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Algeria

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Algeria. For more information see SOS Children in Algeria, Africa

Algeria (الجزائر, *Al Jaza'ir* IPA: [ældʒæˈzæːʔir], Berber: ⵍⵣⵣⴰⵢⵔ, *Dzayer* ['dzæjər]), officially the **People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**, is a nation in North Africa. It is the second largest country on the African continent and the 11th largest country in the world in terms of total area. It is bordered by Tunisia in the northeast, Libya in the east, Niger in the southeast, Mali and Mauritania in the southwest, a few kilometers of the Western Sahara in the west, Morocco in the northwest, and the Mediterranean Sea in the north.

Algeria is a member of the United Nations, African Union, Arab League, and OPEC. It also contributed towards the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union. Constitutionally, Algeria is defined as an Arab, and Amazigh (Berber) country.

Etymology

Al-jazā'ir is itself a truncated form of the city's older name **jazā'ir banī mazghannā**, "the islands of (the tribe) Bani Mazghanna", used by early medieval geographers such as al-Idrisi and Yaqut al-Hamawi.

History

Ancient history

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية</p> <p><i>Al-Jumhūrīyah al-Jazā'irīyah</i> <i>ad-Dīmuqrāṭīyah</i> <i>ash-Sha'bīyah</i> <i>République Algérienne</i> <i>Démocratique et Populaire</i></p> <p>People's Democratic Republic of Algeria</p> | |
|  <p>Flag</p> |  <p>Emblem</p> |
| <p>Motto: من الشعب و للشعب (Arabic) "From the people and for the people"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: Kassaman (Arabic) The Pledge</p> | |



Roman arch of Trajan at Thamugadi (Timgad), Algeria

Algeria has been inhabited by Berbers (or Imazighen) since at least 10,000 BC. After 1000 BC, the Carthaginians began establishing settlements along the coast. The Berbers seized the opportunity offered by the Punic Wars to become independent of Carthage, and Berber kingdoms began to emerge, most notably Numidia. In 200 BC, however, they were once again taken over, this time by the Roman Republic. When the Western Roman Empire collapsed, Berbers became independent again in many areas, while the Vandals took control over other parts, where they remained until expelled by the generals of the Byzantine Emperor, Justinian I. The Byzantine Empire then retained a precarious grip on the east of the country until the coming of the Arabs in the eighth century.

Middle Ages

According to historians of the Middle Ages, the Berbers were divided into two branches, from their ancestor Mazigh. The two branches, Botr and Barnès, were also divided into tribes, with each Maghreb region made up of several tribes. Several Berber dynasties emerged during the Middle Ages.

The Almohads were able to unify the Maghreb. The Berbers of the Middle Ages also contributed to the Arabization of the Maghreb.

Islamization and Berber (Amaari) dynasties

Having converted the Kutama of Kabylie to its cause, the Shia Fatimids overthrew the Rustamids, and conquered Egypt, leaving Algeria and Tunisia to their Zirid vassals. When the latter rebelled and adopted Sunnism, the Shia Fatimids sent in the Banu Hilal, a populous Arab tribe, to weaken them. This initiated the Arabization of the region. The Almoravids and Almohads, Berber dynasties from the west founded by religious reformers, brought a period of relative peace and development; however, with the Almohads' collapse, Algeria became a battleground for their three successor states, the Algerian Zayyanids, Tunisian Hafsid, and Moroccan Marinids. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Spanish Empire started attacking and subsuming a few Algerian coastal settlements.

Ottoman rule

Algeria was brought into the Ottoman Empire by Hayreddin Barbarossa and his brother Aruj in 1517, and

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| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Capital (and largest city) | Algiers |
| Official languages | Arabic |
| Recognised regional languages | Berber, French |
| Demonym | Algerian |
| Government | Presidential Republic |
| - President | Abdelaziz Bouteflika |
| - Prime Minister | Ahmed Ouyahia |
| Establishment | |
| - Hammadid dynasty | from 1014 |
| - Ottoman rule | from 1516 |
| - French rule | from 1830 |
| - Independence from France | July 5, 1962 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 2,381,740 km ² (11th) 919,595 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 33,333,216 (35th) |
| - 1998 census | 29,100,867 |



they established Algeria's modern boundaries in the north and made its coast a base for the Ottoman corsairs; their privateering peaked in Algiers in the 1600s. Piracy on American vessels in the Mediterranean resulted in the First (1801–1805) and Second Barbary War (1815) with the United States. The piracy acts forced people captured on the boats into slavery; alternatively when the pirates attacked coastal villages in southern and western Europe the inhabitants were forced into slavery. Barbary Pirates — Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911 Raids by Barbary pirates on Western Europe did not cease until 1816, when a Royal Navy raid, assisted by six Dutch vessels, destroyed the port of Algiers and its fleet of Barbary ships. Spanish occupation by the king and the Benabbas family of Sevilla of Algerian ports at this time was a source of concern for the local inhabitants.

French colonization



Constantine, Algeria 1840

On the pretext of a slight to their consul, the French invaded Algiers in 1830. The conquest of Algeria by the French was long and particularly violent, and it resulted in the disappearance of about a third of the Algerian population. France was responsible for the extermination of 1 million Algerians. According to Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, the French pursued a policy of extermination against the Algerians.

The French conquest of Algeria was slow due to intense resistance from such people as Emir Abdelkader, Ahmed Bey and Fatma N'Soumer. Indeed, the conquest was not technically complete until the early 1900s when the last

Tuareg were conquered.

Meanwhile, however, the French made Algeria an integral part of France, a status that would end only with the collapse of the Fourth Republic in 1958. Tens of thousands of settlers from France, Spain, Italy, and Malta moved in to farm the Algerian coastal plain and occupied significant parts of Algeria's cities. These settlers benefited from the French government's confiscation of communal land, and the application of modern agricultural techniques that increased the amount of arable land. Algeria's social fabric suffered during the occupation: literacy plummeted, while land confiscation uprooted much of the population.

Starting from the end of the nineteenth century, people of European descent in Algeria (or natives like Spanish people in Oran), as well as the native Algerian Jews (typically Sephardic in origin), became full French citizens. After Algeria's 1962 independence, they were called *Pieds-Noirs*; ("Pieds Noirs" meaning "black feet", referring to the fact that the Europeans wore black shoes on their feet). In contrast, the vast majority of Muslim Algerians (even veterans of the French army) received neither French citizenship nor the right to vote.

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - Density | 14/km ² (196th) 36/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$253.4 billion (38th) |
| - Per capita | \$8,100 (2007 est.) (88th) |
| GDP (nominal) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$131.026 billion (48th) |
| - Per capita | \$3,825 (84th) |
| Gini (1995) | 35.3 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.733 (medium) (104th) |
| Currency | Algerian dinar (DZD) |
| Time zone | CET (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .dz |
| Calling code | +213 |
| | ¹ French is equally used as an administrative language though not on an official basis. Algerian Arabic, an Arabic vernacular is the most common native language. Berber languages, are recognized as "national languages", and are co-official in Kabylia (specifically the Kabyle language.) |



Post-independence

In 1954, the National Liberation Front (FLN) launched the Algerian War of Independence which was a guerrilla campaign. By the end of the war, newly elected President Charles de Gaulle, understanding that the age of empire was ending, held a plebiscite, offering Algerians three options. Unfortunately, he promised the *pieds-noirs* that Algeria would remain French, and that they should stay and invest in the colony. This resulted in a landslide vote for complete independence from France. Over one million people, 10% of the population, then fled the country for France and Italy in just a few months in mid-1962. These included most of the 1,025,000 *Pieds-Noirs*, as well as 81,000 *Harkis* (pro-French Algerians serving in the French Army). In the days preceding the bloody conflict, a group of Algerian Rebels opened fire on a marketplace in Oran killing numerous innocent civilians, mostly women. This event is known as the Saint Bartholomew Massacre.

Algeria's first president was the FLN leader Ahmed Ben Bella. He was overthrown by his former ally and defence minister, Houari Boumédiène in 1965. Under Ben Bella the government had already become increasingly socialist and authoritarian, and this trend continued throughout Boumédiène's government. However, Boumédiène relied much more heavily on the army, and reduced the sole legal party to a merely symbolic role. Agriculture was collectivised, and a massive industrialization drive launched. Oil extraction facilities were nationalized. This was especially beneficial to the leadership after the 1973 oil crisis. However, the Algerian economy became increasingly dependent on oil which led to hardship when the price collapsed during the 1980s oil glut.

In foreign policy, while Algeria shares much of its history and cultural heritage with neighbouring Morocco, the two countries have had somewhat hostile relations with each other ever since Algeria's independence. Reasons for this include Morocco's disputed claim to portions of western Algeria (which led to the Sand War in 1963), Algeria's support for the Polisario Front for its right to self-determination, and Algeria's hosting of Sahrawi refugees within its borders in the city of Tindouf.

Within Algeria, dissent was rarely tolerated, and the state's control over the media and the outlawing of political parties other than the FLN was cemented in the repressive constitution of 1976.

Boumédiène died in 1978, but the rule of his successor, Chadli Bendjedid, was little more open. The state took on a strongly bureaucratic character and corruption was widespread.

The modernization drive brought considerable demographic changes to Algeria. Village traditions underwent significant change as urbanization increased. New industries emerged, agricultural employment was substantially reduced. Education was extended nationwide, raising the literacy rate from less than 10% to over 60%. There was a dramatic increase in the fertility rate to 7-8 children per mother.

Therefore by 1980, there was a very youthful population and a housing crisis. The new generation struggled to relate to the cultural obsession with the war years and two conflicting protest movements developed: communists, including Berber identity movements; and Islamic 'intégristes'. Both groups protested against one-party rule but also clashed with each other in universities and on the streets during the 1980s. Mass protests from both camps in Autumn 1988 forced Bendjedid to concede the end of one-party rule. Elections were planned to happen in 1991. In December 1991, the Islamic Salvation Front won the first round of the country's first multi-party elections. The military then intervened and cancelled the second round. It forced then-president Bendjedid to resign and banned all political parties based on religion (including the Islamic Salvation Front). A political conflict ensued, leading Algeria into the violent Algerian Civil War.



More than 160,000 people were killed between 17 January 1992 and June 2002. Most of the deaths were between militants and government troops, but a great number of civilians were also killed. The question of who was responsible for these deaths was controversial at the time amongst academic observers; many were claimed by the Armed Islamic Group. Though many of these massacres were carried out by Islamic extremists, the Algerian regime also used the army and foreign mercenaries to conduct attacks on men, women and children and then proceeded to blame the attacks upon various Islamic groups within the country.



Algiers

Elections resumed in 1995, and after 1998, the war waned. On 27 April 1999, after a series of short-term leaders representing the military, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the current president, was elected.

By 2002, the main guerrilla groups had either been destroyed or surrendered, taking advantage of an amnesty program, though sporadic fighting continued in some areas (See Islamic insurgency in Algeria (2002–present)).

The issue of Berber language and identity increased in significance, particularly after the extensive Kabyle protests of 2001 and the near-total boycott of local elections in Kabylie. The government responded with concessions including naming of Manthaztieht (Berber) as a national language and teaching it in schools.

Much of Algeria is now recovering and developing into an emerging economy. The high prices of oil and gas are being used by the new government to improve the country's infrastructure and especially improve industry and agricultural land. Recently, overseas investment in Algeria has increased.

Geography



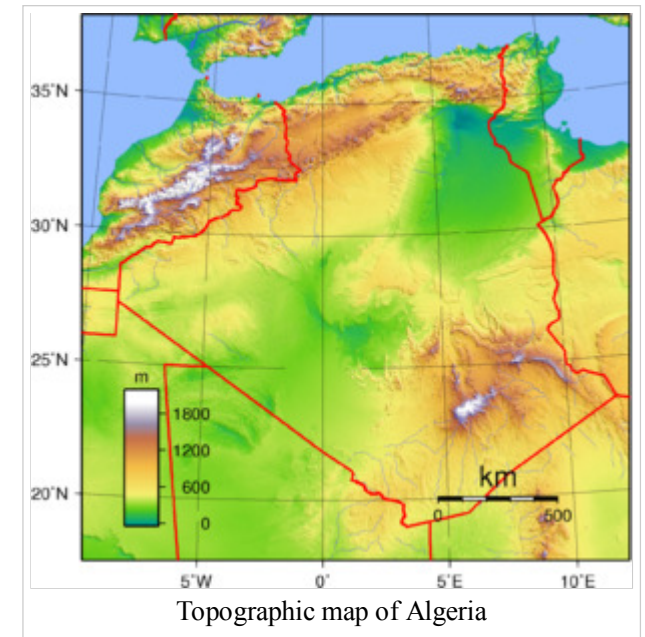
Most of the coastal area is hilly, sometimes even mountainous, and there are a few natural harbours. The area from the coast to the Tell Atlas is fertile. South of the Tell Atlas is a steppe landscape, which ends with the Saharan Atlas; further south, there is the Sahara desert. The Ahaggar Mountains (Arabic: جبال هقار), also known as the Hoggar, are a highland region in central Sahara, southern Algeria. They are located about 1,500 km (932 miles) south of the capital, Algiers and just west of Tamanghasset.

Algiers, Oran , Constantine, and Annaba are Algeria's main cities.

Climate and hydrology

Northern Algeria is in the temperate zone and has a mild, Mediterranean climate. Its broken topography, however, provides sharp local contrasts in both prevailing temperatures and incidence of rainfall. Year-to-year variations in climatic conditions are also common.

In the Tell Atlas, temperatures in summer average between 21 and 24 °C and in winter drop to 10 to 12 °C. Winters are not particularly cold, but the humidity level is high. In eastern Algeria, the average temperatures are somewhat lower, and on the steppes of the High Atlas plateaux, winter temperatures are only a few degrees above freezing. A prominent feature of the climate in this region is the sirocco, a dusty, choking south wind blowing off the desert, sometimes at gale force. This wind also occasionally reaches into the coastal Tell.



The Ahaggar Mountains

In Algeria, only a relatively small corner of the torrid Sahara lies across the Tropic of Cancer in the torrid zone. In this region even in winter, midday desert temperatures can be very hot. After sunset, however, the clear, dry air permits rapid loss of heat, and the nights are cool to chilly. Enormous daily ranges in temperature are recorded.

The highest temperature recorded in Tindouf is 135.4°F (57.4°C) and is probably the highest reliable temperature ever recorded in Algeria under standard conditions.

Rainfall is fairly abundant along the coastal part of the Tell Atlas, ranging from 400 to 670 mm annually, the amount of precipitation increasing from west to east. Precipitation is heaviest in the northern part of eastern Algeria, where it reaches as much as 1000 mm in some years. Farther inland, the rainfall is less plentiful. Prevailing winds that are easterly and north-easterly in summer change to westerly and northerly in winter and carry with them a general increase in precipitation from September through December, a decrease in the late winter and spring months, and a near absence of rainfall during the summer months. Algeria also has ergs, or sand dunes between mountains, which in the summer time when winds are heavy and gusty, temperatures can get up to 110 °F

(43 °C).



Politics



Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of Algeria.

The head of state is the President of Algeria, who is elected to a five year term and is constitutionally limited to two terms. Algeria has universal suffrage at 18 years of age. The President is the head of the Council of Ministers and of the High Security Council. He appoints the Prime Minister who is also the head of government. The Prime Minister appoints the Council of Ministers.

The Algerian parliament is bicameral, consisting of a lower chamber, the *National People's Assembly (APN)*, with 380 members; and an upper chamber, the *Council Of Nation*, with 144 members. The APN is elected every five years.

Under the 1976 constitution (as modified 1979, and amended in 1988, 1989, and 1996) Algeria is a multi-party state. All parties must be approved by the Ministry of the Interior. To date, Algeria has had more than 40 legal political parties. According to the constitution, no political association may be formed if it is "based on differences in religion, language, race, gender or region."

Military forces



The Algerian Army is called Popular National Army (PNA or ANP in French). It is composed of the command of the army, navy, and the air defence of the territory. The summit of military hierarchy leads to the leader of the State, constitutionally supreme leader of Armed forces and Defence Minister. The Algerian army has an enrollment about 300,000 soldiers, including up to 150,000 reservists. It is also assisted by the police station composed of 60 000 members, as well as a republican elite corps of 5 000 guards, dependent on the Ministry of Defence. In 2006, the Algerian budget of defence occupied 3.3% of the GDP, which is about \$3.8 billion (USD). The Algeria's main purveyor of weapon since independence was the USSR (Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic). However, since the fall of this last at the end of Cold War, Algeria has undertaken a diversification of its armed supplies, notably by turning to countries like the United States, China and South Africa. However, Russian material has always occupied a preponderant place within the Algerian army.



Missile launcher ship made in Algeria

It is the direct successor of the Armée de Libération Nationale (ALN), which fought French colonial occupation during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62).



The People's National Army consists of 127,500 members, with some 100,000 reservists. The army is under the control of the president, who also is minister of National Defense (current president is Abdelaziz Bouteflika). Defense expenditures accounted for some \$2.67 billion or 3.5% of GDP. One and a half years of national military service is compulsory for males.

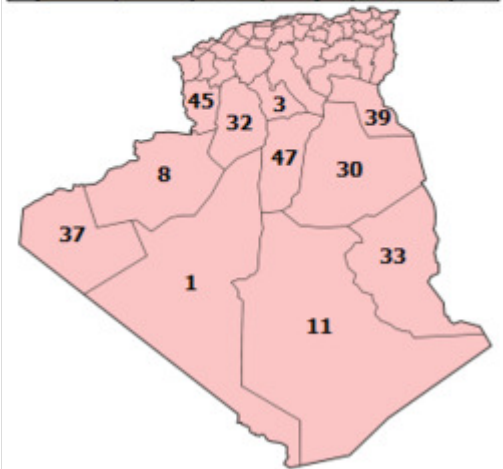
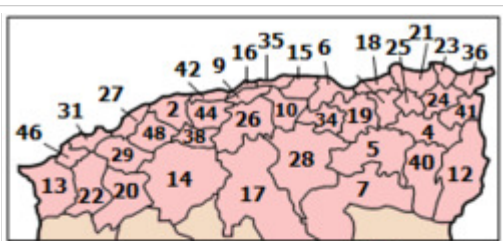
Algeria is a leading military power in North Africa and has its force oriented toward its western (Morocco) and eastern (Libya) borders. Its primary military supplier has been the former Soviet Union, which has sold various types of sophisticated equipment under military trade agreements, and the People's Republic of China. Algeria has attempted, in recent years, to diversify its sources of military material. Military forces are supplemented by a 45,000-member gendarmerie or rural police force under the control of the president and 30,000-member *Sûreté nationale* or Metropolitan police force under the Ministry of the Interior.

Recently, the Algerian Air Force signed a deal with Russia to purchase 49 MiG-29SMT and 6 MiG-29UBT at an estimated \$1.5 Billion. They also agreed to return old airplanes purchased from the Former USSR. Russia is also building 2 636-type diesel submarines for Algeria.

Maghreb Arab Union

Tensions between Algeria and Morocco in relation to the Western Sahara have put great obstacles in the way of tightening the Maghreb Arab Union, which was nominally established in 1989 but carried little practical weight with its coastal neighbors.

Provinces and districts



Map of the provinces of Algeria numbered according to the official order

Algeria is currently divided into 48 provinces (wilayas), 553 districts (daïras) and 1,541 municipalities (communes, baladiyahs). Each province, district, and municipality is named after its seat, which is mostly also the largest city.

According to the Algerian constitution, a province is *a territorial collectivity enjoying some economic freedom*. The People's Provincial Assembly is the political entity governing a province, which has a "president", who is elected by the members of the assembly. They are in turn elected on universal suffrage every five years. The " Wali" (Prefect or governor) directs each province. This person is chosen by the Algerian President to handle the PPA's decisions.

The administrative divisions have changed several times since independence. When introducing new provinces, the numbers of old provinces are kept, hence the non-alphabetical order. With their official numbers, currently (since 1983) they are:

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Adrar | 13 Tlemcen | 25 Constantine | 37 Tindouf |
| 2 Chlef | 14 Tiaret | 26 Médéa | 38 Tissemsilt |
| 3 Laghouat | 15 Tizi Ouzou | 27 Mostaganem | 39 El Oued |
| 4 Oum el-Bouaghi | 16 Algiers | 28 M'Sila | 40 Khenchela |
| 5 Batna | 17 Djelfa | 29 Mascara | 41 Souk Ahras |
| 6 Béjaïa | 18 Jijel | 30 Ouargla | 42 Tipasa |
| 7 Biskra | 19 Sétif | 31 Oran | 43 Mila |
| 8 Béchar | 20 Saida | 32 El Bayadh | 44 Aïn Defla |
| 9 Blida | 21 Skikda | 33 Illizi | 45 Naama |
| 10 Bouira | 22 Sidi Bel Abbes | 34 Bordj Bou Arréridj | 46 Aïn Témouchent |
| 11 Tamanghasset | 23 Annaba | 35 Boumerdès | 47 Ghardaïa |
| 12 Tébessa | 24 Guelma | 36 El Tarf | 48 Relizane |

Economy

The fossil fuels energy sector is the backbone of Algeria's economy, accounting for roughly 60% of budget revenues, 30% of GDP, and over 95% of export earnings. The country ranks fourteenth in petroleum reserves, containing 11.8 billion barrels (1.88×10^9 m³) of proven oil reserves with estimates suggesting that the actual amount is even more. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reported that in 2005, Algeria had 160 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven natural gas reserves, the eighth largest in the world.



Algeria's financial and economic indicators improved during the mid-1990s, in part because of policy reforms supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and debt rescheduling from the Paris Club. Algeria's finances in 2000 and 2001 benefited from an increase in oil prices and the government's tight fiscal policy, leading to a large increase in the trade surplus, record highs in foreign exchange reserves, and reduction in foreign debt. The government's continued efforts to diversify the economy by attracting foreign and domestic investment outside the energy sector have had little success in reducing high unemployment and improving living standards, however. In 2001, the government signed an Association Treaty with the European Union that will eventually lower tariffs and increase trade. In March 2006, Russia agreed to erase \$4.74 billion of Algeria's Soviet-era debt during a visit by President Vladimir Putin to the country, the first by a Russian leader in half a century. In return, president Bouteflika agreed to buy \$7.5 billion worth of combat planes, air-defense systems and other arms from Russia, according to the head of Russia's state arms exporter Rosoboronexport.

Algeria also decided in 2006 to pay off its full \$8bn (£4.3bn) debt to the Paris Club group of rich creditor nations before schedule. This will reduce the Algerian foreign debt to less than \$5bn in the end of 2006. The Paris Club said the move reflected Algeria's economic recovery in recent years.

Agriculture

Since Roman times Algeria has been noted for the fertility of its soil. 25% of Algerians are employed in the agricultural sector.

A considerable amount of cotton was grown at the time of the United States' Civil War, but the industry declined afterwards. In the early years of the twentieth century efforts to extend the cultivation of the plant were renewed. A small amount of cotton is also grown in the southern oases. Large quantities of a vegetable that resembles horsehair, an excellent fibre, are made from the leaves of the dwarf palm. The olive (both for its fruit and oil) and tobacco are cultivated with great success.

More than 7,500,000 acres (30,000 km²) are devoted to the cultivation of cereal grains. The Tell is the grain-growing land. During the time of French rule its productivity was increased substantially by the sinking of artesian wells in districts which only required water to make them fertile. Of the crops raised, wheat, barley and oats are the principal cereals. A great variety of vegetables and fruits, especially citrus products, are exported. Algeria also exports figs, dates, esparto grass, and cork. It is the largest oat market in Africa.

Algeria is known for Bertolli's olive oil spread, although the spread has an Italian background.

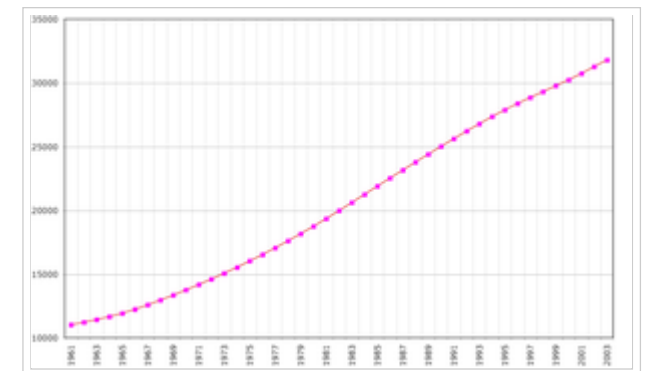
Demographics



The current population of Algeria is 33,333,216 (July 2007 est.). About 70% of Algerians live in the northern, coastal area; the minority who inhabit the Sahara are mainly concentrated in oases, although some 1.5 million remain nomadic or partly nomadic. Almost 30% of Algerians are under 15. Algeria has the fourth lowest fertility rate in the Greater Middle East after Cyprus, Tunisia, and Turkey.

97% of the population is classified ethnically as Berber/Arab and religiously as Sunni Muslim, the few non-Sunni Muslims are mainly Ibadis, representing 1.3%, from the M'Zab valley. (See also Islam in Algeria.) A mostly foreign Roman Catholic community of about 45,000 people exists, along with about 350,000 Protestant Christians, and some 500 Jewish. The Jewish community of Algeria, which once constituted 2% of the total population, has substantially decreased due to emigration, mostly to France and Israel.

Europeans account for less than 1% of the population, inhabiting almost exclusively the largest metropolitan areas. However, during the colonial period there was a large (15.2% in 1962) European population, consisting primarily of French people, in addition to Spaniards in the west of the country, Italians and Maltese in the east, and other Europeans in smaller numbers known as *pieds-noirs*, concentrated on the coast and forming a majority in cities like Bône, Oran, Sidi Bel Abbès, and Algiers. Almost all of this population left during or immediately after the country's independence from France.



Demographics of Algeria, Data of FAO, year 2005; number of inhabitants in thousands.



A Dancer in Biskra, published in March 1917 National Geographic.

Housing and medicine continue to be pressing problems in Algeria. Failing infrastructure and the continued influx of people from rural to urban areas has overtaxed both systems. According to the UNDP, Algeria has one of the world's highest per housing unit occupancy rates for housing, and government officials have publicly stated that the country has an immediate shortfall of 1.5 million housing units.

Women make up 70 percent of Algeria's lawyers and 60 percent of its judges. Women dominate medicine. Increasingly, women are contributing more to household income than men. Sixty percent of university students are women, according to university researchers.

It is estimated that 95,700 refugees and asylum seekers have sought refuge in Algeria. This includes roughly 90,000 from Morocco and 4,100 from Former Palestine.

Ethnic groups

Most Algerians are Berber or Arab, by language or identity, but almost all Algerians are Berber in origin. Today, the Arab-Berber issue is often a case of self-identification or identification through language and culture, rather than a racial or ethnic distinction. The Berber people are divided into several ethnic groups, Kabyle in the mountainous north-central area, Chaoui in the eastern Atlas Mountains, Mozabites in the M'zab valley, and Tuareg in the far south. Small pockets of Black African populations also are in Algeria. Turkish Algerians represent 5% of the population and live mainly in the big cities.



However, in a recent genetic study by Standford University, Arabs and Berbers were found to have more genetic similarities than was once believed. The Y-chromosome DNA haplogroups that characterize both Arabs and Berbers are E1b1b and J (found in 70% of Middle Eastern people and 90% in North Africa). This has led scientists to conclude that North Africa has a higher genetic affinity with Arab populations than was previously hypothesized. Southern Algerians are most genetically closely linked with Arabs from Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the UAE. Northern Algerians are most genetically linked with Arabs from Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Jordan and some Gulf countries.

A more recent and thorough study by Arredi et al. (2004) which analyzed populations from Algeria concludes that the North African pattern of Y-chromosomal variation (including both E1b1b and J haplogroups) is largely of Neolithic origin, which suggests that the Neolithic transition in this part of the world was accompanied by demic diffusion of Afro-Asiatic-speaking pastoralists from the Middle East. This Neolithic origin was later confirmed by Myles et al. (2005), which in turn suggests that "contemporary Berber populations possess the genetic signature of a past migration of pastoralists from the Middle East".

Languages



Trilingual welcome sign in the Isser Municipality (Boumerdès), written in Arabic, Kabyle (Tifinagh), and French.

Most Algerians speak Algerian Arabic. Arabic is spoken natively in dialectal form ("Darja") by some 65 percent of the population. However, in the media and on official occasions the spoken language is Standard Arabic.

The Berbers (or Imazighen), who form approximately 45 percent of the population, largely speak one of the various dialects of Tamazight as opposed to Arabic. But a majority can use both Berber and Algerian Arabic. Arabic remains Algeria's only official language, although Tamazight has recently been recognized as a national language alongside it.

Ethnologue counts eighteen living languages within Algeria, splitting both Arabic and Tamazight into several different languages, as well as including Korandje, which is unrelated to Arabic or Tamazight.

The language issue is politically sensitive, particularly for the Berber minority, which has been disadvantaged by state-sanctioned Arabization. Language politics and Arabization have partly been a reaction to the fact that 130 years of French colonization had left both the state bureaucracy and much of the educated upper class completely Francophone, as well as being motivated by the Arab nationalism promoted by successive Algerian governments.

French is still the most widely studied foreign language, and most Algerians are fluent in French though it is usually not spoken in daily circumstances. Since independence, the government has pursued a policy of linguistic Arabization of education and bureaucracy, with some success, although many university courses continue to be taught in French. Recently, schools have started to incorporate French into the curriculum as early as children start to learn Arabic, as many Algerians are fluent in French. French is also used in media and commerce.

Education



Education is officially compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 15. In the year 1997, there was an outstanding amount of teachers and students in primary schools.

In Algeria there are 10 universities, 7 colleges, and 5 institutes for higher learning. The University of Algiers (founded in 1909), which is located in the capital of Algeria, Algiers has about 267,142 students. The Algerian school system is structured into Basic, General Secondary, and Technical Secondary levels:

Basic

Ecole fondamentale (Fundamental School)

Length of program: 10 years

Age range: age 6 to 15 old

Certificate/diploma awarded: Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen B.E.M.

General Secondary

Lycée d'Enseignement général (School of General Teaching) , lycées polyvalents (General-Purpose School)

Length of program: 3 years

Age range: age 15 to 18

Certificate/diploma awarded: Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement secondaire
(Bachelor's Degree of Secondary School)

Technical Secondary

Lycées d'Enseignement technique (Technical School)

Length of program: 3 years

Certificate/diploma awarded: Baccalauréat technique (Technical Bachelor's Degree)

Culture



Young inhabitants of Algiers in the streets of the Kasbah of Algiers.



Image:Chahid.jpg
Martyrs Monument

Modern Algerian literature, split between Arabic and French, has been strongly influenced by the country's recent history. Famous novelists of the twentieth century include Mohammed Dib, Albert Camus, and Kateb Yacine, while Assia Djebar is widely translated. Among the important novelists of the 1980s were

Rachid Mimouni, later vice-president of Amnesty International, and Tahar Djaout, murdered by an Islamist group in 1993 for his secularist views. In philosophy and the humanities, Jacques Derrida, the father of deconstruction, was born in El Biar in Algiers; Malek Bennabi and Frantz Fanon are noted for their thoughts on decolonization; Augustine of Hippo was born in Tagaste (modern-day Souk Ahras); and Ibn Khaldun, though born in Tunis, wrote the *Muqaddima* while staying in Algeria. Algerian culture has been strongly influenced by Islam, the main religion. The works of the Sanusi family in pre-colonial times, and of Emir Abdelkader and Sheikh Ben Badis in colonial times, are widely noted. The Latin author Apuleius was born in Madaurus (Mdaourouch), in what later became Algeria.

The Algerian musical genre best known abroad is *raï*, a pop-flavored, opinionated take on folk music, featuring international stars such as Khaled and Cheb Mami. In Algeria itself the style: (*raï*) remains the most popular, but the older generation still prefer ("shaabi", Dahmane Elharrashi its King..) while the tuneful melodies of Kabyle music, exemplified by Idir, Ait Menguellat, or Lounès Matoub, have a wide audience. For more classical tastes, Andalusí music, brought from Al-Andalus by Morisco refugees, is preserved in many older coastal towns. For a more modern style, the English born and of Algerian descent, Potent C is gradually becoming a success for younger generations. Encompassing a mixture of folk, *raï*, and British hip hop it is a highly collective and universal genre.

Although " " *raï* ". is welcomed and praised as a glowing cultural emblem for Algeria, there was time when *raï*'s come across critical cultural and political conflixtions with Islamic and government policies and practices, post-independency. Thus the distribution and expression of *raï* music became very difficult. However, "then the government abruptly reversed its position in mid-1985. In part this was due to the lobbying of a former liberation army officer turned pop music impresario, Colonel Snoussi, who hoped to profit from *raï* if it could be mainstreamed." In addition, given both nations' relations, Algerian government was pleased with the music's growing popularity in France. Although the music is ore widely accepted on the political level, it still faces severe conflixtions with the populace of Islamic faith in Algeria.

