



International Boundary Study

No. 96 – March 16, 1970

Algeria – Mali Boundary

(Country Codes: AG-ML)

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

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 96

ALGERIA - MALI BOUNDARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Brief.....	2
II. Historical Background.....	2
III. Niamey Convention	4
IV. Alignment	4

APPENDIX

Maps

1. Republique du Mali	5
2. Carte Aeronautique	5

ALGERIA - MALI BOUNDARY

I. BRIEF

The Algeria - Mali boundary is approximately 855 miles in length. It is undemarcated and straight-line sectors at both ends account for more than three-fifths of the total distance. Located in the Sahara, the boundary extends between the tripoint with Niger at about 19° 08' 30" N. and 4° 14' 30" E. and the Mauritania tripoint at 25° N. and 4° 50' W.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

French military forces occupied Algiers in 1830, and by 1847 most of northern Algeria was under the administration of France. In 1848 northern Algeria was proclaimed an integral part of France and was organized into the three departments of Oran, Alger, and Constantine. Under a French law of December 24, 1902, the Saharan area, known as the Territoires du Sud Algerien, was annexed by France. However, the Territoires du Sud Algerien were administered separately from the departments of northern Algeria.

Until 1880 the area east of the Faleme river, known as the Haut Fleuve (Upper River), was administered as an integral part of Senegal. On September 6, 1880, the territory of Haut Senegal (Upper Senegal) was created from the Haut Fleuve, and the new entity was placed under a military officer subordinate to the Governor of Senegal. On August 18, 1890, a decree changed the name of Haut Senegal to the Soudan Francais (French Sudan), and administratively it came under the general direction of the Governor of Senegal. Two years later a decree afforded French Sudan autonomy, directly under the French Government. However, the Commandant continued to forward copies of political reports to the Governor of Senegal, but in 1893 military control was replaced by a civil administration. French West Africa was constituted by a decree on June 16, 1895, and French Sudan was included as a member, along with Senegal, Ivory Coast, and French Guinea.

Following a decree of October 17, 1899, French Sudan was organized into the civil territory of Haut Senegal et Moyen Niger (Upper Senegal and Middle Niger) and initially two and later three (after December 20, 1900) military territories with headquarters at Tombouctou, Bobo Dioulasso, and Zinder. Haut Senegal et Moyen Niger was made a dependency of Senegal administered by the Governor of Senegal through a civil delegate residing at Kayes. Commanders in charge of the military territories were directly responsible to the Governor General of French West Africa on military matters, but on civil matters they dealt with his civil delegate.

On October 1, 1902, a decree ended the procedure of the Governor of Senegal also being the ipso facto Governor General of French West Africa. Haut Senegal et Moyen Niger was renamed Senegambie et Niger (Senegambia and Niger) and placed under a delegate of the Governor General resident at Kayes. The first and second military territories were also

responsible to the delegate for civil affairs, but the third military territory with headquarters at Zinder was responsible directly to the Governor General for civil matters. A decree of October 18, 1904 changed the name of Senegambie et Niger to the colony of Haut Senegal et Niger and moved the capital to Bamako. On June 7, 1905, an agreement between the Commandant of Haut Senegal et Niger and the Military Commander of the Departement de l'Oasis (part of the Territoires du Sud Algerien) delimited a boundary between Algeria and French West Africa (included the boundaries of the present states of Mali, Mauritania, and Niger). In principle the boundary agreement of 1905 was completed by the Niamey Convention of June 20, 1909, which was approved by a decision of the French President du Conseil on August 16, 1911. Also in 1911, the third or Niger military territory was detached from the colony of Haut Senegal et Niger, and the first and second military territories were abolished. Haut Senegal et Niger was renamed the French Sudan on December 4, 1920.

In 1947 the Algerian Statute altered the status of the Saharan territories (Ain-Sefra, Ghardaia, Touggourt, and Saharan Oases), which then were organized as departments. Ten years later the Saharan area was divided into the Department of Saoura (capital at Bechar) and the Department of Oasis (capital at Ouargla). Prior to 1960 the number of departments in northern Algeria was expanded gradually to 13. Pursuant to the Evian Agreements and subsequent plebiscites, Algeria became independent on July 5, 1962.

