



# **International Boundary Study**

**No. 152 – October 15, 1975**

## **Ethiopia – Kenya Boundary**

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**The Geographer  
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**INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY**

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# ETHIOPIA – KENYA BOUNDARY

## I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Ethiopia–Kenya boundary is approximately 535 miles long and is demarcated throughout. From the Somalia tripoint, it follows the lowest course of the bed of the Daua for about 120 miles, utilizes numerous straight-line segments, and extends across Lake Rudolf for about 24 miles. Northwest of Lake Rudolf, the exact tripoint with Sudan has not been determined finally.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1887 the British East Africa Association obtained a concession to part of the mainland territories of the Sultan of Zanzibar. The following year the association was incorporated under a royal charter as the Imperial British East Africa Company. During 1895 the East Africa Protectorate was created, under the administration of the British Crown, which included the territory between the Indian Ocean and the Rift Valley. On April 1, 1902, the Eastern Province of the Uganda Protectorate was transferred to the East Africa Protectorate by the British Foreign Office.

An Anglo–Ethiopian agreement of December 6, 1907, delimited a boundary between the East Africa Protectorate, Uganda, and the Empire of Ethiopia<sup>1</sup> from the confluence of the Daua and the Ganale–Darya (called Giuba in Somalia) to a point northwest of Lake Rudolf at 6° N. and 35° E.<sup>2</sup>

In June 1920, the East Africa Protectorate was reorganized. The interior became Kenya colony and the coastal strip, leased from the Sultan of Zanzibar, became the protectorate of Kenya. During 1925, Jubaland or Trans-Juba (Giuba), Kenyan territory immediately west of the Giuba, was ceded by the United Kingdom to Italy, and it was incorporated into Italian Somaliland the following year. Thus the Ethiopia–Kenya–Italian Somaliland tripoint was shifted from the confluence of the Daua and the Giuba to a point upstream on the Daua opposite Malca Rie.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1902 Captain Maud, an official of the British East Africa Administration, traversed the area between the British territories and Ethiopia and determined the so-called Maud Line, which subsequently formed the basis of the 1907 agreement. Because the 1907 boundary cut across traditional grazing areas, Major Gwynn, also an official of the British East Africa Administration, proposed another line in 1908 to rectify the problems of the Maud Line. The Gwynn Line was presented unsuccessfully to the Ethiopian Government for approval.

<sup>2</sup> An Anglo–Ethiopian treaty of May 15, 1902, had delimited the Ethiopian–Sudan boundary southward to the point of 6° N. and 35° E.

Rudolf Province was transferred from Uganda to Kenya in 1926. This action automatically made the eastern sector of the Sudan–Uganda boundary<sup>3</sup> between Lake Rudolf and Zulia (mount) the Kenya–Sudan boundary.

In 1946, the British Foreign Office suggested in a note to the Ethiopian Government that a commission be established to make changes in the Ethiopia–Kenya boundary. An Anglo–Ethiopian agreement of September 29, 1947, contained a proposal for the redelimitation of much of the boundary. It was understood, however, that territorial changes would not be made until the line was demarcated.

After a series of conferences, the United Kingdom and Ethiopia agreed to a joint boundary commission with Colonel Clifford in charge. With minor changes and greater detail than the 1947 agreement, the commission completed its demarcation work from 1951–55, but the Ethiopian Government refused to ratify the Clifford Line the following year.

Kenya was granted internal self-government in May 1963 and independence the following December. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian–Kenyan agreement of November 15, 1963, made changes in the 1947 agreement, which were reflected ultimately in the redemarcation of several boundary segments. A treaty signed by Ethiopia and Kenya on June 9, 1970, determines the present-day boundary and abrogates all previous boundary treaties between the two states.

### **III. BOUNDARY TREATIES**

The 1907 agreement delimited the boundary between the British territories and Ethiopia as follows:

...which line, starting from the junction of the River Dawa with the River Ganale, follows the thalweg of the River Dawa [Daua, Dewa] to Ursulli, and from that point follows the tribal limits between the Gurre and the Borama to Gebel Kuffole; from Gebel Kuffole the line passes through the summits of the following hills: Roka, Churre Moyele, Burrole, El Dimtu, Furroli, Dugga Kakulla, Burrchuma, and Afur. From there the line goes to the creek at the south end of Lake Stefanie, thence north-west across Lake Rudolf to the point of the peninsula east of Sanderson Gulf, thence along the west shore of that peninsula to the mouth, or marshes at the mouth of the River Kibish (River Sacchi), thence along the thalweg of this river to latitude 5° 25' north; from there due west to a point 35° 15' longitude east of Greenwich, thence the line follows this degree of longitude to its intersection with latitude 5° 40' north,

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<sup>3</sup> This boundary was the so-called Uganda 1914 Line which left the exact location of the tripoint with Ethiopia somewhat indefinite: "A line beginning at a point, on the shore of Sanderson Gulf, Lake Rudolf, due east of the northernmost point of the northernmost crest of the line of the long spur running north from Mount Lubur [Laburr]; thence following a straight line to the northernmost point of the northernmost crest of the long spur running north from Mount Lubur;..."

and runs from there to the intersection of the 6° north latitude with the 35° of longitude east of Greenwich.

The Anglo–Ethiopian agreement of September 29, 1947, abrogated the provisions of the 1907 agreement and proposed a redelimitation of much of the Ethiopia–Kenya boundary as follows:

From Malka Re along the thalweg of the Daua River to a point at Malka Murri to be decided on the spot by the Commissioners in accordance with the details recorded in the minutes on the subject written at the meeting of 13th May.