In painting, Mohammed Khadda and M'Hamed Issiakhem have been notable in recent years.

Landscapes and monuments of Algeria

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Algeria

There are several UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Algeria including Al Qal'a of Beni Hammad, the first capital of the Hammadid empire; Tipasa, a Phoenician



Mosque in Algiers.



and later Roman town; and Djémila and Timgad, both Roman ruins; M'Zab Valley, a limestone valley containing a large urbanized oasis; also the Casbah of Algiers is an important citadel. The only natural World Heritage Sites is the Tassili n'Ajjer, a mountain range.

Retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria>"

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Angola

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Angola. For more information see SOS Children in Angola, Africa

Angola, officially the **Republic of Angola** (Portuguese: *República de Angola*, pronounced IPA: [ʁɛˈpublikɐ di ʁ̃ˈɡolɐ] Kongo: Repubilika ya Ngola), is a country in south-central Africa bordering Namibia to the south, Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north, and Zambia to the east, and with a west coast along the Atlantic Ocean. The exclave province Cabinda has a border with the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Angola was a Portuguese colony from the 16th century to 1975. The country is the second-largest petroleum and diamond producer in sub-Saharan Africa, yet its people are among the continent's poorest. According to the International Monetary Fund, more than \$4 billion in oil receipts have disappeared from Angola's treasury in the 2000s. In August 2006, a peace deal was signed with separatist rebels from the Cabinda exclave in the North. About 65% of Angola's oil comes from that region.

History



Queen Nzinga in peace negotiations with the Portuguese governor in Luanda, 1657.

Khoisan hunter-gatherers are some of the earliest known modern human inhabitants of the area. They were largely replaced by Bantu tribes during Bantu migrations, though small numbers of Khoisan remain in parts of southern Angola to the present day. The geographical areas now designated as Angola first became the subject to incursions by Europeans in the late 15th century. In 1483 Portugal established a base at the river Congo, where the Kongo State, Ndongo and Lunda existed. The Kongo State stretched from modern Gabon in the north to the Kwanza River in the south. Angola became a link in trade with India and Southeast Asia. In 1575 Portugal established a colony at Cabinda based on slave trade. Before the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade, slavery was practiced in Africa by many

indigenous peoples. The African slave trade provided a large number of black slaves to Europeans and their African agents. For example, in what is now Angola, the Imbangala had economies which were

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>República de Angola</i> Republic of Angola | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>Virtus Unita Fortior</i> " (Latin) "Unity Provides Strength" | |
| Anthem: <i>Angola Avante!</i> (Portuguese) <i>Forward Angola!</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Luanda |
| Official languages | Portuguese |



heavily focused on the slave trade. Within the Portuguese Empire, most black African slaves were traded to Brazilian merchants arrived to Portugal's African ports from other Portuguese colony - Brazil (South America) - seeking cheap workforce for use on Brazilian agricultural plantations. This trade would last until the first half of the 1800s. The Portuguese gradually took control of the coastal strip throughout the sixteenth century by a series of treaties and wars forming the Portuguese colony of Angola. Taking advantage of the Portuguese Restoration War, the Dutch occupied Luanda from 1641 to 1648, where they allied with local peoples to consolidate their colonial rule against the remaining Portuguese resistance.

Colonial era

In 1648, Portugal retook Luanda and initiated a conquest of the lost territories, which restored the pre-occupation possessions of Portugal by 1650. Treaties regulated relations with Congo in 1649 and Njinga's Kingdom of Matamba and Ndongo in 1656. The conquest of Pungo Andongo in 1671 was the last great Portuguese expansion, as attempts to invade Congo in 1670 and Matamba in 1681 failed. Portugal expanded its territory behind the colony of Benguela in the eighteenth century, and began the attempt to occupy other regions in the mid-nineteenth century. The process resulted in few gains until the 1880s. Development of the interior began after the Berlin Conference in 1885, fixed the colony's borders, and British and Portuguese investment fostered mining, railways, and agriculture. Full Portuguese administrative control of the interior didn't occur until the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1951, the colony was designated as an overseas province, called Portuguese West Africa. Portugal had a presence in Angola for nearly five hundred years, and the population's initial reaction to calls for independence was mixed.

Independence

Leftist military officers overthrew the Caetano government in Portugal in the Carnation Revolution on April 25, 1974. The transitional government opened negotiations with the three main independentist guerrilla groups: MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA, concluding separate peace agreements with each organization. With Portugal out of the picture, the nationalist movements turned on each other, fighting for control of Luanda and international recognition. Holden Roberto, Agostinho Neto, and Jonas Savimbi met in Bukavu, Zaire in July and agreed to negotiate with the Portuguese as one political entity. They met again in Mombasa, Kenya on January 5, 1975 and agreed to stop fighting each other, further outlining constitutional negotiations with the Portuguese. They met for a third time in Alvor, Portugal from January 10-15.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recognised regional languages | Kongo, Chokwe, South Mbundu, Mbundu |
| Demonym | Angolan |
| Government | Presidential republic |
| - President | José E. dos Santos |
| - Prime Minister | Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos |
| Independence | from Portugal |
| - Date | November 11, 1975 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,246,700 km ² (23rd) 481,354 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 15,941,000 (61st) |
| - 1970 census | 5,646,177 |
| - Density | 13/km ² (199th) 34/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$43.362 billion (82nd) |
| - Per capita | \$2,813 (126th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.446 (<i>low</i>) (162nd) |
| Currency | Kwanza (AOA) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .ao |
| Calling code | +244 |



Roberto, Neto, Savimbi, and the Portuguese government signed the Alvor Agreement on January 15, setting November 11 as the date for independence. *Alvor* marked Angola's transition from the war for independence to the war for Luanda. Portuguese authorities deliberately excluded the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) and Eastern Revolt from participating in the negotiations to ensure Angola's territorial integrity, in direct opposition to the de Spínola's plans for Angola. The coalition government the Alvor Agreement established soon fell as nationalist factions, doubting one another's commitment to the peace process, tried to take control of the colony by force.

Civil war

When it was known that Portuguese authorities and military forces would leave the territory and hand over power to the nationalist groups, a mass exodus of civilian Portuguese citizens ensued. The Angolan Civil War (1975 - 2002), one of the largest and deadliest Cold War conflicts, erupted shortly after and lasted 27 years, ravaging the economy, disturbing social order and disrupting social stability in the newly independent country. Over 500,000 people lost their lives, mostly in the 1990s, as the three main factions and several smaller ones struggled for supremacy. Thousands of Angolan refugees suffered with the conflict and left the country or simply fled to other regions of Angola. Today, all parties to conflict are active politically, but the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola's (MPLA) victory in the war prevents any opposition candidate or ethnic group from challenging dos Santos and the Kimbundu's "de facto" control of the country. The MPLA's base is among the Kimbundu people and the multiracial intelligentsia of Luanda. The National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), based in the Bakongo region of the north, allied with the United States, the People's Republic of China and the Mobutu government in Zaïre. The United States, South Africa, and several other African nations also supported Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), whose ethnic and regional base lies in the Ovimbundu heartland of central Angola.

Ceasefire with UNITA

On February 22, 2002, Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA, was killed in combat with government troops, and a cease-fire was reached by the two factions. UNITA gave up its armed wing and assumed the role of major opposition party. Although the political situation of the country began to stabilize, President dos Santos has so far refused to institute regular democratic processes. Among Angola's major problems are a serious humanitarian crisis (a result of the prolonged war), the abundance of minefields, and the actions of guerrilla movements fighting for the independence of the northern exclave of Cabinda (Frente para a Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda). While most of the internally displaced have now returned home, the general situation for most Angolans remains desperate, and the development facing the government challenging as a consequence.

Politics

Angola's motto is *Virtus Unita Fortior*, a Latin phrase meaning "Virtue is stronger when united." The executive branch of the government is composed of the President, the Prime Minister (currently Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos) and Council of Ministers. Currently, political power is concentrated in the Presidency. The Council of Ministers, composed of all government ministers and vice ministers, meets regularly to discuss policy issues. Governors of the 18 provinces are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the president. The Constitutional Law of 1992 establishes the broad outlines of government structure and delineates the rights and duties of citizens. The legal system is based on Portuguese and customary law but is weak and fragmented, and courts operate in



only twelve of more than 140 municipalities. A Supreme Court serves as the appellate tribunal; a Constitutional Court with powers of judicial review has never been constituted despite statutory authorization.

The current government has announced an intention to hold elections in 2008. These elections would be the first since 1992 and would serve to elect both a new president and a new National Assembly.

Administrative divisions

Angola is divided into eighteen provinces (*provincias*) and 163 municipalities. The provinces are:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Bengo | 10. Huila |
| 2. Benguela | 11. Luanda |
| 3. Bié | 12. Lunda Norte |
| 4. Cabinda | 13. Lunda Sul |
| 5. Cuando Cubango | 14. Malanje |
| 6. Cuanza Norte | 15. Moxico |
| 7. Cuanza Sul | 16. Namibe |
| 8. Cunene | 17. Uíge |
| 9. Huambo | 18. Zaire |



Exclave of Cabinda

With an area of approximately 7,283 km² (2,800 square miles), the Northern Angolan province of Cabinda is unique in being separated from the rest of the country by a strip, some 60 km wide, of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) along the lower Congo river. Cabinda borders the Congo Republic to the north and north-northeast and the DRC to the east and south. The town of Cabinda is the chief population centre. According to a 1995 census, Cabinda had an estimated population of 600,000, approximately 400,000 of whom live in neighbouring countries. Population estimates are, however, highly unreliable.

Consisting largely of tropical forest, Cabinda produces hardwoods, coffee, cocoa, crude rubber and palm oil. The product for which it is best known, however, is its oil, which has given it the nickname, "the Kuwait of Africa". Cabinda's petroleum production from its considerable offshore reserves now accounts for more than half of Angola's output. Most of the oil along its coast was discovered under Portuguese rule by the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company (CABCOG) from 1968 onwards. Since Portugal handed over sovereignty of its former overseas province of Angola to the local independentist groups (MPLA, UNITA, and FNLA), the territory of Cabinda has been a theatre of separatist guerrilla actions opposing the Government of Angola (which has employed its military forces, the FAA – Forças Armadas Angolanas) and Cabindan separatists. The Cabindan separatists, FLEC-FAC, created a virtual Federal Republic of Cabinda under the Presidency of N'Zita Henriques Tiago. In its website, it claimed to be committed to building a Republic of Cabinda in which "freedom, opportunity, prosperity and civil society flourish". This Federal Republic, with Tchiowa (Cabinda) as its capital city, would be administratively made up of seven districts, with a system of government which the website simply describes as a "true democracy" and a legal system based on traditional N'Goyo law. One of the characteristics



of the Cabindan independence movement is its constant fragmentation, into smaller and smaller factions, in a process which the Angolan government, although not totally fomented by it, undoubtedly encourages and duly exploits it.

Military

The Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) is headed by a Chief of Staff who reports to the Minister of Defense. There are three divisions--the Army, (Exército), Navy (Marinha de Guerra, MGA), and Air and Air Defense Forces (Força Aérea Nacional, FAN). Total manpower is about 110,000. The army is by far the largest of the services with about 100,000 men and women. The Navy numbers about 3,000 and operates several small patrol craft and barges. Air force personnel total about 7,000; its equipment includes Russian-manufactured fighters, bombers, and transport planes. There are also, Brazilian made EMB-312 Tucano for Training role, Czech made L-39 for training and bombing role, Czech Zlin for training role and a variety of western made aircraft such as C-212\Aviocar, Sud Aviation Alouette III, etc. A small number of FAA personnel are stationed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa) and the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville).

Police

The National Police departments are: Public Order, Criminal Investigation, Traffic and Transport, Investigation and Inspection of Economic Activities, Taxation and Frontier Supervision, Riot Police and the Rapid Intervention Police. The National Police are in the process of standing up an air wing, which will provide helicopter support for police operations. The National Police are also developing their criminal investigation and forensic capabilities. The National Police has an estimated 6,000 patrol officers, 2,500 Taxation and Frontier Supervision officers, 182 criminal investigators and 100 financial crimes detectives and 90 Economic Activity Inspectors.

The National Police have implemented a modernization and development plan to increase the capabilities and efficiency of the total force. In addition to administrative reorganization; modernization projects include procurement of new vehicles, aircraft and equipment, construction of new police stations and forensic laboratories, restructured training programs and the replacement of AKM rifles with 9 mm UZIs for police officers in urban areas.

Geography



At 481,321 square miles (1,246,700 km²), Angola is the world's twenty-third largest country (after Niger). It is comparable in size to Mali and is nearly twice the size of the US state of Texas, or five times the area of the United Kingdom.

Angola is bordered by Namibia to the south, Zambia to the east, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north-east, and the South Atlantic Ocean to the west. The exclave of Cabinda also borders the Republic of the Congo to the north. Angola's capital, Luanda, lies on the Atlantic coast in the north-west of the country. Angola's average temperature on the coast is 60 degrees Fahrenheit (16 °C) in the winter and 70 degrees Fahrenheit (21 °C) in the summer.

Economy



Luanda is Angola's capital city and economic and commercial hub.

Angola's economy has undergone a period of transformation in recent years, moving from the disarray caused by a quarter century of war to being the second fastest growing economy in Africa and one of the fastest in the world. In 2004, China's Eximbank approved a \$2 billion line of credit to Angola. The loan is being used to rebuild Angola's infrastructure, and has also limited the influence of the International Monetary Fund in the country.

Growth is almost entirely driven by rising oil production which surpassed 1.4 million barrels (220,000 m³) per day in late-2005 and which is expected to grow to 2 million barrels (320,000 m³) per day by 2007. Control of the oil industry is consolidated in Sonangol Group, a conglomerate which is owned by the Angolan government. In December 2006, Angola was admitted as a member of OPEC. The economy grew 18% in 2005, 26% in 2006 and 17.6% in 2007 and it's expected to stay above 10% for the rest of the decade. The security brought about by the 2002 peace settlement has led to the

resettlement of 4 million displaced persons, thus resulting in large-scale increases in agriculture production.

The country has developed its economy since political stability arose in 2002. However, it faces huge social and economic problems as a result of an almost continual state of conflict since 1961, although the highest level of destruction and socio-economic damage was reached after the 1975 independence, during the long years of civil war. Rapidly rising production and revenues from the oil sector have been the main driving forces behind the improvements in overall economic activity – nevertheless, poverty remains widespread. Anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International rated Angola one of the 10 most corrupt countries in the world in 2005. The capital city is the most developed and the only large economic centre worth mentioning in the country, however, slums called *musseques*, stretch for miles beyond Luanda's former city limits.

According to an American think tank, oil from Angola has increased so significantly that Angola now is China's biggest supplier of oil.

Demographics



Satellite image of Angola, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Angola is composed of Ovimbundu 37%, Kimbundu 25%, Bakongo 13%, *mestiços* (mixed European and native African) 2%, European 1%, and 22% 'other' ethnic groups.

Angola is a majority Christian country, with 53% of citizens professing the religion. Most Angolan Christians are Roman Catholic, 38%, or Protestant, 15%. 46.8% of Angolans practice indigenous beliefs.

It is estimated that Angola was host to 12,100 refugees and 2,900 asylum seekers by the end of 2007. 11,400 of those refugees were originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo-Kinshasa) who arrived in the 1970s.

Education

Although by law, education in Angola is compulsory and free for 8 years, the government reports that a certain percent of students are not in school due to a lack of school buildings and teachers. Students are often responsible for paying additional school-related expenses, including fees for books and supplies. In 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 74 percent and in 1998, the most recent year for which data are available, the net primary enrollment rate was 61 percent. Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. There continue to be significant disparities in enrollment between rural and urban areas.¹⁵⁴ In 1995, 71.2 percent of children ages 7 to 14 years were attending school. It is reported that higher percentages of boys attend school than girls. During the Angolan Civil War (1975-2002), nearly half of all schools were reportedly looted and destroyed, leading to current problems with overcrowding. The Ministry of Education hired 20,000 new teachers in 2005, and continued to implement teacher trainings. Teachers tend to be underpaid, inadequately trained, and overworked (sometimes teaching two or three shifts a day). Teachers also reportedly demand payment or bribes directly from their students. Other factors, such as the presence of landmines, lack of resources and identity papers, and poor health also prevent children from regularly attending school. Although budgetary allocations for education were increased in 2004, the education system in Angola continues to be extremely under-funded. Literacy is quite low, with 67.4% of the population over the age of 15 able to read and write in Portuguese. 82.9% of males and 54.2% of women are literate as of 2001.

Culture

Portugal ruled over Angola for 400 years and both countries share cultural aspects: language (Portuguese) and main religion (Roman Catholic Christianity). The Angolan culture is mostly native Bantu which was mixed with Portuguese culture. In the Moxico province more than 10,000 persons are Spanish-speaking (ca. 4.34% of the population of this province) due to the presence of Cuban troops during the civil war.

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Benin

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Benin. For more information see SOS Children in Benin, Africa

Benin (IPA: /bəˈnɪn/), officially the **Republic of Benin**, is a country in Western Africa. It borders Togo to the west, Nigeria to the east and Burkina Faso and Niger to the north; its short coastline to the south leads to the Bight of Benin. Its capital is Porto Novo, but the seat of government is Cotonou. Benin was known as *Dahomey* until 1975.

Name




The name "Benin" has no proper connection to Kingdom of Benin (or Benin City). The name Dahomey was changed in 1975 to The People's Republic of Benin, named after the body of water on which the country lies, the Bight of Benin. This name was picked due to its neutrality, since the current political boundaries of Benin encompass over fifty distinct linguistic groups and nearly as many individual ethnic groups. The name Dahomey was the name of the ancient Fon Kingdom, and was determined to be an inappropriate name.

History

The African kingdom of Dahomey was formed out of a mixture of various local ethnic groups on the Abomey plain. Historians theorized that the insecurity caused by the slave trade may have contributed to mass migrations of different groups to Abomey, including a segment of the royal family of the city of Allada. These groups coalesced around a strict military culture aimed at securing and eventually expanding the borders of the small kingdom.

Dahomey was known for its distinct culture and traditions. Boys were often apprenticed to older soldiers at a young age, and learned about the kingdom's military customs until they were old enough to join the navy. Dahomey was also famous for instituting an elite female soldier corps, called *Ahosi* or "our mothers" in the Fongbe language, and known in English as the Dahomean Amazons. This emphasis on military preparation and achievement earned Dahomey the nickname of "black Sparta" from European

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 25 of 586

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République du Bénin</i> Republic of Benin | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>Fraternité, Justice, Travail</i> " (French) "Fellowship, Justice, Labour" | |
| Anthem: <i>L'Aube Nouvelle</i> (French) <i>The Dawn of a New Day</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital | Porto Novo ¹ |
| Largest city | Cotonou |
| Official languages | French |
| Demonym | Beninese; Beninois |



observers and 19th century explorers like Sir Richard Burton. Human sacrifice was a common practice, according to contemporary sources; on holidays and special occasions, thousands of slaves and prisoners of war were beheaded in public. Some Dahomean religious beliefs maintained that decapitation enhanced the prestige and potency of the Dahomean king and his warriors.

Though the founders of Dahomey appeared initially to resist the slave trade, it flourished in the region of Dahomey for almost three hundred years, leading to the area being named "the Slave Coast". Court protocols, which demanded that a portion of war captives from the kingdom's many battles be decapitated, decreased the number of enslaved people exported from the area. The number went from 20,000 per year at the beginning of the seventeenth century to 12,000 at the beginning of the 1800s. The decline was partly due to the banning of the trans-Atlantic trade by Britain and other countries. This decline continued until 1885, when the last Portuguese slave ship departed from the coast of present-day Benin bound for Brazil.

Along with the powerful Dahomey Kingdom, other peoples inhabited the area that would become the Republic of Benin. Of note were the Ketu, Icha, Dassa, Anago, and other sub-groups of the Yoruba-speaking people. These groups were in close contact with related sub-groups in present-day Nigeria, and were often enemies of the Dahomeans. However, some were also citizens of Dahomey. In regions such as present-day Porto Novo, both groups inter-married. North of these people were the Borgu, Mahi, and several other ethnic groups that are included in the country's current population.

Colony

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Dahomey started to lose its status as the regional power. This enabled the French to take over the area in 1892. In 1899, the French included land called Dahomey within the French West Africa colony.

Independence

In 1958, France granted autonomy to the Republic of Dahomey, and full independence as of August 1, 1960.

For the next 12 years, ethnic strife contributed to a period of turbulence. There were several coups and regime changes, with three main figures dominating - Sourou Apithy, Hubert Maga, and Justin Ahomadegbé - each of them representing a different area and ethnicity of the country. These three

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Multiparty democracy |
| - President | Yayi Boni |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | August 1, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 112,622 km ² (101st) 43,483 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.8 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 8,439,000 ² (89th) |
| - 2002 census | 6,769,914 |
| - Density | 75/km ² (118th ³) 194/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$8.75 billion (140th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,176 (166th) |
| Gini (2003) | 36.5 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.437 (low) (163rd) |
| Currency | West African CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .bj |
| Calling code | +229 |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Cotonou is the seat of government. 2 Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower |



agreed to form a presidential council after violence marred the 1970 elections.

In 1972, a military coup led by Mathieu Kérékou overthrew the council. Kérékou established a Marxist government under the control of Military Council of the Revolution (CNR). In 1975 he renamed the country the People's Republic of Benin. In 1979, the CNR was dissolved and elections took place. By the late 1980s, Kérékou abandoned Marxism after an economic crisis and decided to re-establish a parliamentary capitalist system.

In 1991 he was defeated Nicéphore Soglo and became the first black African president to step down after an election. Kérékou returned to power after winning the 1996 vote. In 2001, a closely fought election resulted in Kérékou's winning another term. His opponents claimed election irregularities.

President Kérékou and former President Soglo did not run in the 2006 elections, as both were barred by the constitution's restricting age and total terms of candidates. President Kérékou is widely praised for making no effort to change the constitution so that he could remain in office or run again, unlike some African leaders.

On March 5, 2006, an election was held that was considered free and fair. It resulted in a runoff between Yayi Boni and Adrien Houngbédji. The runoff election was held on March 19 and was won by Yayi Boni, who assumed office on April 6. The success of the fair multi-party elections in Benin won high praise internationally. Benin is widely considered a model democracy in Africa.

United States President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush briefly visited Benin on February 16 2008, marking the first visit of a major head of state to this tiny country. President Yayi Boni presented President Bush with the Grand Cross of the National Order of Benin and thanked him for US economic aid.

Politics

Benin's politics takes place in a framework of a presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Benin, who is currently Yayi Boni, is both head of state and head of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the legislature. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature. The current political system is derived from the 1990 Constitution of Benin and the subsequent transition to democracy in 1991.

On February 16th 2008, United States President George W. Bush made a brief stop in Benin during which he held a meeting with president Thomas Boni Yayi as well as a press conference at Cadjehoun Airport in Cotounou. The president later proceeded to Tanzania to continue with his five-nation African tour.

In its 2007 Worldwide Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders ranked Benin 53rd out of 169 countries.

Departments and communes

population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

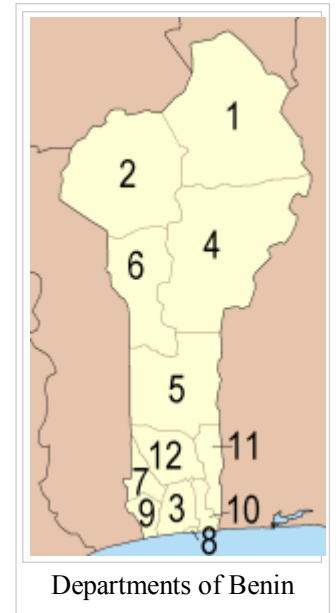
³ Rank based on 2005 estimate.



Benin is divided into 12 departments (French: *départements*), and subdivided into 77 communes. In 1999, the previous six departments were each split into two halves, forming the current 12. The new six departments have not been assigned a capital yet.

1. Alibori
2. Atakora
3. Atlantique
4. Borgou
5. Collines
6. Donga
7. Kouffo
8. Littoral
9. Mono
10. Ouémé
11. Plateau
12. Zou

Geography





Map of Benin

Stretched between the Niger River in the northeast and the Bight of Benin in the south, Benin's elevation is about the same for the entire country. Most of the population lives in the southern coastal plains, where Benin's largest cities are also located, including Porto Novo and Cotonou. The north of the country consists mostly of savanna and semi-arid highlands.

Running southernly, down the middle of the country is the Oueme River.

The climate in Benin is hot and humid with relatively little rain compared to other West African countries, although there are two rainy seasons (April-July and September-November). In the winter the dust winds of the harmattan can make the nights rather cold.

The largest city and commercial capital is Cotonou. The name *Cotonou* is from the Fon phrase *ku to nu* 'at the lake of the dead', from the adjacent lagoon. This is a reference to the belief that falling stars represent the souls of those who have just died falling to the underworld. It is said that when Cotonou was founded, the lights of the lacustrine village of Ganvié across the lagoon were reflected in the waters, suggesting fallen stars at the bottom. Ganvié is a fishing village sitting in the water on stilts at the western shore of the lagoon.

The town of Ouidah is the spiritual capital of Vodun, and is known locally as *Glexwe*. It was a major slaving port under Portuguese occupation. The town of Abomey is the old capital of the Fon kingdom of Dahomey, and the Fon king continues to reside there.

In Atakora province, Betamaribe settlements straddling the Togolese border are called tata somba 'Somba houses'; they are famous for their fortifications, with livestock housed inside and the people sleeping in huts among the granaries on the roofs.

Economy

The economy of Benin remains underdeveloped and dependent on subsistence agriculture, cotton production, and regional trade. Growth in real output has averaged a stable 5% in the past six years, but rapid population rise has offset much of this increase. Inflation has subsided over the past several years. In order to raise growth still further, Benin has plans to attract more foreign investment, place more emphasis on tourism, facilitate the development of new food processing systems and agricultural products, and encourage new information and communication technology. The 2001 privatization policy should continue in telecommunications, water, electricity, and agriculture in spite of initial government reluctance. The Paris Club and bilateral creditors have eased the external debt situation, while pressing for accelerated structural reforms.

Although trade unions in Benin represent up to 75% of the formal workforce, the large informal economy has been noted by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITCU) to contain ongoing problems, including a lack of women's wage equality, the use of child labour, and the continuing issue of forced labour.



Demographics

There are several dozen **ethnolinguistic groups** in Benin, representing three of Africa's language families: Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, and Afroasiatic. The latter is represented by Hausa living mostly as merchants in the north, while Nilo-Saharan is represented by the Dendi, descending from the Songhai Empire. The Dendi language predominates along the Niger River in the far north, and is used as a lingua franca in Muslim areas throughout the north, in Alibori, Borgou, and Donga provinces. Of the Niger-Congo family, five branches are represented:

- Mande by the Boko or Busa, now in the far eastern corner (southern Alibori-northern Borgou), but previously more widely spread before being largely absorbed by the Bariba
- West Atlantic by the nomadic Fulbe scattered across the northeast
- Benue-Congo by the Yoruba of Collines and Plateau provinces, such as the old kingdom of Sakete, and the capital city of Porto-Novo, having expanded west from Oyo and Ife in the twelfth to nineteenth centuries
- Gur (Voltaic) languages predominate in the four northern provinces, with the Batombu (Bariba) of the old Borgou (Bariba) Kingdom occupying most of the countryside in its successor provinces of Borgou and Alibori, as well as the provincial capital of Parakou; the Yom throughout much of Donga province and its capital Djougou; and several groups in the Atakora, including the Betamaribe of the Otammari country around the provincial capital of Natitingou, the Biali, the Waama of Tanguiéta, and the Gulmàceba.
- Kwa, especially the Gbe languages spoken by the Tado peoples in the southern and central provinces: the Aja who established themselves in Kouffo province from neighboring Togo and gave rise to the other Tado peoples of Benin, except for the Mina of Mono province, who arrived separately from Togo or Ghana: The Fɔn culture centered in Zou province around the old Fɔn capital of Abomey, but also dominant in Cotonou and southern Atlantique areas such as Ouidah; the Maxi in central Collines, especially around Savalou; the Ayizo of central Atlantique (Allada); the Xwla and Xueda in the lagoons of the coast; the Tɔfin of Ouémé; and the Gun of Porto-Novo. Other Kwa languages are spoken by the Anii in southern Donga in the region of Bassila, and the Foodo in western Donga near the town of Ouaké.



The largest ethnic group are the Fon, with 1.7 million speakers of the Fon language (2001), followed by the various Yoruba groups (1.2 million), the Aja (600,000), the Bariba (460,000), the Ayizo (330,000), the Fulbe (310,000), and the Gun (240,000). Near the ports in the south can be found people who are descended from returned Brazilian slaves. There are also small numbers of Europeans, principally French, and people from the western Asia, mainly Lebanese, and East Asia, chiefly Indians.

Religion



According to the 2002 census, 27.1 percent of the population of Benin is Roman Catholic, 24.4 percent Muslim, 17.3 percent Vodun, 5 percent Celestial Christian, 3.2 percent Methodist, 7.5 percent other Christian, 6 percent other traditional local religious groups, 1.9 percent other religious groups, and 6.5 percent claim no religious affiliation.

Indigenous religions include local animistic religions in the Atakora (Atakora and Donga provinces) and Vodun among the Yoruba and Tado peoples in the centre and south of the country. The town of Ouidah on the central coast is the spiritual centre of Beninese Vodun.

The Yoruba and Tado pantheons correspond closely:

- The supreme deity Mawu (in the Fon language) or Olodumare (in Yoruba)
- The god of the earth and smallpox, Sakpata or Cankpana
- The god of thunder, Xevioso or Cango
- The god of war and iron, Gu or Ogun

The major **introduced religions** are Islam, introduced by the Songhai Empire and Hausa merchants, and now followed throughout Alibori, Borgou, and Donga provinces, as well as among the Yoruba, by 10-15% of the population; and Christianity, followed nominally by another 10-15% throughout the south and centre of Benin and in Otammari country in the Atakora. Most Christians, however, continue to hold Vodun beliefs and have incorporated into Christianity the pantheon of Vodun.



Celestial Church of Christ baptism in Cotonou. Five percent of Benin's population belongs to the Celestial Church of Christ, an African Initiated Church.

Culture

It is believed that Vodun (or "Voodoo", as it is commonly known) originated in Benin and was introduced to the Caribbean Islands and parts of North America by slaves taken from this particular area of the Slave Coast. The indigenous religion of Benin is practiced by about 60% of the population. Since 1992 Vodun has been recognized as one of Benin's official religions, and a National Vodun Holiday is celebrated on January 10.

Many Beninois in the south of the country have Akan-based names indicating the day of the week they were born on. Twins are important in south Beninois culture, and special names for twins are also used.

Local languages are used as the languages of instruction in elementary schools, with French only introduced after several years. Beninois languages are generally transcribed with a separate letter for each speech sound (phoneme), rather than using diacritics as in French or digraphs as in English. This includes Beninese Yoruba, which in Nigeria is written with both diacritics and digraphs. For instance, the mid vowels written *é è, ô, o* in French are written *e, ε, o, ɔ* in Beninese languages, whereas the consonants written *ng* and *sh* or *ch* in English are written *ŋ* and *c*. However, digraphs are used for nasal vowels and the labial-velar consonants *kp* and *gb*, as in the name of the Fon language *Fon gbe* /fõ gbe/, and diacritics are used as tone marks. In French-language publications, a mixture of French and Beninois orthographies may be seen.

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 31 of 586



Actor Djimon Gaston Hounsou (born April 24, 1964), pronounced "Jie-mon Hahn-soo" is an Academy Award-nominated Beninese actor, dancer and fashion model who was born in Cotonou, Benin. He is now a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Singer Angelique Kidjo, who is a five time Grammy nominee and international goodwill ambassador for UNICEF, was born in Cotonou, Benin.

Health issues

During the 1980s, less than 30 percent of the population had access to primary health care services. Benin had one of the highest death rates for children under the age of five in the world. Its infant mortality rate stood at 203 deaths for every 1000 live births. Only one of three mothers had access to child healthcare services. The Bamako Initiative changed that dramatically by introducing community-based healthcare reform, resulting in more efficient and equitable provision of services. A comprehensive approach strategy was extended to all areas of health care, with subsequent improvement in the health care indicators and improvement in health care efficiency and cost.

