



Country Profile: Congo, Republic of the

The Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) is a developing nation in central Africa. The official language is French. The largest cities are the capital, Brazzaville, located on the Congo River, and Pointe Noire on the coast. Civil conflict in 1997 and again in 1998-99 damaged parts of the capital and large areas in the south of the country. The last rebel group signed a cease-fire accord with the government in March 2003. Facilities for tourism are very limited. Read the Department of State [Background Notes](#) on the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) for additional information.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW



Country Name:	Congo, Republic of the
Continent:	Africa
Capital City:	Brazzaville
Boundary Countries:	Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon
Recommended Hospitals in Capital:	
Main Cities:	Pointe-Noire, Loubomo Kayes, Djambala, Oyo, Owando, Ouessou, Impfondo, Mossendjo, Madingo-Kayes
Country Size:	342.000 sq km
Population:	4,012.809 note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS

COUNTRY GENERAL INFORMATION

Language:	French (official), Lingala and Monokutuba (lingua franca trade languages), many local languages and dialects (of which Kikongo is the most widespread)
Currency:	Cooperation Financiere en Afrique Centrale francs (XAF)
Predominant Religions:	Christian 50%, animist 48%, Muslim 2%
National Holidays:	Independence Day, 15 August (1960)
Economic Status:	The economy is a mixture of subsistence agriculture, an industrial sector based largely on oil, and support services, and a government characterized by budget problems and overstaffing. Oil has supplanted forestry as the mainstay of the economy, providing a major share of government revenues and exports. In the early 1980s, rapidly rising oil revenues enabled the government to finance large-scale development projects with GDP growth averaging 5% annually, one of the highest rates in Africa. The government has mortgaged a substantial portion of its oil earnings through oil-backed loans that have contributed to a growing debt burden and chronic revenue shortfalls. Economic reform efforts have been undertaken with the support of international organizations, notably the World Bank and the IMF. However, the reform program came to a halt in June 1997 when civil war erupted. Denis SASSOU-NGUESSO, who returned to power when the war ended in October 1997, publicly expressed interest in moving forward on economic reforms and privatization and in renewing cooperation with international financial institutions. Economic progress was badly hurt by slumping oil prices and the resumption of armed conflict in December 1998, which worsened the republic's budget deficit. The current administration presides over an uneasy internal peace and faces difficult economic challenges of stimulating recovery and reducing poverty. Recovery of oil prices has boosted the economy's GDP and near-term prospects. In March 2006, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) treatment for Congo.

Security:	Congolese Armed Forces (Forces Armees Congolaises, FAC): Army, Navy, Congolese Air Force (Armee de l'Air Congolaise), Gendarmerie, Special Presidential Security Guard (GSSP)
US Presence:	<u>U.S. Embassy in Brazzaville</u> 70-83 Section D MAYA-MAYA Boulevard Brazzaville, CONGO General: (242) 06 612-2000 (dial ""0"" to reach the switchboard operator)
Major Airports:	Airports: 24; Airports with paved runways: 6 Brazzaville - Maya Maya Airport (BZV/FCBB) Brazzaville Airport, Congo (People's Republic), BP 218, Brazzaville, BRAZZAVILLE CONGO Tel: +242-820-996 Pointe - Noire Aerodrome (PNR/FCPP) Pointe-Noire Airport, Congo (People's Rep.), BP 1188, Pointe-Noire, BRAZZAVILLE CONGO Tel: +242-941-025

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