

# Burundi

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ULL, UNIV 100- H05,  
November 2024

Monument de l'Unité in Gitega



# Interest

- I randomly picked Burundi.
- I didn't know anything about it, but it was a happy accident, and I have enjoyed learning many things about Burundi's culture and clothing through this research.



# Case Study

- This case study aims to answer why the people in Burundi wear the clothing they do.
- The case study details components of Burundi that form the country's culture, and how they effect the clothing worn in the country.
- This is a look into some parts of culture and the resulting clothing worn.
- This study reveals what the people wear, why they wear them, and how the culture affects them
- This research study doesn't control what events occur and instead focuses on real-life situations.

# Location

- East Africa
- 10k sq.mil = ~MD
- Population: 13 mil (77<sup>th</sup> in the world)
- Capitals: Gitega (Political) and Bujumbura (Commercial)



Due to its ports



# Background Facts

- Climate: equatorial
  - Average temperature varies from 63-73F
  - Average rainfall is around 59 in.
  - Two rain seasons (February-May & September-November) & two dry seasons (June-August & December-January)
- Natural Resource: Nickel
  - Sponsor other mining companies to mine it due to lack of mining capabilities
- Language: Kirundi, French, English (All official)



<https://investingnews.com/daily/resource-investing/base-metals-investing/nickel-investing/nickel-reserves-by-country/>



<https://dianabuja.wordpress.com/2013/07/23/the-dry-season-in-burundi-%E3%80%93-time-to-celebrate-4-of-iii/>



<https://theglobepost.com/2021/09/20/climate-shocks-burundi/>

# History

- First monarchy (Tutsi) developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century
- Europeans colonized in 1858
  - Eventually controlled by Germany, given to Belgium after WWI
- Belgium rule mostly eliminated the traditional Burundian society of chiefs and subchiefs
  - Created the boundaries between Hutu and Tutsi
- July 1, 1962: Burundi gains independence
- January 1965: Hutu prime minister was assassinated by a Tutsi
- Tutsi gained control after Hutu lost power
  - Several coups were held by the Hutu: all failed
- October 21, 1993: newly elected Hutu president Melchior Ndadaye was assassinated
  - This sparked the civil war that lasted until 2001
- 2001-Present: political, social, and civic unrest has persisted to this day under Hutu president (presidential republic)
  - Causes range from hypocritical political leaders, ethnic boundaries, and several more coup attempts



<https://www.france24.com/en/20150531-burundi-tanzania-eac-east-african-community-postpone-polls-elections>

WEB: *Burundi - History*. (n.d.). Encyclopedia Britannica. 6

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Burundi/History>

# Cuisine

Bugali: Corn flour porridge



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugali#/media/File:Ugali\\_&\\_Sukuma\\_Wiki.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugali#/media/File:Ugali_&_Sukuma_Wiki.jpg)

Ibiharage: Fried bean dish



<https://cuisine.voozenoo.fr/2023/07/01/ibiharage-burundi/>

Isombe: Cassava leaf stew



<https://www.unitednationsoffood.com/2017/04/156-rwanda-isombe-and-supermodel-ugali/>

# Burundi Tourism





# Rusizi National Park

- Main attraction is the hippo sanctuary



# Bujumbura

- Living Museum: Showcase of traditional and contemporary arts of crafts and petting zoo