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Botswana

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Botswana. For more information see SOS Children in Botswana, Africa

Botswana, officially the **Republic of Botswana** (Tswana: *Lefatshe la Botswana*), is a landlocked nation in Southern Africa. Citizens of Botswana are **Batswana** (singular: **Motswana**), regardless of ethnicity. Formerly the British protectorate of Bechuanaland, Botswana adopted its new name after becoming independent within the Commonwealth on September 30, 1966. It is bordered by South Africa to the south and southeast, Namibia to the west, Zambia to the north, and Zimbabwe to the northeast. The economy, closely tied to South Africa's, is dominated by mining (especially diamonds), tourism, and cattle.

Geography and environment



Map of Botswana

Summary




Botswana is predominantly flat, tending toward gently rolling tableland. The Kalahari Desert is located in the southwest of the country. The Limpopo River Basin is the major landform of all of southern Africa, including Botswana.

More detail

At 231,788 mi² (600,370 km²), Botswana is the world's 45th-largest country (after Ukraine). It is comparable in size to Madagascar, and is slightly smaller than the state of Texas in the Southern United States.

Botswana is dominated by the Kalahari Desert, which covers up to 70% of the land surface of the country. The Okavango Delta, the world's largest inland delta, is in the northwest. The Makgadikgadi Pan, a large salt pan lies in the north.

Botswana has diverse areas of wildlife habitat, including the Okavango Delta, the Kalahari Desert, grasslands and savannas, the latter where Blue Wildebeest and many antelopes as well as other mammals

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Lefatshe la Botswana</i> Republic of Botswana | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>Pula</i> Rain | |
| Anthem: <i>Fatshe leno la rona</i> <i>Blessed Be This Noble Land</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Gaborone |
| Official languages | English, Tswana (national) |
| Demonym | Batswana |
| Government | Parliamentary republic |



and birds are found.

Politics and government

The politics of Botswana takes place in a framework of a presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Botswana is both head of state and head of government, and of a pluriform multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the Parliament of Botswana. Since independence the party system has been dominated by the Botswana Democratic Party. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

Defense

At the time of independence Botswana had no armed forces, It was only after attacks from the Rhodesian army that Botswana formed a Botswana Defence Force (BDF) in self-defence in 1977. The president is commander in chief and a defence council is appointed by the president. The BDF now has approximately 12,000 members.

The BDF is a capable and well-disciplined military force. Following positive political changes in South Africa and the region, the BDF's missions have increasingly focused on anti-poaching activities, disaster-preparedness, and foreign peacekeeping. The United States has been the largest single foreign contributor to the development of the BDF, and a large segment of its officer corps has received U.S. training. It is considered an apolitical and professional institution.

Foreign relations

Botswana puts a premium on economic and political integration in Southern Africa. It seeks to make SADC a working vehicle for economic development, and promotes efforts to make the region self-policing in terms of preventative diplomacy, conflict resolution, and good governance. It has welcomed post-apartheid South Africa as a partner in these efforts. Botswana joins the African consensus on most major international matters and is a member of international organisations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations and the African Union (AU). Botswana is also a member of the International Criminal Court with a Bilateral Immunity Agreement of protection for the US-military (as covered under Article 98).

Districts and sub-districts

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Festus Mogae |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Date | September 30, 1966 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 581,726 km ² (41st) 224,606 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 2.5 |
| Population | |
| - 2006 estimate | 1,639,833 (147th) |
| - Density | 3.0/km ² (220th) 7.8/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$18.72 billion (114th) |
| - Per capita | \$14,700 (60th) |
| Gini (1993) | 63 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.654 (medium) (124th) |
| Currency | Pula (BWP) |
| Time zone | CAT (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .bw |
| Calling code | +267 |



Botswana is divided into nine districts:

1. Central
2. Ghanzi
3. Kgalagadi
4. Kgatleng
5. Kweneng
6. North-East
7. North-West
8. South-East
9. Southern

These districts are subdivided into a total twenty-eight subdistricts.

Main population centres (in descending order)

Cities

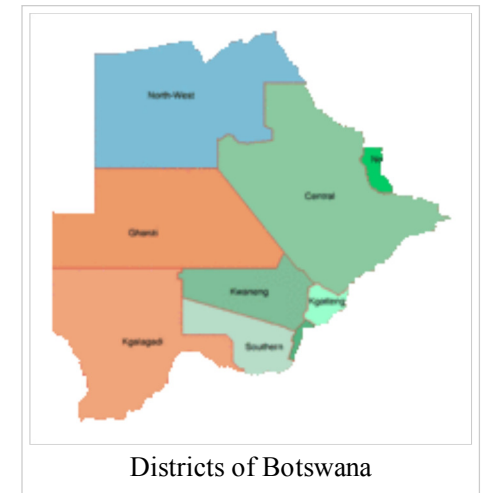
- Gaborone
- Francistown

Towns and villages

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| ■ Molepolole | ■ Serowe | ■ Mochudi | ■ Palapye | ■ Thamaga | ■ Bobonong |
| ■ Selebi-Phikwe | ■ Kanye | ■ Mogoditshane | ■ Tlokweng | ■ Moshupa | ■ Orapa |
| ■ Maun | ■ Mahalapye | ■ Gabane | ■ Ramotswa | ■ Tonota | ■ Jwaneng |
| | | ■ Lobatse | | | |

Economy

Since independence, Botswana has had one of the fastest growth rates in per capita income in the world. Botswana has transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income country with a per capita GDP of \$14,700 in 2007. Economic growth averaged over 9% per year from 1966 to 1999. The government has maintained a sound fiscal policy, despite consecutive budget deficits in 2002 and 2003, and a negligible level of foreign debt. It earned the highest sovereign credit rating in Africa and has stockpiled foreign exchange reserves (over \$7 billion in 2005/2006) amounting to almost two and a half years of current imports. Botswana's impressive economic record has been built on the foundation of wisely using revenue generated from diamond mining to fuel economic development through prudent fiscal policies and a cautious foreign policy. Debswana, the only diamond mining company operating in Botswana, is 50% owned by the government and generates about half of all government revenues. In 2007, significant quantities of Uranium were discovered, and mining is projected to begin by 2010. Several international mining corporations have prospected in



Cattle at a water hole near Serowe.



Botswana for diamonds, gold, uranium, copper, and even oil, many coming back with positive results.

However, economic development spending was cut by 10% in 2002-2003 as a result of recurring budget deficits and rising expenditure on healthcare services. Botswana has been hit very hard by the AIDS epidemic; the average life expectancy in Botswana at birth, 1990: 64 years, 2005: 34 years. This is barely half the 59-year average for low-income countries, and Botswana residents, along with those of Swaziland, have the shortest average lifespan in the world. Approximately one in three Botswana has HIV, giving Botswana the second highest HIV infection rate in the world after Swaziland. The government recognizes that HIV/AIDS will affect the economy and is trying to combat the epidemic, including free Antiretroviral drug treatment and a nation-wide Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission program. Some of Botswana's budget deficits can be traced to relatively high military expenditures (about 4% of GDP in 2004, according to the CIA World Factbook), which some critics contend is unnecessary given the low likelihood of international conflict (though the Botswana government also makes use of these troops for multilateral operations and assistance efforts).

Trade

Botswana is part of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) with South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Namibia. The World Bank reports that in 2001 (the most recent year for which World Bank data are available), the SACU had a weighted average common external tariff rate of 3.6 percent. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, "There are very few tariff or non-tariff barriers to trade with Botswana, apart from restrictions on licensing for some business operations, which are reserved for [Botswana] companies." Based on the revised trade factor methodology, Botswana's trade policy score is unchanged. The main export of Botswana is diamonds. Jwaneng, in Botswana, is the world's largest and richest diamond mine thus the demand of diamonds from Botswana is fairly high. The mine was discovered when termites looking for water brought grains of diamond to the surface. If the great demand of diamonds were to go into rapid decline, then the economy of Botswana would suffer greatly as they are highly dependent on this export. The diamond mine in Jwaneng provides many jobs for the unemployed in Botswana as people are needed to physically extract the diamonds, and to build the roads needed for their transport, for example. A source of foreign exchange is also introduced to the economy and it offers a potential basis for industrial development, and thus stimulates improvements within Botswana's infrastructure.

Private sector development and foreign investment

Botswana seeks to further diversify its economy away from minerals, which account for a third of GDP, down from nearly half of GDP in the early 1990s. Foreign investment and management are welcomed in Botswana. Botswana abolished foreign exchange controls in 1999, has a low corporate tax rate (15%), no prohibitions on foreign ownership of companies, and a moderate inflation rate (7.6% November 2004). The Government of Botswana is currently considering additional policies to enhance competitiveness, including a new Foreign Direct Investment Strategy, Competition Policy, Privatisation Master Plan, and National Export Development Strategy.

With its proven record of good economic governance, Botswana was ranked as Africa's least corrupt country by Transparency International in 2004, ahead of many European and Asian countries. The World Economic Forum rates Botswana as one of the two most economically competitive nations in Africa. In 2004 Botswana was once again assigned "A" grade credit ratings by Moody's and Standard & Poor's. This ranks Botswana as by far the best credit risk in Africa and puts it on par with or above many countries in central Europe, East Asia, and Latin America.



U.S. investment in Botswana remains at relatively low levels, but continues to grow. Major U.S. corporations, such as H.J. Heinz and AON Corporation, are present through direct investments, while others, such as Kentucky Fried Chicken and Remax, are present via franchise. The sovereign credit ratings by Moody's and Standard & Poor's clearly indicate that, despite continued challenges such as small market size, landlocked location, and cumbersome bureaucratic processes, Botswana remains one of the best investment opportunities in the developing world. Botswana has a 90-member American Business Council that accepts membership from American-affiliated companies.

Due to its history and geography, Botswana has long had deep ties to the economy of South Africa. The Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), comprising Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and South Africa, dates from 1910, and is the world's oldest customs union. Namibia joined in 1990. Under this arrangement, South Africa has collected levies from customs, sales, and excise duties for all five members, sharing out proceeds based on each country's portion of imports. The exact formula for sharing revenues and the decision-making authority over duties — held exclusively by the Government of South Africa — became increasingly controversial, and the members renegotiated the arrangement in 2001. The new structure has now been formally ratified and a SACU Secretariat has been established in Windhoek, Namibia. Following South Africa's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Botswana also joined; many of the SACU duties are thus declining, making products from outside the area more competitive in Botswana. Currently the SACU countries and the U.S. are negotiating a free trade agreement. Botswana is currently also negotiating a free trade agreement with Mercosur and an Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union as part of SADC.

Botswana's currency, the pula, is fully convertible and is valued against a basket of currencies heavily weighted toward the South African Rand. Profits and direct investment can be repatriated without restriction from Botswana. The Botswana Government eliminated all exchange controls in 1999. The Central Bank devalued the Pula by 7.5% in February 2004 in a bid to maintain export competitiveness against the real appreciation of the Pula. There was a further 12% devaluation in May 2005 and the policy of a "crawling peg" was adopted.

Most (70%) of Botswana's electricity is imported from South Africa's Eskom. 80% of domestic production is concentrated in one plant, Morupule Power Station near Palapye.

Gaborone is host to the headquarters of the fourteen-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC), a successor to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC, established in 1980), which focused its efforts on freeing regional economic development from dependence on apartheid South Africa. SADC embraced the newly democratic South Africa as a member in 1994 and has a broad mandate to encourage growth, development, and economic integration in Southern Africa. SADC's Trade Protocol, which was launched on September 1, 2000, calls for the elimination of all tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade by 2008 among the 11 signatory countries. If successful, it will give Botswana companies free access to the far larger regional market. SADC's failure to distance itself from the Mugabe government in Zimbabwe has diminished the number of opportunities for cooperation between the U.S. and SADC.

Botswana is in the process of formulating an Action Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, which is expected to be adopted in the period 2006-2007.



Aerial view over Okavango Delta



Tourism

Tourism plays a large role in the Botswana economy. A number of national parks and game reserves, with their abundant wildlife and wetlands, are a top draw for tourists. The wildlife, including lions, brown hyenas, cheetahs, leopards, wild dogs and antelope, were described in great detail in the best-selling book "Cry of the Kalahari" by Mark and Delia Owens.

The main safari destinations for tourism are Moremi Game Reserve in the Okavango Delta, and Chobe National Park. Botswana is also participating in community based natural resource management projects by trying to involve villagers in tourism. One example is the village of Khwai and its Khwai Development Trust.

Botswana was the location for the 1980 movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. The country is also the location for the fictional The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency stories.

Sports

The most popular sport in Botswana is football, while other popular sports include softball, volleyball and athletics. Botswana is an associate member of International Cricket Council.

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Children playing in Moremi Gorge east of Palapye.



Burkina Faso

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Burkina Faso. For more information see SOS Children in Burkina Faso, Africa

Burkina Faso (pronounced /bə.kiːnəˈfɑːsoʊ/ *burr-KEE-na FAH-soh*), also known by its short-form name **Burkina**, is a landlocked nation in West Africa. It is surrounded by six countries: Mali to the north, Niger to the east, Benin to the south east, Togo and Ghana to the south, and Côte d'Ivoire to the south west. Formerly called the **Republic of Upper Volta**, it was renamed on August 4, 1984, by President Thomas Sankara to mean "the land of upright people" in Moré and Dioula, the major native languages of the country. Literally, "Burkina" may be translated, "men of integrity," from the Moré language, and "Faso" means "father's house" in Dioula.


Independence from France came in 1960. Governmental instability during the 1970s and 1980s was followed by multiparty elections in the early 1990s. Several hundred thousand farm workers migrate south every year to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in search of paid labour. The inhabitants of Burkina Faso are known as *Burkinabé* (pronounced /bə.kiːnəbeɪ/ *burr-KEE-na-bay*).

History

Early history

Typical of West Africa, Burkina Faso was populated early, notably by hunter-gatherers in the northwestern part of the country (12,000 to 5000 BC), and whose tools (scrapers, chisels and arrowheads) were discovered in 1973. Settlements appeared between 3600 and 2600 BC with farmers, the traces of whose structures leave the impression of relatively permanent buildings. The use of iron, ceramics and polished stone developed between 1500 and 1000 BC, as well as a preoccupation with spiritual matters, as shown by the burial remains which have been discovered.

Relics of the Dogon are found in the centre-north, north and north-west region. They left the area between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries BC to settle in the cliffs of Bandiagara. Elsewhere, the remains of high walls are localised in the southwest of Burkina Faso (as well as in the Côte d'Ivoire), but

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Burkina Faso | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>Unité, Progrès, Justice</i> " (French) "Unity, Progress, Justice" | |
| Anthem: <i>Une Seule Nuit</i> (French) <i>One Single Night</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Ouagadougou |
| Official languages | French |
| Demonym | Burkinabé |



the people who built them have not yet been definitely identified.

Burkina Faso was a very important economic region for the Songhai Empire during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

From colony to independence



Traditional huts in south-east Burkina Faso.

After a decade of intense rivalry and competition between the British and the French, waged through treaty making expeditions under military or civilian explorers, in 1896, the Mossi kingdom of Ouagadougou was defeated by French colonial forces and became a French protectorate. The western region, where a standoff against the forces of the powerful ruler Samori Ture complicated the situation, and the eastern region came under French occupation in 1897 following different campaigns. By 1898, the majority of the territory corresponding to Burkina Faso today was nominally conquered, although control of many parts remained precarious. The French and

British convention of June 14, 1898 ended the scramble between the two colonial powers and basically traced the borders between them. On the French side a war of conquest against local communities and political powers continued for about five years. In the 1904 large-scale reorganization of the French West African colonial empire, the now largely pacified territories of the Volta basin were integrated into the Upper Senegal and Niger (Haut-Sénégal et Niger) colony of French West Africa (AOF). The colony had its capital in Bamako.

Draftees from the territory participated in the European fronts of First World War in the battalions of the Senegalese Infantry (Tirailleurs sénégalais). Between 1915 and 1916 the districts in the western part of what is now Burkina Faso and the bordering eastern fringe of Mali became the stage of one of the most important armed oppositions to colonial government (known as the Volta-Bani War). The French government finally suppressed the movement, but only after suffering defeats and being forced to gather the largest expeditionary force of its colonial history up to then. Armed opposition also wrecked the Sahelian north, as the Tuareg and allied groups of the Dori region ended their truce with the government. Once the First World War was over, on March 1, 1919, fear of recurrence of armed uprising and economic considerations led the colonial government to separate the present territory of Burkina Faso from Haut Sénégal et Niger so as to intensify its administration. The new colony was named Upper Volta (*Haute Volta*) and François Charles Alexis Édouard Hesling became its first governor. Hesling initiated an ambitious road making program and promoted cotton growing for export. The cotton policy, based on coercion, failed and revenue stagnated. The colony

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Semi-presidential republic |
| - President | Blaise Compaoré |
| - Prime Minister | Tertius Zongo |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | August 5, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 274,000 km ² (74th) 105,792 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.1% |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 13,228,000 (66th) |
| - 1996 census | 10,312,669 |
| - Density | 48/km ² (145th) 124/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$16.845 billion ¹ (117th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,284 (163rd) |
| Gini (2003) | 39.5 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.370 (low) (176th) |
| Currency | West African CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | GMT |
| Internet TLD | .bf |
| Calling code | +226 |
| <small>¹ The data here is an estimation for the year 2005 produced by the International Monetary Fund in April 2005.</small> | |



was dismantled on September 5, 1932, and its territory divided between Côte d'Ivoire, French Sudan and Niger, the largest share with most of the population and the cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso passing to Côte d'Ivoire.

The decision was reversed during the intense anti-colonial agitation that followed the end of the Second World War and on September 4, 1947 Upper Volta was recreated in its 1932 boundaries under the French Union. On December 11, 1958, it achieved self-government, and became the Republic of Upper Volta and member of the Franco-African Community (*La Communauté Franco-Africaine*). Full independence was attained in 1960. The country's first military coup occurred in 1966; which returned civilian rule in 1978. There was another coup, led by Saye Zerbo in 1980, which in turn was overthrown in 1982. A counter-coup was launched in 1983, which brought the charismatic Captain Thomas Sankara to leadership. In 1984 the revolutionary government changed the name of the country to Burkina Faso, its flag, and its national anthem. The current president is Blaise Compaoré, who came to power in 1987 after a coup d'état that killed Thomas Sankara.

Politics

The constitution of June 2, 1991 established a semi-presidential government with a parliament (Assemblée) which can be dissolved by the President of the Republic, who is elected for a term of seven years. In 2000, however, there was a constitutional amendment reducing the presidential term from seven to five years, which was enforced during the 2005 elections. Another change according to the amendment would have prevented sitting President, Blaise Compaoré from being re-elected. However, notwithstanding a challenge by other presidential candidates, in October 2005 the constitutional council ruled that because Compaoré was already a sitting president in 2000, the amendment would not apply to him until the end of his second term in office. This cleared the way for his candidacy in the 2005 election. On November 13, Compaoré was reelected in a landslide due to a divided political opposition.

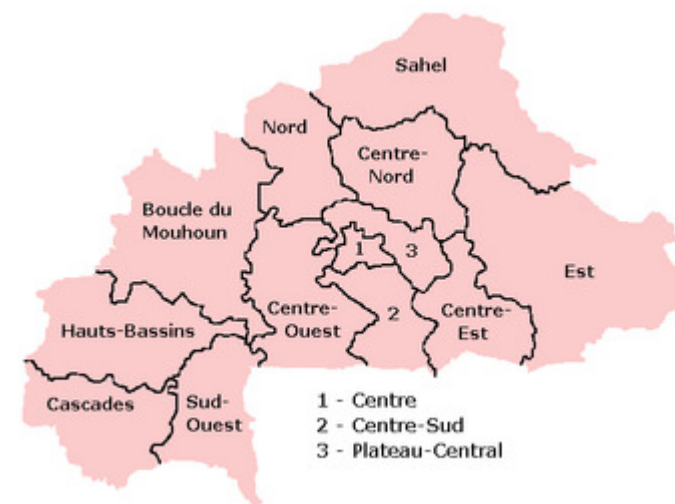
The parliament consists of two chambers: the lower house (l'Assemblée Nationale) and the upper house (la Chambre des Représentants). There is also a constitutional chamber, composed of ten members, and an economic and social council whose roles are purely consultative.

Regions, provinces, and departements

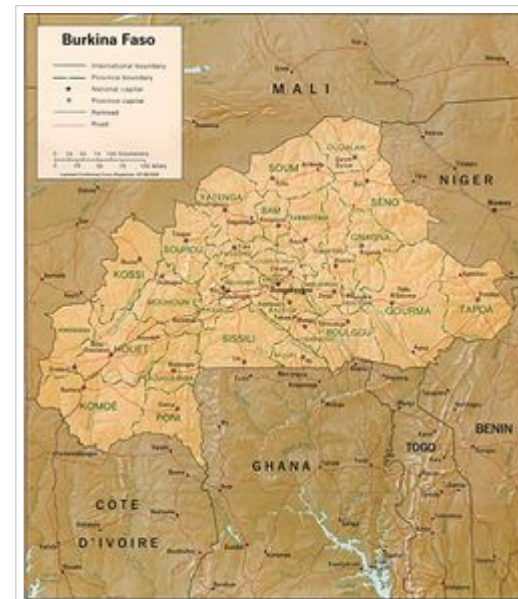


Burkina Faso is divided into thirteen regions, forty-five provinces, and 301 departements. The regions are:

- Boucle du Mouhoun
- Cascades
- Centre
- Centre-Est
- Centre-Nord
- Centre-Ouest
- Centre-Sud
- Est
- Hauts-Bassins
- Nord
- Plateau-Central
- Sahel
- Sud-Ouest



Geography



Map of Burkina Faso



Satellite image of Burkina Faso, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Burkina Faso is made up of two major types of countryside:

- The larger part of the country is covered by a peneplain which forms a gently undulating landscape with, in some areas, a few isolated hills, the last vestiges of a Precambrian massif.
- The south-west of the country forms a sandstone massif, where the highest peak is found: Ténakourou (749 m, 2,450 ft). The massif is bordered by sheer cliffs up to 150 metres (490 ft) high.

The average altitude is 400 metres (1,300 ft) and the difference between the highest and lowest terrain is no greater than 600 metres (2,000 ft). Burkina Faso is therefore a relatively flat country, with a very few localised exceptions.



Tolotama reforestation,
Burkina Faso.

Hydrography

The country owed its former name of Upper Volta to three rivers which cross it: the Mouhoun (formerly called the Black Volta), the Nakambé (the White Volta) and the Nazinon (the Red Volta). The Mouhoun, along with the Comoé which flows to the south west, is the country's only river which flows year-round

The basin of the Niger River also drains 27% of the country's surface. Its tributaries (the Béli, the Gorouol, the Goudébo and the Dargol) are seasonal streams, and only flow for 4 to 6 months a year but can cause large floods.

The country also contains numerous lakes. The principal lakes are Tingrela, Bam and Dem, and the large ponds of Oursi, Béli, Yomboli and Markoye.

Water shortages are often a problem, especially in the north of the country.

Climate

Burkina Faso has a primarily tropical climate with two very distinct seasons: the rainy season with between 24-35 inches (600 and 900 mm) of rainfall, and the dry season during which the harmattan, a hot dry wind from the Sahara, blows. The rainy season lasts approximately 4 months, May/June to September, and is shorter in the north of the country.

Three large climatic zones can be defined:

Sahel Zone

The Sahel in the north typically receives less than 24 inches (600 mm) rainfall a year and high temperatures 5–47 ° C (40–115 ° F). A relatively dry tropical savanna, the Sahel extends beyond the borders of Burkina Faso, from the Horn of Africa to the Atlantic Ocean, and borders the Sahara to its north, and the fertile region of the Sudan to the South. Extreme temperatures recorded are 5.5C and 47.0C.



Sudan-Sahel zone

Situated between 11°3' and 13°5' north latitude, the Sudan-Sahel region is a transitional zone with regards to rainfall and temperature.

Sudan-Guinea zone

Further to the south, the Sudan-Guinea zone receives more than 35 inches (900 mm) of rain a year and cooler average temperatures.

Economy



Tarfila Farming Group

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest GDP per capita incomes in the world: \$1,200. This ranks it as the 127th poorest nation. Agriculture represents 32% of its gross domestic product and occupies 80% of the working population. It consists mostly of livestock but also, especially in the south and southwest, of growing sorghum, pearl millet, maize (corn), peanuts, rice and cotton.

Unemployment causes a high rate of emigration: for example, three million citizens of Burkina Faso live in Côte d'Ivoire. According to the Central Bank of Western African States (Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest), these migrants send tens of billions of Euros back to Burkina Faso each year. Since the 1967 expulsions from Ghana, this situation has provoked tensions in the recipient countries. The most recent crisis occurred owing to

the events of 2003 in Côte d'Ivoire, which led to the return of 300,000 migrants.

A large part of the economic activity of the country is funded by international aid.

The currency of Burkina Faso is the CFA franc.

There is mineral exploitation of copper, iron, manganese and, above all, gold.

Burkina Faso also hosts the **International Art and Craft Fair, Ouagadougou**, better known by its French name as SIAO, *Le Salon International de l'Artisanat de Ouagadougou*, one of the most important African handicraft fairs.



Shop in Burkina Faso.



Vendors in Burkina Faso.

Demographics



Burkina Faso has an estimated life expectancy at birth of slightly under 50 years of age. The median age of its inhabitants is under 17.

Population growth rate: 3.00% (2006)

The population is concentrated in the south and centre of the country, sometimes exceeding 48 per square kilometer (125/sq. mi.). This high population density, causes annual migrations of hundreds of thousands, for seasonal employment.

Approximately 50% of the population is Muslim; Christians account for about 30%, and followers of traditional African religions (typically animism of various forms) make up about 20%. Many Christians incorporate elements of animism into their religious practices.

Education

Education in Burkina Faso is divided into primary, secondary, and higher education. However, schooling is not free. Secondary school costs approximately \$115 (50,000CFA) a year, which is far above the means of most Burkinabe families. Boys receive preference in schooling; as such, girls' education and literacy rates are far lower. An increase in girls' schooling has been observed due to the government's policy of making school cheaper for girls and granting them more scholarships. In order to proceed from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, or high school to college, national exams must be passed. Institutions of higher education include the University of Ouagadougou, and The Polytechnical University in Bobo-Dioulasso, the University of Koudougou, which is also a teacher training institution. A number of private colleges for specific trainings have recently appeared in the capital city Ouagadougou but are affordable to a very small portion of the population.

There is also an International School of Ouagadougou (ISO), which is an American-based private school located in the capital city, Ouagadougou.

The United Nations Development Program Report used to place Burkina Faso as the most illiterate country in the world, with only 12.8% in 1990. However, with the consistent effort of the government in making schooling more accessible and affordable, the literacy rate has doubled and is now at 25.3% of the population.

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United Nations Square in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso



Sala Well



Burundi

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Burundi. For more information see SOS Children in Burundi, Africa

Burundi (pronounced [buˈrundi]), officially the **Republic of Burundi**, is a small country in the Great Lakes region of Africa. It is bordered by Rwanda on the north, Tanzania on the south and east, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the west. Although the country is landlocked, much of its western border is adjacent to Lake Tanganyika. The country's modern name is derived from its Bantu language, Kirundi.

Geographically isolated, facing population pressures and having sparse resources, Burundi has the lowest GDP per capita in the world, arguably making it the poorest country on the planet. One scientific study of 178 nations rated Burundi's population as having the lowest satisfaction with life of all.

History




The earliest inhabitants of the area were the pygmoid Twa. Followed by the Hutu who then co-habited in harmony for numerous years. The Tutsi were the last inhabitants of Burundi, yet they took over by a military regime and forced their monarchy unto the Hutus and Twas. The Tutsi set up a social pyramid where the Hutus and Twas were consistently oppressed.

Burundi existed as an independent kingdom from the sixteenth century. In 1903, it became a German colony and passed to Belgium in World War I. It was part of the Belgian League of Nations mandate of Ruanda-Urundi in 1923, later a United Nations Trust Territory under Belgian administrative authority following World War II.

The origins of Burundi monarchy are veiled in myth. According to some legends, Ntare Rushatsi, founder of the original dynasty, came to Burundi from Rwanda in seventeenth century; other, more reliable sources, suggest that Ntare came from Buha, in the south-east, and laid the foundation for his kingdom in the Nkoma region.

Until the downfall of the monarchy in 1966, kingship remained one of the last links that bound Burundi

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 47 of 586

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Republika y'u Burundi</i> <i>République du Burundi</i> Republic of Burundi</p> | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: <i>Ubumwe, Ibikorwa, Iterambere</i>" (Kirundi) <i>Unité, Travail, Progrès</i>" (French) "Unity, Work, Progress"¹</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Burundi bwacu</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Bujumbura |



with its past. Only Tutsis were recognized as equal humans and could be Kings. The Hutus and Twas were oppressed servants at the Tutsi dictatorship.

From independence in 1962, until the elections of 1993, Burundi was controlled by a series of Tutsi military dictators. These years saw extensive ethnic violence perpetrated by Tutsis militia in power against innocent civilians, mainly Hutu . In 1972, 1988, and 1993, the Hutu were victims of genocides at the hands of Tutsi extremists who maintained all the political and economic power in the country. In 1972, 500,000 Hutus were killed by Tutsi extremists. In 1993 Burundi held its first democratic presidential elections which were won by the Hutu-dominated Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU). FRODEBU leader Melchior Ndadaye became Burundi's first elected President and also Hutu President. But a few months later he was assassinated by a group of Tutsi army officers. The killing was a pretense for the Tutsi army to start a new genocide against the Hutu. Tutsi extremists massacred thousands of Hutu civilians. Years of instability followed , and unelected dictator Pierre Buyoya took power in a coup. In August 2000, a peace deal was agreed by most of Burundi's political groups. Unfortunately, it made no distinction between political parties and genocidal forces, as both were allowed to play a role in the national institutions. The deal laid out a timetable for the restoration of democracy. After several more years of genocide against the Hutu, a cease-fire was signed in 2003 between the government and the largest Hutu rebel group, CNDD-FDD. In April of that year, FRODEBU leader Domitien Ndayizeye had replaced Buyoya as President.

As of today, the Tutsi, consisting of only 14% of the population, still control a majority of the elite business positions in Burundi. The majority of Bank Managers and University Presidents are still Tutsi. The current President, H.E. Nkurunziza, has forgiven the Tutsis for the genocides they perpetrated against the Hutu.

Politics

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Official languages | Kirundi, French |
| Demonym | Burundian |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Pierre Nkurunziza |
| Independence | from Belgium |
| - Date | July 1, 1962 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 27,830 km ² (145th) 10,745 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 7.8% |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 7,548,000 (94th) |
| - 1978 census | 3,589,434 |
| - Density | 271/km ² (43rd) 533.8/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2003 estimate |
| - Total | \$4.517 billion ² (142nd) |
| - Per capita | \$739 (163rd) |
| GDP (nominal) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$799 million (162nd) |
| - Per capita | \$90 (182nd) |
| Gini (1998) | 42.4 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.413 (low) (167th) |
| Currency | Burundi franc (FBu) (BIF) |
| Time zone | CAT (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+2) |



The politics of Burundi take place in a framework of a transitional presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Burundi is both head of state and head of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of parliament, the Senate and the National Assembly. The President has officially called a cease-fire between the two warring parties in the civil war.

Decades of ethnic violence makes the achievement of political and social harmony difficult, as is evident in the reports of seminars of ministers of religion and teachers on the prospects for a 'nonkilling society'

Provinces, communes, and collines

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Internet TLD | .bi |
| Calling code | +257 |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Before 1966, "Ganza Sabwa". 2 Estimate is based on regression; other PPP figures are extrapolated from the latest International Comparison Programme benchmark estimates. | |



Pierre Nkurunziza, president of Burundi.



Burundi is divided into 17 provinces, 117 communes, and 2,638 collines.

The provinces are:

- Bubanza
- Bujumbura Mairie
- Bujumbura Rural
- Bururi
- Cankuzo
- Cibitoke
- Gitega
- Karuzi
- Kayanza
- Kirundo
- Makamba
- Muramvya
- Muyinga
- Mwaro
- Ngozi
- Rutana
- Ruyigi

Geography





Map of Burundi



NASA photo of the Bujumbura region.



Satellite image of Burundi and the surrounding region.



Burundi is a landlocked country with an equatorial climate. Called "*The heart of Africa*" it lies on a rolling plateau, with Lake Tanganyika in its south west corner. The average elevation of the central plateau is 5,600 feet (1,700 m), with lower elevations at the borders. The highest peak, Mount Karonje, at 9,055 feet (2,760 m), lies to the southeast of the capital, Bujumbura. The southeastern and southern borders are at roughly 4,500 feet (1,370 m). A strip of land along the Ruzizi River, north of Lake Tanganyika, is the only area below 3,000 feet (915 m): this area forms part of the Albertine Rift, the western extension of the Great Rift Valley.

