



# International Boundary Study

No. 30 – March 2, 1964

## **Zambia** (*Northern Rhodesia*) – **Zimbabwe** (*Southern Rhodesia*) **Boundary**

(Country Codes: ZA-ZI)

The Geographer  
Office of the Geographer  
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

# INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 30

## ZAMBIA (NORTHERN RHODESIA) – ZIMBABWE (SOUTHERN RHODESIA) BOUNDARY

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# **ZAMBIA (NORTHERN RHODESIA) – ZIMBABWE (SOUTHERN RHODESIA) BOUNDARY**

## **I. BOUNDARY BRIEF**

The boundary between Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia has been redelimited, effective January 1, 1964, with slight alterations in the area of Lake Kariba and Victoria Falls. The 495-mile long boundary, which is situated entirely in the Zambezi River including Lake Kariba, is considered to be demarcated. The Mozambique tripoint is situated at 30°25' 30" E. while the Bechuanaland - South-West Africa quadripoint is at the junction of Hunter's Road and the river.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### **A. Geographical**

The Zambezi, one of Africa's great rivers, flows approximately 1700 miles eastward from Angola and South-West Africa to the Indian Ocean in Mozambique. For the distance of 495 miles the river forms the boundary between the Rhodesias, it passes through three distinct physiographic regions. In its upper course to the west of the Victoria Falls, the Zambezi drains a portion of the central African plateau. The average elevation in the extensive but shallow and swampy basin measures slightly over 3,000 feet above sea level. To the east of the falls, the Zambezi traverses a series of gorges about 2,500 feet in elevation. The trough-like valley is finally terminated below the site of the Kariba rapids where the lower, undulating Mozambique plain carries the stream at a lower gradient.

Throughout the entire basin of the river, rainfall is low, averaging between 20 inches in the west and 32 inches in the east. A marked winter drought exists throughout the entire region. Natural vegetation, reflecting the rainfall deficiency and the prevailing high temperatures, consists of savanna bush and grass. However, along the immediate banks of the river, a permanent forest cover dominates. In spite of the low precipitation and its great variability, the Zambezi along with its principal tributaries are perennial streams.

Generally, the valley has only a sparse population and it forms a considerable barrier to north-south communications. Not only is it impassible during the floods of the rainy season but during the remainder of the year, the valley is malarious and unhealthy. The marked isolation of the valley from the main areas of economic development within the Rhodesias has, until the recent construction of the Kariba Dam, further reduced its importance.

### **B. Historical**

The Portuguese discovered the mouth of the Zambezi early in their voyages of exploration along the east coast of Africa. Traders and missionaries soon penetrated the lower valley

but not until 1850 did a European view the upper course of the river when Livingstone traveled from South Africa overland into the heart of central Africa. Five years later, this famous missionary-explorer also discovered the Victoria Falls and followed the river to its mouth. Returning to the region in 1858, Livingstone persisted in his explorations in an effort to expose the cruelties of the infamous slave trade.

Within thirty years, the British were to declare a protectorate (July 20, 1888) over Zambezia, the region of the modern-day Rhodesias. From 1880 to 1888, British subjects had negotiated numerous mining concessions from local rulers. These grants, consolidated by Cecil Rhodes, led to the declaration of protection and the formation of the British South Africa Company (1889). In effect, the Rhodesias remained until 1923 the private domain of this chartered company.

The first European settlers arrived at the site of modern Salisbury on September 12, 1890. After struggling overland from South Africa, the pioneers soon realized that the effective occupation of the territory and the exploitation of its mineral and agricultural wealth demanded improved communications. As a consequence, the railroad was extended from South Africa through Bechuanaland to Salisbury and via Bulawayo to Victoria Falls, Livingstone, Lusaka, Broken Hill and the Copper Belt along the Belgian Congo frontier.

Settlements soon were established along the line and they tended to remain concentrated along this vital artery. In Southern Rhodesia, the railroad traverses areas of high veld, over 5,000 feet in elevation, climatically suitable for European development. European farms and ranches spread in a broken band averaging 50 miles in width along the railroad. As a consequence agriculture has dominated the economy of Southern Rhodesia although gold, chrome, coal and asbestos have been exploited. Industry has developed recently and the economy has become more diversified.

