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## Uganda at 60

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# Uganda AT 60

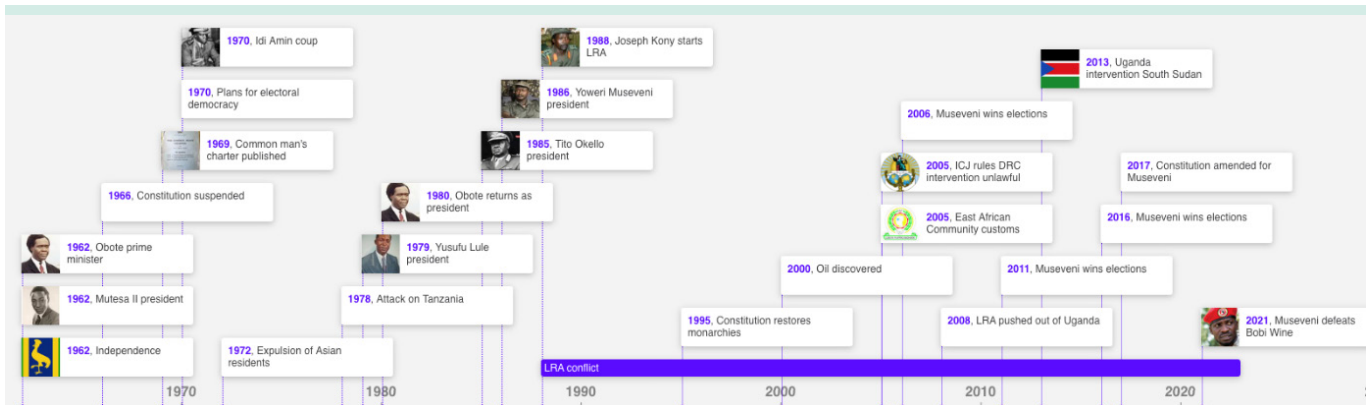
## Political history

On 9 October 2022 Uganda celebrated its 60th birthday as an independent country. Before 1962 it had been a British protectorate, and in the late 19th century it was governed by the British East Africa Company. In pre-colonial Uganda separate kingdoms existed, like Buganda, Busoga, Bunyoro, Toro, and Ankole (see Figure 1). These Kingdoms still play a role. But not all areas in current-day Uganda had some form of central governance during pre-colonial times.



**Figure 1: Kingdoms of Uganda**

Source: <https://www.geocurrents.info/geopolitics/troubled-times-in-the-kingdom-of-buganda-in-the-country-of-uganda>



**Figure 2: Political timeline Uganda since independence**

Uganda became an independent country in 1962, but retained its strong kingdoms, most notably the Baganda kingdom led by king Mutesa II. Milton Obote, leader of the Uganda People's Congress party, was made prime minister as Mutesa II became Uganda's first president. However, this balance of power turned out to be fragile as 1966 saw the suspension of the country's constitution and a subsequent abolition of the kingdoms. Obote then attempted to use his position to strengthen Uganda's economic position, expounding his vision in the famous Common Man's Charter, and planning to introduce a new electoral system in 1970. Before this could be implemented, however, Colonel Idi Amin capitalised on the resistance against Obote and led a successful coup in 1971 that removed Obote from power.

While many were optimistic about Amin's coup, his reign quickly turned authoritarian, a move symbolised by the infamous expulsion of all Asian non-nationals from Uganda in 1972. Uganda's economy declined under Amin, as did its international reputation, and it was perhaps little surprise that a new coup - this time supported by Tanzanian troops - removed Amin in the late 1970s. A coalition government of former exiles led by Yusufu Lule was short-lived, as Obote's supporters helped him resume political office in 1980. Obote was declared the winner of the 1980 presidential elections, although resisted from the start by Lule's ally Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Army (NRA). The NRA's guerrilla war defeated Obote and the Ugandan army, leading to Museveni's ascendance to the presidency

in January 1986. Museveni has not left office since, continuously defeating opponents up to and including the most recent presidential elections against the popular politician, singer, and actor Bobi Wine in 2021.