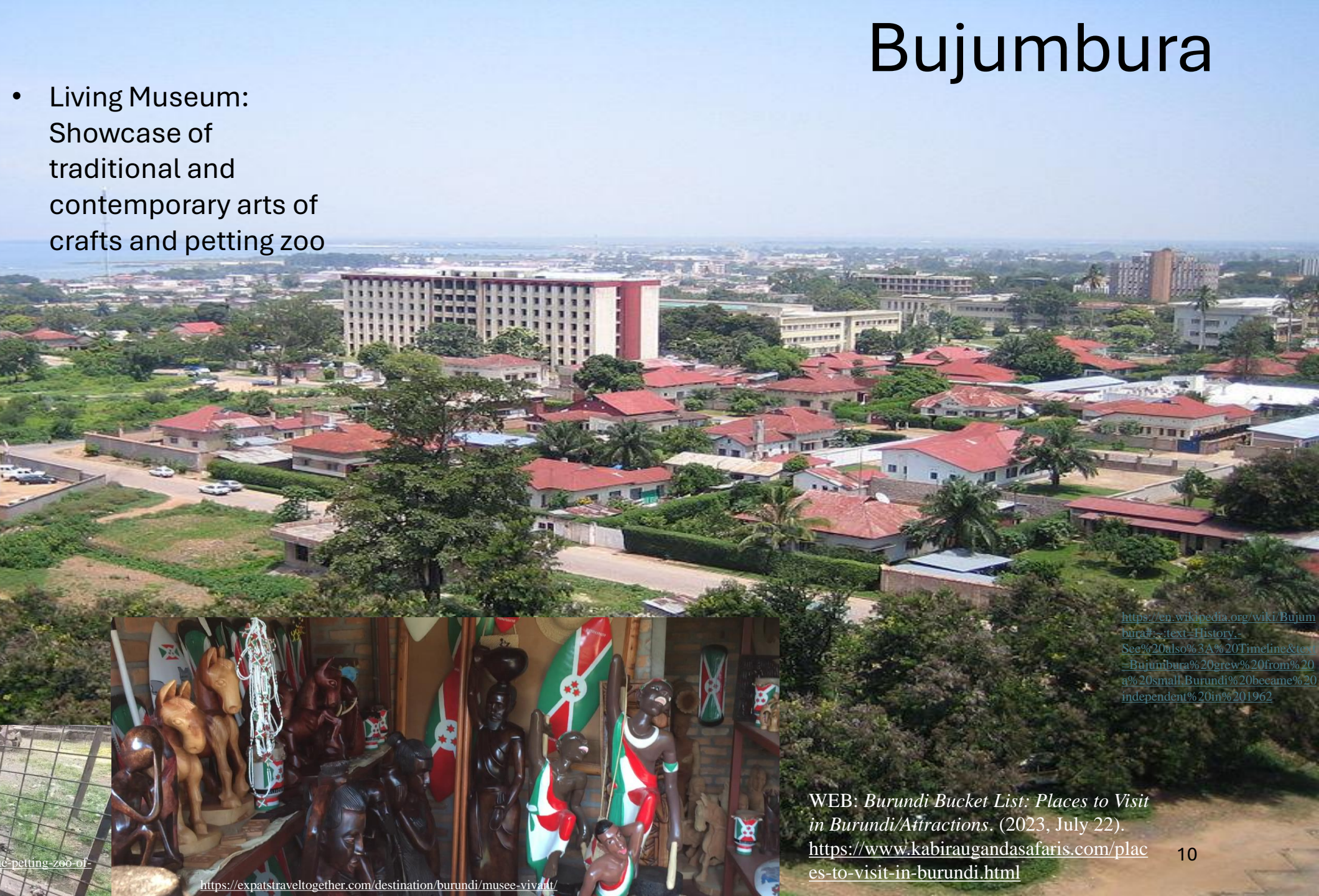
<https://www.3rdculturewife.com/musee-vivant-the-petting-zoo-of-things-that-should-not-be-petted-africa-day-10/c>



<https://www.3rdculturewife.com/musee-vivant-the-petting-zoo-of-things-that-should-not-be-petted-africa-day-10/c>



<https://www.3rdculturewife.com/musee-vivant-the-petting-zoo-of-things-that-should-not-be-petted-africa-day-10/c>



<https://expatstraveltogether.com/destination/burundi/musee-vivant/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bujumbura#:~:text=History,See%20also%3A%20Timeline&text=Bujumbura%20grew%20from%20a%20small%20Burundi%20became%20independent%20in%201962>

WEB: *Burundi Bucket List: Places to Visit in Burundi/Attractions.* (2023, July 22). <https://www.kabiraugandasafaris.com/places-to-visit-in-burundi.html>

# Gishora



Red, White, and Green are the country's colors

WEB: *Gishora Drum Sanctuary: Day Tour & The Story Behind.* (2023, July 24).

