



International Boundary Study

No. 54 – July 1, 1965

Rwanda – Uganda Boundary

(Country Codes: RW-UG)

**The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research**

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 54

RWANDA - UGANDA BOUNDARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Boundary Brief.....	2
II. Historical Background.....	2
III. Politico - Geographic Setting	3
IV. Boundary Alignment	4
V. Present Situation.....	7
Appendix	8
Documents.....	8
Maps.....	8

RWANDA - UGANDA BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Rwanda - Uganda boundary has a length of approximately 105 miles, of which about 40 percent consists of streams. Eastward from the Congo (Leopoldville) tripoint on Sabinio (Volcan Sabinyo) peak, it passes through an area of volcanic mountains for about 29 miles, follows the thalweg of the Vigaga (Kirurumu) for 8 miles, crosses a second area of high peaks (including 3 miles of swamps) for 37 miles, and follows down-stream successively the thalwegs of the Lubirizi, muvogero (Tshinzinga), and Kakitumba (Kagitumba) river for 31 miles to the Tanzania tripoint. The tripoint is located at the junction of the thalweg of the Kakitumba and the midstream of the Kagera. The boundary is demarcated throughout either by pillars or streams.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1886¹ British and German spheres of influence north and south, respectively, of a line beginning at the Indian Ocean near Vanga and, diverting to include Kilimanjaro in the German sphere, extended to the intersection of the parallel of one degree south latitude with the eastern shore of Lake Victoria, a point immediately north of the present port of Shirati. An Anglo - German treaty in 1890 reiterated the line between the Indian Ocean and the eastern shore of Lake Victoria and delimited initially the spheres of influence between the two states inland between the eastern shore and the Congo Free State² as follows:

...; thence [from the parallel of one degree south latitude with the eastern shore of Lake Victoria], crossing the lake on that parallel, it follows the parallel to the frontier of the Congo Free State, where it terminates.

Mount Mfumbiro

It is, however, understood that, on the west side of the lake, the sphere does not comprise Mount Mfumbiro;³ if that mountain shall prove to lie to the south of the selected parallel, the line shall be deflected so as to exclude it, but shall nevertheless, return so as to terminate at the above-named point.

¹ Agreement between the British and German Governments, respecting the Sultanate of Zanzibar and the opposite East African Mainland, and their Spheres of Influence, October 29 - November 1, 1886. Edward Hertslet, The Map of Africa by Treaty, 3v. 3rd ed. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909), Vol. 3, pp. 882 - 886.

² The Berlin Conference of 1884 - 5 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 Congo Free State which was retained until the colony of the Belgian Congo was created in 1908. West of Lake Victoria the boundary of the Congo Free State was self-delimited in 1885 as the 30th meridian east of Greenwich southward to 1° 20' south latitude. The Congo was granted independence on June 30, 1960.

³ Mount Mfumbiro was found later to be a region of volcanoes lying both south of 1° S. latitude and west of the 30th meridian.

Designation of the territory north of the parallel of 1° south latitude as a British sphere of influence and to the south of the line as a German sphere ended a period of international bargaining. Prior to the treaty of 1890, the United Kingdom had claimed an area south of Lake Victoria extending to Lake Tanganyika, and Germany had claimed a boundary that would have extended northwestward from the eastern shore of Lake Victoria bisecting the Kingdom of Buganda, presently a part of Uganda. The latter claim would have placed western Buganda and an access route to the Nile valley within the German sphere.

In 1910 an Anglo - German - Belgian conference held in Brussels ended in agreement on Sabinio as the tripoint of the territories of the three states and led to a number of bilateral treaties among the participants. An Anglo - German agreement signed at Brussels on May 14, 1910, delimited the present Rwanda - Uganda boundary and the Tanzania - Uganda boundary. Details of the final delimitation and demarcation of the boundary between Sabinio and the source of the southwestern branch (Lubirizi) of the Muvogero are given in an Anglo - German Protocol signed at Kamwezi on October 30, 1911.

