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CATEGORIES

Congo, Democratic Republic of the



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Background:  

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 sham elections, as well as through the use of brutal force. Ethnic strife and civil war, touched off by a massive 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 backed by Rwanda and Uganda and fronted by Laurent KABILA. He renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), but in August 1998 his regime was itself challenged by a second insurrection again backed by Rwanda and Uganda. Troops from Angola, Chad, Namibia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe intervened to support KABILA's regime. A cease-fire was signed in July 1999 by the DRC, Congolese armed rebel groups, Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe 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 as president and four vice presidents represented the former government, former rebel groups, the political opposition, and civil society. The transitional government held a successful constitutional referendum in December 2005 and elections for the presidency, National Assembly, and provincial legislatures in 2006. KABILA was inaugurated president in December 2006. The National Assembly was installed in September 2006. Its president, Vital KAMERHE, was chosen in December. Provincial assemblies were constituted in early 2007, and elected governors and national senators in January 2007.

Location:  

Central Africa, northeast of Angola

Geographic coordinates:  

0 00 N, 25 00 E

Map references:  

Africa

Area:   

total: 2,345,410 sq km

land: 2,267,600 sq km

water: 77,810 sq km

Area - comparative:  

slightly less than one-fourth the size of the US

Land boundaries:  

total: 10,730 km

border countries: Angola 2,511 km (of which 225 km is the boundary of Angola's discontinuous Cabinda Province), Burundi 233 km, Central African Republic 1,577 km, Republic of the Congo 2,410 km, Rwanda 217 km, Sudan 628 km, Tanzania 459 km, Uganda 765 km, Zambia 1,930 km

Coastline:  

37 km

Maritime claims:  

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: boundaries with neighbors

Climate:  

tropical; hot and humid in equatorial river basin; cooler and drier in southern highlands; cooler and wetter in eastern highlands; north of Equator - wet season (April to October), dry season (December to February); south of Equator - wet season (November to March), dry season (April to October)

Terrain:  

vast central basin is a low-lying plateau; mountains in east


Elevation extremes:  

lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m

highest point: Pic Marguerite on Mont Ngaliema (Mount Stanley) 5,110 m

Natural resources:  

cobalt, copper, niobium, tantalum, petroleum, industrial and gem diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, uranium, coal, hydropower, timber

Land use:  

arable land: 2.86%

permanent crops: 0.47%

other: 96.67% (2005)

Irrigated land:  

110 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources:  

1,283 cu km (2001)

**Freshwater withdrawal
(domestic/industrial/agricultural):**  

total: 0.36 cu km/yr (53%/17%/31%)
per capita: 6 cu m/yr (2000)

Natural hazards:  



periodic droughts in south; Congo River floods (seasonal); in the east, in the Great Rift Valley, there are active volcanoes

Environment - current issues:  

poaching threatens wildlife populations; water pollution; deforestation; refugees responsible for significant deforestation, soil erosion, and wildlife poaching; mining of minerals (coltan - a mineral used in creating capacitors, diamonds, and gold) causing environmental damage

Environment - international agreements:  

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: Environmental Modification




Geography - note:  

straddles equator; has narrow strip of land that controls the lower Congo River and is only outlet to South Atlantic Ocean; dense tropical rain forest in central river basin and eastern highlands

People

Congo, Democratic Republic of the

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Population:   

66,514,504



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, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2008 est.)

Age structure:  




0-14 years: 47.1% (male 15,711,817/female 15,594,449)




15-64 years: 50.4% (male 16,672,399/female 16,875,468)




65 years and over: 2.5% (male 674,766/female 985,607) (2008 est.)



Median age:  
total: 16.3 years
male: 16.1 years
female: 16.5 years (2008 est.)




Population growth rate:   
3.236% (2008 est.)

Birth rate:   
43 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)

Death rate:   
11.88 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)




Net migration rate:   
1.24 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)




Sex ratio:  
at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.01 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 0.99 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.68 male(s)/female
total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

Infant mortality rate:   
total: 83.11 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 91.14 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 74.83 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)



Life expectancy at birth:   
total population: 53.98 years
male: 52.22 years
female: 55.8 years (2008 est.)

Total fertility rate:   
6.28 children born/woman (2008 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:   
4.2% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:   
1.1 million (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths:   
100,000 (2003 est.)

