

Administrative Borders in Uganda – a short overview

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Uganda has a series of ADM-Level. In accordance with GNA, Statoids and the two “Uganda District”-booksⁱ, UCDP decided to use what is generally called “Districts” as ADM1, and what is called “County” as ADM2. This means that there is a level above the ADM1 (the four regions) and at least two levels below the ADM2 (sub-counties, localities). Over time, there was a considerable amount of changes of ADM borders, mostly due to the creation of new ADM1s. Annoyingly, Google Earth does not show the current ADM1 (likely shows them as of 2004). A pdf map from the UN for the ADM1 (as of 2002, most recent UN map) and the Google-Earth-layer¹ for the ADM2 (equally not entirely up to date) is saved in the map folder (GISproject -> Gazetteer -> Maps -> Uganda). In addition, I saved a series of scans from the 2005-handbooks (map of Uganda, and some of the more contested districts)

ADM1 – Districts of Uganda

Since 1989, big changes happened in 1990/1991, 1997, in 2000/2001 and between 2005-2007. Between those “big moments”, smaller changes sporadically appeared; as a result every geocoder must carefully check the ADMs over time. The following “change history” is largely based on Statoids, yet carefully checked against other sources, mainly the two Uganda-District handbooks.

1990: Kalangala district split from Masaka.

1991: Kibaale district split from Hoima, while 314 km.² of territory was transferred from Masindi to Hoima; Kiboga split from Mubende; Kisoro split from Kabale; Pallisa split from Tororo.

-> Note that many of those new Districts consist of only one county (ADM2); those changes affect southern Sudan.

1993 (handbook) or 1994 (statoids): Ntungamo district formed by taking parts of Bushenyi and Mbarara. It is difficult to find out which parts were taken, since possibly the three counties of Ntungamo were created together with the new district.

-> Note: I could not resolve the disagreement over the date, and decided to code this change effective as of 01-01-1994.

1997-03-20: Adjumani district split from Moyo; Bugiri split from Iganga (B. before was a county of I.); Busia split from Tororo; Katakwi split from Soroti; Nakasongola split from Luwero; Sembabule split from Masaka.

¹ Be aware that there are little mistakes in the google earth plug in. E.g. in Masindi district, there are four counties and not, as in the plug in, three. (Bujene county is smaller, and Buliisa county is missing), see scan of map on server)

-> Note that those changes affect mainly the east of the country (east and south east of Lake Kyoga), exception: Mojo/Adjumani (North) and Seambule/Masaka (Southwest).

2000-07-01: Kamwenge (Kabarole), Kayunga (Mukono), Kyenjojo (Kabarole), Mayuge (Iganga), Pader (Kitgum), Sironko (Mbale), Wakiso (Mpigi), and Yumbe (Arua)

->In brackets are the District where they are split away from

2001-07-01: Kaberamaido (Soroti), Kanungu (Rukungiri) and Nakapiripirit (Moroto).

2005-07-01: Fourteen new districts created: Amolatar (by taking Kyoga county from Lira); Amuria district (taking Amuria and Kapelebyong counties from Katakwi); Budaka district (taking Budaka county and Kakoro, Kabwangasi, Kirika and Kadama sub-counties from Pallisa); Bukwo district (taking Kongasis county from Kapchorwa); Butaleja district (taking Bunyole county from Tororo); Ibanda district (taking Ibanda county from Mbarara); Kaabong district (taking Dodoth county from Kotido); Isingiro district (taking Kabingo and Bukanga counties from Mbarara); Kaliro district (taking Bulamogi county from Kamuli); Kiruhura (aka Kiruhuura) district (taking Kazo and Nyabushozi counties from Mbarara); Koboko district (taking Koboko county from Arua); Manafwa district (taking Bubulo and Manjiya counties from Mbale); Mityana district (taking Mityana and Busujju counties from Mubende); and Nakaseke district (taking Nakaseke county from Luwero).

->Note that some of the above mentioned districts and its creation are contested, depending on source. I checked the existence of all those districts with the website of the Parliament of Uganda (List of MPs, which are elected in the Districts), and all the above listed districts exist today (obviously, this says nothing about the date of creation, but since the dispute in the sources is about whether the districts were created or not, I assume that those sources arguing for the creation also have the date right).

2006-07-01: Seven new districts created: Abim district (taking Labwor county from Kotido); Buliisa district (taking Buliisa county from Masindi); Namutumba district (taking Busiki county from Iganga); Dokolo district (taking Dokolo county from Lira); Amuru district (taking Kilak and Nwoya counties from Gulu); Nyadri district (taking Maracha and Terego counties from Arua); Oyam district (taking Oyam county from Apac).

2007-07-01: Three new districts created: Bukedea district (taking Bukedea county from Kumi); Bududa district (Manjiya county from Manafwa); Lyantonde district (taking Kabula county from Rakai). ->those districts are also contested, but as above, checked against Parliament website, existence decided to be credible.

ADM2 – Counties of Uganda

In contrast to the ADM1, it seems as if the Counties hardly changed. The main changes on the ADM2 level are in connection to the above mentioned change of ADM1. (The belonging to ADM1 changes, yet not the county borders or names)

Nevertheless, Statoids mentions some change in ADM2, all to have happened between January 2000 and September 2002. Since no more precise dates are available, I coded those changes to take effect as of 2001. The following is a list of changes based on statoids, yet revised with the two handbooks (it seems as if statoids reports changes that never happened...)

Adjumani district: the five counties (Adropi, Ciforo, Dzaipi, Ofua, and Pekelle) merged into one (East Moyo).

Arua district: Vurra county was created.

Kapchorwa district: Bukedea, Kumi, and Ngora counties were replaced by Kongasis, Kween, and Tingey counties.

Kisoro district: Kisoro County merged with Bufumbira.

Sembabule district: Lwemiyaga county split from Mawogola.

Tororo district: Tororo county split from Tororo municipality.

ⁱ Mugisha Odrek Rwabwoogo, 2002 (5th edition), "Uganda Districts Information Handbdoock – 2002 Edition, Fountain Publishers, Kampala, Uganda.
Fountain Publishers (eds), 2005, "Uganda Districts Information Handbook – Expanded Edition 2005-2006", Fountain Publishers, Kamoakam, Uganda