The land is mostly agricultural or pasture, the creation of which has led to deforestation, soil erosion and habitat loss. Deforestation of the entire country is almost complete due to overpopulation, with a mere 230 square miles (600 km²) remaining and an ongoing loss of about nine percent per annum. There are two national parks, Kibira National Park to the northwest (a small region of montane rainforest, adjacent to Nyungwe Forest National Park in Rwanda), Rurubu National Park to the north east (along the Rurubu River, also known as Ruvubu or Ruvuvu).

The farthest headstream of the Nile is in Burundi. Although Lake Victoria is commonly considered to be the source of the Nile, the Kagera River flows for 429 miles (690 km) before reaching Lake Victoria. The source of the Ruvyironza River, an upper branch of the Kagera River, is at Mount Kikizi in Burundi.

Economy

Burundi's largest industry is agriculture, which accounted for 58% of GDP in 1997. Coffee is the nation's biggest revenue earner with 78% of all exported goods. Other agriculture products include cotton, tea, maize, sorghum, sweet potatoes, bananas (of which Burundi is one of the world's ten largest producers), manioc (tapioca); beef, milk, and hides. Besides agriculture, other industries include light consumer goods such as blankets, shoes, soap; assembly of imported components; public works construction; food processing. The currency is the Burundian franc (BIF).

Burundi is the poorest country in the world, in terms of GDP per capita: US\$90 as of 2007. The economy is supported by foreign aid from Western Europe and other parts of the world. In 2000 this amount reached US\$92.7 million. 68% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2002. The country's estimated gross domestic product (GDP) was US\$700 million in 2001. According to the World Food Programme, the majority of children aged under 5 (56.8%) suffer from chronic malnutrition.

Demographics

As of July 2006, Burundi was projected to have an estimated population of 8,090,068, approximately half of whom are aged 14 or less. This estimate explicitly takes into account the effects of AIDS, which has a significant effect on the demographics of the country. Roughly 85% of the population are of Hutu ethnic origin; most of the remaining population are Tutsi, with a minority of Twa (Pygmy), and a few thousand Europeans and South Asians. The population density of around 315 people per square kilometre (753/sq mi) is the second highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, behind only Rwanda. The Twa are thought to be the original



Satellite image of Burundi, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



inhabitants of the area, with Hutu and then Tutsi settlers arriving in the 1300s and 1400s respectively.

The largest religion is Roman Catholicism (62%), followed by indigenous beliefs (23%) and a minority of Protestants (5%) and Muslims (10%). However, The Anglican Church of Burundi claims over 10% of the population as members and recent reports indicate the Christian population may be as high as 90% with most of the remainder being Muslim. . Care should therefore be taken with these statistics.

The official languages are Kirundi and French, although Swahili is spoken along the eastern border.

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Cameroon

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

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The **Republic of Cameroon** is a unitary republic of central and western Africa. It borders Nigeria to the west; Chad to the northeast; the Central African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the south. Cameroon's coastline lies on the Bight of Bonny, part of the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. The country is called "Africa in miniature" for its geological and cultural diversity. Natural features include beaches, deserts, mountains, rainforests, and savannas. The highest point is Mount Cameroon in the southwest, and the largest cities are Douala, Yaoundé, and Garoua. Cameroon is home to over 200 different ethnic and linguistic groups. The country is well known for its native styles of music, particularly makossa and bikutsi, and for its successful national football team. English and French are the official languages.

Early inhabitants of the territory included the Sao civilisation around Lake Chad and the Baka hunter-gatherers in the southeastern rainforest. Portuguese explorers reached the coast in the 15th century and named the area *Rio dos Camarões* ("River of Prawns"), the name from which *Cameroon* derives. Fulani soldiers founded the Adamawa Emirate in the north in the 19th century, and various ethnic groups of the west and northwest established powerful chiefdoms and fondoms. Cameroon became a German colony in 1884. After World War I, the territory was divided between France and Britain as League of Nations mandates. The Union des Populations du Cameroun political party advocated independence but was outlawed in the 1950s. It waged war on French and Cameroonian forces until 1971. In 1960, French Cameroun became independent as the Republic of Cameroun under President Ahmadou Ahidjo. The southern part of British Cameroons merged with it in 1961 to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The country was renamed the United Republic of Cameroon in 1972 and the Republic of Cameroon in 1984.

Compared with other African countries, Cameroon enjoys political and social stability. This has permitted the development of agriculture, roads, railways, and large petroleum and timber industries. Nevertheless, large numbers of Cameroonians live in poverty as subsistence farmers. Power lies firmly in the hands of the president, Paul Biya, and his Cameroon People's Democratic Movement party, and corruption is widespread. The Anglophone community has grown increasingly alienated from the

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République du Cameroun</i> Republic of Cameroon | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Emblem |
| Motto: " <i>Paix - Travail - Patrie</i> " (French) "Peace - Work - Fatherland" | |
| Anthem: <i>Ô Cameroun, Berceau de nos Ancêtres</i> (French) <i>O Cameroon, Cradle of our Forefathers</i> ¹ | |
|  | |
| Capital | Yaoundé |
| Largest city | Douala |



government, and Anglophone politicians have called for greater decentralisation and even the secession of the former British-governed territories.

History



Joseph Merrick (shown here attending an Isubu funeral in 1845) was a Jamaican Baptist missionary who established a church among the Isubu of the coast.

The territory of present day Cameroon was first settled during the Neolithic. The longest continuous inhabitants are the Pygmy groups such as the Baka. The Sao culture arose around Lake Chad c. AD 500 and gave way to the Kanem and its successor state, the Bornu empire. Kingdoms, fondoms, and chiefdoms arose in the west.

Portuguese sailors reached the coast in 1472. They noted an abundance of prawns and crayfish in the Wouri River and named it *Rio dos Camarões*, Portuguese for "River of Prawns", and the phrase from which *Cameroon* is derived. Over the following few centuries, European interests regularised trade with the coastal peoples, and Christian missionaries pushed inland. In the early 19th century, Modibo Adama led Fulani soldiers on a jihad in the north against non-Muslim and partially Muslim peoples and established the

Adamawa Emirate. Settled peoples who fled the Fulani caused a major redistribution of population.

The German Empire claimed the territory as the colony of Kamerun in 1884 and began a steady push inland. They initiated projects to improve the colony's infrastructure, relying on a harsh system of forced labour. With the defeat of Germany in World War I, Kamerun became a League of Nations mandate territory and was split into French Cameroun and British Cameroons in 1919. The French carefully integrated the economy of Cameroun with that of France and improved the infrastructure with capital investments, skilled workers, and continued forced labour. The British administered their territory from neighbouring Nigeria. Natives complained that this made them a neglected "colony of a colony". Nigerian migrant workers flocked to Southern Cameroons, ending forced labour but angering indigenous peoples. The League of Nations mandates were converted into United Nations Trusteeships in 1946, and the question of independence became a pressing issue in French Cameroun. France outlawed the most radical political party, the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC), on 13 July 1955. This prompted a long guerrilla war and the assassination of the party's leader, Ruben Um Nyobé. In British Cameroons, the question was whether to reunify with French Cameroun or join Nigeria.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Official languages | French, English |
| Demonym | Cameroonian |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Paul Biya |
| - Prime Minister | Ephraïm Inoni |
| Independence | from France and the UK |
| - Date | 1 January 1960, 1 October 1961 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 475,442 km ² (53rd) 183,568 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.3 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 17,795,000 (58th) |
| - 2003 census | 15,746,179 |
| - Density | 37/km ² (167th) 97/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$43.196 billion (84th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,421 (130th) |
| Gini (2001) | 44.6 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.532 (medium) (144th) |
| Currency | Central African CFA franc (XAF) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .cm |



On 1 January 1960, French Cameroon gained independence from France under President Ahmadou Ahidjo, and on 1 October 1961, the formerly-British Southern Cameroons united with its neighbour to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Ahidjo used the ongoing war with the UPC and fears of ethnic conflict to concentrate power in the presidency, continuing with this even after the suppression of the UPC in 1971. His political party, the Cameroon National Union (CNU), became the sole legal political party on 1 September 1966 and in 1972, the federal system of government was abolished in favour of a United Republic of Cameroon, headed from Yaoundé. Ahidjo pursued an economic policy of planned liberalism, prioritising cash crops and petroleum exploitation. The government used oil money to create a national cash reserve, pay farmers, and finance major development projects; however, many initiatives failed when Ahidjo appointed unqualified allies to direct them.

Ahidjo stepped down on 4 November 1982 and left power to his constitutional successor, Paul Biya. However, Ahidjo remained in control of the CNU and tried to run the country from behind the scenes until Biya and his allies pressured him into resigning. Biya began his administration by moving toward a more democratic government, but a failed coup d'état nudged him toward the leadership style of his predecessor. An economic crisis took effect in the mid-1980s to late 1990s as a result of international economic conditions, drought, falling petroleum prices, and years of corruption, mismanagement, and cronyism. Cameroon turned to foreign aid, cut government spending, and privatised industries. With the reintroduction of multi-party politics in December 1990, Anglophone pressure groups called for greater autonomy, with some advocating complete secession as the Republic of Ambazonia. In February 2008, Cameroon experienced its worse violence in 15 years when a transport union strike in Douala escalated into violent protests in 31 municipal areas.

Politics and government



President Paul Biya of Cameroon and Ambassador R. Niels Marquardt of the United States, 16 February 2006.

The President of Cameroon has broad, unilateral powers to create policy, administer government agencies, command the armed forces, negotiate and ratify treaties, and declare a state of emergency. The president appoints government officials at all levels, from the prime minister (considered the official head of government), to the provincial governors, divisional officers, and urban-council members in large cities. The president is selected by popular vote every seven years. In smaller municipalities, the public elects mayors and councilors. Corruption is rife at all levels of government. In 1997, Cameroon established anti-corruption bureaus in 29 ministries, but only 25% became operational, and in 2007, Transparency International placed Cameroon at number 138 on a list of 163 countries ranked from least to most corrupt. On 18 January 2006, Biya initiated an anti-corruption drive under the direction of the National Anti-Corruption Observatory.

Calling code

+237

- These are the titles as given in the *Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon*, Article X. The French version of the song is sometimes called "*Chant de Ralliement*", as in *National Anthems of the World*, and the English version "O Cameroon, Cradle of Our Forefathers", as in DeLancey and DeLancey 61.



Ahmadou Ahidjo arrives at Washington, D.C., in July 1982.



Cameroon's legal system is largely based on French civil law with common law influences. Although nominally independent, the judiciary falls under the authority of the executive's Ministry of Justice. The president appoints judges at all levels. The judiciary is officially divided into tribunals, the court of appeal, and the supreme court. The National Assembly elects the members of a nine-member High Court of Justice that judges high-ranking members of government in the event they are charged with high treason or harming national security.

Human rights organisations accuse police and military forces of mistreating and even torturing criminal suspects, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, and political activists. Prisons are overcrowded with little access to adequate food and medical facilities, and prisons run by traditional rulers in the north are charged with holding political opponents at the behest of the government. However, since the early 2000s, an increasing number of police and gendarmes have been prosecuted for improper conduct.

The National Assembly makes legislation. The body consists of 180 members who are elected for five-year terms and meet three times per year. Laws are passed on a majority vote. Rarely has the assembly changed or blocked legislation proposed by the president. The 1996 constitution establishes a second house of parliament, the 100-seat Senate, but this body has never been put into practice. The government recognises the authority of traditional chiefs, fons, and lamibe to govern at the local level and to resolve disputes as long as such rulings do not conflict with national law.

President Paul Biya's Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) was the only legal political party until December 1990. Numerous ethnic and regional political groups have since formed. The primary opposition is the Social Democratic Front (SDF), based largely in the Anglophone region of the country and headed by John Fru Ndi. Biya and his party have maintained control of the presidency and the National Assembly in national elections, but rivals contend that these have been unfair. Human rights organisations allege that the government suppresses the freedoms of opposition groups by preventing demonstrations, disrupting meetings, and arresting opposition leaders and journalists. Freedom House ranks Cameroon as "not free" in terms of political rights and civil liberties. The last parliamentary elections were held on 22 July 2007.

Cameroon is a member of both the Commonwealth of Nations and La Francophonie. Its foreign policy closely follows that of its main ally, France. The country relies heavily on France for its defence, although military spending is high in comparison to other sectors of government. Biya has clashed with the government of Nigeria over possession of the Bakassi peninsula and with Gabon's president, El Hadj Omar Bongo, over personal rivalries. Nevertheless, civil war presents a more credible threat to national security, as tensions between Christians and Muslims and between Anglophones and Francophones remain high.

Education and health



A statue of a chief in Bana, West Province, shows the prestige afforded such rulers. The Cameroonian government recognises the power of traditional authorities provided their rulings do not contradict national law.



Most children have access to free, state-run schools or subsidised, private and religious facilities. The educational system is a mixture of British and French precedents with most instruction in English or French. Cameroon has one of the highest school attendance rates in Africa. Girls attend school less regularly than boys do because of cultural attitudes, domestic duties, early marriage and pregnancy, and sexual harassment. Although attendance rates are higher in the south, a disproportionate number of teachers are stationed there, leaving northern schools chronically understaffed.

Six state-run universities serve Cameroon's student population. More than 60,000 students were enrolled for the 1998–1999 school year. A council of deans, school directors, and representatives of state ministries governs the schools under the leadership of a vice-chancellor. State funding for universities is low, and student registrations nominally make up 25% of the higher education budget. However, students have fought these fees since their introduction in 1993. Universities have resisted the urge to increase the selectiveness of admissions in an effort to increase revenue from student fees, and the student populations have increased well beyond the 5,000 they were built to educate. Likewise, cuts in faculty salaries in 1993 have made it difficult to find and keep qualified staff.

Since 1990, private institutions have sprung up in five provinces. These schools charge fees that are five to ten times those levied by state schools. Nevertheless, they offer short professional-training programmes in areas such as accounting, management, journalism, and Internet technologies, so they are popular with students. Many of these schools fall short of government minimum standards of infrastructure and faculty and must operate unlicensed.

The quality of health care is generally low. Outside the major cities, facilities are often dirty and poorly equipped. Endemic diseases include dengue fever, filariasis, leishmaniasis, malaria, meningitis, schistosomiasis, and sleeping sickness. The HIV/AIDS seroprevalence rate is estimated at 5.4% for those aged 15–49, although a strong stigma against the illness keeps the number of reported cases artificially low. Traditional healers remain a popular alternative to Western medicine.

Provinces and divisions



A traditional doctor advertises his services in Tatum, Northwest Province. Such healers are popular alternatives to conventionally trained doctors.



The constitution divides Cameroon into 10 semi-autonomous regions, each under the administration of an elected Regional Council. In practice, Cameroon still follows the system that was in place prior to the adoption of a new constitution in 1996. The country is divided into 10 provinces, each headed by a presidentially appointed governor. These leaders are charged with implementing the will of the president, reporting on the general mood and conditions of the provinces, administering the civil service, keeping the peace, and overseeing the heads of the smaller administrative units. Governors have broad powers: they may order propaganda in their area and call in the army, gendarmes, and police. The provinces are subdivided into 58 divisions (French *départements*). These are headed by presidentially appointed divisional officers (*prefets*), who perform the governors' duties on a smaller scale. The divisions are further sub-divided into sub-divisions (*arrondissements*), headed by assistant divisional officers (*sous-prefets*). The districts, administered by district heads (*chefs de district*), are the smallest administrative units. These are found in large sub-divisions and in regions that are difficult to reach.

The three northernmost provinces are the Far North (*Extrême Nord*), North (*Nord*), and Adamawa (*Adamaoua*). Directly south of them are the Centre (*Centre*) and East (*Est*). The South Province (*Sud*) lies on the Gulf of Guinea and the southern border.

Cameroon's western region is split into four smaller provinces: The Littoral (*Littoral*) and Southwest (*Sud-Ouest*) provinces are on the coast, and the Northwest (*Nord-Ouest*) and West (*Ouest*) provinces are in the western grassfields. The Northwest and Southwest were once part of British Cameroons; the other provinces were in French Cameroun.



Geography and climate



Volcanic plugs dot the landscape near Rhumsiki, Far North Province.

At 475,442 square kilometres (183,569 sq mi), Cameroon is the world's 53rd-largest country. It is comparable in size to Papua New Guinea and somewhat larger than the U.S. state of California. The country is located in Central and West Africa on the Bight of Bonny, part of the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. Tourist literature describes Cameroon as "Africa in miniature" because it exhibits all major climates and vegetation of the continent: coast, desert, mountains, rainforest, and savanna. The country's neighbours are Nigeria to the west; Chad to the northeast; the Central African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the south.

Cameroon is divided into five major geographic zones distinguished by dominant physical, climatic, and vegetative features. The coastal plain extends 15 to 150 kilometres (10 to 90 mi) inland from the Gulf of Guinea and has an average elevation of 90 metres (295 ft). Exceedingly hot and humid with a short dry season, this belt is densely forested and includes some of the wettest places on earth. The South Cameroon Plateau rises from the coastal plain to an average elevation of 650 metres (2,130 ft). Equatorial rainforest dominates this region, although its alternation between wet and dry seasons makes it is less

humid than the coast.

An irregular chain of mountains, hills, and plateaus known as the Cameroon range extends from Mount Cameroon on the coast—Cameroon's highest point at 4,095 metres (13,435 ft)—almost to Lake Chad at Cameroon's northern tip. This region has a mild climate, particularly on the Western High Plateau, although rainfall is high. Its soils are among Cameroon's most fertile, especially around volcanic Mount Cameroon. Volcanism here has created crater lakes. On 21 August



1986, one of these, Lake Nyos, belched carbon dioxide and killed between 1,700 and 2,000 people.

The southern plateau rises northward to the grassy, rugged Adamawa Plateau. This feature stretches from the western mountain area and forms a barrier between the country's north and south. Its average elevation is 1,100 metres (3,600 ft), and its temperature ranges from 22 to 25 °C (72 to 77 °F) with high rainfall. The northern lowland region extends from the edge of the Adamawa to Lake Chad with an average elevation of 300 to 350 metres (980 to 1,150 ft). Its characteristic vegetation is savanna scrub and grass. This is an arid region with sparse rainfall and high median temperatures.

Cameroon has four patterns of drainage. In the south, the principal rivers are the Ntem, Nyong, Sanaga, and Wouri. These flow southwestward or westward directly into the Gulf of Guinea. The Dja and Kadéï drain southeastward into the Congo River. In northern Cameroon, the Bénoué River runs north and west and empties into the Niger. The Logone flows northward into Lake Chad, which Cameroon shares with three neighbouring countries.

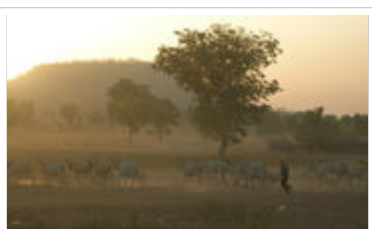
Economy and infrastructure

Cameroon's per-capita GDP (PPP) was estimated as US\$2,421 in 2005, one of the ten highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Major export markets include France, Italy, South Korea, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Cameroon is part of the Bank of Central African States (of which it is the dominant economy) and the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC). Its currency is the CFA franc. Red tape, high taxes, and endemic corruption have impeded growth of the private sector. Unemployment was estimated at 30% in 2001, and about 48% of the population was living below the poverty threshold in 2000. Since the late 1980s, Cameroon has been following programmes advocated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reduce poverty, privatise industries, and increase economic growth. Tourism is a growing sector, particularly in the coastal area, around Mount Cameroon, and in the north.

Cameroon's natural resources are better suited to agriculture and forestry than to industry. An estimated 70% of the population farms, and agriculture comprised an estimated 45.2% of GDP in 2006. Most agriculture is done at the subsistence scale by local farmers using simple tools. They sell their surplus produce, and some maintain separate fields for commercial use. Urban centres are particularly reliant on peasant agriculture for their foodstuffs. Soils and climate on the coast encourage extensive commercial cultivation of bananas, cocoa, oil palms, rubber, and tea. Inland on the South Cameroon Plateau, cash crops include coffee, sugar, and tobacco. Coffee is a major cash crop in the western highlands, and in the north, natural conditions favour crops such as cotton, groundnuts, and rice. Reliance on agricultural exports makes Cameroon vulnerable to shifts in their prices.



Fishing is a major industry in Cameroon. Fifteenth-century Portuguese explorers found prawns in such abundance that they named the area *Rio dos Camarões* ("River of Prawns"), the name from which *Cameroon* derives. This prawn was caught at Limbe in 2007.



A Fulani herder drives his cattle in northern Cameroon.

Livestock are raised throughout the country. Fishing employs some 5,000 people and provides 20,000 tons of seafood each year. Bushmeat, long a staple food for rural Cameroonians, is today a delicacy in the country's urban centres. The commercial bushmeat trade has now surpassed deforestation as the main threat to wildlife in Cameroon.

The southern rainforest has vast timber reserves, estimated to cover 37% of Cameroon's total land area. However, large areas of the forest are difficult to reach. Logging, largely handled by foreign-owned firms, provides the government US\$60 million a year, and laws mandate the safe and sustainable exploitation of timber. Nevertheless, in practice, the industry is one of the least regulated in Cameroon.

Factory-based industry accounted for an estimated 16.1% of GDP in 2006. More than 75% of Cameroon's industrial strength is located in Douala and Bonabéri. Cameroon possesses substantial mineral resources, but these are not extensively mined. Petroleum exploitation has fallen since 1985, but this is still a substantial sector such that dips in prices have a strong effect on the economy. Rapids and waterfalls obstruct the southern rivers, but these sites offer opportunities for hydroelectric development and supply most of Cameroon's energy. The Sanaga River powers the largest hydroelectric station, located at Edéa. The rest of Cameroon's energy comes from oil-powered thermal engines. Much of the country remains without reliable power supplies.

Transport in Cameroon is often difficult. Roads are poorly maintained and subject to inclement weather, since only 10% of the roadways are tarred. Roadblocks often serve little other purpose than to allow police and gendarmes to collect bribes from travellers. Road banditry has long hampered transport along the eastern and western borders, and since 2005, the problem has intensified in the east as the Central African Republic has further destabilised. Rail service runs from Kumba in the west to Bélébo in the east and north to Ngaoundéré. International airports are located in Douala and Garoua with a smaller facility at Yaoundé. The Wouri River estuary provides a harbour for Douala, the country's principal seaport. In the north, the Bénoué River is seasonally navigable from Garoua across into Nigeria.

Although press freedoms have improved since the early 2000s, the press is corrupt and beholden to special interests and political groups. Newspapers routinely self-censor to avoid government reprisals. The major radio and television stations are state-run, and other communications, such as land-based telephones and telegraphs, are largely under government control. However, cell phone networks and Internet providers have increased dramatically since the early 2000s and are largely unregulated.

Demographics



A bush taxi attempts to pass a stalled logging vehicle on the road between Abong-Mbang and Lomié, East Province.



2005 estimates place Cameroon's population at 17,795,000. This population is young: an estimated 41.2% are under 15, and 96.7% are under 65. The birth rate is estimated at 33.89 births per 1,000 people, the death rate at 13.47. The life expectancy is 51.16 years (50.98 years for males and 51.34 years for females).

Cameroon's population is almost evenly divided between urban and rural dwellers. Population density is highest in the large urban centres, the western highlands, and the northeastern plain. Douala, Yaoundé, and Garoua are the largest cities. In contrast, the Adamawa Plateau, southeastern Bénoué depression, and most of the South Cameroon Plateau are sparsely populated. People from the overpopulated western highlands and the underdeveloped north are moving to the coastal plantation zone and urban centres for employment. Smaller movements are occurring as workers seek employment in lumber mills and plantations in the south and east. Although the national sex ratio is relatively even, these out-migrants are primarily males, which leads to unbalanced ratios in some regions.

Both monogamous and polygamous marriage are practiced, and the average Cameroonian family is large and extended. In the north, women tend to the home, and men herd cattle or work as farmers. In the south, women grow the family's food, and men provide meat and grow cash crops. Cameroonian society is male-dominated, and violence and discrimination against women is common. At the onset of puberty, an estimated 26% of girls are subjected to breast ironing, a practice by which their breasts are pounded or massaged with heated objects to prevent them from developing. The goal is to prevent the girls from becoming precociously sexually active and to protect them from sexual assault. Female genital mutilation is practiced in portions of the Far North and Southwest provinces.



Members of Tikar ethnic groups, such as this family, live in the Northwest Province.



The homes of the Musgum, in the Far North Province, are made of earth and grass.

Estimates identify anywhere from 230 to 282 different ethnic and linguistic groups in Cameroon. The Adamawa Plateau broadly bisects these into northern and southern divisions. The northern peoples are Sudanese ethnic groups, who live in the central highlands and the northern lowlands, and the Fulani, who are spread throughout northern Cameroon. A small number of Shuwa Arabs live near Lake Chad. Southern Cameroon is inhabited by speakers of Bantu and Semi-Bantu languages. Bantu-speaking groups inhabit the coastal and equatorial zones, while speakers of Semi-Bantu languages live in the Western grassfields. Some 5,000 Pygmies roam the southeastern and coastal rainforests or live in small, roadside settlements. Nigerians, especially Igbo, make up the largest group of foreign nationals. In 2007, Cameroon hosted a total population of refugees and asylum seekers of approximately 97,400. Of these, 49,300 were from the Central African Republic (many driven west by war), 41,600 from Chad, and 2,900 from Nigeria. Kidnappings of Cameroonian citizens by Central African bandits have increased since 2005.

Cameroon has a high level of religious freedom and diversity. The northern peoples are predominantly Muslim, although some ethnic groups retain native animist beliefs and are called *Kirdi* ("pagan") by the Fulani. The U.S. Department of State claims that some Muslims discriminate against Christians and followers of traditional beliefs in the north. Southern ethnic groups predominantly follow Christian or animist beliefs, or a syncretic combination of the two. People widely believe in witchcraft, and the government outlaws such practices. Suspected witches are often subject to mob violence.

The European languages introduced during colonialism have created a linguistic divide between the English-speaking fifth of the population who live in the Northwest and Southwest provinces and the French-speaking remainder of the country. Both English and French are official languages. Cameroonian Pidgin



English is the most common lingua franca, especially in the formerly British-administered territories. A mixture of English, French, and Pidgin called Camfranglais has been gaining popularity in urban centres since the mid-1970s.

Culture

Holidays

| Date | English Name |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 January | New Year's Day |
| 11 February | National Youth Day |
| 1 May | Labour Day |
| 20 May | National Day |
| 15 August | Assumption |
| 1 October | Unification Day |
| 25 December | Christmas |

Each of Cameroon's ethnic groups has its own unique cultural forms. Typical celebrations include births, deaths, plantings, harvests, and religious rituals. Seven national holidays are observed throughout the year, and movable holidays include the Christian holy days of Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, and Ascension; and the Muslim holy days of 'Id al-Fitr, 'Id al-Adha, and Eid Milad Nnabi.

Music and dance are an integral part of Cameroonian ceremonies, festivals, social gatherings, and storytelling. Traditional dances are highly choreographed and separate men and women or forbid participation by one sex altogether. The goals of dances range from pure entertainment to religious devotion. Traditionally, music is transmitted orally. In a typical performance, a chorus of singers echoes a soloist. Musical accompaniment may be as simple as clapping hands and stomping feet, but traditional instruments include bells worn by dancers, clappers, drums and talking drums, flutes, horns, rattles, scrapers, stringed instruments, whistles, and xylophones; the exact combination varies

with ethnic group and region. Some performers sing complete songs by themselves, accompanied by a harplike instrument.

Popular music styles include ambasse bey of the coast, assiko of the Bassa, mangambeu of the Bangangte, and tsamassi of the Bamileke. Nigerian music has influenced Anglophone Cameroonian performers, and Prince Nico Mbarga's highlife hit " Sweet Mother" is the top-selling African record in history. The two most popular styles are makossa and bikutsi. Makossa developed in Douala and mixes folk music, highlife, soul, and Congo music. Performers such as Manu Dibango, Francis Bebey, Moni Bilé, and Petit-Pays popularised the style worldwide in the 1970s and 1980s. Bikutsi originated as war music among the Ewondo. Artists such as Anne-Marie Nzié developed it into a popular dance music beginning in the 1940s, and performers such as Mama Ohandja and Les Têtes Brulées popularised it internationally during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Cuisine varies by region, but a large, one-course, evening meal is common throughout the country. A typical dish is based on cocoyams, maize, manioc, millet, plantains, potatoes, rice, or yams, often pounded into dough-like fufu (*cous-cous*). This is served with a sauce, soup, or stew made from greens, groundnuts, palm oil, or other ingredients. Meat and fish are popular but expensive additions. Dishes are often quite hot, spiced with salt, red pepper, and Maggi. Water, palm wine, and millet beer are the traditional mealtime drinks, although beer, soda, and wine have gained popularity. Silverware is common, but food is traditionally manipulated with the right hand. Breakfast consists of leftovers or bread and fruit with coffee or tea. Snacks are popular, especially in larger towns where they may be bought from street vendors.



Baka dancers greet visitors to the East Province.



A woman weaves a basket near Lake Ossa, Littoral Province. Cameroonians practice such handicrafts throughout the country.

Traditional arts and crafts are practiced throughout the country for commercial, decorative, and religious purposes. Woodcarvings and sculptures are especially common. The high-quality clay of the western highlands is suitable for pottery and ceramics. Other crafts include basket weaving, beadworking, brass and bronze working, calabash carving and painting, embroidery, and leather working. Traditional housing styles make use of locally available materials and vary from temporary wood-and-leaf shelters of nomadic Mbororo to the rectangular mud-and-thatch homes of southern peoples. Dwellings made from materials such as cement and tin are increasingly common.

Cameroonian literature and film have concentrated on both European and African themes. Colonial-era writers such as Louis-Marie Pouka and Sankie Maimo were educated by European missionary societies and advocated assimilation into European culture as the means to bring Cameroon into the modern world. After World War II, writers such as Mongo Beti and Ferdinand Oyono analysed and criticised colonialism and rejected assimilation. Shortly after independence, filmmakers such as Jean-Paul Ngassa and Thérèse Sita-Bella explored similar themes. In the 1960s, Mongo Beti and other writers explored

post-colonialism, problems of African development, and the recovery of African identity. Meanwhile, in the mid-1970s, filmmakers such as Jean-Pierre Dikongué Pipa and Daniel Kamwa dealt with the conflicts between traditional and post-colonial society. Literature and films during the next two decades concentrated more on wholly Cameroonian themes.

National policy strongly advocates sport in all forms. Traditional sports include canoe racing and wrestling, and several hundred runners participate in the 40 km (24.8 mi) Mount Cameroon Race of Hope each year. Cameroon is one of the few tropical countries to have competed in the Winter Olympics. However, sport in Cameroon is dominated by football (soccer). Amateur football clubs abound, organised along ethnic lines or under corporate sponsors. The Cameroon national football team has been one of the most successful in the world since its strong showing in the 1990 FIFA World Cup. Cameroon has won four African Cup of Nations titles and the gold medal at the 2000 Olympics.

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Cameroon faces Germany at Zentralstadion in Leipzig, 27 April 2003.



Cape Verde

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Cape Verde. For more information see SOS Children in Cape Verde, Africa

The **Republic of Cape Verde** (Portuguese: *Cabo Verde*, IPA: [ˈkabu ˈverdi]), is a republic located on an archipelago in the Macaronesia ecoregion of the North Atlantic Ocean, off the western coast of Africa. The previously uninhabited islands were discovered and colonized by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century (though there may have been earlier discoveries), and attained independence in 1975.


Naming

Cape Verde is named after Cap Vert (meaning Green Cape) in Senegal, the westernmost point of continental Africa. The country's name can be pronounced many ways in English. Cape is pronounced like the article of clothing, and Verde is pronounced either to rhyme with "bird", "birdy", "bear D", or "bear day". "Cabo" is not used in English.

History

Cape Verde was uninhabited when the Portuguese arrived in 1460 and made the islands part of the Portuguese empire. Due to its location off the coast of Africa, Cape Verde became an important watering station, then sugar cane plantation site, and later a major hub of the trans-atlantic slave trade, that would later form the contemporary African Diaspora.