In contrast, Northern Rhodesia, with almost no land above 5,000 feet, offers little incentive to permanent European agricultural settlement. The economy is based on mining, concentrated particularly at Broken Hill and in the Copper Belt south of Katanga. On the average, the population density of Northern Rhodesia is about half that of Southern Rhodesia.

In 1895 Southern Rhodesia was separated from Zambezia as a consequence of the influx of Europeans and given greater control over its own affairs. In 1923 after union with South Africa was rejected by a referendum, self-governing colony status was granted. With only slight modifications, the present form of government reflects this development.

Although by 1911, the various entities remaining in Zambezia had been amalgamated to form Northern Rhodesia, political development had to wait until 1924 when, with the cancellation of the charter of the British South Africa Company, the Crown assumed responsibility for the protectorate. Due to the lack of a sizable European minority, however, the British ruled the territory indirectly through local leaders.

After many years of discussion, the two Rhodesias and neighboring Nyasaland became in 1953 the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The union, however, did not succeed and the United Kingdom dissolved it effective December 31, 1963. During the period of federation the first stage of the Kariba Dam and power station was completed and, with most of Northern and Southern Rhodesia situated within a 300-mile radius, has contributed to the territories' economic development. If the construction of the second stage is decided upon, this complex will generate approximately 1, 500,000 kilowatts of electricity. The resulting 160-mile long reservoir, however, has obliterated the original boundary and made a redefinition necessary.

### **III. BOUNDARY ACTS**

#### **A. Colonial Boundaries Act 1895 and Southern Rhodesia (Annexation) Order in Council, 1923**

In dividing the protectorate of Zambesia (1895) and annexing the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia (1923), the boundaries of the territory were defined in identical language as follows: "... thence by that [Hunter's] Road to the River Zambesi (sic), and by that river to the Portuguese boundary [of Mozambique]."

#### **B. The Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia (Boundaries) Order in Council, 1963**

"The Order makes slight alterations to that part of the boundary which runs through Lake Kariba and sets out a precise description of the remainder of the boundary." The entire Order is reproduced as Enclosure I to this study with the geographic coordinates and administrative allocation of the islands mentioned in the Order set forth in Enclosure II.

The Order in Council, in effect, delimits the boundary by the medium filum (median line) of the Zambezi, the medium filum between a specific shore and enumerated islands or the medium filum between specified islands. In Lake Kariba, however, the Order defines the boundary by a series of straight lines joining specified fixed points. (See attached map.)

### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

The new delimitation has removed all major disputes concerning the boundary. In effect, the Order in Council appears to continue the previous administrative situation with two exceptions:

1. The cited abandonment of the precise former course of the Zambezi in Lake Kariba in favor of a geometric line approximating it; and
2. In the area of Victoria Falls, Livingstone Island now belongs to Northern

Rhodesia while Princess Victoria, Princess Christian, and Princess Marie Louise islands adhere to Southern Rhodesia. The boundary crosses the Falls to the west of Livingstone Island. Immediately above the Falls, Livingstone, Princess Helena Victoria, Princess Margaret, King George VI, Queen Elizabeth, Canary and Palm islands fall within Northern Rhodesia while Princess Victoria, Princess Christian, Princess Marie Louise, Princess Elizabeth and Kandahar islands are included within Southern Rhodesia. West of the islands, the boundary again joins the median line of the river.

Since the entire course of the boundary is in the Zambezi, the line may be considered to be demarcated.

At present, Northern Rhodesia is scheduled for independence as Zambia on October 24, 1964. Should this action take place as anticipated, the boundary will assume an international aspect of greater significance.

**Enclosure I**

1963 No. 2083

OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

The Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia  
(Boundaries) Order in Council 1963

Made	20th December 1963
Laid before Parliament	31st December 1963
Coming into Operation	1st January 1964

At the Court at Buckingham Palace, the 20th day of December, 1963

Present

The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty in Council

Whereas, as a consequence of the creation of Lake Kariba, it is expedient to alter such part of the boundary between Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia as runs through the Lake by describing it as a series of straight lines approximately following the existing boundary consisting of the old course of the River Zambezi;

And Whereas it is further expedient to describe precisely the remainder of the boundary between Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia;

Now, therefore, Her Majesty, by virtue and in exercise of Her powers in that behalf by the Colonial Boundaries Act 1895 (a) and the Foreign Jurisdiction Act 1890 (b) or otherwise in Her Majesty vested, is pleased, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:--

1. This Order may be cited as the Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia (Boundaries) Order in Council 1963 and shall come into operation on 1st January 1964.
2. The boundary between Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia shall be as described in the Schedule hereto.