<https://www.kabiraugandasafaris.com/gishora-drum-sanctuary.html>

- Known as the Drum Sanctuary (1903)
- Owned and maintained by Abatimbo drummers (Backbone of past monarchy)
- Men of all ages learn to master drumming

# People and Society

- Ethnicity: Hutu 85%
  - Tutsi 14%
- Religion: Christian 94%
  - Catholic 59%
  - Protestant 35%
- School life expectancy: 11 yrs
- Literacy rate: 75%
- Child labor: 33%



Tutsi

Hutu



# People and Society

- Median age: 18
- Mother's age @ first birth: 22
- Life expectancy: 68 (192<sup>nd</sup> in the world)
- Fertility rate: 4.9 (10<sup>th</sup> in the world)
- Contraceptive prevalence: 29%



# People and Society

- Drinking water/Sanitation: 99% drinkable/ 58% sanitary
- Alcohol consumption: 1.1 gal (95<sup>th</sup> in the world)
- Tobacco use: 12% (123<sup>rd</sup> in the world)
- HIV/AIDS prevalence: 0.9%



# Economy: Low Income

- GDP per capita: \$900 (222nd in the world)
- Below poverty line: 81%
- Primarily Exports gold, coffee, and tea to the UAE (32%)
  - \$300 mil. (197<sup>th</sup> in the world)
- Primarily Imports petroleum, fertilizers, and medicine from China (15%)
  - \$900 mil. (193<sup>rd</sup> in the world)



# Ethnic Boundary Changes in Burundi

- Researchers interviewed 202 Burundi citizens, asking them about their personal histories in the country and their experiences with its conflicts
  - All interviewees all had a different violence experiences in Bugendana and Mugara
  - Interviews conducted in personal homes, yielding unfiltered responses
- Bugendana had a more hostile relationship between Hutu and Tutsi
  - Tutsi lived in the village; Hutu lived in surrounding hills
  - People lived in fear of the other group
  - Concerned with past violence
- Mugara had a more peaceful relationship between Hutu and Tutsi
  - Shared ideas and land
  - Friendly and helped each other during hard times
- Non-Hutu and Non-Tutsi were influential in establishing peace between groups
  - Helped show people ways to value their individual selves
  - Not focused on group assumptions
- Non-violence, non-ethnic categorizations, and the blurring of ethnic lines are and will help reshape Burundi



<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/burundi-peace-choir-singing-to-remember-singing-to-forget/uvyd289zu>



# Returning Home After Years

- Due to conflicts, many Burundians have fled to neighboring countries like Tanzania and Rwanda
  - Families, little money, and limited freedom made refugee camp life difficult
  - They could not continue their education
- Since 2017, over 200,000 Burundian refugees returned due to rising stability
  - Receive financial help from the UN Refugee Agency



# Burundi President Strangling Civil Society

- Many Burundians believed that change would occur when President Ndayishimiye took office
  - Burundians hoped that his presidency would be different from the bloody terms of the last
  - He released several rights journalists and protestors in his first year
  - The EU resumed financial aid to Burundi due to his “new window of hope”
- Ndayishimiye instead enhanced the repression of critical voices
  - At least 6 rights campaigners were sentenced to long sentences for very contrived reasons
  - UN voiced alarm around this increasing punishment of rights activists
- UN is calling for Ndayishimiye to fix these issues in 2025



# After 4 Years, No Change

- The Burundians are no longer believe the president will decrease pressure on civil activists
  - Hopes were high after previous president enacted crackdown on civil figures
  - He did release several prevalent human rights defenders and journalists
- He instead increased repression on civil rights activists
  - While he released some activists, but he jailed just as many for similar charges as the ones released
  - 24 people were arrested for attending a meeting focused on economic inclusion put on by a group focused on HIV/AIDS
  - They were accused of homosexuality and inciting debauchery
- Many citizens think this is an intentional shut down of human rights