In 1975, Cape Verde achieved independence from Portugal after a long armed struggle in the jungles of Guinea-Bissau. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was the main entity responsible for the independence of Cape Verde. Moreover, the people's revolutionary armed forces of Cuba, too, played a role in the Cape Verdean independence armed struggle in Guinea-Bissau. After independence, the PAIGC attempted to unite Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau into one nation, the PAIGC controlling both governments, but a coup in the latter nation in 1980 ended these plans. As a result, the G, standing for Guinea-Bissau, in PAIGC was dropped. Consequently, PAICV (African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde) was formed. In Cape Verde the PAICV (affiliated

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>República de Cabo Verde</i> Republic of Cape Verde | |
|  |  |
| Flag | National Emblem |
| Anthem: Cântico da Liberdade | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Praia |
| Official languages | Portuguese |
| Recognised regional languages | Cape Verdean Creole |
| Demonym | Cape Verdean |
| Government | Republic |



with the PAIGC) governed until democratic elections, held in 1991, resulted in a change of government. The Movimento para a Democracia (MPD) won that election. The MPD was re-elected in 1996. The PAICV returned to power in 2001, and was re-elected in 2006.

Politics

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Pedro Pires |
| - Prime Minister | José Maria Neves |
| Independence | from Portugal |
| - Recognised | July 5, 1975 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 4,033 km ² (172nd) 1,557 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - 2008 estimate | 499,796 (165th) |
| - 2000 census | 436,821 |
| - Density | 126/km ² (79th) 326/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$3.905 billion (157th) |
| - Per capita | \$7,904 (90th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.736 (medium) (102nd) |
| Currency | Cape Verdean escudo (<small>CVE</small>) |
| Time zone | CVT (UTC-1) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC-1) |
| Internet TLD | .cv |
| Calling code | +238 |



Politics of Cape Verde takes place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the Prime Minister of Cape Verde is the head of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is held by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the National Assembly. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.



Current president of Cape Verde, Pedro Piros, meeting with Brazilian president Lula da Silva.

Municipalities and parishes

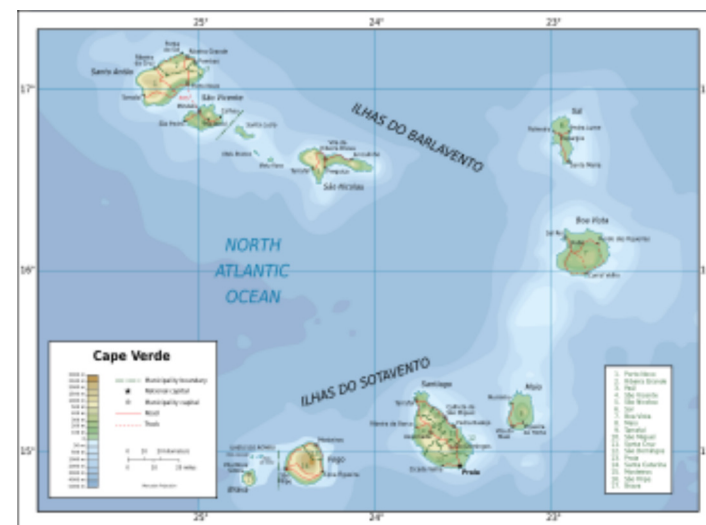
Cape Verde is divided into 22 municipalities (*concelhos*), and subdivided into 32 parishes (*freguesias*).

Geography



Cape Verde is an archipelago off the west coast of Africa at 15.02N, 23.34W. It is formed by 10 main islands and about 8 islets. The main islands are:

- Barlavento (northern island group)
 - Santo Antão
 - São Vicente
 - Santa Luzia
 - São Nicolau
 - Sal
 - Boa Vista
- Sotavento (southern island group)
 - Maio
 - Santiago
 - Fogo
 - Brava



Of these, only Santa Luzia and the five islets are uninhabited. Presently it is a natural reserve. All islands are volcanic, but an active volcano only exists on one of the islands, Fogo (see Mount Fogo).

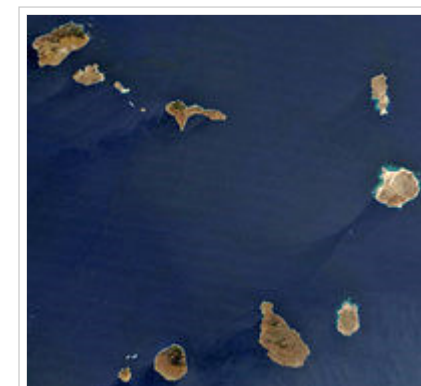
Environment

The isolation of Cape Verde about 500 km (310 mi) from the African mainland has resulted in the islands having a large number of endemic species, many of which are endangered by human development. Endemic birds include Alexander's Swift (*Apus alexandri*), Raso Lark (*Alauda razae*), Cape Verde Warbler (*Acrocephalus brevipennis*), and Iago Sparrow (*Passer iagoensis*), and reptiles include the Cape Verde Giant Gecko (*Tarentola gigas*).

Charles Darwin gives a vivid description of the geology, climate, zoology and botany of the islands in the first chapter of his book *The Voyage of the Beagle*.

Climate

Cape Verde is in the tropical zone. Average temperatures range from 24 °C (75 °F) in January and February to 29 °C (85 °F) in September. The average annual rainfall for Cape Verde is 68.4 mm (2.7 in), with September being the wettest month with 33.6 mm (1.3 in). Conversely, the months April to July record less than one millimetre of rainfall each. The climate is arid, but Cape Verde's position in the Atlantic contributes to soften the aridity, that otherwise would be the same aridity as that in continental areas.



Cape Verde satellite image



Economy

Cape Verde is a small nation that lacks resources and has experienced severe droughts. Agriculture is made difficult by lack of rain and is restricted to only four islands for most of the year. Most of the nation's GDP comes from the service industry. Cape Verde's economy has grown since the late 1990s, and it is now considered a country of average development. Cape Verde has significant cooperation with Portugal at every level of the economy, which has led it to link its currency first to the Portuguese escudo and, in 1999, to the euro.

Former Portuguese prime minister José Manuel Durão Barroso, now (second semester 2004) president of the European Commission, has promised to help integrate Cape Verde within the European Union sphere of influence via greater cooperation with Portugal. In March 2005, former Portuguese president Mário Soares launched a petition urging the European Union to start membership talks with Cape Verde.

In 2007 the United Nations graduated Cape Verde from the category of Least Developed Countries, only the second time this has happened to a country.

Cape Verde has been on the list of the United Nations Small Island Developing States, and is considered a Developing country in economic terms.

On 18 December 2007, the General Council of the World Trade Organization approved a package for the accession of Cape Verde to the WTO. Accession will be effective 30 days after it is ratified by Cape Verde, which must take place by 30 June 2008. The package requires Cape Verde to adapt some of its economic regulation. In particular, it will need to introduce a new Customs Code, and to introduce copyright and patent laws complying with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.



1000 CVE bank note issued in
1992

Demographics



Most inhabitants of Cape Verde are a genetic blend of Sub-Saharan Africans and Europeans, the Africans having been slaves and hailing mostly from Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. Cape Verdeans' European ancestors include Portuguese settlers and exiles, Portuguese Jews who were victims of the Inquisition, and Spanish and Italian seamen who were granted land by the Portuguese Empire. Many foreigners from other parts of the world settled Cape Verde as their permanent country. Most of them were Dutch, French, British, Arabs and Jews (from Lebanon and Morocco), Chinese (especially from Macau), Americans, and Brazilians (including people of Portuguese and African descent) settlers. All of these have been absorbed into the general Cape Verdean population.

The majority of the population adheres to Christianity, mostly Catholicism which constitutes some 90% of the population (in many areas Catholicism and traditional African religions are syncretised). The remaining includes a sizeable Protestant community as well as a small number of Bahá'í and Buddhist and even smaller Muslim groups.

Cape Verde has been steadily developing since its independence, and besides having been promoted to the group of "medium development" countries in 2007, leaving the Least Developed Countries category (which is only the second time it has happened to a country), is currently the 5th best ranked country in Africa in terms of Human Development Index.

Cape Verdean diaspora

The Cape Verdean diaspora refers to both historical and present emigration from Cape Verde. Today, more Cape Verdeans live abroad than in Cape Verde itself, with significant emigrant Cape Verdean communities in the United States (500,000 Cape Verdeans, with a major concentration on the New England coast from Providence, R.I., to New Bedford, Mass.), Portugal (80,000) and Angola (45,000). There is also a significant number of Cape Verdeans in São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, France, Brazil, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Cape Verdean populations also settled in Spain, Germany, and other CPLP countries such as Guinea-Bissau.

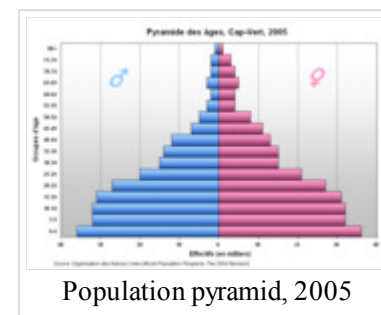
Culture

The culture of Cape Verde reflects its mixed African and Portuguese roots. It is well known for its diverse forms of music such as *Morna* and a wide variety of dances: the soft dance *Morna*, and its modernized version, *passada*, the *Funaná* - a sensual mixed Portuguese and African dance, the extreme sensuality of *coladeira*, and the *Batuque* dance. These are reflective of the diverse origins of Cape Verde's residents. The term "Criolo" is used to refer to residents as well as the culture of Cape Verde.

Cape Verdean literature



Local people from Santiago island





Cape Verdean literature is one of the richest of Lusitanian Africa.

- Poets: Frusoni Sergio (linked site is in Portuguese), Tavares Eugénio (linked site is in Portuguese), B.Léza, João Cleofas Martins, Luís Romano de Madeira Melo, Ovídio Martins, Barbosa Jorge, Fortes Corsino António, Baltasar Lopes (Osvaldo Alcântara), João Vário, Osvaldo Osório, Arménio Vieira, Vadinho Velhinho, José Luís Tavares, Carlos Baptista, etc.
- Authors: Manuel Lopes, Henrique Teixeira de Sousa, Almeida Germano, Luís Romano de Madeira Melo, Germano de Almeida, Orlanda Amarilis, Jorge Vera Cruz Barbosa, Pedro Cardoso, Mário José Domingues, Daniel Filipe, Mário Alberto Fonseca de Almeida, Corsino António Fortes, Arnaldo Carlos de Vasconcelos França, António Aurélio Gonçalves, Aguinaldo Brito Fonseca, Ovídio de Sousa Martins, Osvaldo Osório, Dulce Almada Duarte, Manuel Veiga
- Poems in Portuguese: Cape Verdean Poems, Poesia
- Cape Verdean Literature
- Sopinha de Alfabeto
- Famous tales: Ti Lobo and Chibinho

Music

Cape Verde is known internationally for *morna*, a form of folk music usually sung in the Cape Verdean Creole, accompanied by clarinet, violin, guitar and cavaquinho. The islands also boast *funaná* and *batuque* music.

Cesária Évora is perhaps the best internationally-known practitioner of morna. Madonna is so inspired by her that she even purchased a house on the island of Sal.

Language

Cape Verde's official language is Portuguese. It is the language of instruction and official acts. However, the Cape Verdean Creole is used colloquially and is the mother tongue of virtually all Cape Verdeans. Cape Verdean Creole or Kriolu is a dialect continuum of a Portuguese-based creole, which varies from island to island.

There is a substantial body of literature in Creole, especially in the Santiago Creole and the São Vicente Creole. Creole has been gaining prestige since the nation's independence from Portugal.

However, the differences between the varied forms of the language within the islands have been a major obstacle in the way of standardization of the language. Some people have advocated the development of two standards: a North (Barlavento) standard, centered on the São Vicente Creole, and a South (Sotavento) standard, centered on the Santiago Creole. Manuel Veiga, PhD, a linguist by training, and Minister of Culture of Cape Verde, is the premier proponent of Kriolu's officialization and standardization.

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Eugénio Tavares is one of the most well-known poets of the Cape Verdean literature



A group playing morna.



Transportation

TACV Cabo Verde Airlines is a scheduled and charter, passenger and cargo airline based in **Cape Verde**. It is the national flag carrier of Cape Verde, operating an inter-island service and flights to Europe, North America, South America and the West African mainland. Its main base is Sal Airport (SID), with a hub at Praia Airport (RAI).



São Pedro airport in São Vicente island

Newspapers

- *A Semana* (Praia, since 1991)
- *Expresso das Ilhas*
- *Jornal O Cidadão* (São Vicente)
- *Jornal Horizonte* (Praia, since 1988)
- *Terra Nova* (S.Vicente, since 1975)
- *Artiletra* (S.Vicente, since 1991)

Online

- CaboSpace (Cape Verdean American)
- CaboVerdeOnline
- *Cape Verde Portal*
- Inforpress news agency
- Visão News
- O Liberal
- CVN (Cape Verdean American)
- FORCV (Cape Verdean American)

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Central African Republic

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The **Central African Republic (CAR)**, French: *République Centrafricaine* pronounced [ʁepyblik sɑ̃trafʁikɛn] or *Centrafrique* [sɑ̃trafʁik]) is a landlocked country in Central Africa. It borders Chad in the north, Sudan in the east, the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the south, and Cameroon in the west.




Most of the CAR consists of Sudano-Guinean savannas but it also includes a Sahelo-Sudanese zone in the north and an equatorial forest zone in the south. Two thirds of the country lies in the basins of the Ubangi River, which flows south into the Congo River, while the remaining third lies in the basin of the Chari River, which flows north into Lake Chad.

Since most of the territory is located in the Ubangi and Shari river basins, the French called the colony it carved out in this region Ubangi-Shari, or Oubangui-Chari in French. This French colony of Ubangi-Shari became a semi-autonomous territory of the French Community in 1958 and then an independent nation on 13 August 1960. For over three decades after independence, the CAR was ruled by presidents who were not chosen in truly democratic elections or who took power by force. Local discontent with this system was eventually reinforced by international pressure, following the end of the Cold War.

The first fair democratic elections were held in 1993 with resources provided by the country's donors and help from the UN Office for Electoral Affairs. They brought Ange-Félix Patassé to power, but President Patassé lost popular support and was overthrown by French-backed General François Bozizé in 2003. General Bozizé won a democratic election in May 2005.

Inability to pay workers in the public sector led to strikes in 2007, forcing the resignation of the government in early 2008. A new Prime Minister, Faustin-Archange Touadéra was named on January 22, 2008.

The Central African Republic is one of the poorest countries in the world and among the ten poorest countries in Africa.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>République Centrafricaine</i> <i>Ködörösêse tî Bêafrîka</i> Central African Republic</p> | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: <i>Unité, Dignité, Travail</i> (French) "Unity, Dignity, Work"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>La Renaissance</i> (French) <i>E Zingo</i> (Sango)</p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Bangui |
| Official languages | Sango, French |



In 2001 *The Ecologist* magazine estimated that Central African Republic is the world's leading country in sustainable development.

History

Pre-history

Between about 1000 BC and 1000 AD, Adamawa-Eastern-speaking peoples spread eastward from Cameroon to Sudan and settled in most of the territory of the CAR. During the same period, a much smaller number of Bantu-speaking immigrants settled in Southwestern CAR and some Central Sudanic-speaking populations settled along the Oubangi. The majority of the CAR's inhabitants thus speak Adamawa-Eastern languages or Bantu languages belonging to the Niger-Congo family. A minority speak Central Sudanic languages of the Nilo-Saharan family. More recent immigrants include many Muslim merchants who most often speak Arabic or Hausa.

Exposure to the outside world

Until the early 1800s, the peoples of the CAR lived beyond the expanding Islamic frontier in the Sudanic zone of Africa and thus had relatively little contact with Abrahamic religions or northern economies. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, however, Muslim traders began increasingly to penetrate the region of the CAR and to cultivate special relations with local leaders in order to facilitate their trade and settlement in the region. The initial arrival of Muslim traders in the early 1800s was relatively peaceful and depended upon the support of local peoples, but after about 1850, slave traders with well-armed soldiers began to penetrate the region. Between c. 1860 and 1910, slave traders from Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, Dar al-Kuti in Northern CAR and Nzakara and Zande states in Southeastern CAR exported much of the population of Eastern CAR, a region with very few inhabitants today.

French colonialism

European penetration of Central African territory began in the late nineteenth century during the so-called Scramble for Africa (c. 1875-1900). Count Savorgnan de Brazza took the lead in establishing the French Congo with headquarters in the city named after him, Brazzaville, and sent expeditions up the Ubangi River in an effort to expand France's claims to territory in Central Africa. King Leopold II of Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom also competed to establish their claims to territory in the Central African region. In 1889 the French established a post on the Ubangi River at Bangui, the future

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demonym | Central African |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | François Bozizé |
| - Prime Minister | Faustin-Archange Touadéra |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | August 13, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 622,984 km ² (43rd) 240,534 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0 |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 4,216,666 (124th) |
| - 2003 census | 3,895,150 |
| - Density | 6.77/km ² (191st) 17.53/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$5.015 billion (153rd) |
| - Per capita | \$1,198 (167th) |
| GDP (nominal) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$1.48 billion (152nd) |
| - Per capita | \$355 (160th) |
| Gini (1993) | 61.3 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.384 (low) (171st) |
| Currency | Central African CFA franc (XAF) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .cf |



capital of Ubangi-Shari and the CAR. De Brazza then sent expeditions in 1890-91 up the Sangha River in what is now Southwestern CAR, up the centre of the Ubangi basin toward Lake Chad, and eastward along the Ubangi River toward the Nile. De Brazza and the procolonial in France wished to expand the

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Calling code | +236 |
|--------------|------|

borders of the French Congo to link up with French territories in West Africa, North Africa and East Africa. In 1894, the French Congo's borders with Leopold II's Congo Free State and German Cameroon were fixed by diplomatic agreements. Then, in 1899, the French Congo's border with Sudan was fixed along the Congo-Nile watershed, leaving France without her much coveted outlet on the Nile and turning Southeastern Ubangi-Shari into a cul-de-sac.

Once European negotiators agreed upon the borders of the French Congo, France had to decide how to pay for the costly occupation, administration, and development of the territory. The reported financial successes of Leopold II's concessionary companies in the Congo Free State convinced the French government in 1899 to grant 17 private companies large concessions in the Ubangi-Shari region. In return for the right to exploit these lands by buying local products and selling European goods, the companies promised to pay rent to the colonial state and to promote the development of their concessions. The companies employed European and African agents who frequently used extremely brutal and atrocious methods to force Central Africans to work for them. At the same time, the French colonial administration began to force Central Africans to pay taxes and to provide the state with free labor. The companies and French administration often collaborated in their efforts to force Central Africans to work for their benefit, but they also often found themselves at odds. Some French officials reported abuses committed by private company militias and even by their own colonial colleagues and troops, but efforts to bring these criminals to justice almost always failed. When news of terrible atrocities committed against Central Africans by concessionary company employees and colonial officials or troops reached France and caused an outcry, there were investigations and some feeble attempts at reform, but the situation on the ground in Ubangi-Shari remained essentially the same.

In the meantime, during the first decade of French colonial rule (c. 1900-1910), the rulers of African states in the Ubangi-Shari region increased their slave raiding activities and also their sale of local products to European companies and the colonial state. They took advantage of their treaties with the French to procure more weapons which were used to capture more slaves and so much of the eastern half of Ubangi-Shari was depopulated as a result of the export of Central Africans by local rulers during the first decade of colonial rule. Those who had power, Africans and Europeans, often made life miserable for those who did not have the power to resist.

During the second decade of colonial rule (c. 1910-1920), armed employees of private companies and the colonial state continued to use brutal methods to deal with local populations who resisted forced labor but the power of local African rulers was destroyed and so slave raiding was greatly diminished. In 1911, the Sangha and Lobaye basins were ceded to Germany as part of an agreement which gave France a free-hand in Morocco and so Western Ubangi-Shari came under German rule until World War I, during which France reconquered this territory by using Central African troops.

The third decade of colonial rule (1920-1930) was a period of transition during which a network of roads was built, cash crops were promoted, mobile health services were formed to combat sleeping sickness, and Protestant missions established stations in different parts of the country. New forms of forced labor were also introduced, however, as the French conscripted large numbers of Ubangians to work on the Congo-Ocean Railway and many of these recruits died of exhaustion and illness. In 1925 the French writer André Gide published *Voyage au Congo* in which he described the alarming consequences of conscription for the Congo-Ocean railroad and exposed the continuing atrocities committed against Central Africans in Western Ubangi-Shari by employees of the Forestry Company of Sangha-Ubangi, for example. In 1928 a major insurrection, the Kongo-Wara 'war of the hoe handle' broke out in Western Ubangi-Shari and



continued for several years. The extent of this insurrection, perhaps the largest anticolonial rebellion in Africa during the interwar years, was carefully hidden from the French public because it provided evidence, once again, of strong opposition to French colonial rule and forced labor.

During the fourth decade of colonial rule (c. 1930-1940), cotton, tea, and coffee emerged as important cash crops in Ubangi-Shari and the mining of diamonds and gold began in earnest. Several cotton companies were granted purchasing monopolies over large areas of cotton production and were thus able to fix the prices paid to cultivators in order to assure profits for their shareholders. Europeans established coffee plantations and Central Africans also began to cultivate coffee.

The fifth decade of colonial rule (c. 1940-1950) was shaped by the Second World War and the political reforms which followed in its wake. In September 1940 pro-Gaullist French officers took control of Ubangi-Shari.

Independence

On 1 December 1958 the colony of Ubangi-Shari became an autonomous territory within the French Community and took the name Central African Republic. The founding father and president of the *Conseil de Gouvernement*, Barthélemy Boganda, died in a mysterious plane accident in 1959, just eight days before the last elections of the colonial era. On 13 August 1960 the Central African Republic gained its independence and two of Boganda's closest aides, Abel Goumba and David Dacko, became involved in a power struggle. With the backing of the French, Dacko took power and soon had Goumba arrested. By 1962 President Dacko had established a one-party state.

On 31 December 1965 Dacko was overthrown by Colonel Jean-Bédel Bokassa, who suspended the constitution and dissolved the National Assembly. President Bokassa declared himself President for life in 1972, and named himself Emperor Bokassa I of the Central African Empire on 4 December 1976. A year later, Emperor Bokassa crowned himself in a lavish and expensive ceremony that was ridiculed by much of the world. In 1979 France carried out a coup against Bokassa and "restored" Dacko to power. Dacko, in turn, was overthrown in a coup by General André Kolingba on 1 September 1981.

Kolingba suspended the constitution and ruled with a military junta until 1985. He introduced a new constitution in 1986 which was adopted by a nationwide referendum. Membership in his new party, the Rassemblement Démocratique Centrafricain (RDC) was voluntary. In 1987, semi-competitive elections to parliament were held and municipal elections were held in 1988. Kolingba's two major political opponents, Abel Goumba and Ange-Félix Patassé, boycotted these elections because their parties were not allowed to compete.

By 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a pro-democracy movement became very active. In May 1990 a letter signed by 253 prominent citizens asked for the convocation of a National Conference but Kolingba refused this request and detained several opponents. Pressure from the United States, more reluctantly from France, and from a group of locally represented countries and agencies called GIBAFOR (France, USA, Germany, Japan, EU, World Bank and UN) finally led Kolingba to agree, in principle, to hold free elections in October 1992, with help from the UN Office of Electoral Affairs. After using the excuse of alleged irregularities to suspend the results of the elections as a pretext for holding on to power, President Kolingba came under intense pressure from GIBAFOR to establish a "Conseil National Politique Provisoire de la République" (Provisional National Political Council) (CNPPR) and to set up a "Mixed Electoral Commission" which included representatives from all political parties.



When elections were finally held in 1993, again with the help of the international community, Ange-Félix Patassé came in first in the first round and Kolingba came in fourth after Abel Goumba and David Dacko. In the second round, Patassé won 53 percent of the vote while Goumba won 45.6 percent. Most of Patassé's support came from Gbaya, Kare and Kaba voters in seven heavily-populated prefectures in the northwest while Goumba's support came largely from ten less-populated prefectures in the south and east. Furthermore, Patassé's party, the *Mouvement pour la Libération du Peuple Centrafricain* (MLPC) or Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People gained a simple but not an absolute majority of seats in parliament, which meant Patassé needed coalition partners.

Patassé relieved former President Kolingba of his military rank of general in March 1994 and then charged several former ministers with various crimes. Patassé also removed many Yakoma from important, lucrative posts in the government. Two hundred mostly Yakoma members of the presidential guard were also dismissed or reassigned to the army. Kolingba's RDC loudly proclaimed that Patassé's government was conducting a "witch hunt" against the Yakoma.

A new constitution was approved on 28 December 1994 and promulgated on 14 January 1995, but this constitution, like those before it, did not have much impact on the practice of politics. In 1996-1997, reflecting steadily decreasing public confidence in its erratic behaviour, three mutinies against Patassé's government were accompanied by widespread destruction of property and heightened ethnic tension. On 25 January 1997, the Bangui Peace Accords were signed which provided for the deployment of an inter-African military mission, the *Mission Interafricaine de Surveillance des Accords de Bangui* (MISAB). Mali's former president, Amadou Touré, served as chief mediator and brokered the entry of ex-mutineers into the government on 7 April 1997. The MISAB mission was later replaced by a U.N. peacekeeping force, the *Mission des Nations Unies en RCA* (MINURCA).

In 1998 parliamentary elections resulted in Kolingba' RDC winning 20 out of 109 seats, which constituted a comeback, but in 1999, notwithstanding widespread public anger in urban centers with his corrupt rule, Patassé won free elections to become president for a second term. On 28 May 2001 rebels stormed strategic buildings in Bangui in an unsuccessful coup attempt. The army chief of staff, Abel Abrou, and General Francois N'Djadder Bedaya were shot, but Patassé regained the upper hand by bringing in at least 300 troops of the rebel leader Jean-Pierre Bemba from over the river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and by Libyan soldiers.

In the aftermath of this failed coup, militias loyal to Patassé sought revenge against rebels in many neighborhoods of the capital, Bangui, that resulted in the destruction of many homes as well as the torture and murder of many opponents. Eventually Patassé came to suspect that General François Bozizé was involved in another coup attempt against him and so Bozizé fled with loyal troops to Chad. On 25 October 2002 Bozizé launched a surprise attack against Patassé, who was out of the country. Libyan troops and some 1,000 soldiers of Bemba's Congolese rebel organization failed to stop the rebels, who took control of the country and thus succeeded in overthrowing Patassé.

François Bozizé suspended the constitution and named a new cabinet which included most opposition parties. Abel Goumba, "Mr. Clean", was named vice-president, which gave Bozizé's new government a positive image. Bozizé established a broad-based National Transition Council to draft a new constitution and announced that he would step down and run for office once the new constitution was approved. A national dialogue was held from 15 September to 27 October 2003, and Bozizé won a fair election that excluded Patassé, to be elected president on a second ballot, in May 2005.

Development and humanitarian needs

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The CAR is heavily dependent upon multilateral foreign aid and the presence of numerous NGOs which provide numerous services which the government fails to provide. As one UNDP official put it, the CAR is a country "sous serum," or a country metaphorically hooked up to an IV. (Mehler 2005:150). The very presence of numerous foreign personnel and organizations in the country, including peacekeepers and even refugee camps, provides an important source of revenue for many Central Africans.

The country is self-sufficient in food crops, but much of the population lives at a subsistence level. Livestock development is hindered by the presence of the tsetse fly.

In 2006 due to ongoing violence, over 50,000 in the country's north-west were at risk of starvation, and this was only averted thanks to United Nations support.

Politics

The country is currently under the rule of François Bozizé. A new constitution was approved by voters in a referendum held on December 5, 2004. Full multiparty presidential and parliamentary elections were held in March 2005, with a second round in May. Bozizé was declared the winner after a run-off vote.

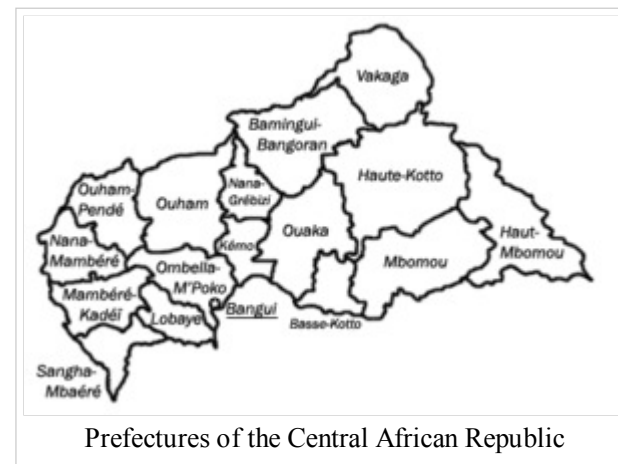
In February 2006, there were reports of widespread violence in the northern part of the CAR. Thousands of refugees fled their homes, caught in the crossfire of battles between government troops and rebel forces. More than 7,000 people fled to neighboring Chad. Those who remained in the CAR told of government troops systematically killing men and boys suspected of cooperating with rebels.

Prefectures and sub-prefectures

The Central African Republic is divided into 14 administrative prefectures (*préfectures*), along with 2 economic prefectures (*préfectures économiques*) and one autonomous commune. The prefectures are further divided into 71 sub-prefectures (*sous-préfectures*).

The prefectures include:

- Bamingui-Bangoran
- Basse-Kotto
- Haute-Kotto
- Haut-Mbomou
- Kémo
- Lobaye
- Mambéré-Kadéï
- Mbomou
- Nana-Mambéré
- Ombella-M'Poko
- Ouaka
- Ouham
- Ouham-Pendé
- Vakaga



the two economic prefectures are Nana-Grébizi and Sangha-Mbaéré; the commune is Bangui.

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Geography



Map of the Central African Republic

The Central African Republic is an entirely land-locked nation within the interior of the African continent. It is bordered by the countries of Cameroon, Chad, the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo. Much of the country consists of flat, or rolling plateau savanna, typically about 1,640 feet (500 m) above sea level. In the northeast are the Fertit Hills, and there are scattered hills in southwest part of the country. To the northwest is the Yade Massif, a granite plateau with an altitude of 3,750 feet (1,143 m).

At 240,519 mi² (622,984 km²), the Central African Republic is the world's 43rd-largest country (after Somalia). It is comparable in size to Ukraine, and is somewhat smaller than the US state of Texas.

Much of the southern border is formed by tributaries of the Congo River, with the Mbomou River in the east merging with the Uele River to form the Ubangi River. In the west, the Sangha River flows through part of the country. The eastern border lies along the edge of the Nile river watershed.

Estimates of the amount of the country covered by forest ranges up to 8%, with the densest parts in the south. The forest is highly diverse, and includes commercially important species of Ayous, Sapelli and Sipo. The current deforestation rate is 0.4% per annum, and lumber poaching is commonplace.

The climate of the C.A.R. is generally tropical. The northern areas are subject to harmattan winds, which are hot, dry, and carry dust. The northern regions have been subject to desertification, and the northeast is desert. The remainder of the country is prone to flooding from nearby rivers.

Economy



Satellite image of Central African Republic, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



The economy of the CAR is dominated by the cultivation and sale of food crops such as cassava, peanuts, maize, sorghum, millet, sesame and plantains. The current annual real GDP growth rate is just above 3%. The importance of foodcrops over exported cash crops is indicated by the fact that the total production of cassava, the staple food of most Central Africans, ranges between 200,000 and 300,000 tons a year, while the production of cotton, the principal exported cash crop, ranges from 25,000 to 45,000 tons a year. Foodcrops are not exported in large quantities but they still constitute the principal cash crops of the country because Central Africans derive far more income from the periodic sale of surplus foodcrops than from exported cash crops such as cotton or coffee. Many rural and urban women also transform some foodcrops into alcoholic drinks such as sorghum beer or hard liquor and derive considerable income from the sale of these drinks. Much of the income derived from the sale of foods and alcohol is not "on the books" and thus is not considered in calculating per capita income, which is one reason why official figures for per capita income are not accurate in the case of the CAR. The per capita income of the CAR is often listed as being around \$300 a year, said to be one of the lowest in the world, but this figure is based mostly on reported sales of exports and largely ignores the more important but unregistered sale of foods, locally-produced alcohol, diamonds, ivory, bushmeat, and traditional medicine, for example. The informal economy of the CAR is more important than the formal economy for most Central Africans.

Diamonds constitute the most important export of the CAR, frequently accounting for 40-55% of export revenues, but an estimated 30-50% of the diamonds produced each year leave the country clandestinely.

Export trade is hindered by poor economic development, and the location of this country far from the coast.

The natural wilderness regions of this country had good potential as ecotourist destinations. The country is noted for its population of forest elephants. In the southwest, the Dzanga-Sangha National Park is a rain forest area. To the north, the Manovo-Gounda St Floris National Park has been well-populated with wildlife, including leopards, lions, and rhinos. To the northeast the Bamingui-Bangoran National Park. However the population of wildlife in these parks has severely diminished over the past 20 years due to poaching, particularly from the neighboring Sudan.

