

PRISON STATUS FACT SHEET IN EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

Summary

Rwanda has the highest prison-holding capacity among the countries in the East African Community, with a maximum holding capacity of 61,320 prisoners. Kenya follows with a holding capacity of 34,000 prisoners, while Tanzania has a capacity of 29,760. Uganda's prison system can accommodate up to 20,036 prisoners, while the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has a holding capacity of 7,070. Burundi has the lowest holding capacity among these countries, with a capacity of 4,294 prisoners. No clear data is available for South Sudan regarding its prison holding capacity.

As of May 2023, Rwanda had the highest number of prisoners among all countries in the East African Community, with a total of 84,710 prisoners. Uganda follows closely behind with 74,444 prisoners, Kenya with 58,887 prisoners, Tanzania with 32,671 prisoners, the DRC with 22,820 prisoners, Burundi with 12,820 prisoners, and South Sudan with 8,400 prisoners.

All countries within the East African Community have a surplus of prisoners beyond their holding capacity, indicating severe congestion and poor living conditions for incarcerated individuals. Uganda has the highest excess, reaching 271.6%, followed by the DRC with an excess of 222.8%, and Burundi with a surplus of 186.2%. Rwanda is second last with excess at 38.1%, and Tanzania has the smallest excess at 9.8%. The high number of prisoners beyond holding capacity is due to factors such as extended periods of remand especially politically motivated cases and a leisurely justice system.

The DRC has the highest proportion of prisoners on remand (75%), followed by Burundi (53.4%), Tanzania (50%), Uganda (48.4%), and Kenya (41%). South Sudan has 28.9% of prisoners on remand, while Rwanda has the smallest proportion at 13.5%, indicating an efficient justice system.

Rwanda has the highest likelihood of imprisonment within the East African Community, with a prisoner rate of 621 per 100,000 people. Uganda has a rate of 150 prisoners per 100,000 people, followed by Kenya with 107, and Burundi with 87. South Sudan has a rate of 58, while Tanzania falls behind South Sudan with a rate at 50 prisoners per 100,000 people. The Democratic Republic of Congo has the lowest prisoner rate in the region, with 24 prisoners per 100,000 people.

Authors:

