

THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

COUNTRIES, GEOGRAPHY, FACTS, HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

ORANGEWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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INTRODUCTION

Brief Description

The Great Lakes Region of Africa includes the countries of Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania. The Swahili language is the most commonly spoken language of the area. The area has a high population – estimated to be 107 million people. Historically this region was a one large area, but then high population and the agricultural surplus in the region brought about the organization into a number of small states. These were organized into monarchies, the most powerful of which were Buganda, Bunyoro, Rwanda and Burundi.

Being the long-sought source of the Nile, the region was of great interest to Europeans. Missionaries were the first to arrive in the region in any numbers, opening it up to later colonization by European countries.

Colonization lasted until the mid-20th century. After independence the region was seen as an area of great potential, however the ensuing decades were consumed in civil war and conflict, which only Tanzania escaped.

The United Nations has great involvement in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, providing relief from famine and epidemics as well as managing refugee camps.

Information Modules

This document was assembled for learning about The Great Lakes Region of Africa. Learning about this region is a large undertaking, encompassing many types of information.

The information has been printed in a single document and also in modules. Shortened versions of some of the modules are also available.

The set of modules includes:

1. Indigenous Tribes of the Region
2. Country Facts for Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo, Tanzania and Uganda
3. Colonialism and Independence
4. Ethnic Conflict and Civil War
5. Refugee Camps

The Great Lakes Region document will be revised and reprinted as corrections/clarifications and new types of information are added.

INTRODUCTION

The source for much of the information in these modules is:

Exploring Africa, Michigan State University Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION



This map of Africa is included to show the location of the countries in the Great Lakes Region relative to other countries. In the current document we focus on the countries of Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Tanzania. Notice how small the countries of Rwanda and Burundi are relative to their neighbors.

INTRODUCTION

INDIGENOUS TRIBES OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

Overview

The three primary indigenous tribes in the Great Lakes Region are the Twa, the Hutus, and the Tutsi.

For interesting descriptions and introductions to the tribes of the Great Lakes Region, visit the Apple Podcasts titled “Tribes of Africa”. There are individual podcasts for the Tutsi, Twa and Hutu tribes.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/tribes-of-africa/id1514392237>

The Abatutsi of the Great Lakes Region: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-abatutsi-of-the-african-great-lakes-region/id1514392237?i=1000486501832>

The Twa: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-twa-tribe/id1514392237?i=1000555699977>

Abahutu of the Bantu Ethnic Group: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/abahutu-of-the-bantu-ethnic-group/id1514392237?i=1000478489648>

The Twa are generally assumed to be the oldest surviving population of the Great Lakes region. Current populations are found in the states of Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the eastern portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2000 they numbered approximately 80,000 people, making them a significant minority group in these countries. While the Batwa adapted to the changes in their environment by adopting new economic activities and thus traditions and identities, they continue to face challenges to their survival.

The Hutus are the largest of the four main population divisions in Burundi and Rwanda. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, 84% of Rwandans and 85% of Burundians are Hutu. They are also known as the Abahutu, Bahutu or Wahutu. They mainly live in Rwanda, Burundi, and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where they form one of the principal ethnic groups alongside the Tutsi and the Twa. Traditionally, Hutu life centered on small-scale agriculture

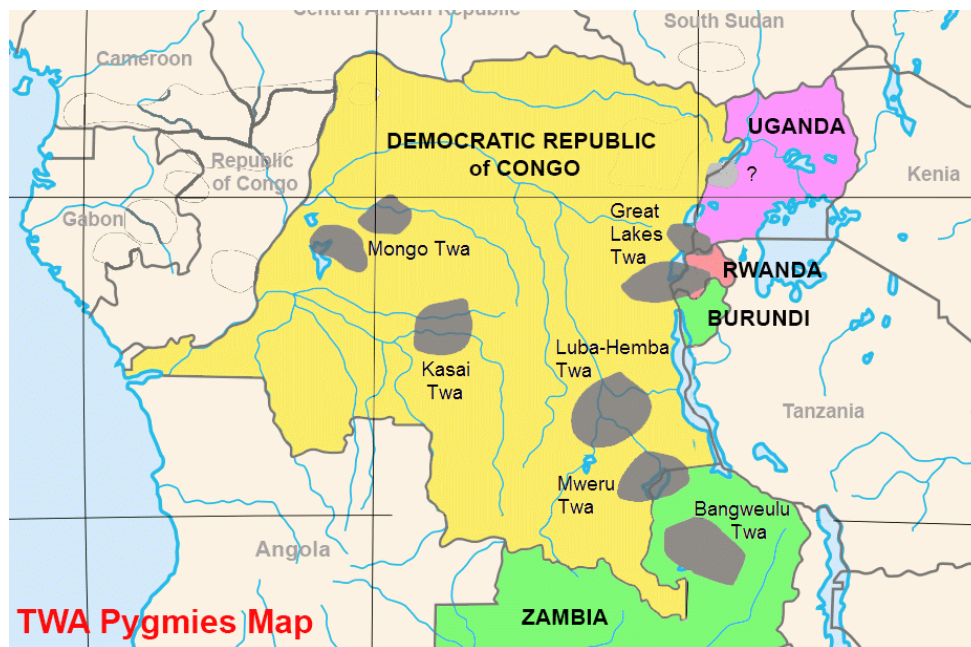
Rwanda, Burundi, and the northeastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are home to the Tutsi people. In the DRC, the Tutsi live near the city of Bukavu in the Mulenge region. Here, they are known as Ban-ya-mu-lenge. Cattle herding carries a higher status among the Tutsi than farming.

More About the Indigenous Tribes

Twa

The Great Lakes Twa, also known as Batwa, Abatwa or Ge-Sera, are a Bantu ethnic group native to the African Great Lakes region on the border of Central and East Africa.

Apart from anthropological literature, the term "Twa" generally refers to the Twa of the Great Lakes region. There are a number of other Twa populations in the Congo forest, as well as southern Twa populations living in swamps and deserts where there has never been forest, but these are little known in the West. Traditionally, the Twa have been semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers of the mountain forests living in association with agricultural villages.



History

When the Hutu, a Bantu-speaking people, arrived in the region, they subjugated 'bush people' (hunter-gatherers) they called *Abatwa*, which are generally assumed to be the ancestors of the Twa today, though it may be that the Twa arrived alongside the Hutu, and either were a distinct people from the original inhabitants, or have mixed ancestry. Around the 15th century AD, the pastoralist Tutsi arrived and dominated both the Hutu and the Twa, creating a three-caste society with the Tutsi governing, the Hutu the bulk of the population, and the Twa at the bottom of the social scale, simultaneously despised, admired, and feared. For several hundred years, the Twa have been a small minority in the area, currently 1% in Rwanda and Burundi, and have had little political role, though there were at times Twa in the government of the Tutsi king.

INDIGENOUS TRIBES

Unusually for Pygmies, who generally trade meat for agricultural products, iron, and pottery, the Twa are themselves potters.

The Twa are often omitted in discussions about the conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis, which reached its height in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. About 30% of the Twa population of Rwanda died in the violence.

The Twa of Uganda lived in the mountains of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest until 1992, when it was made a World Heritage Site for the endangered mountain gorilla. At that time they were expelled from the forest and placed in settlements.

Current situation

Today, much of the available land, apart from areas reserved for wildlife conservation and environmental protection, is under cultivation. Unable to access their ancestral lands and practice traditional cultural and economic activities, the Batwa now perceive their pottery as an expression of their identity. Although it is no longer profitable since industrialized pottery became cheaply available, the Batwa continue to produce traditional pottery for its cultural and social significance. Due to clearing of the forests for agriculture, logging, development projects, and the creation of conservation areas, the Twa have been forced to leave the mountain forests and establish new homes. As they seek to develop new means of sustaining their communities (such as agriculture and livestock development) most are currently landless and live in poverty. The ancestral land rights of the Twa have never been recognized by their governments and no compensation has been made for lands lost.

Twa children have little access to education and their communities have limited representation in local and national government. Due to their pygmy ancestry, they continue to suffer ethnic prejudice, discrimination, violence, and general exclusion from society. Batwa men struggle with alcoholism, known to occur in communities facing cultural collapse as men can no longer carry out traditional roles and provide for families. By 2007, begging was the primary source of livelihood for 40 percent of the Batwa in Rwanda.

While the Batwa adapted to the changes in their environment by adopting new economic activities and thus traditions and identities, they continue to face challenges to their survival. Today, much of the available land, apart from areas reserved for wildlife conservation and environmental protection, is under cultivation. Unable to access their ancestral lands and practice traditional cultural and economic activities, the Batwa now perceive their pottery as an expression of their identity. Although it is no longer profitable since industrialized pottery became cheaply available, the Batwa continue to produce traditional pottery for its cultural and social significance. Not only do they consider it an ancestral tradition, but also it carries a social importance in their current day society. The process of digging the clay and carrying it to their settlements allows for socialization and a sense of community among Batwa potters. However, in Rwanda the shared access marshes where Batwa harvest clay under an informal communal tenure system are fast becoming collectivized rice-growing plantations due to a 2005 land policy

change. The Batwa face another crisis as they lose another occupation that defines Batwa identity and provides social livelihood.

Tutsi

Rwanda, Burundi, and the northeastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are home to the Tutsi people. In the DRC, the Tutsi live near the city of Bukavu in the Mulenge region. Here, they are known as Ban-ya-mu-lenge.

The Tutsi speak a Central Bantu language called Kin yar-wanda in Rwanda, and Kirundi in Burundi. Both are dialects of the same language. Like other Bantu languages, both use nouns with prefixes. For example, the word Banyamulenge ("Ba-nya-mulenge") can be divided into parts. The prefix "banya" means "people"; "Mulenge" is the name of a region. The whole word means "people of Mulenge."

Many Rwandese and Burundians speak French, the language of their former Belgian rulers. French is used in school. Tutsi who have been refugees in Uganda may also speak English. Personal Tutsi names may be based on events, poetry, or beliefs. For example, the name Ndagijimana means "God is my herder." Ha-ki-zum-wami means "only the king can save" while Muvu-nan-yambo means "the defender of noble cows."

Tutsi folklore includes poetry, proverbs, folk tales, riddles, and myths. Many believe they were descended from a mythical king named Gihanga. Some Tutsis used to know the names of their ancestors at least six generations back.

Today most Tutsi people in Rwanda and Burundi are Christians. However, some traditional beliefs survive. These include the belief in a distant creator called Imaana who has the power to grant wealth and fertility. The king also shares in this power which can be seen in his sacred fire, royal drums, and rituals. Spirits of dead relatives, called abazima, carry messages between Imaana and the human world. However, the abazima may bring bad luck to those who do not respect them. People offer gifts to protect themselves from the abazima. They also try to learn the spirits' wishes by seeing fortune-tellers.

Tutsi marriage is made legal by payment of the bride price. The groom's family pays the bride's family because they are losing her labor. There is no ritual other than marriage to mark the beginning of adulthood. Tutsi and Hutu families are patrilineal. In the past, marriage in Rwanda and Burundi was based on the relations between the two families. Today most Tutsis choose the person they will marry. In the past, Tutsi men and women wore robes brought in from the African coast. A woman's costume included a white robe and white headbands. Today Western-style clothing is usually worn. Women wear dresses and scarves made from the printed cloth popular in East Africa. Men wear shirts and trousers.