Demographics

The population has tripled since independence. In 1960 the population was 1,232,000. The current population is at 4,302,360. *(February 2008 est.) Note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.*

The United Nations estimates that approximately 11% of the population ages 15 - 49 is HIV positive. Only 3% of the country has antiretroviral therapy available, compared to 17% coverage in neighbouring countries of Chad and the Republic of the Congo.

The nation is divided into over 80 ethnic groups, each having its own language. The largest ethnic groups are the Baya 33%, Banda 27%, Mandjia 13%, Sara 10%, Mboum 7%, M'Baka 4%, and Yakoma 4%, with 2% others, including Europeans. Religiously, about 35% of the population follows indigenous beliefs,



A boy playing with a burnt lamp in the city of Birao, Central African Republic. The town was almost completely burnt down in March 2007 during fighting between rebels and government troops.



25% is Protestant, 25% is Roman Catholic, and 15% is Muslim.

Culture

See also:

- List of writers from the Central African Republic
- Music of the Central African Republic
- Public holidays in the Central African Republic

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Chad

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Chad (French: *Tchad*; Arabic: تشاد), officially the **Republic of Chad**, is a landlocked country in central Africa. It is bordered by Libya to the north, Sudan to the east, the Central African Republic to the south, Cameroon and Nigeria to the southwest, and Niger to the west. Due to its distance from the sea and its largely desert climate, the country is sometimes referred to as the "Dead Heart of Africa". Chad is divided into three major geographical regions: a desert zone in the north, an arid Sahelian belt in the centre and a more fertile Sudanese savanna zone in the south. Lake Chad, after which the country is named, is the largest wetland in Chad and the second largest in Africa. Chad's highest peak is the Emi Koussi in the Sahara, and the largest city by far is N'Djamena, the capital. Chad is home to over 200 different ethnic and linguistic groups. French and Arabic are the official languages. Islam is the most widely practiced religion.



Beginning in the 7th millennium BC, human populations moved into the Chadian basin in great numbers. By the end of the 1st millennium BC, a series of states and empires rose and fell in Chad's Sahelian strip, each focused on controlling the trans-Saharan trade routes that passed through the region. France conquered the territory by 1920 and incorporated it as part of French Equatorial Africa. In 1960 Chad obtained independence under the leadership of François Tombalbaye. Resentment towards his policies in the Muslim north culminated in the eruption of a long-lasting civil war in 1965. In 1979 the rebels conquered the capital and put an end to the south's hegemony. However, the rebel commanders fought amongst themselves until Hissène Habré defeated his rivals. He was overthrown in 1990 by his general Idriss Déby. Recently, the Darfur crisis in Sudan has spilt over the border and destabilised the nation.

While many political parties are active, power lies firmly in the hands of President Déby and his political party, the Patriotic Salvation Movement. Chad remains plagued by political violence and recurrent attempted coups d'état, and is one of the poorest and most corrupt countries in Africa; most Chadians live in poverty as subsistence herders and farmers. Since 2003 crude oil has become the country's primary source of export earnings, superseding the traditional cotton industry.

Hi

In the 7th millennium BC, ecological conditions in the northern half of Chadian territory favoured human

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 83 of 586

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p><i>République du Tchad</i> جمهورية تشاد <i>Jumhūriyyat Tshād</i> Republic of Chad</p> | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: "<i>Unité, Travail, Progrès</i>" (French) "Unity, Work, Progress"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: "<i>La Tchadienne</i>"</p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | N'Djamena |
| Official languages | French, Arabic |
| Demonym | Chadian |
| Government | Republic |



settlement, and the region experienced a strong population increase. Some of the most important African archaeological sites are found in Chad, mainly in the Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti Region; some date to earlier than 2,000 BC. For more than 2000 years, the Chadian Basin has been inhabited by agricultural and sedentary peoples. The region became a crossroads of civilizations. The earliest of these were the legendary Sao, known from artifacts and oral histories. The Sao fell to the Kanem Empire, the first and longest-lasting of the empires that developed in Chad's Sahelian strip by the end of the 1st millennium AD. The power of Kanem and its successors was based on control of the trans-Saharan trade routes that passed through the region. These states, at least tacitly Muslim, never extended their control to the southern grasslands except to raid for slaves.

French colonial expansion led to the creation of the *Territoire Militaire des Pays et Protectorats du Tchad* in 1900. By 1920, France had secured full control of the colony and incorporated it as part of French Equatorial Africa. French rule in Chad was characterised by an absence of policies to unify the territory and sluggish modernisation. The French primarily viewed the colony as an unimportant source of untrained labour and raw cotton; France introduced large-scale cotton production in 1929. The colonial administration in Chad was critically understaffed and had to rely on the dregs of the French civil service. Only the south was governed effectively; French presence in the north and east was nominal. The educational system suffered from this neglect. After World War II, France granted Chad the status of overseas territory and its inhabitants the right to elect representatives to the French National Assembly and a Chadian assembly. The largest political party was the Chadian Progressive Party (PPT), based in the southern half of the colony. Chad was granted independence on August 11, 1960 with the PPT's leader, François Tombalbaye, as its first president.

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Idriss Déby |
| - Prime Minister | Delwa Kassiré Koumakoye |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | August 11, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,284,000 km ² (21st) 495,753 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.9 |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 9,885,661 (75th) |
| - 1993 census | 6,279,921 |
| - Density | 7.9/km ² (212th) 20.4/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$15.260 billion (128th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,519 (163rd) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.388 (low) (170th) |
| Currency | CFA franc (XAF) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .td |
| Calling code | +235 |



15,000 Chadian soldiers fought for Free France during WWII.

Two years later, Tombalbaye banned opposition parties and established a one-party system. Tombalbaye's autocratic rule and insensitive mismanagement exacerbated interethnic tensions. In 1965 Muslims began a civil war. Tombalbaye was overthrown and killed in 1975, but the insurgency continued. In 1979 the rebel factions conquered the capital, and all central authority in the country collapsed. Armed factions, many from the north's rebellion, contended for power. The disintegration of Chad caused the collapse of France's position in the country. Libya moved to fill the power vacuum and became involved in Chad's civil war. Libya's adventure ended in disaster in 1987; the French-supported president, Hissène Habré, evinced a united response from Chadians of a kind never seen before and forced the Libyan army off Chadian soil.

Habré consolidated his dictatorship through a power system that relied on corruption and violence; an estimated 40,000 people were killed under his rule. The president favoured his own Daza ethnic group and discriminated against his former allies, the Zaghawa. His general, Idriss Déby, overthrew him in 1990.

Deby attempted to reconcile the rebel groups and re-introduced multiparty politics. Chadians approved a new constitution by referendum, and in 1996, Déby easily won a competitive presidential election. He won a second term five years later. Oil exploitation began in Chad in 2003, bringing with it hopes that Chad would at last have some chances of peace and prosperity. Instead, internal dissent worsened, and a new civil war broke out. Déby unilaterally modified the constitution to remove the two-term limit on the presidency; this caused an uproar among the civil society and opposition parties. In 2006 Déby won a third mandate in elections that the opposition boycotted. Ethnic violence in eastern Chad has increased; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has warned that a genocide like that in Darfur may yet occur in Chad.

Politics and government



By defeating and killing Rabih az-Zubayr on April 22, 1900, at the Battle of Kousséri, France removed a major obstacle to its colonisation of Chad.



The president of Chad,
Idriss Déby

Chad's constitution provides for a strong executive branch headed by a president who dominates the political system. The president has the power to appoint the prime minister and the cabinet, and exercises considerable influence over appointments of judges, generals, provincial officials and heads of Chad's para-statal firms. In cases of grave and immediate threat, the president, in consultation with the National Assembly, may declare a state of emergency. The president is directly elected by popular vote for a five-year term; in 2005 constitutional term limits were removed. This removal allows a president to remain in power beyond the previous two-term limit. Most of Déby's key advisers are members of the Zaghawa ethnic group, although southern and opposition personalities are represented in government. Corruption is rife at all levels; Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2005 named Chad the most corrupt country in the world, and it has fared only slightly better in the following years. In 2007, it scored 1.8 out of 10 on the Corruption Perceptions Index (with 10 being the least corrupt). Only Tonga, Uzbekistan, Haiti, Iraq, Myanmar, and Somalia scored lower. Critics of President Déby have accused him of cronyism and tribalism.

Chad's legal system is based on French civil law and Chadian customary law where the latter does not interfere with public order or constitutional guarantees of equality. Despite the constitution's guarantee of judicial independence, the president names most key judicial officials. The legal system's highest jurisdictions, the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Council, have become fully operational since 2000. The Supreme Court is made up of a chief justice, named by the president, and 15 councillors, appointed for life by the president and the National Assembly. The Constitutional Court is headed by nine judges elected to nine-year terms. It has the power to review legislation, treaties and international agreements prior to their adoption.

The National Assembly makes legislation. The body consists of 155 members elected for four-year terms who meet three times per year. The Assembly holds regular sessions twice a year, starting in March and October, and can hold special sessions when called by the prime minister. Deputies elect a National Assembly president every two years. The president must sign or reject newly passed laws within 15 days. The National Assembly must approve the prime minister's plan of government and may force the prime minister to resign through a majority vote of no confidence. However, if the National Assembly rejects the executive branch's programme twice in one year, the president may disband the Assembly and call for new legislative elections. In practice, the president exercises considerable influence over the National Assembly through his party, the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), which holds a large majority.

Until the legalisation of opposition parties in 1992, Déby's MPS was the sole legal party in Chad. Since, 78 registered political parties have become active. In 2005, opposition parties and human rights organisations supported the boycott of the constitutional referendum that allowed Déby to stand for re-election for a third term amid reports of widespread irregularities in voter registration and government censorship of independent media outlets during the campaign. Correspondents judged the 2006 presidential elections a mere formality, as the opposition deemed the polls a farce and boycotted.

Déby faces armed opposition from groups who are deeply divided by leadership clashes but united in their intention to overthrow him. These forces stormed the capital on April 13, 2006, but were ultimately repelled. Chad's greatest foreign influence is France, which maintains 1,000 troops in the country. Déby relies on the French to help repel the rebels, and France gives the Chadian army logistical and intelligence support for fear of a complete collapse of regional stability. Nevertheless, Franco-Chadian relations were soured by the granting of oil drilling rights to the American Exxon company in 1999.

Educators face considerable challenges due to the nation's dispersed population and a certain degree of reluctance on the part of parents to send their children to school. Although attendance is compulsory, only 68% of boys continue past primary school, and more than half of the population is illiterate. Higher



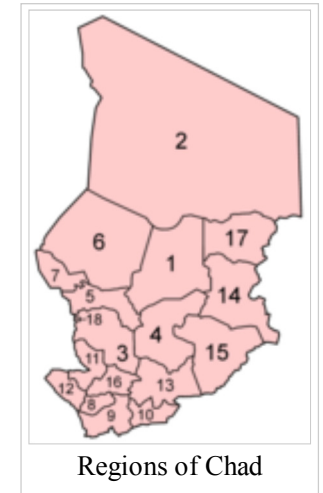
education is provided at the University of N'Djamena.

Regions, departments, and sub-prefectures

Chad is divided into 18 regions. This system came about in 2003 as part of the decentralisation process, when the government abolished the previous 14 prefectures. Each region is headed by a presidentially appointed governor. Prefects administer the 50 departments within the regions. The departments are divided into 200 sub-prefectures, which are in turn composed of 446 cantons. The cantons are scheduled to be replaced by *communautés rurales*, but the legal and regulatory framework has not yet been completed. The constitution provides for decentralised government to compel local populations to play an active role in their own development. To this end, the constitution declares that each administrative subdivisions be governed by elected local assemblies, but no local elections have taken place, and communal elections scheduled for 2005 have been repeatedly postponed.

The regions are:

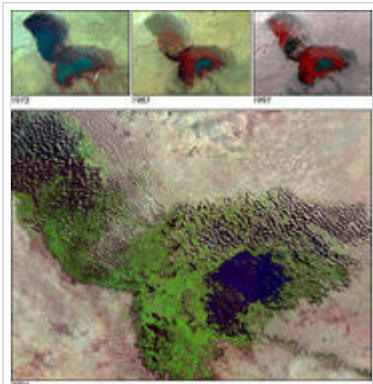
- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Batha | 7. Lac | 13. Moyen-Chari |
| 2. Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti | 8. Logone Occidental | 14. Ouaddaï |
| 3. Chari-Baguirmi | 9. Logone Oriental | 15. Salamat |
| 4. Guéra | 10. Mandoul | 16. Tandjilé |
| 5. Hadjer-Lamis | 11. Mayo-Kebbi Est | 17. Wadi Fira |
| 6. Kanem | 12. Mayo-Kebbi Ouest | 18. N'Djamena |



Geography



At 1,284,000 square kilometres (496,000 sq mi), Chad is the world's 21st-largest country. It is slightly smaller than Peru and slightly larger than South Africa. Chad is in north central Africa, lying between 8° and 24° north and between 14° and 24° east. Chad is bounded to the north by Libya, to the east by Sudan, to the west by Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon, and to the south by the Central African Republic. The country's capital is 1,600 km (990 mi) from the nearest seaport. Due to this distance from the sea and the country's largely desert climate, Chad is sometimes referred to as the "Dead Heart of Africa".



Lake Chad in a 2001 satellite image. On the top, the changes from 1973 to 1997 are shown.

A heritage of the colonial era, Chad's borders do not coincide wholly with natural boundaries. The dominant physical structure is a wide basin bounded to the north, east and south by mountain ranges. Lake Chad, after which the country is named, is the remains of an immense lake that occupied 330,000 km² (130,000 sq mi) of the Chadian Basin 7,000 years ago. Although in the 21st century it covers only 17,806 km² (6,875 sq mi), and its surface area is subject to heavy seasonal fluctuations, the lake is Africa's second largest wetland. The Emi Koussi, a dormant volcano in the Tibesti Mountains that reaches 3,414 metres (13,435 ft) above sea level, is the highest point in Chad and the Sahara.

Each year a tropical weather system known as the intertropical front crosses Chad from south to north, bringing a wet season that lasts from May to October in the south, and from June to September in the Sahel. Variations in local rainfall create three major geographical zones. The Sahara lies in the country's northern third. Yearly precipitations there are under 50 millimetres (2 in); in fact, Borkou in Chad is the most arid area of the Sahara. Vegetation throughout this belt is scarce; only the occasional spontaneous palm grove survives, the only ones to do so south of the Tropic of Cancer. The Sahara gives way to a Sahelian belt

in Chad's centre; precipitation there varies from 300 mm to 600 mm (12–24 in) per year. In the Sahel a steppe of thorny bushes (mostly acacias) gradually gives way to a savanna in Chad's Sudanese zone to the south. Yearly rainfall in this belt is over 900 mm (35 in). The region's tall grasses and extensive marshes make it favourable for birds, reptiles, and large mammals. Chad's major rivers—the Chari, Logone and their tributaries—flow through the southern savannas from the southeast into Lake Chad.

Economy and infrastructure



Chad is divided into three distinct zones, from the Sudanese savanna in the south to the Sahara Desert in the north.



The United Nations' Human Development Index ranks Chad as the fifth poorest country in the world, with 80% of the population living below the poverty line. The GDP (PPP) per capita was estimated as US\$1,500 in 2005. Chad is part of the Bank of Central African States and the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC). Its currency is the CFA franc. Years of civil war have scared away foreign investors; those who left Chad between 1979 and 1982 have only recently begun to regain confidence in the country's future. In 2000 major direct foreign investment in the oil sector began, boosting the country's economic prospects.



Women in Mao, where water is provided by a water tower. Access to clean water is often a problem in Chad.

Over 80% of Chad's population relies on subsistence farming and livestock raising for its livelihood. The crops grown and the locations of herds are determined by the local climate. In the southernmost 10 percent of the territory lies the nation's most fertile cropland, with rich yields of sorghum and millet. In the Sahel only the hardier varieties of millet grow, and these with much lower yields than in the south. On the other hand, the Sahel is ideal pastureland for large herds of commercial cattle and for goats, sheep, donkeys and horses. The Sahara's scattered oases support only some dates and legumes. Before the development of oil industry, cotton dominated industry and the labour market and accounted for approximately 80% of export earnings. Cotton remains a primary export, although exact figures are not available. Rehabilitation of Cotontchad, a major cotton company that suffered from a decline in world cotton prices, has been financed by France, the Netherlands, the European Union, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The parastatal is now expected to be privatised.



A Chadian maternity ward. Although improving, Chad's infrastructure remains far less developed than that of its northern neighbours.

ExxonMobil leads a consortium of Chevron and Petronas that has invested \$3.7 billion to develop oil reserves estimated at one billion barrels in southern Chad. Oil production began in 2003 with the completion of a pipeline (financed in part by the World Bank) that links the southern oilfields to terminals on the Atlantic coast of Cameroon. As a condition of its assistance, the World Bank insisted that 80% of oil revenues be spent on development projects. In January 2006 the World Bank suspended its loan programme when the Chadian government passed laws reducing this amount. On July 14, 2006, the World Bank and Chad signed a memorandum of understanding under which the Government of Chad commits 70% of its spending to priority poverty reduction programmes.

Civil war crippled the development of transport infrastructure; in 1987, Chad had only 30 kilometres (19 mi) of paved roads. Successive road rehabilitation projects improved the network to 550 kilometres (342 mi) by 2004. Nevertheless, the road network is limited; roads are often unusable for several months of the year. With no railways of its own, Chad depends heavily on Cameroon's rail system for the transport of Chadian exports and imports to and from the seaport of Douala. An international airport serves the capital and provides regular direct flights to Paris and several African cities. The telecommunication system is basic and expensive, with fixed telephone services provided by the state telephone company SotelTchad. Only 14,000 fixed telephone lines serve all of Chad, one of the lowest telephone density rates in the world. Chad's energy sector has suffered from years of mismanagement by the parastatal Chad Water and Electric Society (STEE), which provides power for 15% of the capital's citizens and covers only 1.5% of the national population. Most Chadians burn biomass fuels such as wood and animal manure for power. Chad's cities face serious difficulties of municipal infrastructure; only 48% of urban residents have access to potable water and only 2% to basic sanitation.



A bridge on the Bragoto River



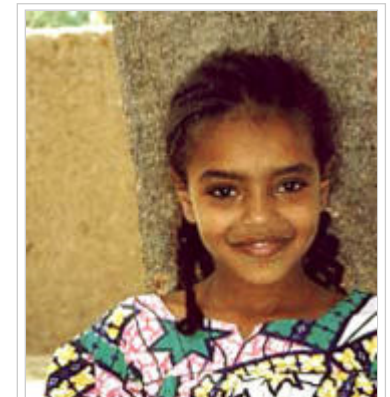
The country's television audience is limited to N'Djamena. The only television station is the state-owned TeleTchad. Radio has a far greater reach, with 13 private radio stations. Newspapers are limited in quantity and distribution, and circulation figures are small due to transportation costs, low literacy rates, and poverty. While the constitution defends liberty of expression, the government has regularly restricted this right, and at the end of 2006 began to enact a system of prior censorship on the media.

Demographics

2005 estimates place Chad's population at 10,146,000; 25.8% live in urban areas and 74.8% in rural ones. The country's population is young: an estimated 47.3% is under 15. The birth rate is estimated at 42.35 births per 1,000 people, the mortality rate at 16.69. The life expectancy is 47.2 years.

Chad's population is unevenly distributed. Density is 0.1/km² (0.3/sq mi) in the Saharan Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti Region but 52.4/km² (135.7/sq mi) in the Logone Occidental Region. In the capital, it is even higher. About half of the nation's population lives in the southern fifth of its territory, making this the most densely populated region. Urban life is virtually restricted to the capital, whose population is mostly engaged in commerce. The other major towns are Sarh, Moundou, Abéché and Doba, which are less urbanised but are growing rapidly and joining the capital as decisive factors in economic growth. Since 2003, 230,000 Sudanese refugees have fled to eastern Chad from war-ridden Darfur. With the 172,000 Chadians displaced by the civil war in the east, this has generated increased tensions among the region's communities.

Polygyny is common, with 39% of women living in such unions. This is sanctioned by law, which automatically permits polygamy unless spouses specify that this is unacceptable upon marriage. Although violence against women is prohibited, domestic violence is common. Female genital mutilation is prohibited, but the practice is widespread and deeply rooted in tradition; 45% of Chadian women undergo the procedure, with the highest rates among Arabs, Hadjarai, and Ouaddaians (90% or more). Lower percentages were reported among the Sara (38%) and the Toubou (2%). Women lack equal opportunities in education and training, making it difficult for them to compete for the relatively few formal-sector jobs. Although property and inheritance laws based on the French code do not discriminate against women, local leaders adjudicate most inheritance cases in favour of men, according to traditional practice.



A Ouaddaian girl



A tribal delegation

Chad has more than 200 distinct ethnic groups, which create diverse social structures. The colonial administration and independent governments have attempted to impose a national society, but for most Chadians the local or regional society remains the most important influence outside the immediate family. Nevertheless, Chad's peoples may be classified according to the geographical region in which they live. In the south live sedentary people such as the Sara, the nation's main ethnic group, whose essential social unit is the lineage. In the Sahel sedentary peoples live side-by-side with nomadic ones, such as the Arabs, the country's second major ethnic group. The north is inhabited by nomads, mostly Toubous. The nation's official business languages are French and Arabic, but over 100 languages and dialects are spoken. Due to the important role played by itinerant Arab traders and settled merchants in local communities, Chadian Arabic has become a *lingua franca*.

The 1993 census found that 54% of Chadians were Muslim, 20% Roman Catholic, 14% Protestant, 10% animist, and 3%



atheist. None of these religious traditions is monolithic. Animism includes a variety of ancestor and place-oriented religions whose expression is highly specific. Islam, though characterised by an orthodox set of beliefs and observances, is expressed in diverse ways. Christianity arrived in Chad only with the French; as with Chadian Islam, it syncretises aspects of pre-Christian religious beliefs. Muslims are largely concentrated in northern and eastern Chad, and animists and Christians live primarily in southern Chad and Guéra. The constitution provides for a secular state and guarantees religious freedom; different religious communities generally co-exist without problems.

Culture

Due to its great variety of peoples and languages, Chad possesses a rich cultural heritage. The Chadian government have actively promoted Chadian culture and national traditions by opening the Chad National Museum and the Chad Cultural Centre. Six national holidays are observed throughout the year, and movable holidays include the Christian holiday of Easter Monday and the Muslim holidays of Eid ul-Fitr, Eid ul-Adha, and Eid Milad Nnabi.

Regarding music, Chadians play instruments such as the *kinde*, a type of bow harp; the *kakaki*, a long tin horn; and the *hu hu*, a stringed instrument that uses calabashes as loudspeakers. Other instruments and their combinations are more linked to specific ethnic groups: the Sara prefer whistles, balafones, harps and *kodjo* drums; and the Kanembu combine the sounds of drums with those of flute-like instruments.



A Chadian tailor sells traditional dresses.

The music group Chari Jazz formed in 1964 and initiated Chad's modern music scene. Later, more renowned groups such as African Melody and International Challal attempted to mix modernity and tradition. Popular groups such as Tibesti have clung faster to their heritage by drawing on *sai*, a traditional style of music from southern Chad. The people of Chad have customarily disdained modern music. However, in 1995 greater interest has developed and fostered the distribution of CDs and audio cassettes featuring Chadian artists. Piracy and a lack legal protections for artists' rights remain problems to further development of the Chadian music industry.

Millet is the staple food throughout Chad. It is used to make balls of paste that are dipped in sauces. In the north this dish is known as *alysh*; in the south, as *biya*. Fish is popular, which is generally prepared and sold either as *salanga* (sun-dried and lightly smoked *Alestes* and *Hydrocynus*) or as *banda* (smoked larger fish). *Carcaje* is a popular sweet drink extracted from hibiscus leaves. Alcoholic beverages, though absent in the north, are popular in the south, where people drink millet beer, known as *billi-billi* when brewed from red millet and as *coshate* when from white millet.

As in other Sahelian countries, literature in Chad has suffered from an economic, political and spiritual drought that has affected its best known writers. Chadian authors have been forced to write from exile or expatriate status and have generated literature dominated by themes of political oppression and historical

Holidays

| Date | English Name |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| January 1 | New Year's Day |
| May 1 | Labour Day |
| May 25 | African Liberation Day |
| August 11 | Independence Day |
| November 1 | All Saints' Day |
| November 28 | Republic Day |
| December 1 | Freedom and Democracy Day |
| December 25 | Christmas |



discourse. Since 1962, 20 Chadian authors have written some 60 works of fiction. Among the most internationally renowned writers are Joseph Brahim Seïd, Baba Moustapha, Antoine Bangui and Koulsy Lamko. In 2003 Chad's sole literary critic, Ahmat Taboye, published his *Anthologie de la littérature tchadienne* to further knowledge of Chad's literature internationally and among youth and to make up for Chad's lack of publishing houses and promotional structure.

The development of a Chadian film industry has suffered from the devastations of civil war and from the lack of cinemas, of which there is only one in the whole country. The first Chadian feature film, the docudrama *Bye Bye Africa*, was made in 1999 by Mahamat Saleh Haroun. His later film *Abouna* was critically acclaimed, and his *Daratt* won the Grand Special Jury Prize at the 63rd Venice International Film Festival. Issa Serge Coelo directed Chad's two other films, *Daresalam* and *DP75: Tartina City*.

Football is Chad's most popular sport. The country's national team is much followed during international competitions, and Chadian footballers have played for French teams. Basketball and freestyle wrestling are widely practiced, the latter in a form in which the wrestlers don traditional animal hides and cover themselves with dust.

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Comoros

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The **Comoros** (pronounced /ˈkɒməroʊs/, listen (help·info); Arabic: جزر القمر, *Juzur al-Qumur*), officially the **Union of the Comoros** (French: *Union des Comores*, Arabic: الإتحاد القمريّ, *Al-Ittiḥād al-Qumuriyy*) is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, located off the eastern coast of Africa on the northern end of the Mozambique Channel between northern Madagascar and northeastern Mozambique. The nearest countries to the Comoros are Mozambique, Tanzania, Madagascar, and the Seychelles. At 2,235 km² (863 sq mi) the Comoros is the third smallest African nation by area; and with a population estimated at 798,000 it is the sixth smallest African nation by population (though it has one of the highest population densities in Africa), and is the southern most member state of the Arab League. Its name derives from the Arabic word *qamar* ("moon").


The country officially consists of the four islands in the volcanic Comoros archipelago: Ngazidja (French: *Grande Comore*), Mwali (French: *Mohéli*), Nzwani (French: *Anjouan*), and Mahoré (French: *Mayotte*), as well as many smaller islands. However, the government of the Union of the Comoros (or its predecessors since independence) has never administered the island of Mayotte, which France considers an overseas community and still administers. Since Mayotte was the only island in the archipelago that voted against independence from France, and France has vetoed United Nations Security Council resolutions that would affirm Comorian sovereignty over the island, control was never passed to the Comoros.

The country is notable for its diverse culture and history, as a nation formed at the crossroads of many civilizations. It has three official languages— Comorian (*Shikomor*), Arabic, and French, and it is the only state to be a member of each of the African Union, Francophonie, Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Arab League, and Indian Ocean Commission, among other international organizations. However it has had a troubled history since independence in 1975, marked by an inordinate number of *coups d'état*.

History

Pre-colonial inhabitation

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| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Union des Comores</i> <i>Udzima wa Komori</i> الإتحاد القمريّ <i>Al-Ittiḥād Al-Qumuriyy</i> Union of the Comoros</p> | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: <i>Unité - Solidarité - Développement</i>" (French) "Unity - Solidarity - Development"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Udzima wa ya Masiwa</i> (Comorian) "The Union of the Great Islands"</p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Moroni |



The first human inhabitants of the Comoro Islands are thought to have been Polynesian and Melanesian settlers, Malays and Indonesians (Austronesians), travelling by boat. They settled there no later than the sixth century AD, the date of the earliest known archaeological site, found on Nzwani, though some sources speculate that settlement began as early as the first century. The islands of Comoros became populated by a succession of diverse groups from the coast of Africa, the Persian Gulf, Indonesia, and Madagascar. Swahili settlers first reached the islands as a part of the greater Bantu expansion that took place in Africa throughout the first millennium.

Development of the Comoros is periodized into phases, beginning with Swahili influence and settlement in the Dembini phase (ninth to tenth centuries), during which each island maintained a single, central village. From the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, trade with the island of Madagascar and merchants from the Middle East flourished, smaller villages emerged, and existing towns expanded. Unconfirmed legends tell of early Arab or Persian settlements dated even before their known arrival to the archipelago, and Swahili oral historians frequently trace genealogies back to Persian or Arab ancestors. Middle Eastern merchants first introduced Islam to the islands. As the religion gained in popularity, large mosques were constructed. The Comoro Islands, like other coastal areas in the region, were important stops in early Islamic trade routes frequented by Persians and Arabs. Despite its distance from the coast, Comoros is situated along the major sea route between Kilwa and Mozambique, an outlet for Zimbabwean gold.

By the nineteenth century, the influence of Sunni Persians from Shiraz, Iran, dominated the islands. The Shirazi traded along the coasts of East Africa, the Middle East, and India, and established colonies in the archipelago. Arab influence increased with the ascendancy of Zanzibar under Arab Omani rule, and Comorian culture, especially architecture and religion, increasingly reflected Arab contact. Many rival sultanates were established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

By the time Europeans showed interest in the Comoros, the dominant Arab cultural veneer of the islands led to many to emphasize the society's Arab foundations at the expense of its Swahili and African heritage. More recent scholarship by Thomas Spear and Randall Pouwells emphasizes African historical predominance over the diffusionist perspective.

European contact and French colonization

Portuguese explorers first visited the archipelago in 1505.

In 1793, Malagasy warriors from Madagascar first started raiding the islands for slaves, and later settled and seized control in many locations. France first

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Official languages | Arabic, French |
| Demonym | Comorian |
| Government | Federal republic |
| - President | Ahmed Abdallah M. Sambi |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | July 6, 1975 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 2,235 km ² (178th) 863 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 798,000 (159th) |
| - Density | 275/km ² (25th) 712.2/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2004 estimate |
| - Total | \$1.049 billion (171st) |
| - Per capita | \$1,660 (156th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.561 (medium) (134th) |
| Currency | Comorian franc (KMF) |
| Time zone | EAT (UTC+3) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .km |
| Calling code | +269 |



established colonial rule in the Comoros in 1841. The first French colonists landed in Mayotte, and Andrian Tsouli, the Malagasy King of Mayotte, signed the Treaty of April 1841, which ceded the island to the French authorities. In 1886, Mohéli was placed under French protection by its Queen Salimba Mochimba. That same year, after consolidating his authority over all of Grande Comore, Sultan Said Ali agreed to French protection of his island, though he retained sovereignty until 1909. Also in 1909, Sultan Said Muhamed of Anjouan abdicated in favour of French rule. The Comoros (or *Les Comores*) was officially made a French colony in 1912, and the islands were placed under the administration of the French colonial governor general of Madagascar in 1914.

The Comoros served as a way station for merchants sailing to the Far East and India until the opening of the Suez Canal significantly reduced traffic passing through the Mozambique Channel. The only native commodities exported by the Comoros were coconuts. French settlers, French-owned companies, and wealthy Arab merchants established a plantation-based economy that now uses about one-third of the land for export crops. After its annexation, France converted Mayotte into a sugar plantation colony. The other islands were soon transformed as well, and the major crops of ylang-ylang, vanilla, coffee, cocoa, and sisal were introduced.

Agreement was reached with France in 1973 for Comoros to become independent in 1978. On July 6, 1975, however, the Comorian parliament passed a unilateral resolution declaring independence. The deputies of Mayotte, which remained under French control, abstained. Referendums on all four of the islands excluding Mayotte showed strong support for independence. Ahmed Abdallah proclaimed the of independence the **State of the Comoros** (*État comorien*; دولة القمر) on September 5, 1975 and became its first president.

Independence

The next 30 years were a period of political turmoil. On August 3, 1975, mercenary Bob Denard, with clandestine support from Jacques Foccart and the French government, removed president Ahmed Abdallah from office in an armed coup and replaced him with United National Front of the Comoros (UNF) member Prince Said Mohammed Jaffar. Months later, in January 1976, Jaffar was ousted in favour of his Minister of Defense Ali Soilih. At this time, the population of Mayotte voted against independence from France in two referendums. The first, held in December 1974, won 63.8% support for maintaining ties with France, while the second, held in February 1976, confirmed that vote with an overwhelming 99.4%. The three remaining islands, ruled by President Soilih, instituted a number of socialist and isolationist policies that soon strained relations with France. On May 13, 1978, Bob Denard returned to overthrow President Soilih and re-instate Abdallah with the support of the French and South African governments. During Soilih's brief rule, he faced seven additional coup attempts until he was finally forced from office and killed.

