Maritime Fisheries, is repealed and replaced by the following article.

"First Article - The territorial waters extend up to a distance of twelve nautical miles from a straight base line from Cap Blanc to Cap Timiris and for the southern part of the littoral, from the low water line."

Article 2 - Article 2 of Chapter IV of Book VII of the said law is repealed.

Article 3 - Article one of Chapter V of Book VII of the said law is repealed and replaced by the following article:

"First Article - In territorial waters maritime fishing is subject to the dispositions of Article 4 of Chapter II of Book VIII of the present code.

Article 4 - Article 3 of Chapter V of Book VII of the said law is repealed and replaced by the following article:

"Article 3 - Foreign ships may circulate or anchor freely in these territorial waters on the condition that they conform to the regulations in effect."

Article 5 - Article 5 of Chapter II of Book VIII of the said law is repealed.

Article 6 - In Article 4 of Chapter IV of Book X of the said law the following sentence is to be omitted: "These same sanctions apply in the matters of fishing in the adjacent zone."

Article 7 - All previous dispositions now being contrary to this present law are repealed.

Article 8 - This law will be executed as State Law.

Nouakchott, the 21st of January 1967

ANALYSIS

The straight baseline measures approximately 89 nautical miles in length and it includes within Mauritanian internal waters approximately 60 per cent of the very shallow Banc d'Arguin. The depth of the water along the straight baseline appears everywhere to be less than 10 fathoms. The enclosed waters, while forming a major indentation of the Mauritanian coast, do not satisfy the semicircular requirements of a bay. The greatest indentation of the coast, measured perpendicular to the straight baseline, is approximately 34.2 nautical miles. The straight baseline extends over approximately 30 per cent of the Mauritanian coast. The low water line forms the baseline for the remaining portions of the coast.