



International Boundary Study

No. 69 – May 2, 1966

Rwanda – Tanzania Boundary

(Country Codes: RW-TZ)

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

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 69

RWANDA - TANZANIA BOUNDARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Boundary Brief.....	2
II. Historical Background.....	2
III. Geographic Setting.....	4
IV Boundary Alignment.....	5
V. Present Situation.....	7
Appendix	8

RWANDA - TANZANIA BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Rwanda - Tanzania boundary is demarcated throughout by the Kagera or by pillars. In the south the Burundi tripoint is located at the confluence of the Mwibu and Kagera, and in the north the Uganda tripoint is located at the confluence of the Kagitumba (Kakitumba) and Kagera. Except for straight-line segments between pillars in the central part, it follows the thalweg or median of the Kagera. The boundary is about 135 miles in length.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Between 1885 and World War I, the entities known at present as Rwanda and Tanzania were separated by an internal administrative boundary in German East Africa. Following the war the German state was separated into two League of Nations mandates with Belgium administering Ruanda - Urundi in the northeast corner and the United Kingdom the part to be known as Tanganyika after July 22, 1920. As trusteeships of the United Nations under original mandate administrators, the territories were given their independence in the early 1960's.

Tanganyika became independent on December 9, 1961 and formed a union with Zanzibar on April 27, 1964. The name of the state was changed from the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar to the United Republic of Tanzania on October 29, 1964.

Ruanda and Urundi both became independent states on July 1, 1962. Rwanda became the newly accepted spelling of Ruanda, and the local name of Burundi was used for Urundi.

By Article 119 of the Treaty of Peace signed at Versailles on June 28, 1919, Germany renounced title to its overseas possessions in favor of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers. Article 22 of the same document stated that territories which, as a result of the war, had ceased to be under the sovereignty of the states formerly administering them should be placed under the mandate of another Power. The terms of the mandate were to be explicitly defined in each instance by the Council of the League of Nations.

In accordance with the Milner - Orts agreement of 1919, Belgium agreed that the so-called Kisaka or Kissaga (presently known as Gisaka) territory west of the Kagera in Ruanda would be included in the United Kingdom mandate of Tanganyika, and it was surrendered to the British on March 21, 1921. Consisting of about 2,100 square miles, it was believed that the territory would afford a suitable all-British route between the United Kingdom-administered states of Uganda and Tanganyika.

The territory of Tanganyika and the boundary between the two former parts of German East Africa were defined by the Council of the League of Nations in Article 1 of the mandate as follows:

The territory over which a mandate is conferred upon His Britannic Majesty (hereinafter called the Mandatory) comprises that part of the territory of the former colony of German East Africa situated to the east of the following line:--

From the point where the frontier between the Uganda Protectorate and German East Africa cuts the River Mavumba, a straight line in a south-easterly direction to point 1640, about 15 kilom. south-southwest of Mount Gabiro;

Thence a straight line in a southerly direction to the north shore of Lake Mohazi, where it terminates at the confluence of a river situated about 2-1/2 kilom. west of the confluence of the River Msilala;

If the trace of the railway on the west of the River Kagera between Bugufi and Uganda approaches within 16 kilom. Of the line defined above, the boundary will be carried to the west, following a minimum distance of 16 kilom. from the trace, without, however, passing to the west of the straight line joining the terminal point of Lake Mohazi [Lac Muhazi] and the top of Mount Kivisa, point 2100, situated on the Uganda - German East Africa frontier about 5 kilom. southwest of the point where the River Mavumba cuts this frontier;

Thence a line south-eastwards to meet the southern shore of Lake Mohazi;

Thence the watershed between the Taruka and the Mkarange and continuing southwards to the north-eastern end of Lake Mugesera;

Thence the median line of this lake and continuing southwards across Lake Ssake to meet the Kagera;

Thence the course of the Kagera downstream to meet the western boundary of Bugufi;

Thence this boundary to its junction with the eastern boundary of Urundi; ...

