



IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones



# Returning to the Democratic Republic of Congo

## Country Information

Latest Update on 17 November 2009



Source: CIA World Factbook (on line)<sup>1</sup>

Country information compiled in the framework of the IOM project “Enhanced and Integrated Approach regarding Information on Return and Reintegration in the Countries of Origin – IRRICO II”

<sup>1</sup> CIA World Factbook (on line): <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

**Disclaimer**

The information in this document was collected with great care. However, IOM does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness or correctness of the information, nor does it endorse any views, opinions or policies expressed by any organisations or individuals referred to in this document. The boundaries, geographic names and related data shown on maps included in this document are not warranted to be free of error, nor do they necessarily imply official acceptance by IOM. This document does not take any position related to the economic, political or security situation of the country. IOM accepts no responsibility for any conclusions or results which are based on information provided in this document.

## Contents

General Overview.....	4
1. Health Care.....	6
Registering with a Health Insurance Company .....	6
Getting Medical Treatment.....	6
Psycho-Social Support .....	6
Services for Vulnerable Cases.....	7
2. Housing.....	10
Buying Property .....	10
Social Grants for Housing .....	11
Housing for Vulnerable Cases.....	11
3. Education .....	12
Access to Primary School, High School and University .....	12
Recognition of Foreign Diplomas .....	12
Vocational Training .....	12
4. Economic Situation and Employment.....	13
Employment Opportunities.....	13
The Pension System.....	15
Unemployment Assistance.....	15
5. Banking System and Business Set-up Opportunities.....	16
Micro Credits.....	16
6. Customs.....	19
Customs Regulations.....	19
8. Transport .....	20
Detailed Map of the DRC .....	20
Transport Between Major Cities .....	21
By Road.....	21
Transport for Vulnerable Cases .....	23
8. Telecommunications and Postal Services.....	24
Post.....	24
The Phone System .....	24
Internet.....	24
List of Abbreviations.....	25
Sources.....	26

The currency is the Congolese Franc (international code CDF). The November 2009 exchange rate was USD1 = EUR 0.68. The exchange rate for the Congolese Franc was approximately CDF 840 for USD 1 (EUR 0.68) at the local market rate in April 2009.

## General Overview<sup>2</sup>

The Republic of the Congo was established as a Belgian colony in 1908. It gained its independence in 1960 but its early years were marred by political and social instability. Colonel Joseph Mobutu seized power and declared himself president in a coup in November 1965. He subsequently changed his name – to Mobutu Sese Seko – as well as that of the country – to Zaire. Mobutu retained his position for 32 years through several sham elections, and the use of brutal force.

Ethnic strife and civil war touched off a massive inflow of refugees in 1994 from fighting in Rwanda and Burundi. This led, in May 1997, to the toppling of the Mobutu regime by a rebellion backed by Rwanda and Uganda and fronted by Laurent Kabila. He renamed the country “the Democratic Republic of the Congo” (DRC), but, in August 1998, his regime was itself challenged by a second insurrection, again backed by Rwanda and Uganda. Troops from Angola, Chad, Namibia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe intervened to support Kabila's regime.

Laurent Kabila was assassinated in January 2001 and his son, Joseph Kabila, was named Head of State.

The transitional government held a successful constitutional referendum in December 2005. Elections were held for the presidency, National Assembly, and provincial legislatures in 2006. Kabila was inaugurated president in December 2006.

### Population:

The population is about 69,000,000. Estimates explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS. This can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, and lower population growth rates than would otherwise be expected. It can also change the distribution of population by age and sex.

### Age structure:

*0-14 years:* 46.9% (male 16,161,301/female 16,038,024);  
*15-64 years:* 50.6% (male 17,289,453/female 17,483,027);  
*65 years and over:* 2.5% (male 699,667/female 1,021,070).

### Sex ratio:

*at birth:* 1.03 male/female;  
*under 15 years:* 1.01 male/female;  
*15-64 years:* 0.99 male/female;  
*65 years and over:* 0.68 male/female;  
*total population:* 0.99 male/female;

### Life expectancy at birth:

*total population:* 54.36 years;  
*male:* 52.58 years;  
*female:* 56.20 years.

---

<sup>2</sup> CIAWorld Factbook (on line) : <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

**Urbanisation:**

*urban population:* 34% of total population (2008);

*rate of urbanisation:* 5.1% annual rate of change (2005-2010).

## **1. Health Care**

In every large city there is a general hospital, private clinics and health care centres to provide health care services to the population. Rural areas, by contrast, do not always have these facilities nearby. Even though health care is provided in large cities, it is recommended that certain ailments are treated abroad since most hospitals do not have the necessary equipment. Often, it has not been renewed for several decades. Anything from a stroke to head surgery or implants is best treated abroad. Most cases are referred to doctors in South Africa, Belgium or France.

