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Guinea – Sierra Leone Boundary

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

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GUINEA – SIERRA LEONE BOUNDARY

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GUINEA – SIERRA LEONE BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Guinea–Sierra Leone boundary has a length of approximately 405 miles. It follows rivers for about half the distance including parts of the Great Scarcies, Meli, and Makona. All land sectors of the boundary are demarcated by pillars.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sierra Leone. Utilized by the British as a haven for freed slaves, the first group of settlers to reach the present territory of Sierra Leone arrived at the site of Freetown in 1787. Four years later the Sierra Leone Company was organized to administer the settlement. Along with the adjacent coastal area, the settlement was made a British crown colony in 1808, and a British protectorate was declared formally over the hinterland in 1896.

Following a constitutional conference in London in 1960, Sierra Leone became independent on April 27, 1961, with a parliamentary form of government. In April 1971 it adopted a republican constitution.

Guinea. From coastal holdings, French penetration into the interior of what is now Guinea took place in the latter part of the 19th century. After 1894 Guinea was governed under the French Ministry of Colonies assisted by the Supreme Council for Overseas France. A decree of June 16, 1895, established the federation of French West Africa which included Guinea. The federation was headed by a governor general with lieutenant governors administering individual colonies.

After World War II, Guinea was made an overseas territory of France and a member of the French Union. On October 2, 1958, the Republic of Guinea became the first state of former French West Africa to gain independence.

III. BOUNDARY TREATIES

An Anglo–French convention of June 28, 1882, delimited a boundary between the territories of Sierra Leone and Guinea from the Atlantic Ocean inland along the drainage divide of the Great Scarcies and Melikhore to an indefinite point in the interior.¹ On August 10, 1889, France and the United Kingdom signed an arrangement extending the

¹ Although considered a binding arrangement by France and the United Kingdom, the convention was never ratified formally. North of the boundary, the Iles de Los adjacent to Conakry were retained by the United Kingdom until ceded to France in a convention of April 8, 1904.

Guinea–Sierra Leone boundary northward to the 10th parallel and then eastward to the 13th meridian west of Paris (10°39'46.05" W. of Greenwich).²

In order to determine the boundary between British and French spheres of influence west and south of the upper Niger river, an Anglo–French agreement of June 26, 1891, stated that the 13th meridian west of Paris was to be followed where possible from the 10th parallel to Timbekundu (the source of the Timbe or Niger). The boundary commissions were to keep both banks of the Niger in the French sphere, but the line could be deflected by agreement east or west of the meridian. A Franco–Liberian convention of December 8, 1892, delimited the western sector of the Guinea–Liberia boundary as the parallel of Timbekundu (9°05' N.) to the 13th meridian west of Paris.

An agreement of January 21, 1895, between the United Kingdom and France established the present Guinea–Sierra Leone boundary from the Atlantic Ocean to Timbekundu. The agreement stated that the sector from the 10th parallel to Timbekundu would follow the drainage divide or "watershed separating the basin of the Niger on the one hand from the basins of the Little Scarcies and other rivers, falling westward to the Atlantic Ocean on the other hand."

In accordance with the Anglo–French agreement of January 21, 1895, British and French commissions between December 1895 and May 1896 surveyed and demarcated the boundary as contained in a proces-verbal of April 9–30, 1896. The demarcation was accepted by the French and British Governments by notes exchanged at Paris on June 14 and 16, 1898.

In accordance with proces-verbaux of March 12, 1903, the Guinea–Sierra Leone boundary was demarcated by pillars between Tembikundu and the 13th meridian west of Paris. The demarcation was approved by an exchange of notes between France and the United Kingdom on March 22 and April 5, 1904, respectively. In the meantime, on June 25, 1903, an Anglo–Liberian proces-verbal delimited the Liberia–Sierra Leone boundary as the 13th meridian west of Paris southward from the Wulafu (Ou Lafou) to the Mano river.