INDIGENOUS TRIBES

Alcoholic beverages are made from bananas and sorghum. People drink them on special occasions.

Royal dancing and drumming groups perform for the Tutsi kings of Rwanda and Burundi. For rituals, two dozen tall drums are placed around a central drum. The drummers move around the drums in a circle with each one taking a turn beat the central drum. This style of drumming is still practiced.

Cattle herding carries a higher status among the Tutsi than farming. In the past, there was a special class of herders, called abashumba, who took care of the king's prize cattle known as inyambo.

For sport, a game called igisoro is popular with children and adults. It is played on a wooden board with holes for beads or stones. Players line up their pieces in rows and capture as many of their opponents' pieces as they can. In other parts of Africa, the game is known as mancala.

Hutu

The Hutus are the largest of the four main population divisions in Burundi and Rwanda. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, 84% of Rwandans and 85% of Burundians are Hutu. They are also known as the Abahutu, Bahutu or Wahutu. They mainly live in Rwanda, Burundi, and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where they form one of the principal ethnic groups alongside the Tutsi and the Twa.

Traditionally, Hutu life centered on small-scale agriculture and social organization was based on the clan, with kings known as bahinza ruling over limited domains.

Hutus speak Rwanda-Rundi as their native tongue, which is a member of the Bantu subgroup of the Niger–Congo language family. Rwanda-Rundi is subdivided into the Kinyarwanda and Kirundi dialects, which have been standardized as official languages of Rwanda and Burundi respectively. It is also spoken as a mother tongue by the Tutsi and Twa.

Additionally, a small portion of Hutu speak French, the other official language of Rwanda and Burundi, although the population is dwindling given the poor relations between Rwanda and France.

Ancient Hutu beliefs involve praying to the Hutu god, Imaana, who had many human qualities. According to legend, Imaana meant well, but he was distant from the people. The abazima were the spirits of the ancestors. They could become angry and bring bad luck to the living. Gifts were offered to the abazima for protection. People also contacted them through fortune-tellers.

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Hutu culture involves telling proverbs, folktales, riddles, and myths. A popular Hutu folk hero is Samadari. He broke the rules everyone else had to follow and could make fun of the rich and powerful as well as insult the wealthy cattle owners.

When a Hutu baby is born, the baby and mother stay alone in their house for seven days. A naming ceremony is held on the seventh day. Children who live nearby take part, and food is served.

Hutu Marriages are legal when the man's family pays the bride price to the woman's family. It is paid in cattle, goats, and beer. For the ceremony, the bride's body is covered with herbs and milk to make it pure.

Death is marked by prayers, speeches, and rituals. Close family members do not take part in certain activities. After a death, they do not work in the fields or have sexual relations during the period of mourning. When the family declares that the mourning period is over, they hold a ritual feast.

Traditional Hutu houses are huts made from wood, reeds, and straw and are shaped like beehives. High hedges serve as fences. In recent years, modern houses have been built with modern materials.

In the past, Hutus wore skirts of cloth made from tree bark, and cloaks made of animal hides. These have long been replaced by Western-style clothing. However, handmade beaded necklaces and bracelets are still worn.

The staple foods of the Hutu include beans, corn, millet, sorghum, sweet potatoes, and cassava. Milk and beef are important foods. Goat meat and goat milk are eaten by people of low social status. Meals are often planned around a family's work schedule. An alcoholic drink made from bananas and sorghum grain is saved for special occasions.

Music, dancing, and drumming are important parts of rural Hutu life. Men and women have different dances. The dancers move their arms and bodies quickly. They also stomp their feet in time to the music. People sing alone or in a chorus which include hunting songs, lullabies, and songs known as ibicuba which is in praise of cattle.

Indigenous peoples in Uganda

Indigenous peoples in Uganda include traditional hunter/gatherers and pastoralists. These peoples are not specifically recognized as indigenous by the government. Former Hunter-gatherers include the:

- Benet, who number around 20,000 people, live in the north-eastern part of Uganda
- Batwa (or Twa), numbering around 6,700 persons, who live primarily in the south-western region of Uganda

INDIGENOUS TRIBES

The Batwa were dispossessed of their ancestral land when the Bwindi and Mgahinga forests were gazetted as national parks in 1991.

Pastoralists include the:

- Ik number about 1,600 people and live on the edge of the Karamoja/Turkana region along the Uganda/Kenya border
- Karamojong number around 988,429 people, who live in the north-east of Uganda

The Current Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Uganda

All these communities have a common experience of state-induced landlessness and historical injustices caused by the creation of conservation areas in Uganda. They have experienced various human rights violations, including continued forced evictions and/or exclusions from ancestral lands without community consultation, consent, or adequate (or any) compensation.

Violence and destruction of homes and property, including livestock; denial of their means of subsistence and of their cultural and religious life through their exclusion from ancestral lands and natural resources; and in consequence, their continued impoverishment, social and political exploitation and marginalization.

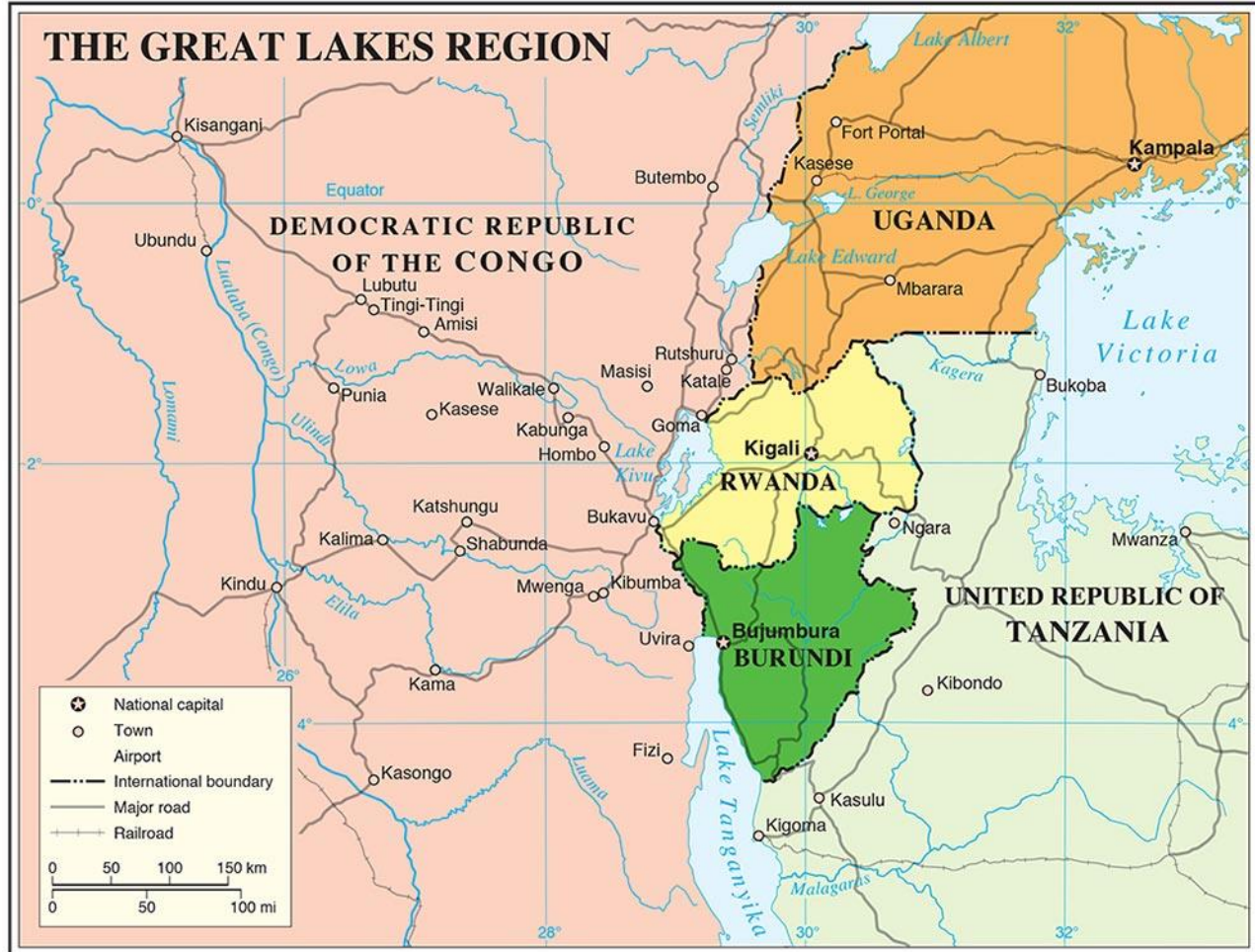
No legislation explicitly addresses indigeonus peoples. The 1995 Constitution offers no express protection for indigenous peoples but Article 32 places a mandatory duty on the state to take affirmative action in favour of groups who have been historically disadvantaged and discriminated against. This provision, while primarily designed or envisaged to deal with the historical disadvantages of children, people with disabilities and women, is the basic legal source of affirmative action in favour of indigenous peoples in Uganda.

The Land Act of 1998 and the National Environment Statute of 1995 protect customary interests in land and traditional uses of forests. However, these laws also authorize the government to exclude human activities in any forest area by declaring it a protected forest, thus nullifying the customary land rights of indigenous peoples.

Uganda has **never ratified** the **ILO Convention 169**, but is a signatory to the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**.

<https://www.iwgia.org/en/uganda.html>

GEOGRAPHY AND COUNTRY FACTS



This map shows the Great Lakes region of Africa and the locations of Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo and Tanzania. The Great Lakes Region also includes Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia.

The Swahili language is the most commonly spoken language in the African Great Lakes region. It also serves as a national or official language of five nations in the region: Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Because of its high population—estimated to be 107 million people—and the agricultural resources in the region, the area became organized into a number of small states. The most powerful of these monarchies were Buganda, Bunyoro, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Being the long-sought source of the Nile, the region had long been of interest to Europeans. The first Europeans to arrive in the region in any numbers were missionaries who had limited success in converting the locals, but did open the region to later colonization. The increased contact with the rest of the world led to a series of devastating epidemics affecting both humans and livestock. While seen as a region with great potential after independence, the region has in recent decades been marred by civil war and conflict, which only Tanzania has escaped. According to

COUNTRY FACTS

the UNHCR, Tanzania hosted the most Congolese refugees of the region. The worst affected areas have been left in great poverty.

Fishing—primarily of tilapia species but also of Nile perch—provides the main livelihood. With four Great Lakes on its borders, Uganda ranks as one of the world's largest producers of freshwater fish. The climate and rich volcanic soils in the highlands also sustain intensely cultivated croplands.

For details about each country, see the modules for Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania.

Country Facts

Burundi



Landscapes of Burundi Image: [Dave Proffer](https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/burundi.htm)
<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/burundi.htm>



Facts

Burundi is a small landlocked country in the African Great Lakes region in central Eastern Africa bordering Lake Tanganyika on its southwest side. The country shares borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania.

COUNTRY FACTS

With an area of 27,834 km², the country is somewhat smaller than half the size of Croatia, or slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Maryland.

Climate: Tropical equatorial, with wet and dry seasons, temperature varies with altitude.

The capital and largest city is Bujumbura. Spoken languages are French (official 0.3%) and Kirundi (spoken by nine million people in Burundi and adjacent parts of Tanzania and Congo-Kinshasa), other dialects like Rundi and Kiga. More than 80% percent of the population are Christians.

