



International Boundary Study

No. 140 – November 6, 1973

Benin (*Dahomey*) – Niger Boundary

(Country Codes: BN-NG)

**The Geographer
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BENIN (DAHOMY) – NIGER BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Dahomey–Niger boundary is approximately 165 miles long. It follows the Niger and Mekrou rivers for almost equal distances between the tripoints with Nigeria and Upper Volta.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Dahomey. In 1893 the new colony of Benin was established, with a governor directly responsible to Paris, and the following year the name of the colony was changed to Dahomey. A French decree included Dahomey in the federation of French West Africa in 1899.

In 1946 Dahomey was made an overseas territory and a member of the French Union. On December 4, 1958, the Republic of Dahomey became an autonomous member of the French Community. Dahomey was proclaimed independent on August 1, 1960, following an accord with France.

Niger. Established first as a military territory in French West Africa near the end of 1900, Niger became a colony in 1922. On September 5, 1932, the adjacent colony of Upper Volta was abolished and the cercles of Fada and most of Dori were added to Niger. Upper Volta was reconstituted on September 4, 1947, with its previous territory and boundaries.

Following World War II, Niger was made an overseas territory in 1946, and it became an autonomous member of the French Community in 1958. The Republic of Niger was granted independence from France on August 3, 1960.

III. ALIGNMENT

The alignment of the Dahomey–Niger boundary is determined by a French statute of October 27, 1938,¹ which affords a description of the northern limit of the Dahomean cercle of Kandi adjacent to Niger. From the tripoint with Nigeria, the boundary is delimited as "On the northeast, along the Niger to its junction with the Mekrou. On the northwest, by the boundary between Dahomey and the colony of Niger [which from the junction of the two rivers had been determined previously to follow the Mekrou southward]."² The present

¹ Journal Officiel de l'Afrique Occidentale, Francaise, 1938, p. 1956.

² At this time Dahomey had a common boundary with the colony of Niger from Nigeria to Togo because the former Upper Voltan cercle of Fada had been added to Niger in 1932. The Upper Voltan tripoint was reestablished in 1947 when Upper Volta was reconstituted.

boundary follows the Mekrou upstream to a tripoint with Upper Volta at approximately 11°54'15" N.

Available information does not indicate the position of the boundary in the Niger and Mekrou relative to following the thalwegs of median lines of the rivers. An Anglo–French agreement of October 19, 1906, stated that the Dahomey–Nigeria boundary terminated on the median line of the Niger (the tripoint with the Republic of Niger). Likewise, available information does not indicate specifically the sovereignty of the various islands in the Niger and Mekrou.

MAPS

Institut Geographique National (Francaise): 1955-69; sheets NC-31-XXII (Gaya), ND-31-IV (Sabongari), ND-31-III (Kirtachi), and NC-31-XXI (Kandi).

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