### **Registering with a Health Insurance Company**

Health insurance can be obtained from the National Insurance Company (SONAS – Société Nationale d'Assurance). It offers several packages of cover. However, the National Insurance Company is a private insurance company, which is not affordable by everyone (and not actually much trusted).

### **Getting Medical Treatment**

Treatment is cheaper in public hospitals than in the private ones. However, it is not easy to access them because of the general poverty in the country. Patients are transferred to a higher medical level for serious health problems. Opening a consultation file and consulting with a physician costs about CDF 5 (EUR 3.38) to CDF 20 (EUR 13.52). Patients should go to:

- a small health post, such as a dispensary or a medical centre, for minor health problems;
- a health centre for both minor and serious health problems;
- a general hospital or specialised centre for minor, serious or special health problems;
- a clinic for serious, special or complicated health problems.

### **Medicines**

Medicines for the treatment of some diseases (tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis, children's diseases, HIV) are available in small health posts and health centres in each Commune (administrative area) in Kinshasa and in each administrative sector in the regions. There is one general hospital and a specialised centre in the big towns as well as in the administrative territories of the regions. There are also some clinics (public and private) in Kinshasa.

### **Psycho-Social Support**

The government does not offer psycho-social support. Patients must pay any costs themselves. They may have to turn to their family, or to the support of a non- governmental organisation (NGO) or to church associations.

## **Services for Vulnerable Cases**

There are no specific health services for vulnerable cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo, except for people suffering from HIV/AIDS.

## **Treatment for HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS has become a daily reality for everybody in the DRC. However, due to the traditionalist habits of society, discussion of the disease remains taboo. In many parts of Africa, sex is still a hidden issue, which parents cannot speak about with their children. In the churches, the subject is still considered as taboo even though some pastors and priests themselves suffer from AIDS and die from it. Country-wide statistics reveal that 4.5% of the adult population (15 to 49 years old) is HIV positive although the prevalence of HIV varies between different regions of the country.<sup>3</sup>

The rate of HIV/AIDS in the DRC is increasing. The increase has been enhanced by the recent civil war that caused people to be displaced both inside and outside the country. The economic poverty and social misery of families has pushed women and young girls into prostitution (frequently to support their families), further increasing the risk of infection. Victims of HIV/AIDS are found in all parts of the country. Widows and orphans of people who have died of AIDS can be found in miserable situations.

People in hospitals suffering from AIDS are so numerous that the government, with the support of international organisations and UN agencies, has created a national board (*Programme National Multisectoriel de Lutte Contre le SIDA – PNMLS*). The board was created by Presidential decree number 04/029 on 17 March 2004 and its task is the prevention of new cases and the treatment of persons suffering from HIV/AIDS. The government has also encouraged NGOs to become involved in the issue.

People who suffer from HIV/AIDS, and most of their close relatives (husband, wife and children), are partially or completely taken in charge by support organisations for treatment, food support and sometimes also housing assistance. Campaigns of information dissemination are organised in the country for parents, children and soldiers, also in churches.

Numerous initiatives aimed at the prevention of HIV/AIDS are ongoing, for example awareness raising campaigns about the use of condoms.

An HIV blood test can be obtained at a low cost or free of charge since many medical institutions are sponsored by the AIDS National Programme and receive help from international aid. There are many hospitals and medical centres in the country where an HIV test can be carried out. In Kinshasa, apart from the National Institute of Bio-Medical Research (INRB) and the Ngaliema Clinic, other centres that offer blood tests are.

• *Centre de Victoire*  
61, Avenue Victoire

---

<sup>3</sup> IOM Kinshasa : Information collected from AIDS National Program in 2007

Commune de Kasa-Vubu.

• ***Centre de Traitement Ambulatoire (CTA)***

Avenue Kabinda – in the compound of the Tuberculosis Test Centre (Centre de Dépistage de la Tuberculose - CDT), in front of Radio Nationale.

• ***CSAC AMOCONGO***

12 Avenue ASSOSSA,  
Quartier Salongo / Kasa-Vubu.

• ***AMOCONGO***

N'djili, 12 Rue Londo,  
Quartier 9,  
Commune de N'djili.

• ***Femme Plus***

112 Rue Lokelenge / Ngiri-Ngiri et sur 70 Avenue Muanza  
Commune de Kisenso.

• ***Laboratoire National de Référence:***

Pavillon 11  
Hospital Général de Kinshasa.

• ***Check Up Pour Tous***

Avenue de la Montagne, Commune de Ngaliema

The follow-up to HIV/AIDS treatment can be divided into different types. A medical follow-up is carried out in 20% of all cases in the country and 80% of cases in Kinshasa. Treatment against opportunistic infections and anti-retroviral treatment may be available. Both are free of charge. The patient can also be treated with a prophylaxis, using Cotrimoxazol. This treatment can be initiated before the Anti-retroviral treatment is started, or be used as a complementary treatment during the anti-retroviral treatment.