According to the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) report in December 2016:

- **2.1 million** people lacking reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food, of which more than 800,000 are severely food-insecure.
- **30,000 hectares** of farmland destroyed by climate hazards related to El Niño for the 2015/16 season.
- **428,170 people** displaced by ongoing crisis and climate hazards, of which 139,000 were internally displaced and the rest in neighboring countries.

Radio is the main source of information for many Burundians. The government runs the sole TV station, the only radio station with national coverage, as well as the only newspaper that publishes regularly.

Burundi is a resource-poor country with an underdeveloped manufacturing sector. Agriculture accounts for over 40% of GDP and employs more than 90% of the population. Burundi's primary exports are coffee and tea, which account for 90% of foreign exchange earnings. Burundi is heavily dependent on aid from bilateral and multilateral donors.

People:

Nationality: Burundian(s).

Population: 11.89 million (2020)

Ethnic groups (estimated): Hutu 85%; Tutsi 14%; Twa 1.0%.

Religions (estimated): Roman Catholic 60%-65%; Protestant 10%-15%; traditional beliefs 15%-20%; Muslim 5%.

Languages: Rundi (Kirundi), and French (official), Swahili (trade and governmental language)

Literacy: 37%

Natural resources: Nickel, uranium, rare earth oxides, peat, cobalt, copper, platinum (not yet exploited), vanadium, arable land, hydropower.

Agriculture products: Coffee, cotton, tea, corn, sorghum, sweet potatoes, bananas, manioc (tapioca); beef, milk, hides.

Industries: Consumer goods such as blankets, shoes, soap; assembly of imported components.

COUNTRY FACTS

Exports - commodities: coffee, tea, sugar, cotton, hides



Fishing activities at Lake Tanganyika, Burundi. Image: SuSanA Secretariat
<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/burundi.htm>

Recent History

Originally a colony of Belgium, Burundi attained its independence in 1962. Burundi's first democratically elected president was assassinated in October 1993 after only one hundred days in office. Since then, some 200,000 Burundians have perished in widespread, often intense ethnic violence between Hutu and Tutsi factions. Hundreds of thousands have been internally displaced or have become refugees in neighboring countries.

Recent News

Fri - Feb 18, 2022: Free of Sanctions, Burundi Can Start to Recover and Rebuild - AllAfrica News: Burundi

[The Conversation Africa] Since 2015, crippling sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) and the US have held back the economy of Burundi. The sanctions were imposed in response to the government's violation of human rights as well as violence.

<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/country-overview/burundi/>

For up-to-date information about Burundi, visit these online links:

- [CIA World Fact Book: Burundi](#)
- [U.S. Department of State: Burundi](#)
- [BBC News: Burundi](#)
- [Burundian Embassy in the U.S.](#)
- [IWACU News](#)

Rwanda



Two extinct volcanoes in the Virunga mountain range, Mount Mikenko (DR Congo) and Mount Karisimbi, Rwanda's highest mountain. Image: [MONUSCO](https://www.monusco.org/)

<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/rwanda.htm>



<https://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/>

Facts

Rwanda has a population of 12.95 million people (2020). Rwanda's population density is among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The capital and largest city is Kigali (est. pop. 1 million)

COUNTRY FACTS

people). Spoken languages are Kinyarwanda (official language), English, French, and Swahili. Rwanda is a presidential republic with a multi-party system. The Head of State and Head of Government is the President. The President is elected by popular vote every seven years. The President appoints the Prime Minister and all other members of Cabinet.

Type: Republic.

Independence: 1 July 1962 (from Belgium-administered UN trusteeship).

Constitution: 26 May 2003.

Other Cities: Gitarama, Butare, Ruhengeri, Gisenyi.

Geography:

Location: Central Africa, south of the Equator at the Great Lakes region, east of Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Area: 26,338 km² (10,169 sq. mi.)

Terrain: From Grasslands and rolling hills to areas of rugged mountains that extend southeast from a chain of volcanoes in the northwest.

Highest point: Volcano Karisimbi 4,519 m.

Climate: Mild and temperate, with two rainy seasons (February to April, November to January).

People:

Nationality: Rwandan(s).

Ethnic groups: Hutu 85%, Tutsi 14%, Twa 1%.

Religions: Christian 93.5%, traditional African 0.1%, Muslim 4.6%, 1.7% claim no religious beliefs.

Literacy: 65%

Natural resources: Gold, cassiterite (tin ore), wolframite (tungsten ore), methane, hydropower, arable land.

Agriculture products: Coffee, tea, pyrethrum (insecticide made from chrysanthemums), bananas, beans, sorghum, potatoes; livestock.

Industries: Cement, agricultural products, small-scale beverages, soap, furniture, shoes, plastic goods, textiles, cigarettes.

Exports - commodities: coffee, tea, hides, tin ore.

Export partners: Democratic Republic of the Congo 19.8%, US 10.8%, China 10.3%, Swaziland 7.9%, Malaysia 7%, Pakistan 6.2%, Germany 5.9%, Thailand 5.5% (2015).

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Imports - commodities: foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, steel, petroleum products, cement and construction material.

Import partners: Uganda 15.7%, Kenya 11.8%, India 8.7 %, UAE 8.6%, Russia 6.6%, Tanzania 5.1% (2015).

Currency: Rwandan Franc (RWF)

Recent History

In 1959, three years before independence, the majority ethnic group, the Hutus overthrew the ruling Tutsi king. Over the next several years thousands of Tutsis were killed, and some 150,000 driven into exile in neighboring countries. The children of these exiles later formed a rebel group, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and began a civil war in 1990. The war, along with several political and economic upheavals, exacerbated ethnic tensions culminating in April 1994 in the genocide of roughly 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The Tutsi rebels defeated the Hutu regime and ended the killing in July 1994, but approximately 2 million Hutu refugees - many fearing Tutsi retribution - fled to neighboring Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zaire, now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Since then most of the refugees have returned to Rwanda.

Despite substantial international assistance and political reforms - including Rwanda's first local elections in March 1999 - the country continues to struggle to boost investment and agricultural output and to foster reconciliation. A series of massive population displacements, a nagging Hutu extremist insurgency, and Rwandan involvement in two wars over the past four years in the neighboring DROC continue to hinder Rwanda's efforts.

(Source: CIA - The World Factbook)

For up-to-date information about Rwanda, visit these online links:

- [CIA World Fact Book: Rwanda](#)
- [U.S. Department of State: Rwanda](#)
- [BBC News: Rwanda](#)
- [Rwandan Embassy in the U.S.](#)
- [The New Times](#)

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



Aerial view of the Congo River near Kisangani, the capital of Orientale Province. Kisangani is an important commercial hub point for river and land transportation and a major marketing and distribution center for the north-eastern part of the country. Image: [MONUSCO/Myriam Asmani](#)

https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/congo_droc.htm



Facts

The DRC is bordered by 9 countries: Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. A 45 km wide strip of coastline in the west provides the country's narrow access to the Atlantic Ocean. Five of the famous African Great Lakes are lined up on DR Congo's eastern border: Lake Albert, Lake Edward, Lake Kivu, Lake Tanganyika, and Lake Mweru.

COUNTRY FACTS

The country occupies an area of 2,344,858 km (905,000 sq mi), making it the second largest country in Africa (behind Algeria), the DRC is about 3 times the size of Turkey, or slightly less than the size of one-fourth of the US.

DR Congo has a population of 89.56 million people (2020). The capital and largest city is Kinshasa. Spoken languages are French (official) and several other languages like Lingala (in the north of the country), Kikongo, Kituba (a widely used lingua franca in Central Africa), Swahili, and Tshiluba.

Capital City: Kinshasa (pop. 17.07 million in 2021)

Other Cities: Bandundu, Bukavu, Goma, Kananga, Kindu, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, Matadi, Mbandaka, Mbuji-Mayi.

Government:

Type: Republic; transitional regime highly centralized with executive power vested in the president.

Independence: 30 June 1960 (from Belgium).

Constitution: 18 February 2006

Geography:

Location: Central Africa, northeast of Angola

Terrain: Varies from tropical rainforests to mountainous terraces, plateau, savannas, dense grasslands, and mountains.

Highest point: Pic Marguerite 5 110 m on Rwenzori Range's Mont Ngaliema (Mount Stanley).

Climate: Equatorial; ranges from tropical rainforest in the Congo River basin, hot and humid in much of the north and west, cooler and drier in the south central area and the east.

People:

Nationality: Congolese

Ethnic groups: More than 200 African ethnic groups; the Luba, Kongo, and Anamongo are some of the larger groupings of tribes.

Religions: Christianity 70%, other sects and traditional beliefs 10%, Kimbanguist 10%, Muslim 10%.

Languages: French (Official). National languages: Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba.

Literacy: 64%

Natural resources: Cobalt, copper, Columbite-tantalite (coltan) refined, coltan becomes tantalum, niobium, petroleum, industrial and gem diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, uranium, coal, hydropower, timber.

Agriculture products: Coffee, sugar, palm oil, rubber, tea, quinine, cassava (tapioca), palm oil,

COUNTRY FACTS

bananas, root crops, corn, fruits; wood products.

Industries: mining (diamonds, copper, zinc), mineral processing, consumer products (including textiles, footwear, cigarettes, processed foods and beverages), cement, commercial ship repair.

Export Partners: China 43.5%, Zambia 25%, South Korea 4.9%, Belgium 4.8% (2015)

Import Partners: China 20.6%, South Africa 17.7%, Zambia 12.3%, Belgium 6.9%, Zimbabwe 17.7%, Zambia 12.3%, Belgium 6.9%, Zimbabwe 5.1%, India 4.7% (2015)

Source: International Business Times



Community fish-farming ponds in the rural town of Masi Manimba. UK aid supported the NGO Action Against Hunger to provide an emergency response to a malnutrition crisis in Masi Manimba. Image: [Russell Watkins/Department for International Development](#)

https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/congo_droc.htm

Recent History

Established as a Belgian colony in 1908, the Republic of the Congo gained its independence in 1960, but its early years were marred by political and social instability.

Col. Joseph Mobutu seized power and declared himself president in a November 1965 coup. He subsequently changed his name - to MOBUTU Sese Seko - as well as that of the country - to Zaire. Mobutu retained his position for 32 years through several subsequent sham elections as well as through the use of brutal force. Ethnic strife and civil war, touched off by a massive

COUNTRY FACTS

inflow of refugees in 1994 from fighting in Rwanda and Burundi, led in May 1997 to the toppling of the Mobutu regime by a rebellion led by Laurent Kabila.

Kabila renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but in August 1998 his regime was itself challenged by an insurrection backed by Rwanda and Uganda. Troops from Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan intervened to support the Kinshasa regime. A cease-fire was signed in July 1999 by the DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, Namibia, Rwanda, and Congolese armed rebel groups, but sporadic fighting continued.

Laurent Kabila was assassinated in January 2001 and his son Joseph Kabila was named head of state. In October 2002, the new president was successful in negotiating the withdrawal of Rwandan forces occupying eastern Congo; two months later, the Pretoria Accord was signed by all remaining warring parties to end the fighting and establish a government of national unity.

