Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

Rwanda and the Apostille Convention

Rwanda acceded to the **1961 Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (Apostille Convention)** on **6 October 2023**, Simplifying the Use of Public Documents Across Borders.

The Convention **entered into force for Rwanda on 5 June 2024**. On this date, Rwanda officially started issuing Apostilles and accepting Apostilles issued by other Apostille Convention member countries.

Through this Convention, Rwanda introduced the **electronic Apostille (e-Apostille)**, enabling faster, secure, and simplified use of public documents across borders.

⚠ Important Notice

All documents bearing valid Apostilles issued by Apostille Convention member countries are accepted and executed in Rwanda, **except Power of Attorney documents related to the transfer of movable or immovable property.**

Power of Attorney for transfer of property must be legalized through Rwandan Embassies using the service: "*Legalization of documents from abroad to be used in Rwanda*" on Irembo.

What is an Apostille?

An **Apostille** is an official certificate that authenticates the origin of a public document. Once a document is apostilled:

- It becomes valid in Apostille Convention member countries
- It does not require further Embassy legalization
- It simplifies cross-border document use
- It reduces processing time and administrative costs

Rwanda issues **electronic Apostilles (e-Apostille)** with secure verification features.

Verification of Rwandan Apostilles

All Apostilles issued by Rwanda contain:

- Unique Apostille number
- QR code
- Electronic signature
- Secure online verification capability

Users can verify Apostilles using the official verification system.

Benefits of Apostille Services

For Citizens

- Faster document processing
- Reduced administrative steps
- Simplified international procedures

For Businesses

- Simplified international transactions
- Reduced documentation delays

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For Students and Professionals

- Faster recognition of academic documents abroad
- Easier visa and employment applications

For Government and Institutions

- Standardized authentication procedures
- Improved service delivery efficiency

Documents from Rwanda to be used abroad vs Documents from Abroad to be used in Rwanda

Apostille vs Embassy Legalization

Step 1: Where was your document issued?

Option A: Document issued in Rwanda
➡️ Follow **Process A**

Option B: Document issued abroad
➡️ Follow **Process B**

Process A: Documents from Rwanda to Be Used Abroad

Apostille issued in Rwanda

If your document was **issued in Rwanda** and needs to be used abroad in an Apostille Convention member country, you must obtain an **Apostille issued in Rwanda**.

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Common documents that can be apostilled

- Birth certificates
- Marriage certificates
- Death certificates
- Academic certificates and diplomas
- Court documents
- Notarized documents
- Administrative documents
- Commercial documents

Processing Time (SLA): Up to 3 working days

How to Apply:

1. Visit irembo.gov.rw
2. Select: **Foreign Affairs** → Legalization of public documents from Rwanda to be used abroad / Apostille;
3. Input required information and upload required attachments;
4. Pay applicable fees;
5. Get the Apostille or Legalization certificate by email;

After Apostille issuance, your document can be used abroad **without Embassy legalization**.

Process B: Documents from Abroad to Be Used in Rwanda

Apostilles Issued by Other Countries If your document was issued abroad and bears a valid Apostille, it is generally accepted directly in Rwanda without Embassy legalization, except in specific cases described below.

Special Rule: Power of Attorney for Transfer of Property

Upon accession to the Apostille Convention, Rwanda made a reservation regarding Power of Attorney documents related to the transfer of movable or immovable property. These documents cannot be accepted based solely on Apostille issued abroad. They must undergo **Embassy legalization** before use in Rwanda. This applies to:

- Sale of land or property
- Transfer of land ownership
- Transfer of vehicles or movable property
- Representation in property transfer transactions

Required Process for Property-Related Power of Attorney

If your Power of Attorney relates to property transfer: You must apply for Legalization of Documents from Abroad to Be Used in Rwanda Available online via **IremboGov**.

Steps:

1. Prepare the Power of Attorney

If you live far from the Embassy, check with the Embassy if documents authenticated in the country of origin are accepted or if the signature must be witnessed at the Embassy.

2. Submit legalization request through Irembo
3. Embassy reviews (invites you at the embassy to witness the signature, where applicable) and process and send it for further processing and approval to MINAFFET
4. Once approved, you receive the legalization certificate by email
5. Use legalized document in Rwanda

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

- ***When did Rwanda start issuing Apostilles?*** Rwanda started issuing Apostilles and accepting Apostilles from other member countries on 5 June 2024.
- ***Do I still need Embassy legalization after Apostille?*** No, once a document is apostilled, no additional legalization is required, except for Power of Attorney related to transfer of property issued abroad.
- ***Can foreign documents be apostilled in Rwanda?*** No, only documents issued in Rwanda can be apostilled in Rwanda. Foreign documents must be apostilled in the country where they were issued.
- ***How long does Apostille processing take?*** Typical processing time is Up to 3 working days

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Contact information:

For assistance regarding Apostille and legalization services:

MINAFFET Consular Services

Email: *rca@minaffet.gov.rw* , *info@minaffet.gov.rw*

Phone: *+250788125043*

You may also contact your nearest **Rwandan Embassy** for guidance.