# Burundian Dance Traditions

- Burundi citizens still take pride in their nation's history
- Done by performing traditional dances done by their ancestors
- Dances unite people of all ages and classes in celebration
- There are a variety of dances that mean different things
  - All done in vibrant clothing
- Ingoma: embodies strength and harmony of the community
- Amahoro: dance of peace
- Igihambwe: symbolizes wisdom and reflection
- Dances have been used to preserve cultural identity for generations
- Continued preservation is being done



WEB: *Les danses traditionnelles du Burundi* | Burundi Travel. (2024, February 16). Burundi Travel | Guide de Voyage Au Burundi. <https://burunditravel.bi/en/la-danse-traditionnelle-du-burundi-un-heritage-vivant-qui-bat-au-rythme-du-tambour/>

# The Royal Drummers

- The Royal Drummers of Burundi are considered the most important representers of their musical heritage
- Performances combine both dance and music
  - Drummers from a crescent of tree-made drums and perform in traditional Burundi costumes
- The drummers bang a center drum at the beginning of each performance
  - They jump and spin around with great excitement
- This art is handed down by generations, father to son
- They perform at local festivals and national events

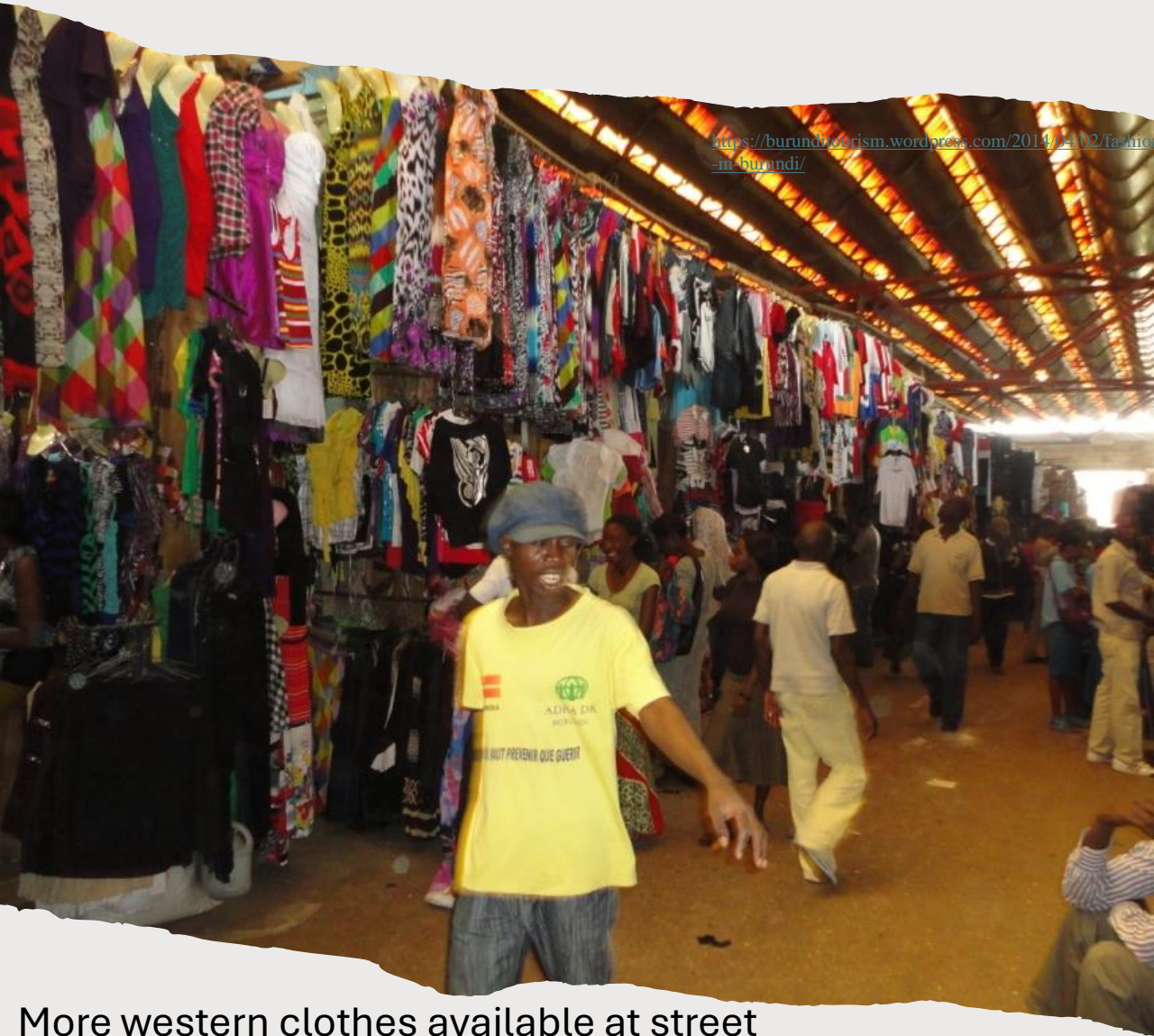


© GlobalGaz