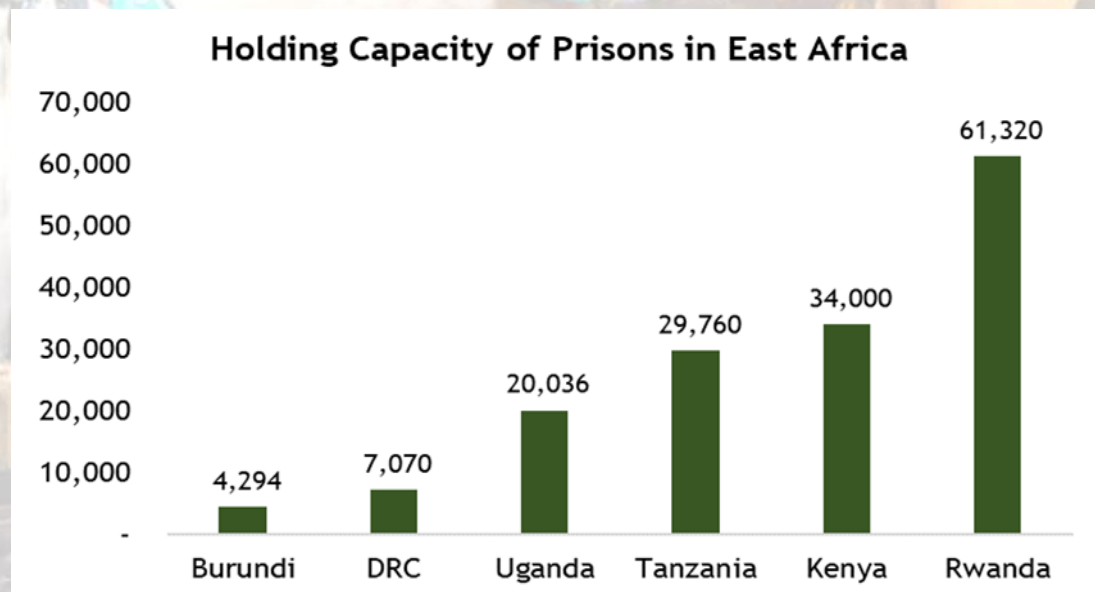
Benard Mukisa, Edward Obicho

INTRODUCTION

In numerous nations throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, a significant number of individuals held in custody are detained solely for peacefully practicing their fundamental human rights. Not only is it morally correct, but releasing prisoners of conscience promptly and without any conditions would create available capacity in these institutions and contribute to safeguarding their well-being (Amnesty International, 2020).

We present an in-depth analysis of the prison profile of the East African Community (EAC) countries based on the 2023 World Prison Brief data. The EAC currently consists of seven member countries, namely Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In this analysis, we will compare various aspects of each country's prison system, including holding capacity, current prison population as of 2023, occupancy level, prisoner rate per 100,000 people, and the number of prisoners on remand.

HOLDING CAPACITY BY COUNTRY



Source: World Prison Brief (2023).

Rwanda has the highest prison-holding capacity among the countries in the East African Community. With a maximum holding capacity of 61,320 prisoners, Rwanda surpasses the other nations in the region. Kenya follows with a holding capacity of 34,000 prisoners, while Tanzania has a capacity of 29,760. Uganda's prison system can accommodate up to

Research . Learn . Inform

Neofacts

www.neofacts.org E info@neofacts.org

[@neofacts1](https://twitter.com/neofacts1) [in @neofacts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/neofacts) [@neofacts2](https://www.instagram.com/neofacts2) [@neofacts1](https://www.facebook.com/neofacts1)

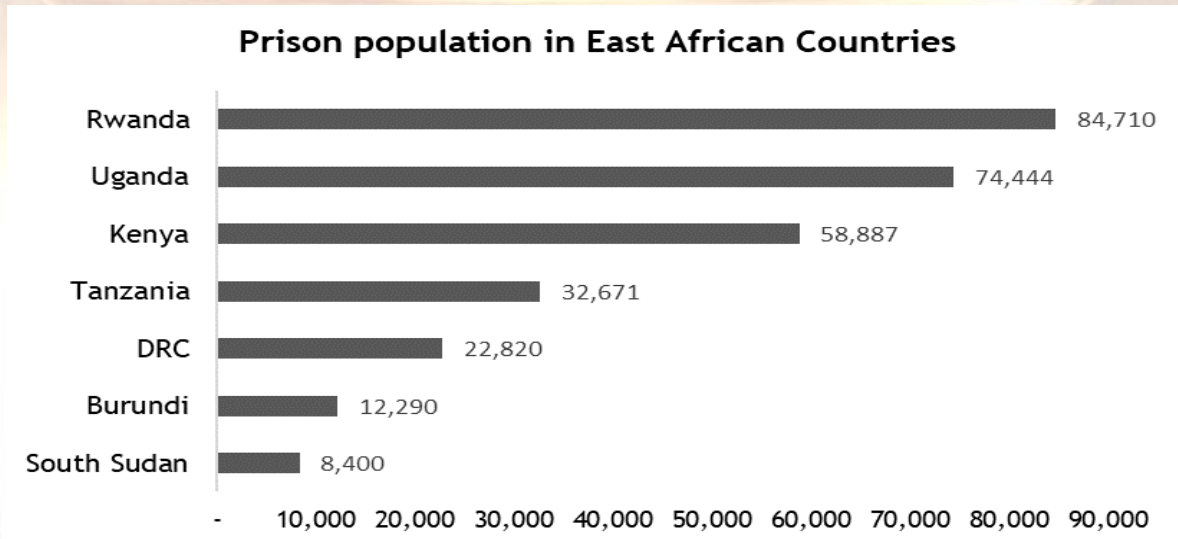
+256 392 951605

+256 704 421080

Ntinda, Kampala Uganda

20,036 prisoners, while the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has a holding capacity of 7,070. Burundi has the lowest holding capacity among these countries, with a capacity of 4,294 prisoners. Unfortunately, no clear data is available for South Sudan regarding its prison holding capacity.

