pcgn The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

Congo (Democratic Republic)

Country name	Congo (Democratic Republic)
State title	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Name of citizen	Citizen of the Democratic Republic of the Congo[1]
Official language	French (*fra*)[2]
Country name in official language	République démocratique du Congo
Script	Roman script
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	CD/COD
Capital city in official language	Kinshasa
Population	97 million (UN data)
Area	2.345 million km²

Introduction

Congo (Democratic Republic) lies in central Africa and shares land boundaries with Angola (including Cabinda); Burundi; Central African Republic; Congo; Rwanda; South Sudan; Tanzania; Uganda and Zambia. It has a coastline on the Atlantic Ocean of just 37km and takes its name from the Congo river.

Congo (Democratic Republic) became independent from Belgium in 1960, and has seen significant political instability since. The military dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko saw the country's (and the associated river's) renaming to Zaire. Restoring the name Congo after Mobutu's ousting in 1997, the country, though resource rich, has continued to have a poor human rights record and is politically unstable, particularly in the eastern area of Kivu[3].

PCGN has primarily recommended the country name as *Congo (Democratic Republic)* to shorten the full name (*Democratic Republic of the Congo*) while disambiguating from the *Republic of Congo* (which is shortened to *Congo*), that lies across the Congo river. The form *Democratic Republic of Congo* (or alternatively with the article, matching the state title *Democratic Republic of the Congo*) can also be used if preferred[4].

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[1] Congolese may also be used informally, though this adjective may refer to both Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[2] ISO 639-3 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

[3] North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces

[4] Other informal abbreviations, such as 'Congo (Kinshasa)', 'DR Congo' and 'DRC' are sometimes used, but these are not usually recommended for HMG products.

TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

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Geographical names policy

PCGN policy for Congo (Democratic Republic) is to use names as they appear on local official sources, retaining any diacritical marks. These are likely to be in French (see more in *Language*, below).

In practice it may be difficult to find up-to-date local official sources, and in their absence other sources will be needed: mapping produced by Belgium (National Geographic Institute (NGI)) may be useful. This authority also co-hosts a historical repository of geospatial products with the National Library of Belgium. This Cartesius portal is available online and contains many maps of Congo (Democratic Republic), though none post-dating independence. The UN has significant operations in Congo (Democratic Republic) (MONUSCO: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and UN maps will also be useful as a source for geographical names.

The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) Geographic Names Server can also be used as a source for names.

Language

Highly multilingual, with over 200 indigenous languages spoken, French is the only official language, though four further languages have 'national' status: Kikongo (*kon*), spoken broadly in the southwest, Lingala (*lin*), spoken in the northwest, Swahili (*swa*), east, and Tshiluba (*lua*) centre. French is primarily used as the inter-ethnic *lingua franca*.

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings[5]):

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[6]	0178	ÿ	00FF

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[5] See www.unicode.org
[6] rarely encountered

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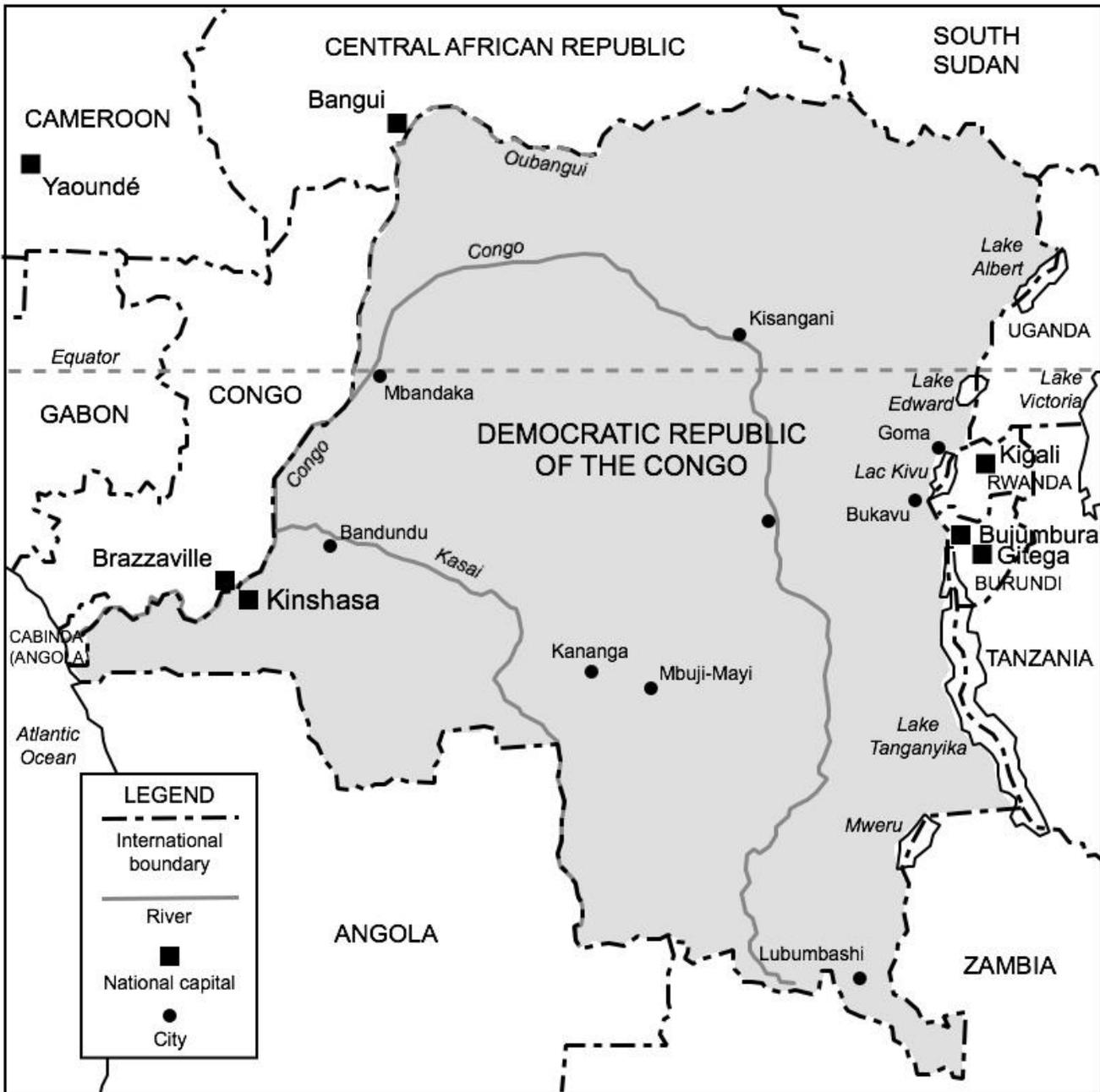
Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

