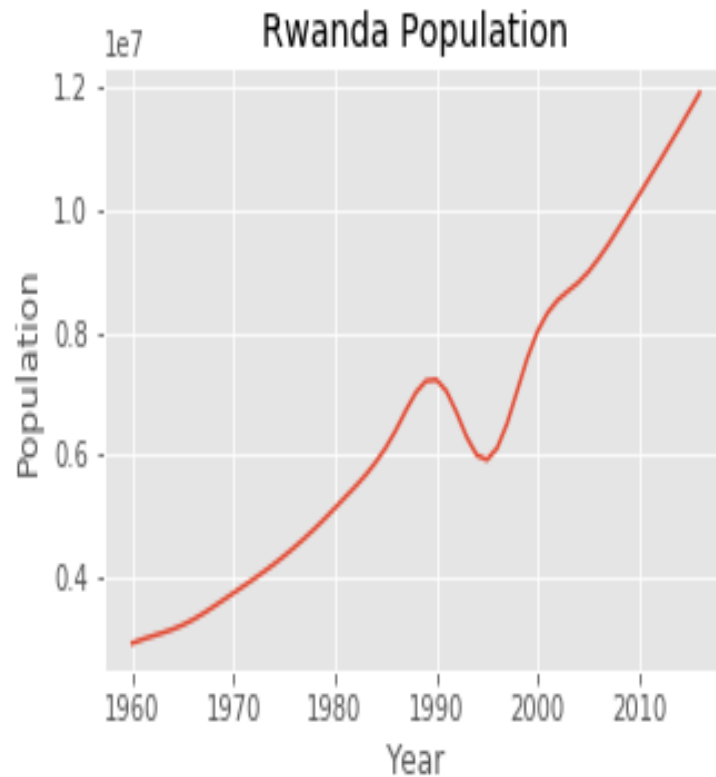


# Rwanda



République du Rwanda (French)– in Africa (light blue & dark grey) – in the African Union (light blue) Rwanda (/ruˈwɒndə/ or /ruˈændə/ ( listen); Kinyarwanda: U Rwanda [u.ˈwanda] ( listen)), officially the Republic of Rwanda (Kinyarwanda: Repubulika y'u Rwanda; French: République du Rwanda), is a sovereign state in Central and East Africa and one of the smallest countries on the African mainland. Located a few degrees south of the Equator, Rwanda is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda is in the African Great Lakes region and is highly elevated; its geography is dominated by mountains in the west and savanna to the east, with numerous lakes throughout the country. The climate is temperate to subtropical, with two rainy seasons and two dry seasons each year. The population is young and predominantly rural, with a density among the highest in Africa. Rwandans are drawn from just one cultural and linguistic group, the Banyarwanda, although within this group there are three subgroups: the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. The Twa are a forest-dwelling pygmy people descended from Rwanda's earliest inhabitants. Scholars disagree on the origins of and differences between the Hutu and Tutsi; some believe differences are derived from former social castes within a single people, while others believe the Hutu and Tutsi arrived in the country separately, and from different locations. Christianity is the largest religion in the country; the principal language is Kinyarwanda, spoken by most Rwandans, with English and French serving as official languages. Rwanda has a presidential system of government. The president is Paul Kagame of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), who took office in 2000. Rwanda today has low corruption compared with neighbouring countries, although human rights organisations report suppression of opposition groups, intimidation and restrictions on freedom of speech. The country has been governed by a strict administrative hierarchy since precolonial times; there are five provinces delineated by borders drawn in 2006. Rwanda is one of only two countries with a female majority in the national parliament.