Major infectious diseases:  
degree of risk: very high
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne diseases: malaria, plague, and African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness)

water contact disease: schistosomiasis
animal contact disease: rabies (2008)

Nationality:  

noun: Congolese (singular and plural)
adjective: Congolese or Congo

Ethnic groups:  

over 200 African ethnic groups of which the majority are Bantu; the four largest tribes - Mongo, Luba, Kongo (all Bantu), and the Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic) make up about 45% of the population

Religions:  

Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 20%, Kimbanguist 10%, Muslim 10%, other (includes syncretic sects and indigenous beliefs) 10%

Languages:  




French (official), Lingala (a lingua franca trade language), Kingwana (a dialect of Kiswahili or Swahili), Kikongo, Tshiluba

Literacy:  

definition: age 15 and over can read and write French, Lingala, Kingwana, or Tshiluba
total population: 67.2%
male: 80.9%
female: 54.1% (2001 est.)

School life  

expectancy *total:* 9 years
(primary to *male:* 10 years
tertiary *female:* 8 years (2003)
education):

Education   
expenditures: NA

Government **Congo, Democratic Republic of the**

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Country name:  

conventional long form: Democratic Republic of the Congo
conventional short form: none
local long form: Republique Democratique du Congo
local short form: none
former: Congo Free State, Belgian Congo, Congo/Leopoldville, Congo/Kinshasa, Zaire
abbreviation: DRC

Government  

type: republic

Capital:  

name: Kinshasa

geographic coordinates: 4 19 S, 15 18 E

time difference: UTC+1 (six hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative  

divisions: 10 provinces (provinces, singular - province) and 1 city* (ville); Bandundu, Bas-Congo, Equateur, Kasai-Occidental, Kasai-Oriental, Katanga, Kinshasa*, Maniema, Nord-Kivu, Orientale, Sud-Kivu
note: according to the Constitution adopted in December 2005, the current administrative divisions will be subdivided into 26 new provinces by 2009

Independence:  

30 June 1960 (from Belgium)

National  

holiday: Independence Day, 30 June (1960)

Constitution:  

18 February 2006

Legal system:  

a new constitution was adopted by referendum 18 December 2005; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage:  

18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Executive  

branch: *chief of state:* President Joseph KABILA (since 17 January 2001); note - following the assassination of his father, Joseph KABILA succeeded to the presidency which he retained through the 2003-06 transition; he was subsequently elected president in October 2006
head of government: Prime Minister Adolphe MUZITO (since 10 October 2008)

cabinet: Ministers of State appointed by the president

elections: under the new constitution the president is elected by popular vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); elections last held 30 July 2006 and 29 October 2006 (next to be held in 2011); prime minister appointed by the president

election results: Joseph KABILA elected president; percent of vote (second round) - Joseph KABILA 58%, Jean-Pierre BEMBA Gombo 42%

note: Joseph KABILA succeeded his father, Laurent Desire KABILA, following the latter's assassination in January 2001; negotiations with rebel leaders led to the establishment of a transitional government in July 2003 with free elections held on 30 July 2006 and 29 October 2006 confirming Joseph KABILA as president

Legislative  

branch: bicameral legislature consists of a National Assembly (500 seats; 61

members elected by majority vote in single-member constituencies, 439 members elected by open list proportional-representation in multi-member constituencies; to serve five-year terms) and a Senate (108 seats; members elected by provincial assemblies to serve five-year terms)

elections: National Assembly - last held 30 July 2006 (next to be held in 2011); Senate - last held 19 January 2007 (next to be held by 2012)

election results: National Assembly - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PPRD 111, MLC 64, PALU 34, MSR 27, FR 26, RCD 15, independents 63, others 160 (includes 63 political parties that won 10 or fewer seats); Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PPRD 22, MLC 14, FR 7, RCD 7, PDC 6, CDC 3, MSR 3, PALU 2, independents 26, others 18 (political parties that won a single seat)

Judicial branch:  

Constitutional Court; Appeals Court or Cour de Cassation; Council of State; High Military Court; plus civil and military courts and tribunals

Political parties and leaders:  

Christian Democrat Party or PDC [Jose ENDUNDO]; Congolese Rally for Democracy or RCD [Azarias RUBERWA]; Convention of Christian Democrats or CDC; Forces of Renewal or FR [Mbusa NYAMWISI]; Movement for the Liberation of the Congo or MLC [Jean-Pierre BEMBA]; People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy or PPRD [Joseph KABILA]; Social Movement for Renewal or MSR [Pierre LUMBI]; Unified Lumumbist Party or PALU [Antoine GIZENGA]; Union for Democracy and Social Progress or UDPS [Etienne TSHISEKEDI]; Union of Mobutuist Democrats or UDEMO [MOBUTU Nzanga]

Political pressure groups and leaders:  

MONUC - UN organization working with the government; FARDC (Forces Armees de la Republique du Congo) - Army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo which commits atrocities on citizens; FDLA (Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda) - Rwandan militia group

International organization participation:  

ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AU, CEPGL, COMESA, FAO, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO (suspended), ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, NAM, OIF, OPCW, PCA, SADC, UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:  

chief of mission: Ambassador Faida MITIFU

chancery: 1800 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC

20009: note - Consular Office at 1726 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20036

telephone: [1] (202) 234-7690, 7691

FAX: [1] (202) 234-2609

Diplomatic representation from the US:  

chief of mission: Ambassador William GARVELINK

embassy: 310 Avenue des Aviateurs, Kinshasa

mailing address: Unit 31550, APO AE 09828

telephone: [243] (81) 556-0151

FAX: [243] (81) 556-0175

Flag description:  

sky blue field divided diagonally from the lower hoist corner to upper fly corner by a red stripe bordered by two narrow yellow stripes; a yellow, five-pointed star appears in the upper hoist corner




Economy

Congo, Democratic Republic of the

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Economy - overview:  

The economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo - a nation endowed with vast potential wealth - is slowly recovering from two decades of decline. Conflict, which began in August 1998, dramatically reduced national output and government revenue, increased external debt, and resulted in the deaths of more than 3.5 million people from violence, famine, and disease. Foreign businesses curtailed operations due to uncertainty about the outcome of the conflict, lack of infrastructure, and the difficult operating environment. Conditions began to improve in late 2002 with the withdrawal of a large portion of the invading foreign troops. The transitional government reopened relations with international financial institutions and international donors, and President KABILA has begun implementing reforms, although progress is slow and the International Monetary Fund curtailed their program for the DRC at the end of March 2006 because of fiscal overruns. Much economic activity still occurs in the informal sector, and is not reflected in GDP data. Renewed activity in the mining sector, the source of most export income, boosted Kinshasa's fiscal position and GDP growth. Government reforms and improved security may lead to increased government revenues, outside budget assistance, and foreign direct investment, although an uncertain legal framework, corruption, and a lack of transparency in government policy are continuing long-term problems.

GDP (purchasing power parity):   
\$19.03 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official  

exchange rate: \$10.14 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real   

growth rate: 7% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita   

(PPP): \$300 (2007 est.)

GDP -  



composition by *agriculture: 55%*

sector: *industry: 11%*

services: 34% (2000 est.)

Labor force:   

15 million (2006 est.)

Labor force - by  

occupation: *agriculture: NA%*

industry: NA%

services: NA%

Unemployment   

rate: NA%

Household  

income or *lowest 10%: NA%*

consumption by *highest 10%: NA%*

percentage

share:

Budget:  

revenues: \$700 million

expenditures: \$2 billion (2006 est.)

Inflation rate   

(consumer 16.7% (2007 est.)

prices):

Central bank   

discount rate: 5.25% (31 December 2007)

Commercial   

bank prime NA (31 December 2007)

lending rate:

Stock of money:   

\$597 million (31 December 2007)

Stock of quasi   

money: \$677.9 million (31 December 2007)

Stock of   

domestic credit: \$559.5 million (31 December 2007)




Agriculture -  

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

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

Industries:  

mining (diamonds, gold, copper, cobalt, coltan zinc), mineral processing, consumer products (including textiles, footwear, cigarettes, processed foods and beverages), cement, commercial ship repair

Industrial production growth rate:    NA%

Electricity - production:    7.341 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - consumption:    5.272 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - exports:   1.8 billion kWh (2005)




Electricity - imports:   6 million kWh (2005)




Oil - production:    19,750 bbl/day (2005 est.)




Oil - consumption:    11,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)




Oil - exports:    20,750 bbl/day (2004)




Oil - imports:    8,220 bbl/day (2006 est.)




Oil - proved reserves:    187 million bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas - production:    0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - consumption:    0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - exports:    0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - imports:    0 cu m (2005)

Natural gas - proved reserves:    950.5 million cu m (1 January 2006 est.)



Current account balance:    -\$402 million (2007 est.)

Exports:   

\$1.587 billion f.o.b. (2006)

Exports -  



commodities: diamonds, copper, crude oil, coffee, cobalt

Exports -  



partners: Belgium 22.8%, China 20.9%, Brazil 12.1%, US 9.5%, Finland 8.8%, France 6.6%, Zambia 5.8% (2007)

Imports:   

\$2.263 billion f.o.b. (2006)

Imports -  

commodities: foodstuffs, mining and other machinery, transport equipment, fuels

Imports -  

partners: South Africa 22.2%, Belgium 10.1%, Zambia 8.8%, Zimbabwe 7.3%, France 6.7%, Kenya 6.2%, US 4%, Cote d'Ivoire 4% (2007)

Debt - external:   

\$10 billion (2006 est.)