Museveni's rule as president initially increased stability and economic growth; but it was quickly challenged by the brutal insurgency by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony. The war between Uganda and the LRA lasted until well into the 2000s, with several attempts at peace talks failing to stop the horrific violence that characterised this war. Even when the DRC and southern Sudan joined Uganda in its operations against the LRA, the movement was pushed out of Uganda rather than defeated. Museveni continued to strengthen his grip on Ugandan politics, earning increasing international criticism, exemplified by the 2008 ruling by the International Court of Justice against Uganda's intervention in the DRC. Despite the international skepticism, Museveni benefited from a 2017 constitutional amendment that has allowed him to continue standing for election for the presidency in 2021 and 2026.

#### Political philately



**Figure 3: Postage stamps of (respectively) British East Africa Company 1895, Kenya and Uganda 1922, Uganda Kenya Tanganyika 1954, Uganda 1962, and an Independence stamp of 1962**

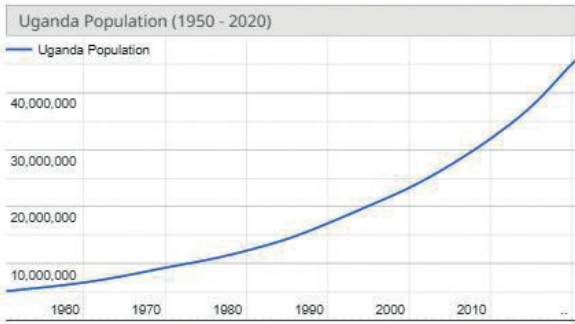
#### Conflict, state fragility, and travel risks

The Fragile States Index of the Washington-based Fund for Peace puts Uganda in the 25th position of 'worst performers', with an overall score of 92.1 in 2022, which indicates an 'alert' position (the worst score can be 120; see <https://fragilestatesindex.org/>).

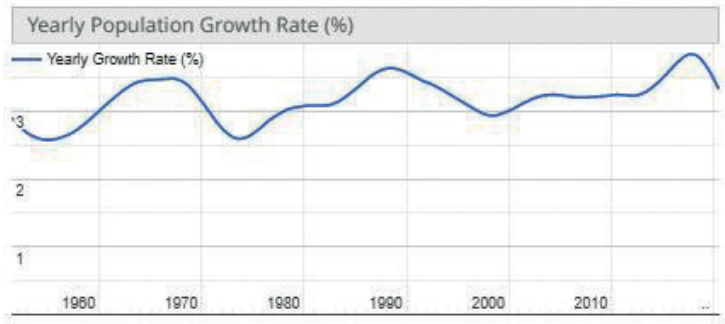
The index consists of twelve variables, and for Uganda the most worrying variables are 'refugees and IDPs' (9.2 out of 10), demographic pressures (8.9), and 'factionalised elites' (8.9). The least worrying variables are the 'economy' (6.2), 'human rights and brain drain' (6.4), and the quality and performance of the security apparatus (6.7). But even these 'best scores' are in the 'warning' category, and in recent years the situation has deteriorated. However, the travel advice of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 2022 is 'yellow' for the whole country, indicating a relatively safe environment for travellers, with some security risks. See: <https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/reisadvies/uganda>.

