



# **International Boundary Study**

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**Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire) - Uganda  
Boundary**

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**The Geographer  
Office of the Geographer  
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**INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY**

**No. 108**

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (Kinshasa) – UGANDA BOUNDARY**

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# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (Kinshasa) – UGANDA BOUNDARY

## I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Congo (Kinshasa)–Uganda boundary is approximately 475 miles in length. It follows straight-line segments, rivers, drainage divides, and traverses both Lake Edward and Lake Albert. Boundary pillars demarcate two sectors: (1) between the peaks of Sabinio and Mont Ngabua and (2) between Lake Albert and the hill of Okiyo on the Congo–Nile drainage divide. North of Okiyo to the Sudan tripoint, the boundary extends along the Congo–Nile drainage divide.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Berlin Conference of 1884–5 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 renamed the Congo Free State, and in 1908 the state was accorded colonial status as the Belgian Congo. In the area adjacent to present-day Uganda, a declaration on August 1, 1885, by the Administrator–General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Congo Free State stated that its eastern limit was the 30th meridian between the 4th parallel of north latitude and 1°20' of south latitude. In 1890 an Anglo–German agreement established their spheres of influence north and south, respectively, of the 1st parallel of south latitude between the eastern shore of Lake Victoria and the 30th meridian.

On May 12, 1894, the United Kingdom and King Leopold signed an agreement which in Article I (a) delimited their spheres of influence in East and Central Africa northward to the Congo–Nile watershed.

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.

In Article II of the agreement of May 12, 1894, 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, as previously determined by the Anglo–German agreement of July 1, 1890.

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.

Also, in the agreement of May 12, 1894, the Congo Free State in Article III agreed to lease to the United Kingdom a narrow corridor of land between Lake Edward and Lake Tanganyika. However, Germany opposed the transaction, and it was decided to annul the lease by a joint declaration on June 22, 1894.

Because of French influence and interest in central Africa, King Leopold occupied only the land known as the Lado Enclave in the leased territories. The Enclave was so-named because it included the river port of Lado on the Bahr al Jabal about 10 miles north of Juba. Twelve years later the lease to the territories granted by the United Kingdom to King Leopold in 1894 was annulled by an agreement between the United Kingdom and the Congo Free State on May 9, 1906. However, King Leopold was given permission to continue the occupation of the Lado Enclave<sup>1</sup> during his reign under the same terms then in effect. Within six months of the termination of His Majesty's occupation of the enclave, the

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<sup>1</sup> The Lado Enclave was delimited as follows in Article I of the Agreement between the United Kingdom and Congo Free State of May 9, 1906.

"The Enclave comprises the territory bounded by a line drawn from a point situated on the west shore of Lake Albert, immediately to the south of Mahagi, to the nearest point of the watershed between the Nile and Congo basins; thence the boundary follows that watershed up to its intersection from the north with the 30th meridian east of Greenwich, and that meridian up to its intersection with the parallel 5°30' of north latitude, whence it runs along that parallel to the Nile; thence it follows the Nile southward to Lake Albert and the western shore of Lake Albert down to the point above indicated south of Mahagi."

territory was to be handed over to the Sudanese Government. Also, the Mahagi Strip was to remain in the possession of the Congo Free State relative to the conditions laid down in Article II of the Agreement of 1894.

In the meantime 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, located north and west of Lake Victoria, on June 18, 1894. Gradually the United Kingdom extended protectorate rights to the areas adjacent to Buganda, and the name of Uganda came into usage for the entire area.

During the period 1906–8, a Uganda–Congo commission was organized and mapped the area of the present Congo–Uganda boundary between Mont Ngabua to the south of Lake Edward and the Semlike river which drains northward into Lake Albert. In 1910 an Anglo–Belgian–German conference held at Brussels reached agreement that Sabinio (Volcan Sabinyo) would be the tripoint of their respective territories of Uganda, Belgian Congo, and East Africa, which led to bilateral treaties among the participants on May 14, 1910.<sup>2</sup>

The Anglo–Belgian agreement of May 14, 1910, delimited a boundary northward from Sabinio to the Congo–Nile drainage divide northwest of Lake Albert. It transferred the territory west to the 30th meridian between Sabinio and the Semlike river from Belgian Congo to Uganda. In the same agreement, an elongated piece of land extending northeastward from the 30th meridian to the southern boundary of the Mahagi Strip, including the western half of Lake Albert and adjacent territory, was transferred from Uganda to Belgian Congo. However, the occupation of the Mahagi Strip was continued by the Belgian Congo.