Several hospitals and clinics in the private sector, as well as in the public sector, offer HIV/AIDS treatment in Kinshasa, such as:

- Kinshasa General Clinic;
- University Clinic;
- Ngaliema Clinic;
- Kitambo Clinic;
- Bondeko Clinic;
- Yolo Medical Clinic;
- Saint Joseph Hospital;
- Nganda Centre;
- Kinshasa Medical Centre;
- N'djili Hospital;
- Marie Biamba Mutombo Clinic;
- Gombele Medical Clinic;
- Roi Baudouin Clinic.

There are also NGOs, which provide the same assistance, such as Action Communautaire Sida (ACS) and AMOCONGO.

HIV/AIDS treatment is also generally available outside Kinshasa, including the provision of anti-retroviral medications. The treatment is free. However, some patients do pay for treatment when they can afford it. Often, they do so to avoid hospitals using free medicines.

It is not possible to list all the available drugs for HIV/AIDS treatment here, taking into account their large number. A few examples of drugs used at the first and second levels of treatment include:

- drugs used for treatment against opportunistic infections, like *Zidovudine; Stavudine; Névirapine; Efavirenz; and Abacavir*; and
- drugs used for anti-retroviral treatment like *Ritonavir/Lopinavir; Nelfinavir; and Didanosine*.

Please note that the dosage differs from one individual to another taking into account his or her clinical state, other co-morbidities (e.g. tuberculosis, hepatitis, and renal pathology), etc. The price of a drug also depends on the dosage.

Psychological follow up, is carried out by NGOs:

- AMOCONGO, Coins de avenues de l'Enseignement et des Huileries, Commune de Kasa-Vubu;
- Fondation Femme Plus, Mme Bernadette Mulebwe, Directice Nationale: 09999 11 162;
- ALPI, Apostolat pour la Libération des Personnes Infectées, Mme Docteur Numbi, Directice Nationale, Avenue de l'OUÉ, Commune de Kitambo, Kinshasa
- Programme National de Lutte contre le SIDA (PNLS/CPCDV), Dr Darius Makela, Avenue de Huileries, Kinshasa.

A complete follow up for patients costs from USD 30 (EUR 20.28) to USD 50 (EUR 33.8) per month.

Health advice and prevention activities include:

- public awareness campaigns;
- information campaigns about transfusion safety;
- sexual transmissible infections prevention and treatment;
- HIV mother-infant prevention and treatment.

## 2. Housing

Rented housing is the most common form of accommodation in the DRC. But the procedures for purchasing property are also described in this section. Most people, who can afford to buy their own property, do so.

No system of housing loans exists in the DRC. The government does not provide subsidised housing although a limited number of homes for the elderly can be found in Kinshasa. People returning from abroad will receive no assistance from the government in finding accommodation and need to know that they will need to cover this cost entirely by themselves.

### **Buying Property**

There are no administrative impediments to buying and selling land in the DRC, but a great deal of caution should be exercised in buying property. There are reported cases of people who have bought property that has been sold to two or more other buyers.

The procedures for property purchase are different for land and house purchases.

#### Buying Land

- Obtain a purchase certificate (usually delivered by the customary chief of the area).
- Place the contract at the cadastral office (land registry office).
- Secure a valuation.
- The registration certificate will be handed out three years after the construction of the building. It is definitive proof of ownership.

#### Buying a House

- Obtain a purchase certificate (provided by the seller).
- Obtain an estate certificate for ownership transfer (provided at the town hall).
- Pay taxes (paid at municipality and at cadastral offices).

### **Finding a House or Apartment to Rent or Buy**

There are not many proper estate agencies in the DRC, which makes it impossible to obtain trustworthy information on the availability of housing, rents, property being sold, etc. People who have the money and the opportunity often buy a piece of land on which they build a house for themselves.

So called commissioners (*commissionaires*) operate in the DRC. The commissioners are like mobile estate agencies. They have a list of places recorded on paper and sit at a corner of a street with their boards. They can be useful in finding places of all sorts: houses; shops; flats; etc. Their reliability is variable.

Once a prospective tenant or purchaser has expressed interest in a place, the commissioners take them to look at it. The commissioners play an important role in assisting people with finding a house in Kinshasa because they are in contact with the owners. They charge 10% of the purchase price or the monthly rent.

The rent varies according to the location of the property. Generally, in Kinshasa, before renting, a person needs to guarantee his or her ability to pay six months rent, pay three months rent in advance and pay one month of rent as commission. The price examples cited below need to be multiplied by two or three in luxury compounds.

#### Examples of rents (July 2008):

- USD 50 (EUR 33.80) to USD 100 (EUR 67.60) per month for an apartment of one bedroom including dining room, kitchen, bathroom and water closet.
- USD 100 (EUR 67.60) to USD 200 (EUR 135.2) per month for an apartment of two bedrooms including dining room, kitchen, bath room and water closet.
- USD 250 (EUR 168) to USD 500 (EUR 338) or USD 1,000 (676) per month for an apartment of three bedrooms including dining room, kitchen, bath room and water closet.