A Franco–Liberian agreement of September 18, 1907, stated that it was physically impossible to apply the theoretical lines of their 1892 convention and that natural topographical lines should be used where possible. The agreement redrew the Guinea–Liberia boundary and transferred a large strip of Liberian territory to French Guinea. In implementation of the 1907 agreement, a commission delimited the boundary as approved by a second agreement on January 13, 1911.

Located between the Makona and Mauwa rivers to the east of the 13th parallel west of Paris, the Liberian Kailahan area was transferred to Sierra Leone by an Anglo–Liberian convention of January 21, 1911. The transfer of the area moved the tripoint with French Guinea eastward to the left bank of the Makona and the center of the Dundugbia.

² The Paris meridian is 2°20'13.95" E. of the Greenwich prime meridian.

By an exchange of notes on July 6, 1911, the United Kingdom and France agreed to extend the Guinea–Sierra Leone boundary to the tripoint with Liberia by utilizing the Wulafu, Meli, and Makona rivers. An Anglo–French agreement of September 4, 1913, reconfirmed the 1903 demarcation east of Timbekundu and delimited in detail the present Guinea–Sierra Leone boundary from the Wulafu to the Liberian tripoint on the left bank of the Makona at the center of the Dundugbia.

IV. ALIGNMENT

In accordance with the Anglo–French agreement of January 21, 1895, the alignment of the Guinea–Sierra Leone boundary between Timbekundu and the Atlantic Ocean is given in the proces-verbal of April 9–30, 1896. The proces-verbal divides this part of the boundary into the following four sectors:

- (1) Timbekundu to the 10th parallel, (2) the 10th parallel, (3) the Small Scarcies to the Great Scarcies (including the two subsectors of the Small Scarcies to the Lolo and the Lolo to the Great Scarcies), and
- (4) the Great Scarcies to the Atlantic Ocean.

Timbekundu to the 10th Parallel

From beacon No. 1 [Timbekundu: 9°05' N., 10°47'00.45" W. of Greenwich] the boundary passes to the peak which, at a distance of 800 metres in a west-north-westerly direction, commands the principal source of the Tembiko (Timbiko). It then follows generally a north-north-east direction, and passes over the two great Sulu peaks (Soullou) and mounts Massakonko and Forea; leaving on the east in French territory the villages Tembikunda (ruined) (Timbikounda), Kulakoia (Kulakoya), and Nalia:—

On the west in English territory the villages of Suradu (Souadou) and Nerekoro.

West of Nalia the boundary bends towards the north-west, turning again north-north-east, then near the farm village of Fua (Foua) it takes a south-easterly direction to about 1,500 metres (1,640 yards) north-north-west of Nalia, at which point it resumes the general north-north-easterly direction, leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Safinian or Sarafinian and Yurukuria (Youroukouria);

On the west, within English territory, the villages of Kulakoia (Kulakoya), Yenankolia, and Sansanbalia (Sansangbala).

From Yurukuria (Youroukouria) it turns north-west as far as the village of Samaindu (Samandou or Samayandou), which it leaves on the west within English territory, taking then a northerly direction as far as the Kola mountain chain, by the easternmost peak of which it passes.

It then takes an easterly direction, turns northwards, resumes the easterly, and finally follows generally a north-westerly direction as far as Mount Bokonko, which dominates, at a distance of 1,500 metres (1,640 yards) on the south-west, the village of Boria or Bogoria; leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Farko (farm village), Sirikamaria (farm village), and Dimbasiria (ruined), situated at the source of the Faliko;

On the west, within English territory, the villages of Yaria (farm village) and Dandafarra.

From Mount Bokonko the frontier takes a westerly direction, passing by Mount Niandan; it then turns north, leaving on the east, within French territory, the village of Boria or Bogoria;

On the west, within English territory, that of Massadugu (Massadou or Massadougou).

