

RWANDA



Background:

In 1959, three years before independence from Belgium, 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 the former Zaire. Since then, most of the refugees have returned to Rwanda, but about 10,000 that remain in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo have formed an extremist insurgency bent on retaking Rwanda, much as the RPF tried in 1990. Despite substantial international assistance and political reforms - including Rwanda's first local elections in March 1999 and its first post-genocide presidential and legislative elections in August and September 2003, respectively - the country continues to struggle to boost investment and agricultural output, and ethnic reconciliation is complicated by the real and perceived Tutsi political dominance. Kigali's increasing centralization and intolerance of dissent, the nagging Hutu extremist insurgency across the border, and Rwandan involvement in two wars in recent years in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to hinder Rwanda's efforts to escape its bloody legacy.

Location: Central Africa, east of Democratic Republic of the Congo

Geographic coordinates: 2 00 S, 30 00 E

Area: total: 26,338 sq km land: 24,948 sq km water: 1,390 sq km

Coastline: 0 km (landlocked)

Climate: temperate; two rainy seasons (February to April, November to January); mild in mountains with frost and snow possible

Terrain: mostly grassy uplands and hills; relief is mountainous with altitude declining from west to east

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

Environment - current issues:

deforestation results from uncontrolled cutting of trees for fuel; overgrazing; soil exhaustion; soil erosion; widespread poaching

Population: 8,440,820

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected

Population growth rate: 2.43%

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population

Languages: Kinyarwanda (official) universal Bantu vernacular, French (official), English (official), Kiswahili (Swahili) used in commercial centers

Country name: Republic of Rwanda

Government type: republic; presidential, multiparty system

Capital: Kigali

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

Legal system: based on German and Belgian civil law systems and customary law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Executive branch: *chief of state:* President Paul KAGAME

International organization participation:

ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AU, CEPGL, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, ILO, IMF, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO (correspondent), ITU, MIGA, NAM, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WToO, WTO

Economy - overview: Rwanda is a poor rural country with about 90% of the population engaged in (mainly subsistence) agriculture. It is the most densely populated country in Africa; landlocked with few natural resources and minimal industry. Primary foreign exchange earners are coffee and tea. The 1994 genocide decimated Rwanda's fragile economic base, severely impoverished the population, particularly women, and eroded the country's ability to attract private and external investment. However, Rwanda has made substantial progress in stabilizing and rehabilitating its economy to pre-1994 levels, although poverty levels are higher now. GDP has rebounded and inflation has been curbed. Export earnings, however, have been hindered by low beverage prices, depriving the country of much needed hard currency. Despite Rwanda's fertile ecosystem, food production often does not keep pace with population growth, requiring food imports. Rwanda continues to receive substantial aid money and was approved for IMF-World Bank Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative debt relief in late 2000. Kigali's high defense expenditures have caused tension between the government and international donors and lending agencies. An energy shortage and instability in neighboring states may slow growth in 2005, while the lack of adequate transportation linkages to other countries continues to handicap export growth.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$10.43 billion
GDP - real growth rate: 0.9%
GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$1,300
GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture:* 41.1%
industry: 21.2%
services: 37.7%
Investment (gross fixed): 20% of GDP
Population below poverty line: 60%
Distribution of family income - Gini index: 28.9
Inflation rate (consumer prices): 7%
Labor force: 4.6 million
Unemployment rate: NA
Budget: *revenues:* \$354.5 million
expenditures: \$385 million, including capital expenditures of NA
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
Oil - production: 0 bbl/day
Oil - consumption: 5,300 bbl/day
Oil - proved reserves: 0 bbl
Natural gas - proved reserves: 28.32 billion cu m
Current account balance: \$-212.5 million
Exports: \$69.78 million f.o.b.
Exports - commodities: coffee, tea, hides, tin ore
Imports: \$260 million f.o.b.
Imports - commodities: foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, steel, petroleum products, cement and construction material
Imports - partners: Kenya 21.9%, Germany 7.8%, Belgium 7.7%, Uganda 5.9%, France 5.9%
Currency: Rwandan franc (RWF)
Exchange rates: Rwandan francs per US dollar - 574.62 (2004), 537.66 (2003), 476.33 (2002), 442.8 (2001), 393.44 (2000)
Highways: *total:* 12,000 km
paved: 996 km
unpaved: 11,004 km
Waterways: Lac Kivu navigable by shallow-draft barges and native craft
Ports and harbors: Cyangugu, Gisenyi, Kibuye
Airports: 9