In 1923 both the Belgian and United Kingdom Governments agreed that dismemberment of Ruanda by assigning the Kisaka territory to Tanganyika had had harmful effects on the resident population. Likewise, a British railroad route through the territory to connect Tanganyika and Uganda was no longer essential. In concurrence, Belgium and the United Kingdom submitted to the Council and received sanction for an amendment to the terms of the mandates. The amendment moved the boundary between Ruanda and Tanganyika eastward to the Kagera, and the territory of Kisaka was reoccupied by Belgium on January 1, 1924.

An Anglo - Belgian protocol signed at Kigoma on August 5, 1924 gave the following description of the Ruanda - Tanganyika boundary:

49. Down [northward] the thalweg of the Mwibu to its junction with the Kagera River [Urundi tripoint].

50. From this point 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 course of the Kagera River will be subsequently surveyed by the Belgian Section and the midstream line provisionally fixed. This line will be submitted for acceptance to the two interested Governments, who will then, if necessary, appoint local representatives to make the final arrangements.

Because of swampy conditions and numerous meanders in the course of the Kagera, the protocol of 1924 did not delimit the Ruanda - Tanganyika boundary accurately. Therefore, an Anglo - Belgian treaty in 1934 afforded the alignment of the present boundary as demarcated by pillars relative to the course of the river. Note where the Kagera is the boundary, the 1934 treaty states the thalweg is the line and not the midstream as in the protocol of 1924. An additional agreement signed the same day in London established water rights on the boundary between Ruanda - Urundi and Tanganyika.

The location of the Burundi tripoint at the confluence was determined officially from an ordinance of the Vice-Governor General of Ruanda - Urundi delimiting the boundary between Ruanda and Urundi in 1949. Prior to this time a traditional line was in use between the two entities.

The Uganda tripoint situated at the junction of the Kagera and Kagitumba connects with a boundary established by an Anglo - German Agreement signed at Brussels on May 14, 1910.

III. GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

Numerous lakes and swamps are typical of the Rwanda - Tanzania boundary area. A river of many meanders, the course of the Kagera is difficult to trace through the vast swamps in the central part of the boundary. West and east of the Kagera low hills rise above the river valley.

Although surrounded by a savanna type of climate, the uplands of the boundary area have cooler temperatures in both winter and summer. Precipitation ranges between about 40 and 60 inches and is confined mainly to the time of the high-sun. In general the uplands are not forested with most of the suitable land being utilized for crops. Much of the Kagera valley has trees or tall grasses associated with poorly drained areas.

Swampy areas immediately adjacent to the boundary are not generally densely populated. Former swamp lands drained for agricultural purposes and the adjacent uplands have between 100 and 250 persons per square mile. Most of the people are engaged in subsistence agriculture. There are only small villages along the boundary and transportation across the Kagera valley is by a few tracks and trails. In general the boundary separates different ethnic groups, although a traditionally migratory hunting people known as Banyambo inhabit the swamps on both sides of the Kagera. Some Tutsi have migrated from Rwanda to Tanzania in recent years.

IV. BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

The demarcation treaty of November 22, 1934 between Belgium and the United Kingdom affords the alignment of the Rwanda - Tanzania boundary. The Burundi tripoint is the junction of the thalwegs of the Mwibu and Kagera rivers. Northward from this tripoint the boundary is as follows:

ARTICLE 1.

From the confluence of the Mwibu River with the Kagera River to the intersection of the straight line joining boundary beacon 59A to boundary beacon 59B with the thalweg of the Kagera River, the boundary follows the thalweg of the Kagera River. (The thalweg shall be understood to be the line of minimum level along the river bed. Where owing to rapids or any other cause it is not possible to determine the position of the thalweg, the median line of the widest channel shall be the boundary.)

ARTICLE 2.

From the point where the thalweg of the Kagera River is intersected by the straight line joining boundary pillars 59A and 59B to the point where the straight line joining boundary pillars 72A and 72B intersects the said thalweg, the boundary is determined by the series of straight lines, joining adjacent intervisible stone pillars erected either on prominent headlands on the mainland or on islands in the Kagera Valley, wherever such straight lines traverse the river channel or the marsh; but along the stretches other than on islands where these straight lines traverse terra firma, the boundary is determined by the shore of the headlands from the point where the straight line between pillars crosses the shore on departure from the marsh to the point where same or another straight line next crosses the shore again on re-entering the marsh.