<https://globalgaz.com/royal-drummers-burundi/>



Clothing



## Urban/Casual Wear

More western clothes available at street markets, includes name brands



More secondhand clothing rather than brand name



Pagnes (wraparounds): common attire, even for field work

# Rural Wear

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## Business Wear



# College Wear

# Holiday Wear

Costumes:  
Performers wear colorful attire adorned with traditional patterns and symbols, adding visual flair to the captivating performances.



Festival Goers:  
Wear colorful clothes to represent cultural pride and the richness of their traditions

WEB: *Burundi traditions- discover what they are.* (2023, October 10).

<https://travelinspires.org/burundi-traditions-discover-what-they-are/>

# Common Wedding

Its culture for every man to have one suit for a wedding



<https://danddclothing.com/blogs/african-fashion-blog/burundian-traditional-wedding-styles>

*Imvutano*: 3-piece outfit Skirt, top, and Sari Wrap



<https://danddclothing.com/blogs/african-fashion-blog/burundian-traditional-wedding-styles>



# Wealthy Wedding

*Imbega*: two-piece outfit with overall on right shoulder



Jewelry and additional adornments represent wealth



# Special Adornments: Men

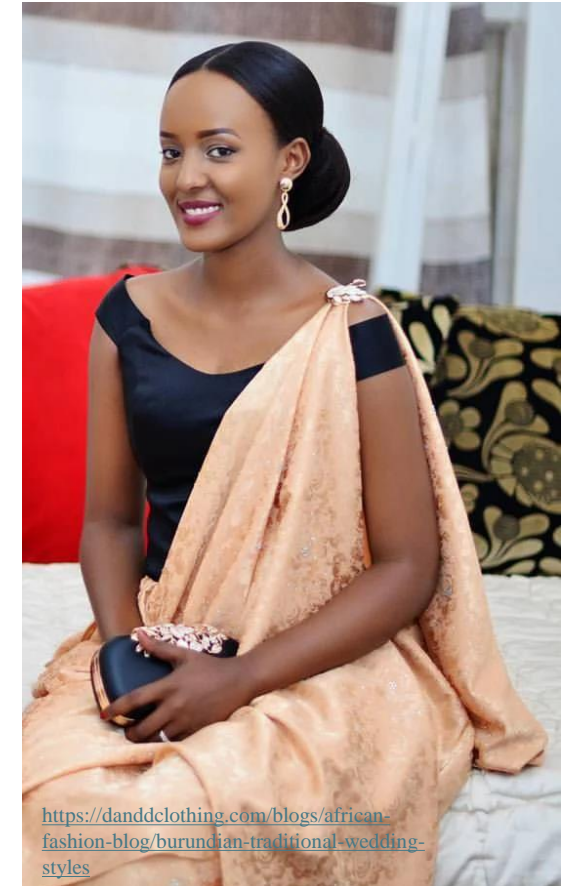
Beaded crown represents groom, ivory necklace, and spear (*Icumu*)



