

Congo

Country name	Congo
State title	Republic of the Congo
Name of citizen	Congolese ¹
Official language	French (<i>fra</i>) ²
Country name in official languages	Congo
State title in official languages	République du Congo
Script	Roman script
Romanization System	Not required
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	CG/COG
Capital	Brazzaville
Area / Population	342,000km ² / 6.1 million (2024 est.) ³

Introduction

Congo gained independence from France in 1960 and the subsequent decades saw periods of political instability and unrest. With a ceasefire agreed in 2017, there have been indications of increasing political stability in recent years.

Lying on the equator, Congo shares land boundaries with Angola (Cabinda), Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon and has a short coastline of 169km on the Atlantic Ocean.

Geographical names policy

For HMG use, geographical names should be taken from official sources from Congo, where these are available. Congo's national mapping agency, after independence was known as the *Institut Géographique National Congolaise*; this organisation is now the *Centre de Recherche Géographique et de Production Cartographique (CERGEC)*, though PCGN knows of no recent products or digital information from this organisation.

¹ 'Congolese' is also sometimes used as an informal demonym for citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so if there is any likelihood of ambiguity, 'citizen of the Republic of Congo' can be used.

² ISO 639 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

³ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/congo-republic-of-the/>

If no national official sources can be found, maps produced by France’s *Institut national de l’information géographique et forestière* (IGN) (previously *Institut géographique national*) or the French Ministry of Defence are good alternative sources.

The [Africa Geoportal](#) may additionally be used as a helpful source of geospatial data and names⁴; the US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) [Geographic Names Server](#) can also be used as a source for names.

Country name

Congo is often informally referred to as Congo-Brazzaville to distinguish it from its neighbour, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (sometimes referred to as Congo-Kinshasa). Congo should preferentially be used as the short country name for HMG purposes, or the full state title may be used for disambiguation purposes, if required.

Languages

French is the only official language in Congo, but there are two national languages as recorded in the 2015 [Constitution](#): Kituba (*mkw*), a Creole language based on Kikongo, spoken principally in the south of the country, and Lingala (*lin*), principally in the north.

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:

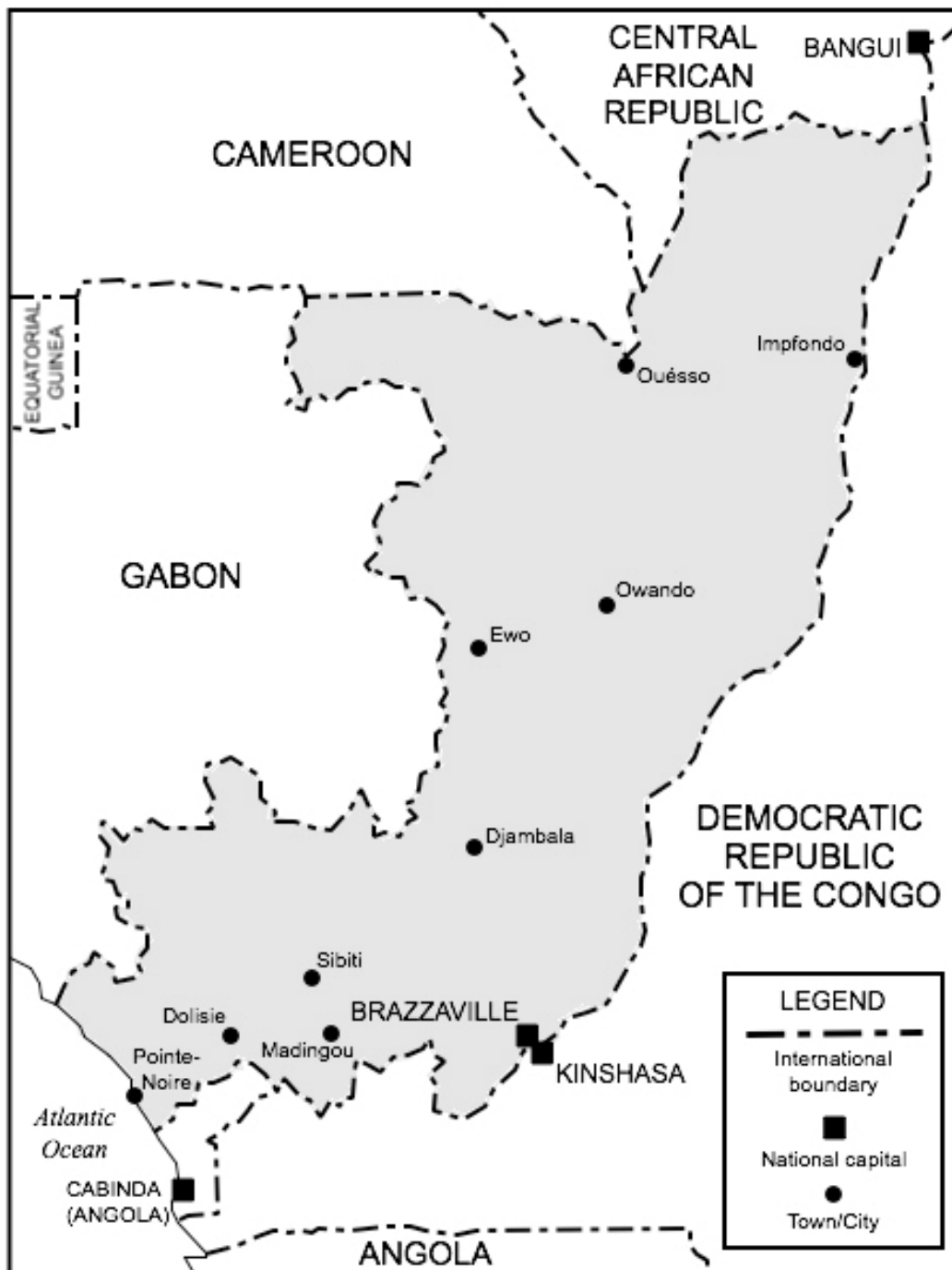
Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
È	00C8	è	00E8
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Ë	00CB	ë	00EB
Î	00CE	î	00EE
Ï	00CF	ï	00EF
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Œ	0152	œ	0153
Ù	00D9	ù	00F9
Û	00DB	û	00FB
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC
ÿ ⁶	0178	ÿ	00FF

