



International Boundary Study

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Central African Republic – Chad Boundary

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CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - CHAD BOUNDARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Boundary Brief.....	2
II. Historical Background.....	2
III. Treaties	3
IV. Boundary Alignment	5
Map Appendix	5

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - CHAD BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Central African Republic - Chad boundary is about 745 miles in length. In the west the Cameroon tripoint is located at the center of the Mbere, and in the east the Sudan tripoint is situated in a small stream immediately east of the Mare de Tizi. Most of the boundary is demarcated by rivers, and there are no known boundary pillars.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

French interests in Central Africa date from early coastal trade and missionary work in Gabon. In 1839 Captain L. E. Bouet-Willaumez completed the first of a series of treaties with local chieftains for coastal rights, so that by 1862 French authority extended along most of the littoral of Gabon. Libreville was founded by the French in 1849, and shortly thereafter, a number of French explorers such as Compiègne, Marche, and Brazza penetrated into the interior. During expeditions in 1874 and 1883, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza explored the territory of the upper Ogooué and parts of the Congo drainage area.

The Berlin Conference of 1885 recognized French claims to the lands explored by De Brazza, which included the territory along the right bank of the Congo. In 1886 Gabon was administered by a lieutenant governor under the authority of Commissioner De Brazza. Later the same year, De Brazza was appointed commissioner general over the colonies of Gabon and French Congo (Congo Français). A French decree of 1888 united Gabon and French Congo into a single administrative entity until 1903, and during most of this period the combined units were known as the French Congo. Northwestward of French Congo, the territory of Ubangi-Shari (Oubangi-Chari) was formally established by the French in 1894.

Starting from Libreville in 1897, a mission headed by Captain Marchand crossed unmapped lands to reach Fashoda (Kodok) and to establish French claims in the area of the upper Nile. Marchand reached his objective the following year, only to discover British forces already in possession of the area. Before Marchand reached Fashoda, however, the French had made plans to occupy the Chari-Baguirmi region south of Lake Chad, and in 1899 - 1900 three expeditions were organized with the aim of joining France's possessions in central, west, and north Africa. An expedition marched southward from Algeria, a second moved eastward from the Niger area, and a third travelled northward from the French Congo all meeting on April 21, 1900 at Kousséri (Fort Foureau) south of Lake Chad. The campaign was successful in linking together France's African possessions and in expanding the French Congo northward to include Chad as a military territory.

In 1903 French Congo consisted of the colonies of Gabon and Middle Congo (Moyen Congo) the territory of Ubangi-Shari, and the military territory of Chad. Two years later

the territory of Ubangi-Shari and the military territory of Chad were merged into a single territory. The colony of Ubangi-Shari - Chad was formed in 1906 with Chad under a regional commander at Fort-Lamy subordinate to Ubangi-Shari. The commissioner general of French Congo was raised to the status of a governor generalship in 1908; and by a decree of January 15, 1910, the name of French Equatorial Africa was given to a federation of the three colonies (Gabon, Middle Congo, and Ubangi-Shari - Chad), each of which had its own lieutenant governor. In 1914 Chad was detached from the colony of Ubangi-Shari and made a separate territory; full colonial status was conferred on Chad in 1920.

In accordance with the constitution of the Fourth French Republic, adopted October 26, 1946, both Chad and Ubangi-Shari became overseas territories within the French Union. As provided in the constitution of the French Republic in 1958, a French Community was established superseding the French Union. Chad and Ubangi-Shari elected to become autonomous members of the French Community and adopted the names of the Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic, respectively. On June 4, 1960, the constitution of the Fifth Republic was amended so that states might become independent and sovereign republics without forfeiting membership in the Community. After agreements of transfer of power and cooperation were signed in Paris on July 12, 1960, Chad proclaimed its independence on August 11, 1960, and the Central African Republic became independent two days later.

III. TREATIES

The Central African Republic (Ubangi-Shari) - Chad boundary was established initially for internal administrative purposes within French Equatorial Africa. Historically, maps have indicated the boundary with various alignments because of changes resulting from command expediency. Prior to World War II, the boundary commonly was shown northward of the present line to include Moundou and Fort-Archambault in Ubangi-Shari.¹ However, on the eastern part of the boundary, Chad often was extended southward of the Aoukale into the territory of present Central African Republic as far as the Kameur and Oulau.

Apparently an arrete (decree) of June 12, 1941 (Official Journal of French Equatorial Africa) was the basis for the determination of the present Central African Republic - Chad boundary, except in the eastern sector. However, the arrete merely indicated that a particular subprefecture would be a part of a given region attached to Chad, while other subprefectures would form a region attached to Ubangi-Shari. Each administrator

¹ The Cameroon tripoint was located on the upper Mayo Senabou. From the tripoint the boundary formed a large arc north of Moundou, crossed the Logone near Kim, and extended to the confluence of the Chari and Bahr Salamat north of Fort-Archambault. It followed the Bahr Salamat upstream to about 10°30' N., 19°50' E., extended southeastward by a straight line to the Bahr Aouk at about 9°05' N., 20°05' E. From this point the boundary followed the Bahr Aouk (also known as the Oulou in the extreme eastern part of the Central African Republic and the Wadi Trival in Sudan) upstream to its confluence with the Kameur and then the Kameur upstream to the Sudan tripoint.

was left to specify to the governor concerned, the accepted limits of the administrative subdivision.