# Special Adornments: Women

Gold necklaces, bracelet matching earrings, and hair-piece or wrap

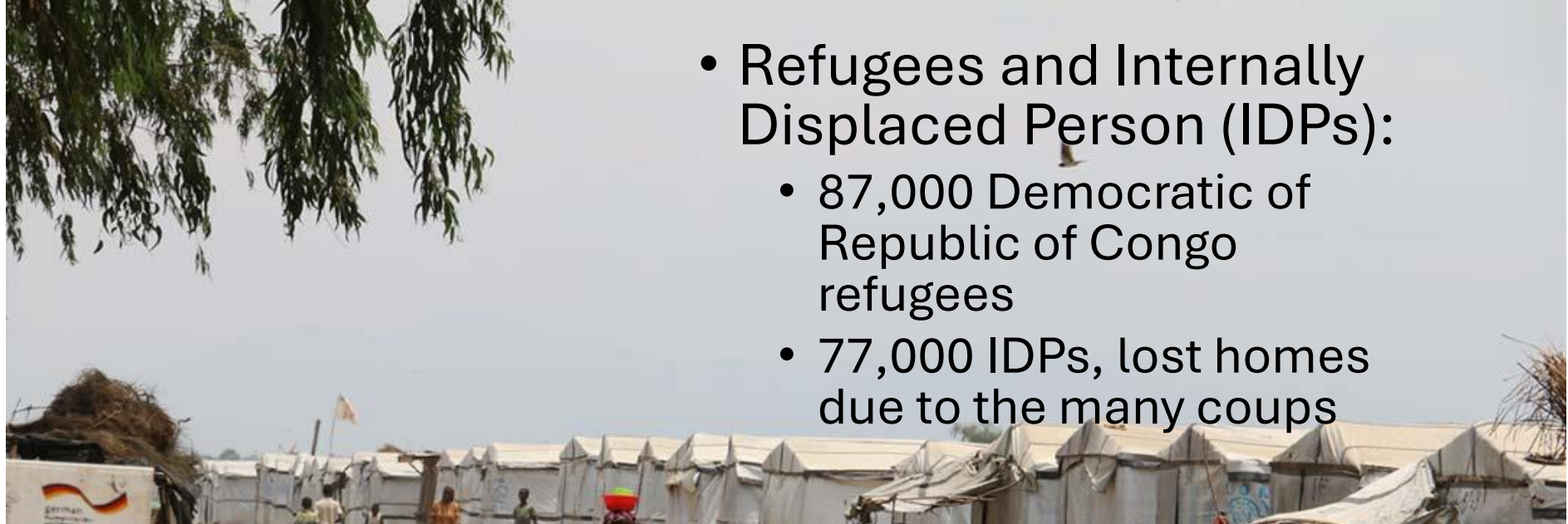
Handbag or Clutch



WEB: Ekundayo Folorunsho. (2021, June 21). *Burundian Traditional Wedding Styles*. D&D Clothing; D&D Clothing. <https://danddclothing.com/blogs/african-fashion-blog/burundian-traditional-wedding-styles>

# Issues

- Refugees and Internally Displaced Person (IDPs):
  - 87,000 Democratic of Republic of Congo refugees
  - 77,000 IDPs, lost homes due to the many coups





# Conclusions

- Many internal conflicts have caused thousands of Burundians to flee the country, but they still choose to return later due to their love of their home and traditions.
- Conflicts and a weak economy has made the wealthy and poor wear similar clothes.
- Traditional clothes are worn over more western clothes in cities, and the rural areas usually wear only the traditional clothes.
- Though the people face internal violence, they still find time to appreciate their heritage and celebrate their unity and love of Burundi.