A transitional government was set up in July 2003; Joseph Kabila remains as president and is joined by four vice presidents representing the former government, former rebel groups, and the political opposition. (Source: CIA World Fact Book) For more detail on the wars in DR Congo, go to the module titled (Ethnic Conflict and Violence)

The Democratic Republic of Congo remains a humanitarian disaster despite the presence of UN troops and the recent approval of a new constitution that paved the way for elections in April. Source: UN Mission MONUC

Recent News

- Sun - Feb 13, 2022: Museveni Meets Tshisekedi in Congo Brazzaville - AllAfrica News: Congo-Brazzaville
[Independent (Kampala)] Oyo, Congo Brazzaville -- Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has met President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo in a mini-summit on peace and security in the region, three days after the International Court Of Justice ruled against the East African nation in a reparation case.
- Thu - Feb 3, 2022: USAID Announces \$400,000 for People Affected By Flooding in Republic of the Congo - AllAfrica News: Congo-Brazzaville
[USAID] The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), provided approximately \$400,000 in humanitarian assistance in Fiscal Year 2021 that is now being used to support populations affected by widespread flooding in the Republic of the Congo (RoC). Since late 2021, heavy rainfall and resultant flooding have adversely affected communities in the RoC's Cuvette, Likouala, Plateaux, and Sangha departments.
- Wed - Feb 2, 2022: Following DR Congo Murder Trial, UN Calls for Death Penalty Moratorium to Remain - AllAfrica News: Congo-Brazzaville
[UN News] Following a verdict in the case of the brutal murder of two of its experts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) nearly five years ago, the UN on Tuesday urged authorities to uphold their moratorium on the death penalty.

COUNTRY FACTS

For up-to-date information about the DR Congo, visit these online links:

- [CIA World Fact Book: Republic of Congo](#)
- [U.S. Department of State: Republic of Congo](#)
- [BBC News: Republic of Congo](#)
- [Congolese Embassy in the U.S.](#)
- [BizCongo \(French\)](#)

Tanzania



Giraffe in Lake Manyara National Park, Tanzania. Image: [Fanny Schertzer](#)

<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/tanzania.htm>



Facts

Tanzania is located east of Africa's Great Lakes north of Mozambique and south of Kenya. It has a coastline at the Indian Ocean in the east. The nation is bordered by six other African countries: Burundi, DR Congo, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia, it also shares maritime borders with the Comoros and the Seychelles. It has shorelines at three of the Great Lakes: Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika and Lake Nyassa (Lake Malawi).

COUNTRY FACTS

The country occupies an area of 945,087 km. It is about three times the size of Italy or slightly larger than twice the size of California.

Tanzania has a population of 59.73 million people (2020). Its capital is Dodoma. The largest city, chief port, major economic and transportation hub and de facto capital is Dar es Salaam. Spoken languages are Swahili and English (both official), Arabic (widely spoken in Zanzibar).

Capital City: Dar es Salaam (executive), Dodoma (legislative)

Other Cities: Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya, Mtwara, Stonetown, Zanzibar

Government:

Type: Unitary Republic.

Independence: Tanganyika 1961 (from UK-administered UN trusteeship),
Zanzibar 1963 (from UK).

Union formed 1964.

Constitution: 1982.

Geography:

Location: Eastern Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean, between Kenya and Mozambique.

Area: Tanzania mainland: 945 000 km² (378 000 sq. mi.); Zanzibar: 1,658 km² (640 sq. mi.).

Terrain: Coastal plains; a central plateau; highlands in north and south.

Highest point: Kilimanjaro 5,895 meters.

Climate: Varies from tropical to arid to temperate.

People:

Nationality: Tanzanian(s); Zanzibari(s).

Population: 50.1 million (2016) including Zanzibar.

Ethnic Groups: mainland - native African 99% (of which 95% are Bantu consisting of more than 130 tribes), other 1% (consisting of Asian, European, and Arab); Zanzibar - Arab, native African, mixed Arab and native African.

Religions: mainland - Christian 30%, Muslim 35%, indigenous beliefs 35%; Zanzibar - more than 99% Muslim.

Languages: Kiswahili (Swahili, Kiunguja), and English (both official), Arabic (widely spoken in Zanzibar), many local languages.

Literacy: male: 85.9%, female: 70.7% .

Natural resources: Hydropower, tin, phosphates, iron ore, coal, diamonds, gemstones, gold, natural gas, nickel.

Agriculture products: Coffee, sisal, tea, cotton, pyrethrum (organic insecticide), cashew nuts, tobacco, cassava (tapioca), bananas, fruits, vegetables; livestock.

COUNTRY FACTS

Industries: Agricultural processing (sugar, beer, cigarettes, sisal twine); diamond, gold, and iron mining, oil refining.

Exports - commodities: gold, coffee, cashew nuts, manufactures, cotton.

Exports partners: India 21.4%, China 8.1%, Japan 5.1%, Kenya 4.6%, Belgium 4.3% (2015)

Imports - commodities: consumer goods, machinery and transportation equipment, industrial raw materials, crude oil

Imports partners: China 34.6%, India 13.5%, South Africa 4.7%, UAE 4.4%, Kenya 4.1% (2015)

Currency: Tanzanian Shilling (TZS)



Tengeru market. Tengeru is a market-town in northern Tanzania, in the Arusha Region. Image: [Fanny Schertzer](#)

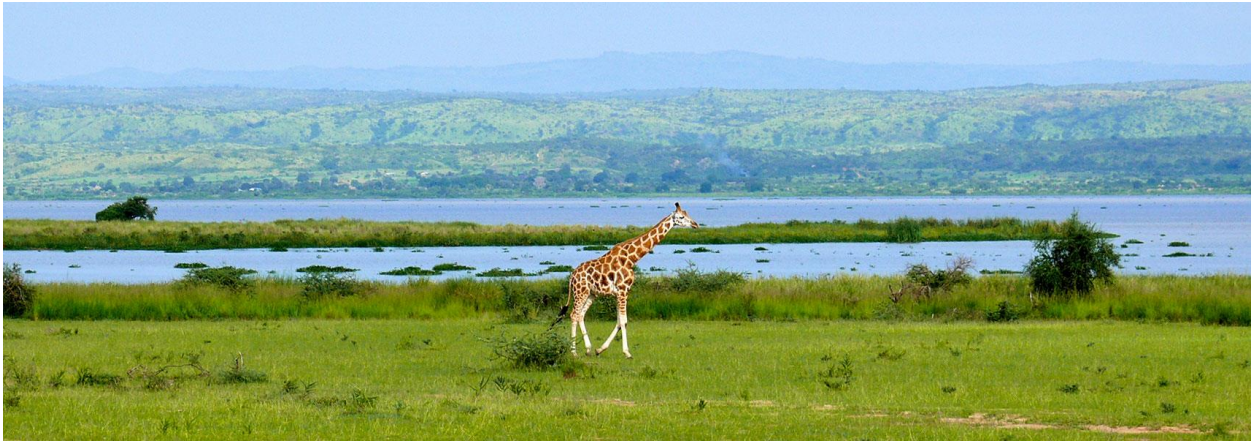
<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/tanzania.htm>

Recent History

The African Great Lakes nation of Tanzania dates formally from 1964, when it was formed out of the union of the much larger mainland territory of Tanganyika and the coastal archipelago of Zanzibar. The former was a colony and part of German East Africa from the 1880s to 1919's when, under the League of Nations, it became a British mandate. It served as a British military outpost during World War II, providing financial help, munitions, and soldiers. In 1947, Tanganyika became a United Nations Trust Territory under British administration, a status it kept until its independence in 1961. The island of Zanzibar thrived as a trading hub, successively controlled by the Portuguese, the Sultanate of Oman, and then as a British protectorate by the end of the nineteenth century.

Julius Nyerere, independence leader and "baba wa taifa" for Tanganyika (father of the Tanganyika nation), ruled the country for decades, while Abeid Amaan Karume, governed Zanzibar as its president and Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania. Following Nyerere's retirement in 1985, various political and economic reforms began. He was succeeded in office by President Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

Uganda



Albert lake (Albert Nyanza) in Uganda's Murchison Falls National Park is Africa's seventh-largest lake and one of the African Great Lakes. Image: Bernard Dupont



Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa whose diverse landscape encompasses the snow-capped Rwenzori Mountains and immense Lake Victoria. Its abundant wildlife includes chimpanzees as well as rare birds.

Uganda is bordered by South Sudan to the north, Kenya to the east, Tanzania and Rwanda to the south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. The capital city, Kampala, is built around seven hills not far from the shores of Lake Victoria, which forms part of the frontier with Kenya and Tanzania.

COUNTRY FACTS

Uganda extends over 93,000 square miles, of which 26, 828 square miles is Uganda's share of Lake Victoria. Uganda is roughly the size of the state of Oregon.

70% of Uganda is covered by forests, woodlands, and grasslands. More than 10% of the territory of Uganda is protected in national parks, national forests and game reserves.

Facts

Official Name: Republic of Uganda, conventional short form: Uganda
Uganda: Swahili for 'Land of the Ganda'

Capital City: Kampala (pop. 1.2 million)

Other Cities:

Entebbe, Jinja, Lira, Mbale, Mbarara

Government:

Type: No-party "Movement" system.

Constitution: The new Constitution was ratified on 12 July 1995, and promulgated on 8 October 1995.

People: Nationality: Ugandan(s).

Population: 34.8 million (2014).

Ethnic groups: African 99%, European, Asian, Arab 1%.

Religions: Christian 66%, Muslim 16%, traditional and other 18%.

Languages: English (official); Luganda and Swahili widely used; other Bantu and Nilotic languages.

Literacy: 62%.

Natural resources: Copper, cobalt, limestone.

Agriculture products: Coffee, tea, cotton, tobacco, cassava (tapioca), potatoes, corn, millet, pulses; beef, goat meat, milk, poultry, cut flowers.

Industries: Sugar, brewing, tobacco, cotton textiles, cement.

Exports - commodities: coffee, fish and fish products, tea, cotton, flowers, horticultural products; gold

Export partners: Rwanda 10.7%, UAE 9.9%, Democratic Republic of the Congo 9.8%, Kenya 9.7%, Italy 5.8%, Netherlands 4.8%, Germany 4.7%, China 4.1% (2015)

Import commodities: capital equipment, vehicles, petroleum, medical supplies; cereals

COUNTRY FACTS

Import partners: Kenya 16.4%, UAE 15.5%, India 13.4%, China 13.1% (2015)

Currency: Uganda Shilling (UGX)



Mount Kadam is situated north of Mount Elgon near the eastern border of Uganda with Kenya. Image: Ed Wright

Uganda Natural Features:

- Lake Victoria (Africa's largest lake, one of the African Great Lakes); Ssese Islands (islands in Lake Victoria)
- Lake Bunyonyi (freshwater lake)
- Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (mountain gorillas)
- Murchison Falls National Park (wildlife and waterfalls)
- Queen Elizabeth National Park
- Kibale National Park (evergreen rain forest)
- Kidepo Valley National Park (savannah landscape and Mount Morungole)



Lake Bunyonyi in south-western Uganda near the border with Rwanda.

Image: [Carine06](#)

Recent History

Uganda achieved independence from the UK in 1962. The colonial boundaries created by Britain to delimit Uganda grouped together a wide range of ethnic groups with different political systems and cultures.

The dictatorial regime of Idi AMIN (1971-79) was responsible for the deaths of some 300,000 people. Guerrilla war and human rights abuses under Milton OBOTE (1980-85) claimed another 100,000 lives.

The rule of Yoweri MUSEVENI since 1986 has brought relative stability and economic growth to Uganda. During the 1990s the government promulgated non-party presidential and legislative elections.