It then takes an easterly direction, afterwards turning north-north-west as far as within about 1,000 metres (1,097 yards) south-west of the village of Sombadugu (Sombodou) (Sombodougou): leaving on the east, within French territory, the village of Sombadugu (Sombodou) (or Sombodougou); on the west, within English territory, that of Kirimandugu (Kirimindou or Kirimindougou).

It then takes a westerly direction, leaving to the north, within French territory, the village of Kosaba (or Kosso); to the south, within English territory, those of Konkekoro, Kiridugu (Kirdou or Kiridougou), and Fangaia.

It then makes an angle towards the south-west, leaving on the east, within French territory, the head of the Falikotamba, with the farm villages of Falikotamba, then turning north-north-west it leaves to the east, within French territory, the village of Bennikoro.

As far as Mount Keme it runs towards the north-west leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Yeruaia (Yerouaya) (farm village), Konairto (farm village), Farama, Balia (farm village), and Fode Bogoria (Forboria or Fode Bogoria);

On the west, within English territory, the ruined farm village of Yerindo.

From Mount Keme, which dominates at a distance of 800 metres (880 yards) the village of Farama, the frontier takes a northerly direction as far as the source of the Bondolo, leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Lanseredugu (Lanseredou or Lanseredougou) and Yebadu (ruined) (Yebadou); on the west, within English territory, the village of Siria.

It then turns eastward, and afterwards sharply to the north-north-west, passing by the western peak of the Konkokuraa (Konkokouroua) mountains, leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Nimonmoria (Gnimonmoria) (ruined farm village), Bambaireya (farm village), Kikalia (Kikalaya) (farm village), Siramaia (Siramaya), and Bakunufe (Bakounoufe) (ruined farm village); on the west, within English territory, those of Firaia (Firaoua) (ruined), Karafaia (Karfaya) (ruined), Morifinia, Dugulema (Dougoulema) (ruined), Bonbonkoro (Bongbondo) (farm village), and Kenawa (Kenaoua).

The frontier makes a slight bend to the eastward to turn the head of the Gwiuro (Guiouro), an affluent of the Bandangban, resuming then its north-north-westerly direction as far as within

4,500 metres (4,920 yards) of Mount Bondi, leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Kondeya (ruined), Lansanabara (farm village), Kerto (farm village), Songoia Tukoro (Songoya Toukoro); on the west, within English territory, that of Boala Karafaia (Boala Karfaya) (ruined).

It then takes a westerly direction till within about 3,500 metres (3,828 yards) in a north-easterly direction of the ruins of Boala Karafaia (Boala Karfaya), turning again northwards, leaving on the east, within French territory, the village of Konkofiniria; on the west, within English territory, those of Dundunia (Doundounia) (ruined farm village), and Issikimedu (Issikimedou) (farm village).

It then takes a north-westerly direction as far as the village of Berea Futambu (Berea Fotombo), which it leaves about 1,000 metres (1,090 yards) to the west; leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Minamamudia (Minamamoudia), Sakolaia (Sakolaya), Songoia Tintarba (Songoya Tintarba), Silimaia (Silimaya) (ruined), Farmairia (farm village), Kissitambaia (Kissitambaya), Melibu (Melibou) (ruined), Niamalaia (Niamalaya), and Kobedugu (Kobedongou); on the west, within English territory, the villages of Kombili, Dakolofe (Dagbolofe), Salamaia, Denkeledo, Kabelea (ruined), Bambaia (Bambaya) (farm village), Kambaia (Kambaya), Sandeya (ruined), Dagnini (farm village), Dogonya (Dogounia) (farm village), and Berea Futambu (Berea Fotombo).

It bends then slightly northwards, leaving on the east, within French territory, the villages of Heremakono, Sambaia (Sambaya) (ruined), Sanaia (Sanaya) (farm village), Siraia (Siraya) (farm village), Sisseya, Tumania (Toumania) (ruined), Tendoia (Tendoya) (ruined), and Niaia (Niaya); on the west, within English territory, the villages of Kobelea (ruined), Kalieri (Kaliere), and Modibaia (farm village).

