



Diaspora engagement mapping **BURUNDI**

Facts & figures

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections
for citizens residing abroad²



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **7.69%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **236.89**

Voting from abroad³:

At embassies/consulates



Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2024).

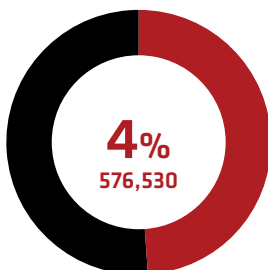
Emigration



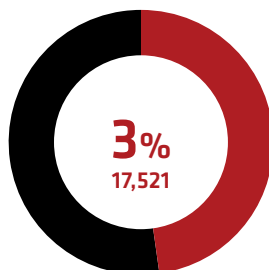
% of emigrants in
total population



% of which
in the EU



♂ 49.9%
♀ 50.1%



♂ 47.8%
♀ 52.2%

Top countries of destination



United Republic of Tanzania	241,069
Rwanda	130,912
Democratic Republic of Congo	67,352
Uganda	42,181
Canada	16,563

1 Article 21 Loi no. 1-013 du 18 juillet 2000 portant réforme du Code de la nationalité: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/452d01c94.html>

2 Loi Organique n°1/11 du 20 Mai 2019 portant modification de la Loi n°1/20 du 13 Juin 2014 portant Code Electoral : <http://www.droit-afrique.com/uploads/Burundi-Code-2019-electoral.pdf>

3 Source: AU (2019) Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Report <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/2019%20Diaspora%20Engagement%20Self%20Assessment%20Report%20ENG.pdf>. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the diaspora will not be able to vote remotely in the May 2020 elections : <https://www.dw.com/fr/pr%C3%A9sidentielle-au-burundi-pas-de-vote-pour-la-diaspora/a-53201033>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2011** ● **Vision 2025** is Burundi's national development strategy. It makes no explicit reference to the Burundian diaspora, but states that 'the settlement of land conflicts will receive very detailed attention because it constitutes one of the sources of the social conflicts following the *return of refugees and displaced persons*.' (editor's italics).⁴
- 2013** ● **National Migration Policy** aims to provide a framework for the return of Burundian refugees (and by implication, the diaspora) to facilitate their reintegration in the social and economic life of the country.⁵
- 2015** ● **Diaspora Policy.** Under the EC-funded MIEUX programme, ICMPD supported the government of Burundi to draft a national diaspora policy in 2015. This draft policy document contains key strategic objectives aimed at improving communication and coordination with diaspora groups, and recognising the potential impact of the economic and social contributions of the diaspora for the country's development. In 2022 the government has also developed a sector strategy for the implementation of the national diaspora policy.⁶ In July 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a technical validation workshop for a revised version of the National Diaspora Policy and its implementation strategy. The revised policy seeks to strengthen coordination with Burundians abroad and to better channel diaspora contributions to development in line with Burundi's Vision 2040–2060.
- 2018** ● **Draft Labour Mobility Policy** - As of late 2018, Burundi has also started the process of developing a draft labour mobility policy, although it is not clear when this will be publicly available.⁷ In April 2019 the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Employment launched the project 'development of the national policy on labour migration in Burundi' to develop enhanced migrant labour regulations, including conclusion of bilateral agreements with the Gulf states.⁸ The policy will 'regulate the movement of labour who goes abroad but also Burundians who are already abroad.' It is not clear whether the draft labour mobility policy has been achieved. However, in 2021, the government signed a Decent Work Country Programme 2020–2023 with ILO.⁹
- 2022** ● **Ordinance determining measures for the exemption of personal effects of members of the Burundian diaspora.** This ordinance provides for the exemption of the personal effects of members of the diaspora who decide to return permanently to the country.¹⁰

Practices

Explore 520+ practices by country, SDG or sector of engagement in the [interactive database!](#)



Upgrading the Rungika domestic money transfer system

Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the Burundi National Postal Service (RNP) worked in partnership with IOM and RIA Money Transfer to upgrade the Rungika domestic money transfer system, allowing remittances to be collected via the national postal service network of 144 offices. Its international corridor, run in partnership with RIA Money Transfer was launched in 2017 and aims to leverage existing domestic money transfer services. The Rungika project aims to support financial education, inclusion, and communication among rural communities in Burundi via a network of 144 national Rungika agencies. As of November 2018, RNP has received nearly 20,000 deposits, amounting to a total of 1,238,284,150 Burundian Francs (approximately \$695,400 USD).¹¹

4 See p.53, https://www.undp.org/content/dam/burundi/docs/publications/UNDP-bi-vision-burundi-2025_complete_EN.pdf

5 <http://www.burundi.gov.bi/spip.php?article661>

6 <https://www.mae.gov.bi/en/strategic-relations-between-the-government-of-burundi-and-the-diaspora-are-normalizing/>

7 <http://www.rtnb.bi/fr/art.php?idapi=2/4/130>

8 <http://www.ministerefptss.gov.bi/?q=content/atelier-de-lancement-du-projet-%C2%AB-developpement-de-la-politique-nationale-de-la-migration-de>

9 http://wcmsq3.ilo.org/africa/media-centre/pr/WCMS_776533/lang--en/index.htm.

