

## GEOGRAPHY

**Location:** East Africa (Also, referred to as the Horn of Africa)

### Geographical Coordinates:

The Republic of Somaliland is situated in the Horn of Africa. The territory of the Republic of Somaliland covers the same area as that of the former Somaliland Protectorate and is located between Latitude 8' to 11' 30' north of the equator and Longitude 42' 45 to 49' East; and consists of the land, islands, and territorial water above and below the surface, the airspace, and the continental shelf.

### Land boundaries:

The Republic of Somaliland is bounded by the Red Sea - Gulf of Aden – to the north; Somalia to the east; the Federal Republic of Ethiopia to the south and the west; and the Republic of Djibouti to the northwest. Somaliland is positioned along the Gulf of Aden near the entrance to the Bab al-Mandeb, a major sea-lane through which almost one-third of the world's shipping passes.<sup>2</sup>

### Border Treaties and Demarcations

The country's boundaries were amply defined by, respectively, the Anglo-French Treaty of 1888, Anglo- Italian Protocol of 1894, and the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1897. The Djibouti–Somaliland boundary was established by the Anglo–French agreement of February 2–9, 1888, as follows:

<sup>3</sup> *The protectorates exercised, or to be exercised by France and Great Britain shall be separated by a straight line starting from a point on the coast situated opposite the wells of Hadou [at Loyada], and leading through the said wells to Abassouen; from Abassouen the line shall follow the caravan road as far as Bia-Kabouba, and from this latter point it shall follow the caravan route from Zeyla [Zeila] to Harrar [Harer] passing by Gildessa [Jaldesa]. It is expressly agreed that the use of the wells of Hadou shall be common to both parties.*

The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1897 (sometimes called the Rodd Treaty) was an agreement negotiated between diplomat Sir Rennell Rodd of Great Britain and Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia primarily involving border issues between Ethiopia and British Somaliland. It was signed on 14 May 1897 in order to “strengthen and render more effective and profitable the friendship between the two kingdoms”, according to its preamble.<sup>4</sup>

The Treaty consisted of several articles, the second of which defined the geographical boundaries between Ethiopia and British Somaliland. Between 1932 and 1935,<sup>5</sup> an Anglo–Ethiopian boundary commission demarcated the British Somaliland–Ethiopia boundary. The tripoint — Madaha Djalelo — was decided from the context of the Anglo- French agreement of 1888, the Ethiopian–French Convention of 1897, and the Anglo–Ethiopian treaty of 1897.

The eastern border with Somalia took shape through a series of treaties known as the British-Italian Protocol between 1891 and 1894. The delimitation of the ‘spheres of influence of Great Britain and Italy in Eastern Africa’ was signed at Rome, Italy, on the 24th March, and the 15th April 1891.

## The Plenipotentiaries representing the two sides decided that:

*The boundary of the spheres of influence of Great Britain and of Italy in the regions of the Gulf of Aden shall be constituted by a line which, starting from Gildessa and running towards the 8th degree of north latitude, skirts the north-east frontier of the territories of the Girrhi, Bertiri, and Ber Ali tribes, leaving to the right the villages of Gildessa, Darmi, Gig-giga, and Milmil. On reaching the 8th degree of north latitude the line follows that parallel as far as its intersection with the 48th degree of longitude east of Greenwich. It then runs to the intersection of the 9th degree of north latitude with the 49th degree of longitude east of Greenwich, and follows that meridian of longitude to the sea.*<sup>6</sup>

In 1929 the two governments of Britain and Italy decided to carry out the actual demarcation of the two areas under their respective influence and work commenced in September of that year.<sup>7</sup> The British government proposed that a more accurate mapping, following the lines previously agreed upon, be done initially from the air which the Italian government agreed to.

**Country Area:** 110,000 Square Miles or 177,000 Square Km.

**Area - comparative:** An area slightly larger than England and Wales combined. It is about the size of Uruguay (177,125 Sq. Km) which ranks 89th in a list of 195 world nations<sup>8</sup>.

**Topography:** Somaliland consists of three topographic zones: coastal plain (Guban), mountain range (Oogo) and plateau (Hawd). The Coastal plain "Guban" is between the sea and the mountain range known as "Golis". This is a narrow and dry strip of land the coast and is very hot hence the name 'Guban', meaning "the burnt" in Somali.

Guban gets narrower towards the East and wider towards the West. The Golis range (Oogo) is the escarpment south of Guban zone and runs along the coastal lines in the North of the country, where the highest peak known as Surad rises up to 2,633 m (7000 ft) above sea Level..

**Coastline:** The Somaliland coast lies north of the equator, between latitude 10.0N and latitude 11.0N and between longitudes 43. 15/E and longitude 49.0E in the Gulf of Aden. It stretches 856km with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) area of approximately 70, 000 sq.km.

**Maritime Zone:** The four main zones Somaliland has an international right to command are: (a) a territorial sea that extends twelve nautical miles seaward from delineated baselines; (b) a contiguous zone that extends beyond the seaward limit of territorial sea to a distance of 24 nm; (c) a continental shelf that extends 200 nautical miles seaward from its baselines, subject to delimitation with states having overlapping maritime claims in accordance with international law; and (d) An exclusive economic zone that equally extends 200 nautical miles seaward from its baselines subject to delimitation with states having overlapping maritime claims in accordance with international law.