Apartments and houses are not furnished. The cost of accommodation in a hotel ranges from USD 50 (EUR 33.8) up to USD 150 (EUR 101.4) per day, not including meals. As with the price of rent for private housing, the rent of housing for business purposes varies according to the location of the property.

All disputes about property, prices and rents are handled and judged by the District Attorney of the Court of First Instance in the area of the property.

### **Social Grants for Housing**

There is no government financial assistance to pay for housing and there are no shelters available in Kinshasa for persons who are returning from abroad.

### **Housing for Vulnerable Cases**

Elderly people are accommodated in some public homes in Kinshasa and in some provinces in the DRC, although there are not many.

Street children are looked after by some NGOs and churches until their reintegration into the family or into society and work.

IOM Kinshasa has upgraded two centres of Don Bosco's Salesians Nuns for street children in Kinshasa (Mazzarello House) and Lubumbashi. They are to be used to help victims of trafficking under the Southern African Countries' Trafficking Assistance Programme.

### **3. Education**

The organisation of the education system in the DRC is similar to that of Belgium, the country's former colonial power. Public education is guaranteed for both boys and girls but is not free. The parents must pay a tuition fee, which forms a practical obstacle to some families enrolling their children in school. Some families prioritise the schooling of boys over girls, who are often assigned domestic responsibilities instead.

#### **Access to Primary School, High School and University**

The school system has a total of twelve grades. Grades one to six are at the primary level (*primaires*) and seven to twelve are secondary/high school (*secondaires*). The tuition fee is usually between USD 10 (EUR 6.76) and USD 300 (EUR 202.80) per trimester, depending on the reputation of the school in question.

There are three private foreign schools in Kinshasa that are mostly attended by the children of international workers in DRC.

The administration of the education system is centralised, with the Ministry of Education taking responsibility for overall control.

There are universities, both private and public, all over the country. There are many universities, mostly in the bigger cities, and they offer a wide range of courses and degrees at undergraduate and graduate level. Most people prefer to go overseas for doctoral studies and post-doctoral research,

#### **Recognition of Foreign Diplomas**

All foreign diplomas are validated by the Ministry of Education. They take account of UNESCO's report on worldwide education.

#### **Vocational Training**

The Minister of Labour and Social Protection is very active in promoting vocational training, and the Government has made noticeable efforts in this respect since its appointment. However, vocational programmes remain the initiative of local NGOs and international partners in the country, such as ILO, UNDP and IOM.

Training is intended mainly to provide students with a basic knowledge of traditional occupations such as mechanics, electronics, electricians, secretarial skills, computer skills, dress making, hair and beauty courses, driving, carpentry, brick making, and shoemaking.

No scholarships or grants are available. People must pay for these training courses from their own means, or with the help of NGOs or church associations.

## **4. Economic Situation and Employment**

The DRC remains among the world's least developed countries, ranking 168<sup>th</sup> in the latest human development index (2007/2008).

Finding a job in the DRC is difficult and the informal labour market is a good deal larger than the formal labour market. Small and medium business enterprises are at present among the main economic activities. Some inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have started providing micro grants and loans to help the local population start up their own businesses. The government has established a National Employment Office but its capacity to assist remains limited.

Social reform is underway to improve support for people needing medical care and suffering occupational accidents, amongst other issues. However, this support will only be available to people working in the formal labour market, excluding approximately 80% of the country's population of 62.6 million people.

### **Food and Basic Supplies**

Local markets can usually provide basic staple food. Some shops and supermarkets also have imported products for household consumption. Most families buy food on a daily basis. There are state-owned companies supplying water and electricity to households all over the country, but only in the urban areas. The water supply depends on the electricity supply and the electricity company is facing technical problems with *délestage* (selective power cut), which means that neighbourhoods have one day a week of no electricity. The electricity supply is regularly interrupted. If it returns suddenly, unprotected equipment (TVs, radios, computers, etc.) can be damaged by the surge.

### **Employment Opportunities**

It is generally difficult to obtain a good job in the DRC. One contributing reason is the inundation of the labour market with graduate job seekers. In some cases, even a diploma from a renowned university is useless when looking for work. However, among the employed population, it is still true that people who have a university diploma tend to have a higher salary.

Because companies and other enterprises have been looted since the beginning of the 1990s, there is no major sector that offers significant job opportunities. The civil wars of the last few years have increased the labour crisis. However, no official unemployment rate figures are available

Recently, non-governmental and international organisations have been the major employers in the DRC and most of the jobs created are in the development field. Typical activities include project management, logistics, and radio operations.