Thence in a straight line to El Mole Tiko, leaving the Hara at El Mole Tiko in Kenya, and the Italian road to the Daua River in Ethiopia.

Thence in a straight line to the summit of G. Burduras so that the Police Post and well at El Roba will be in Ethiopia.

Thence to the summit of G. Gamadda.

Thence to the summit of G. Guf Tika leaving Gagabba in British territory.

Thence to the summit of G. Faiyu.

Thence following the watershed between the Gaddaduma and Adde valleys on the one side, and the valleys of Bor and Dembi on the other, to a point on the hill south of the Hara of Dembi (leaving Gaddaduma and Adde in British territory and Bar and Dembi in Ethiopia).

Thence the following the same watershed to the summit of G. Gaiyu.

Thence to the summit of G. Dimbi Dakarra.

Thence to the summit of G. Yabello leaving the wells to Godoma in Ethiopia.

Thence along the valley to the east of the Harbor Police Post.

Thence along the bottom of the valley between the two Moyales to the summit of G. Gaferso.

Thence to the summit of G. Ajali leaving the wells of El Guda in Ethiopia.

Thence to the summit of G. Abo leaving the wells of Waiye in Kenya.

Thence to the summit of G. Somai.

Thence to the summit of G. Uran or to a point near G. Uran so as to leave all the Uran wells in Kenya (but the Golole wells remain in Ethiopia).

Thence to the summit of K. Golja (near Uran).

Thence to the summit of El Dimtu, leaving the wells of Sala, Salole and Dukanle in Ethiopia.

Thence to the summit of G. Furroli.

Thence through the summits of Ulan, Shobel, Dakka Kagalla and Dibban Dibba to the summit of G. Burchuma.

Thence to the summit of G. Afurr.

Thence to the summit of G. El Dima leaving the El Dima wells in Ethiopia.

Thence west along the parallel of approximately  $4^{\circ} 27'$  to a point in Lake Rudolf due north of North Island (approximately  $36^{\circ} 3'$  longitude) leaving the Kenya Police Posts at Sabarre and Banya (Ilola) in Kenya. Sabarre is approximately longitude  $36^{\circ} 47'$ .

Thence in a straight line to a point on the Todenyang–Namuruputh road known as Consul's Rock.

Thence along the road to the junction of the Sudan–Kenya boundary, leaving in Ethiopia Namuruputh (together with an adequate area surrounding the Police Post).

In accordance with the Ethiopia–Kenya agreement of November 15, 1963, the wells of Gadaduma were transferred to Ethiopia in exchange for the wells of Godoma and the Namoruputh area west of Lake Rudolf where a former Kenyan police post had been located.

#### **IV. ALIGNMENT**

The Ethiopia–Kenya treaty of June 9, 1970, affords the demarcation and precise alignment of the Ethiopia–Kenya boundary. Sixteen articles regulate specific matters pertaining to the boundary. Article I states that the boundary shall follow the line contained in "Schedule I - Description of the Boundary." Article II makes reference to the series of 30 Boundary Commission Maps (scale 1:50,000) published as Series SK 73 by the Survey of Kenya, which forms an integral part of the treaty. The tripoint with Sudan has not been determined finally, and Article VI states that beyond Point (pillar) D.23 of Schedule I the line is undetermined.

Schedule I delimits the line from the tripoint with Somalia to pillar No. 1 of the Ethiopia–Kenya boundary demarcation as follows:

The boundary between Ethiopia and Kenya starts from a point on the lowest point of the course of the Dawa River opposite Boundary Pillar No. 1 of the boundary between Kenya and Somalia, situated on the right bank of the river about 650 metres north-west of the Police Post on the Mendera–Dolo–Gedo road of the Malka Rie area. From this point the line follows the lowest point of the course of the river up-stream as far as a point opposite Boundary Pillar No. 1 at Malka Mari;...

From Malka Mari the boundary is demarcated by approximately 650 main, secondary, or mountain pillars to No. D.23 "situated about 200 metres to the south of the south-eastern end of the rocky ridge called Okolon." In addition numerous natural and reference pillars have been utilized.

The boundary pillars have been numbered in various series. It should be noted that the boundary has been redemarcated in some segments and that there are no pillars bearing the number A. 1 to A. 25, A. 111 to A. 115, B. 16 to B. 22, and D. 4 to D. 11. For most pillars Schedule I includes the number, type, altitude, bearing to the next pillar, distance to the next pillar, and a brief description of the site or location. The majority of the pillars are intervisible, and a lane has been cleared along the line for width of four meters. Schedule II assigns the responsibility for the maintenance of specific boundary pillars between Ethiopia and Kenya.

Pursuant to Article VIII of the treaty, Annex I contains six articles relating to trans-frontier and grazing right along the boundary.

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Agreement between the United Kingdom and Ethiopia relative to the Frontiers between British East Africa, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, December 6, 1907. Great Britain Treaty Series No. 27 (1908), Cd. 4318.
2. Exchange of Notes constituting an Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ethiopia amending the description of the Kenya/Ethiopia Boundary. Addis Ababa, September 29, 1947. Great Britain Treaty Series No. 18 (1948), Cmd. 7374.
3. Treaty between the Empire of Ethiopia and the Republic of Kenya respecting the Boundary between the two Countries. Mombasa, June 9, 1970.

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.

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