#### Demography

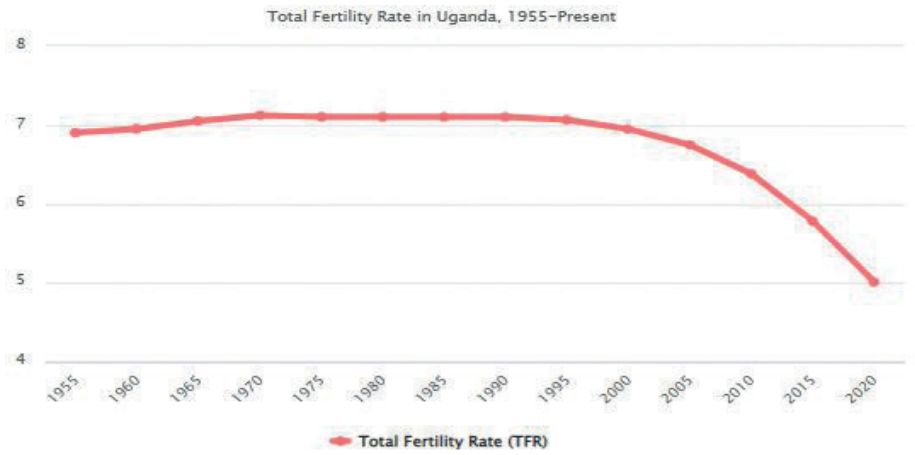
Uganda's population increased more than 6.5-fold between 1960 and 2020, from 6.8 million in 1960 to 45.7 million in 2020, mostly through high fertility rates and longer life expectancy for both males and females (also because of rapidly improving child and infant mortality figures), but also as a result of refugee immigration from neighbouring countries South Sudan, Congo DR, and Rwanda. Population growth figures have always been high: above 2.5% per annum and in 1986-1990 and 2015-2019 even more than 3.5% per annum. Currently, the average growth rate is 3.2 percent per year, one of the highest in the world. Total fertility was around 7.0 children per woman in 1960, and it was stable until 1995, after which a gradual decrease started, with currently 5.0 births per average woman in Uganda during her lifetime. As a result of these demographic developments Uganda has a very skewed population pyramid, with many more young people than adults and elderly people. The median age changed from 17.1 years old in 1960 to 16.7 years old in 2020, with the lowest figures in 2000-2005 (15.2 years). Uganda has one of the youngest populations of the world. Urbanisation has always been low, but is on the increase, and currently 26% of the population lives in cities. The urban population increased 39 times between 1960 and 2020. UN demographers expect that Uganda's population will increase to 89 million in 2050, with 52% in cities. Uganda has a high population density (currently 190 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, or 227 if we only look at land area), and if the predictions hold that will increase to more than 350 (or 440) inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> in 2050. Uganda has a surface of 241,000 km<sup>2</sup> (but that includes part of Lake Victoria; the land area is 201,000 km<sup>2</sup>).



**Uganda Population, 1950 - 2000**



**Uganda Population Growth Rate (%)**



**Total Fertility Rate in Uganda, 1955 - Present**

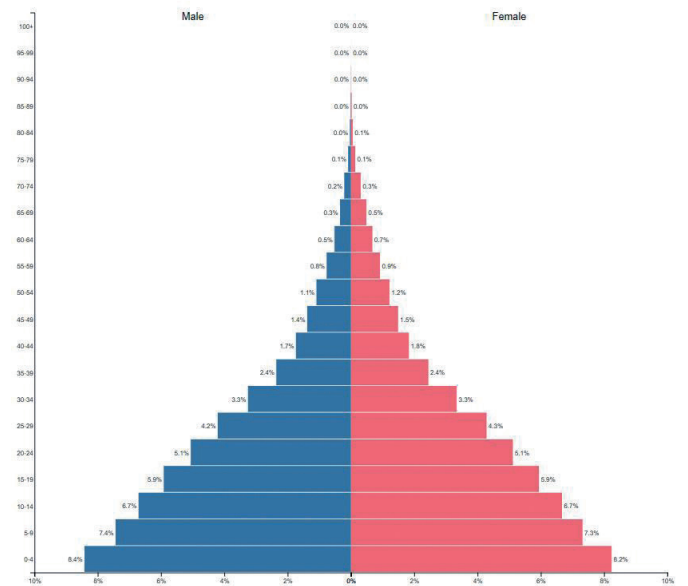
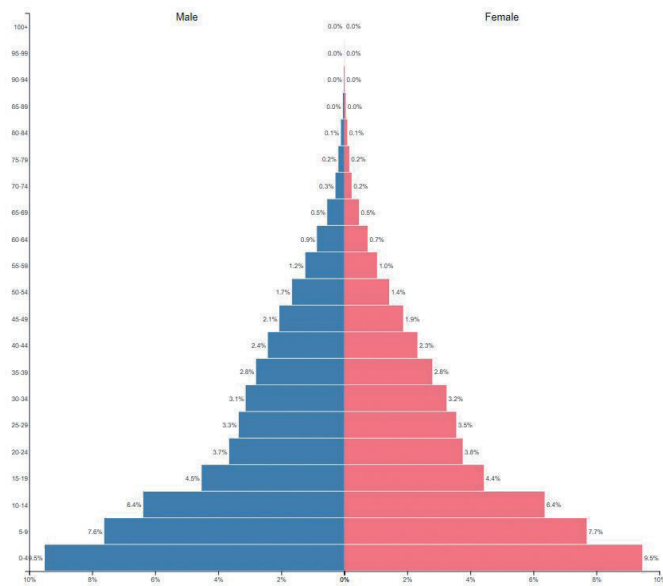
Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/>