The labour laws and regulations in the DRC are established by the Labour Law of the DRC, le Droit du Travail. The labour market in the DRC has two levels. The formal (or "modern")

sector covers only 2.8% of the labour market. It is composed of individual enterprises as well as private, charitable and public companies, covering all types of activities and sub-sectors. In the formal sector, employees benefit from social and legal protection, and are very often organised into unions;

The informal (or “traditional”) sector is thought to cover more than 80% of the market and is composed of small individual companies or micro businesses. Despite the prevalence of this sector, employees do not benefit from legal or social protection.

Both sectors are characterised by an absence of clear rules and regulations. Some companies obtain special authorisations for the few procedures that are in place by paying a “lump-sum” that includes the taxes and fees due to the State.

On both levels, salaries depend on the owner or on the sector. There is no common salary scale, even if the government has fixed USD 3 (EUR 2.03) a day as the minimum salary.

There are no particular requirements for applying for a job. Since 2002, the National Office for Employment has been in charge of labour issues. However, this office has limited capabilities to assist. There are other private institutions that can help (such as the Job Factory). Vacancies are rarely advertised in newspapers. They are instead passed orally to close friends and relatives, except for the rare cases where advertisements are posted on the gates or in the lobby of a company. Companies often advertise a position for the sake of appearances and to seem to comply with internal regulations. It is customary to select an insider even before posting the job advertisement.

Women have access to the labour market in the DRC and the majority of small businesses are run by women. Also, some 65% of the active population in the agricultural sector are women. They are in fact strongly encouraged to work, particularly in urban areas. The establishment, in 2006, of The Vice Ministry of the Feminine Condition was intended to improve the situation of women.

The main economic activities in the DRC are small businesses and micro enterprises. Examples of such small businesses include:

- transport companies: e.g. taxi or mini bus;
- bars;
- shops selling basic items;
- hair dressing salons;
- clothes shops/stalls;
- shops selling spare parts and tyres for cars;
- dress makers, with training facilities;
- places selling phone cards;
- small communication centres (phone shop);
- food shops;
- pharmacies;
- public secretariats (typing and printing services) with a computer training centre.

## **The Pension System**

There is an ongoing social reform, the result of which will be a unique social structure within the framework of the National Social Security Institute (described below). However, the beneficiaries are employees in the formal system only. Almost 80% of the population will not have access to these services. In addition, because of the centralised administration and lack of private competition, the services provided are very basic.

- Medical care is only available in case of occupational accidents or professional illness. Nothing is provided for maternity leave or non-occupational accidents or illness;
- Disability at Work covers compensation in case of occupational accidents;
- Family benefits: only child benefits are covered. The reform also envisages other types of benefits, such as maternity, education, accommodation, but it remains to be seen how this will be implemented in practice.
- Pension fund. Pensions are not common in the DRC. On paper, Congolese government officials are offered access to pension plans. Larger companies used to pay pensions to retired workers, but the social security scheme is now ineffective and mainly offers advice and counselling.

For people returning from abroad, pensions can be channelled through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, provided that some arrangement or agreement is made before return. The Ministry can also be contacted for specialised advice on mechanisms and structures for channelling pension funds. But, there is no pension or financial assistance specifically for returnees, nor are there employment projects for returnees.

## **Unemployment Assistance**

There is no unemployment assistance or support, apart from the National Office for Employment, which may assist with job applications. Due to the living conditions, war, and economic conditions, single parent families are very common in the DRC, with single mother parenting being the predominant type. No institutional assistance is provided, and single parents very often have to rely on the support of the community.

## **5. Banking System and Business Set-up Opportunities**

The banking system in the DRC is recovering from a period of turmoil. Foreign banks, such as Citibank, Belgolaise, Stanbic Bank, etc., are operating in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. A savings bank account can be opened with Pro-credit Bank and the Congo African International Bank (Banque Internationale pour l’Afrique au Congo (BIAC)). Opening a bank account is a simple procedure. The necessary forms must be filled in and there is a compulsory deposit of between USD 100 (EUR 67.60) and USD 3,000 (EUR 2028.00).

### **Transferring Money from Abroad**

Transferring money within the country can be done through several agencies that operate in all urban areas, such as Western Union, Mister Cash, Soficom, Solidaire or Money Gramm. Bringing in money from outside the country can be done through several of the agencies such as Western Union, Money Gramm, or some of the other private agencies well known in Congolese communities.

### **Starting a Business**

In order to open a shop or office, certain procedures need to be followed. For instance, an authorisation must be obtained and commercial registration made with the Ministry of Commerce. The costs related to the procedures to be followed when opening small shops or offices are as follows, apart from monthly taxes:

- authorisation: USD 200 (EUR135.2);
- Commercial Register (Identification): USD 60 (EUR 40.56)
- Agence Nationale de Renseignement (ANR) (National Investigation Agency): USD 100 (EUR 67.60 ;
- Culture and Art: USD 50 (EUR 33.80);
- Environment: USD 50 (EUR 33.80).