Apparently the Tanzania⁴ tripoint at the confluence of the Kagitumba and Kagera rivers is a traditional location dating from the period when both Rwanda and Tanganyika were administered as parts of German East Africa. By treaty the precise location of the tripoint would be at the junction of the thalweg of the Kagitumba and the midstream of the Kagera.

Between 1885 and World War I, Rwanda (formerly Ruanda) was administered with Burundi (formerly Urundi) and Tanganyika as part of German East Africa. Following World War I, a Belgian mandate was proclaimed for Ruanda - Urundi, and after World War II, Belgian administration of the entity continued as a trusteeship. Both Rwanda and Burundi became independent on July 1, 1962.

Although a somewhat vaguely defined area, Uganda was declared to be within the British sphere of influence by the Anglo - German agreement of July 1, 1890. In 1902 an Order in Council proclaimed Uganda a protectorate, whose limits were expanded or contracted according to political expediency. The United Kingdom terminated the protectorate in 1962 and Uganda became an independent state.

III. POLITICO - GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

The western segment of the Rwanda - Uganda boundary is anchored in the volcanic Mufumbiro (Virunga) where several peaks exceed 10,000 feet in elevation. In general elevations decrease eastward along the boundary to less than 4,500 feet in the vicinity of the Tanzania tripoint. The boundary traverses highly dissected surfaces, and streams flow

⁴ Tanganyika was a British mandate between World War I and World War II and a British trusteeship from World War II until independence on December 9, 1961. 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.

in relatively narrow valleys. Most of the land has been deforested and many swamps drained for agricultural purposes. Several secondary roads connect Rwanda and Uganda.

Located only a short distance south of the equator, the boundary area has two wet and two dry seasons with annual precipitation ranging between 40 and 60 inches. Temperature differences are quite pronounced between the high peaks of the Mufumbiro and the lower elevations at the eastern terminus of the boundary.

Most of the area adjacent to the boundary is densely populated with between 100 and 250 persons per square mile. Hills commonly are terraced and farmed in their entirety. In addition to numerous products grown for local consumption, coffee is an important export crop. Since World War I emigration from Rwanda into southwestern Uganda has been of sizeable proportions. At the present time, it is estimated that as many as 300,000 Rwandans may reside in Uganda more or less permanently. In addition a number of Batutsi political refugees from Rwanda are living in Uganda.

IV. BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

The Anglo - German agreement of May 14, 1910 established the present Rwanda - Uganda boundary but allowed for a certain amount of interpretation of the final line by the boundary demarcation commission. The exact alignment of the boundary between the Congo tripoint of Volcan Sabinio and the source of the southwestern branch (Lubirizi) of the Muvogero or Tshinzinga, marked by boundary pillar No. 38, is afforded by the Anglo - German protocol signed at Kamwezi on October 30, 1911 as follows:

1. The watershed from the highest point of Sabinio over the highest point of Mgahinga [Gahinga] to the highest point of Muhavura [Volcan Muhavura], marked by boundary pillar No. 1 where the road from north to south of the volcanoes crosses it between Sabinio and Mgahinga.
2. The spur in a north-easterly direction (referred to in the Convention [Anglo - German agreement of May 14, 1910] as the Mulemule - Mussongo spur] to the summit of the hill Nyarubebsa, marked by a direction pillar; thence to B.P. No. II, situated between the hills Nyarubebsa and Mussongo and on the road leading southwards; thence to the top of Mussongo, marked by a direction pillar; thence along the crest to the summit of the hill called (X) in the Convention, marked by B.P. No. III.
3. A curved line, as shown on the map, marked by B.P. Nos. IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII, to B.P. No. IX, which is on the point called (Y) in the Convention; thence a straight line to the top of the hill called (Z) in the Convention, marked by B.P. No. X; thence a straight line to the southern summit of the Vugamba (Wugamba) range, marked by B.P. No. XI.