⁴ 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.

⁵ See www.unicode.org

⁶ rarely encountered

Map of 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

Congo is divided into 15 *départements* at the first-order administrative level. A structure of 12 *départements* was introduced in 2002, replacing a structure of *régions* at the first-order level. Three new *départements* (Congo-Oubangui, Djoué-Léfini and Nkeni-Alima) were created on 3rd July 2024⁷. ISO 3166-2 codes have not yet been allocated to the new *départements*. The *départements* are subdivided into *districts* at the second-order level: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:code:3166:CG>

Département	ISO 3166-2 code	Administrative centre	Location of centre
Bouenza	CG-11	Madingou	04°09'13"S 13°33'00"E
Brazzaville	CG-BZV	Brazzaville	04°15'33"S 15°17'05"E
Congo-Oubangui	N/A	Mossaka	01°12'51"S 16°47'39"E
Cuvette	CG-8	Owando	00°29'13"S 15°54'29"E
Cuvette-Ouest	CG-15	Ewo	00°52'21"S 14°49'14"E
Djoué-Léfini	N/A	Odziba	03°34'40"S 15°30'52"E
Kouilou	CG-5	Loango	04°39'07"S 11°48'45"E
Likouala	CG-7	Impfondo	01°38'17"N 18°04'00"E
Lékoumou	CG-2	Sibiti	03°41'09"S 13°20'45"E
Niari	CG-9	Dolisie ⁸	04°11'59"S 12°40'26"E
Nkeni-Alima	N/A	Gamboma	01°52'35"S 15°51'52"E
Plateaux	CG-14	Djambala	02°32'41"S 14°45'12"E
Pointe-Noire	CG-16	Pointe-Noire	04°47'41"S 11°50'46"E
Pool	CG-12	Kinkala	04°21'41"S 14°45'52"E
Sangha	CG-13	Ouéso	01°36'49"N 16°03'06"E

⁷ <https://gouvernement.cg/compte-rendu-du-conseil-des-ministres-du-03-juillet-2024/>

⁸ This city, now the third largest in the country, was created in the French colonial period and given the name Dolisie. The name was changed to Loubomo in 1975; however, subsequently the name gradually reverted to Dolisie, and there is now no apparent use of the name Loubomo, though of course this will appear on sources between 1975 and approximately 2000 (for some years after this date, PCGN recommended using both names).

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name ⁹	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Congo	Congo River, Fleuve Congo	06°04'05"S 12°23'35"E	River (Angola, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia)
Maiombe	Mayombe Range	04°30'00"S 12°30'00"E	Mountain range (Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Congo)
Chutes de Loufoulakari	Loufoulakari Falls	04°35'03"S 14°58'29"E	Waterfalls
Mont Nabeba	-	01°56'53"N 13°53'49"E	Mountain (high point, 1020m)
Oubangui	Ubangi	00°30'37"S 17°42'24"E	River (Central African Republic Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo)

Useful references

- Africa Geoportal: <https://www.africageoportal.com/>
- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14121191>
- CIA World Factbook: [Congo, Republic of the - The World Factbook \(cia.gov\)](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/00africa_01.html)
- 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/congo>
- Institut National de la Statistique (INS) – Congo: <https://ins-congo.cg>
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:code:3166:CG>
- 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
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: [GNS Search & Download WebApp \(nga.mil\)](https://www.fgdl.gov/gns/)

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www.gov.uk/pcgn
 Edition 2, September 2024

⁹ PCGN usually recommends conventional English names for international features, unless national variants are specifically required, or the relevant countries share an official language.