



International Boundary Study

No. 106 – September 5, 1978

Sudan – Democratic Republic of the Congo (*Zaire*) Boundary

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (Kinsasha) [ZAIRE]

- SUDAN BOUNDARY

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**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (Kinsasha) [ZAIRE]
– SUDAN BOUNDARY**

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Sudan–Zaire boundary is approximately 628 kilometers (390 miles) long. It follows the drainage divide between the Congo and Nile river systems. From the tripoint with Uganda at about 3°27'40" N. and 30°50'30" E., the boundary extends northwestward to the Central African Empire tripoint at 5°01'10" N. and 27°26'37" E.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After more than six decades of administration, Egyptian officials were expelled from most of the Sudan by the Mahdi in 1882. Egypt itself, although nominally under the suzerainty of the Turkish Empire, was occupied by British forces from 1882 to 1914 and was in effect a United Kingdom protectorate. The United Kingdom and Egypt signed an agreement in 1899 creating a dual administration for the entity to be known as the Anglo–Egyptian Sudan. On December 18, 1914, the United Kingdom declared an official protectorate over Egypt which was in effect until January 28, 1922.

The Berlin Conference of 1884–85 recognized King Leopold II of Belgium as the sovereign head of state for the International Association of the Congo. On July 1, 1885, the entity was named the Congo Free State, and in 1908 the state was accorded colonial status as the Belgian Congo. A declaration on August 1, 1885, by the Administrator–General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Congo Free State stated that the limits of the area adjacent to present-day Sudan were:

The 17th degree of longitude east of Greenwich until it meets the 4th parallel of north latitude;

The 4th parallel of north latitude until it meets the 30th degree of longitude east of Greenwich.

On May 12, 1894, the United Kingdom and King Leopold signed an agreement delimiting their spheres of influence in East and Central Africa along the Congo–Nile watershed. In Article II of the agreement, the United Kingdom leased territories to King Leopold in the western drainage area of the Nile (most of which was known as the Bahr al Ghazal) in return for his recognition of the British sphere of influence in Uganda in accordance with the Anglo–German agreement of July 1, 1890, as follows:

II. Great Britain grants a lease to His Majesty King Leopold II, Sovereign of the Independent Congo State, of the territories hereinafter defined, to be by him occupied and administered on the conditions and for the period of time hereafter laid down.

The territories shall be bounded by a line starting from a point situated on the west shore of Lake Albert, immediately to the south of Mahagi, to the nearest point of the frontier defined in paragraph (a) of the preceding Article. Thence it shall follow the watershed between the Congo and the Nile up to the 25th meridian east of Greenwich, and that meridian up to its intersection by the 10th parallel north, whence it shall run along that parallel directly to a point to be determined to the north of Fashoda. Thence it shall follow the thalweg of the Nile southward to Lake Albert and the western shore of Lake Albert to the point above indicated south of Mahagi.

The lease shall remain in force during the reign of His Majesty Leopold II, Sovereign of the Independent Congo State.

Nevertheless, at the expiration of His Majesty's reign, it shall remain fully in force as far as concerns all the portion of the territories above mentioned situated to the west of the 30th meridian east of Greenwich, as well as a strip of 25 kilom. in breadth to be delineated by common consent, stretching from the watershed between the Nile and the Congo up to the western shore of Lake Albert, and including the port of Mahagi.

This extended lease shall be continued so long as the Congo territories as an independent State or as a Belgian Colony remain under the sovereignty of His Majesty and His Majesty's successors.

Because of French influence and interest in Central Africa, King Leopold occupied only the Lado Enclave and the Mahagi Strip in the leased territories. The Enclave was so-called because it included the river port of Lado on the Bahr al Jabal about 10 miles north of Juba. An agreement between France and King Leopold later the same year, on August 14, delimited the eastern sector of their common boundary from west to east as the thalweg of the Oubangui, the thalweg of the Mbomou, and a straight line to the Congo–Nile drainage divide. Following the administration of the Imperial East Africa Company chartered in 1888, the British Government declared a protectorate over the Kingdom of Buganda or Uganda on June 18, 1894. Except for the Lado Enclave and the Mahagi Strip, the lease of the territories both west and east of the 30th meridian was annulled by an agreement between the United Kingdom and the Congo Free State on May 9, 1906.

An Anglo–Belgian agreement of May 14, 1910, terminated the lease of the Lado Enclave in accordance with the terms of the agreement of May 12, 1894, which action was to take place at the end of the reign of King Leopold. The administration of the territory was transferred to the Anglo–Egyptian Sudan on June 16, 1910.