It does not normally take long to go through this procedure. Applicants receive the papers as soon as they pay the fees.

### **Micro Credits**

Both NGOs and international organisations have introduced micro credit programmes in the DRC but under various conditions. For example, applicants need to belong to a specified group in society, and normally to groups that are considered vulnerable. There is a limit to the size of the credit. Micro credit programs are usually aimed at households where at least one of its members is considered “vulnerable”. The micro-projects need also to be sustainable.

IOM Kinshasa provides some returnees with micro grants as part of reintegration support, through bilateral agreements with the returnees’ host countries. Examples are people returning to the DRC from the UK, the Netherlands, or Belgium.

Recently, various financial banking institutions, such as Pro-credit, Finca, Hope-DRC, and Congo African International Bank, have offered access to micro credits, but these are generally loans that have to be repaid.

Details of the financial services of some banks operating in DRC are as follows.

- FINCA DR Congo

Address in Kinshasa: Sodimca Building, Colonel EBEYA and Maman YEMO avenues, corner of Gombe Commune. Tel.: +243 81 50 97 198 - +243 89 82 22 854, Website: [www.villagebanking.org](http://www.villagebanking.org)

Conditions for receiving credits:

- to be Congolese, over 18 years old, and living in DR Congo;
- to have been commercially active for at least two years;
- to have a licence permit or an official authorisation.

Credit is a minimum of USD 400 (EUR 270.4) and a maximum of USD 20,000 (EUR 13,520)

- MUFESAKIN (Mutualité des Sages Femmes de Kinshasa)

Address in Kinshasa: Avenue NGUMA N° 5, Jolie Parc Quarter (Kitambo Magasin place) Ngaliema Commune. Tel.: +243 81 512 14 16

Conditions:

- to be Congolese, over 18 years-old, and living in DR Congo (or be a NGO);
- to be a member of the MUFESAKIN having paid 6,000 Congolese Francs per person, and 12,000 Congolese Francs for NGOs;
- a maximum of 100,000 Congolese Francs (USD 115 or EUR 77,74) is available for income generating activities initially. This amount can be increased, given evidence of management and reimbursement capacity, with a 4 % interest rate per month (48% per year);
- credit can be obtained for income generating activities, paying children's school fees (for a period of 10 months of the school year) and family expenditure.

- HOPE DRC

Address in Kinshasa: Lumumba's Boulevard and Huileries avenues, corner opposite to Regideso Building in Gombe Commune. Tel.: +243 81 49 26 793

Conditions:

- no individual micro credits are available;
- micro credit is given to groups (associations, NGO or church) of 25 to 45 people;

- applicants should be Congolese, over 18 years-old, and living in DR Congo;
- activity should already exist;
- minimum of USD 80 (EUR 54,08) up to a maximum of USD3.000\$ (2,028.00€) credit is available, depending on creditworthiness, for a period of four months;
- The loan is to be reimbursed in 16 instalments and paid every week, starting from the second week after the start of the credit.

- CTB-BTC Kinshasa

Address in Kinshasa: Avenue Colonel Ebeya N° 15, Kinshasa – Gombe.

Website: [www.btctb.org](http://www.btctb.org). E-mail: [Pierre.dulieu@btctb.org](mailto:Pierre.dulieu@btctb.org)

- The Belgian Technical Cooperation does not provide micro credit directly to individuals but it funds micro credit projects submitted by local NGOs.

## 6. Customs

### Customs Regulations

The Ofida (Office de Douane et Accises) is the Government office in charge of customs in DRC. Taxation is based on *ad valorem* or on specific levies.

Based on the law n° 009-2003 of 18 March 2003. On determination of the value of merchandises, the payment of all costs is made to Ofida, which will divide them amongst the services involved<sup>4</sup>.

The table below details what must be paid and people coming into the country must contact a custom agent or agency who will guide them through the process of paying the costs below. However, IOM Kinshasa does not pay customs duty and IOM assisted returnees will benefit from this IOM Status. All their goods will be in IOM Kinshasa's name.

