

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

## Information for applicants

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo covers an area of 2,344,885 km<sup>2</sup>, making it Africa's second largest country and almost seven times the size of Germany. It is home to the largest surviving areas of rainforest in Africa, with the Congo Basin and its tropical rainforests accounting for around 60% of the nation's territory. As a result, the Republic has come to be known as the Green Heart of Africa. In the east especially, the Congo Basin is bordered by mountain ranges, rising to over 4,000 and 5,000 metres in the case of the Virunga and Rwenzori mountains respectively. The 4,374-kilometre Congo River is the largest and longest in the country and the second longest in Africa after the Nile.

### Climate and sights

Due to its huge size and different altitudes, the DR Congo has a particularly varied climate. Straddling the equator, the nation has an equatorial climate, being consistently warm and humid, though there are nuances depending on altitude and latitude. The central region of DR Congo experiences heavy rainfall throughout the year, while temperatures remain constant at around 26°C. By contrast, the north and south of the country alternate between a rainy season (eight months of the year) and a dry season. Snowfall can even be found on the highest peaks and glaciers on Mount Stanley. Mid- and high-altitude areas have a temperate or Afro-alpine climate.

DR Congo boasts five national parks with UNESCO World Heritage status and has the widest variety of

great apes in the world, with three of the four known species: gorillas, bonobos and chimpanzees.

Kinshasa especially offers a good range of cultural activities, with many stages for live music, theatre and dance, and several festivals. Its bars and restaurants also make for a vibrant night-life. Weekends are ideal for visiting sandy beaches on the shores of the Congo River or for enjoying boat trips and water sports on the river itself.

### Medical care

Kinshasa has a number of hospitals and specialists providing satisfactory care. Outside of the major cities, medical care is basic and it is difficult to access emergency treatment for more complicated issues.

### Accommodation and quality of life

For security reasons, expatriate GIZ staff members in Kinshasa live in the Gombe district. Rents are higher here than in Europe, with a family of four typically paying around EUR 4,000 per month or more. GIZ provides support in this context by substantially subsidising the payments. Rents in eastern Congo and other provinces are significantly lower.

### Shops and services

You can find low-priced seasonal fruit and vegetables at Kinshasa's bustling markets. It is always advisable to opt for varieties grown without the use of pesticides. European products are readily available in the capital, though for much higher

prices. As far as high-quality clothing, shoes and cosmetics are concerned, it is best to bring them back with you from home on your next visit or find a traditional local tailor. In the east of the country, most of the produce on sale is regional. There is less choice, but the items are fresher and cheaper.

## Accompanying partners and children

DR Congo is a good location for accompanying partners. Those with an official passport are issued with a 'Visa de Service' one to two weeks after arriving in the country, allowing them to conclude an employment contract with international organisations. Additionally, many local NGOs and private companies are looking for foreign workers and prefer to employ accompanying partners. Salaries are usually set at the local level, with the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to strengthening an engaged civil society.

**Schools:** Kinshasa has French, Belgian, Turkish and American schools, as well as a private international school (Jewels). Our staff members have had positive experiences with many of these schools.

**Childcare:** For younger children, we recommend 'Les Oisillons' private kindergarten/pre-school and the British kindergarten.

## Find out more

[https://www.auswaertiges-  
amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen/kongodemokratische-republik-node](https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen/kongodemokratische-republik-node)

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