



# **International Boundary Study**

**No. 3 (Revised) – December 15, 1978**

## **Chad – Libya Boundary**

**(Country Codes: CD-LY)**

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

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## CHAD–LIBYA BOUNDARY

### I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Chad–Libya boundary extends for its entire length of approximately 1,055 kilometers (656 miles) through the barren, sparsely populated Sahara Desert. It is delimited by two geodesic lines as follows: (1) a line about 113 kilometers (70 miles) long between the Niger tripoint and the intersection of the 16th meridian and the Tropic of Cancer; and (2) a line about 942 kilometers (586 miles) long between the intersection of the 16th meridian and the Tropic of Cancer and the Sudanese tripoint. The boundary alternately crosses rocky, pebbly, and sandy surfaces with dunes in places.

### II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The present-day territory of Libya came under Turkish suzerainty as part of the Ottoman Empire in the latter half of the 16th century. In the decade following 1890, French military forces gradually extended their control to the lands south and east of Lake Chad.

On June 14, 1898, France and the United Kingdom signed a convention delimiting their spheres of influence east of the Niger river. Supplementary to the 1898 convention, an Anglo-French declaration of March 21, 1899, indicated that the French zone was delimited to the northeast and east as follows:<sup>1</sup>

... by a line which shall start from the point of intersection of the Tropic of Cancer with the 16th degree of longitude east of Greenwich (13°40' east of Paris), shall run thence to the south-east until it meets the 24th degree of longitude east of Greenwich (21°40' east of Paris).

Italy was interested in obtaining territory in North Africa at this time. In an exchange of notes with France on November 1, 1902, Italy concurred in the line specified by the 1899 Anglo-French declaration as the northern limit of French expansion.

In 1903 the French Congo consisted of the colonies of Gabon and Middle Congo, the territory of Ubangi-Chari, and the military territory of Chad. The colony of Ubangi-Chari-Chad was formed in 1906, with Chad under a regional commander at Fort-Lamy subordinate to Ubangi-Chari. The commissioner general of French Congo was raised to the status of a governor general in 1908, and by a decree the name of French Equatorial Africa was given to a federation of the three colonies, each of which had its

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<sup>1</sup> Convention between the United Kingdom and France. Delimitation of the Respective Possessions to the West of the Niger, and of their Respective Possessions and Spheres of Influence to the East of that River. Signed at Paris on June 14, 1898. Together with a Declaration completing the same. Signed at London on March 21, 1899. [Ratifications for both the convention and the declaration were exchanged in Paris on June 13, 1899.] U.K. Treaty Series No. 15 (1899), c. 9334. Also see British and Foreign State Papers (BFSP), Vol. 91 (1898–1899), pp. 38–54 and 55–57.

own lieutenant governor. In 1914 Chad was detached from the colony of Ubangi-Chari and made a separate territory; full colonial status was conferred six years later. In the meantime, during September 1911, Italy occupied the vilayet of Tripoli, and on October 18, 1912, by the treaty of Ouchy, Turkey recognized Italian sovereignty in the territory known officially as Libya after 1934.

The boundary as given in the Anglo-French declaration of 1899 did not indicate the point of intersection of the line with the 24th meridian. A convention signed by France and the United Kingdom on September 8, 1919, determined the point of the intersection to be at 19°30' north latitude.

In 1923 the boundary between the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Chad was surveyed by a joint Anglo-French commission, and a protocol was signed in London on January 10, 1924, relative to the work of the commission. The survey was conducted northward along the 24th meridian to 19°30' north latitude, where a pile of stones was erected. On March 18, 1931, the Tibesti area was transferred from Niger to Chad.

The boundary between the Tropic of Cancer and the present Sudan tripoint as established by the Anglo-French accords of 1899 and 1919 did not originally separate Libya on the north from French territory on the south throughout its entire length. After the westward extension of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan–Egypt boundary along the parallel of 22° North to the intersection of the line between the Tropic of Cancer and the meridian 24° East, the northwest corner of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan formed a triangular parcel of land with its apex pointing westward.

