



# **International Boundary Study**

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## **Tanzania – Zambia Boundary**

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**INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY**

**No. 44**

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# TANZANIA - ZAMBIA BOUNDARY

## I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Tanzania - Zambia boundary has a length of approximately 210 miles which includes about 41 miles in Lake Tanganyika. Between the Malawi tripoint and Lake Tanganyika, the boundary is demarcated by streams and pillars. In streams comprising the boundary, the line follows the thalweg where it can be distinguished and the middle of the stream bed otherwise. Boundary pillars have been erected to demarcate segments formed by straight lines and by drainage area divides. There are no known boundary disputes, however, the exact location of the Congo (Leopoldville) tripoint remains unresolved.

## II. BACKGROUND

The Tanzania - Zambia boundary originally was established to delimit British and German spheres of influence in East Africa. An Anglo - German agreement in 1890<sup>1</sup> fixed the limits of their territories between Lake Tanganyika and the Malawi tripoint.<sup>2</sup> Decisions on the exact alignment of the boundary were made by a joint demarcation commission in 1898, and an agreement approving the work of the commission was signed by the United Kingdom and Germany in 1901. Between World War I and the independence of the Tanganyika region of Tanzania<sup>3</sup> in 1961, the boundary was interterritorial in scope with British administered states on both sides. On October 24, 1964, the former British Protectorate of Northern Rhodesia<sup>4</sup> became independent as the Republic of Zambia.

The segment of the boundary in Lake Tanganyika apparently was established de facto. A media line was extended into the lake to the limits of the Congo from the mouth of the Kalambo, which forms the boundary between Tanzania and Zambia.

Although never clarified by treaty, the Congo tripoint apparently was assumed by the states concerned to be the intersection of an extension of the Congo - Zambia boundary between Lake Mweru and Lake Tanganyika and the media line of Lake Tanganyika. In 1885 a declaration by the Administrator-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Congo Free State<sup>5</sup> stated that the limits of the entity were determined by:

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<sup>1</sup> Complete titles and sources of boundary documentation are listed in the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> The agreement also included the present Malawi - Tanzania boundary.

<sup>3</sup> Between 1885 and World War I, Tanganyika was the major part of German East Africa, the remainder being Ruanda - Urundi and Kionga triangle. Following World War I it was placed under British administration as a League of Nations mandate and after World War II as a U.N. Trust Territory. From 1891 to independence on December 10, 1963, Zanzibar was a protectorate of the United Kingdom. The United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was constituted by a merger on April 27, 1964, and the name of the state was changed to the United Republic of Tanzania on October 29, 1964.

<sup>4</sup> Under British administration for approximately 75 years, Northern Rhodesia was a member of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland operative between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1963.

<sup>5</sup> The Berlin Conference of 1884 - 1885 recognized King Leopold II of Belgium as the sovereign head of state for the International Association of the Congo. On July 1, 1885, the name of the entity was changed to

The median line of Lake Tanganyika;  
A straight line drawn from Lake Tanganyika to Lake Moero [Mweru] by 8° 39' south latitude;  
The median line of Lake Moero;  
The watercourse which unites Lake Moero with Lake Bangweolo.

An agreement in May 1984<sup>6</sup> between Great Britain and King Leopold II, Sovereign of the Congo Free State, terminated the boundary about 15 minutes northward of the former point on the west shore of Lake Tanganyika as follows:

The frontier between the Independent Congo State and the British sphere to the north of the Zambezi shall follow a line running direct from the extremity of Cape Akalunga on Lake Tanganyika, situated at the northernmost point of Cameron Bay at about 8° 15' south latitude, to the right [east] bank of the river Luapula [Luvua], where this river issues from Lake Moero. The line shall then be drawn directly to the entrance of the river into the lake, being, however, deflected towards the south of the lake so as to give the Island of Kilwa to Great Britain.