The boundary ends at the point of intersection of the watershed with the 10th degree of latitude.³

³ This sector is demarcated by 66 boundary pillars with No. 1 at Timbekundu and No. 66 on the western drainage divide of the Niger a short distance south of the 10th parallel. The proces-verbal also contains

Tenth Parallel Sector

From the intersection of the 10th parallel of north latitude with the watershed between the Niger basin and the basins of waters flowing westwards the boundary follows this parallel as far as its junction with the thalweg of the Kaba [Little Scarcies].

Twenty-one beacons have been erected by the two Commissions, generally at points where this parallel cuts the roads and important streams of the region.⁴

Small Scarcies to the Great Scarcies Sector

1. Small Scarcies to the Lolo Subsector

From the point of intersection of the 10th parallel of north latitude with the thalweg of the Small Scarcies or Kaba the boundary follows this thalweg as far as a point situated 4 statute miles (6,400 metres) south of the above parallel, and about 110 yards north of the confluence of the Kukubeakude (Koudoubekoude), an affluent of the left bank of the Small Scarcies or Kaba with this river.

From this point the boundary runs in a straight line to the confluence of the River Kita with the Lolo. This line makes an angle of 16° south with the true west (true bearing 254°).

(The magnetic declination allowed by the two Commissions for measuring this angle was 18°10' west).

Eight beacons have been constructed along this line by the direction of the two Commissions.⁵

2. Lolo to the Great Scarcies Subsector

The boundary from the confluence of the Rivers Kita and Lolo follows the thalweg of the River Kita as far as a point situated above and 1,500 metres (1,640 yards) distant, as the crow flies, from the centre of the village of Lakhata.

data on this and other sectors relative to the numbering and sites of the pillars.

⁴ Boundary pillars of this series begin with No. 1 at the eastern end of the parallel sector and end with No. 21 on the left bank of the Little Scarcies.

⁵ Boundary pillar No. 1 is located on the right bank of the Little Scarcies. Although the proces verbal states eight beacons were erected, a number of maps show a ninth pillar east of the confluence of the Lolo and Kita.

From this point it follows a straight line, making an angle of 5° with the magnetic west (bearing 275° magnetic), as far as the centre of a vertical rocky escarpment commanding from the south-west the village of Kankuya (Kankouga).

From this rocky escarpment it follows a straight line, making an angle of about 30° south of the magnetic west (240° magnetic), as far as a point situated in the centre of the western edge of the plateau commanding from the south-east the village of Kankuya (Kankouya).

(See proces-verbal of the Conference of 24th April annexed to the present proces-verbal.)

From this point the frontier follows a straight line making an angle of 9° with the magnetic west (bearing 279° magnetic), till it meets a line drawn parallel to and 500 metres south of, the centre of the track of the road from Wellia (Ouelia) to Wossu (Ouossou) by Lusenja (Lucenia), Ula (Oula), and Fema.

From this point of intersection of these two lines the boundary follows a line drawn at a distance of 500 metres to the south of the road mentioned above as far as its meeting with the right bank of the Great Scarcies (Grand Scarcie or Kolinte).

Twenty-three beacons have been constructed along this section of the boundary by the two Commissions.⁶

Great Scarcies to the Atlantic Ocean Sector

From Beacon No. 1 on the right bank of the Great Scarcies (Kolinte) situated at the point

500 metres (547 yards) south of the spot where the road from Wellia (Ouelia) to Wossu (Ouossou) by Lusenja (Lucenia) touches the right bank, the boundary follows the right bank of the Great Scarcies (Kolinte) to its confluence with the Mola, then the thalweg of the Mola, as far as the confluence of the little Mola, thence following the course of Little Mola, to its source, from which point it is drawn in a straight line to the point on the watershed, nearest to this source.

The boundary then follows the watershed between the basins of the Mellakore (Mellacoree) and the Great Scarcies (Kolinte) till it reaches a point 500 metres (547 yards) south of the centre of the village of Digipali (Diguipali).