A new Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was passed in February 2006 which altered the administrative structure of the country: having been divided into 10 provinces and 1 city (Kinshasa), the country is now divided into 25 provinces and 1 city. Though this change took some years to come into effect, this structure is now fully adopted.

Province	ISO 3166-2 code	Administrative centre	Centre location
Bas-Uélé	CD-BU	Buta	02°47'09"N 24°43'48"E
Équateur	CD-EQ	Mbandaka	00°02'55"N 18°15'37"E
Haut-Katanga	CD-HK	Lubumbashi	11°40'17"S 27°28'45"E
Haut-Lomami	CD-HL	Kamina	08°44'06"S 24°59'53"E
Haut-Uélé	CD-HU	Isiro	02°46'26"N 27°36'58"E
Ituri	CD-IT	Bunia	01°33'34"N 30°15'08"E
Kasaï	CD-KS	Tshikapa	06°25'09"S 20°47'36"E
Kasaï Central	CD-KC	Kananga	05°53'46"S 22°25'00"E
Kasaï Oriental	CD-KE	Mbuji-Mayi	06°08'03"S 23°36'37"E
Kinshasa	CD-KN	Kinshasa	04°19'30"S 15°19'20"E
Kongo Central	CD-BC	Matadi	05°50'19"S 13°27'47"E
Kwango	CD-KG	Kenge	04°51'13"S 16°57'52"E
Kwilu	CD-KL	Bandundu	03°19'01"S 17°22'50"E
Lomami	CD-LO	Kabinda	06°08'21"S 24°29'00"E
Lualaba	CD-LU	Kolwezi	10°43'00"S 25°28'21"E
Mai-Ndombe	CD-MN	Inongo	01°55'39"S 18°17'17"E
Maniema	CD-MA	Kindu	02°56'37"S 25°55'21"E
Mongala	CD-MO	Lisala	02°09'14"N 21°30'54"E
Nord-Kivu	CD-NK	Goma	01°40'27"N 29°13'42"E

Province	ISO 3166-2 code	Administrative centre	Centre location
Nord-Ubangi	CD-NU	Gbadolite	04°16'44"N 21°00'10"E
Sankuru	CD-SA	Lusambo	04°58'30"S 23°26'38"E
Sud-Kivu	CD-SK	Bukavu	02°29'27"S 28°50'34"E
Sud-Ubangi	CD-SU	Gemena	03°15'23"N 19°46'20"E
Tanganyika	CD-TA	Kalemie	05°55'08"S 29°11'25"E
Tshopo	CD-TO	Kisangani	00°30'55"N 25°11'28"E
Tshuapa	CD-TU	Boende	00°16'54"S 20°52'50"E

Other significant locations

PCGN Approved name[7]	Other names	Feature Type	Location
Congo	Congo River; Fleuve Congo (*fra*); Nzâdi Kôngo (*kon*)	River (Angola, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo)	06°04'05"S 12°23'35"E
Kasai River	Kasaï (*Congo (Dem Rep)*); Cassai (*Angola*)	River (Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo)	03°02'11"S 16°55'46"E
Lac Kivu	Lake Kivu	Lake (Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo)	02°01'07"S 29°08'04"E
Lac Mai-Ndombe	-	Lake	03°56'03"S 15°54'06"E
Lake Albert	Lac Albert (*fra*)	Lake (Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo)	01°42'07"N 30°57'20"E
Lake Edward	Lac Édouard (*fra*)	Lake (Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo)	00°22'03"S 29°34'23"E
Lake Tanganyika	Lac Tanganika (*fra*)	Lake (Burundi, Tanzania, and Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo)	06°00'00"S 29°30'00"E
Mweru	Lake Mweru (*Zambia*); Lac Moero (*Congo (Dem Rep)*)	Lake (Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo)	08°59'48"S 28°43'58"E
Oubangui	Ubangi	River (Central African Republic Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo)	00°30'37"S 17°42'24"E

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[7] PCGN recommends use of conventional names for international features where they exist. If there is no conventional name, then the relevant name can be shown on the appropriate side of the international boundary on cartographic products.

Useful references

- BBC country profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13283212
- CIA World Factbook: Congo, Democratic Republic of the - The World Factbook (cia.gov)
- Ethnologue: https://www.ethnologue.com/
- FCDO Geographical Names & Information:
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/geographical-names-and-information
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui
- PCGN Country Names list: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names
- Unicode: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names Geographic Names Server: GNS Search & Download WebApp (nga.mil)

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