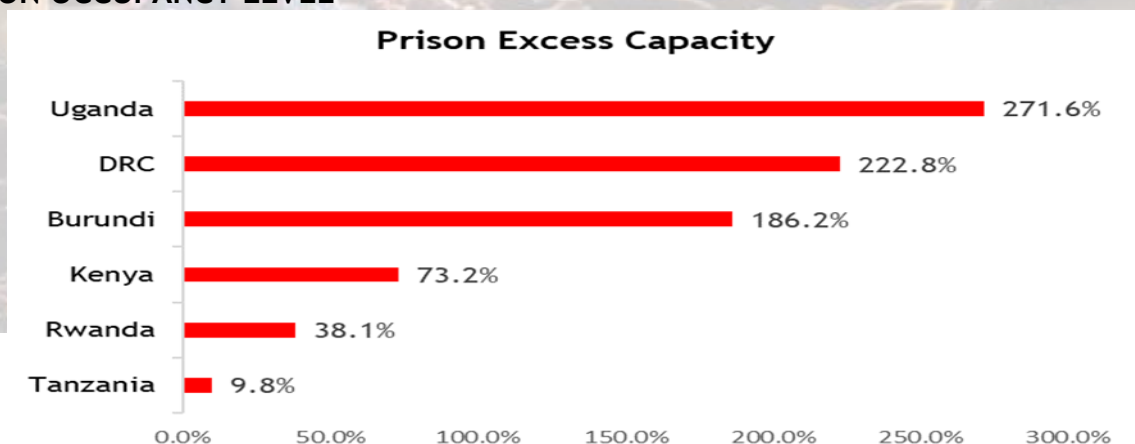
CURRENT PRISON POPULATION (2023)



Source: World Prison Brief (2023).

Rwanda currently has the highest number of prisoners among all countries in the East African Community. As of May 2023, Rwanda's total number of prisoners stood at 84,710. Following closely behind is Uganda with 74,444 prisoners, Kenya with 58,887 prisoners, Tanzania with 32,671 prisoners, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with 22,820 prisoners, Burundi with 12,290 prisoners, and South Sudan with 8,400 prisoners.

PRISON OCCUPANCY LEVEL



Research . Learn . Inform

Neofacts

www.neofacts.org E info@neofacts.org

[@neofacts1](https://twitter.com/neofacts1) [@neofacts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/neofacts) [@neofacts2](https://www.instagram.com/neofacts2) [@neofacts1](https://www.facebook.com/neofacts1)

