

Burundi

Country name	Burundi
State title	Republic of Burundi
Name of citizen	Citizen of Burundi, Burundian
Official language	Kirundi (<i>run</i>), French (<i>fra</i>), English (<i>eng</i>) ¹
Country name in official languages	Burundi
State title in official languages	Republika y'u Burundi (<i>run</i>) ² , République du Burundi (<i>fra</i>), Republic of Burundi (<i>eng</i>)
Script	Roman script
Romanization System	Not required
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	BI/BDI
Capital	Gitega (political), Bujumbura (economic) ³
Area / Population	27,834km ² / 13,590,102 (2024 est.) ⁴

Introduction

Burundi gained its independence from Belgium in 1962. Landlocked and largely hilly and mountainous, it shares land boundaries with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania. Since independence, Burundi has suffered periodically violent tensions between the usually-dominant Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority.

Geographical names policy

For HMG use, geographical names should be taken from official Burundian sources if they can be acquired, though no sources from a national mapping agency are known. In the absence of national mapping, Burundian government sources should be sought, and these may be supplemented with Belgian IGN/NGI⁵ mapping and UN products⁶. Official sources and information are likely to be available only in French, though if Kirundi names can be established from an official source, these

¹ ISO 639 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

² Also seen as Repuburika Y'Uburundi.

³ PCGN recommends that Gitega and Bujumbura both be shown as capitals. Burundi's parliament voted to make Gitega the political capital of the country in 2019 while Bujumbura would remain its commercial capital. It is understood that the government's move to Gitega remains incomplete.

⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burundi/>

⁵ IGN/NGI (Institut Géographique National/Nationaal Geografisch Instituut)

⁶ The [United Nations system in Burundi](#) is made up of 12 resident and non-resident agencies, funds, and programmes and therefore has good access to up-to-date information about the country.

may be added alongside French names where they differ (see more in *Languages*, below). All diacritical marks, apostrophes and hyphens should be retained.

The [Africa Geoportal](#) may be used as a helpful source of geospatial data and names⁷; the US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) [Geographic Names Server](#) can also be used as a source for names.

Languages

Burundi has three official languages. The official status of two of these is long-established: Kirundi, recognised as the national language in the 2005 Constitution, and French, as the former colonial language. English was made a third official language in 2014.

Kirundi is a Bantu language and is mutually intelligible with Kinyarwanda, the national language of Rwanda.

Inventory of Characters (and their Unicode encodings)⁸

French contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
È	00C8	è	00E8
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Ë	00CB	ë	00EB
Î	00CE	î	00EE
Ï	00CF	ï	00EF
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Œ	0152	œ	0153
Ù	00D9	ù	00F9
Û	00DB	û	00FB
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC
Ÿ ⁹	0178	ÿ ⁸	00FF

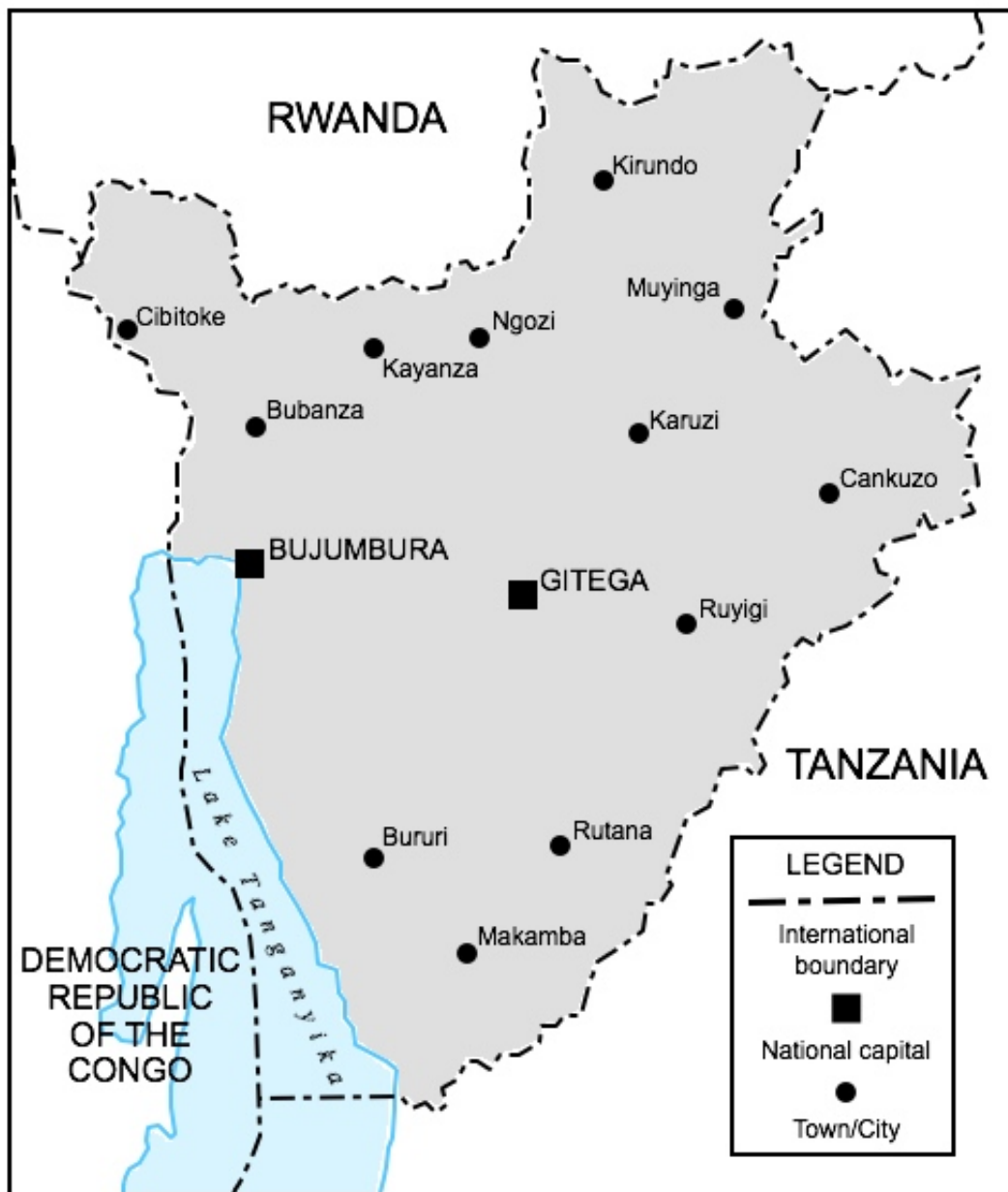
Kirundi is a tonal language, but the tones are not usually indicated in written form. The language uses no other letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script.

