



International Boundary Study

No. 145 – July 17, 1974

**Central African Republic – Republic of the Congo
Boundary**

(Country Codes: CT-CF)

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

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 145 - July 17, 1974

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC –
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE) [CONGO] BOUNDARY**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Boundary Brief	2
II. Historical Background.....	2
III. Alignment.....	3
Maps	4

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC – REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE) [CONGO] BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Central African Republic–Congo boundary extends between the Sangha and Ubangi rivers and is about 290 miles long. For much of this distance, it follows the drainage divide between the Lobaye and the Ibenga. The boundary also follows a long straight-line sector adjacent to the Cameroon tripoint and passes along the Gouga river adjacent to the Zaire tripoint. The line is not demarcated by pillars.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A law of November 30, 1882, provided for the establishment of a government in the French Congo. On December 11, 1888, a decree united the colonies of French Congo and Gabon into a single administrative entity which lasted until 1903, meanwhile, a decree of April 30, 1891, gave the whole the title of French Congo. The territory of Ubangi–Shari was established formally in 1894, and decrees of September 5 and 8, 1900, created the military territory of Chad.

On December 29, 1903, a decree placed the French possessions of central Africa under a commissioner in residence at Brazzaville. The possessions consisted of the colonies of Gabon and Middle Congo, the territory of Ubangi–Shari, and the military territory of Chad. The colony of Ubangi–Shari–Chad was formed in 1906 with Chad under a regional commander at Fort-Lamy (N'Djamena) subordinate to Ubangi–Shari. The commissionership was raised to the status of a governorship in 1908, and by a decree of January 15, 1910, the name of French Equatorial Africa was given to a federation of the three colonies of Gabon, Middle Congo, and Ubangi–Shari–Chad, each of which had its own lieutenant governor. In 1914 Chad was detached from the colony of Ubangi–Shari, and in 1920 the territory of Chad was made a colony in the federation of French Equatorial Africa.

On October 18, 1926, an arrete made changes in the territory of the Middle Congo by transferring the subdistricts of Ngoto and Mbaiki from the district of Bas-Oubangui (later known as Likouala) to the district of Haute-Sanga. For most of its length, the boundary between these districts then followed the Ibenga–Lobaye drainage divide, and had essentially the same alignment as the present-day Central African Republic–Congo boundary.

The Territorial Chief of the Middle Congo created the district of Lobaye from the eastern part of the Haute-Sanga (Mbaiki, Boda, and Bambio) by an arrete of November 12, 1929. Three years later by an arrete of November 18, 1932, the district of Lobaye was detached from the Middle Congo and added to the colony of Ubangi–Shari.

A letter of September 28, 1941,¹ from Lobaye to Likouala contained a number of proposals with respect to the boundary between the two departments. These proposals were accepted by the Prefect of Likouala in a letter dated April 23, 1942. In effect the second letter reiterated the delimitation of 1926 that the boundary followed the drainage divide between the Lobaye and Ibenga. The letters also stated that the boundary continued eastward from the Plaine aux Herbes to the Ubangi river at a point a little south of 3°30' south. The text did not specify how the boundary would reach the Plaine aux Herbes after departing from the Lobaye–Ibenga water divide. Following World War II, the department of Haute-Sanga was transferred from the Middle Congo to Ubangi–Shari completing the alignment of the present-day boundary between the Central African Republic and the Congo.

In 1946 the colonies of French Equatorial Africa were made overseas territories of France and members of the French Union. The federation was dissolved in 1958 when the overseas territories became republics and autonomous members of the French Community. The Central African Republic (formerly Ubangi–Shari) became fully independent on August 13, 1960, and the Congo (formerly Middle Congo) was proclaimed independent on August 15, 1960.

III. ALIGNMENT

In accordance with the French documentation previously discussed in Part II of this study and sheets of the French Institut Geographique National 1:200,000 map series, the following delimitation is given for the Central African Republic–Congo boundary.

From the Cameroon tripoint located on the thalweg² of the Sangha at about 2(13'20"N., the boundary extends northeastward in a straight line for approximately 48 miles to the drainage divide between the Kenie, a tributary of the Motaba which in turn flows into the Ubangi. It then follows generally the Sangha–Ubangi drainage divide northward to the headwaters of the Ibenga.

The boundary next turns eastward and follows the drainage divide first between the Ibenga and the Bodingue, a tributary of the Lobaye, and then that between the Ibenga and the main stream of the Lobaye for a total of about 175 miles. It then continues eastward for a short distance along the drainage divide between the Lobaye and Gouga before passing southeastward between the Lombo and Mbouka, tributaries of the Gouga, to the Gouga. For the remainder of the boundary, it follows the Gouga to its confluence with the Ubangi.³

¹ Letter No. 249/AEF/Oubangui–Chari/Dept. Lobaye.

² A Franco–German convention of April 9, 1908, established the thalweg of the Sangha as the boundary between their respective territories in Central Africa.

³ An agreement of August 14, 1894, between the Congo Free State and France, stated that the boundary between the Congo Free State and the adjacent French territories followed the thalweg of the Ubangi.

MAPS

Carte de l'Afrique de l'Centrale au 1/200,000:

Institut Geographique National (Francaise); 1962–8; sheets NA-33–XVII (Bayanga), NA-33–XXIII (Nola), NA-33–XXIV (Mbaiki), and NA-34–XIX (Zinga).

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. 16.

Government agencies may obtain additional information and copies of the study by calling The Geographer, Room 8742, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520 (Telephone: 632-2021 or 632-2022).