A constitutional referendum in 2005 cancelled a 19-year ban on multi-party politics and lifted presidential term limits.

(Source: CIA - The World Factbook)

COUNTRY FACTS

RECENT NEWS

- Thu - Jul 21, 2022: Anyone Killing Ugandans Will Pay a Heavy Price, Says Museveni - AllAfrica News: Uganda
[Nile Post] President Museveni has condemned the recent killing of three Ugandans including the Bukwo acting CAO, university student at Makerere and the Kamwokya LC1 chairman under different circumstances.
- Thu - Jul 21, 2022: Mao Joins Long List of Museveni's Critics Who Have Kissed His Feet - AllAfrica News: Uganda
[Nile Post] On March 6 while addressing party delegates in Masaka, Norbert Mao the DP presidential general said he would "never join" Museveni's government" according to a clip circulating on various social media platforms.
- Thu - Jul 21, 2022: Museveni Appoints Mao as Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs - AllAfrica News: Uganda
[Nile Post] The Democratic Party (DP) president Norbert Mao has been appointed as the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, a day after he brokered a deal with President Museveni.
- Thu - Jul 21, 2022: Police Brace for Protests, Warn Against Illegal Assemblies On High Cost of Living - AllAfrica News: Uganda
[Nile Post] Police territorial commanders instructed not to allow unlawful assemblies by politicians and activists.
- Wed - Jul 20, 2022: Most Suspended NGOs Still in Limbo - AllAfrica News: Uganda
[IPS] Kampala -- Nearly a year after the Ugandan government suspended 54 NGOs for allegedly operating illegally and failing to file accounts, most civil society organisations (CSOs) remain shut.

COUNTRY FACTS

COLONIALISM AND INDEPENDENCE

The 19th century in Europe was a time of industrialization. Factories in Europe required raw materials to be manufactured into marketable products. As a result, Europeans sought both a source of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods in Africa. This economic motivation played a large role in the colonization of Africa.

Politics in Europe also led to the colonization of Africa. The rise of nationalism in Europe resulted in competition between nations that was carried out in wars and also in competition over colonial expansion in Africa. Between 1885 and 1910 all of Africa was colonized. The competition was particularly strong between Britain, France, and Germany, the strongest European nation-states in the late 19th century.

In addition, ideologies of racial hierarchy were prevalent in Europe in the 19th century. Many Europeans viewed themselves as the most advanced civilization in the world, and some saw it as their mission to “enlighten” and “civilize” people in the rest of the world. Many inaccurate and racialized stereotypes of African peoples, which existed at the time, were used to justify colonialism in Africa.

The colonization of Africa coincided with the expansion of Christian missionary activity in Africa. Parts of Africa, for example Ethiopia and Egypt, were home to Christians right from the beginning of Christianity as a region. However, Christianity was introduced to the rest of Africa only in the modern era. Christian missionary activity began in earnest in the 19th century during the same period of time that European countries were becoming more engaged in Africa. Historians do not all agree on what the relationship was between Christian missionary activity and colonialism. However, evidence suggests that while many missionaries opposed the harsher aspects of colonialism, they were supportive of the colonization of African countries. Missionaries who supported colonialism believed that European control would provide a political environment that would facilitate missionary activity in Africa. This support for colonialism played an important role in legitimizing the colonial endeavor among the citizens of the colonizing powers in Europe.

European nations were able to make certain areas of Africa into their colonies in two main ways. Some African leaders were willing to sign treaties with Europeans for various reasons. In some cases, they saw it to their benefit to gain European allies. In other cases, there was not a clear understanding of what the treaties were about or what the consequences of them would be. Secondly, military force was used in some cases when there was a large amount of resistance to colonial rule.

This period is sometimes referred to as the “Scramble for Africa.” Chancellor Otto von Bismarck of Germany initiated a conference in 1884 for European nations to regulate the rush for territory. The conference served several main purposes. First, European nations were interested in being assured access to various important trade routes, particularly along the Niger and Congo river basins. Secondly, there was a concern to suppress the internal slave trade that was still going on in some parts of Africa. Thirdly, a ban was put on importing firearms into Africa, which resulted in Europeans having a monopoly on guns in Africa. And finally,

COLONIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION

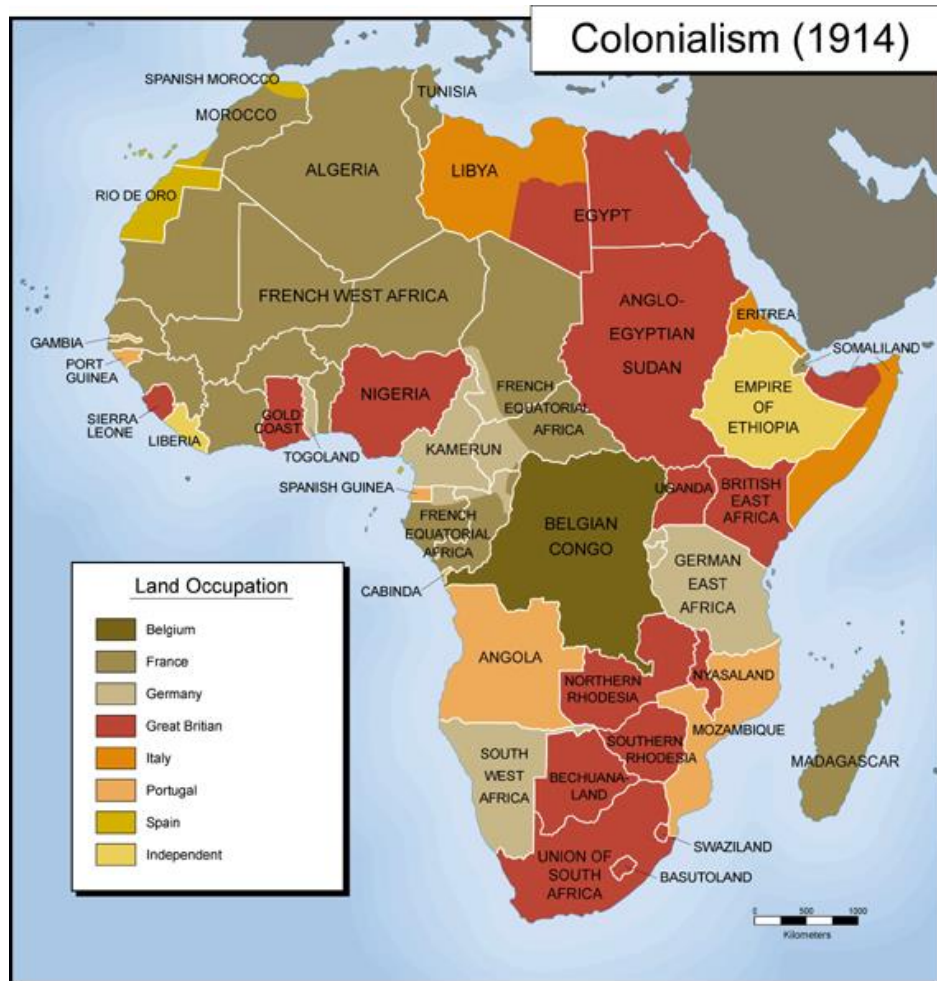
occupation of territories in Africa was discussed. The result of this conference was a treaty called the Treaty of Berlin. By 1900, almost 90% of Africa was under European control.

In the 1890's, 32,000 laborers from (then) British India were recruited to East Africa under indentured labor contracts to construct the Uganda Railway. Most of the surviving Indians returned home, but 6, 724 decided to stay in East Africa after construction was completed. Some became traders and took control of cotton gins and retail clothing.

Map One shows the African territories that had been colonized by European nations by 1914. It is important to notice how borders have shifted as a result of colonialism. The borders of African countries today were imposed from the outside by European nations. Often the people who drew these borders paid no attention to ethno-linguistic groups or existing political organization at the time of colonization. Sometimes they grouped together people who had never been united under the same government before. Sometimes they divided existing systems of government at the time of colonial conquest. Map One compares today's borders (drawn in white) with the borders that had been made in 1914 (shown in color.)

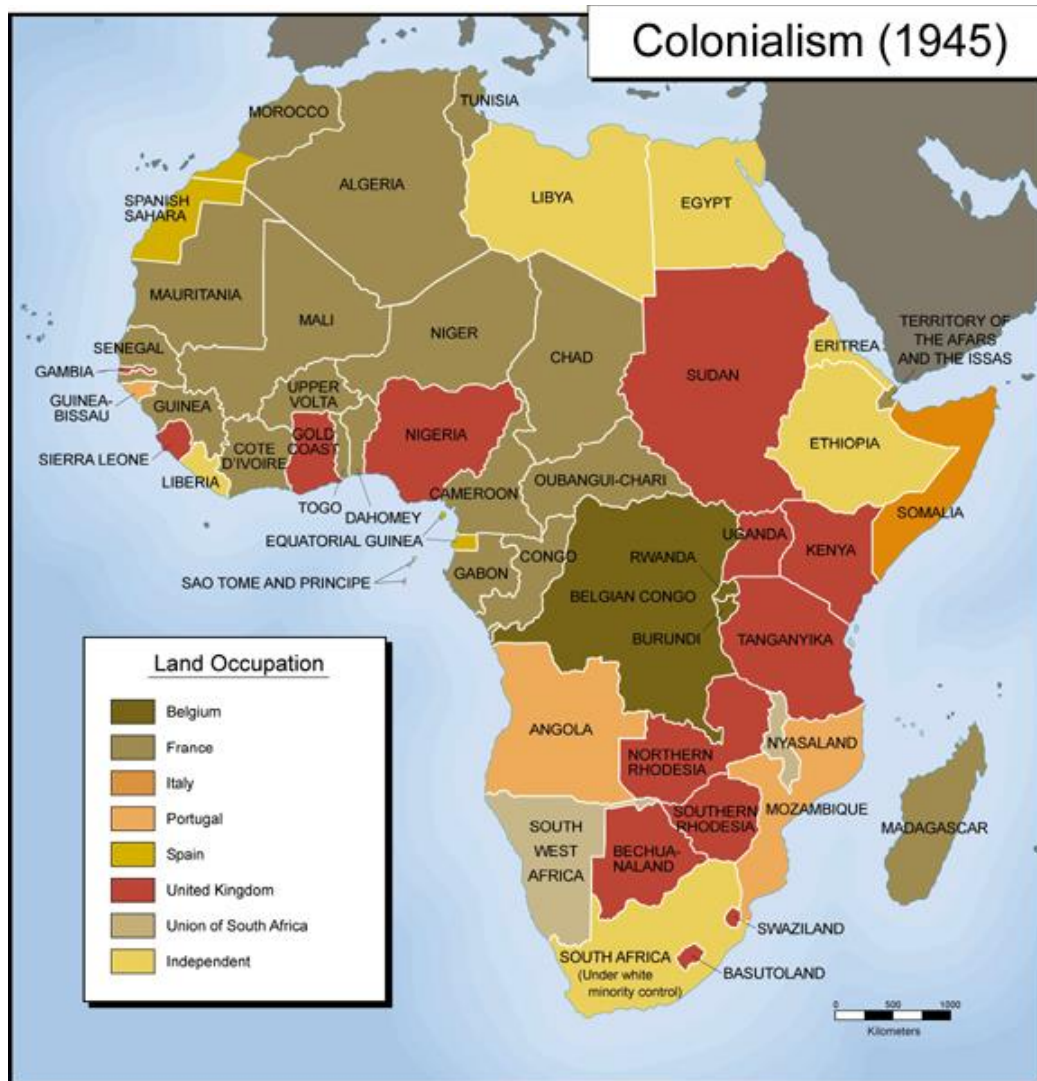
Note that the borders of African colonies in 1914 were still different than what they would become in the latter part of the 20th century. Having looked at the map for 1914, now look at Map Two that shows how borders shifted again by 1945. Note that these borders are virtually the same that they are today for independent African nations.

COLONIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION



Map One: Colonialism 1914

COLONIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION



Map Two: Colonialism 1945

<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/>

Exploring Africa is produced and developed by the African Studies Center (ASC) at Michigan State University in an effort to address the severe shortage of high quality African resources available to students and educators, particularly at the K-12 level. As an academic community comprised of more than 200 scholars who study Africa from a diversity of more than 20 disciplines, we are acutely aware of the need to provide learners and educators with resources that help them to engage Africa in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the continent's rich diversity and complexities.

Independence

In 1941 Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt drew up “The Atlantic Charter,” confirming the right of people everywhere to self-determination of government. These words were not accompanied by a plan, however, and the countries in Africa attained their independence separately and over a period of years. There was no one process of decolonization. In some areas, it was peaceful, and orderly. In many others, independence was achieved only after a protracted revolution. A few newly independent countries acquired stable governments almost immediately; others were ruled by dictators or military juntas for decades or endured long civil wars. Some European governments welcomed a new relationship with their former colonies; others contested decolonization militarily. The process of decolonization coincided with the new Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the early development of the new United Nations. Decolonization was often affected by superpower competition and had a definite impact on the evolution of that competition. It also significantly changed the pattern of international relations in a more general sense. (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa>)

Burundi and Rwanda had already gained independence from Germany in 1919. Independence from Belgium did not come until 1962. DR Congo gained independence in 1960. Uganda, which had been a protectorate of the British Empire gained independence in 1962. Benedicto Kiwanuka became the first chief minister and Milton Obote was elected Prime Minister.

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND CIVIL WAR

Introduction

Once you see the countries of Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo and Uganda on a map you have an idea of how they are interrelated by geography and proximity to the lakes of the region. They also share a similar history through the 20th century and the early part of the 21st century. They were all monarchies and they were all colonized by European nations during the “Scramble for Africa” that took place between 1885 and 1910. After gaining independence in the early 1960’s they all had a succession of military regimes. During these times, ethnic conflicts grew and radical factions developed within both the Tutsi and Hutu tribes.

Violent overthrows of government became more and more frequent and by the time the 1990’s arrived violence was erupting everywhere. That decade saw large scale genocide and many thousands of people were killed. Many people fled from Rwanda and Burundi to DR Congo and wars were fought in Congo by other countries. The first refugee camp in Tanzania was established by the UNHCR and the Tanzanian government in **1996** after an estimated 150,000 Congolese refugees from the eastern Sud-Kivu region of the DRC crossed the border to escape civil war there.

While all the armed conflicts were occurring the countries also experienced famine, drought and medical epidemics. It is hard to imagine the devastation, fear and physical and emotional abuse that people endured.

A very interesting video about the history of the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Rwanda – shedding light on the origins of the civil war there – can be viewed at http://www.rwandanstories.org/origins/hutu_and_tutsi.html .

Burundian Civil War

The Burundian Civil War was a civil war in Burundi lasting from 1993 to 2005. The civil war was the result of longstanding ethnic divisions between the Hutu and the Tutsi ethnic groups. The conflict began following the first multi-party elections in the country since its independence from Belgium in 1962, and is seen as formally ending with the swearing-in of President Pierre Nkurunziza in August 2005. Children were widely used by both sides in the war. The estimated death toll stands at 300,000.

Before becoming subject to European colonial rule, Burundi was governed by an ethnic Tutsi monarchy, similar to that of its neighbor Rwanda. German, and subsequently Belgian, colonial rulers found it convenient to govern through the existing power structure, perpetuating the dominance of the Tutsi minority over the ethnic Hutu majority. The Belgians generally identified the ethnic distinctions in Burundi and Rwanda with superficial observations: the Twa were considered short in height, the Hutu were of medium height and the Tutsi were tallest among them. Those individuals who owned more than ten cows were normally described as Tutsi.

Burundi became independent in 1962, breaking from a colonial federation with Rwanda. The independent country initially preserved its monarchy. Beginning in 1966, the monarchy was overthrown and replaced by a succession of Tutsi military regimes. This period of time saw the establishment of armed rebel groups. In 1972, Hutu militants organized and carried out systematic attacks on ethnic Tutsi. The military regime responded with large-scale reprisals targeting Hutus. The total number of casualties was never established, but estimates are said to exceed 100,000. A similar number of refugees and asylum-seekers left the country for Tanzania and Rwanda.

The last of the military coups was in 1987 and installed Tutsi officer Pierre Buyoya. He attempted to institute a number of reforms, but the reforms had the effect of increasing hope among the Hutu population that the Tutsi monopoly was at an end. Local revolts subsequently took place against several Tutsi leaders in northern Burundi. Once again the death toll from the uprisings and the subsequent government military action was in the thousands.

A democratic transition began in Burundi in the early 1990s. During this time, some of the ethnic groups decided to cooperate with each other, but radical members of other groups did not. The country's first multi-party national elections were held in June 1993. These elections were free and fair, but the actions of extremist ethnic groups continued, resulting in a coup just months after the election and the newly elected president was murdered by extremist army officers within the government. As a result of President Ndadaye's murder, violence and chaos broke out all over Burundi. An estimated 50,000 to 100,000 people died within a year about as many Hutu as Tutsi. As a result of this chaos and international pressure, the new military regime collapsed, and power was returned to a Hutu-dominated civilian government.

The mass killings consequently abated, and the country was somewhat restabilized by the end of 1993. The coup and subsequent ethnic violence had however deeply affected the country. The Tutsi extremists in the military were still present, and though they had given up outright power for the time being, they continued to undermine the civilian government in hopes of regaining full power in the future. The Hutu rebels believed that the coup had proven the impossibility of negotiations and regarded the new Hutu-dominated civilian government as mere "stooges" of the old regime. They consequently fully resumed their insurgency. Furthermore, radicals among the Tutsi civil society believed the ruling party had initiated the anti-Tutsi mass killings following the 1993 coup. They thus organized demonstrations and strikes to bring down what they considered a criminal regime.

A succession of bi-ethnic governments attempted to stabilize the country from early 1994 to July 1996, but all failed. Extremists on all sides continued to advance their causes and then the neighboring countries of Zaire (now called the Democratic Republic of Congo) and Tanzania began interfering in Burundi. Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko believed that he could gain political leverage by harboring Rwandan and Burundian Hutu militants and refugees. In contrast, leading Tanzanian statesman Julius Nyerere wanted the region to be stabilized and pacified, and believed that the existence of Burundi and Rwanda as independent states posed a security problem by itself. Ultimately, he desired for these states to be unified with Tanzania, regaining all territory that had formerly belonged to German East Africa. In the short term, however, Nyerere believed that peace and order could only be achieved in Burundi through the inclusion of Hutu in the Burundian government and military.

While the country further descended into civil war, the political situation in Burundi deteriorated. Ndadaye's successor Cyprien Ntaryamira was assassinated in the same plane crash with Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana on 6 April 1994. This act marked the beginning of the Rwandan genocide, while in Burundi, the death of Ntaryamira exacerbated the violence and unrest, although there was no general massacre. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya was installed to a four-year presidency on April 8, but the security situation further declined. The influx of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees and the activities of armed Hutu and Tutsi groups further destabilized the government. A coalition government, formed by the peaceful FRODEBU faction and UPRONA in September 1994, proved to be too weak and fractured to actually govern the country. With the civil authorities very weakened, the military effectively held control and overall the power of the central government was very weak.

At the same time, the power of unofficial paramilitary wings of Hutu and Tutsi parties, independent extremist militias, and militant youth gangs increased. These militias undermined attempts by the government to restore peace. The Tutsi militias were often trained and armed by extremist factions in the Burundian military. With aid by the army, they defeated a number of Hutu militias, but also terrorized as well as displaced many Hutu civilians at Bujumbura and other cities in 1995/96. Events in neighboring Rwanda also had an effect. When the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) defeated the Hutu regime of Rwanda in July 1994, the military and paramilitary forces of the former Hutu regime fled across the border into Zaire. There, they rebuilt their strength and launched an insurgency against the RPF. The Burundian Hutu extremist groups allied themselves with the Rwandan Hutu factions which consequently aided them in attacking the Burundian military.

This situation, and the decline of state authority in Burundi, greatly alarmed the RPF-led government of Rwanda. The RPF feared that the collapse of the Burundian government would lead not only to the influx of possibly 500,000 Tutsi refugees into Rwanda, but also provide a new haven to the Rwandan Hutu insurgents. The Rwandan government thus began providing aid to the Burundian government from 1995. Rwandan troops would repeatedly cross the border, and attack Hutu refugee camps which harbored rebel forces in coordination with the Burundian military and local Tutsi militias.

The power-sharing political system of Hutu presidency and Tutsi military operated until 1996, when Tutsi Pierre Buyoya replaced the Hutu president in a coup, ostensibly to restore order. As the government had already been under *de facto* military control by this point, the coup mostly cemented the status quo. Upon assuming power, Buyoya took action to solve the war peacefully. He brought the radical Tutsi mostly under control, forcing their militias to integrate into the military or to be disbanded. Buyoya also attempted to open negotiations with the insurgents. Despite this, the coup also strengthened the Hutu rebel groups, as Buyoya's regime was regarded as illegitimate, and neighboring countries imposed an embargo on Burundi to protest against the coup.

The civil war escalated in intensity. Hutu rebels grew in power and killed about 300 Tutsi in a major attack on 20 July 1996. The increasing activity of the Hutu rebels in Burundi worried the Rwandan government, and influenced its decision to launch the First Congo War in late 1996 to overthrow President Mobutu of Zaire. By doing so, Rwanda hoped to eliminate Zaire as a haven for various Hutu rebel groups. Although Rwanda successfully overthrew Mobutu in a matter of months and replaced him with Laurent-Désiré Kabila, the rebels still managed to significantly

expand their operations in 1997. In fact, at least elements of the new Congolese government under Joseph Kabila came to support the Burundian insurgents by the early 2000s just as Mobutu had done previously.

In response to the deteriorating security situation, the government opted to organize a new paramilitary initiative. The military forced civilians to organize unarmed patrols to guard their communities against rebels. Though the state authorities claimed that these self-defense groups consisted of volunteers, civilians were generally coerced with threats of violence or fines. Most of the civilian militiamen were also poor Hutu, while Tutsi and wealthy or well-connected Hutu were generally exempted of the patrol duties.

As result of demands by Tutsi extremist politicians, the military also set up a special, armed training program for Tutsi militiamen; Hutu were not allowed to join this training. As these initiatives failed to halt the growth of the rebel movements, the Burundian military eventually decided to set up a new militia in Cibitoke Province, which was initially simply known as "the young men" (*les jeunes* or *abajeunes*). In contrast to previous self-defense groups which were either unarmed or dominated by Tutsi, the *abajeunes* were both armed as well as mostly Hutu. They consisted of ex-rebels and former civilian patrolmen who had proven themselves to be trustworthy. Trained, armed and supplied by the military, the *abajeunes* were a success. The program was thus expanded to the entire country; the *abajeunes* in southern Burundi soon became known as the "Guardians of the Peace". Numbering 3,000 fighters by late 1997, they were decisive in keeping the insurgents at bay.