From thence it takes a south-west direction, parallel to the road from Rubane (Roubane) to Kiragba, which passes through or near to the French villages of Tinketuk (N'Tineketouk) and Digipali (Diguipali) and the English villages of Konkobotoia (Konkobotoya), Momotimonia, Mandimoya Minkia, Robanti, Minkiadi,

⁶ In this subsector boundary pillar No. 1 is situated on the right bank of the Kita and B.P. 23 on the left bank of the Great Scarcies.

and Fungala (Foungala) at an even distance of 500 metres (547 yards) from the centre of the track, as far as a point half-way between the French village of Digipali (Diguipali) and the English village of Konkobotoia (Konkobotoya).

From this point it turns north-west, cuts the road at right angles, and is drawn to a point

500 metres (547 yards) north-west of the said road, parallel to which it runs at a distance of 500 metres (547 yards) measured as above, as far as a point on the Atlantic coast, north-west of the village of Kiragba (English) determined by the intersection of an arc of 500 metres (547 yards) radius, drawn from the centre of the said village, with the high-water mark.

Eighty-nine beacons have been constructed along this boundary (one of which is numbered 43 (a)).⁷

The sector from Timbekundu eastward to the 13th parallel west of Paris is demarcated by 11 pillars in accordance with the Anglo–French proces-verbaux of March 12, 1903. Boundary pillar No. I is located a short distance southeast of the Timbekundu boundary pillar, and B.P. No. XI is located at the source of the Walufu. The boundary from B.P. XI follows the thalweg of the Walufu to the 13th meridian west of Paris.

Beginning at the starting marker [Timbekundu] set by the Trotter–Passaga mission whose geographic coordinates are Lat. 9°5' N., Long. 13°7'.14.4" W. [10°47'00.45" W. of Greenwich], the boundary runs for 260.50 m., constitutes an azimuth angle of 123°18' with the meridian, and is determined at summit marker No. 1.

From marker No. 1 and constituting a 126°39' angle with the foregoing line, the boundary runs in a straight line for 996 m. to summit marker No. 2. From marker No. 2 and constituting a 152°56' angle with the foregoing line, the boundary runs in a straight line for 917 m. to summit marker No. 3. From marker No. 3 and constituting a 178°9' angle with the foregoing line, the boundary runs in a straight line for 522.50 m. to summit marker No. 4. From marker No. 4 and constituting a 152°58' angle with the foregoing line, the boundary runs in a straight line for 660.50 m. to summit marker No. 5. From marker No. 5 and constituting a 178°45' angle with the foregoing line, the boundary runs in a straight line for 627 m. to boundary marker No. 6.

From summit marker No. 6 and constituting a 157°15' angle with the foregoing line, the boundary runs in a straight line for 987 m. to summit marker No. 8.

From marker No. 8 and constituting a 157°11' angle with the foregoing line, the boundary runs in a straight line for 1,520 m. to marker No. 11 placed at the source of the Ouldafo [Walufu] River.

⁷ Boundary pillar No. 88 is located on the Atlantic coast.

From marker No. 11, the boundary is delimited by the Ouldafo River to its intersection with 13° meridian west of Paris, determined as stated in Proces-Verbal No. 1.

The remainder of the boundary from the 13th parallel west of Paris to the Liberian tripoint is determined by the Anglo–French agreement of September 4, 1913, as contained in Articles 2 through 8:

2. From cairn No. XI the frontier follows the thalweg of the Uldafu [Walufu] to its meeting with the River Meli. Cairn No. XII has been erected close to this point, and its position is marked on the map attached to this Protocol.

3. The frontier then follows the thalweg of the River Meli to its meeting with the Moa, or Makona, on the understanding that the islands marked by the letters A and B on the attached map belong to France, and that the island marked C belongs to Great Britain. The cairn No. XIII has been placed at the meeting of the Meli and the Moa, on the French bank.