Market value of   

publicly traded \$NA
shares:

Currency (code):  




Congolese franc (CDF)

Exchange rates:  

Congolese francs (CDF) per US dollar - NA (2007), 464.69 (2006), 437.86 (2005), 401.04 (2004), 405.34 (2003)

Communications Congo, Democratic Republic of the

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Telephones -   

main lines in 9,700 (2006)
use:

Telephones -   

mobile cellular: 6.592 million (2007)

Telephone  

system: *general assessment:* inadequate; state-owned fixed-line operator has been unable to expand fixed-line connections and there are now fewer than 10,000 connections - less than 1 per 1000 persons; given the backdrop of a wholly inadequate fixed-line infrastructure, the use of cellular services has surged and subscribership in 2007 reached 6.6 million - 10 per 100 persons

domestic: barely adequate wire and microwave radio relay service in and between urban areas; domestic satellite system with 14 earth stations

international: country code - 243; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat

(Atlantic Ocean) (2007)

Radio broadcast stations:   AM 3, FM 11, shortwave 2 (2001)

Television broadcast stations:   4 (2001)

Internet country code:   .cd



Internet hosts:    3,211 (2008)



Internet users:    230,400 (2007)

Transportation Congo, Democratic Republic of the




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Airports:    237 (2007)

Airports - with paved runways:  
total: 26
over 3,047 m: 4
2,438 to 3,047 m: 2
1,524 to 2,437 m: 17
914 to 1,523 m: 2
under 914 m: 1 (2007)

Airports - with unpaved runways:  
total: 211
1,524 to 2,437 m: 17
914 to 1,523 m: 95
under 914 m: 99 (2007)

Pipelines:   gas 62 km; oil 71 km (2007)



Railways:   
total: 5,138 km
narrow gauge: 3,987 km 1.067-m gauge (858 km electrified); 125 km 1.000-m gauge; 1,026 km 0.600-m gauge (2006)

Roadways:   
total: 153,497 km
paved: 2,794 km
unpaved: 150,703 km (2004)

Waterways:    15,000 km (2005)

Merchant   



marine: *total:* 1
by type: petroleum tanker 1
foreign-owned: 1 (Congo, Republic of the 1) (2008)



Ports and terminals:   Banana, Boma, Bukavu, Bumba, Goma, Kalemie, Kindu, Kinshasa, Kisangani, Matadi, Mbandaka


Military

Congo, Democratic Republic of the



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Military branches:   Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces d'Armees de la Republique Democratique du Congo, FARDC): Army, National Navy (La Marine Nationale), Congolese Air Force (Force Aerienne Congolaise, FAC) (2008)

Military service age and obligation:   18-45 years of age for military service

Manpower available for military service:   *males age 16-49:* 14,101,263 (2008 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:   *males age 16-49:* 8,562,989 (2008 est.)



Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:  
male: 783,762
female: 780,922 (2008 est.)

Military expenditures:    2.5% of GDP (2006)



Transnational Issues

Congo, Democratic Republic of the

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Disputes - international:   heads of the Great Lakes states and UN pledged in 2004 to abate tribal, rebel, and militia fighting in the region, including northeast Congo, where the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), organized in 1999, maintains over 16,500 uniformed peacekeepers; members of Uganda's Lords Resistance Army forces continue to seek refuge in Congo's Garamba National Park as peace talks with the Uganda government evolve; the location of the boundary in the broad Congo River with the Republic of the Congo is indefinite except in the Pool Malebo/Stanley Pool area; Uganda and DROC dispute Rukwanzi island in Lake Albert and other areas on the Semliki River with hydrocarbon potential; boundary commission continues discussions over Congolese-administered triangle of land on the right bank of the Lunkinda river claimed by

Zambia near the DROC village of Pweto

Refugees and internally displaced persons:  

refugees (country of origin): 132,295 (Angola); 37,313 (Rwanda); 17,777 (Burundi); 13,904 (Uganda); 6,181 (Sudan); 5,243 (Republic of Congo)

IDPs: 1.4 million (fighting between government forces and rebels since mid-1990s; most IDPs are in eastern provinces) (2007)

Trafficking in persons:  

current situation: Democratic Republic of the Congo is a source and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation; much of this trafficking occurs within the country's unstable eastern provinces and is perpetrated by armed groups outside government control

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - Democratic Republic of the Congo is on the Tier 2 Watch List for its failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking in persons in 2007; while some significant initial advances were noted, the government's capacity to apprehend, convict, or imprison traffickers remained weak; the government lacks sufficient financial, technical, and human resources to effectively address not only trafficking crimes, but also to provide basic levels of security in some parts of the country (2008)

Illicit drugs:  

one of Africa's biggest producers of cannabis, but mostly for domestic consumption; while rampant corruption and inadequate supervision leaves the banking system vulnerable to money laundering, the lack of a well-developed financial system limits the country's utility as a money-laundering center

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