### Custom Clearance for IOM Kinshasa (USD (EUR))

N°	Description	Vehicle	Container		Personal Items
			20'	40'	
1	Customs duty	No cost	No cost	No cost	No cost
2	OCC/TALLY (Control office tax)	118 (79.76)	118 (79.76)	118 (79.76 )	118 (79.76)
3	ONATRA (per item type : A, B or C)	300 to 850 (202.80 to 574.60)	Depending on weight	Depending on weight	Depending on weight
4	Carrier Costs	-	1,480(1,000.48 )	1,480(1,000.48 )	-
5	Travel insurance (Matadi - Kinshasa)	125 (84.5)	-	-	-
6	Agency Visa	100 (67.60)	200 (135.20)	400 (270.40)	100 (67.60)
7	Ofida Entry Visa	40 (27.04)	40 (27.04)	80 (54.08)	40 (27.04)
8	Administrative and Operational Costs	450 (304.20)	lump sum	lump sum	lump sum
9	Bank charges	25(16.90)	50 (33.80)	50 (33.80)	30 (20.28)
10	Ogefrem Office Tax	0.59% on C.I.F	0.59% on C.I.F	0.59% on C.I.F	0.59% on C.I.F
11	Ogefrem subscription	50 (33.80)	50 (33.80)	50 (33.80)	50 (33.80)
12	Handling	50 (33.80)	200 (135.20)	400 (270.40)	lump sum
13	Stripping	10 (6.76)	300 (202.80)	500 (338)	100 (67.60)
14	Agency Honorary	10 % of C.I.F	5 % of C.I.F	5 % of C.I.F	lump sum
15	Transport (Matadi – Kinshasa)	No cost	1400 (946.40)	2,800(1,892.80 )	lump sum

Source: Information collected from the custom service

<sup>4</sup> [www.leganet.cd](http://www.leganet.cd)

## 8. Transport

### Detailed Map of the DRC



Source: Populationdata.net<sup>5</sup>

A large part of the DRC road network is in a poor condition. Due to this, land transport is a problem: there are practically no roads that connect one city to another. Trips can take weeks or months to cover relatively small distances. Railways go between some cities only.

Even so, the trains are mostly in such a precarious condition that people fear to put their lives

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.populationdata.net>

at risk by using this mode of travel. Air transport is smoother than any other mode, but since the country has different administrations, the ability to travel to troubled areas (war zones such as North Goma and Bunia) is highly restricted. Accessing remote areas therefore remains very difficult due to the lack of transport.

## **Transport Between Major Cities**

### By Road

Most of the road network in the DRC is in a poor condition. The rural road system was built primarily to connect agricultural and mineral producing areas to the river and rail networks. Major highways in western DRC link Kinshasa to Boma via Matadi, Kinshasa to Kikwit, and, in the south east, link the mining centres in Kolwezi and Lubumbashi in Katanga to northern Zambia.

Most roads have deteriorated considerably and many others that run through the lowlands are impassable. A suspension bridge across the river Congo has improved links between the western part of Bas-Congo and the rest of the country.

The governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo have, for years, agreed in principle to build a bridge across the Congo river between both the capitals, Kinshasa and Brazzaville.

In Kinshasa:

- The cost of one way travel is USD 0.25 (EUR 0.169) by bus and USD 0.50 (EUR 0.338) for a shared taxi;
- The cost of using a parked taxi (normal taxi) is USD 5 (EUR 3.38) to USD 10 (EUR 6.76) one way and USD 15 (EUR 10.14) per hour. Parked taxis can be found at the Airport or at Luxury Hotels;
- Cars can also be rented at Euro Car, AVIS and others car rental companies for USD 100 (EUR 67.60) a day with a driver and USD 80 (EUR 54.08) without a driver.

Two public transport companies, Société de Transport Urbain au Congo (STUC) and City Train are restarting in Kinshasa and in other major cities with new buses.

There are small private societies providing public transport between Kinshasa and Matadi for about USD 30 (EUR 20.28) for a taxi and USD 15 (10.14) for a bus, between Kinshasa and Boma/Muanda for USD 45 (EUR 30.42), and, recently, between Kinshasa and Kikwit (in Bandundu Province) for about USD 25 (EUR 16.9) for a bus and USD 60 (EUR40.56) for a jeep taxi.

### By Rail

Five major railway systems exist in the DRC. However, since the mid-1970s, deteriorating track, old rolling stock, and a shortage of spare parts and fuel have caused constant problems for the railways.

The oldest train lines link the ocean port of Matadi with Kinshasa. The longest line, which runs Ilebo-Dilolo-Lubumbashi, connects the mining area of the southern Katanga Region with the port of Ilebo on the Kansai River and ultimately runs to Kinshasa by the Kasai and Congo rivers.

There are other minor rail systems in north-east Congo. The 140 km Mayumbe railway in Bas-Congo links the ocean port of Boma to the agricultural area of Tshiela and Cabinda. The cost of travel ranges from USD 10 (EUR 6.760) and USD 35 (EUR 23.66) depending on the train line and distance travelled.

### By Boat

The ferry between Kinshasa and Brazza still exists and runs with five daily rotations. The fare is approximately USD 25 (EUR 16.9) one way. From Goma to Bukavu by boat is about USD 40 (EUR 27.04)

### Air Travel

The major international airport is N'Djili in Kinshasa (airport code FIH), which is served regularly by a number of international airlines throughout Africa and runs direct flights to Europe and Asia.

Private carriers and small charter companies support air travel within the DRC. Loano in Lubumbashi is also an international airport (airport code FBM). Approved international airline companies are SN Brussels Airlines, Air France, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airways, and South African Airlines. Inside the country, only the airline Hewa Bora is recommended. Many DRC airlines are presently banned from landing at EU airports for security reasons.