In contrast to Soilih, Abdallah's presidency was marked by authoritarian rule and increased adherence to traditional Islam and the country was renamed the **Federal and Islamic Republic of Comoros** (*République Fédérale Islamique des Comores*; جمهورية القمر الاتحادية الإسلامية). Abdallah continued as president until 1989 when, fearing a probable coup d'état, he signed a decree ordering the Presidential Guard, led by Bob Denard, to disarm the armed forces. Shortly after the signing of the decree, Abdallah was allegedly shot dead in his office by a disgruntled military officer, though later sources claim an anti-tank missile launched into his bedroom killed him. Although Denard was also injured, it is suspected that Abdallah's killer was a soldier under his command. A few days later, Bob Denard was evacuated to South Africa by French paratroopers. Said Mohamed Djohar, Soilih's older half-brother, then became president and served until September 1995 when Bob Denard returned and attempted another coup. This time France intervened with paratroopers and forced Denard to surrender. The French removed Djohar to Reunion, and the Paris-backed Mohamed Taki Abdulkarim became president by election. He led the country from 1996, during a



time of labor crises, government suppression, and secessionist conflicts, until his death November 1998. He was succeeded by Interim President Tadjidine Ben Said Massoude.

The islands of Anjouan and Mohéli declared their independence from the Comoros in 1997, in an attempt to restore French rule. But France rejected their request, leading to bloody confrontations between federal troops and rebels. In April 1999, Colonel Azali Assoumani, Army Chief of Staff, seized power in a bloodless coup, overthrowing the Interim President Massoude, citing weak leadership in the face of the crisis. This was the Comoros' 18th coup d'état since independence in 1975. But Azali failed to consolidate power and reestablish control over the islands, which was the subject of international criticism. The African Union, under the auspices of President Mbeki of South Africa, imposed sanctions on Anjouan to help broker negotiations and effect reconciliation. The official name of the country was changed to the **Union of the Comoros** and a new system of political autonomy for each island, plus a union government for the three islands.

Azali stepped down in 2002 to run in the democratic election of the President of the Comoros, which he won. Under ongoing international pressure, as a military ruler who had originally come to power by force and was not always democratic while in office, Azali led the Comoros through constitutional changes that enabled new elections. A *Loi des compétences* law was passed in early 2005 that defines the responsibilities of each governmental body, and is in the process of implementation. The elections in 2006 were won by Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi, a Sunni Muslim Cleric nick-named the "Ayatollah" for his time spent studying Islam in Iran. Azali honored the election results, thus allowing the first peaceful and democratic exchange of power for the archipelago.

Colonel Mohammed Bacar, a French-trained former gendarme, seized power as President in Anjouan in 2001. He staged a vote in June 2007 to confirm his leadership that was rejected as illegal by the Comoros federal government and the African Union. On March 25, 2008 hundreds of soldiers from the African Union and Comoros seized rebel-held Anjouan, generally welcomed by the population. Some rebels were killed and injured, but there are no official figures. At least 11 civilians were wounded. Some officials were imprisoned. Bacar fled in a speedboat to the French Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte to seek asylum. Anti-French protests followed in Comoros (see 2008 invasion of Anjouan).

Since independence from France, the Comoros experienced more than 20 coups or attempted coups.

Geography

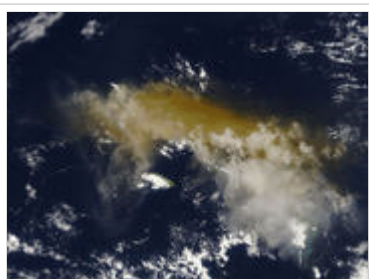


The Comoros is formed by Ngazidja (Grande Comore), Mwali (Mohéli), Nzwani (Anjouan), and Mahoré (Mayotte), the major islands in the Comoros Archipelago, as well as many minor islets. The islands are officially known by their Comorian language names, though international sources still use their French names (in parentheses) commonly. The capital and largest city, Moroni, is located on Ngazidja. The archipelago is situated in the Indian Ocean, in the Mozambique Channel, between the African coast (nearest to Mozambique and Tanzania) and Madagascar, with no land borders. At 2,235 km² (863 sq mi), it is one of the smallest countries in the world. The Comoros also has claim to 320 km² (124 sq mi) of territorial seas. The interiors of the islands vary from steep mountains to low hills. The climate is generally tropical and mild, and the two major seasons are distinguishable by their relative raininess. The temperature reaches an average of 29-30°C (84-86°F) in March, the hottest month in the rainy season (December to April), and an average low of 19°C (66°F) in the cool, dry season (May to November). The islands are subject to cyclones during rainy season which are strong enough to devastate the infrastructure about twice every decade.



Map of Comoros

Ngazidja is the largest of the Comoros Archipelago, approximately equal in area to the other islands combined. It is also the most recent island, and therefore has rocky soil. The island's two volcanoes, Karthala and La Grille, and the lack of good harbors are distinctive characteristics of its terrain. Mwali, with its capital at Fomboni, is the smallest of the four major islands. Nzwani, whose capital is Mutsamudu, has a distinctive triangular shape caused by three mountain chains, Sima, Nioumakele, and Jimilime, emanating from a central peak, Mtingui (1,575 m, 5,177 ft). The oldest of the islands, Mahoré has the richest soil as well as good harbors and local fish populations, due to its ring of coral reefs. Dzaoudzi, a previous capital of all the colonial Comoros, is located on Pamanzi, (French: *Petite-Terre*), the largest islet of Mahoré. Mahoré's current capital is at Mamoudzou. The term *Mayotte* (or Mahoré) may also refer to the group of islands, of which the largest is known as Mahoré (French: *Grande-Terre*), and it includes Mahoré's surrounding islands, most notably Pamanzi (*Petite-Terre*).



Satellite view of Mount Karthala after a Nov. 2005 eruption. Ash obscures the islands (outlined).

The islands of the Comoros Archipelago were formed by volcanic activity. Mount Karthala, an active shield volcano located on Ngazidja, is the country's highest point, at 2,361 m or 7748 ft. It contains the Comoros' largest patch of its disappearing rainforest. Karthala is currently one of the most active volcanoes in the world, with a minor eruption in May 2006, and prior eruptions as recently as April 2005 and 1991. In the 2005 eruption, which lasted from April 17 to 19, 40,000 citizens were evacuated, and the crater lake in the volcano's 3 by 4 km (2 by 2½ mi) caldera was destroyed.

The Comoros also lays claim to the Glorioso Islands, comprised of Grande Glorieuse, Île du Lys, Wreck Rock, South Rock, Verte Rocks (three islets), and three unnamed islets, one of France's *Îles Éparses* or *Îles éparses de l'océan indien* (Scattered islands in the Indian Ocean) possessions. The Glorioso Islands were administered by the colonial Comoros before 1975, and are therefore sometimes considered part of the Comoros Archipelago. Banc du Geysier, a former island in the Comoros Archipelago, now submerged, is geographically located in the *Îles Éparses*, but was annexed by Madagascar in 1976 as an unclaimed territory. The Comoros now claims it as part of its exclusive economic zone.

Government



Politics of the Union of the Comoros takes place in a framework of a federal presidential republic, whereby the President of the Comoros is both head of state and head of government, and of a multi-party system. The Constitution of the Union of the Comoros was ratified by referendum on December 23, 2001, and the islands' constitutions and executives were elected in the following months. It had previously been considered a military dictatorship, and the transfer of power from Azali Assoumani to Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi in May 2006 was the first peaceful transfer in Comorian history. Executive power is exercised by the government. Federal legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. The preamble of the constitution guarantees an Islamic inspiration in governance, a commitment to human rights, and several specific enumerated rights, democracy, "a common destiny" for all Comorians. Each of the islands (according to Title II of the Constitution) has a great amount of autonomy in the Union, including having their own constitutions (or Fundamental Law), president, and Parliament. The presidency and Assembly of the Union are distinct from each of the Islands' governments. The presidency of the Union rotates between the islands. Anjouan holds the current presidency rotation, and so Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi is President of the Union; Mohéli and Ngazidja follow in four year terms.

The Comorian legal system rests on Islamic law and an inherited French (Napoleonic code) legal code. Village elders or civilian courts settle most disputes. The judiciary is independent of the legislative and the executive. The Supreme Court acts as a Constitutional Council in resolving constitutional questions and supervising presidential elections. As High Court of Justice, the Supreme Court also arbitrates in cases where the government is accused of malpractice. The Supreme Court consists of two members selected by the president, two elected by the Federal Assembly, and one by the council of each island.

Military

The military resources of the Comoros consist of a small standing army and a 500-member police force, as well as a 500-member defense force. A defense treaty with France provides naval resources for protection of territorial waters, training of Comorian military personnel, and air surveillance. France maintains a small troop presence in Comoros at government request. France maintains a small maritime base and a Foreign Legion Detachment (DLEM) on Mayotte. See also Military of Comoros.

Foreign relations

In November 1975, Comoros became the 143rd member of the United Nations. The new nation was defined as comprising the entire archipelago, although France continues to maintain control over the island of Mayotte as an overseas collectivity. Comoros has repeatedly pressed its claim to the island before the United Nations General Assembly, which adopted a series of resolutions under the caption "Question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte", opining that Mayotte belongs to Comoros under the principle that the territorial integrity of colonial territories should be preserved upon independence. As a practical matter, however, these resolutions have little effect and there is no foreseeable likelihood that Mayotte will become *de facto* part of Comoros without its people's consent. More recently, the Assembly has maintained this item on its agenda but deferred it from year to year without taking action. Other bodies, including the UN General Assembly, the Organization of African Unity, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, have similarly questioned French sovereignty over Mayotte.

Comoros also is a member of the African Union, the Arab League, the European Development Fund, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Indian Ocean Commission, and the African Development Bank.



Economy

Economic growth and poverty reduction are major priorities for the government. With a rate of 14.3%, unemployment is considered very high. Agriculture, including fishing, hunting, and forestry, is the leading sector of the economy, and 38.4% of the working population is employed in the primary sector. High population densities, as much as 1000 per square kilometer in the densest agricultural zones, for what is still a mostly rural, agricultural economy may lead to an environmental crisis in the near future, especially considering the high rate of population growth. The Comoros' real GDP growth was a low 1.9% in 2004 and real GDP per capita was continuing declining annually in 2004. These declines are explained by factors including declining investment, drops in consumption, rising inflation, and an increase in trade imbalance due in part to lowered cash crop prices, especially vanilla.

Comoros has an inadequate transportation system, a young and rapidly increasing population, and few natural resources. The low educational level of the labor force contributes to a subsistence level of economic activity, high unemployment, and a heavy dependence on foreign grants and technical assistance. Agriculture contributes 40% to GDP, employs 80% of the labor force, and provides most of the exports. Comoros is the world's largest producer of ylang-ylang, and a large producer of vanilla.

The government is struggling to upgrade education and technical training, to privatize commercial and industrial enterprises, to improve health services, to diversify exports, to promote tourism, and to reduce the high population growth rate.

The Comoros claims the Banc du Geysir and the Glorioso Islands as part of its exclusive economic zone.

Demographics

With fewer than a million people, the Comoros is one of the least populous countries in the world, but is also one of the most densely populated, with an average of 275 people per km² (712 people per sq mi). In 2001, 34% of the population was considered urban, but that is expected to grow, since rural population growth is negative, while overall population growth is still relatively high. Major urban centers include Moroni, Mutsamudu, Domoni, Fomboni, and Tsémbéhou.

The islands of the Comoros share mostly African-Arab origins. Sunni Islam is the dominant religion, representing as much as 98% of the population. Although Arab culture is firmly established throughout the archipelago, a minority of the citizens of Mayotte (the Mahorais) are Roman Catholic and have been strongly influenced by French culture. Malagasy and Indian minorities also exist, as well as Creole-speaking minorities mostly descended from Réunionnaise. Chinese peoples are also present on Mayotte and parts of Grande Comore (especially Moroni).

The most common language is Comorian, or *Shikomor*, a descendant of Swahili with Arabic influences. Shingazidja, Shimwali, Shinzwani, and Shimaore are the local dialects spoken on each of the islands, Ngazidja, Mwali, Nzwani, and Mahoré, respectively. French and Arabic are also official languages, along with Comorian. Arabic is widely known as a second language, being the language of Quranic teaching, and French is the language of all other formal education. Malagasy is also spoken by a small number of Malagasy immigrants. About fifty-seven percent of the population is literate in the Latin alphabet, more with the Arabic alphabet; total literacy is estimated at 62.5%. Comorian has no native script, but both Arabic and Latin scripts have been used.



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Côte d'Ivoire

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Côte d'Ivoire (pronounced /ˌkɒt diˈvɔː(r)/ in English, IPA: [kot diˈvwar] in French), or **Ivory Coast**, officially the **Republic of Côte d'Ivoire** is a country in West Africa. The government officially discourages the use of the name *Ivory Coast* in English, preferring the French name *Côte d'Ivoire* to be used in all languages. It borders Liberia and Guinea to the west, Mali and Burkina Faso to the north, Ghana to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south.

The country's early history is virtually unknown, although a Neolithic culture is thought to have existed. In the 19th century it was invaded by two Akan groups. In 1843–1844, a treaty made it a protectorate of France and in 1893 Côte d'Ivoire became a French colony. The country became independent in 1960. Until 1993 it was led by Félix Houphouët-Boigny and was closely associated economically and politically with its West African neighbours, for example forming the Council of the Entente. At the same time the country maintained close ties to the West, which helped its economic development and political stability. Since the end of Houphouët-Boigny's rule, this stability has been destroyed by two coups (1999 and 2001) and a civil war since 2002, which has hampered its economic development.

Côte d'Ivoire is a republic with a strong executive power personified in the President. Its *de jure* capital is Yamoussoukro and the official language is French. The country is divided into 19 regions and 58 departments. Côte d'Ivoire's economy is largely market-based and relies heavily on agriculture, with smallholder cash crop production being dominant.

History

Little is known about Côte d'Ivoire before the arrival of Portuguese ships in the 1460s. The major ethnic groups came relatively recently from neighbouring areas: the Kru people from Liberia around 1600; the Senoufo and Lobi moved southward from Burkina Faso and Mali. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Akan people, including the Baoulé, migrated from Ghana into the eastern area of the country, and the Malinké from Guinea into the north-west.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République de Côte d'Ivoire</i> Republic of Côte d'Ivoire | |
|  | Image:Coat of arms of Cotê d'Ivoire.svg Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Union - Discipline - Travail" "Unity, Discipline and Labour" (translation) | |
| Anthem: <i>L'Abidjanaise</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital | Yamoussoukro (<i>de jure</i>) Abidjan (<i>de facto</i>) |
| Largest city | Abidjan |
| Demonym | Ivorian/Ivoirian |
| Government | Republic |



French colonial era

Compared to neighboring Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire suffered little from the slave trade. European slaving and merchant ships preferred other areas along the coast, with better harbors. France took an interest in the 1840s, enticing local chiefs to grant French commercial traders a monopoly along the coast. Thereafter, the French built naval bases to keep out non-French traders and began a systematic conquest of the interior. They accomplished this only after a long war in the 1890s against Mandinka forces, mostly from Gambia. Guerrilla warfare by the Baoulé and other eastern groups continued until 1917.

France's main goal was to stimulate the production of exports. Coffee, cocoa and palm oil crops were soon planted along the coast. Côte d'Ivoire stood out as the only West African country with a sizeable population of "settlers"; elsewhere in West and Central Africa, the French and British were largely bureaucrats. As a result, a third of the cocoa, coffee and banana plantations were in the hands of French citizens and a forced-labour system became the backbone of the economy.

Independence

The son of a Baoulé chief, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, was to become Côte d'Ivoire's father of independence. In 1944 he formed the country's first agricultural trade union for African cocoa farmers like himself. Annoyed that colonial policy favoured French plantation owners, they united to recruit migrant workers for their own farms. Houphouët-Boigny soon rose to prominence and within a year was elected to the French Parliament in Paris. A year later the French abolished forced labour. Houphouët-Boigny established a strong relationship with the French government, expressing a belief that the country would benefit from it, which it did for many years. France made him the first African to become a minister in a European government.

In 1958, Côte d'Ivoire became an autonomous member of the French Community (which replaced the French Union).

At the time of Côte d'Ivoire's independence (1960), the country was easily French West Africa's most prosperous, contributing over 40% of the region's total exports. When Houphouët-Boigny became the first president, his government gave farmers good prices for their products to further stimulate production. Coffee production increased significantly, catapulting Côte d'Ivoire into third place in world output (behind Brazil and Colombia). By 1979 the country was the world's leading producer of cocoa. It also became Africa's leading exporter of pineapples and palm oil. French technicians contributed to the 'Ivoirian miracle'. In the rest of Africa, Europeans were driven out following independence; but in Côte d'Ivoire, they poured in. The French community grew

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Laurent Gbagbo |
| - Prime Minister | Guillaume Soro |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | August 7, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 322,460 km ² (68th) 124,502 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.4 |
| Population | |
| - 2008 estimate | 18,373,060 |
| - 1988 census | 10,815,694 |
| - Density | 56/km ² (141st) 145/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$32.86 billion |
| - Per capita | \$1,800 |
| Gini (2002) | 44.6 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.432 (low) (166th) |
| Currency | West African CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC+0) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .ci |
| Calling code | [[+225]] |
| ^a Estimates for this country take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower population than would otherwise be expected. | |



from only 10,000 prior to independence to 50,000, most of them teachers and advisors. For 20 years, the economy maintained an annual growth rate of nearly 10% - the highest of Africa's non-oil-exporting countries.

Houphouët-Boigny administration

Politically, Houphouët-Boigny ruled with a firmness some called an "iron hand"; others characterized his rule more mildly as "paternal." The press was not free and only one political party existed, although some accepted this as a consequence of Houphouët-Boigny's broad appeal to the population that continually elected him. He was also criticized for his emphasis on developing large scale projects. Many felt the millions of dollars spent transforming his home village, Yamoussoukro, into the new capital that it became, were wasted; others support his vision to develop a centre for peace, education and religion in the heart of the country. But in the early 1980s, the world recession and a local drought sent shockwaves through the Ivoirian economy. Thanks also to the overcutting of timber and collapsing sugar prices, the country's external debt increased threefold. Crime rose dramatically in Abidjan.



Abidjan, economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire

In 1990, hundreds of civil servants went on strike, joined by students protesting institutional corruption. The unrest forced the government to support multi-party democracy. Houphouët-Boigny became increasingly feeble and died in 1993. He favoured Henri Konan Bédié as his successor.

Bédié administration

In October 1995, Bédié overwhelmingly won re-election against a fragmented and disorganised opposition. He tightened his hold over political life, jailing several hundred opposition supporters. In contrast, the economic outlook improved, at least superficially, with decreasing inflation and an attempt to remove foreign debt.

Unlike Houphouët-Boigny, who was very careful in avoiding any ethnic conflict and left access to administrative positions wide-open to immigrants from neighbouring countries, Bédié emphasized the concept of "Ivory" (*Ivoirité*) to exclude his rival Alassane Ouattara, who had two parents of foreign nationality, from running for future presidential election. As people originating from Burkina Faso are a large part of the Ivoirian population, this policy excluded many people from Ivoirian nationality, and the relationship between various ethnic groups became strained.

1999 coup

Similarly, Bédié excluded many potential opponents from the army. In late 1999, a group of dissatisfied officers staged a military coup, putting General Robert Guéi in power. Bédié fled into exile in France. The new leadership reduced crime and corruption, and the generals pressed for austerity and openly campaigned in the streets for a less wasteful society.



Gbagbo administration

A presidential election was held in October 2000 in which Laurent Gbagbo vied with Guéï, but it was peaceful. The lead-up to the election was marked by military and civil unrest. Guéï's attempt to rig the election led to a public uprising, resulting in around 180 deaths and his swift replacement by the election's likely winner, Gbagbo. Alassane Ouattara was disqualified by the country's Supreme Court, due to his alleged Burkinabé nationality. The existing and later reformed constitution [under Gueï] did not allow non-citizens to run for presidency. This sparked violent protests in which his supporters, mainly from the country's north, battled riot police in the capital, Yamoussoukro.

2002 uprising

In the early hours of September 19, 2002, while the President was in Italy, there was an armed uprising. Troops who were to be demobilised mutinied, launching attacks in several cities. The battle for the main gendarmerie barracks in Abidjan lasted until mid-morning, but by lunchtime the government forces had secured the main city, Abidjan. They had lost control of the north of the country, and the rebel forces made their strong-hold in the northern city of Bouake. The rebels threatened to move on Abidjan again and France deployed troops from its base in the country to stop any rebel advance. The French said they were protecting their own citizens from danger, but their deployment also aided the government forces. It is disputed as to whether the French actions improved or worsened the situation in the long-term.

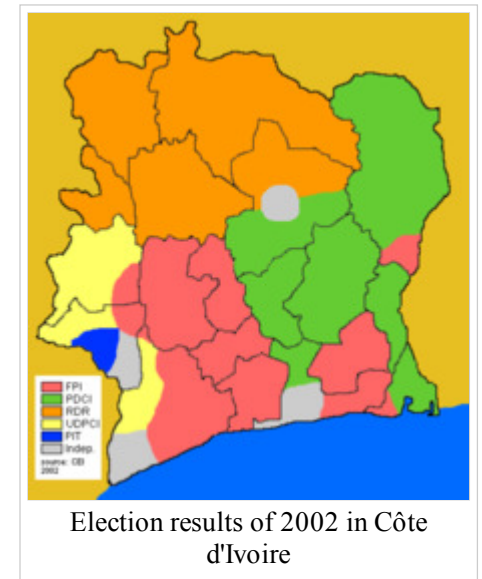
What exactly happened that night is disputed. The government said that former president Robert Guéï had led a coup attempt, and state TV showed pictures of his dead body in the street; counter-claims said that he and fifteen others had been murdered at his home and his body had been moved to the streets to incriminate him. Alassane Ouattara took refuge in the French embassy, his home burned down.

President Gbagbo cut short a trip to Italy and on his return stated, in a television address, that some of the rebels were hiding in the shanty towns where foreign migrant workers lived. Gendarmes and vigilantes bulldozed and burned homes by the thousands, attacking the residents.

An early ceasefire with the rebels, who had the backing of much of the northern populace, proved short-lived, and fighting over the prime cocoa-growing areas resumed. France sent in troops to maintain the cease-fire boundaries, and militias, including warlords and fighters from Liberia and Sierra Leone, took advantage of the crisis to seize parts of the west.

2003 unity government

In January 2003, President Gbagbo and rebel leaders signed accords creating a "government of national unity". Curfews were lifted and French troops patrolled the western border of the country. Since then, the unity government has proven extremely unstable and the central problems remain with neither side achieving its goals. In March 2004, 120 people were killed in an opposition rally, and subsequent mob violence led to foreign nationals being evacuated. A later report concluded the killings were planned.





Though UN peacekeepers were deployed to maintain a *Zone of Confidence*, relations between Gbagbo and the opposition continued to deteriorate.

Aftermath 2004 - 2007

Early in November 2004, after the peace agreement had effectively collapsed following the rebels' refusal to disarm, Gbagbo ordered airstrikes against the rebels. During one of these airstrikes in Bouaké, French soldiers were hit and nine of them were killed; the Ivorian government has said it was a mistake, but the French have claimed it was deliberate. They responded by destroying most Ivorian military aircraft (2 Su-25 planes and 5 helicopters), and violent retaliatory riots against the French broke out in Abidjan.

Gbagbo's original mandate as president expired on October 30, 2005, but due to the lack of disarmament it was deemed impossible to hold an election, and therefore his term in office was extended for a maximum of one year, according to a plan worked out by the African Union; this plan was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council. With the late October deadline approaching in 2006, it was regarded as very unlikely that the election would be held by that point, and the opposition and the rebels rejected the possibility of another term extension for Gbagbo. The U. N. Security Council endorsed another one-year extension of Gbagbo's term on November 1, 2006; however, the resolution provided for the strengthening of Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny's powers. Gbagbo said the next day that elements of the resolution deemed to be constitutional violations would not be applied.

A peace deal between the government and the rebels, or New Forces, was signed on March 4, 2007, and subsequently Guillaume Soro, leader of the New Forces, became prime minister. These events have been seen by some observers as substantially strengthening Gbagbo's position.

Regions and departments



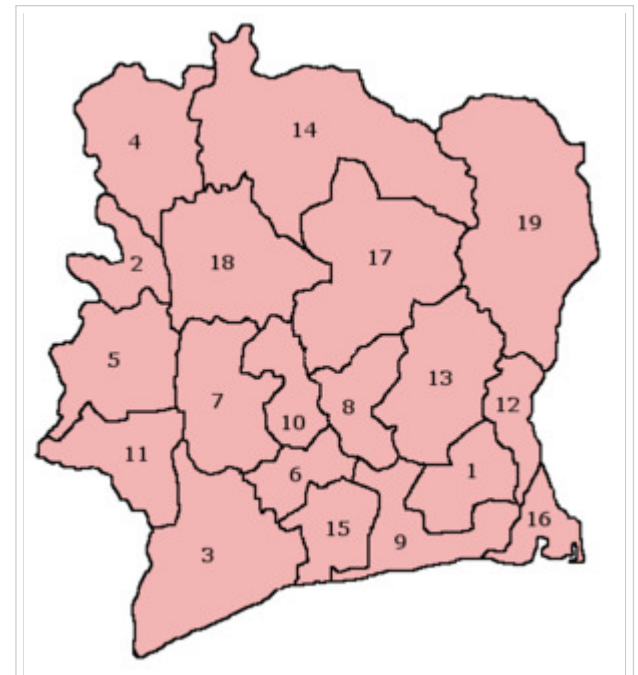
" Childsoldier in the Ivory Coast."



Côte d'Ivoire is divided into nineteen regions (*régions*):

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Agnéby | 11. Moyen-Cavally |
| 2. Bafing | 12. Moyen-Comoé |
| 3. Bas-Sassandra | 13. N'zi-Comoé |
| 4. Denguélé | 14. Savanes |
| 5. Dix-Huit Montagnes | 15. Sud-Bandama |
| 6. Fromager | 16. Sud-Comoé |
| 7. Haut-Sassandra | 17. Vallée du Bandama |
| 8. Lacs | 18. Worodougou |
| 9. Lagunes | 19. Zanzan |
| 10. Marahoué | |

The regions are further divided into 58 departments.



Regions of Côte d'Ivoire

Population of major cities

| City | Population |
|--------------|------------|
| Abidjan | 3,310,500 |
| Bouaké | 775,300 |
| Daloa | 489,100 |
| Yamoussoukro | 295,500 |
| Korhogo | 163,400 |
| San Pédro | 151,600 |
| Divo | 134,200 |



Politics

Since 1983, Côte d'Ivoire's official capital has been Yamoussoukro; Abidjan, however, remains the administrative centre. Most countries maintain their embassies in Abidjan, although some (including the United Kingdom) have closed their missions because of the continuing violence and attacks on Europeans. The Ivoirian population continues to suffer because of an ongoing civil war (*See the History section above*). International human rights organizations have noted problems with the treatment of captive non-combatants by both sides and the re-emergence of child slavery among workers in cocoa production.

Although most of the fighting ended by late 2004, the country remained split in two, with the north controlled by the *New Forces* (FN). A new presidential election was expected to be held in October 2005. However, this election could not be held on time due to delay in preparation and was postponed first to October 2006, and then to October 2007 after an agreement was reached among the rival parties.

Geography



Côte d'Ivoire is a country of western sub-Saharan Africa. It borders Liberia and Guinea in the west, Mali and Burkina Faso in the north, Ghana in the east, and the Gulf of Guinea (Atlantic Ocean) in the south.

Economy

Maintaining close ties to France since independence in 1960, diversification of agriculture for export, and encouragement of foreign investment, has made Côte d'Ivoire one of the most prosperous of the tropical African states. However, in recent years Côte d'Ivoire has been subject to greater competition and falling prices in the global marketplace for its primary agricultural crops: coffee and cocoa. That, compounded with high internal corruption, makes life difficult for the grower and those exporting into foreign markets.

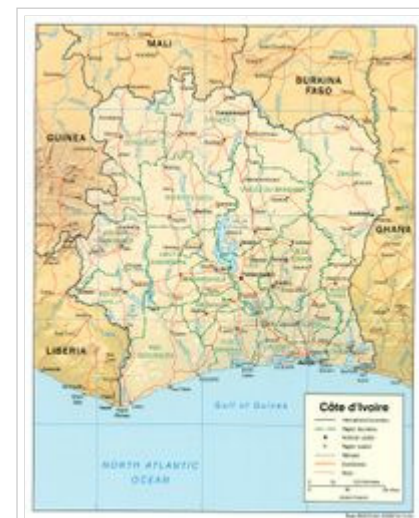
Demographics

77% of the population are considered Ivorians. They represent several different people and language groups. An estimated 65 languages are spoken in the country. One of the most common is Dyula, which acts as a trade language as well as a language commonly spoken by the Muslim population. French, the official language, is taught in schools and serves as a lingua franca in the country. The native born population is roughly split into three groups of Muslim, Christian (primarily Roman Catholic) and animist. Since Côte d'Ivoire has established itself as one of the most successful West African nations, about 20% of the population (about 3.4 million) consists of workers from neighbouring Liberia, Burkina Faso and Guinea, over two thirds of these migrant workers are Muslim. 4% of the population is of non-African ancestry. Many are French, Lebanese, Vietnamese and Spanish citizens, as well as Protestant missionaries from the United States and Canada. In November 2004, around 10,000 French and other foreign nationals evacuated Côte d'Ivoire due to attacks from pro-government youth militias. Aside from French nationals, there are native-born descendants of French settlers who arrived during the country's colonial period.

Culture



Satellite image of Côte d'Ivoire, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Map of Côte d'Ivoire



- Music of Côte d'Ivoire: Espoir 2000, Les Garagistes, Gyl, Dunun
- Roman Catholicism in Côte d'Ivoire
- Islam in Côte d'Ivoire
- List of Ivoirians
- List of writers from Côte d'Ivoire
- Art of Côte d'Ivoire

Name

The country was originally known in English as *Ivory Coast*. In October 1985 the government requested that the country be known in every language as **Côte d'Ivoire**, without a hyphen between the two words (thereby contravening the standard rule in French that geographical names with several words must be written with hyphens).

Usage

Despite the Ivorian government's ruling, "Ivory Coast" (sometimes "the Ivory Coast") is still sometimes used in English:

- BBC usually uses "Ivory Coast" both in news reports and on its page about the country,
- *The Guardian* newspaper's Style Guide says: "Ivory Coast, not 'the Ivory Coast' or 'Côte D'Ivoire'; its nationals are Ivorians,
- ABC News, *The Times*, the *New York Times*, and the South African Broadcasting Corporation all use "Ivory Coast" either exclusively or predominantly.

Governments use "Côte d'Ivoire" for diplomatic reasons. The English country name registered with the United Nations and adopted by ISO 3166 is "Côte d'Ivoire". English-speaking people in neighboring Liberia and Ghana both use "Côte d'Ivoire" in reference to "Ivory Coast". Other organizations that use "Côte d'Ivoire" include:

- the United States Department of State uses "Côte d'Ivoire" in formal documents, but uses "Ivory Coast" in many general references, speeches and briefing documents,
- FIFA and the IOC, referring to their national football and Olympic teams in international games and in official broadcasts,
- *The Economist* newsmagazine,
- *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and
- *National Geographic Society*.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%B4te_d%27Ivoire"

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Mask from Côte d'Ivoire



Democratic Republic of the Congo

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

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The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (French: *République démocratique du Congo*), also often referred to as **DR Congo**, **DRC**, **RDC** or formerly as **Congo Free State**, **Belgian Congo**, **The Congo**, **Congo-Leopoldville**, **Congo-Kinshasa**, and **Zaire** (or *Zaire* in French), is the third largest country by area on the African continent. Though it is located in the Central African UN subregion, the nation is economically and regionally affiliated with Southern Africa as a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It borders the Central African Republic and Sudan on the north, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi on the east, Zambia and Angola on the south, the Republic of the Congo on the west, and is separated from Tanzania by Lake Tanganyika on the east. The country enjoys access to the ocean through a forty-kilometre stretch of Atlantic coastline at Muanda and the roughly nine-kilometre wide mouth of the Congo river which opens into the Gulf of Guinea. The name "Congo" (meaning "hunter") is coined after the Bakongo ethnic group who live in the Congo river basin.