In attempting to delimit the boundary in detail the question as to the exact location of Cape Akalunga has remained unresolved. Following a demarcation attempt in 1913, the boundary cut off the fishing village of Pweto from Lake Mweru, on which the livelihood of the people depended. Thus a modus vivendi was put into effect which again gave Pweto access to Lake Mweru. A relatively recent map of the Congo prepared by a Belgian-sponsored Special Committee of the Katanga indicated the Congo - Zambia boundary reached the shore of Lake Tanganyika at Cape Kipimbi (Chipimbi), which places the tripoint at about 8° 17' S. latitude. Recent maps published by the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia indicated the boundary reached the shore on the northern point of Cape Pungu, which places the tripoint at about 8° 12' S. latitude. The two tripoints are about five miles apart, and the approximate point of reference given in the agreement of 1894 for Cape Akalunga of 8° 15' S. latitude lies between the two capes.

The Malawi<sup>7</sup> tripoint was determined in accordance with the terms set forth in a British Government paper in February 1891 relative to the extension of the field of operations of the British South Africa Company north of the Zambezi, at which time also the Nyasaland territory was delimited and excluded from the field of operations of the company. According to the delimitation, the northern part of the boundary between the chartered

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the Congo Free State which was retained until it became a Belgian colony in 1908. The Belgian Congo acquired independence on June 30, 1960.

<sup>6</sup> The limit of the state in Lake Tanganyika was reiterated as the median line in a declaration of neutrality by the Congo Free State in December, 1894. Likewise, a Belgian - German convention to fix the limits between the territories of the two states recognized the median line as the boundary in Lake Tanganyika in 1910.

<sup>7</sup> Formerly a British protectorate, Nyasaland became independent on July 6, 1964 and adopted the name of Malawi.

territory (Rhodesia) of the British South Africa Company and Nyasaland was the drainage area divide of the Congo Basin, and the tripoint was at the intersection of the northward trending divide and the boundary between the British and German spheres of influence as provided for in the Anglo - German Agreement of 1890. The location of the tripoint is shown on the map based on the report of the demarcation commission of 1898 as Nakungulu (Ngungulu) hill and is the site of boundary pillar No. 2. On a 1:250,000 map published in 1960 by the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the tripoint was indicated by the same hill spelled Nankungulu and marked by boundary pillar No. 588.<sup>8</sup>

From the Malawi tripoint the boundary crosses a dissected plateau between 5,000 and 6,000 feet in elevation before descending to the surface of Lake Tanganyika which has an elevation of about 2,540 feet. Lake Tanganyika occupies the southern end of the western branch of the Great Rift valley of East Africa. For most of its length, the land rises steeply from the shores of the lake which is more than 2,000 feet below sea level in its deepest part. The lake is subject to sizeable seasonal and annual variations in water level. Rapids and waterfalls are common in streams forming the boundary, and Kalambo Falls located on the Kalambo river makes a single drop of 704 feet as the river descends 3,000 feet in six miles from the plateau to Lake Tanganyika.

In general, the boundary is situated in an area of hot summers, warm winters, and moderate to heavy precipitation. Concentrated during the summer or high sun period, the precipitation ranges between 40 and 60 inches. July is the coolest month with average temperatures at various locations ranging between 50° F. and 60° F., and January is the warmest month with average temperatures ranging between 70° F. and 80° F.

Typical of the vegetation along the boundary are broad-leaved deciduous trees. Along the boundary adjacent to Lake Tanganyika population densities are less than five persons per square mile, and eastward to the Malawi tripoint the densities increase to between 5 and 50 persons per square mile. Although fishing is important in Lake Tanganyika, most of the people are engaged in shifting cultivation or in rudimental sedentary farming. The boundary divides the territories of the Lungu and Iwa peoples. In the past large numbers of Tanganyikans have migrated into the Copperbelt of Zambia to work in the mines.

Transportation across the boundary is limited mainly to two principal roads: 1) between Abercorn in Zambia and Sumbawanga in Tanzania and 2) between Nakonde in Zambia and Tunduma in Tanzania. A road in Zambia parallels the boundary at distances ranging between about 5 and 25 miles. There are no railroad connections across the boundary, but steamship services are maintained between Mupulungu in Zambia and the lake railhead of Kigoma in Tanzania.