In 1998, Buyoya and the opposition-led Hutu parliament reached an agreement to sign a transitional constitution, and Buyoya was sworn in as president. Formal peace talks with the rebels began at Arusha on 15 June 1998. The talks proved to be extremely difficult. Tanzanian ex-President Julius Nyerere acted as chief negotiator, and attempted to use caution and patience to achieve a solution. Upon Nyerere's natural death in 1999, Nelson Mandela assumed responsibility for the peace talks. He and other heads of states in the region increased the pressure on Burundi's political leadership, pressuring them to accept a government with participation of the rebel groups. Meanwhile, the civil war continued unabated, despite the efforts of the international community to facilitate the peace process. Though 1999 saw a reduction of fighting, the war again grew in intensity during the following two years.

Arusha Accords

After bitter negotiations, an agreement was finally reached which established a transitional government, where the presidency and vice-presidency would be rotated every 18 months, sharing power between the Hutus and Tutsis. While the Burundian government and three Tutsi groups signed the Arusha Accords ceasefire in August 2000, two leading Hutu rebel groups refused to participate, and the fighting continued. The Arusha talks closed on November 30, 2000. Twenty Tutsis and one British woman were killed on 28 December 2000, in the Titanic Express massacre.

As the Arusha Accords were gradually implemented, severe challenges remained. Several times, the peace process almost broke down. Even though some moderate Tutsi parties had signed the peace deal, they remained opposed to some of its provisions. Many Tutsi extremists refused to accept the Arusha Accords at all and refused any deal with the Hutu rebels. On 18 April 2001, an attempted coup against Buyoya failed. The putschists had wanted to prevent the power-

sharing deal from coming into effect. A group of extremist Tutsis also attempted to revive the "Puissance Auto-défense-Amasekanya" (PA-Amasekanya) ethnic militia in mid-2000 to resist the peace agreement, but the leaders of this faction were promptly jailed. On 23 July 2001, it was agreed that the transitional government would be led by Buyoya for 18 months, followed by Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu and FRODEBU leader. Furthermore, a reform of the Burundian military would be implemented as soon as possible; the latter was especially contentious among the Tutsi.

The transitional government was implemented in October 2001. Buyoya was sworn in as internationally recognized president in November, while the first South African peacekeepers arrived in Burundi. Despite this, the main Hutu rebel groups, CNDD-FDD and FNL, still refused to sign a ceasefire agreement. Instead, fighting intensified, as the FNL launched numerous attacks around Bujumbura. Some 300 boys were kidnapped from Museuma College on November 9, 2001. The army responded by launching an offensive against the rebel bases in Tenga forest in December, claiming to have killed 500 insurgents. The September 9, 2002 Itaba massacre left hundreds of unarmed civilians dead.

After being promised to be included in the new government, two wings of CNDD-FDD finally agreed to a ceasefire and joined the Arusha agreement on 3 December 2002. The PALIPEHUTU-FNL refused to enter negotiations with the government and continued its struggle.

On April 9, 2003, the force headquarters of the African Union Mission in Burundi was established in Bujumbura under South African Maj. Gen. Sipho Binda. As previously agreed, Buyoya stepped down, and Ndayizeye became President on 30 April 2003. In the following months, the CNDD-FDD faction of Pierre Nkurunziza was gradually integrated into the transitional government. A power-sharing deal was signed on 8 October 2003, and Nkurunziza was appointed Minister of State in charge of good governance and the general inspection of the state. On 18 October 2003, it was announced that the African Union Mission had reached full strength: 1,483 South Africans, 820 Ethiopians, and 232 personnel from Mozambique.

As the Arusha Accords were implemented, the peace process made substantial progress. The reform of the military proved remarkably successful, and the integration of CNDD-FDD fighters went well. In contrast to earlier attempts to ensure peace which had been sabotaged by army extremists, most of the military had become weary of the constant civil war by the early 2000s. Its Tutsi and Hutu troops proved to be willing to stay loyal to the new government. The United Nations Operation in Burundi also helped to stabilize the country.

In spite of these successes, the war had not yet ended. The FNL remained the only active rebel group, but it was still a capable fighting force and continued its attacks. In July 2003, a rebel raid on Bujumbura left 300 dead and 15,000 displaced. On December 29, 2003, Archbishop Michael Courtney, the papal nuncio for the country, was murdered. Confronted by the newly unified Burundian military and the international peacekeepers, as well as a war-weary population, the abilities of the FNL to wage an insurgency gradually whittled down. By late 2004, it had just about 1,000 fighters left, and its area of operations had been reduced to just Bujumbura Rural Province. In August 2004, the FNL claimed responsibility for killing 160 Congolese Tutsi refugees in a United Nations camp at Gatumba near the Congo border in Burundi. The attack was strongly condemned by the U.N. Security Council, which issued a statement of outrage at the fact that "most of the victims were women, children and babies who were shot dead and

burned in their shelters. The FNL attempted to deflect criticism by claiming that the victims had been Banyamulenge militants, but the Gatumba massacre proved to be a propaganda disaster. The group was consequently labelled as "terrorist" both internationally and in Burundi, weakening it politically. Confronted with its declining fortunes, the FNL signalled that it was willing to negotiate an end of its insurgency.

In 2005, many developments were made in the peace process. The president signed a law in January 2005 to initiate a new national army, consisting of Tutsi military forces and all but one of the Hutu rebel groups. The Constitution was approved by voters in a referendum—marking the first time Burundians had voted since 1994. They voted again in July during the parliamentary elections, postponed from November 2004, in which "the Government of Burundi and the Independent National Electoral Commission conducted a technically-sound election, carried out in an atmosphere of peace and security." The Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) ended up winning the parliamentary elections. Several months later, Pierre Nkurunziza from the Hutu FDD group was elected as president by the two Hutu-dominated houses of parliament.

After 12 years of living with a midnight-to-dawn curfew, Burundians were free to stay out late when the curfew was lifted on April 15, 2006, for the first time since 1993. This signified the most stable point in Burundian civil affairs since the assassination of Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye and the beginning of the civil war.

Matters continued to look promising after Burundi's last rebel group, the FNL, signed a ceasefire deal in Tanzania, "solidifying the end of a 12-year civil war." As part of the agreement, members of the FNL were to be assembled, demobilized, and integrated into the national army. Dissident parts of the FNL, most notably the National Liberation Forces – Icanzo (FNL–Icanzo), continued their insurgency, however, and only surrendered later on. In mid-April 2008, FNL rebels shelled the then-capital, Bujumbura, while fighting killed at least 33.

Rwanda War and Violence

Ethnic tension in Rwanda grew substantially during the colonial period. The two ethnic groups are actually very similar - they speak the same language, inhabit the same areas and follow the same traditions. When the Belgian colonists arrived in 1916, they produced identity cards classifying people according to their ethnicity. The Belgians considered the Tutsis to be superior to the Hutus. Not surprisingly, the Tutsis welcomed this idea, and for the next 20 years they enjoyed better jobs and educational opportunities than their neighbors.

Resentment among the Hutus gradually built up, culminating in a series of riots in 1959. More than 20,000 Tutsis were killed, and many more fled to the neighboring countries of Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. When Belgium relinquished power and granted Rwanda independence in 1962, the Hutus took their place. Over subsequent decades, the Tutsis were portrayed as the scapegoats for every crisis. This was still the case in the years before the 1994 genocide. The economic situation worsened and the incumbent president, Juvenal Habyarimana, began losing popularity. At the same time, Tutsi refugees in Uganda - supported by some moderate Hutus - were forming the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Mr. Kagame. Their aim was to overthrow Habyarimana and secure their right to return to their homeland.

Habyarimana chose to exploit this threat as a way to bring dissident Hutus back to his side, and Tutsis inside Rwanda were accused of being RPF collaborators. In August 1993, after several attacks and months of negotiation, a peace accord was signed between Habyarimana and the RPF, but it did little to stop the continued unrest.

When Habyarimana's plane was shot down at the beginning of April 1994, the effect was instantaneous and catastrophic. In Kigali, the presidential guard immediately initiated a campaign of retribution. Leaders of the political opposition were murdered, and almost immediately, the slaughter of Tutsis and moderate Hutus began. Within hours, recruits were dispatched all over the country to carry out a wave of mass murders. Boys were among those recruited into militia groups. The early organizers included military officials, politicians and businessmen, but soon many others joined in the mayhem. The extremist ethnic Hutu regime in office in 1994 appeared to believe that the only way it could maintain power was by eliminating the ethnic Tutsis completely. Encouraged by the presidential guard and radio propaganda, an unofficial militia group called the Interahamwe (meaning those who attack together) was mobilized. At its peak, this group was 30,000-strong.

Soldiers and police officers encouraged ordinary citizens to take part. In some cases, Hutu civilians were forced to murder their Tutsi neighbors by military personnel. Participants were often given incentives, such as money or food, and some were even told they could appropriate the land of the Tutsis they killed.

On the ground at least, the Rwandans were largely left alone by the international community. Most of the UN troops withdrew after the murder of 10 soldiers. The day after Habyarimana's death, the RPF renewed their assault on government forces, and numerous attempts by the UN to negotiate a ceasefire came to nothing.

Finally, in July, the RPF captured Kigali. The government collapsed and the RPF declared a ceasefire. As soon as it became apparent that the RPF was victorious, an estimated two million Hutus fled to Zaire (now called the Democratic Republic of Congo). These refugees include many who have since been implicated in the massacres.

At first, a multi-ethnic government was set up, with a Hutu, Pasteur Bizimungu as president and Mr. Kagame as his deputy. This alliance did not last, however, and Bizimungu was jailed on charges of inciting ethnic violence, while Mr. Kagame became president.

Although the killing in Rwanda was over, the presence of Hutu militias in DR Congo has led to years of conflict there, causing up to five million deaths. Rwanda's now Tutsi-led government has twice invaded its much larger neighbor, saying it wants to wipe out the Hutu forces. A Congolese Tutsi rebel group remains active, refusing to lay down arms, saying otherwise its community would be at risk of genocide. The United Nations, the world's largest peacekeeping force, has been unable to end the fighting.

DR Congo Wars and Violence

With up to six million dead and over two million displaced between 1998 and 2003, DR Congo was home to the deadliest conflict since World War II. At the height of the conflict, nine countries were fighting each other on Congolese soil. Millions more have been driven to the brink by starvation in the country that is the size of Western Europe. A brief history of the violence and conflict follows:

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide

In the wake of the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed, millions of Rwandan refugees flooded into the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. As a new Tutsi government was established in Rwanda after the genocide, more than two million Hutus sought refuge in eastern Congo.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that only 7% of these refugees were perpetrators of the genocide — often referred to as Interhamwe or FDLR (the Federation for the Liberation of Rwanda).

The First Congo War

In 1996 Rwanda and Uganda invaded the eastern DRC in an effort to root out the remaining perpetrators of the genocide.