A letter of January 4, 1942, from the Chief Administrator of the Rouan-Sim divisions, Chief of the Cuham-Pende (Bozoum) department, (addressed to the Governor of Ubangi-Shari), delimits the western part of the boundary as follows:

(a) A line from the river M'Bere (Cameroon border) at the village of Baimini, ceded to Moyen Logone (Chad), to the Lim at its confluence with the Lebe, the course of the Lebe to its confluence with the Biamana, a line joining that point to the source of the river Ouarassi (or Ouaramassi), and leaving the Makore and Lam mountains at Baibokoum; the course of the Ouarassi to its confluence with the Ereke.

(b) The course of the Pende to its confluence with the Ereke, the course of the Ereke from its confluence with the Pende to its confluence with the Bouli, the course of the Bouli to a point situated north of the sources of the river Loura, a line joining that point to the sources of the Loura, the course of the river Loura to its confluence with the Pende, a line joining the confluence of the Loura and Pende rivers to the Nana-Barya.

Survey teams of the French National Geographic Institute (IGN) were unable to follow this sector of the boundary in accordance with the text of the letter, although they were able to find well-defined border-crossing points. Thus, it was suggested that the delimitation should in fact be worded as follows:

The course of the Ereke from the Pende to its confluence with the Taibo, the course of that river to its sources, thence a straight line [running] east-west, 2 kilometers long, to the sources of the Bokola (Tor), the course of the latter to the Nana-Barya.

The remainder of the boundary was delimited by an arrete of September 27, 1909.

The Barya, which it follows to its confluence with the Ouham. From that point, it proceeds in a straight line to the confluence of the Gribingui and the Vassako, follows the Gribingui, then the Shari, to the Aouk (Bandido), and finally the latter river to the border of Egyptian Sudan.

Actually the boundary from the confluence of the Nana Barya and Ouham extends by a series of straight-line sectors to the Petite Sido. It then follows downstream successively the Petite Sido, Grand Sido, and the Chari to its confluence with the Bahr Aouk.

IV. BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

The present boundary alignment as determined by the French Institut Geographique National from arretes, aerial photography, ground surveys, and information supplied by Central African and Chadian nationals is as follows:²

The Cameroon tripoint is located at the center³ of the Mbere (7°31'40" N., 15°29'40" E.). From the tripoint the boundary extends southeastward in a straight line to a point (7°30'40" N., 15°32'40" E.) on the road between Baibokoum (Chad) and Mann (Central African Republic), it then continues eastward in a straight line to the mouth of the Lebe located at the river's confluence with the Lim. The Lebe forms the boundary upstream to near its source, crosses a narrow drainage divide, and follows successfully the Ouaraouassi, Ereke, and Pende to the confluence of the last named river with the Taibo. Thence the boundary follows the course of the Taibo to its source, a straight line eastward for one kilometer to the source of the Bokola (also known as the Tor), the Bokola to its confluence with the Nana Barya, and the Nana Barya downstream to its confluence with the Ouham.

From the Ouham the boundary extends by a series of straight line sectors: (1) southeastward to the Goumou (7°57'20"N., 17°55'30"E.); (2) northeastward to 8°00'50"N., 18°02'00"E., and (3) northeastward to the Petite Sido (8°02'40"N., 18°34'45"E.). It follows downstream successively the Petite Sido, Grand Sido (enters the Chari about two miles north of the junction of the Gribingui and Bamingui, which two rivers form the Chari), and the Chari to its confluence with the Bahr Aouk. The boundary then continues upstream successively by the Bakr Aouk, Samoybayn,⁴ Aoukale, Mare de Tizi, and a small stream to the Sudan tripoint (10°56'30" N., 22°52'36" E.).

MAP APPENDIX

Carte de l'Afrique Centrale: scale 1:200,000; published 1955 - 1960 by Institut Geographique National (Paris) and Service Geographic (Brazzaville); Sheets NB-33-XXII (Baibokoum), NB-33-XXIII (Paoua), NB-33-XXIV (Kouki), NC-34-I (Moussafoyo), NC-34-II (Miamere), NC-34-VIII (Singako), NC-34-IX (Harazo), NC-34-X (Parc Saint-Floris), NC-34-XVI (Mangeigne), NC-34-XXIII (Nzili), NC-34-XVII-XVIII (Birao-AM Dafok).

² For Institut Geographique National maps indicating the boundary from west to east see the Appendix.

³ Unless otherwise indicated all boundary references to rivers are to the center of the stream bed.

⁴ The Samoybagn or Madeam apparently carries overflow from the Aoukale southward to the Bahr Aouk during periods of high water and possibly is a former course of the Aoukale.

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