Uganda ▾  
1962

Population: 8,068,828

Uganda ▾  
2022

Population: 47,249,584



**Population Pyramids of Uganda, 1962 and 2022**

Source: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/Uganda/>

	1960	2020
Population	6.8 million	45.7 million
Fertility rate	7.0 children per women	5.0 children per women
Life expectancy (males)	44 years	62 years
idem (females)	47 years	67 years
Median age	17.1 years	16.7 years
Infant mortality (<1 yr)	132/1000	39/1000
Under-5 mortality	220/1000	53/1000
Urbanisation rate	4%	26%
Urban population	0.3 million	11.8 million
Rural population	6.5 million	33.9 million

Source: Worldometers

### Demographic statistics, Uganda as a whole, 1960 and 2020

### Human Development Index, Uganda as a whole, 1990 and 2019

Human Development Index data exist since 1990, with annual UNDP updates. In 1990, Uganda's Human Development Index started at a level of 0.321 (the range is between 0 and 1). The HDI consists of a health index, an income index and an education index, while UNDP also provides data about life expectancy, and some other indicators. For Uganda the various components of the HDI all show improvements. Between 1990 and 2019 Uganda's population increased from 17.4 million people to 44,3 million

people. The increase in the HDI between 1990 and 2019 (from 0.321 to 0.544) can be attributed to improvements in all components: health, education and income, and can also be seen in the data for life expectancy. However, the most significant growth took place in education. Average income levels per capita (in US\$ of 2011, PPP) currently are estimated to be \$ 7,661 per capita, but that is only 13% better than in 1990. Also the income index showed the slowest improvements compared to health and education indexes.

	1990	2019	2019/1990
Health Index	0.398	0.668	X1.7
Income Index	0.330	0.462	X1.4
GNI/capita *	6.791	7.661	X1.1
Education Index	0.252	0.523	X2.1
Mean years of schooling	2.8	6.2	X2.2
Expected years of schooling	5.7	11.4	X2.0
Life Expectancy	45.9	63.4	X1.4
Total HDI Index	0.321	0.544	X1.7

Source: <https://globaldatatlab.org/5.0>

### Uganda: HDI composition and life expectancy, data for 1990 and 2019

\* GNI/capita in US \$ of 2011, PPP.