Thus the southeastern segment of the line between the Tropic of Cancer and the Sudan tripoint formed the boundary between the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan on the north and French territory on the south; the northwestern segment of this line separated Libya on the north from French territory on the south. This situation existed until the Italian–British–Egyptian Agreement of July 29, 1934, transferred this triangular parcel of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan territory, known as the Sarra Triangle, to Libya.

A Franco-Italian Agreement of January 7, 1935, placed the French Equatorial–Libya boundary southward of the recognized boundary of that time, but the agreement was never ratified. The 1935 boundary in its entirety would have extended from south of Tummo on the French West Africa (Niger)–Libya boundary southeastward to the French Equatorial Africa tripoint (Chad) and thence in the same general direction across the Tibesti to a new Sudan tripoint of 18°45' North and 24° East.

Italy administered Libya as a colony until World War II. From 1943 to 1951, the two Libyan provinces of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were under British administration, and the French controlled the province of Fezzan located in the Sahara. In accordance with the terms of the 1947 peace treaty with the Allies, Italy relinquished title to Libya and agreed to accept the recommendation of the UN General Assembly with respect to Libya's future status. On November 21, 1949, the UN General Assembly passed a

resolution recommending that Libya become independent before January 1, 1952. Libya declared its independence on December 24, 1951.

In accordance with Article 3 of the Franco-Libyan Treaty of August 10, 1955, the contracting parties recognized the French Equatorial Africa–Libya boundary, as fixed in the international acts listed in Annex I, on the date of the establishment of the United Kingdom of Libya (December 24, 1951). Annex I contains the following acts applicable to the Chad–Libya boundary: (1) Anglo-French Convention of June 14, 1898; (2) Anglo-French Declaration of March 21, 1899; (3) Franco-Italian Agreement of November 1, 1902; and (4) Anglo-French Convention of September 8, 1919.

Chad was made an overseas territory following World War II, became an autonomous republic within the French Community on November 28, 1958, and declared its independence on August 11, 1960.

### **III. ALIGNMENT**

#### **Niger Tripoint to Tropic of Cancer**

The geodesic line between the Niger tripoint (23°N, 15°E) and the intersection of the 16th meridian with the Tropic of Cancer is a conventional boundary.<sup>1</sup> There is no known international treaty delimiting the boundary, and lines shown on early 20th century maps apparently were based on the southern limits of Turkish vilayets.

#### **Tropic of Cancer to Sudanese Tripoint**

The geodesic line between the intersection of the 16th meridian with the Tropic of Cancer and the Sudanese tripoint on the 24th meridian is determined by the Anglo-French convention of September 8, 1919, as follows:<sup>2</sup>

It is understood that nothing in this Convention prejudices the interpretation of the Declaration of the 21st March, 1899, according to which the words in Article III "... shall run thence to the south-east until it meets the 24th degree of longitude east of Greenwich (21°40' east of Paris)" are accepted as meaning "... shall run thence in a south-easterly direction until it meets the 24th degree of longitude east of Greenwich at the intersection of that degree of longitude with parallel 19°30' of latitude."

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<sup>1</sup> This sector of the Chad–Libya boundary is part of a geodesic line which extends from an escarpment south of Tummo to the intersection of the 16th meridian with the Tropic of Cancer. The part of the line from south of Tummo to the Chadian tripoint is approximately 89 kilometers (55 miles) long and delimits a sector of the Libya–Niger boundary.

<sup>2</sup> Convention between the United Kingdom and France Supplementary to the Declaration of March 21, 1899, and the Convention of June 14, 1898, Respecting Boundaries West and East of the Niger. Signed at Paris on September 8, 1919, U.K. Treaty Series No. 6 (1921), Cmd. 1239. Also see BFSP, Vol. 112 (1919), pp. 722–724.

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. A-16.

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