+256 392 951605

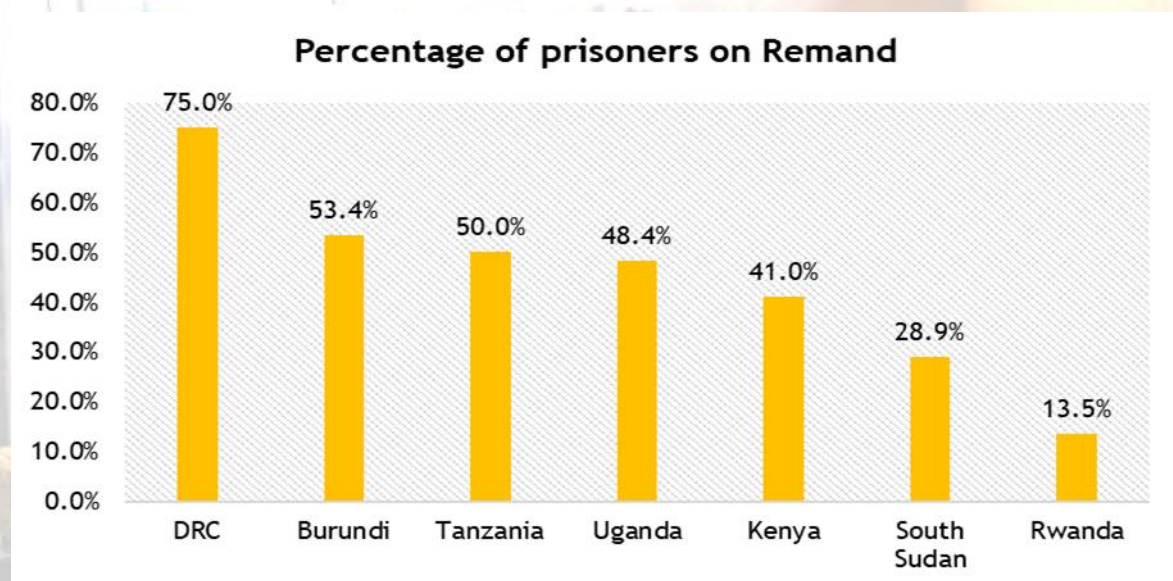
+256 704 421080

Ntinda, Kampala Uganda

Source: World Prison Brief (2023).

It is intriguing to observe that all countries within the East African Community currently have a surplus of prisoners beyond their holding capacity. This situation indicates severe congestion in prisons and consequently leads to poor living conditions for incarcerated individuals. Among the member countries, Uganda stands out with the highest excess, reaching 271.6%. Following closely behind is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with an excess of 222.8%, while Burundi experiences a surplus of 186.2%. Kenya's excess stands at 73.2%, Rwanda's at 38.1%, and Tanzania has the smallest excess at 9.8%. The Republic of South Sudan also misses the prison capacity data. These statistics shed light on the urgent need for attention and improvements within the prison systems across the East African Community.

PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS ON REMAND



Source: World Prison Brief (2023).

As observed, the member countries of the East African Community are facing the issue of excessive prisoners beyond their holding capacity. This situation can be attributed to various factors, including a significant number of individuals being held on remand for extended periods and a slow justice system that delays the conclusion of cases and the sentencing of suspects. Among the member countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the highest proportion of prisoners on remand, accounting for 75% of the total

Research . Learn . Inform

Neofacts

www.neofacts.org E info@neofacts.org

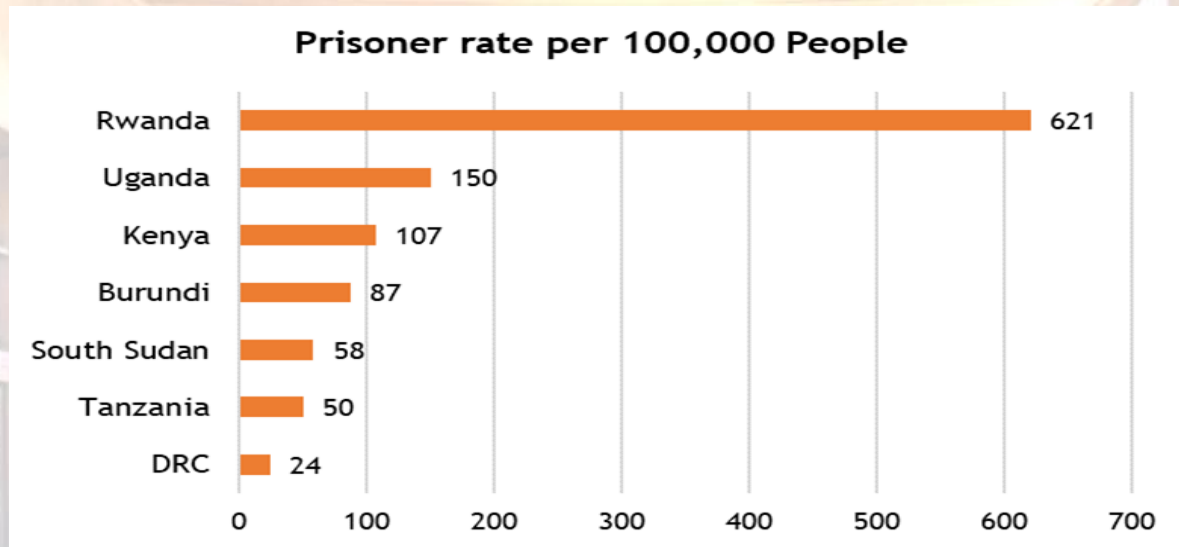
[@neofacts1](https://twitter.com/neofacts1) [@neofacts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/neofacts) [@neofacts2](https://www.instagram.com/neofacts2) [@neofacts1](https://www.facebook.com/neofacts1)