### International migration

In 2019 735,000 people who were born in Uganda lived outside the country (only 1.7% of Uganda's total population of 45.0 million people inside and outside the country during that year), of which 588,000 elsewhere in Africa (321,000 in Kenya, 147,000 in South Sudan, and 94,000 in Rwanda), and 147,000 outside Africa (93,000 in Europa (mainly in the UK) and 140,000 in North America (mainly in the USA and Canada); UN migration report 2019). In 2019 Uganda had around 1,875,000 immigrants, according to the UN demographic statistics. The registered immigrants mainly came from South Sudan (1.1 million, mostly refugees), DR Congo (316,000), as well as Rwanda, Sudan, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, and

Eritrea, in that order (UN Migration Report 2019). Among the immigrants are more women than men. The immigration history of Uganda shows the political turmoil in the surrounding countries. In 1990 most immigrants were refugees from Rwanda, but after 1994 many have returned to Rwanda. Between 1995 and 2005 refugees from South Sudan became the largest group, and in 2010-2015 refugees from DR Congo. In the period between 2015 and 2019 there was a massive influx of refugees from South Sudan again, but also from DR Congo and from Burundi. In 2022 there were almost 1.5 million refugees in Uganda (UNHCR data portal <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>) and Uganda hosts some of the largest refugee camps in the world; e.g. in Bidibidi.

Year	Immigration							
	Total	(S)Sud	DRC	RW	BUR	KEN	TANZ	SOM
1990	544	124	65	214	49	32	32	0
1995	607	269	73	132	46	31	30	1
2000	584	341	85	71	14	38	22	2
2005	593	338	93	76	16	36	22	2
2010	493	145	160	71	20	39	22	2
2015	851	263+67	286	73	44	38	22	36
2019	1,735	1,100+67	316	70	55	37	22	37

Source: UN Migration Report 2019

### Immigration statistics Uganda 1990–2019, in thousands

### Trade statistics, Algeria: exports and imports, 2020

In 2020, Uganda exported products for a total value of \$ 5.87 billion, and services for a total value of \$ 1.97 billion and imported products and services for a total value of \$ 10.48 billion (products mostly from China, Kenya, India, Tanzania and the UAE, in that order), resulting in a negative trade balance. Leading

import products were gold (mainly from Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Kenya, but also from DR Congo and probably from South Sudan as well), refined petroleum, palmoil, packaged medicaments and delivery trucks, in that order.

The most important export products and most important export destinations in 2020 were:

Main export products (value in \$ billion)		Main export destinations (value in \$ billion)	
Gold	3.47	UAE	3.50
Coffee	0.54	Kenya	0.40
Cocoa Beans	0.10	South Sudan	0.36
Raw Sugar	0.07	DRC	0.27
Tea	0.07	Italy	0.14
Total			5.87

Source: <https://oecworld/en/profile/country/uga?year=Select=export&year=21>

Although small-scale gold production in Uganda existed for quite some time, commercial gold production really started in 2015, mainly based on gold imports and re-exports. 'The country's gold export boom, which started around 2015, coincided with the opening of Africa Gold Refinery, the largest gold refinery in East Africa, located less than a kilometre from Entebbe International Airport in Entebbe city' (<https://www.theafricareport.com/185199/uganda-sudden-disappearance-of-gold-exports-hits-the-economy/>). The refinery's owners were a Belgian-Ugandan business venture. However, the same report talks about a crisis in 2020, after the government imposed taxes. In 2022 gold exports have resumed.

### Protected areas and Forests

Uganda currently has ten national parks and seven national reserves (<http://www.parks.it/world/UG/index.html>). According to Protectedplanet, currently

3.9 million hectares are protected land areas (16% of Uganda's total land area; and this source mentions 711 protected areas (<https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/uga>). Uganda had 3.6 million hectares of forests in in 2020; 18% of Uganda's land area. However, between 1971 and 1987 (the era of Idi Amin and the troubled decade afterwards) Uganda lost 50% of its forest cover, and between 1990 and 2005 another 26%; with current annual losses estimated at ca. 2.2%. Most of it is a result of agricultural expansion, cutting firewood and human habitation, which is not strange, given the enormous population growth in recent decades, that still continues (<https://rainforests.mon-gabay.com/20uganda.htm>).

