In general, information available as of 1 January, 2004 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2004.

This page was last updated on 11 May, 2004.
Background: Since 1997, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DROC; formerly called Zaire) has been rent by ethnic strife and civil war, touched off by a massive inflow in 1994 of refugees from the fighting in Rwanda and Burundi. The government of former president MOBUTU Sese Seko was toppled by a rebellion led by Laurent KABILA in May 1997; his regime was subsequently challenged by a Rwanda- and Uganda-backed rebellion in August 1998. Troops from Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan intervened to support the Kinshasa regime. A cease-fire was signed on 10 July 1999 by the DROC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, Namibia, Rwanda, and Congolese armed rebel groups, but sporadic fighting continued. KABILA was assassinated on 16 January 2001 and his son Joseph KABILA was named head of state ten days later. In October 2002, the new president was successful in getting occupying Rwandan forces to withdraw from eastern Congo; two months later, an agreement was signed by all remaining warring parties to end the fighting and set up a government of national unity.

Geography Location: Central Africa, northeast of Angola

Geographic coordinates: 000 N, 25 00 E

Map references: Africa

Area: total: 2,345,410 sq km
water: 77,810 sq km
land: 2,267,600 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 discontiguous 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 - as described in UNCLOS 1982 (see Notes and Definitions):
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, cadmium, petroleum, industrial and gem diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, germanium, uranium, radium, bauxite, iron ore, coal, hydropower, timber

Land use:
- arable land: 2.96%
- permanent crops: 0.52%
- other: 96.52% (1998 est.)

Irrigated land: 110 sq km (1998 est.)

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


Geography - note: straddles equator; has very 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

Population: 58,317,930
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 (July 2004 est.)

Age structure:
- 0-14 years: 48.2% (male 14,122,237; female 14,008,654)
- 15-64 years: 49.3% (male 14,097,301; female 14,646,285)
- 65 years and over: 2.5% (male 590,262; female 853,191) (2004 est.)

Median age:
- total: 15.8 years
- female: 16.2 years (2004 est.)
- male: 15.4 years

Population growth rate: 2.99% (2004 est.)

Birth rate: 44.73 births/1,000 population (2004 est.)

Death rate: 14.64 deaths/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Net migration rate: -0.17 migrant(s)/1,000 population
note: fighting between the Congolese Government and Uganda- and Rwanda-backed Congolese rebels spawned a regional war in DROC in August 1998, which left 1.8 million Congolese internally displaced and caused 300,000 Congolese refugees to flee to surrounding countries (2004 est.)

Sex ratio:
- at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female
- under 15 years: 1.01 male(s)/female
- 15-64 years: 0.96 male(s)/female
- 65 years and over: 0.69 male(s)/female
- total population: 0.98 male(s)/female (2004 est.)

Infant mortality rate:
- total: 94.69 deaths/1,000 live births
- female: 85.95 deaths/1,000 live births (2004 est.)
- male: 103.18 deaths/1,000 live births

Life expectancy at birth:
- total population: 49.14 years
- male: 47.06 years
- female: 51.28 years (2004 est.)


HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 4.9% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 1.3 million (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 120,000 (2001 est.)

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 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: 65.5%
- male: 76.2%
- female: 55.1% (2003 est.)

Government: Congo, Democratic Republic of the
Country name: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Country name:

conventional long form: Democratic Republic of the Congo

conventional short form: none

local short form: none

former: Congo Free State, Belgian Congo, Congo/Leopoldville, Congo/Kinshasa, Zaire

local long form: Republique Democratique du Congo

abbreviation: DROC

Government type: dictatorship; presumably undergoing a transition to representative government

Capital: Kinshasa

Administrative divisions: 10 provinces (provinces, singular - province) and one city* (ville); Bandundu, Bas-Congo, Equateur, Kasai-Occidental, Kasai-Oriental, Katanga, Kinshasa*, Maniema, Nord-Kivu, Orientale, Sud-Kivu

Independence: 30 June 1960 (from Belgium)


Constitution: 24 June 1967, amended August 1974, revised 15 February 1978, amended April 1990; transitional constitution promulgated in April 1994; in November 1998, a draft constitution was approved by former President Laurent KABILA but it was not ratified by a national referendum; one outcome of the ongoing inter-Congolese dialogue will be a new constitution

Legal system: based on Belgian civil law system and tribal law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Executive branch:

Chief of state: President Joseph KABILA (since 26 January 2001); note - following the assassination of his father, Laurent Desire KABILA, on 16 January 2001, Joseph KABILA succeeded to the presidency; the president is both the chief of state and head of government

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Cabinet: National Executive Council, appointed by the president

Elections: prior to the overthrow of MOBUTU Sese Seko, the president was elected by popular vote for a seven-year term; election last held 29 July 1984 (next was scheduled to be held in May 1997); formerly, there was also a prime minister who was elected by the High Council of the Republic; note - a Transitional Government is drafting a new constitution with free elections scheduled to be held in NA 2005

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 scheduled to be held in NA 2005

Election results: results of the last election were: MOBUTU Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa Za Banga reelected president in 1984 without opposition

Legislative branch:

a 300-member Transitional Constituent Assembly established in August 2000

Elections: NA; members of the Transitional Constituent Assembly were appointed by former President Laurent Desire KABILA

Judicial branch:

Supreme Court or Cour Supreme
Political parties and leaders:
Democratic Social Christian Party or PDSC [Andre BO-BOLIKO]; Forces for Renovation for Union and Solidarity or FONUS [Joseph OLENGHANKOY]; National Congolese Lumumbist Movement or MNC [Francois LUMUMBA]; Popular Movement of the Revolution or MPR (three factions: MPR-Fait Prive [Catherine NZUZI wa Mbombo]; MPR/Vunduawe [Felix VUNDUAWE]; MPR/Mananga [MANANGA Dintoka Mpholo]); Unified Lumumbist Party or PALU [Antoine GIZENGA]; Union for Democracy and Social Progress or UDPS [Etienne TSHISEKEDI wa Mulumba]; Union of Federalists and Independent Republicans or UFERI (two factions: UFERI [Lokambo OMOKOKO]; UFERI/OR [Adolph Kishwe MAYA])

Political pressure groups and leaders:
NA

International organization participation:
ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AU, CEPGL, FAO, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO (correspondent), ITU, NAM, OPCW (signatory), PCA, SADC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WToO, WTrO

Diplomatic representation in the US:
chief of mission: Ambassador Faida MITIFU
FAX: [1] (202) 234-2609
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chancery: 1800 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009

Diplomatic representation from the US:
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Flag description:
light blue with a large yellow five-pointed star in the center and a columnar arrangement of six small yellow five-pointed stars along the hoist side

Economy - overview:
The economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo - a nation endowed with vast potential wealth - has declined drastically since the mid-1980s. The war, which began in August 1998, has dramatically reduced national output and government revenue, has increased external debt, and has resulted in the deaths from war, famine, and disease of perhaps 3.5 million people. Foreign businesses have curtailed operations due to uncertainty about the outcome of the conflict, lack of infrastructure, and the difficult operating environment. The war has intensified the impact of such basic problems as an uncertain legal framework, corruption, inflation, and lack of openness in government economic policy and financial operations. Conditions improved in late 2002 with the withdrawal of a large portion of the invading foreign troops. Several IMF and World Bank missions have met with the government to help it develop a coherent economic plan, and President KABILA has begun implementing reforms. Much economic activity lies outside the GDP data. Economic stability, aided by international donors, improved in 2003. New mining contracts have been approved, which - combined with high mineral and metal prices - could improve Kinshasa's fiscal position and GDP growth.

GDP:
purchasing power parity - $35.62 billion (2003 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:
6% (2003 est.)

GDP - per capita:
purchasing power parity - $600 (2003 est.)
GDP - composition by sector:
- agriculture: 55%
- industry: 11%
- services: 34% (2000 est.)

Population below poverty line: NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:
- lowest 10%: NA%
- highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 14% (2003 est.)

Labor force:
- 14.51 million (1993 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: NA

Unemployment rate: NA% (2003 est.)

Budget:
- revenues: $269 million
- expenditures: $244 million, including capital expenditures of $24 million (1996 est.)

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

Industrial production growth rate: NA%

Electricity - production: 5.243 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - production by source:
- fossil fuel: 1.8%
- hydro: 98.2%
- other: 0% (2001)
- nuclear: 0%

Electricity - consumption: 3.839 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - exports: 1.097 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - imports: 60 million kWh (2001)

Oil - production: 24,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - consumption: 14,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)
Oil - exports: NA

Oil - imports: NA

Oil - proved reserves: 1.538 billion bbl (1 January 2002)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 104.8 billion cu m (1 January 2002)

Agriculture - products: coffee, sugar, palm oil, rubber, tea, quinine, cassava (tapioca), palm oil, bananas, root crops, corn, fruits; wood products

Exports: $1.417 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

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

Exports - partners: Belgium 64.3%, US 13.4%, Zimbabwe 6.7%, Finland 4.9% (2002)

Imports: $933 million f.o.b. (2002 est.)

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

Imports - partners: South Africa 15.9%, Belgium 14.1%, Nigeria 10.1%, France 9.2%, Germany 7.4%, Netherlands 5.1%, Kenya 5% (2002)

Debt - external: $11.6 billion (2000 est.)


Currency: Congolese franc (CDF)

Currency code: CDF


Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Congo, Democratic Republic of the
### Telephones

- **main lines in use**: 10,000 (2002)
- **mobile cellular**: 560,000 (2002)

### Telephone system

- **general assessment**: poor
- **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)

### Radio broadcast stations

- AM 3, FM 11, shortwave 2 (2001)

### Television broadcast stations

- 4 (2001)

### Internet country code

- .cd

### Internet hosts

- 134 (2002)

### Internet users

- 50,000 (2002)
Railways:
- total: 4,772 km
- narrow gauge: 3,621 km 1.067-m gauge (858 km electrified); 125 km 1.000-m gauge; 1,026 km 0.600-m gauge (2002)

Highways:
- total: 157,000 km (including 30 km of expressways)
- paved: NA km
- unpaved: NA km (1999 est.)

Waterways:
- 15,000 km (including the Congo and its tributaries, and unconnected lakes)

Pipelines:
- gas 54 km; oil 71 km (2003)

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

Merchant marine:
- none

Airports:
- 230 (2003 est.)

Airports - with paved runways:
- total: 24
- over 3,047 m: 4
- 2,438 to 3,047 m: 2
- 1,524 to 2,437 m: 16
- 914 to 1,523 m: 2 (2003 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways:
- total: 206
- 1,524 to 2,437 m: 17
- 914 to 1,523 m: 92
- under 914 m: 97 (2003 est.)

Military branches:
- Army, Navy, Air Force

Military manpower - availability:
- males age 15-49: 12,706,971 (2004 est.)

Military manpower - fit for military service:
- males age 15-49: 6,480,645 (2004 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure:
- $115.5 million (2003)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:
- 1.4% (2003)
Disputes - international:
Democratic Republic of the Congo is in the grip of a civil war, tribal conflict, and rebel gang fighting that has drawn in neighboring states of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda; in the Great Lakes region and Sudan, heads of the Great Lakes states and UN pledge to end conflict, but unchecked localized violence continues unabated; 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.

Illicit drugs:
illicit producer of cannabis, 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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