In accordance with the terms of the Anglo–Belgian Agreement of May 12, 1894, following the end of the reign of King Leopold II, the Belgian occupation of the Lado Enclave was terminated and the administration of the territory was transferred to the Anglo–Egyptian Sudan on June 16, 1910.

On May 4, 1911, an Anglo–Belgian protocol was signed relative to the survey of the boundary and the erection of 12 pillars between Sabinio and Nkabwa. In 1913 an Anglo–

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<sup>2</sup> The following treaties, printed in the British and Foreign State Papers, were signed at Brussels on May 14, 1910.

(a) Agreement between Great Britain and Belgium Settling the Boundary between Uganda and the Congo. Vol. 107, Part I, 1914, pp. 348–9.

(b) Convention between Belgium and Germany confirming the Agreement signed at Brussels, May 14, 1910, Settling the Boundary between German East Africa and the Belgian Colony of the Congo. Signed at Brussels. August 11, 1910, Annexe–Arrangement signe a Bruxelles, le 14 Mai, 1910, Vol. 103, 1909–10, pp. 372–5.

(c) Agreement between Great Britain and Germany Settling the Boundary between Uganda and German East Africa. Vol. 107, Part I, 1914, pp. 394–7.

Belgian commission delimited on the ground the boundary between 2°7' N. and the Congo–Nile drainage divide northwest of Lake Albert.

Also in 1913 a Sudanese–Ugandan Commission delimited on the ground a common boundary between Sudan and Uganda westward to 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 Bahr al Jabal the Anglo–Egyptian Sudan transferred to Uganda the southern part of the former Lado Encalve which became the West Nile District, and (2) east of the Bahr al Jabal 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, and 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, gave official recognition to the territorial transfers of 1910 between the Belgian Congo and Uganda and to the Congo (Kinshasa)–Uganda boundary as presently determined between Sabinio and the Congo–Nile drainage divide northwest of Lake Albert: (1) between Sabinio and Mont Ngabua by the mixed demarcation commission of 1911, (2) between Nkabwa and the parallel of 2°7' N. in Lake Albert by a joint delimitation commission in Brussels during 1910 [the line is essentially the same as that contained in the Anglo–Belgian agreement of May 4, 1910], and (3) between 2°7' N. and the Congo–Nile drainage divide by the joint delimitation commission of 1913. In accordance with the Anglo–Belgian agreement of February 3, 1915, the southeastern part of the Mahagi Strip was added to the Belgian Congo, which afforded direct access through Congolese territory to Mahagi Port on Lake Albert and eliminated the need of a special corridor such as the Mahagi Strip.

### **III. ALIGNMENT**

The Anglo–Belgian agreement of February 3, 1915, affords the alignment of the Congo (Kinshasa)–Uganda boundary from the tripoint with Rwanda on Sabinio northward to the Congo–Nile drainage divide northwest of Lake Albert:

Art. I. The boundary between the Uganda Protectorate and the Belgian Colony of the Congo begins at the highest point of Mount Sabinio and follows, as far as the highest point of the hill Nkabwa (Ngabua), the lines marked out with pillars by a Mixed Commission in 1911, as described below, and as indicated on map No. 1 annexed to this Agreement:—

1. A straight line from the highest point of Sabinio to the southern extremity of the Mdagana (Munagana) ridge, marked by boundary pillar 1;
2. The watershed of Mdagana (Munagana) to its highest point, marked by boundary pillar 2;