### **III. BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT**

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<sup>8</sup> Apparently the initial demarcation has been supplemented by additional pillars and the numbering system changed.

The Anglo - German agreement of 1901 delimits the boundary between the Malawi tripoint and Lake Tanganyika. The boundary reference in Section 1 of the treaty starts from the Malawi tripoint on the top of Nankungulu (Nakungulu) hill marked by boundary pillar No. 2.

...From here the boundary goes along the waterparting past a boundary pillar (3) about 6.5 kilom. from Nakungulu to a boundary pillar (4) opposite to the source of the Mpemba Stream; here it leaves the waterparting and follows the Mpemba downstream to a boundary pillar (5) on the left bank about 119 metres north of the village Tontera; from this point it goes in a straight line to the true west to a boundary pillar (6) about 2,560 metres off again on the waterparting; it then follows the waterparting between the Nkana and its affluents on the north and the Karunga and its affluents on the south past the following boundary pillars:-

- (1) Kumbi Hill (7).
- (2) About 3 kilom. north of the English Station Fife (8).
- (3) About 400 metres south of the source of the Ntakimba Stream (9).
- (4) Between the old and the new Stevenson Road (10).
- (5) About 1,700 metres from Nombwe village (11).
- (6) About 1,700 metres from Kissitu village (12).

At this boundary pillar the boundary leaves the waterparting and goes in a straight line to a boundary pillar (13) about 1,200 metres northwest of the English Station Ikomba, and thence in a straight line to a boundary pillar (14) in the Suwa (Zuwa) Forest, about 3-1/2 kilom. south of Karimansira village, which is again on the waterparting; it then follows the waterparting past the following boundary pillars:-

- (1) About 700 metres west of Shovere (Chowere) village (15).
- (2) Dundunda Hill (16).
- (3) About half-way between Mambwe and Mssungu (17).

4, 5, 6. Three boundary pillars in the neighbourhood of the English Station Mambwe, which are marked on the map with the numbers 18, 19, and 20 in red. The last of these boundary pillars is at the same time the point of intersection of the waterparting with longitude 32 east of Greenwich, ascertained by the Commission. The boundary then goes in a straight line to the source of the Massiete (Mashete) Stream and follows this downstream to its junction with the Masia Stream (21); it runs then in a straight line to a boundary pillar on the left bank of the Ipundu (22) south of the ruins of Ipundu village and then on a straight line to the junction of the Saissi (Saisi) River with the Kassokorwa (Kasokolwa) Stream [now considered part of the Saisi] (23); it follows the Saissi upstream to its junction with the Rumi (Lumi) Stream, it follows the Rumi upwards to its junction with the Mkumbaw Stream [Nkumba], and follows this up to its source. Hence the boundary goes in a straight line to the middle of the narrow saddle between the sources of the Mosi (Mozi) and Kipoko (Chipoko) Stream, and from there in a straight line to the south-east source

of the Safu (Samfu) Stream; this it follows down-stream until it runs into the Kalambo and then the latter down-stream to its mouth in the Tanganyika Lake.

The segment of the Tanzania - Zambia boundary in Lake Tanganyika commonly is drawn on maps as an arc which trends southwestward and then northward to attain the median line of the lake as rapidly as possible after leaving the mouth of the Kalambo. The Congo tripoint should be shown as the intersection of the median line of Lake Tanganyika and a straight line drawn southwestward to the shore of the lake at about 8° 15' S. latitude and thence to the right bank of the Luvua on Lake Mweru. The Congo - Zambia boundary between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Mweru should be indicated as indefinite.

#### **IV. PRESENT SITUATION**

There are no known active disputes on the Tanzania - Zambia boundary at the present time. However, the exact location of the Congo tripoint remains unresolved because of the indefinite status of the Congo - Zambia boundary between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Mweru.