### Agricultural Uganda

Crop Area (in 1000 hectares), and total production (in 1000 tonnes), 1961 and 2020, in the order of the crop areas in 2021:



Crops	1961		2021		2021/1961	
	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.
Plantains and cookbananas	616	3700	2060	9200	3.3	2.5
Maize	178	196	985	2800	5.5	14.3
Casava	317	1120	878	2679	2.8	2.4
Coffee	245	94	693	375	2.8	4.0
Dry Beans	140	100	462	856	3.3	8.6
Groundnuts	240	120	330	194	1.4	1.6
Sweet potatoes	141	495	299	1268	2.1	2.6
Sunflower seed	3	1	280	282	93.3	282.0
Sorghum	292	276	229	200	0.8	0.7
Sesame seeds	109	34	215	146	2.0	4.3
Bananas	50	?	200	?	4.0	?
Other vegetables	56	181	197	1063	3.5	5.9
Rice	3	3	101	303	33.7	101.0
Seed Cotton	839	218	99	141	0.1	0.6
Sugar Cane	17	1211	85	5369	5.0	4.4
Onions	4	9	81	320	20.3	35.6
Cocoa Beans	1	0	80	40	80.0	++
Millet	519	420	56	78	0.1	0.2
Other oil seeds	4	5	56	49	14.0	9.8
Soya Beans	3	1	50	106	16.7	106.0
Pigeon peas	57	17	44	17	0.8	1.0
Potatoes	11	100	40	246	3.6	2.5
Tea leaves	6	5	35	321	5.8	64.2
Cow peas	50	45	33	14	0.7	0.3
Tobacco	12	7	22	33	1.8	4.7
Wheat	-	-	16	25	++	++
Other fruits	6	30	10	69	1.7	2.3
Sisal	2	1	-	-	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,921</b>	<b>8,389</b>	<b>7,636</b>	<b>26,194</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>

2021/1961: red = 2021 is below 1961; green: 2021 is more than 6.7 times the 1961 figures (that is: more than population increase in Uganda from 6.984 million to 47.113 million between 1961 and 2021); black: in-between. Source: Faostat data.

Uganda's land area is 20.1 million hectares, and its crop area increased from 20% to 38% of its land area between 1961 and 2021, an expansion of 195%. Production increases are more than the area increases, which suggests that overall yield levels have improved. However, Uganda experienced a major shift in crop choices: strong increases in production volumes of maize, dry beans, rice, wheat, soya beans, oil seeds, onions, cocoa and tea (increases that have often been much higher than Uganda's very high population growth), and decreases in the production volumes of sorghum, millet, cow peas and cotton, and the complete disappearance of sisal. The most spectacular production increases can be noted for sunflower seeds, soya beans and rice.

If we look at the total food value of cereals, beans, roots, tubers and plantains (ignoring all other food crops for this calculation), in terms of food production values Uganda can currently not feed its population (total food value for these crops in

2021: 1600 Cal/day/capita, of which 44% came from cereals, and 48% from roots, tubers and plantains). In 1961 the food situation was much better: with a total food value for these crops of 3500 Cal/day/capita, of which 60% came from roots, tubers and plantains. However, food production figures don't tell the whole story: there is food wastage between production and consumption, and some food is being used for animals, for beer production, and as seed for the next year. And people also consume vegetables, fruits, nuts and (oil) seeds, and these products generally show considerable production increases during these sixty years. However, it is obvious that Uganda now has to import food. In FAOSTAT's food balance sheets it is stated that Uganda imported 1.1 million tonnes of cereals in 2020. For a country that was once regarded as the 'food basket' of the region, some observers criticise the 'shameful trend' (e.g. <https://sunrise.ug/news/201909/the-shameful-trend-of-uganda-importing-food.html>), while they also point at the high cost of food imports and the risk of food

dependencies on providers. For 2017/2018 this source mentions that Uganda had to spend US\$ 591 million on food imports, of which US\$ 226 million on palmoil from Indonesia, and Malaysia, US\$ 90 million on wheat from Russia and Ukraine (and US \$29 million on wheat from Argentina), and US\$ 83 million on rice from Pakistan and Thailand. The numbers of all live animals, measured in stock units, expanded considerably for pigs, but did not keep pace with Uganda's population growth for the other types of animals. Uganda's livestock

units increased 4.3 times, less than the 6.7 times of population increase between 1961 and 2021. Per capita, the numbers of live animals in the country (measured in livestock units) diminished from 0.42 to 0.27, indicating a relatively unimportant element of food production. However, in terms of income, the increase in chicken and pigs as well as goats can be seen as a major boost, and women in particular will have benefited from the expanded sales of chicken and eggs.