+256 392 951605

+256 704 421080

Ntinda, Kampala Uganda

prison population. Burundi follows closely with 53.4% of prisoners on remand, while Tanzania has 50%, Uganda has 48.4%, and Kenya has 41%. In contrast, South Sudan has 28.9% of its prisoners on remand, and Rwanda has the smallest proportion, with only 13.5% of its total prison population being held on remand. This indicates that the justice system in Rwanda operates efficiently, resulting in swift conclusions and sentencing of suspects despite having the highest number of prisoners within the region.



Source: World Prison Brief (2023).

Rwanda stands out as the country within the East African community with the highest likelihood of imprisonment with a prisoner rate per 100,000 people reaching 621, Rwanda surpasses all other nations in the region. This figure indicates that for every 100,000 individuals residing in Rwanda, approximately 621 are incarcerated.

Trailing behind Rwanda in terms of prisoner rates is Uganda, where the number stands at 150 prisoners per 100,000 people. While this rate is significantly lower than that of Rwanda, it still demonstrates a higher likelihood of imprisonment compared to the other countries in the East African community.

Kenya follows closely with a prisoner rate of 107 per 100,000 people, indicating a moderate likelihood of incarceration within the country. Although lower than Uganda, Kenya's rate is still higher than the subsequent countries in the community. Moving further down the list, we find Burundi, with a prisoner rate of 87 per 100,000 people. While this figure is lower than that of Kenya, it still suggests a notable likelihood of imprisonment

Research . Learn . Inform

Neofacts

www.neofacts.org info@neofacts.org

[@neofacts1](https://twitter.com/neofacts1) [@neofacts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/neofacts) [@neofacts2](https://www.instagram.com/neofacts2) [@neofacts1](https://www.facebook.com/neofacts1)

+256 392 951605

+256 704 421080

Ntinda, Kampala Uganda

within the country. South Sudan follows with a prisoner rate of 58 per 100,000 people, indicating a comparatively lower likelihood of incarceration compared to the preceding nations. However, it is important to note that this rate is still higher than that of Tanzania, where the prisoner rate is 50 per 100,000 people.

Lastly, the Democratic Republic of Congo exhibits the lowest prisoner rate within the East African community, with only 24 prisoners per 100,000 people. This figure indicates a relatively lower likelihood of imprisonment compared to the other countries mentioned.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing these figures, it is evident that Rwanda currently has the highest number of prisoners, and the highest holding capacity as well as the highest likelihood of one ending up in prison within the East African Community. Following Rwanda, the countries with the highest number of prisoners are Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and South Sudan, in that order.

Among these countries, Uganda has the most congested prisons in East Africa, with an excess capacity of 271.6%. This is followed by the DRC, where prisons are overcrowded with an excess capacity of 222.8%. On the other hand, Tanzania's prisons are the least congested in the region, with an excess holding of only 9.8%.

It is important to note that these statistics are based on the information provided on record obtained from the World Prison Brief (2023) and the United Nations. However, it's essential to acknowledge that these numbers may vary over time, as the prisoner population can change due to various factors such as crime rates, law enforcement practices, judicial processes, and prison capacity.

Neofacts 2023.

Research . Learn . Inform

Neofacts

www.neofacts.org info@neofacts.org

[@neofacts1](https://twitter.com/neofacts1) [@neofacts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/neofacts) [@neofacts2](https://www.instagram.com/neofacts2) [@neofacts1](https://www.facebook.com/neofacts1)

+256 392 951605

+256 704 421080

Ntinda, Kampala Uganda