



International Boundary Study

No. 70 – May 16, 1966

Burundi – Tanzania Boundary

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BURUNDI – TANZANIA BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Burundi–Tanzania boundary has a length of about 280 miles, of which 15 miles are in Lake Tanganyika. Tripoints with the Congo (Leopoldville) and Rwanda are located on the median line of Lake Tanganyika and at the confluence of the thalwegs of the Mwibu and Kagera, respectively. East of Lake Tanganyika, the boundary is demarcated by streams and pillars.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Previously known as Urundi and Tanganyika respectively, Burundi and Tanzania were from 1885 to World War I administrative units of German East Africa with a common internal boundary. In 1919 a decision of the Supreme Council of the Allies to assign the whole of German East Africa to the United Kingdom as a mandate was protested by Belgium. Subsequently an agreement was reached in an Anglo–Belgian convention that Belgium should receive a mandate over Ruanda–Urundi,¹ which was concurred in by the Supreme Council. In 1922 the League of Nations approved a British mandate for Tanganyika and the following year a Belgian mandate for Ruanda–Urundi.

According to the terms of the British mandate for East Africa, the boundary between Tanganyika and Urundi was delimited as follows:

Thence the course of the Kagera downstream² to meet the western boundary of Bugufi;³

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

Thence the eastern and southern boundary of Urundi to Lake Tanganyika.

An Anglo–Belgian protocol signed at Kigoma on August 5, 1924, afforded the precise alignment and demarcation of the Tanganyika–Urundi boundary which included Bugufi in the British mandate. The protocol of 1924 is the basis for the present Burundi–Tanzania boundary. In 1934 an Anglo–Belgian agreement was reached on the water rights of the respective mandates of the two states along the boundary.

¹ On August 21, 1925, a Belgian law united Ruanda–Urundi administratively with the Belgian Congo.

² The boundary of the British mandate included Kisaka or Kissaga (now known as Gisaka), the eastern territory of Ruanda, in Tanganyika and moved the Urundi tripoint westward of its previous position. In 1923 Kisaka was returned to Ruanda.

³ The Bugufi comprises the area between the Ruvubu and the Kagera westward to the present Burundi–Tanzania boundary. The text of the mandate states the boundary of Tanganyika follows the western boundary of Bugufi; which in effect includes the latter territory in the British mandate. Some German maps of German East Africa indicate apparently that Bugufi was administered as part of Urundi.

Following World War II both Ruanda–Urundi and Tanganyika became United Nations trusteeships continuing under Belgian and British administration, respectively. On July 25, 1948, Mwambutsa, the Mwami or King of Urundi, by petition to the United Nations made an unsuccessful attempt to regain Bugufi for his state.

The Congo (Leopoldville) tripoint is situated on the median line of Lake Tanganyika, which was established as the boundary between Belgian and German territories by the Belgo–German Convention of August 11, 1910. In the case of the Rwanda tripoint, an official delimitation of the Burundi–Rwanda boundary was made in 1949 by the issuance of an ordinance by the Vice-Governor General of Ruanda–Urundi.

Tanganyika became independent on December 9, 1961. The United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was constituted by a union of the two states on April 27, 1964, and the name of the entity was changed to the United Republic of Tanzania on October 29, 1964.

Urundi acquired independence on July 1, 1962, as the Kingdom of Burundi, and Ruanda, the second member of the Belgian trusteeship, received independence on the same day as the Republic of Rwanda.

III. GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

The Burundi–Tanzania boundary traverses an area which has the general appearance of a highly dissected plateau. Adjacent to the boundary are numerous peaks and ridges, some of which exceed a mile in elevation. Except for the sector in Lake Tanganyika, rivers form the boundary throughout much of its distance, with the remainder being comprised mainly of short interstream segments or drainage-area divides. Major streams such as the Muragarazi (Malagarasi) and the Ruvubu (Ruvuvu) have numerous meanders and flow through poorly-drained valleys.

Located a short distance south of the equator, the boundary area has two wet and two dry seasons. Subject to considerable variations in amount, precipitation usually averages between 40 and 60 inches a year. Because of the uplands, average temperatures are relatively cool in both summer and winter. Most of the land has been deforested, and grasses and crops are the typical vegetation.

In general population densities range between 5 and 50 persons per square mile along both sides of the boundary. There are small villages along the boundary, and most of the people are engaged in cattle grazing or the raising of crops for local consumption. Generally the boundary separates different ethnic groups, although Burundi claims kinship to the people of Bugufi. Much of the boundary area is difficult of access and there are only a few tracks and trails crossing the boundary.