	1961	2020	2020/1961
Cattle	3618	14624	4.0
Chicken	6500	35796	5.5
Goats	2592	16141	6.2
Pigs	16	2600	162.5
Sheep	865	2168	2.5
Livestock units	2945	12686	4.3

Source: Foostat data: Livestock unit = based on 0.7 cattle, 0.1 goats/sheep/pigs, 0.01 chicken.

**Livestock numbers (x 1000)**

**Urban Uganda**

Uganda's urban population increased from only 300,000 people in 1961 (only 4% of its national population at Independence) to 11.8 million in 2020 (26%). The capital city, Kampala, is by far the biggest

city, and its metropolitan area increased from only 167,000 in 1962 to more than 3.8 million people nowadays. Growth has been rapid for all smaller cities as well, although different sources give very different information for these smaller cities.



Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2e/Ug-map.png>



Cities (and region)	Population in thousands of inhabitants		
	Macrotrends: 1962, and 2022 (metropol. area)	Citipopulation.de: census 2014, and wikipedia	Worldometers, city, as given in 2022
Kampala	167 > 3846	1507	1353
Nansana (near Kampala)		365	
Kira (near Kampala)		317	
Makindye Ssabagabo (near Kampala)		283	
Kyengerera (near Kampala)		196	
Mbarara		195	98
Mukono		163	
Njeru		160	
Gulu		150	146
Kasangali		142	
Nyazi		115	
Lugazi		114	
Katabi		106	
Ibanda		105	
Masaka		103	
Mubende		103	
Kasese		101	
Hoima		100	
Lira		99	119
Mityana		95	
Mbale		93	76
Kajjansi		93	
Jinja		76	93
Entebbe		70	
Fort Portal/Kabarole		54	
Bwizibwera (near Mbarara)		?	79

### Major urban areas in Uganda

<https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/22744/kampala/population> (with long-term historical information 1950–2021; this is the 'metropolitan area'); and for the census data in 2014: <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uganda/cities/>, and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_cities\\_and\\_towns\\_in\\_Uganda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_and_towns_in_Uganda).

## Regional Inequality



Regio	Population x 1000		'19/'90
	1990	2019	
Central South	1824	5297	x2.9
Central North	1665	4863	x2.9
East Central	1752	4380	x2.5
East	2518	7976	x3.2
Kampala	1010	1734	x1.7
North	2847	5911	x2.1
South Western	2144	5325	x2.5
West Nile	943	3086	x3.3
Western	2651	5697	x2.1
<b>Total Uganda</b>	<b>17354</b>	<b>44270</b>	<b>x2.6</b>

Total Uganda

Source: <https://globaldatalab.org> 5.0; East Central is also known as Busoga; East is a combination of Teso and Elgon (Bukedi and Bugishu); North is a combination of Karamoja, Acholi and Lango; South Western consists of Ankole and Kigezi, and Western of Bunyoro and Toora. Map: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/previews/85/80/8580e625-b497-32ef-b0df-51d46b7a9922.png>

Source: <https://globaldatalab.org> 5.0

Uganda has 10 major administrative regions. The Globaldatalab website, however, gives data for nine regions: they split the big Central region in Central South and Central North, and they combine three regions in the North and three regions in the East. Between 1990 and 2019 all regions experienced population growth; the highest growth happened in West Nile in the far northwest, partly as a result of an influx of refugees from South Sudan. Also the Eastern Region experienced a very rapid population growth. The population of the region of the capital city, Kampala, increased at a rather modest rate, compensated by very rapid growth rate in the metropolitan area adjacent to it (and belonging to Central South).