⁷ This is a source collated from multiple sources, including Esri, organisations working in Africa and crowdsourced information. It should be used as a supplementary reference.

⁸ See www.unicode.org.

⁹ rarely encountered

Map of Burundi



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

Loi Organique No.1/05 issued on 16 March 2025¹⁰ reduced the number of provinces (province (*fra*); iprovense (*run*)) at the first-order administrative level, from 18 to 5. The provinces are sub-divided into 42 communes at the second-order level, 451 zones and 3044 collines or quartiers. The new provinces have not yet been issued ISO 3166-2 codes.

The short names of the provinces are shown in the table below, but for information, province names in their long form including the generic term follow the pattern: iProvense ya Bujumbura (sometimes an alternative generic is used in Kirundi: Intara ya Bujumbura) or Province de Bujumbura. The Kirundi and French short forms are the same for each province.

Provinces of Burundi

Province	Administrative centre	Location of centre
Bujumbura	Bujumbura	3°22'55"S 29°21'41"E
Buhumuza	Cankuzo	3°13'07"S 30°33'10"E
Gitega	Gitega	3°25'37"S 29°55'29"E
Burunga	Makamba	4°08'05"S 29°48'14"E
Butanyerera	Ngozi	2°54'27"S 29°49'50"E

¹⁰ <https://www.ceniburundi.bi/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/LOI-n%C2%B05-du-16-mars-2023DETERMINATION-ET-DELIMITATION-DES-PROVINCES-COMMUNES-ZONES-ET-QUARTIERS.pdf>

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name ¹¹	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Kagera	Akagera	0°57'00"S 31°47'00"E	River (Rwanda; Burundi; Tanzania; Uganda)
Lake Tanganyika	Lac Tanganika (<i>fra</i>)	6°00'00"S 29°30'00"E	Lake (Burundi; Democratic Republic of Congo; Tanzania; Zambia)
Lac Rweru	Lake Rweru	2°22'40"S 30°19'25"E	Lake (Rwanda; Burundi)
Mukike		3°36'04"S 29°32'15"E	Mountain range ¹²
Ruzizi		3°16'06"S 29°14'27"E	River (Burundi; Democratic Republic of Congo; Rwanda)

Useful references

- Africa Geoportal: <https://www.africageoportal.com/>
- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13085064>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burundi/>
- Ethnologue: www.ethnologue.com (for information on languages)
- FCDO Geographical Names Index (GNI): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/geographical-names-and-information>
- FCDO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/burundi>
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#home>
- Omniglot: www.omniglot.com (for information on languages and scripts)
- PCGN Country Names list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names>
- Unicode: www.unicode.org
- [United Nations system in Burundi](#)
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: [GNS Search & Download WebApp \(nga.mil\)](https://www.nga.mil)

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¹¹ PCGN usually recommends conventional English names for international features, unless national variants are specifically required, or the relevant countries share an official language.

¹² Range includes Burundi's high point (an unnamed mountain).