

A Historic First: Ciara Receives Benin Citizenship During Rolling Stone Africa Milestone Visit

COTONOU, BENIN, BENIN, July 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a powerful and emotional moment that marks a milestone in global cultural diplomacy, Grammy Award-winning artist, entrepreneur, and philanthropist Ciara Wilson made history by becoming the first person in the world to receive Beninese citizenship under the Republic of Benin's new nationality initiative.



The citizenship was granted during a two-day visit to the West African nation co-organized by Rolling Stone Africa and Benin Tourisme. The trip was planned in celebration of Ciara's historic double cover with Rolling Stone Africa, where she became the first American to ever grace the magazine's cover and the first person to feature on the inaugural French-language edition of the iconic publication.

“

I feel incredibly proud to be a Benin citizen. This is more than symbolic, this is deeply personal, and I cannot wait to go home and show my family this beautiful certificate.”

Ciara Wilson

The citizenship ceremony, held on the United Nations International Day of Women and Girls of African Descent, was led by top dignitaries and government representatives. Ciara was presented with the certificate of nationality in the presence of cultural leaders, international press, and the team that helped orchestrate this landmark visit: Gwen Madiba, Editor in Chief of RollingStone Africa, Sindé CHEKETE, CEO of the Benin Tourism Agency, and Jean-Wilfried KEMAJOU, Country Brand Manager for the Republic of Benin.

“I truly feel so thankful and my heart is full of so much gratitude during this special moment,” Ciara shared during the ceremony. “I feel incredibly proud to be a Benin citizen. This is more than symbolic, this is deeply personal, and I cannot wait to go home and show my family this beautiful

certificate. The significance of this moment is so powerful. My daughters will see their mother honored in this way, and so will my sons and husband. I won't take this lightly."

This unprecedented moment was hailed by David Romuald Bellegarde Smeralda, CEO of Rolling Stone Africa and the MWANKOM Group, who has been leading efforts to create meaningful cultural exchanges between Africa and the African diaspora through media, art, and storytelling.

"This moment is a powerful reflection of everything we stand for at Rolling Stone Africa and MWANKOM Group. With my team and our Editor-in-Chief, we've worked to build bridges between Africa and its diaspora by unifying Afro-descendants through music, culture, and storytelling. To see Ciara receive Benin citizenship during this historic celebration is deeply meaningful, it shows what's possible when we amplify African voices at the highest level and reclaim our narratives through a platform that is truly by us, for us", said Smeralda.

Sindé CHEKETE, CEO of the Benin Tourism Agency, noted:

"It has been a true honor for Benin Tourism to facilitate Ciara's return to her roots, a historic moment that allowed her to reconnect with her heritage and cultural history. This return has been an opportunity to highlight Benin, a country with a soul that leaves no one indifferent, and that invites its children from the diaspora to come and discover it."

Jean-Wilfried KEMAJOU, Country Brand Manager for the Republic of Benin, added: "Ciara's presence in Benin marks a significant milestone in our efforts to position the country on the international stage. This visit highlights Benin as a nation that celebrates its history, embraces its future, and is eager to deepen its connection with the diaspora in a more meaningful and impactful way."

This trip, full of deep emotion, history, and vision, marks a new era for international cultural exchange. It symbolizes a future where identity, ancestry, and belonging are honored across borders.

LaQuita Washington
QEY Creative Studios, LLC
+ 13125606111
[email us here](#)

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