10 <https://www.mae.gov.bi/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ORDONNANCE.pdf>

11 <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-partners-improve-international-money-transfer-service-burundian-diaspora-rural-communities>.

Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA)

The MIDA programme run by the IOM has been active within Burundi since 2001, and has the primary objective of engaging highly skilled members of the diaspora in periods of short-term return for capacity building. The programme is focused on the diaspora in Europe and particularly in Belgium, with active projects in the areas of education, health, and rural development.

Diaspora Tackles Youth Unemployment

Through its vocational education and mentorship programme, IOM connected young participants with members of the diaspora through an online platform, via which diaspora mentors offered advice, feedback, guidance, and opportunities to over 200 young people. Some diaspora mentors also physically travelled to Burundi to support their mentees.

Diaspora Week

Diaspora Week is an annual multi-stakeholder event organised by the Ministry of External Relations and International Cooperation, supported by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). It seeks to promote skills transfers, investment opportunities and bring together key Burundian stakeholders to network and share experiences through investment opportunities, national and regional migration policies and diaspora policies discussion. These serve to further inform and develop the existing draft national policy on migration as well as the national diaspora policy.

Improving maternal health care access in rural Burundi



Supported by EUDiF under the Diaspora for Development (D4D) Grants, this project is implemented by Stichting Microprojects in partnership with local health institutions. The initiative strengthens maternal health services in three rural hospitals (Bururi, CONDI and Nyagihotora) by providing medical equipment, specialised training and technical support. By mobilising diaspora expertise and resources, the project improves access to prenatal diagnostics and quality antenatal care closer to patients' homes, reducing the need for long-distance referrals and contributing to the prevention of maternal mortality and orphanhood.

Youth employability and diaspora mentorship programme

Within the framework of a project funded by the African Development Bank Group, IOM implemented an initiative in 2023 aimed at improving youth employability in Burundi while mobilising the expertise of the Burundian diaspora. The programme sought to address youth unemployment by strengthening links between young job seekers, the diaspora and private sector actors. As part of the initiative, IOM conducted a study identifying skills gaps and employment opportunities in Bujumbura and Gitega province, highlighting sectors such as mechanics, information and communication technology, agro-industry and sewing. Based on these findings, more than 450 Burundian young people enrolled in two programmes: one placing over 200 graduates in internships within the private sector and another providing technical and vocational training to 250 people combined with mentorship from members of the Burundian diaspora. The programme was implemented in partnership with Burundi's Ministry of East African Community Affairs, Youth, Sport and Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

»» Observations

The “Observations” and “Obstacles” sections contain additional information on the context of diaspora engagement that does not fit directly into the other sections. They are based on a combination of literature review and comments from the authors. New information is incorporated during the annual updates. Readers are invited to verify the relevance of the information at the time of reading, as the context may have evolved.

The Burundian diaspora has been engaged in development and advocacy activities in Burundi throughout the duration of its exile, but after 2005 when the conflict officially ended, their role changed from being political actors to potential players in nation building and reconstruction efforts.¹²

With the adoption of the National Migration Policy and the establishment of the Burundian Diaspora Council (*Conseil de la Diaspora Burundaise*) in 2013, the government sought to put in place a balanced and relevant multisector policy to guide its decisions and actions in the field of migration management.¹³

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has strengthened the existing institutional and political structures responsible for dialogue, management and mobilization of the diaspora.¹⁴ These include a dedicated web-portal, and the organisation of an annual diaspora week to encourage the return and participation of Burundian diaspora in the country's development.¹⁵

Currently, the Burundian government is able to draw on resources and skills of a segment of the diaspora that are highly committed and mobilised to support national reconstruction efforts and reconciliation efforts. However, the Burundian diaspora as a whole has much to offer, in terms of both monetary support and the transfer of knowledge and skills, as many are highly skilled and specialised in health and education.¹⁶

Diaspora - for vision 2040 and 2060. The Burundian government has articulated a clear vision—emerging by 2040 and developed by 2060—where the diaspora is considered a strategic partner. This vision emphasises economic diplomacy and encourages diaspora members to contribute through investments, knowledge transfer, and advocacy.