In 1912–13 an Anglo–Belgian commission redelimited the Belgian Congo–Uganda boundary from Lake Albert northwestward to the Congo–Nile drainage divide. Also in 1913, a Sudanese–Ugandan commission delimited a common boundary on the ground between the Bahr al Jabal and the Belgian Congo tripoint. On January 1, 1914, sizable

transfers of territory were made south and north of the Sudanese–Ugandan Commission line of 1913: (1) west of the Nile the Anglo–Egyptian Sudan transferred to Uganda the southern part of the former Lado Enclave which became the West Nile District; and (2) east of the Nile the protectorate of Uganda transferred to the Anglo–Egyptian Sudan the territory from the parallel of five degrees eastward to the boundary with Ethiopia. By an Order of The Secretary of State under the Uganda Order in Council, 1902, the Anglo–Egyptian Sudan–Uganda boundary delimited by the commission in 1913 was promulgated officially on April 21, 1914.

An Anglo–Belgian agreement of February 3, 1915, afforded official recognition to the boundary as presently constituted between Uganda and Zaire northward from Sabinio to the Congo–Nile drainage divide northwest of Lake Albert. In accordance with this agreement, the southeastern part of the Mahagi Strip was transferred to Belgian Congo, which afforded the town of Mahagi access to Lake Albert through Congolese territory and in effect annulled the lease to the strip.

In February 1953 the United Kingdom and Egypt concluded an agreement for Sudanese self-government. The first parliament inaugurated under self-government took office on January 9, 1954, and approximately two years later, on January 1, 1956, the former condominium became independent as the Republic of the Sudan. On May 25, 1969, the name of the state was changed to the Democratic Republic of the Sudan.

The Belgian Congo became independent on June 30, 1960, as the Republic of the Congo. The name of the state was officially changed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on August 1, 1964, and to the Republic of Zaire on October 27, 1971.

III. ALIGNMENT

The Sudan–Zaire boundary follows the drainage divide or watershed between the Congo and Nile river systems in accordance with the agreement signed by the United Kingdom and King Leopold of the Belgians on May 12, 1894, as follows:

Article I—(a) It is agreed that the sphere of influence of the Independent Congo State shall be limited to the north of the German sphere in East Africa by a frontier following the 30th meridian east of Greenwich up to its intersection by the watershed between the Nile and the Congo, and thence following this watershed in a northerly and north-westerly direction.

The tripoint with Uganda at about 3°27'40" N. and 30°50'30" E. was determined by a British Order of the Secretary of State in 1914, which formally promulgated the Sudan–Uganda boundary westward from the Bahr al Jabal to the Congo–Nile drainage divide. The site of the tripoint with the Central African Empire (French Equatorial Africa), at 5°01'10" N. and 27°26'37" E., was established by an exchange of notes between the

United Kingdom and France on January 24, 1924. At the meeting point of the three states, a large monument of stones was erected marking its exact location.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Circular of the Administrator–General of Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of the Congo, declaring the Neutrality of that State, within its Limits as defined by Treaties. Brussels, August 1, 1885. Edward Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909), Vol. 2, pp. 552–553.
2. Agreement between Great Britain and His Majesty King Leopold II, Sovereign of the Independent State of the Congo, relating to the Spheres of Influence of Great Britain and the Independent State of the Congo in East and Central Africa, signed at Brussels, May 12, 1894. *British and Foreign State Papers (BFSP)*, Vol. 86 (1893–4), pp. 19–22.
3. Agreement between Great Britain and the Independent State of the Congo, Modifying the Agreement signed at Brussels, May 12, 1894, relating to the Spheres of Influence of Great Britain and the Independent State of the Congo in East and Central Africa. Signed at London May 9, 1906. *BFSP*, Vol. 99 (1905–6), pp. 173–175.
4. Agreement between Great Britain and Belgium Settling the Boundary between Uganda and the Congo. Signed at Brussels, May 14, 1910. *BFSP*, Vol. 107 (1914, Part I), pp. 348–349.
5. Proclamation by the Acting Governor–General of the Soudan announcing that the Administration of the Lado Enclave has been taken over by the Soudan Government and laying down the boundaries of the Territory. Khartoum, August 4, 1910. *BFSP*, Vol. 103 (1909–10), pp. 458–459.
6. The Uganda Order in Council, 1902, Order of the Secretary of State. Signed April 21, 1914. *Uganda Official Gazette* (May 30, 1914), Vol. VII, No. 10.
7. Agreement between Great Britain and Belgium respecting the Boundary between the British and Belgian Territories in East Africa, from Mount Sabinio to the Congo–Nile Watershed. Signed at London, February 3, 1915 [Ratifications exchanged at London, October 20, 1919]. *BFSP*, Vol. 110, pp. 487–490.
8. Jentgen, P., *Les Frontieres du Congo Belge*, Institut Royal Colonial Belge, *Memoires*, Tome XXV, 1952.
9. Jentgen, P., *Notice de la Carte des Frontieres du Congo Belge*. *Atlas General du Congo* (Bruxelles, 1953).
10. Notes exchanged between the United Kingdom and France agreeing to the Ratification of the Protocol defining the boundary between French Equatorial Africa and the Anglo–Egyptian Soudan, together with the Protocol. London, January 21, 1924, *Treaty Series No. 28* (1924), Command 2221.

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

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