4. The crest of this range marked as follows: by B.P. No. XII on the hill Kanyaminyenya [Kanyaminyinya], by point of the range, by direction pillars to B.P. No. XIII, on the most northerly point of the range, by direction pillars to B.P. No. XIV, on the hill Mabaramere [Maberemere], by a direction pillar to B.P. No. XV, which is due west (true) of the confluence of the rivers Vigaga (or Kirurumu) and Mugeru (Narugwambu) [Kasasha]; thence a straight line marked by a direction pillar to the confluence of these two rivers, marked by B.P. No. XVI.

5. The thalweg of the Kirurumu to its source, marked by B.P. No. XVII; thence in a straight line to B.P. No. XVIII, which is situated 4 kilom. north-west of the summit of the hill Gwassa, and is on the point called (B) in the Convention.

6. A straight line to the top of the hill Akasiru, marked by a direction pillar; thence a straight line to the top of the hill Sanja, marked by B.P. No. XIX.

7. A straight line to B.P. No. XX in the valley east of Sanja and on the path running east and west; thence a straight line to the top of the hill Kisivo [Kisive], marked by B.P. No. XXI.

8. The spur of the hill Kisivo in an E.N.E. direction, and marked by direction pillars to a conspicuous knoll at its foot, marked by B.P. No. XXII; thence to a direction pillar on the edge of the swamp; thence the centre line of the swamp, as shown on the map, to B.P. No. XXIII, situated at the foot of a prominent spur.

9. The crest of this spur, marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. XXIV on the summit; thence the crest of the hill, marked by direction pillars, to the top of the hill Kavimbiri, marked by B.P. No. XXV.

10. The crest of the hill to B.P. No. XXVI, thence a straight line, marked by a direction pillar in the valley, to the summit of the conspicuous small hill Nyakara marked by a direction pillar; thence a straight line to the summit of the hill Kitanga, marked by a direction pillar; thence the crest of this hill and the spur leading north and north-east to a conspicuous knoll in the valley, marked by a direction pillar; thence a straight line to a direction pillar on a conspicuous spur of the hill Nebishagara; thence the crest of this spur to the top of the hill, marked by B.P. No. XXVII.

11. A line following the crest and a long spur of this hill as shown on the map, and marked by direction pillars, to the top of the hill Magumbizi, marked by B.P. No. XXVIII; thence a line following a very conspicuous water parting to the top of the hill Kivisa, marked by B.P. No. XXIX; thence along a spur of this hill to its northern end, marked by a direction pillar; thence a straight line

to a direction pillar in the valley; thence a straight line to the southern summit of the hill Ndega [Nbega], marked by B.P. No. XXX; thence a straight line to a conspicuous small hill on the east side of the River Muvumba (Luvumba), marked by a direction pillar; thence a straight line to the top of another conspicuous small hill, marked by B.P. No. XXXI.

12. A series of straight lines, as shown on the map, following the eastern slopes of the Moshuri range, and marked at each change of direction by a direction pillar, and B.P. Nos. XXXII and XXXIII, both on prominent spurs.

13. A similar series of straight lines, following round the slopes of the valley formed between the Mushuri range and the spur ending in the hill Kitoff (Kitofu), marked by direction pillars and by B.P. Nos. XXXIV and XXXV, on prominent spurs; continuing, as shown on the map, round the slopes of the hill Kitoff [Kitofu], marked by direction pillars and by B.P. No. XXXVI, on a prominent spur at the southern end of that hill.

14. A straight line to a direction pillar on a spur on the south-east of Kitoff; thence a straight line to a direction pillar on a spur on the east of Kitoff; thence a straight line to a knoll at the foot of this spur, marked by a direction pillar; and thence a straight line to the saddle between Kitoff and Mavari (Mabare), marked by B.P. No. XXXVII.

15. The thalweg leading north-eastwards, marked by a direction pillar, to the source of the south-western branch of the River Chizinga, marked by B.P. No. XXXVIII.

