



# OSAC Country Security Report Rwanda

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*This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State Rwanda Travel Advisory and [Rwanda Country Information Page](#).*

## Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

### U.S. Embassy Kigali:

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Tel: +250-252-596-400; After-hour emergencies: +250-788-383-305.

Hours: Monday to Thursday: 0800 to 1730; Friday: 0800 to 1300.

## OSAC Country Chapter(s)

Kigali does not have an active Country Chapter. Contact [OSAC's Africa team](#) with any questions.

## Rwanda Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise increased caution in Rwanda due to the potential for armed violence. Do Not Travel to Rwanda-Burundi border due to armed violence or the Rwanda-Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) border due to armed violence.

## Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Kigali as being a **HIGH**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Rwanda.

There has been no official publication of Rwandan crime statistics since 2015. However, news reporting notes an increase in criminal cases in the courts.

Residential crimes tend to be incidents of opportunity, with unsecured items stolen from yards or unsecured homes. There has been an increase in forcible entry of homes to commit robberies. However, burglars generally target homes when residents are not present. Burglars may break and enter, or domestic staff and residential security guards may allow them entrance.

U.S. citizens have reported a slight increase in residential theft throughout Kigali.

Although violent crimes such as assault, robbery, rape, and home invasion occur in Rwanda, they are rarely committed against foreigners. The Embassy received several recent reports of late-night assaults and robberies involving pedestrians walking alone in poorly lighted neighborhoods.

## Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping “K” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Rwanda.

There are no statistics on criminal kidnappings, but the number is nominal. Any such incidents do not target foreign nationals.

## Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Kigali as being a **MEDIUM**-threat location for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Terrorism “T” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Rwanda.

The U.S. Department of State recommends against all travel to the border with the DRC, given the fighting between the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) and armed rebel groups.

In 2024, South African Development Community (SADC) forces replaced the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in the DRC to assist in the fight against armed rebel groups. Then in March 2025, after suffering significant losses on the ground, the SADC announced its planned “phased withdrawal” from the country. The security situation in these parts of eastern DRC remains unstable; sporadic but severe outbreaks targeting civilians, including rape, kidnapping, and pillaging, continue throughout both provinces. The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) is an armed group that includes former soldiers and supporters of the regime that orchestrated the 1994 genocide; FDLR continues to operate in eastern DRC, near the border with Rwanda.

The most recent M23 conflict in eastern DRC has significantly impacted the security landscape of western Rwanda, particularly along the shared border. In January 2025, M23 rebels seized Goma, the largest city in North Kivu province, and within three weeks, captured Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu. They also took control of Walikale, a major mining hub, and continue advancing west. According to the United Nations, M23 is backed by thousands of Rwandan troops and receives support from the Rwandan Army and intelligence services, though Rwanda denies backing the group. Rwandan President Paul Kagame has acknowledged the presence of Rwandan troops in eastern DRC, citing security threats from Congo's military presence and the harboring of Hutu ethnic group members responsible for the 1994 genocide. The conflict has

led to reports of machine gun fire and artillery shelling along the DRC border, prompting the U.S. Embassy to release a security alert. It's important to note that U.S. Embassy staff are restricted from districts bordering the DRC and Burundi without special permission. As M23 moves westward, the risk of spillover along the border with Rwanda may decrease.

In January 2025, residents in the border areas of Rubavu and Gisenyi reported machine gunfire, artillery shelling, and border delays due to the M23 conflict in neighboring DRC.

Armed rebel groups operate in Virunga National Park, on the DRC side of Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park. Exercise extreme caution and avoid crossing the border into DRC while exploring the Rwandan side of the park. Rwandan armed forces actively patrol and secure their borders along DRC; cross-border incursion by an armed group from DRC where tourists may be present is possible.

## Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Kigali as being a **LOW**-threat location for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Civil Unrest "U" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Rwanda. Civil unrest can develop quickly without prior notice, often interrupting logistics and services. Avoid demonstration activity, as even those planned to remain peaceful have the potential to turn violent.

## Elections/Political Stability

Rwanda has guarded its political stability since the 1994 genocide. Parliamentary elections in 2018 saw elected women to 64% of the seats, the Rwandan Patriotic Front maintain an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies and, for the first time, two opposition parties each won two seats in the parliament. In 2024, President Paul Kagame was re-elected for a fourth term after winning more than 99% of the vote.