3. A straight line to the summit of the knoll Chieshire (Tshieshire), marked by boundary pillar 3;
4. A straight line to the confluence of the rivers Nyarugando and Kanga; thence the thalweg of the river Nyarugando to its source; thence a straight line to the highest point of the hill Giskio, marked by boundary pillar 4;
5. The watershed between the hill Giskio and the hill Lubona and its continuation as far as a point, marked by boundary pillar 5, about 400 metres north-west of the summit of the hill Lubona;
6. The crest of the spur running in a north-westerly direction to the river Sinda; thence the crest of the opposite spur, as shown on the map, to the summit of the hill Kirambo, marked by boundary pillar 6;
7. A curved line, as shown on the map, along the crest of a spur running from Kirambo in a north-easterly and northerly direction to the northernmost elbow of the river Kako or Ruchuru (Rutshuru); thence a straight line across this river to the mouth of the stream Kasumo; thence the thalweg of this stream to its source; thence a straight line to the lowest point, marked by boundary pillar 7, of the col north-east of the above-mentioned elbow of the river Kako or Ruchuru (Rutshuru);
8. A straight line to the confluence of the rivers Kiarakibi and Murungu; thence the thalweg of the river Murungu downwards to its junction with the thalweg of the river Chonga (Tshonga); thence a straight line to the summit of a hill, marked by boundary pillar 8, about 700 metres north-north-east of this junction;
9. A straight line to the summit of the hill Chikomo (Deko South), marked by boundary pillar 9;
10. A straight line to the summit of the hill Deko North; thence a straight line to the summit of a hill about 3 kilom. north by west of Deko North; thence a straight line to the point, marked by boundary pillar 10, where the Kayonsa (Kayonza) road crosses the river Ivwi;
11. A straight line to a point, marked by boundary pillar 11, about 1 kilom. to the north of boundary pillar 10, on a prominent spur of the Nkabwa (Ngabua)–Salambo range;
12. The crest of this spur to the summit of the hill Salambo; thence the watershed of the Nkabwa (Ngabua)–Salambo range to the summit of the hill Nkabwa (Ngabua), marked by boundary pillar 12.

II. From the summit of the hill Nkabwa (Ngabua) the boundary follows, as far as a point, on the parallel of 2°7' north latitude, midway between the shores of Lake Albert, the lines determined by a Mixed Commission at Brussels in 1910, as described below and as indicated on maps Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, annexed to this Agreement;—

1. The parallel of latitude of the summit of the hill Nkabwa (Ngabua) eastwards to its intersection with the thalweg of the river Manyaga (Muniaga);
2. The thalweg of this river downwards to its junction with the thalweg of the river Ishasha (Isasa);
3. The thalweg of the river Ishasha (Isasa) to its mouth in Lake Edward;
4. A straight line across Lake Edward to the mouth of the river Lubilia–Chako (Lubiliha);
5. The thalweg of this river to its source;
6. A straight line to the highest point of the Ruwenzori range, the summit of Margarita Peak (Pic Marguerite);
7. A straight line to the source of the river Lami (Lamia), situated about 5.4 kilom. north-west of the peak Kalengili and about 20 kilometers south-west of the hill-top Karangora;
8. The thalweg of the river Lami (Lamia) to its junction with the thalweg of the river Semliki;
9. The thalweg of the river Semliki to its mouth in Lake Albert;
10. A succession of straight lines, as shown on the maps, across Lake Albert, passing, through the points situated midway between the shores of the lake on the parallels of 1°30', 1°45', and 2° north latitude, to a point midway between the shores of the lake on the parallel of 2°7' north latitude.

III. From this point the boundary follows, as far as the Congo–Nile watershed, the lines determined on the ground by a Mixed Commission in 1913, as described below and as indicated on map No. 6 annexed to this Agreement: —<sup>3</sup>

1. The meridian of a point, on the parallel of 2°7' north latitude, midway between the shores of Lake Albert, northwards to its intersection with the prolongation of a straight line from the summit of the hill Kagudi to the summit of a knoll, on the

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<sup>3</sup> This sector is demarcated by 26 boundary pillars.



escarpment overlooking the western shore of the lake, situated about 1.7 kilom. south-east by east of the summit of the hill Kagudi;