### Fares on international flights (return):

From/to Brussels:	+/- USD 960	(EUR 648.96)
From/to Paris:	+/- USD 1,635	(EUR 105.26)
From/to Johannesburg:	+/- USD 536	(EUR 362.33)
From/to Nairobi:	+/- USD 942	(EUR 636.79)
From/to Rabat:	+/- USD 950	(EUR 642.2)

### One way fares on domestic flights from N'djili (FIH) to the following destinations (USD (EUR)):

FIH > Bandundu :	+/-120 (81.12)	FIH > Kisangani :	+/-260 (175.76)
FIH > Matadi :	+/-125 (84.50)	FIH > Mbandaka :	+/-200 (135.20)
FIH > Mbuji mayi :	+/-170 (114.92)	FIH > Tshikapa :	+/-250 (169)
FIH > Kananga :	+/-170 (114.92)	FIH > Kalemie :	No Flight from FIH
FIH > Lubumshi :	+/-290 (196.04)	FIH > Kahemba :	+/-150 (101.40)
FIH > Kindu :	+/-320 (216.32)	FIH > Bumba :	+/-400 (270.40)
FIH > Kikwit :	+/-130 (87.88)		

### **Transport for Vulnerable Cases**

No special means of transport for vulnerable cases exists in the DRC. However, people living with a major handicap (deaf, mute, blind or crippled) do not pay on public transport, except for taxis.

## **8. Telecommunications and Postal Services**

The state-owned National Mail and Telephone Office (OCPT) faces competition from private companies, in both the postal and the telecommunications sectors. Many people prefer to use the services offered by private companies since the OCPT is generally thought to function poorly. Over the last couple of years, the mobile phone services provided by a variety of private companies have virtually replaced OCPT.

### **Post**

There are many companies, both state and privately owned, that offer postal services (to areas where access is possible). These companies include the National Mail and Telephone Office (OCPT), DHL, Kin Service Express and other local agencies. However, it is reported that the state-owned OCPT is not operating properly, and due to this, it has few clients these days.

### **The Phone System**

The country code for the Democratic Republic of the Congo is +243. There are no prefixes in place for the regions.

The national landline telecommunications network of OCPT has deteriorated badly and has been overtaken by the expansion of mobile phones. GSM mobile phone providers have virtually replaced the state-owned telecommunications company, ensuring people's access all over the country to both domestic and international telecommunications.

Thus, landline telecommunication systems exist with a very limited function but the preferred telecommunication option amongst the general public is mobile phones or the Internet. This also means that the use of fax in the DRC is very limited.

Mobile phone services are offered by privately owned companies such as Vodacom, Zain (which has recently replaced Celtel), Standard Telecom, Sait-Telecom, Congo-Chine Telecom, and Starcel. All the main cities are covered by mobile phone companies.

### **Internet**

Internet connections are available in the country's bigger cities. There are many Internet providers, such as Vodanet–Microcom, Cyber Net, Standard Télécom, Iburst Africa/DRC, Comax. The connection charge is about USD 450 (EUR 304.20) to USD 1,000 (EUR 676) and the monthly cost is from USD 100 (EUR 67.60) to USD 300 (202.80) according to the subscriber's needs. A prepaid option is also available.

A monthly Internet subscription costs approximately USD 20 (EUR 13.52) but cheaper options can also be found. One hour in an Internet café costs around USD 2 (EUR1.35).

## List of Abbreviations

ADFL:	Alliance of Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire
AfDB:	African Development Bank
CDF:	Congolese Franc
DRC:	Democratic Republic of the Congo
IGO:	Inter-governmental Organisation
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
INGO:	International Non Governmental Organisation
INRB:	National Institute of Bio-Medical Research
IOM:	International Organisation for Migration
NGO:	Non Governmental Organisation
OCC:	Office Congolais pour le Contrôle
OCHA:	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Actions (OCHA)
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFIDA:	Office de Douane et Accises
OGEFREM:	Office de Gestion de Fret Maritime
ONATRA:	Office Nationale pour le Transport
OCPT :	National Mail and Téléphone Office (Office Congolais des Postes et Télécommunications)
PNMLS:	Programme National Multisectoriel de Lutte Contre le SIDA
SONAS:	Société Nationale d'Assurance
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO:	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund

## Sources

### Main source

The main source of information for this country sheet was information collection in the field and IOM Kinshasa's knowledge and expertise gained from work in the DRC.

### Additional sources

CIA World Factbook, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Available online at:  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/cg.html>

Population Data.net, Informations, maps and statistics on population and countries of the world: <http://www.populationdata.net>

LEGANET.CD, available on line: [www.leganet.cd](http://www.leganet.cd)

UNAIDS, available on line: [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)