If we look at the regional data for human develop-

ment, which for Uganda exist since 1990, we see that improvements have taken place everywhere between 1990 and 2019. Both in 1990 and in 2019 the best conditions existed in Kampala for the HDI index as a whole, and also for education. For life expectancy the region with the best conditions shifted from Kampala to Central South, the area around Kampala. In 1990 and in 2019 the worst conditions existed in the Northern Region for the Subregional Human Development Index as a whole, and for education, but for life expectancy the worst conditions in both years existed in West Nile. With the exception of Kampala, regional inequality was already quite low in 1990 and further diminished towards 2019. However, Kampala's leading position is still strong.

Region	Subregional HDI (X1000)			Life expectancy (years)			Education index (X1000)		
	1990	2019	19/90	1990	2019	19/90	1990	2019	19/90
Central South	331	603	x1.8	45.1	65.4	x1.5	271	593	x2.2
Central North	335	557	x1.7	47.5	63.3	x1.3	265	539	x2.0
East Central	332	545	x1.6	47.5	61.9	x1.3	264	549	x2.1
East	326	543	x1.7	48.5	64.6	x1.3	255	539	x2.1
Kampala	425	657	x1.5	50.5	64.7	x1.3	369	684	x1.9
North	285	490	x1.7	44.1	63.2	x1.4	209	433	x2.1
South Western	306	534	x1.7	44.2	63.8	x1.4	235	507	x2.2
West Nile	301	501	x1.7	43.6	61.7	x1.4	245	475	x1.9
Western	308	514	x1.7	45.7	61.9	x1.4	230	474	x2.1
Total	321	544	x1.7	45.9	63.4	x1.4	252	523	x2.1
Regional inequality	1.49	1.34		1.16	1.06		1.77	1.58	

Source: <https://globaldatalab.org> 50

If we compare 2019 with 1990, the human development index as a whole and the education situation has improved very much, with the fastest improvements in Central South region for the HDI as a whole for life expectancy and for education (for education

the top growth position was shared with the South Western Region. For all variables the slowest growth happened in Kampala.

Region	Income/capita (2011 US\$ PPP)		
	1990	2019	'19/'90
Central South	6,895	8,109	x1.18
Central North	6,835	7,789	x1.14
East Central	6,777	7,639	x1.13
East	6,648	7,475	x1.12
Kampala	7,553	8,605	x1.14
North	6,570	7,317	x1.11
South Western	6,780	7,563	x1.12
West Nile	6,638	7,333	x1.10
Western	6,727	7,548	x1.12
Total	6,791	7,661	x1.13
Regional inequality	1,15	1,18	

The economic situation, as measured by the (real) average income per capita situation, improved everywhere between 1990 and 2019, but not much. The highest growth was experienced in Central South, although the best performance in both years was in Kampala. In 1990 and in 2019, the worst income situations existed in the Northern Region. Regional income inequality in Uganda was low in 1990 for African standards, but regional inequality in income levels became somewhat more pronounced during the period between 1990 and 2019, and particularly

the gap widened between the metropolitan region of the capital city, and the rest of the country. Of course, these are average income figures and based on (rough) estimates. Regional inequality is not the same as income or wealth inequality. According to World Bank data the GINI-coefficient was relatively high in 1990 (43) and varied between 39 and 45 afterwards. In 2019 the Gini coefficient was estimated to be 43 (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=UG>).

#### Further reading

<http://countryportal.ascleiden.nl/uganda>

<https://www.ascleiden.nl/africa2020>

Country information: Ton Dietz,  
David Ehrhardt and Fenneken Veldkamp  
Country Portal: Harro Westra

*African Studies Centre Leiden, July 2023*

#### African Studies Centre Leiden (ASCL)

The African Studies Centre Leiden, founded in 1947, is the only knowledge institute in the Netherlands devoted entirely to the study of Africa.



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