Following World War II, the French Sudan became an overseas territory with membership in the French Union. In November 1958, it was made the Republic of Sudan and an autonomous member of the French Community. Sudan and Senegal joined to form the Federation of Mali on April 4, 1959. Both Mali and Senegal as parts of the federation became independent from French administration on June 20, 1960. Senegal seceded from the federation and inaugurated an independent republic on August 20, 1960. Following the break up of the Federation of Mali, the Republic of Sudan became the Republic of Mali on September 19, 1960.

During the period from January 30-31, 1970 President Moussa Traore of Mali and President Houari Boumediene of Algeria conferred at Ouargla, Algeria, at which time the demarcation of the mutual boundary of their two states was discussed. A communique issued by the two presidents after the meeting stated that a joint committee would be established to demarcate the Algeria - Mali boundary. According to the communique, the first session of the committee was to be convened at Kidal, Mali the following February 20th to determine work plans and timetables for the demarcation.

III. NIAMEY CONVENTION

The Niamey Convention of June 30, 1909 affords a general description of the boundary between Algeria and Mali. Recent French maps provide additional details on the alignment. The text of the convention delimits the Algeria - Mali boundary in two parts, first westward of the Oued Ti-n Zaouatene and then eastward of the wadi. The Naimey Convention is as follows:

The boundary will begin at the source of the Tin-Zaouaten wadi, will follow the watershed of the Tilemsi basin westward to the source of the Ngouden [Djoudem] wadi, then will continue westward, following the outline of the Ngouden wadi and the lukeouen [l-n-Keouen] wadi basin to the place where this watershed is cut by the llakok [llafok]-Aboukar-Tin Tagen-Sounfat [Tessounfat] road (Itineraire Laperrine, 1906). From this point the boundary will run to the Tarmanant [Tahmanant] well (situated on the road from Taoudeni [Taoudenni] to Tafilalet) then will continue along the border defined in the June 1905 agreement, that is, it will run towards Cape Noun.¹ The pasture lands of the Ngouden wadi and its tributaries will belong to Algeria; the pasture lands of the Tukeouen wadi and its tributaries will belong to West Africa.

Beginning at the source of the Tin Zaouaten wadi, the boundary follows the course of the wadi eastward for a hundred kilometers downstream from the confluence with the Tin Zaoua [Ti-n-Elhaoua] wadi. Leaving the Tin Zaouaten wadi, the boundary runs in a straight line to the foreground of the Tassili des Ahaggars [Tassili Qua-n Ahaggar] which is about 15 kilometers south of the In Guezzam well;....

IV. ALIGNMENT

The Algeria - Mali boundary as shown on French Institut Geographique National (IGN) maps extends southwestward in a straight line for 63 miles from the tripoint with Niger at about 19° 08' 30" N. and 4° 14' 30" E. to the In-Akantarer at about 18° 57' 40" N. and 3° 20' E. It continues northward utilizing the In-Akantarer and Ti-n-Zaouatene wadies and then westward to the source of the latter wadi. From the Tin-in-Zouatene, the boundary passes westward along the drainage divide north of the Vallee du Tilemsi, follows the drainage divide between the Djoudem and the In-Keouen, turns northward crossing the Djoudem, and reaches the Bordj le Prieur-Tessalit road at about 21° 06' 15" N. and 1° 10' E. From this point the boundary extends in a straight line for 452 miles to the tripoint with Mauritania at 25° N. and 4° 50' W.

¹ Apparently the Cap Noun of the convention is the present Cap Draa (immediately north of the Oued Draa) in southern Morocco.

MAP APPENDIX

1. Republique, de Mali: scale 1:200,000; published 1959-67 by Institut Geographique National (French). Sheets (E to W): NE-31-XXIII, NE-31-XXII (Ti-n-Srir), NE-31-XXI (Tin-Zaouaten), NF-31-11 (Tessalit-Est), NF-31-VII-VIII (Ait el Khaoua), NF-30-XII (Tagnout Chaggueret), NF-30-XVIII (Djedeyed), NF-30-XVII (Ine Debnane), NF-30-XXII-XXIII, NF-30-XXI, and NG-30-VII-VIII (Chegga).
2. Carte Aeronautique: scale 1:1,000,000; published 1955-63 by Institut Geographique National (French). Sheets (E to W): 2661 (Mont in Rabe), 2572 (Mont Tahat), 2573 (El Khenachich), and 2538 (El Eglab).

This International Boundary Study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared by the Geographer, Office of Strategic and Functional Research, 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 63-22022)