

Rwanda

Information for applicants

Republic of Rwanda

Rwanda is a densely populated landlocked country in eastern Africa. It borders Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. With its hilly landscape, Rwanda is also known as the 'land of a thousand hills'. Rwanda was a German colony from 1884 to 1916, after which it became a Belgian UN mandate territory. It gained independence in 1962. Due to structural problems, a high population density and conflicts between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups – which culminated in the 1994 Tutsi genocide – the country was among the poorest in Africa. The country has made significant economic progress in recent years, achieved among other things by exploiting raw materials in the eastern Congo provinces. The governing party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, controls major segments of the economy.

Medical care

There is a network of government-run hospitals in major cities. The University Hospital in Kigali is clean and decent in parts, but, like many government-run hospitals, it suffers from a lack of materials. While the University Hospital in Butare is certainly suitable for primary care and stabilising of patients with serious illnesses/injuries, you should seek to be transferred to Kigali as soon as possible, and subsequently evacuated from there. Kigali also has private medical services that cover the main health conditions. The King Faisal Hospital is the best choice available if you need to stay in hospital. However, as a whole, patients should return to

Germany to have serious health problems treated, especially cardiovascular conditions. The King Faisal is a good base from which to organise an evacuation if necessary. The Bio Medical Center is a good provider of laboratory tests, and the King Faisal Hospital is the best choice for other technical examination methods like X-ray, ultrasound etc.

Quality of living, finding accommodation

There is a sufficient supply of suitable accommodation in Kigali. The local GIZ office will help you find accommodation, enlisting the help of real estate brokers if necessary.

Shops and services

The currency is the RWF (Rwandan franc). USD and euros can be exchanged easily at banks, larger hotels and exchange offices.

Climate

Despite of the country's proximity to the equator, the climate is quite temperate and damp due to the elevation. The hot equatorial diurnal climate is overlaid by the seasonal East African climate, and moderated by the high elevation. There are no significant temperature fluctuations during the year, but temperatures vary with elevation. There are two rainy seasons in line with the East African monsoons, roughly between September and

December and between February and early June. 40% of the annual precipitation occurs between March and May. The climate and in particular the precipitation are highly irregular. Again and again, abnormal droughts, excessive rain and hail threaten crops and cause famine.

Accompanying partners

Unmarried accompanying partners are not entitled to a permanent visa. Arrangements must be made with the Rwandan authorities on a case-by-case basis. The government is still hostile to sexual minorities, and is even threatening to intensify this hostility. Under the 'moral laws' in the Criminal Code, convicted homosexuals can be given lengthy prison sentences and are subjected to permanent repression and intimidation. A new draft law would punish people who have or support sexual contact with people of the same gender.

Schools

Kigali has several international schools, with most teaching classes in French.

Childcare

There are also childcare services for kindergarten children.

Good to know

Everyday life in Rwanda is still heavily influenced by the 1994 genocide, in which roughly 1,000,000 people, both Tutsi and Hutus suspected of supporting them, were murdered.

Children in particular suffer from the after-effects of the genocide. According to UNICEF, 600,000 children are growing up without parents, or with just one parent and in abject poverty. According to UNICEF estimates, there are roughly 28,000 'child-headed households' in Rwanda. Over 100,000 boys and girls in these families have no parents and fend largely for themselves. In roughly 80% of child-headed households the oldest girls look after their younger siblings. Many of these children are exploited as cheap labour on plantations or in private households, and sexually abused. Girls often have to turn to prostitution to feed their families. As a result, they are exposed to the country's high HIV infection rates, with no idea of the risks. 90% of boys and girls from child-headed households do not attend school. In the past, Congolese rebels have frequently recruited combatants, many of them child soldiers, from refugee camps in Rwanda.

Find out more

<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/332.html>

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