



International Boundary Study

No. 150 – January 13, 1975

Mali – Niger Boundary

(Country Codes: ML-NG)

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

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 150 - January 13, 1975

MALI – NIGER BOUNDARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Boundary Brief.....	2
II. Historical Background.....	2
III. Boundary Treaties	4
IV. Alignment	5

MALI – NIGER BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Mali–Niger boundary extends for approximately 510 miles between the Upper Volta and Algeria tripoints. The line is not demarcated by pillars. Although it follows several valleys, more than two-thirds of the boundary consists of straight-line segments.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A decree of June 16, 1895, established the federation of French West Africa, under the Governor of Senegal as ex officio Governor General. On October 17, 1899, another decree transferred parts of French Sudan to French Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Dahomey. The remainder of French Sudan was divided as follows: (1) two military territories with headquarters at Tombouctou and Bobo Dioulasso respectively, and (2) the civil territory of Upper Senegal and Middle Niger. With headquarters at Zinder, a third military territory was established the following year in the approximate area of present-day Niger. The officers commanding the military territories were directly responsible to the Governor General for military matters and to his civil delegate at Kayes for civil affairs. Upper Senegal and Middle Niger was made a dependency of Senegal and was administered through the civil delegate at Kayes.

In 1902 the Governor of Senegal ceased to be the ipso facto Governor General of French West Africa, and by the same decree, the name of Upper Senegal and Middle Niger was changed to Senegambia and Niger. The entity became the colony of Upper Senegal and Niger in 1904, and included the three previously designated military territories.

Although apparently not ratified, a convention signed at Niamey by the Commanders of Gao and Niamey on August 26, 1909, delimited a line between their respective districts, which later served as the basis for the French Sudan–Niger boundary. Starting from Bentia (app. 15°21'N; 0°46'E.) on the left bank of the Niger river, the line followed the parallel of Bentia eastward to the Vallee de l'Azaouak, the Vallee de l'Azaouak to its confluence with the Ahzar Amachkalo, the Ahzar Amachalo to the meridian separating the wells of Gessao (app. 16°59'N; 4°08'E.) and Mentés (app. 16°59'N; 4°19'E.), and this meridian to the Algeria tripoint.¹

An order of the Governor General on June 22, 1910, detached the military territory of Zinder from the colony of Upper Senegal and Niger. The order also changed the name of the territory to the military territory of Niger and included the districts of Gao and Niamey. On June 21, 1911, a second order attached Gao to the district of Tombouctou.

¹ Maurice Albadie, *La Colonie du Niger* (Paris, 1927), p. 325.

In 1919 the colony of Upper Senegal and Niger was divided to form the colony of Upper Volta. The remainder of Upper Senegal and Niger was renamed the French Sudan on December 4, 1920.

In 1922 Niger achieved the status of a colony, and in 1927 the following territories were transferred from Upper Volta to Niger:

1. The district of Say, except for the canton of Gourmantche–Botou; and
2. The cantons of the district of Dori, which were formerly part of the military territory of Niger in the area of Tera and Yatacala but had been detached from the territory on June 22, 1910.

The French Sudan–Niger boundary was determined between the Sudanese district of Goa and the Nigerien districts of Tillabery and Niamey by the Ansongo Convention of March 5, 1928, subsequently supplemented by the Thierry–Poisson boundary plan of February 28, 1929, and the Laflorencie–Clayssen plan of January 25, 1937, and confirmed by a convention signed at Niamey on April 3, 1939.

In 1946 both French Sudan and Niger were made overseas territories within the French Union, and in 1958 they became autonomous members of the French Community. Sudan and Senegal joined to form the Federation of Mali on April 4, 1959. Senegal seceded from the federation and inaugurated an independent republic on August 20, 1960. Following the breakup of the Federation of Mali, the Republic of Sudan became the Republic of Mali on September 19, 1960. France granted Niger independence on August 3, 1960.

A protocol was signed at Goa on February 27, 1962, by representatives of the Governments of Mali and Niger relative to their common boundary as follows:

The boundaries between the Districts of Ansongo and Menaka (Republic of Mali) and the Districts of Tillabery, Filingue, and Tahoua (Republic of Niger) are and shall remain those established by the Convention of April 3, 1939, concluded at Niamey by Governors Rapenne (Niger) and Desanti (Sudan).

In order to avoid future conflicts and disputes, it was decided to appoint a joint technical commission for the purpose of marking out on the ground the boundary referred to above.²

However, with respect to point E of the Convention of April 3, 1939, (Anderamboukane region), the delegation of the Republic of Niger, while recognizing the entitlement of Mali established by the aforesaid Convention,

² Available information indicates that the boundary has not been demarcated by pillars.

requested that the final decision be made by the two Chiefs of State. The Malian delegation approved that request.