## Protests & Demonstrations

Protests are rare, but those that do occur are generally peaceful. Any protest or rally requires a permit.

Rwandan authorities may subject you to more scrutiny if you meet or plan to meet with individuals or organizations who are critical of the government. This includes those in the country as human rights observers, journalists, NGO workers, and students.

## Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

There is little direct anti-U.S. sentiment in Rwanda.

## Law Enforcement

The emergency line in Rwanda is **112**. RNP also operates an online crime reporting portal. Detained or arrested U.S. citizens should comply with police instructions and contact the ACS section of the U.S. Embassy immediately. Victims often must go to the nearest police station to register a complaint in person.

The Rwanda National Police (RNP), under the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for internal security. The RDF, under the Defense Ministry, oversees external security, although the RDF also works on internal security and intelligence matters alongside the RNP. In 2018, the Rwanda Investigation Bureau has begun conducting many investigative functions formerly performed by the RNP, including counterterrorism investigations, investigation of economic and financial crimes, and judicial police functions. Civilian authorities maintain effective control over state security forces. Members of the security forces have reportedly committed some abuses.

## Police Response

Despite professionalization and capacity building initiatives, the RNP lacks specialized skills such as counterterrorism, bomb disposal, and forensics. The RNP's material resources are extremely limited; police are unable to respond to an emergency call in a timely manner. A mix of defense and police elements conduct patrols in the city, but their focus is more on preventing terrorism than crime. Community watch groups patrol neighborhoods to prevent residential crime. Police will often direct a victim to the nearest police station to register a complaint in person, as they are unable to respond to the caller. RNP leadership acknowledges these challenges and is striving to improve its operations and reputation.

RNP does not tolerate corruption; as a result, incidents are infrequent. Victims of harassment or attempted bribery should contact the dedicated RNP hotline at **116** to report problems.

## Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Rwanda, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [LGB Travelers](#)
- [Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [Student Travelers](#)
- [Faith-Based Travelers](#)

## Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Rwanda.

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, but state security forces regularly arrest and detain persons arbitrarily and without due process. The law provides for the right of persons to challenge in court the lawfulness of their arrest or detention, but few have tried, and there are no reports of any detainees succeeding in obtaining prompt release or compensation for unlawful detention.

Human rights NGOs have reported that individuals suspected of having ties to the FDLR, the Rwanda National Congress, or other insurgent groups were detained unlawfully and held incommunicado for long periods in harsh and inhuman conditions.

Media professionals report the government continues to use threats of arrests and physical violence to silence media outlets and journalists. Journalist Jean Bosco Kabakura remains outside the country after fleeing in 2018 because of threats related to his publication of an article examining the roles of police, military, and civilian authorities in the shooting of refugees from the Kiziba refugee camp in 2018. Several other journalists who fled in prior years remain outside the country. Failure to investigate or prosecute threats against journalists results in self-censorship.

In April 2020, the government enforced a general lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19. During the lockdown, numerous bloggers and journalists, including some who used YouTube channels to distribute their work, were arrested and detained. These journalists were largely known to be critics of government policies and practices. Dieudonne Niyonsenga (also known as Hassan Cyuma), owner of the YouTube channel Ishema TV, and his employee Fidele Komezusenge were arrested for violating lockdown measures, remanded for 30 days, and denied bail. Komezusenge was later released, as was Niyonsenga after 11 months. HRW considered the detention of Hassan Cyuma and several other bloggers working for outlets that reported on an incident of several rapes perpetrated by a group of RDF soldiers during the COVID-19 lockdown and the impact of the COVID-19 directives on vulnerable populations to be retaliatory.

## Cybersecurity

Theft of credit card and identity information is rare, but a reasonable possibility given the increasing level of sophistication of potential criminal elements in Rwanda.

Rwandan authorities note the rate of cybercrime escalated during the three months of COVID lockdown in 2021, with a 72% increase in the amount of money involved. Authorities reported that, similar to elsewhere, there was no specific targeted group, and social engineering played a main role in most cases of cyber fraud.

Rwandan police’s capabilities in fighting cybercrime have been increasing. Practice the same protection of personally identifiable or private information that you would in the United States.

The law provides legal protection against unauthorized use of personal data by private entities, although officials does not enforce these provisions.

The government blocks some websites, including media outlets, that include content considered contrary to government positions.

## Import/Export Restrictions

There are no known restrictions on the use or importation of satellite phones.

A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

*Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).*