



Diaspora engagement mapping **BURUNDI**

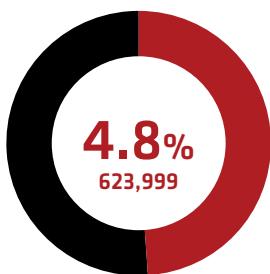
Facts & figures

Emigration

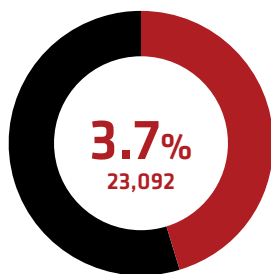
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 49.1%
♀ 50.9%



♂ 45.3%
♀ 54.7%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **1.5%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **46**



Top countries of destination

Tanzania	295,436
Rwanda	137,669
Democratic Republic of Congo	59,826
Uganda	54,494
South Africa	11,468



Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²



Voting from abroad³:

At embassies/consulates



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.⁴

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).⁵
- 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.⁶
- 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

» Trends & achievements

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.¹⁰

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.¹¹

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.¹² 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. However, implementation of diaspora engagement policies and programmes remains weak.¹³

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 http://wcm3sq3.ilo.org/africa/media-centre/pr/WCMS_776533/lang--en/index.htm

10 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

11 Ibid.

12 <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

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

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.¹⁴

The African Development Bank (AfDB) stated in 2019 that it is “planning to provide support, in liaison with IOM, greater diaspora involvement in the development of the country and the employment of young people.”¹⁵ This project will work to support young and women entrepreneurs through capacity building and diaspora engagement, in order to reduce youth unemployment, but details are not yet available.

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 particular activism against the current president who sought to extend his rule in 2015.
- **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.

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

15 AfDB/IOM Youth and Women’s Entrepreneurship Support Project, see ‘AFDB – Republic of Burundi Country Strategy 2019-2023’, available at: https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/burundi_document_de_strategie-pays_2019-2023_-_rev.pdf

SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



Diaspora Week

NETWORKS + COMMUNICATION

Last held in July 2019, Diaspora Week is an annual multi-stakeholder event organised by the Ministry of External Relations and International Cooperation, supported by the IOM. It seeks to promote skills transfers, investment opportunities, and bring together key Burundian stakeholders to network and share experiences through discussion of investment opportunities, national and regional migration policies and diaspora policies. These discussions serve to further inform and develop the existing draft national policy on migration, as well as the national diaspora policy soon to be developed with the support of the IOM.¹⁶

Upgrading the Rungika domestic money transfer system

REMITTANCES

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.¹⁷ 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).¹⁸

Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA)

HUMAN CAPITAL

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.¹⁹

“Burundi Diaspora Gala” 2022

YOUTH + NETWORKING

Organized by the youth of the Burundi Diaspora. The event was supported by the government which encouraged the youth to continue this kind of initiatives to attract more young people to invest in the development of the country of origin. During this event, the organizers proceeded to the awarding of prizes to people and companies who dedicate themselves every day for the well-being of the Diaspora and who support the action of the Community living abroad.²⁰

16 <https://www.iom.int/news/burundi-engages-diaspora-development>

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

18 Ibid.

19 <http://www.migration4development.org/en/projects/mida-migration-development-africa>

20 <https://mae.gov.bi/diaspora/2022/08/05/la-rencontre-des-jeunes-de-la-diaspora-burundaise/>

Annex:

List of Actors

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. <https://www.mae.gov.bi/en/>

Ministry of National Solidarity, Repatriation of Refugees and Social Reintegration

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

<http://www.burundi.gov.bi/>

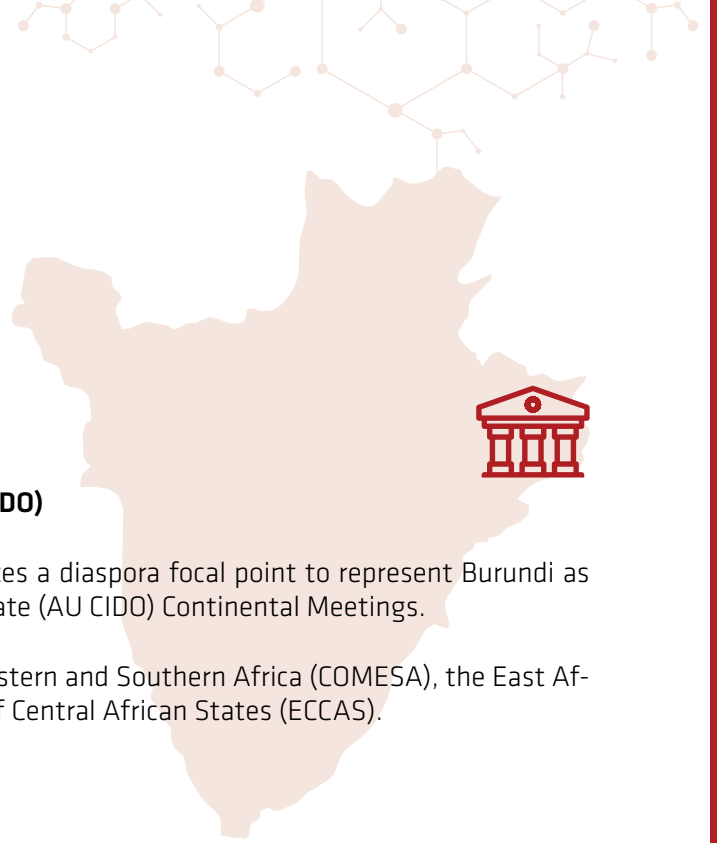
Ministry of Labour and Civil Service

The MIDA programme (Migration for Development in Africa) established by the IOM was run locally by the Ministry of Labour. <http://www.burundi.gov.bi/>

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.

<http://www.burundi.gov.bi/>



- 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.

<https://mae.gov.bi/diaspora/>

Diaspora organisations in Europe



Association de Réflexion et d'Information (ARIB) Belgium 1995 <https://www.arib.info>

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 <https://www.burundi-solidarite.org/>

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 <http://www.bwpd.nl/en/>

Development activities

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

Le Forum de la Diaspora Burundaise (FODIB) France, Norway, Sweden, UK 2015 <https://www.fodib.org/accueil>

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 <http://www.izere.nl/>

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.

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