## APPENDIX

### DOCUMENTS

1. Circular of the Administrator-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of the Congo, declaring the Neutrality of that State, within its Limits as defined by Treaties. Brussels, August 1, 1885. Edward Hertslet, The Map of Africa by Treaty, 3 v. 3d. ed. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909), Vol. 2, pp. 552 - 553.
2. Agreement between the British and German Governments, respecting Africa and Heligoland; Berlin, July 1, 1890. Ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 899 - 906.
3. Conditions on extending the Field of Operations of the British South Africa Company to the North of the Zambezi, February, 1891. Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 277 - 279.
4. Protocol containing the decisions of the Commissioners appointed to delimit the Nyasa - Tanganyika Boundary; Ikawa, November 11, 1891. Ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 916 - 919.
5. Agreement between Great Britain and His Majesty King Leopold II, Sovereign of the Independent State of the Congo, relating to the Spheres of Influence of Great Britain and the Independent State of the Congo in East and Central Africa. Brussels, May 12, 1894. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 578 - 580.
6. Declaration of the Neutrality of the Congo Free State. Brussels, December 28, 1894. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 557 - 561.
7. Agreement between Great Britain and Germany relative to the Boundary of the British and German Spheres of Interest between Lake Nyasa and Tanganyika; Berlin, February 23, 1901. Ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 925 - 926 (includes map annexed to agreement).
8. Kohlschutter, E., "Bericht über die astronomischen und geodatischen Arbeiten der deutschen Grenzregulierungs-Kommission zwischen dem Nyassa- und Tanganyika-See." Mittheilungen aus den deutschen Schützgebieten, (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1900), Band XIII, pp. 265 - 343.
9. Hauptmann, Herrmann, "Bericht über Land und Leute langs der deutsch - englischen Grenze zwischen Nyassa und Tanganyika. Ibid., pp. 344 - 346.
10. Bemerkungen zu Karte 5: Deutsch - englische Nyassa - Tanganyika - Grenzexpedition. Aufnahmen der deutschen Mitglieder Hauptmann Hermann, Dr. Kohlschutter und Oberleutnant Glanning (Karte 5 - Blatt I - IV, 1:100,000). Ibid., Band XII, pp. 347 - 348.
11. Convention en vue d'approuver l'arrangement signé à Bruxelles, le 14 mai 1910, fixant la frontière entre le Protectorat allemand de l'Afrique Orientale et la Colonie du



Congo belge; signe a Bruxelles, le 11 aout 1910 (Les ratifications ont ete echangees a Bruxelles, le 27 juillet 1911). De Martens, G. Fr., Recueil De Traités, Troisieme Serie, Tome VII, (Leipzig: Librairie Dieterich, 1913), pp. 366 - 372.

12. Protocole concernant l'abornement de la frontiere entre la Colonie du Congo belge et celle de l'Est africain allemand; signe a Goma, le 25 Juin 1911, approuve par un Echange de notes du 7 juin 1912. Ibid., Tome VII, pp. 372 - 375.

13. Jentgen, P., "Notice de la Carte des Frontieres du Congo Belge." Atlas General du Congo (Bruxelles, 1953).

14. Jentgen, P., "Les Frontieres du Congo belge," Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Memoires, Tome XXV, 1952.

## **MAPS**

1. East Africa: Geographical Section, General Staff (GSGS) No. 4355; published 1946 - 49 by War Office, United Kingdom; scale 1:500,000; map sheets Abercorn (SC 36-1) and Mbeya (SC 36-2).

2. Anglo - German Boundary Commission 1898: Geographical Section, General Staff No. 1397, War Office, United Kingdom.

3. Northern Rhodesia: Federal Department of Trigonometrical and Topographical Surveys; published 1960 by Federal Government Printer, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; scale 1:250,000; map sheets Abercorn (SC 36-1) and Tunduma (SC 36-6).

4. Northern Rhodesia: Survey Department; published 1962 by Government Printer, Northern Rhodesia; scale 1:500,000; map sheets Nos. 1 and 2.

5. Congo Belge (Katanga): Service Geographique et Geologique Comite Special du Katanga; published 1959 by Institut Geographique Militaire, Belgium; reprinted by United States Army Map Service 1960; scale 1:250,000; map sheet Moliro (SC 36-a).

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