Obstacles



- **Lack of trust** within the Burundian diaspora as a result of ethnic conflict continues to be a barrier to diaspora engagement in Burundi. There is also distrust of the diaspora's political interference, in particularly activism against the current president who sought to extend his rule in 2015.

12 Fransen, S and Siegel, M (2011), *The Development of Diaspora Engagement Policies in Burundi and Rwanda*, UNU-MERIT Working Paper Series, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254405877_The_Development_of_Diaspora_Engagement_Policies_in_Burundi_and_Rwanda

13 Ibid.

14 <http://ambassadeduburundi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Imprim%C3%A9-de-la-Politique-Nationale-de-la-Diaspora.pdf> ; see also Dick, E. and Schraven B (2018), 'Regional Migration Governance in Africa and Beyond - A Framework of Analysis, German Development Institute, available at: https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/DP_9.2018.pdf

15 See <https://mae.gov.bi/diaspora/> for more information.

16 Ratha, D. & Xu, Z. (2008). *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008*. Washington, D. C.: World Bank.

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- **Lack of resources.** The Directorate of Diaspora was created over a decade ago by Burundi's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide a government body dedicated to migration and development policy making issues- however the directorate lacks the capacity to be effective, remaining critically understaffed and lacking resources.
 - **High remittance costs** are another barrier. There is a need for the Burundian government to explore the potential for enhancing remittance channels. Investing in reduced costs and improved safety will serve to create competition in the remittances market, which, in turn, will stimulate and facilitate remittance flows.

Annex:

List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 520+ institutions](#)

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)

Burundi is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Burundi as part of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings.

Burundi is also a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

<https://www.comesa.int/>
<https://www.eac.int/>
<http://www.ceeac-eccas.org/>

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (also called the Ministry of External Relations and International Cooperation)

In addition to foreign affairs, the Ministry of External Relations and International Cooperation is the lead ministry for diaspora engagement.

Ministry of National Solidarity, Repatriation of Refugees and Social Reintegration

This ministry is responsible for the reintegration of refugees and diaspora returnees.

Ministry of Labour and Civil Service

The MIDA programme (Migration for Development in Africa) established by the IOM was run locally by the Ministry of Labour.

Ministry of Public Security

The Ministry of Public Security in Burundi has been given exclusive responsibility to address migration management issues and to construct the migration and diaspora involvement policy.

- At sub-ministerial level

Directorate of Diaspora

The directorate forms part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is responsible for diaspora engagement and provision of external services to the diaspora.

Diaspora organisations in Europe

Association de Réflexion et d'Information (ARIB)

Belgium 1995

Read more about diaspora organisations
in "[Starting guide: What is a diaspora
organisation](#)"



ARIB is a non-profit association with the mission of sharing information on Burundi in order to: promote positive Burundian and universal values; defend the rights and freedoms of citizens; establish a democratic culture; and establish the rule of law ensuring equality of all before the law. They conduct lobbying and advocacy activities in Europe and in Burundi.

Burundi Solidarité Internationale

Development activities

BSI is a network of Burundians. Its mission is "the advent of a Burundi characterised by good governance, politically pacified, socially unified and economically prosperous". Its objectives include mobilising diaspora skills and resources for development and peacebuilding.

Burundian Women for Peace and Development Netherlands 2001

Development activities

The organisation delivers education and peace-building activities in Burundi.

Burundian Diaspora in Germany (BDD e.V) Germany

Promotes international understanding, intercultural exchange, and integration of Burundians in Germany. It organises cultural events, workshops, and supports development projects in Burundi.

Communauté de Belgique (CBB) Belgium

Promotes visibility of Burundians in Belgium and supports development cooperation and cultural promotion."

Diaspora Burundaise au Danemark (DBD) Denmark 2010

Promotes Burundian culture and raises funds for underprivileged children in Burundi through cultural events, art talks and fundraising activities."

Le Forum de la Diaspora Burundaise (FODIB) France, Norway, Sweden, UK 2015

Development activities

FODIB is headquartered in Paris. It is apolitical and aims at solidarity actions between Burundians in the diaspora and humanitarian actions in Burundi.

Izere Foundation Netherlands

✓ Development activities

Izere Foundations works to contribute to the peace process and reconstruction in Burundi, and focuses its work on capacity building and social investments. It also organizes exploratory missions to Burundi to test the feasibility of projects and investments.

Stichting Microprojects the Netherlands

Stichting Microprojects supports local development initiatives in many countries, including in Burundi. Through partnerships with local actors, the organisation implements small-scale projects that address the needs of vulnerable communities, including initiatives in health, education and livelihoods. Its activities combine financial support, technical advice, networking and awareness-raising, with the aim of strengthening sustainable development and improving access to basic services in Burundi.”

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