The remainder of the Rwanda - Uganda boundary is delimited in the Anglo - German agreement of May 14, 1910 as follows:

...From the source of the River Chizinga (Kissinga) [southwestern source] the boundary follows the thalweg of the River Chizinga (Kissinga) to its confluence with the River Kachwamba - Kakitumba [Kagitumba].

From the confluence of the Rivers Chizinga (Kissinga) and Kachwamba - Kakitumba the boundary follows the thalweg of the Rivers Kachwamba - Kakitumba to the confluence of the Rivers Kachwamba - Kakitumba and Kagera.

In 1924, Paragraph 50 of a protocol between the United Kingdom and Belgium delimited the northern segment of the boundary between Rwanda - Urundi and Tanganyika as follows:

50. From this point [the junction of the thalweg of the Mwibu and the midstream of the Kagera] down the Kagera River to the Uganda Frontier the

two Governments agree that the midstream of this latter river shall be accepted as the boundary between the Tanganyika Territory and Ruanda.

The Anglo - German agreement of 1910 and the Anglo - Belgian protocol 1924 locate the Tanzania tripoint at the junction of the thalweg of the Kakitumba and the midstream of the Kagera.

V. PRESENT SITUATION

There are no known disputes relative to the alignment of the Rwanda - Uganda boundary.

APPENDIX

DOCUMENTS

1. Agreement between the British and German Governments, respecting Africa and Heligoland, Berlin, July 1, 1890. Edward Hertslet, The Map of Africa by Treaty, 3v. 3rd ed. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909) Vol. 3, pp. 899 - 906.
2. Agreement between Great Britain and Germany Settling the boundary between Uganda and German East Africa. Signed at Brussels, May 14, 1910. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 107, Part I, 1914, pp. 394 - 397.
3. Protocol between Great Britain and Germany Describing the Frontier between the Uganda Protectorate and German East Africa. Signed at Kamwezi, October 30, 1911. Memorandum attached to the Protocol List of Boundary Pillars on the Anglo - German Boundary, Sabinio to River Chizinga, with approximate Co-ordinates. Ibid., Vol. 107, Part I, 1914, pp. 397 - 402. (Boundary demarcation map prepared by British War Office in 1912; GSGS, No. 2663.)
4. Protocol respecting the Boundary between Tanganyika Territory and the Belgian Mandated Territory of Ruanda - Urundi, Kigoma, August 5, 1924; And Notes Exchanged between the British and Belgian Governments, Brussels, May 17, 1926. United Kingdom Treaty Series No. 6 (1927), Command 2812 (three boundary maps included). Also included in British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 123, Part I, 1914, pp. 462 - 467.
5. Jentgen. P., "Novice de la Carte des Frontieres du Congo Belge." Atlas General du Congo (Bruxelles, 1953).
6. Jentgen, P., "Les Frontieres du Congo Belge," Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Memoires, Tome XXV, 1952.
7. Atlas of Uganda, Department of Lands and Surveys, Uganda, First Edition, 1962.

MAPS

1. Ruanda - Urundi: scale 1:200,000: Service Cartographique, Ministere des Colonies; published 1937 by Institut Cartographique Militaire, Bruxelles, Belgium, sheets 6 and 5.
2. Ruanda - Urundi: scale 1:100,000; Service Cartographique, Ministere des Colonies; published 1936 by Institut Cartographique Militaire, Bruxelles, Belgium; sheets KASINDI, 2A, 2, 3, and 4.
3. Uganda: scale 1:50,000; published 1958 - 63 by Lands and Surveys Department, Uganda; series Y732; sheets 93/III, 93/IV, 94/III, 94/I, and 94/II.

This International Boundary Study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared by the Geographer, Office of Research in Economics and Science, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, in accordance with provisions of Bureau of the Budget Circular No. A-16.

Government agencies may obtain additional information and copies of the study by calling the Geographer, Room 8744, Department of State, Washington 25, D.C. (Telephone: Code 182, Extension 4508)