4. The frontier then follows the thalweg of the Moa, or Makona, to the point where it meets the thirteenth meridian of longitude west of Paris. This point is on the straight line joining the two cairns Nos. XIV and XV, erected by the two Commissioners on the right and left banks of the Moa. The position of the different islets in the vicinity of the thirteenth meridian [west of Paris], and the respective rights of the two nations with regard to them, are defined on the plan, at a scale of 1:10,000, placed in the corner of the map.

5. As regards the whole part of the frontier defined above, and in the case of future disputes, the position of the innumerable little islets and rocks existing in the two rivers will be fixed in connection with the thalweg. Navigation and fishing are free in this part. The use of hydraulic power may only be employed after an agreement made beforehand between the two Governments.

6. The frontier then follows, to the south, the thirteenth meridian [west of Paris] to the point where it meets the left bank of the Moa. This point is marked by cairn No. XV.

7. From this point the frontier follows the left bank of the Moa to its meeting with the Dandogbia River. This point is marked by the cairn of loose stones No. XVI. It is understood that this point will not be definitely fixed until an agreement shall have been made between the British and Liberian Governments, and that it can only be a matter of a small change of position.

8. In the part of the Moa included between cairns XV and XVI the river and the islands belong entirely to France. The inhabitants of the two banks have, however, equal rights of fishing in this part.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Convention between Great Britain and France, for the settlement of Territorial Limits to the North of Sierra Leone. Paris, June 28, 1882. British and Foreign State Papers (BFSP), Vol. 77 (1885–6), pp. 1007–12.
2. Arrangement concerning the Delimitation of the English and French Possessions on the West Coast of Africa. Paris, August 10, 1889. Edward Hertslet, The Map of Africa by Treaty, 3 vols., 3rd edition, (London: Harrison and Sons 1909). Vol. 2, pp. 729–36. Also see Great Britain Treaty Series (1890), Command 5905.
3. Agreement between Great Britain and France, for the Demarcation of Spheres of Influence in Africa (Middle and Upper Niger Districts and Gold Coast). Paris, June 26, 1891. Hertslet, Vol. 2, pp. 743–4. Also see Great Britain Treaty Series (1892), Command 6701.
4. Agreement between Great Britain and France, fixing the Boundary between the British and French Possessions to the North and East of Sierra Leone. Paris, January 21, 1895. Also see Great Britain Treaty Series No. 5 (1895), Command 7600.
5. Proces-Verbal signed by the Commissioners for the Demarcation of the Anglo–French Boundary of Sierra Leone, April 9–30, 1896. Hertslet, Vol. 2, pp. 765–79.
6. Exchange of Notes between the British and French Governments for the definitive Settlement of the Boundary between Sierra Leone and French Guinea (Withdrawal of French Claim to Simitia). Paris, June 16, 1898. Hertslet, Vol. 2, pp. 794–6.
7. Proces-Verbaux for the Delimitation of the Anglo–French Frontier from Tembe–Counda (Tembikunda) to the 13th degree of Longitude West of Paris. March 12, 1903. Hertslet, Vol. 2, pp. 809–11 (French).
8. Exchange of Notes between the British and French Governments relative to the Boundary between Sierra Leone and French Guinea, from Tembi Kunda to the 13° of Longitude West of Paris. London, March 22–April 15, 1904. BFSP, Vol. 99 (1905–6), pp. 356–7.
9. Exchange of Notes between Great Britain and France respecting Boundaries between Sierra Leone and French Guinea. London, July 6, 1911. BFSP, Vol. 104 (1911), pp. 149–50. Also see Great Britain Treaty Series No. 9 (1912), Cd. 6101.

10. Agreement between Great Britain and France respecting the Boundary between Sierra Leone and French Guinea. London, September 4, 1913, BFSP, Vol. 106 (1913), pp. 763–5. Also see Great Britain Treaty Series No. 19 (1913), Cd. 7147.

This International Boundary Study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared by The Geographer, Office of the Geographer, Directorate for Functional Research, 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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