With respect to the boundary between the Districts of Ansongo (Mali) and Tera (Niger), the two District Administrators were empowered by the conference to examine and propose what the line should be.

III. BOUNDARY TREATIES

The convention signed at Niamey on April 3, 1939, delimited the Mali–Niger boundary between the Niger river and the junction of the Vallee de l'Azaouak and the Ahzar Amachkalo as follows:

A. The boundaries of the Colonies of Niger and Sudan between the District of Gao, on one hand, and the Districts of Tillabery and Niamey, on the other hand, shall remain as established by the Ansongo Convention of March 5, 1928, subsequently supplemented by the Thierry–Poisson boundary plan of February 28, 1929, and the Laflourencie–Clayssen plan of January 25, 1937, and shall be determined as follows:

1. Between the Districts of Gao and Tillabery:

a. Points (A) (Departure Points) On the river, between the village of Labbezanga (Gao) and the hamlet of Gaoudel (Tillabery). This point is already marked on the intercolonial road from Niamey to Gao by a concrete ford and a boundary post, establishing the boundary between the two colonies at 6.7 km north of Gaoudel and 3.5 km south of the Labbezanga encampment.

2. Point (B) An imaginary point 5 km south of the Takkao dip (Ansongo).

3. Point (C) An imaginary point 5 km north of the In Atess pond (Tillabery).

4. Point (D) A point at the foot of the north slope of the Tiapsotondi peak (Tillabery).

5. Point (E) An imaginary point 10 km south of the Anderamboukane pond (Gao).

B. Between the Districts of Gao and Niamey

1. The administrative boundary shall be established in the following way:

1. An ideal line starting from a point east of Teguessefan and meeting at the boundary of Tahoua District at the junction of the Azar and Azaouak valleys;

2. An ideal line leading northwest to the rocky peak situated at the southwest tip of the Anderamboukane pond, then leading south to the rocky peak of Mihan;
3. Then west to join the boundary of the Districts of Niamey, Gao, and Tillabery.

They take note of the points established by Lieutenant Maurer and marked out on the ground as they are set forth in the appendix to this Convention.

Although the Mali–Niger boundary has been modified in various places between the Algeria tripoint and the junction of the Vallee de l'Azaouak and the Ahzar Amachkalo, the line apparently follows the general delimitation of the Niamey convention of August 26, 1909.

IV. ALIGNMENT

In accordance with the documentation discussed in Parts II and III of this study and 1:200,000-scale map sheets published by the French Institut Geographique National showing the line, the boundary delimitation is as follows:

Eastward from the Upper Volta tripoint at about 14°59'30"N. and 0°13'30"E., the boundary extends for approximately 54 miles along a series of short straight-line segments to a point at about 14°59'N. and 0°58'E., passing southward of Labbezana, located on an island in the Niger during the process. It next continues northeastward in a straight line for 30 miles to a point 5 kilometers north of In Ates pond at about 15°16'40"N. and 1°18'45"E. and then turns eastward for 79 miles along a straight-line segment to a point on the northern slope of Tiapsa Tondi peak at about 15°21'N. and 2°38'E.

At a slightly different azimuth, a second straight line continues eastward from Tiapsa Tondi for 23 miles to a point 10 kilometers south of Anderamboukane pond at about 15°20'15"N. and 3°01'E.; then the line follows a road northward for six miles to a point on the northwest shore of the pond. From Anderamboukane pond the boundary passes eastward by a straight line for 31 miles, crossing the Vallee de l'Azaouak a short distance north of its junction with the Ahzar Amachkalo to a point in the latter valley at about 15°21'18"N. and 3°29'35"E.

The boundary follows the Ahzar Amachkalo for approximately 54 miles to the Mare d'Etanbo, where the valley branches into two large wadies. The line then follows the more westerly of the wadies for 40 miles, passing to the west of the intersection of the 16th parallel north and the 4th meridian east to about 16°24'N. and 4°12'E. From this point it extends northward along a straight-line segment for 28 miles, crosses several mesas such as the Kahal Batel Bakom and Kahal Sessao for 12 miles, and reaches the 17th parallel at 4°13'E. The boundary then follows the 17th parallel for slightly more than 1.5 miles to 4°14'30"E. It next turns northward along a straight line for 152 miles to the Algeria tripoint at about 19°08'30"N. and 4°14'30"E.

MAPS

Carte de l'Afrique de l'Ouest au 1/200,000: Institut Geographique National (French); sheets north to south NE-31-VXII-XXIII (Tazerzait)-1971, NE-31-IV (Ouaritouloulout)-1970, NE-31-XXII (Tigzezen)-1962, ND-31-XXI (Menaka)-1961, ND-31-XX (In-Deliman)-1961, and ND-31-XIII (Tera)-1960 (reproduced 1969).

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 Office of the Geographer, Room 8742, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520 (Telephone: 632-2021 or 632-2022).