IV. BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

The demarcation protocol of August 5, 1924, signed by representatives of the Belgian and United Kingdom governments affords the alignment of the Burundi–Tanzania boundary. The Congo (Leopoldville) tripoint is located on the median line of Lake Tanganyika at about 4° 27'S. latitude. Paragraph 51 of the protocol states:

By common agreement it is suggested that our respective Governments consider the boundary in the waters of Lake Tanganyika to be the parallel due west from Boundary Pillar No. 1 to the point of intersection with the north and south median line of the lake.

Inland from Lake Tanganyika the protocol demarcates the boundary as follows:

1. B.P. No. I, situated on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, at about 13 feet (4 metres) from the water's edge and at the outlet of the Ndyakalika ravine; thence up the thalweg of this ravine to B.P. No. II situated at its head.
2. The crest of the spur to B.P. No. III, situated on the summit of Rusoro hill.
3. The crest of the spur to B.P. No. IV situated on the summit of Nyangonco hill.
4. The crest of the spur to B.P. No. V situated on the summit of Nganda hill.
5. The crest of the spur to B.P. No. VI situated on the northwest end of Mugombe hill.
6. A straight line measuring 217 feet (66 metres) in a N.E. direction cutting across the head of the valley of the Nyabitaka river to B.P. No. VII situated at the source of the Sesakuya stream.
7. Down the thalweg of the Sesakuya stream to its junction with the Mukelezi river; thence up the thalweg of the Mukelezi river to B.P. No. VIII, situated at its source in Mugombe hill.
8. A ridge in an E.S.E. direction to B.P. No. IX situated at the lowest point of the col separating the river Mutambara to the south and the river Nyamugari to the north.
9. Down the thalweg of the Nyamugari river to its junction with the Mubarazi river; thence up the thalweg of this latter river to B.P. No. X, situated at the head of its eastern source and at the lowest point of the col joining Muharara hill to the south and Materwa hill to the north.

10. Down the thalweg of the Ndihorehi stream to its junction with the Kiyagira river; thence down the thalweg of this latter river to its junction with the Shuza river; thence up the thalweg of this latter river to the junction of the Nyamvuvu river; thence up the thalweg of this latter river to the junction of the Kasuno stream (which forms the northern branch of the Nyamvuvu river); thence up the thalweg of the Kasuno stream to B.P. No. XI situated at its head.
11. Along the edge of the escarpment forming the pan of the Shuza river valley in a northerly direction in straight lines joining B.P. Nos. XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX and XX, which last is situated on the Nyamulongozi col and at the southernmost source of the Malagarasi [Muraganazi] river.
12. Down the Malagarasi river to the junction of the Lumpungu [Rumpungu] river; thence up this latter river to the junction of the Mukarasi stream; thence up the thalweg of this latter stream to B.P. No. XXI situated at the source of its eastern arm (also known as the Mikungwe).
13. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XXII situated on the crest of the watershed separating the Mukarasi and the Kumbizi (Katungura) rivers.
14. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XXIII situated in the Kumbizi (Katungura) depression.
15. Down the thalweg of the Kumbizi (Katungura) [Mukarasi] to its junction with the Lugusi river; up the thalweg of the Lugusi [Ruguzi] river to the confluence of the Kabuyenge river; up the thalweg of the Kabuyenge river to B.P. No. XXIV situated at the source of its western arm (also known as the Mushagasha).
16. A straight line to B.P. No. XXV situated on a prominent rock.
17. A straight line to B.P. No. XXVI also situated on a prominent rock.
18. A straight line to B.P. No. XXVII, situated at the head of the Mumigomera river.
19. Down the Thalweg of Mumigomera river to its junction with the Lumpungu river; up the Lumpungu river to the confluence of the Lusekera river; up the thalweg of this latter river to B.P. No. XXVIII, situated at its N.E. source.
20. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XXIX situated on the crest of a watershed.
21. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XXX situated on the right bank of the Kidobogoro (Akagondo) stream, continuing in this same straight

line for a distance of about 120 feet (37 metres) to the thalweg of this latter stream.

22. Down the thalweg of the Kidobogoro (Akagondo) stream to its junction with the Ruwhiti [Ruwiti] river; down the thalweg of the Ruwhiti river to the confluence of the Kisuma river; up the thalweg of this latter river to the confluence of the Mwivumba stream; up the thalweg of the Mwivumba stream (generally dry) in a N. direction to B.P. No. XXXI, situated at its source on a narrow col in Lugarama hill.

23. Down the thalweg of the Nyakibereko valley in a N.N.E. direction to its junction with the Kashinga river; down the thalweg of the Kashinga river to its junction with the Mkomero river; up the thalweg of this latter river to B.P. No. XXXII situated at the head of its N.E. arm.

24. A straight line in a N.W. direction to B.P. No. XXXIII situated on Rwanganiro col.

25. A straight line in a N.W. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. XXXIV situated at the head of the Kamiranzovu river.

26. Down the thalweg of the Kamiranzovu river to its junction with the Nyamuyumbu [Nyabuyumbu] river; up the thalweg of the Nyamuyumbu river to the confluence of the Ayayeke stream; of the thalweg of this latter stream to B.P. No. XXXV situated at its head.

27. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XXXVI situated in the Ngwa col.

28. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XXXVII situated at the head of the S.E. arm of the Ngwa river.

29. Down the thalweg of the Ngwa river, subsequently called the Kigenda, to its junction with the Mwiruzi [Mweruzi, Mwerusi] river; down the thalweg of this latter river to the confluence of the Kahumo river; up the thalweg of the Kahumo river, following its southern bed, to the confluence of the Mukisuma river; up the thalweg of this latter river to the confluence of the Mukaroba river; up the thalweg of this latter river to the confluence of the Muruhona stream; up the thalweg of this latter stream to B.P. No. XXXVIII situated on a rock at its source.

30. A straight line in a N.W. direction to B.P. No. XXXIX situated on a rock on a crest of the Nyamisana range.

31. A straight line in a N.W. direction to B.P. No. XL situated at the head of the Mururama valley; down the thalweg of this latter valley to the Mutubiri river;

down the thalweg of this latter river subsequently called Nyakondo and Kingoro to its junction with the Luteitavi river; down the thalweg of this latter river subsequently called Magarule, Mkagogo (Migogo) to its junction with the Ruvuvu river; down the thalweg of this latter river to the confluence of the Ichisanye (Chizanye) [Cizanye] up the thalweg of this latter river to the confluence of the Murusenye river; up the thalweg of this latter river subsequently taking the names of Nyabitare (Mubitare) to the confluence of the Mukana river; up the thalweg of this latter river to B.P. No. XLI situated at the head of the Mukana valley.

32. A straight line in an E.N.E. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No XLII situated on the ridge of Ntarentare.

33. A straight line in a N.N.W. direction to B.P. No. XLIII situated on the same ridge.

34. A straight line in a N.N.E. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. XLIV.

35. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XLV.

36. A straight line in an E. direction to B.P. No. XLVI situated on a rocky prominence of Kikomero hill.

37. A straight line in a N.E. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. XLVII situated on the S.E. slope of Karambi hill.

38. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. XLVIII situated on the same hill.

39. A straight line in a N.W. direction to B.P. No. XLIX situated on the same hill.

40. A straight line in a N. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. L situated on Lumandali hill.

41. A straight line in a N.N.E. direction to B.P. No. LI situated on Lumandali ridge.

42. A straight line in a N.N.E. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. LII situated on the same ridge.

43. A straight line in a N. direction to B.P. No. LIII situated on the E. extremity of Kinyami hill.

44. A straight line in a N.N.E. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. LIV situated in the col joining Kinyami and Bwashishi hills.
45. A straight line in a N.E. direction to B.P. No. LV situated on the S.E. slope of Bwashishi hill.
46. A straight line in a N.N.E. direction to B.P. No. LVI situated on the E. slope of the same hill.
47. A straight line in a N.N.E. direction to B.P. No. LVII situated on the N.E. slope of the same hill.
48. A straight line in a N.N.E. direction and marked by a direction pillar to B.P. No. LVIII situated in the head of the S.W. arm of the Mwibu river.
49. Down the thalweg of the Mwibu river to its junction with the Kagera river.

The Rwanda tripoint is the junction of the thalwegs of the Mwibu and Kagera rivers.

V. PRESENT SITUATION

There are no known disputes relative to the alignment of the boundary. Available information indicates there have been no claims made by Burundi relative to the Bugufi territory in Tanzania since the independence of the two states.

APPENDIX

DOCUMENTS

1. Convention en vue d'approuver l'arrangement signe a Bruxelles, le 14 mai 1910, fixant la frontiere entre le Protectorat allemand de l'Afrique Orientale et la Colonie du Congo belge; signee 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.
2. British Mandate for the Cameroons, Togoland, and East Africa. London, January 1923. United Kingdom Command 1794 (boundary map included).
3. 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).
4. 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.
5. Petition from Mwambutsa, the Mwami of Urundi, dated 25 July 1948; United Nations, Trusteeship Council, T/PET.3/5, T/PET.2/49, 20 August 1948.
6. Ordonnance no. 21/258 du aout 1949 fixant l'organisation territoriale du territoire du Ruanda–Urundi. 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 18, 22, 21, 25, 28, 27, and 26.
2. Ruanda–Urundi: scale 1:100,000; printed 1936 by Institut Cartographique Militaire, Bruxelles, Belgium; sheets 18, 22, 21, 25, 28, 27, and 26.
3. Ruanda–Urundi: scale 1:200,000; series Z522; printed 1962 by United States Army Map Service; sheets 3 and 5.
4. Ruanda–Urundi: scale 1:200,000; printed 1937 by Institut Cartographique Militaire, Bruxelles, Belgium; sheets 3 and 5.

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