W.G. Agnew

## SCHEDULE

Starting at the point where the Mozambique International boundary intersects the medium filum of the Zambezi river, the boundary between Northern and Southern Rhodesia follows this medium filum westwards to the Katengathumbi group of islands, thence along the medium filum between these islands and the mainland of Southern Rhodesia, thence along the medium filum of the Zambezi river to the Chikwenya group of islands, thence along the medium filum between this group of islands and the Zambezi river to Kanyemba island, thence along the medium filum between Kanyemba island and Chipara island, thence along the medium filum of the Zambezi river to Umairi island, thence along the medium filum between this island and the mainland of Southern Rhodesia, thence along the medium filum of the Zambezi river to a point on the Kariba dam wall marked by a brass stud numbered NRT/T 153 at approximate Latitude  $16^{\circ} 31' 20''$  South and approximate Longitude  $28^{\circ} 45' 40''$  East, thence from this point in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $221^{\circ} 26'$  for a distance of approximately 11,100 feet to a point at Latitude  $16^{\circ} 32' 40''$  South and Longitude  $28^{\circ} 44' 30''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $259^{\circ} 06'$  for a distance of approximately 37,200 feet to a point at Latitude  $16^{\circ} 33' 50''$  South and Longitude  $28^{\circ} 38' 20''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $247^{\circ} 11'$  for a distance of approximately 145,300 feet to a point at Latitude  $16^{\circ} 43' 20''$  South and Longitude  $28^{\circ} 15' 20''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $229^{\circ} 03'$  for a distance of approximately 55,800 feet to a point at Latitude  $16^{\circ} 49' 20''$  South and Longitude  $28^{\circ} 08' 10''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $245^{\circ} 44'$  for a distance of approximately 117,600 feet to a point at Latitude  $16^{\circ} 57' 30''$  South and Longitude  $27^{\circ} 49' 50''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $214^{\circ} 39'$  for a distance of approximately 125,300 feet to a point at Latitude  $17^{\circ} 14' 40''$  South and Longitude  $27^{\circ} 37' 50''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $185^{\circ} 44'$  for a distance of approximately 31,000 feet to a point at Latitude  $17^{\circ} 19' 50''$  South and Longitude  $27^{\circ} 37' 20''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $221^{\circ} 06'$  for a distance of approximately 39,500 feet to a point at Latitude  $17^{\circ} 24' 50''$  South and Longitude  $27^{\circ} 33' 00''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximately true bearing of  $232^{\circ} 18'$  for a distance of approximately 102,100 feet to a point at Latitude  $17^{\circ} 35' 20''$  South and Longitude  $27^{\circ} 19' 10''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $218^{\circ} 16'$  for a distance of approximately 100,000 feet thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $166^{\circ} 25'$  for a distance of approximately 10,800 feet to a point at Latitude  $17^{\circ} 50' 10''$  South, and Longitude  $27^{\circ} 09' 10''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $226^{\circ} 51'$  for a distance of approximately 34,400 feet to a point at Latitude  $17^{\circ} 54' 00''$  South and Longitude  $27^{\circ} 05' 00''$  East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of  $214^{\circ} 10'$  for a distance of approximately 25,700 feet to a point at Latitude



17° 57' 40" °South and Longitude 27° 02' 30" East, thence in a straight line on an approximate true bearing of 282° 36' for a distance of approximately 9,000 feet to a point at approximate Latitude 17° 57' 20" South and approximate Longitude 27° 01' 00" East on the medium filum of the Zambezi river, thence along the medium filum of the Zambezi river to Mapeta island, thence along the medium filum between Mapeta island and the mainland of Northern Rhodesia, thence along the medium filum of the Zambezi river to its intersection with the middle of the main gorge to the south of Rainbow Falls and Livingstone island, thence following a line along the middle of this gorge round to the west of Livingstone island, thence along the middle of the channel between Livingstone island and the un-named island nearest to and to the west of Livingstone island, thence along the middle of the channel between Livingstone island and Princess Victoria island, thence following the middle of the channel having on its west Princess Victoria island, Princess Christian island, Princess Marie Louise island and Princess Elizabeth island and on its east, Princess Helena Victoria island and Princess Margaret island, to King George VI island thence along the middle of the channel to the south of this island and an un-named group of islands to the north of Princess Elizabeth island to the medium filum between King George VI island and the mainland of Southern Rhodesia, thence along this medium filum and the media fila between the island named Queen Elizabeth island, King George VI island, Canary island and the mainland of Southern Rhodesia to the medium filum of the Zambezi river, thence along this medium filum to Kandahar island, thence along the medium filum between this island and Palm island, thence along the medium filum of the Zambezi river to its intersection with the boundary of Bechuanaland Protectorate.