In cases where boundary pillars are sited upon islands, the boundary runs by the shortest possible route along the shore of the islands, from the point where a straight line between pillars first cuts the shore on leaving the marsh to the point where the next straight line between pillars last cuts the shore on entering the

marsh again. The shore is understood to mean the limit of dry land at extreme low water.

ARTICLE 3.

The straight lines referred to in the preceding Article are, starting from the point indicated in Article 1:

- (a) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 60 situated on the south-west end of the Island of Zinga;
- (b) thence a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 61 situated on Nyakagasha at the north end of Kagoma;
- (c) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 62 situated on Kaliba at the north-east end of Kanyinya (Kagnigna);
- (d) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 63 situated on the south-west end of the Island of Kyabalelwa (Tschabalelwa);
- (e) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 64 situated on Luterana on the east side of Kageyo (Kageo);
- (f) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 65 situated on the west end of Mwoga;
- (g) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 66 situated on the west end of Gitega;
- (h) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 67 situated on the north-east end of Ndalama (Rurama);
- (i) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 68 situated on Magashi at the north-east of Mubari;
- (j) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 69 situated on the south point of Gabiro;
- (k) a straight line towards boundary pillar No. 70 situated on Kitobelaho at the north-east end of Nyakishoz;
- (l) a straight line to boundary pillar No. 71 situated on Gashoza at the north-east end of Kamakaba;
- (m) a straight line to the point mentioned in Article 2 where the line joining boundary pillars 72A and 72B, situated respectively on Ryanyawanga

and Akanyo at the north end of Kamakaba, intersects the thalweg of the Kagera River.

The boundary line defined above is shown on the map attached to the present treaty.

ARTICLE 4.

From the point referred to in paragraph (m) of the preceding Article the boundary line follows the thalweg of the Kagera river to the Uganda frontier.

The Uganda tripoint is the junction of the thalwegs of the Kagitumba and Kagera rivers.

V. PRESENT SITUATION

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

APPENDIX

DOCUMENTS

1. Agreement between Great Britain and Germany Settling the Boundary between Uganda and German East Africa. Brussels, May 14, 1910. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 107, Part I, 1914, pp. 394 - 397.
2. British Mandates for the Cameroons, Togoland, and East Africa, London, January 1923. United Kingdom Command 1794 (boundary map included).
3. Correspondence regarding the modification of the Boundary between British Mandated Territory and Belgian Mandated Territory in East Africa. London, October 1923, United Kingdom Command 1974 (boundary map included).
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).
5. Treaty between His Majesty in respect of the United Kingdom and His Majesty the King of the Belgians regarding the Boundary between Tanganyika and Ruanda - Urundi. London, November 22, 1934, Belgium No. 1 (1936). United Kingdom Command 5075.
6. Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Belgian Government regarding Water Rights on the Boundary between Tanganyika and Ruanda - Urundi. London, November 22, 1934, Belgium No. 2 (1936). United Kingdom Command 5076.
7. Ordonnance no. 21/258 du 14 aout 1949 fixant l'organisation territoriale du territoire du Ruanda - Urundi. 1950. Bulletin Administratif du Congo Belge, 1950, begin p. 138.

MAPS

1. Ruanda - Urundi: scale 1:100,000; series Z621; printed 1962 by United States Army Map Service; sheets 4, 8, and 14.
2. Ruanda - Urundi: scale 1:100,000; printed 1936 by Institut Cartographique Militaire, Bruxelles, Belgium; sheets 4, 8, and 14.
3. Ruanda - Urundi: scale 1:200,000; series Z522; printed 1962 by United State Army Map Service; sheets 2, 1, and 3.
4. Ruanda - Urundi: scale 1:200,000; printed 1937 by Institut Cartographique Militaire, Bruxelles, Belgium; sheets 2, 1, and 3.
5. Tanganyika Territory: scale 1:125,000; printed 1948 by Survey Division, D.S.M.; sheets Kyerwa and Nyabuyonza.

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, D.C. 20520 (Telephone: Code 182, Extension 4508).