2. A straight line to the summit of the hill Kagudi;
3. A straight line towards the summit of the hill Biet (Bieti), as far as its intersection with a straight line joining the summit of the hill Milia to the confluence of the rivers Nashiodo and Alala; thence a straight line to this confluence;
4. The thalweg of the river Nashiodo to its source, as shown on the map, nearest to the summit of the hill Keresi; thence a straight line to this summit;
5. A curved line, as shown on the map, following the watershed of the river Sido basin to the summit of the hill Aminzi (Aminsi);
6. A straight line to the top of the rock Monda;
7. A straight line to the confluence of the rivers Narodo and Niabola;
8. The thalweg of the river Niabola upwards to the point on it nearest to the summit of the hill Agu; thence a straight line to this summit;
9. A curved line, as shown on the map, following the watershed of the Aioda river basin to the summit of the hill Sisi;
10. A curved line, as shown on the map, following the watershed of the Leda river basin to the summit of a knoll situated about 4.2 kilom. south-east by east of the summit of the hill Cho;
11. A curved line, as shown on the map, following the watershed between the Niagaki (Kiagak) river basin and the tributary which joins the river Niagaki (Niagak) just below the confluence of the rivers Niagaki (Niagak) and Ammodar (Amoda), as far as the point on this watershed nearest to the confluence of the rivers Niagaki (Niagak) and Ammodar (Amoda); thence a straight line to this confluence;
12. The thalweg of the river Ammodar (Amoda) upwards to its junction, at a point about 1,600 metres south-west of the summit of the hill Akar, with the thalweg of that tributary, of which the source is close to a knoll on the Congo–Nile watershed, about 5.6 kilom. south-south-east of the summit of the hill Ham and about 6.2 kilom. west-south-west of the summit of the hill Akar; the thalweg of this tributary to its source; thence a straight line to the summit of the above-mentioned knoll on the Congo–Nile watershed.

From the point where the boundary reaches the Congo–Nile drainage divide at the hill of Okiyo, the line continues northward along the drainage divide to the Sudan tripoint as

provided for in the agreement of 1894 between the United Kingdom and King Leopold. Apparently, the boundary is not surveyed between Okiyo and the Sudan tripoint.

## APPENDIX

### I. Documents

1. Circular of the Administrator-General of Foreign Affairs of the Independent States 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. 552–3.
2. Agreement between the British and German Governments, respecting Africa and Heligoland, Berlin, July 1, 1890. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 899–906.
3. 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.
4. Declaration as to Withdrawal of Article III of the 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, June 22, 1894. *BFSP*, Vol. 86 (1893–4), p. 23.
5. 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. 173–5.
6. 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. 348–9).
7. 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. 458–9.

8. Protocol between Great Britain and Belgium describing the Frontier between the Uganda Protectorate and the Belgian Colony of the Congo. Signed at Busenda, May 4, 1911. BFSP, Vol. 107 (1914, Part I), pp. 349–51.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Agreement between the United Kingdom and Belgium respecting Boundaries in East Africa (Mount Sabinio to the Congo–Nile Watershed). Signed at London, February 3, 1915 [with maps], Treaty Series No. 2 (1920), Command 517.
12. Jentgen, P., "Les Frontieres du Congo Belge," Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Memoires, Tome XXV, 1952.
13. Jentgen, P., "Notice de la Carte des Frontieres du Congo Belge." Atlas General du Congo (Bruxelles, 1953).
14. Atlas of Uganda, Department of Lands and Surveys, Uganda, First Edition, 1962.

## II. Maps

1. Uganda: scale 1:50,000; published 1958-67 by Lands and Surveys Department, Uganda or Directorate of Overseas Surveys, United Kingdom; sheets (S to N) 93/3 (Kisoro), 93/1 (Lake Mutanda), 84/3 (Kirima), 84/1 (Ishasha), 75/2 (Katwe), 65/4 (Nyabirongo), 65/2 (Margherita), 56/3 (Bundibugyo), 56/1 (Sempaya), 46/4 (Rwebishengo), 47/3 and 47/1 (Ntoroko), 47/2 and 37/4 (Rwera), 38/3 (Biseruka), 29/4, 29/1 (Parombo), 28/2 (Paidha), 19/4 (Kango), 19/2 (Vurra), 11/4 (Arua), 11/2 and ¾.
2. Uganda: scale 1:250,000; published 1960-4 by Lands and Surveys Department, Uganda; sheets (S to N) Sa-36-5 (Kabale), SA-36-1 (Mbarara), NA-36-13 (Fort Portal), NA-36-9 (Hoima), NA-36-5 (Pakwach), and NA-36-1 (Arua).

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