

# Rwanda National Day Special

## The incredible success story of Africa

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AMBASSADOR OF RWANDA TO JAPAN



Rwanda achieved independence on July 1, 1962. While independence asserted Rwanda as a sovereign state, it didn't usher in the political, economic and social liberties that Rwandans

deserved. The period proceeding independence was marked by political upheaval, discrimination and suffocation of political, economic and social liberties. This culminated in the brutal genocide against the Tutsi in 1994.

The meaningful liberation and rebirth of Rwanda came on July 4, 1994, when the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA), under the leadership of Paul Kagame, now president, captured Kigali, stopped the genocide and set the country on a path to rebirth. The genocide had claimed over 1 million lives in just 100 days. The infrastructure had been ravaged, the social fabric of Rwandan society destroyed and the nation reduced to a failed state.

On this 27th anniversary of Rwanda's liberation, we salute the gallant men and women of the RPA, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice to save Rwanda and the Rwandan people.

After 27 years, Rwanda has a lot to celebrate. Like the proverbial phoenix, Rwanda has risen from its ashes. A country that was a failed state over two decades ago has become a model for successful post-conflict nation-building. In 2015, Gallup ranked Rwanda as the fifth-safest country in the world to walk through at night.

The economy, which had ground to a halt, has rebounded strongly. Rwanda's gross domestic product has grown by an

average of 7.5% per year since 2007, making it the second-fastest-growing economy in Africa, according to the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business report. It is also the most improved nation for human development in the world, according to the United Nations Human Development Index.

The country enjoys a stable macroeconomic environment. Per capita income has nearly quadrupled, from \$220 in 2000 to \$787 in 2020. It has a stable currency and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in Africa, with a stable credit rating. Both Fitch and S&P Global ratings have given Rwanda a sovereign credit rating of B+ with a stable outlook.

Rwanda has invested heavily in its population to improve its health, skills, wealth and productivity. Access to education has been rolled out. Net enrollment for primary school has expanded to cover 96% of school-age children. The free education program covers nine years of basic education in the primary school cycle. The literacy rate has subsequently grown to over 70% of the population.

About 95 percent of the Rwandan people are meanwhile covered by the country's community health insurance plan, guaranteeing access to health care services for the majority of the population. This has led to a drastic decline in infant, child and maternal mortality, and a significant rise in life expectancy.

Rwanda has undertaken massive reforms to build a vibrant and competitive market economy. The country has zero tolerance for corruption. Rwanda has also been consistently ranked one of most reformed countries and No. 2 in Africa for ease of doing business in the World Bank's annual Doing Business rankings and Global Competitiveness Report for 2020.

Visionary leadership has been critical in steering Rwanda away from its tragic past to a stable and prosperous country. The

president has provided the inspiration, leadership and vision that have drastically transformed the country. Vision 2020, the president's blueprint for Rwanda's socio-economic transformation, was rigorously pursued and much of it was realized.

Japan has been a key and reliable partner in Rwanda's transformation. Japan has made significant contributions to Rwanda's development through economic cooperation, technology transfers, technical assistance and capacity development. Through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan has supported programs for infrastructure and agriculture development, water and sanitation, access to electricity and regional integration. Japanese businesses have invested in Rwanda's agriculture, information and communication technology and business and technology start-ups. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage more Japanese companies and business leaders to invest in Rwanda, which offers numerous investment opportunities and incentives.

Rwanda is an attractive tourist destination for Japanese travelers. It is home to the famous mountain gorillas and offers rich attractions in its wildlife, eco-tourism and enchanting flora and fauna. Japanese tourists will receive a visa upon arrival at any port of entry to Rwanda, and air connectivity to and from the country is available via major transit hubs in the Mideast, Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

The theme for the 27th anniversary of liberation is "Together We Prosper." This eloquently captures the spirit of the new Rwanda. A nation on the move and one that is determined to carry all its citizens along by ensuring equal opportunity, a meritocratic society and a stable future for all.

We are observing this liberation anniversary at a time when the world has been ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who

have been affected in different ways. We look forward to a fast recovery.

I would also like to use this occasion to wish Japan and the Japanese people a successful Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



President Paul Kagame (seventh from left) poses with members of Parliament after the swearing-in ceremony in September 2018. Rwanda has the world's highest ratio of female political representation at 64%.

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDENT

### Congratulations

to the People of  
the Republic of Rwanda  
on the Anniversary  
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