A coalition comprised of the Ugandan and Rwandan armies, along with Congolese opposition leader Laurent Désiré Kabila, eventually defeated dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Laurent Désiré Kabila became president in May 1997 and in 1998 he ordered Rwandan and Ugandan forces to leave the eastern DRC, fearing annexation of the mineral-rich territory by the two regional powers.

Kabila's government received military support from Angola and Zimbabwe and other regional partners.

The Second Congo War

This conflict has often been referred to as Africa's World War, with nine countries fighting each other on Congolese soil. After a bodyguard shot and killed President Kabila in 2001, his son Joseph Kabila was appointed president at the age of 29.

The April 2002 Sun City Agreement, the ensuing July 2002 Pretoria Accord between Rwanda and Congo, as well as the Luanda Agreement between Uganda and Congo, put an official end to the war as the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo took power in July 2003.

In 2006 Joseph Kabila won the presidency in the DRC's first democratic elections in 40 years.

In 2008 the DRC and Rwanda joined forces to root out the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) in South and North Kivu provinces. As an ethnic Hutu group opposed to

the ethnic Tutsi influence, the FDLR is one of the last factions of Rwandan rebels active in the Congo. It was founded through an amalgamation of other groups of Rwandan refugees in September 2000 and was active during the latter phases of the Second Congo War and the subsequent insurgencies in Kivu.

In January 2009 the National Committee for the Defense of the People (CNDP) split and as part of a deal between Rwanda and the DRC, Kigali put CNDP leader Laurent Nkunda under house arrest. The remaining CNDP splinter faction, led by Bosco Ntaganda, was supposed to integrate into the national army. But instead, Ntaganda led a new rebel group, M23, which became active in eastern Congo in 2012.ⁱ

Ntaganda, also known as “the Terminator,” walked into the U.S. embassy in Kigali in March 2013 and surrendered to the International Criminal Court’s custody. Accused of thirteen counts of war crimes and five counts of crimes against humanity, Ntaganda was convicted in 2019 and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Current Conflicts in Eastern Congo

The peace process in eastern Congo continues to be fragile with multiple armed groups operating throughout the region, terrorizing civilians and blocking the path to long-term peace.¹

Eastern Congo Initiative: <https://www.easterncongo.org/about-drc/history-of-the-conflict/>

An indepth study of the conflict in the Kivu province can be found in an article by the Rift Valley Institute | Usalama project From CNDP to M23 The evolution of an armed movement in eastern Congo by Jason Stearns. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/51d2c87d4.pdf>

Watch these YouTube videos for additional information:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7o4iw981Aok> DR Congo Conflict: M23 Rebel Group Declares Unilateral Ceasefire (April 2022)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_dJ-NDB7yw DRC Conflict (2018)

Child Soldiers

Children were recruited and used extensively by both sides during the Burundi civil war of 1993–2005. The Burundian military regularly conscripted children between the ages of 7 and 16 for its militias, most importantly the Guardians of the Peace. It would threaten the parents with violence or fines to hand over their sons to the army, and the child soldiers themselves were often beaten during training. Thousands of child soldiers fought for the government in the civil war, though the exact number is not known. Hundreds were killed in combat. The Hutu rebels were also known to deploy large numbers of child soldiers; hundreds of child soldiers were in the

National Forces of Liberation (FNL) by 2004. As the Guardians of the Peace recruited ex-rebels into their ranks, some rebel child soldiers also fought for the government after their surrender or capture.

The recruitment of child soldiers by the military had been reduced by 2000. After the peace agreements brought the conflict to an end in 2005, the new constitution committed to not using children in direct combat. The parties to the conflict no longer recruited children in large numbers, but many remained active in the FNL, which had denounced the peace accord. By 2006, a reintegration program organized by UNICEF had led to the release of 3,000 children from the military and armed groups. According to Child Soldiers International, the majority of the children who took part in the program returned to farm and fish in their local communities, but nearly 600 returned to school. Some 1,800 former child soldiers received occupational training. Health care was provided for those with special needs and psychosocial support was provided through individual and group meetings.

Military Government and War in Uganda

In the early years of Ugandan independence supporters of a centralized state vied with those in favor of a loose federation and a strong role for tribally-based local kingdoms. The maneuvering reached a climax in 1966 when Prime Minister Milton Obote suspended the constitution and assumed all positions of power. Obote was deposed by a military coup in 1971 when Idi Amin seized control of the country. He ran a military dictatorship for the following eight years.

Amin's rule produced economic decline, social disintegration, and massive human rights violations. In addition, about 40,000 ethnic Indians with British passports were forced to leave Uganda. The loss of the entrepreneurial Indian minority left the country's economy in ruins.

Amin's rule ended after the Uganda-Tanzania War in which Tanzanian forces, aided by Ugandan exiles invaded Uganda. On April 11, 1979, the capital city of Kampala was captured and Amin fled with his remaining forces to Libya.

After Amin's removal, the Uganda National Liberation Front formed an interim government, but this was shortly replaced by a military commission. Elections in 1980 returned the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) to power under Milton Obote's leadership, with the former chairman of the military commission, Paulo Muwanga, as vice president. Conflict and violence continued. The security forces had one of the world's worst human rights records and they laid waste to a substantial section of the country near Kampala in an effort to stamp out an insurgency.

The insurgency continued, however, - the so-called "bush war" which was conducted by the National Resistance Army (NRA) under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni and other rebel groups. President Obote was overthrown in July, 1985. The new regime opened negotiations with the insurgent forces but human rights violations continued. Although agreeing in late 1985 to a ceasefire, the NRA continued fighting and seized Kampala in late January 1986. Museveni's forces organized a government with Museveni as president. This government put an end to human rights abuses and initiated substantial reform; however from 1986 to 1994 a variety of rebel groups waged a civil war against the government.

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND CIVIL WAR

In the late 1990's Uganda was involved in several conflicts in neighboring countries, including the First Congo War and the Second Congo War.

In 2005, the Ugandan Parliament voted to lift presidential term limits and Museveni has remained in power since that time. He was re-elected in 2021 under a cloud of complaints of government violence and disinformation, suppression of independent media, the arrest of opposition leaders, the shutdown of the Internet and harassment of observers.

REFUGEE CAMPS

This fact sheet, published by the UNHCR in December, 2021, provides detailed information about life and conditions in the 3 camps in Tanzania.

Tanzania has a long history of hosting refugees. Currently, the country hosts 246,780 refugees and asylum-seekers (09 December 2021), mainly from Burundi and DR Congo. The strict encampment policy limits refugees' freedom of movement, access to employment and public services, leaving them overwhelmingly dependent on humanitarian assistance. Chronic underfunding continues to hamper the humanitarian response. More funding is required to address the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Tanzania.

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/1689>



UNHCR supports the Government of Tanzania in discharging its international obligations, fulfilling the organization's core objectives to provide refugees, asylum seekers and other people of concern with international protection, and to seek durable solutions to displacement.

In 2014, Tanzania made a landmark decision to naturalize some 162,000 Burundian refugees who fled to Tanzania in 1972, marking the largest group in UNHCR's history to which naturalization was offered by a country of first asylum as a solution to decades in exile.

In 2017, the governments of Tanzania, Burundi, and UNHCR agreed to assist refugees who wish to voluntarily repatriate from Tanzania to Burundi. Both governments and UNHCR agreed to

REFUGEE CAMPS

uphold the principle of voluntariness, and noted that while some refugees may opt to return, others will continue to be in need of international protection. More than 70,000 refugees have returned since the exercise began in September 2017.

Resettlement continues to be used as a protection tool for refugees. In June 2015, Tanzania embarked on a five year Group Resettlement Programme aimed at resettling approximately 33,000 Congolese refugees to the USA. Since 2012, over 20,000 individuals have departed to the USA, Australia, and Canada. Tanzania is currently the largest resettlement country for the USA worldwide.

UNHCR works primarily with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), its direct government counterpart in Tanzania, and maintains partnerships critical to effective operations with other Government entities and NGO partners.

UNHCR works closely with other UN agencies through the UN Reform, Delivering as One initiative and participates in the UN Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP II) 2016-2021, under the Resilience Thematic Results Group. UNHCR also supports the United Nations Kigoma Joint Programme, an area-based program with an increased focus on supporting host communities and strengthening the link between humanitarian and development initiatives in the region.

Breakdown by Location [JSON](#)

Location name	Source	Data date	Population
Nyarugusu Camp	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	129,107
Nduta	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	77,160
Other	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	21,507
Katumba	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	10,844
Ulyankulu	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	4,907
Mishamo	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	3,199
Dar es Salaam	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	196
Chogo	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	150

Breakdown by Country of Origin [JSON.CSV](#)

Country of origin	Source	Data date	Population
Burundi	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	145,279
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	79,839
Others	<i>UNHCR, Government</i>	31 Jan 2022	445

REFUGEE CAMPS

Source of information about the refugee camps: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/tza>

Additional resources on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/NRcJmQW1LQs> video of camp in Tanzania





<https://www.unhcr.org/afr>

Recent Article about Burundian Refugees Relocated to Tanzania

Over 21,000 Burundian refugees relocated to Tanzania's Nduta camp as camp consolidation concludes

By Edward Ogolla and Magdalena Kasubi in Mtendeli camp, Tanzania | 08 December 2021



Jambatiste Ntakilumana poses with some of his belongings during the relocation of refugees from Mtendeli to Nduta refugee camp, Tanzania. © UNHCR/Magdalena Kasubi

Over 21,000 refugees and asylum seekers in northern Tanzania have been relocated to Nduta refugee camp as part of a camp consolidation exercise led by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and the Government of Tanzania. On 6 December, the last convoy departed Mtendeli refugee camp with 443 people.

The camp consolidation began five months ago following an increase in the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees.

“Consolidating camps gives UNHCR an opportunity to improve our delivery of life-saving assistance and protection to refugees and asylum seekers, particularly in the current reality of dwindling humanitarian resources,” said George Kuchio, UNHCR’s Deputy Representative in Tanzania. “The remaining refugee population can be more efficiently hosted and together with other humanitarian partners, we can better respond to their needs.”

Kuchio expressed his gratitude to the government of Tanzania and in particular, the community in Mtendeli for generously hosting refugees for the last five years.

Upon arrival at Nduta camp, the newly relocated refugees received shelter materials and other household items to help them settle in. They will also be able to access health and education services as well as protection services.



A Burundian mother and her child wait to relocate from Mtendeli to Nduta refugee camp, Tanzania. UNHCR/Magdalena Kasubi

“Now that we are moving to Nduta, we call upon UNHCR and the government to support us in strengthening peaceful coexistence with the host community, just like it was in Mtendeli,” said Jambatiste Ntakilutimana,

who had been living in the former camp with his three children.

Mtendeli refugee camp was established in 2016 after tens of thousands of asylum seekers sought refuge in Tanzania, having fled conflict in Burundi. UNHCR is working with the government and humanitarian partners to ensure that schools, hospitals and community centers are handed over to district authorities and provide services to the host community. Efforts are ongoing to rehabilitate the environment through activities such as tree planting.

“A sudden influx of a significant number of people within a restricted area can have significant effects on the environment,” said Kuchio. “We are committed to help the community in Mtendeli to restore forests and mitigate the environmental impact,” added Kuchio.

With the closure of Mtendeli camp, some 206,000 refugees are now staying in Nduta and Nyarugusu camps, down from 226,000 refugees at the start of 2021. Tanzania currently hosts over 246,000 refugees and asylum seekers mainly from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.