The boundary described above is shown on Maps deposited in the offices of the Surveyor General, Northern Rhodesia, and the Surveyor General, Southern Rhodesia, signed by them and dated 19th December 1963, which Maps are numbered: --

DCS 1953 1/50,000 1530 SW1.  
DCS 1953 1/50,000 1530 SW2.  
DCS 1949 Preliminary 1/50,000 1529 SE1.  
DCS 1950 Preliminary 1/50,000 1529 SE2.  
DCS 1950 Preliminary 1/50,000 1529 SW2.  
Federal Surveys 1961 1/50,000 1528 D4.  
Federal Surveys 1959 1/50,000 1529 C3.  
Federal Surveys 1959 1/50,000 1529 C4.  
Federal Surveys 1959 1/50,000 1628 B2.  
Federal Surveys 1961 1/50,000 1628 B4.  
Federal Surveys 1960 1/50,000 1628 D2.  
Federal Surveys 1959 1/250,000 SE-35-3.  
Federal Surveys 1962 1/250,000 SE-35-4.  
Federal Surveys 1959 1/250,000 SE-35-7.  
Federal Surveys 1961 1/50,000 1726 D4.  
Federal Surveys 1961 1/50,000 1727 C3.  
Federal Surveys 1962 Preliminary 1/50,000 1826 B1.  
Federal Surveys 1959 1/50,000 1826 B2.  
Federal Surveys 1961 1/50,000 1725 D4.  
Federal Surveys 1963 1/50,000 1726 C3.  
Federal Surveys 1963 1/50,000 1726 C4.  
Federal Surveys 1963 1/50,000 1726 D3

Federal Surveys 1959 1/20,000 Tourist street map of Livingston & the Victoria Falls.  
 Surveys Northern Rhodesia 1950 1/50,000 1725 SE3.  
 Surveys Northern Rhodesia 1950 1/50,000 1725 SW3 and 4.

**ENCLOSURE II**

<u>Island Name</u>	<u>Coordinates</u>		<u>Administration</u>
	<u>South</u>	<u>East</u>	
Katengathumbi	15° 39'	29° 38'	Northern Rhodesia
Chikwenya Is	15° 40'	29° 33'	Southern Rhodesia
Kanyemba	15° 57'	28° 56'	Northern Rhodesia
Chipara	15° 57'	28° 56'	Southern Rhodesia
Umairi	15° 59'	28° 54'	Northern Rhodesia
KARIBA DAM	16° 31'	28° 45'	joint
KARIBA RESERVOIR			joint
Mapeta	18° 03'	26° 44'	Southern Rhodesia
Rainbow Falls	17° 55'	25° 51'	Northern Rhodesia
Livingstone	17° 55'	25° 51'	Northern Rhodesia
Princess Victoria	17° 55'	25° 51'	Southern Rhodesia
Princess Christian	17° 55'	25° 51'	Southern Rhodesia
Princess Marie Louise	17° 55'	25° 51'	Southern Rhodesia
Princess Elizabeth	17° 54'	25° 51'	Southern Rhodesia
Princess Helena Victoria	17° 55'	25° 52'	Northern Rhodesia
Princess Margaret	17° 54'	25° 51'	Northern Rhodesia
King George VI	17° 54'	25° 50'	Northern Rhodesia
Queen Elizabeth	17° 53'	25° 49'	Northern Rhodesia
Canary	17° 53'	25° 49'	Northern Rhodesia
Kandahar	17° 52'	25° 48'	Southern Rhodesia

Palm

17° 52' 25° 48' Northern Rhodesia

BECHUANALAND

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