TERRITORIAL SEA ACT

CHAPTER 1:51

Act
38 of 1969
Amended by
22 of 1986

Current Authorised Pages

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Note on Subsidiary Legislation

This Chapter contains no subsidiary legislation.

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TERRITORIAL SEA ACT

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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CHAPTER 1:51

TERRITORIAL SEA ACT

38 of 1969. **An Act to make provision with respect to the Territorial Sea of Trinidad and Tobago.**

Commencement. [1/1970]. [31ST DECEMBER 1969]

Short title. **1.** This Act may be cited as the Territorial Sea Act.

Interpretation. [22 of 1986]. **2.** In this Act—

"contiguous zone" means that area contiguous to the territorial sea which does not extend beyond twenty-four nautical miles from the archipelagic baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured;

"Island" means a naturally formed area of land which is surrounded by and above water at mean high-water spring tides;

"low-water line" has the meaning assigned to it by section 7;

"low-tide elevation" means a naturally formed area of land which is surrounded by, and above water at mean low-water spring tides but is submerged at mean high-water spring tides;

"nautical mile" means the international nautical mile.

Territorial sea. **3.** The territorial sea of Trinidad and Tobago comprises those areas of the sea having as their inner limits the base-lines defined in section 5 and as their outer limits, a line measured seaward from that baseline, every point of which is distant twelve nautical miles from the nearest point of the baseline so, however, that where the outer limits of the territorial sea of Trinidad and Tobago intersect foreign territorial waters the outer limits thereof shall be resolved through agreements or other means recognised by international law.

Internal waters. [22 of 1986]. **4.** (1) The internal waters of Trinidad and Tobago shall include any areas of sea within its archipelagic waters that are on the landward side of the closing lines.

(2) In this section "closing lines" means the straight lines drawn in accordance with the provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, that—

(a) cross the mouth of a river;

(b) enclose a bay;

(c) delimit the waters of a harbour.

Baseline of territorial sea. [22 of 1986].

5. (1) The baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea shall be measured shall be straight archipelagic baselines of Trinidad and Tobago.

(2) The archipelagic baselines of Trinidad and Tobago consist of straight baselines joining the outermost parts of the outermost islands and drying reefs of the archipelago.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2), a low-tide elevation that lies wholly or partly within the breadth of the sea which would be territorial sea if all low-tide elevations were disregarded for the purpose of the measurement of the breadth thereof, shall be treated as an island.

Bed of territorial sea and internal waters vested in the State.

6. The seabed or submarine areas bounded on the landward side by the baselines referred to in section 5 and on the seaward side by the outer limits of the territorial sea shall be deemed to be and always to have been vested in the State.

Controls exercisable by the State. [22 of 1986].

6A. (1) Where in the contiguous zone an officer referred to in subsection (2) has reasonable cause to suspect that the Customs, revenue, immigration or health laws have been or are likely to be infringed by a vessel, such officer may stop, board and search the vessel and may direct that vessel to proceed to such place as he may specify.

(2) The officers to whom subsection (1) applies are—

(a) members of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard;

(b) members of the Police Service;

(c) Customs officers;

(d) any other person authorised in writing by the Minister to whom responsibility for National Security is assigned.

Official charts. [22 of 1986].

7. (1) Where the low-water line is being used as a means of measuring the closing line, the low-water line area shall be the line of low-water at mean low-water spring tides as depicted on the largest scale Trinidad and Tobago Government nautical chart for the time being of that area or, where no such chart of that area exists, the largest scale British Admiralty chart for the time being of that area.

(2) In any proceedings in any Court a certificate purporting to be signed by the Minister of Home Affairs or a person authorised by him that—

(a) any specified Trinidad and Tobago Government nautical chart of any area is the largest scale Trinidad and Tobago Government nautical chart for the time being of that area; or

(b) no Trinidad and Tobago Government nautical chart for any area exists and that any specified British Admiralty chart of that area is the largest scale British Admiralty chart for the time being of that area,

shall be admissible as evidence of the matter stated in the certificate.

(3) Every person signing any such certificate shall, in the absence of proof to the contrary, be presumed to be duly authorised to sign it.

8. ***(Repealed by Act No. 22 of 1986).***

Act binds the State.

9. This Act binds the State.