Formerly the Belgian colony of the Belgian Congo, the country's post-independence name was the Republic of the Congo until August 1, 1964, when its name was changed to Democratic Republic of the Congo (to distinguish it from the neighboring Republic of the Congo). On October 27, 1971, then-President Mobutu renamed the country *Zaire*, from a Portuguese mispronunciation of the Kikongo word *nzere* or *nzadi*, which translates to "the river that swallows all rivers." Following the First Congo War which led to the overthrow of Mobutu in 1997, the country was renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo. From 1998 to 2003, the country suffered greatly from the devastating Second Congo War (sometimes referred to as the African World War), the world's deadliest conflict since World War II. However, related fighting still continues in the east of the country.

History

Congolese pre-history

A wave of early peoples is identified in the Northern and North-Western parts of Central Africa during the second millennium BC. They were food producing (pearl millet), with some domestic stock, and

République démocratique du Congo Democratic Republic of the Congo



Flag



Coat of arms

Motto: *Justice – Paix – Travail* (French)
"Justice – Peace – Work"

Anthem: *Debout Congolais*



| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Capital (and largest city) | Kinshasa ^a |
| Official languages | French |
| Recognised regional languages | Lingala, Kongo/ Kituba, Swahili, Tshiluba |
| Demonym | Congolese |



developed a kind of arboriculture mainly based on the oil palm. Several centuries later, around 2,500 BC, bananas were known to some in south Cameroon.

From 3,500 BC to 2,000 BC, starting from a nucleus area in South Cameroon on both banks of the Sanaga River, the first Neolithic peopling of northern and western Central Africa can be followed south-eastwards and southwards. In D.R. Congo the first villages in the vicinity of Mbandaka and the Tumba Lake are known as the 'Imbonga Tradition', from around 2,600 BC. In Lower Congo, north of the Angolan border, it is the 'Ngovo Tradition' around 2,300 BC that shows the arrival of the Neolithic wave of advance.

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Semi-Presidential Republic |
| - President | Joseph Kabila |
| - Prime Minister | Antoine Gizenga |
| Independence | |
| - from Belgium | June 30, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 2,344,858 km ² (12th) 905,351 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 3.3 |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 62,636,000 (21st) |
| - 1984 census | 29,916,800 |
| - Density | 25/km ² (179th) 65/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$46.491 billion ¹ (78th) |
| - Per capita | \$774 (174th) |
| GDP (nominal) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$7.094 billion (116th) |
| - Per capita | \$119 (181th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.411 (low) (168th) |
| Currency | Franc congolais (CDF) |
| Time zone | WAT, CAT (UTC+1 to +2) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+1 to +2) |
| Internet TLD | .cd |



In Kivu, across the country to the east, the 'Urewe Tradition' villages first show up around 2,600 BC. The few archaeological sites known in Congo are a western extension of the 'Urewe' Culture which is mainly known in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Western Kenya and Tanzania. From the start of this tradition, the people knew iron smelting, as is evidenced by several iron smelting furnaces excavated in Rwanda and Burundi.

The earliest evidence further to the west is known in Cameroon, and near to the small town of Bouar in Central Africa. Though an ongoing discussion will ultimately give us a better chronology for the start of iron production in Central Africa, the Cameroonian data places iron smelting north of the Equatorial Forest around 2,600 BC to 2,500 BC. This technology developed independently from the previous Neolithic expansion some 900 years later. As fieldwork done by a German team shows, the Congo river network was slowly settled by food-producing villagers going upstream in the forest. Work from a Spanish project in the Ituri area further east suggests villages reached there only around 800 BC.

The supposedly Bantu-speaking Neolithic, and then iron-producing, villagers added to and displaced the indigenous Pygmy populations (also known in the region as the "Bitwa" or "Twa") into secondary parts of the country. Subsequent migrations from the Darfur and Kordofan regions of Sudan into the north-east, as well as East Africans migrating into the eastern Congo added to the mix of ethnic groups. The Bantus imported a mixed economy made up of agriculture, small stock raising, fishing, fruit collecting, hunting and arboriculture before 3,500 BC; iron-working techniques, possibly from West Africa, are a much later addition. The villagers established the Bantu language family as the primary set of tongues for the Congolese.

In the fifth century, a society began to develop in a region that initially encompassed only a 200 kilometer (125 mi) area along the banks of the Lualaba River in the modern day Katanga Province. This culture, known as the Upemba, would eventually evolve into the more significant Luba kingdom.

The Congo Free State (1877 – 1908)

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Calling code | +243 |
| ^a Estimate is based on regression; other PPP figures are extrapolated from the latest International Comparison Programme benchmark estimates. | |



A Katanga Cross, an obsolete form of money.

Historical nation-states of present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo

Kingdom of Kongo (1395-1914)
 Luba Empire (1585-1889)
 Lunda Empire (c. 1665-1887)
 Yeke Kingdom (1856-1891)
 Congo Free State (1885-1908)
 Belgian Congo (1908-1960)
 Republic of the Congo (1960-1964)
 Democratic Republic of the Congo (1964-1971)
 Republic of Zaire (1971-1997)
Democratic Republic of the Congo (1997-present)



European exploration and administration took place from the 1870s until the 1920s — first by Sir Henry Morton Stanley who undertook his explorations mainly under the sponsorship of King Leopold II of Belgium, who desired what was to become the Congo as a colony. In a succession of negotiations, Leopold, professing humanitarian objectives in his capacity as chairman of the Association Internationale Africaine, played one European rival against the other. The Congo territory was acquired formally by Leopold at the Conference of Berlin in 1885. He made the land his private property and named it the Congo Free State. Leopold's regime began undertaking various projects, such as the railway that ran from the coast to Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) which took years to complete. Nearly all these projects were aimed at increasing the capital Leopold and his associates could extract from the colony, leading to exploitation of Africans. In the Free State, the local population was brutalized in exchange for rubber, a growing market with the development of rubber tires. The selling of the rubber made a fortune for Leopold, who built several buildings in Brussels and Ostend to honour himself and his country. To enforce the rubber quotas, the *Force Publique* (FP) was called in. The FP was an army, but its aim was not to defend the country, but to terrorise the local population. The Force Publique made the practice of cutting off the limbs of the natives as a means of enforcing rubber quotas a matter of policy; this practice was widespread. During the period between 1885 and 1908, between five and 15 (the commonly accepted figure is about ten) million Congolese died as a consequence of exploitation and diseases. A government commission later concluded that the population of the Congo had been "reduced by half" during this brutal period. The actions of the Free State's administration sparked international protests led by E. D. Morel and British diplomat/Irish patriot Roger Casement, whose 1904 report on the Congo condemned the practice, as well as famous writers such as Mark Twain. Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* also takes place in Congo Free State. In 1908, the Belgian parliament, which was at first reluctant, bowed to international pressure (especially from Great Britain) by taking over the Free State from the king as a Belgian colony. From then on, it became the Belgian Congo, under the rule of the elected Belgian government.

Image:CongoVillageErased.jp

Clearing tropical forests ate away at profit margins. However, ample plots of cleared land were already available. Above, a Congolese farming village (Baringa, Equateur) is emptied and levelled to make way for a rubber plantation.

The Belgian administration: Belgian Congo (1908 – 1960)

Conditions in the Congo improved following the Belgian government's takeover. Select Bantu languages were taught in primary schools, a rare occurrence in colonial education. Colonial doctors were to greatly reduce the spread of African trypanosomiasis, commonly known as sleeping sickness. The colonial administration implemented a variety of economic reforms that focused on the improvement of infrastructure: railways, ports, roads, mines, plantations and industrial areas. The Congolese people, however, lacked political power and faced legal discrimination. All colonial policies were decided in Brussels and Leopoldville. The Belgian Colony-secretary and Governor-general, neither of whom was elected by the Congolese people, wielded absolute power. Among the Congolese people, resistance against their undemocratic regime grew over time. In 1955, the Congolese upper class (the so-called "évolués"), many of whom had been educated in Europe, initiated a campaign to end the inequality.

During World War I, the Congolese *Force Nationale* successfully attacked, invaded and occupied German East Africa, which included the present-day Rwanda and Burundi. Belgium continued to administer these colonies under League of Nations mandates after the war, instituting racial policies that set the stage for the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

During World War II, the small Congolese army achieved several victories against the Italians in North Africa. The Belgian Congo, which was also rich in uranium deposits, supplied the uranium that was used by the United States to build the atomic weapons that were used in the bombings of Hiroshima and



Nagasaki in August 1945.

Political crises (1960 – 1965)

In May 1960, the MNC party or Mouvement National Congolais, led by Patrice Lumumba, won the parliamentary elections, and Lumumba was appointed Prime Minister. Joseph Kasavubu, of the ABAKO (Alliance des Bakongo) party, was elected President by the parliament. Other parties that emerged include the Parti Solidaire Africain (or PSA, led by Antoine Gizenga) and the Parti National du Peuple (or PNP led by Albert Delvaux and Laurent Mbariko).

The Belgian Congo achieved independence on June 30, 1960 under the name "Republic of Congo" or "Republic of the Congo" ("République du Congo"). As the French colony of Middle Congo (Moyen Congo) also chose the name "Republic of Congo" upon receiving its independence, the two countries were more commonly known as "Congo-Léopoldville" and "Congo-Brazzaville", after their capital cities. In 1966, Joseph Mobutu changed the country's official name to "Democratic Republic of the Congo", and in 1971 it was changed again to "Republic of Zaïre".

Shortly after independence, the provinces of Katanga (with Moïse Tshombé) and South Kasai engaged in secessionist struggles against the new leadership.

Subsequent events led to a crisis between President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba. On September 5, 1960, Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba from office. Lumumba declared Kasavubu's action "unconstitutional" and a crisis between the two leaders developed.

Lumumba had previously appointed Joseph Mobutu chief of staff of the new Congo army, Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC). Taking advantage of the leadership crisis between Kasavubu and Lumumba, Mobutu garnered enough support within the army to create sentiment sufficient to inspire mutinous action. With financial support from the United States and Belgium, Mobutu made payments to his soldiers in order to generate their loyalty. The aversion of Western powers towards communism and leftist ideology in general influenced their decision to finance Mobutu's quest to maintain "order" in the new state by neutralizing Kasavubu and Lumumba in a coup by proxy.

On January 17, 1961, Katangan forces and Belgian paratroops, supported by foreign interests intent on copper and diamond mines in Katanga and South Kasai, kidnapped and executed Patrice Lumumba. Amidst widespread confusion and chaos, a temporary government led by technicians (College des Commissaires) with Evariste Kimba, and several short governments Joseph Ileo, Cyrille Adoula, Moïse Tshombé took over in quick succession. See the book *The Assassination of Lumumba* by Ludo de Witte. The execution is known to have been witnessed by at least one CIA observer.

Zaire (1971 – 1997)

Following five years of extreme instability and civil unrest, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, now Lieutenant General, overthrew Kasavubu in a 1965 coup. He had the support of the United States on account of his staunch opposition to Communism, which would presumably make him a roadblock to Communist schemes in Africa. It is also argued that the Western support for Mobutu was also related to his allowing businesses to export the many natural resources of Zaire without worrying about environmental, labour, or other regulations. A one-party system was established, and Mobutu declared himself head of state. He would periodically hold elections in which he was the only candidate.



Relative peace and stability was achieved; however, Mobutu's government was guilty of severe human rights violations, political repression, a cult of personality (every Congolese bank note displayed his image, his portrait was displayed in all public buildings, most businesses, and on billboards, and it was common for ordinary people to wear his likeness on their clothing), and excessive corruption. Corruption became so prevalent the term "le mal Zairois" or "Zairean Sickness" was coined, reportedly by Mobutu himself. As soon as 1984, he was said to have \$4 billion (USD), an amount close to the country's national debt, deposited in a personal Swiss bank account. International aid, most often in the form of loans, enriched Mobutu while national infrastructure such as roads deteriorated to as little as one-fourth of what had existed in 1960. The term "kleptocracy" was in fact coined to describe Mobutu's embezzlement of government funds.

In a campaign to identify himself with African nationalism, starting on June 1, 1966, Mobutu renamed the nation's cities (Léopoldville became Kinshasa [the country was now Democratic Republic of The Congo – Kinshasa], Stanleyville became Kisangani, and Elisabethville became Lubumbashi). This renaming campaign was completed in the 1970s. In 1971, he renamed the country the *Republic of Zaire*, its fourth name change in 11 years and its sixth overall. The Congo River became the Zaire River. In 1972, Mobutu renamed himself Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, U.S. relations with Kinshasa cooled, as Mobutu was no longer deemed necessary as a Cold War ally, and his opponents within Zaire stepped up demands for reform. This atmosphere contributed to Mobutu's declaring the Third Republic in 1990, whose constitution was supposed to pave the way for democratic reform. The reforms turned out to be largely cosmetic, and Mobutu's rule continued until conflict forced him to flee Zaire in 1997. The name of the nation was returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as the name *Zaire* carried strong connections to the rule of Mobutu.

Conflict and transition (1994 – present)

Since 1994, the Congo has been wrought by ethnic strife and civil war, touched off by a massive inflow of refugees fleeing the Rwandan Genocide. The government of Mobutu Sese Seko was toppled by a rebellion led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila in May 1997; he changed the country's name back to Democratic Republic of The Congo-Kinshasa (the capital of Congo/Zaire). His former allies soon turned against him, however, and his regime was challenged by a Rwandan and Ugandan-backed rebellion in August 1998. Troops from Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan intervened to support the new regime in Kinshasa. See Foreign relations of Congo and First Congo War.



A cease-fire was signed on July 10, 1999; nevertheless, fighting continued apace especially in the eastern part of the country, financed by revenues from the illegal extraction of minerals such as coltan, cassiterite and diamonds. Kabila was assassinated in January 2001 and his son Joseph Kabila was named head of state. The new president quickly began overtures to end the war and an accord was signed in South Africa in 2002. By late 2003, a fragile peace prevailed as the Transitional Government was formed. Kabila appointed four vice presidents, two of whom had been fighting to oust him until July 2003. Much of the east of the country remains insecure, primarily due to the Ituri conflict and the continued activity of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda in the Kivus.

This period of conflict has been the bloodiest in history since World War II. Almost 5 million people have died as a result of the fighting. The United Nations is concerned that 1000 people a day are still dying as a result of the conflict and described 2006 as a "make or break point" for the continuing humanitarian crisis.

On July 30, 2006, the Congo held its first multi-party elections since independence in 1960. After this Joseph Kabila took 45% of the votes and his main opponent Jean-Pierre Bemba took 20%. That was the origin of a two-day fight between the two factions from August 20, 2006 in the streets of the capital, Kinshasa. Sixteen people died before police and the UN mission, MONUC, took control of the city and stopped the violence

A second round of elections between the two leading candidates, Kabila and Bemba, was held on 29 October, 2006. Rioters destroyed polling stations in Congo's east and electoral officials organized a revolt over burned ballots in the north. Despite that, the presidential vote was called a success. Both Kabila and Bemba assured that they would respect the result, but Bemba's militants have begun riots in opposition of the decision by the Supreme Court that will legitimise Kabila's 58%-42% winning result on the run-off.

Bemba has argued for his supporters to stop fighting the government and vowed to take his seat as an official opposition leader. But despite successful elections held in the second half of 2006 and an overall increase in the level of stability, over a million people remained internally displaced in the east of the country, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

On July 30, 2007, a report by Yakin Erturk, special rapporteur for the United Nations Human Rights Council on violence against women, found extreme sexual violence against women is pervasive in the DRC and local authorities do little to stop it or prosecute those responsible. Her report also found 'women are gang raped, often in front of their families and communities. In numerous cases, male relatives are forced at gun point to rape their own daughters, mothers or sisters.' Survivors told Erturk that after rape, many women are held as slaves by the gangs and forced to eat excrement or the flesh of their murdered relatives.

Government

After 4 years of interim between two constitutions that established different political institutions at the various levels of all branches of government, as well as different administrative divisions of the country, politics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are settling into a stable presidential democratic republic.

The transitional constitution established a system composed of a bicameral legislature with a Senate and a National Assembly. The Senate has, among other



UN peacekeepers (from Pakistan) to the DRC in 2005



things, the charge of drafting the new constitution of the country. The executive branch is vested in a 60-member cabinet, headed by a pentarchy of a President, and four vice presidents. The President is also the Commander-in Chief of the Armed forces. The unusual organization of the executive — considering the large number of vice presidents — has earned it the very official nickname of "The 1 + 4".

The transition constitution also established a relatively independent judiciary, headed by a Supreme Court with constitutional interpretation powers.

The 2006 constitution, also known as the *Constitution of the Third Republic*, came into effect in February 2006. It has concurrent authority, however, with the transitional constitution until the inauguration of the elected officials who will emerge from the July 2006 elections. Under this constitution, the legislature will remain bicameral; the executive will be concomitantly undertaken by a President and the government; and the latter will be led by a Prime Minister, appointed from the party with the majority at the National Assembly. The government – not the President – is responsible to the Parliament.

The provincial governments will gain new powers, under the new decentralized model, with the creation of provincial parliaments, with oversight over the Governor, head of the provincial government, whom they elect.

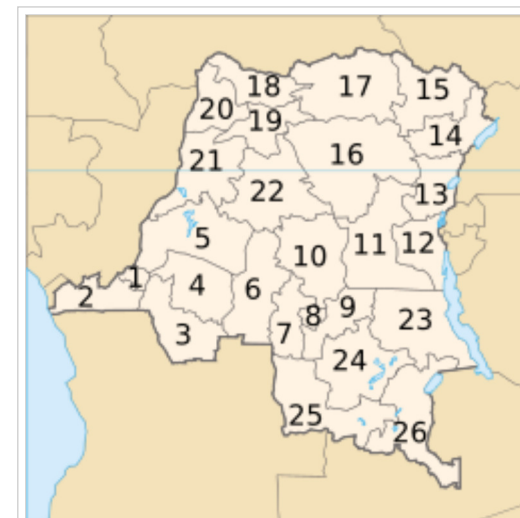
The new constitution also sees the disappearance of the Supreme Court, which is divided into three new institutions. The constitutional interpretation prerogative of the Supreme Court will be held by the Constitutional Court.

Provinces and territories

The constitution approved in 2005 divided the country into 26 fairly autonomous provinces, including the capital, Kinshasa. These new provinces will be formed by February 2009. Until then, the country continues with the existing eleven provinces, as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Kinshasa | 5. Maniema | 9. Bas-Congo |
| 2. Province Orientale | 6. Katanga | 10. Équateur |
| 3. Kasai Oriental | 7. Sud-Kivu | 11. Bandundu |
| 4. Kasai Occidental | 8. Nord-Kivu | |

The provinces are subdivided into territories.



A new provincial map of Democratic Republic of Congo



Population of major cities

| City | Population |
|------------|------------|
| Kinshasa | 6,301,100 |
| Lubumbashi | 1,074,600 |
| Mbuji-Mayi | 905,800 |
| Kolwezi | 803,900 |
| Kananga | 539,600 |
| Kisangani | 510,300 |
| Likasi | 375,100 |

Geography



Nyiragongo volcano



Kinshasa



The map of Democratic Republic of Congo from the CIA World Factbook

The Congo is situated at the heart of the west-central portion of sub-Saharan Africa and is bounded by (clockwise from the southwest) Angola, the Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, the Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania across Lake Tanganyika, and Zambia. The country straddles the Equator, with one-third to the north and two-thirds to the south. The size of Congo, 2,345,408 square kilometres (905,567 sq mi), is comparable to that of Western Europe.

As a result of its equatorial location, the Congo experiences large amounts of precipitation and has the highest frequency of thunderstorms on Earth. The annual rainfall can total upwards of 80 inches (200 cm) in some places, and the area sustains the second largest rain forest in the world (after the Amazon). This massive expanse of lush jungle covers most of the vast, low-lying central basin of the river, which slopes toward the Atlantic Ocean in the west. This area is surrounded by plateaus merging into savannas in the south and southwest, by mountainous terraces in the west, and dense grasslands extending beyond the Congo River in the north. High, glaciated mountains are found in the extreme eastern region.



Satellite image of Democratic Republic of the Congo, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library

The tropical climate has also produced the Congo River system which dominates the region topographically along with the rainforest it flows through, (though they are not mutually exclusive). The name for the "Congo" state is derived from that of the river, along with that of the Kongo Empire which controlled much of the region in precolonial times. The river basin (meaning the Congo River and all of its myriad tributaries) occupy nearly the entire country and an area of nearly one million square kilometers (400,000 sq mi). The river and its tributaries (major offshoots include the Kasai, Sangha, Ubangi, Aruwimi, and Lulonga) form the backbone of Congolese economics and transportation, they have a drastic impact on the daily lives of the people. The sources of the Congo are in the highlands and mountains of the East African Rift, as well as Lake Tanganyika and Lake Mweru. The river flows generally west from Kisangani just below Boyoma Falls, then gradually bends southwest, passing by Mbandaka, joining with the Ubangi River, and running into the Pool Malebo (Stanley Pool). Kinshasa and Brazzaville are actually on opposite sides of the river at the Pool (see NASA image), then the river narrows and falls through a number of cataracts in deep canyons (collectively known as the Livingstone Falls), and then running past Boma into the Atlantic. The river also has the second-largest flow and the second-largest watershed of any river in the world (trailing the Amazon in both respects). The river and a forty-kilometre-wide strip of land on its north bank provide the country's only outlet to the Atlantic, otherwise it would be completely landlocked.

The previously mentioned Great Rift Valley, in particular the Eastern Rift, plays a key role in shaping the Congo's geography. Not only is the northeastern section of the country much more mountainous, but due the rift's tectonic activities, this area also experiences low levels of volcanic activity. The rifting of the African continent in this area has also manifested itself as the famous Great Lakes which lie on the Congo's eastern frontier. The country is bordered in the east by two of these: Lake Albert and Lake Tanganyika. Perhaps most important of all, the Rift Valley has endowed most of the south and east of the Congo with an enormous amount of mineral wealth. These include cobalt, copper, cadmium, petroleum, industrial and gem diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin,



germanium, uranium, radium, bauxite, iron ore, and coal.

On January 17, 2002 Mount Nyiragongo erupted in Congo, with the lava running out at 40 mph (60 km/h) and 50 yards (50 m) wide. One of the three streams of lava emitted flowed through the nearby city of Goma, killing 45 and leaving 120,000 homeless. 400,000 people were evacuated from the city during the eruption. The lava poisoned the water of Lake Kivu, killing fish. Only two planes left the local airport because of the possibility of the explosion of stored petrol. The lava passed the airport but ruined the runway, entrapping several airplanes. Six months after the 2002 eruption, nearby Mount Nyamuragira also erupted, and again more recently in 2006. Both volcanos remain active.

Economy

The economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a nation endowed with vast potential wealth, has declined drastically since the mid-1980s. The two recent conflicts (the First and Second Congo Wars), which began in 1996, have dramatically reduced national output and government revenue, have increased external debt, and have resulted in the deaths from war, famine, and disease of perhaps 3.8 million people. Foreign businesses have curtailed operations due to uncertainty about the outcome of the conflict, lack of infrastructure, and the difficult operating environment. The war has intensified the impact of such basic problems as an uncertain legal framework, corruption, inflation, and lack of openness in government economic policy and financial operations. Malnutrition affects approximately two thirds of the country's population. Conditions improved in late 2002 with the withdrawal of a large portion of the invading foreign troops. A number of International Monetary Fund and World Bank missions have met with the government to help it develop a coherent economic plan, and President Joseph Kabila has begun implementing reforms. Much economic activity lies outside the GDP data. A United Nations Human Development Index report shows human development to be one of the worst in decades along with other African countries.

The Congo remains the world's largest producer of cobalt, and a significant producer of copper and industrial diamonds. It has significant deposits of tantalum, which is used in the fabrication of electronic components used in computers and mobile phones.

Demographics

The population was estimated at 65.8 million in 2007, growing quickly from 46.7 million in 1997. As many as 250 ethnic groups have been distinguished and named. The most numerous people are the Kongo, Luba, and Mongo. Although seven hundred local languages and dialects are spoken, the linguistic variety is bridged both by the use of French and the intermediary languages Kongo, Tshiluba, Swahili, and Lingala.

Status of Women



Young women preparing fufu

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2006 expressed concern that in the post-war transition period, the promotion of women's human rights and gender equality is not seen as a priority.

A 2006 report by the African Association for the Defence of Human Rights prepared for that committee provides a broad overview of issues confronting women in the DRC in law and in daily life.

The war situation has made the life of women more precarious. Violence against women seems to be perceived by large sectors of society to be normal. In July 2007, the International Committee of the Red Cross expressed concern about the situation in eastern DRC. A phenomenon of 'pendulum displacement' has developed, where people hasten at night to safety. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence, Yakin Ertürk, who toured eastern Congo in July 2007, violence against women in North and South Kivu included "unimaginable brutality". "Armed groups attack local communities, loot, rape, kidnap women and children and make them work as sexual slaves," Ertürk said. A local initiative by women in Bukavu aims for recovery from violence based on women's own empowerment.

Religion

Christianity is the majority religion in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, followed by about 80% of the population, comprising Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 20%, Kimbanguist 10%. Kimbanguism was seen as a threat to the colonial regime and was banned by the Belgians. Kimbanguism, officially "the church of Christ on Earth by the prophet Simon Kimbangu," now has about three million members, primarily among the Bakongo of Bas-Congo and Kinshasa.

As well as being the largest religious organisation in the country with about 30 million members, the Roman Catholic Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the largest Christian Churches in Africa. The Congo has more Catholics than any other African country, and one of the highest proportions of Catholics.

62 of the Protestant denominations in the country are federated under the umbrella of the Church of Christ in Congo or CCC (in French, *Église du Christ au Congo* or ECC). It is often simply referred to as 'The Protestant Church', since it covers most of the 20% of the population who are Protestants.

Of the remaining 20% of the population, up to 10% are Muslim, and the rest follow traditional beliefs or syncretic sects. Islam was introduced, and mainly spread by Arabic merchants involved in the ivory trade. Traditional religions embody such concepts as monotheism, animism, vitalism, spirit and ancestor worship, witchcraft, and sorcery and vary widely among ethnic groups. The syncretic sects often merge Christianity with traditional beliefs and rituals, and may not be accepted by mainstream churches as part of Christianity.

Languages



There is an estimated total of 242 languages spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Out of these, only four have the status of national languages: Kongo, Lingala, Tshiluba and Swahili.

Lingala was made the official language of the colonial army, the " Force Publique" under Belgian colonial rule. But since the recent rebellions, a good part of the army also uses Swahili in the East.

French is the official language of the country. It is meant to be an ethnically neutral language, to ease communication between all the different ethnic groups of the Congo.

When the country was a Belgian colony, the four national languages were already used in primary schools, which makes the country one of the few to have had literacy in local languages during the occupation by Europeans.

Culture

The culture of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reflects the diversity of its hundreds of ethnic groups and their differing ways of life throughout the country — from the mouth of the River Congo on the coast, upriver through the rainforest and savanna in its centre, to the more densely populated mountains in the far east. Since the late 19th century, traditional ways of life have undergone changes brought about by colonialism, the struggle for independence, the stagnation of the Mobutu era, and most recently, the First and Second Congo Wars. Despite these pressures, the customs and cultures of the Congo have retained much of their individuality. The country's 60 million inhabitants are mainly rural. The 30 percent who live in urban areas have been the most open to Western influences.

Another notable feature in Congo culture is its sui generis music. The DROC has blended its ethnic musical sources with Cuban rumba, and meringue to give birth to soukous. Influential figures of soukous and its offshoots (n'dombolo, rumba rock...) are Franco Luambo, Tabu Ley, Lutumba Simaro, Papa Wemba, Koffi Olomide, Kanda Bongo, Ray Lema, Mpongo Love, Abeti Masikini, Reddy Amisi, Pepe Kalle and Nyoka Longo. Africa produces music genres which are direct derivatives of Congolese soukous. Some of the African bands sing in Lingala, the main language in the DRC. The same Congolese soukous, under the guidance of "le sapeur", has set up the tone for a generation of young guys always dressed up in expensive designer's clothes.

Flora and fauna



Major Bantu languages in the Congo.



The rainforests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo contain great biodiversity, including many rare and endemic species, such as both species of chimpanzee: the common chimpanzee and the bonobo (also known as the Pygmy Chimpanzee), mountain gorilla, okapi and white rhino. Five of the country's national parks are listed as World Heritage Sites: the Garumba, Kahuzi-Biega, Salonga and Virunga National Parks, and the Okapi Wildlife Reserve. The civil war and resultant poor economic conditions have endangered much of this biodiversity. Many park wardens were either killed or could not afford to continue their work. All five sites are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage In Danger.

Over the past century or so, the DRC has developed into the centre of what has been called the Central African "bushmeat" problem, which is regarded by many as a major environmental, as well as, socio-economic crisis. "Bushmeat" is another word for the meat of wild animals. It is typically obtained through trapping, usually with wire snares, or otherwise with shotguns or arms originally intended for use in the DRC's numerous military conflicts.

The "bushmeat crisis" has emerged in the DRC mainly as a result of the poor living conditions of the Congolese people. A rising population combined with deplorable economic conditions has forced many Congolese to become dependent on bushmeat, either as a means of acquiring income (hunting the meat and selling), or are dependent on it for food. Unemployment and urbanization throughout Central Africa have exacerbated the problem further by turning cities like the urban sprawl of Kinshasa into the prime market for bushmeat.

This combination has caused not only widespread endangerment of local fauna, but has forced humans to trudge deeper into the wilderness in search of the desired animal meat. This overhunting results in the deaths of more animals and makes resources even more scarce for humans. The hunting has also been facilitated by the extensive logging prevalent throughout the Congo's rainforests (from corporate logging, in addition to farmers clearing out forest in order to create areas for agriculture), which allows hunters much easier access to previously unreachable jungle terrain, while simultaneously eroding away at the habitats of animals.

A case that has particularly alarmed conservationists is that of primates. The Congo is inhabited not only by two distinct species of chimpanzee - the Common chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) and the bonobo (*Pan paniscus*) - but by the gorilla as well. It is the only country in the world in which bonobo are found in the wild. The two species of chimpanzees, along with gorillas, are the closest living evolutionary relatives to humans. Much concern has been raised about Great ape extinction. Because of hunting and habitat destruction, the chimpanzee and the gorilla, both of whose population once numbered in the millions have now dwindled down to only about 200,000 per species. Gorillas and both species of chimpanzee are classified as Endangered by the World Conservation Union, as well as the okapi, which is also native to the area geography.

A population of 'super-sized' chimpanzees, the so-called Bili Apes that the local people say eat lions, has has been reported from Bili Forest in the far north, about 200 km (120 miles) east of Bondo, DR Congo. University of Amsterdam scientists observed the animals eating the carcass of a leopard. No scientific evidence has been presented that they hunt and kill big cats, though the Bili chimpanzees exhibit unusual behaviour such as sleeping in large nests on the ground rather than in trees,



Bas-Congo landscape



The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the only country in the world in which bonobos (Pygmy chimpanzees) are found in the wild.



indicating a possible lack of fear of such predators.

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Djibouti

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Djibouti (Arabic: **جيبوتي** *Jībūtī*, Somali: *Jabuuti*), officially the **Republic of Djibouti**, is a country in the Horn of Africa. Djibouti is bordered by Eritrea in the north, Ethiopia in the west and south, and Somalia in the southeast. The remainder of the border is formed by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. On the other side of the Red Sea, on the Arabian Peninsula, 20 kilometres (12 mi) from the coast of Djibouti, is Yemen. The capital of Djibouti is the city of Djibouti.

History

The history of Djibouti as recorded in poetry and songs of its nomadic people, goes back thousands of years to a time when Djiboutians traded hides and skins for the perfumes and spices of ancient Egypt, India, and China. Through close contacts with the Arabian peninsula for more than 1,000 years, the Somali and Afar tribes in this region became among the first on the African continent to accept Islam.

French interest developed in the nineteenth century when the area was ruled by the sultan of **Raheita, Tadjoura and Gobaad**. The French purchased the anchorage of Obock in 1862 and expanded it eventually to a colony called **French Somaliland** with essentially the current boundaries. In 1967 the area became the French overseas territory of the **Afars and Issas**.

The Republic of Djibouti gained its independence from France on June 27, 1977. Djibouti is a Somali, Arab and Islamic country which regularly takes part in Islamic affairs as well as Arab meetings.

Politics

Djibouti is a semi-presidential republic, with executive power in the central government, and legislative power in both the government and parliament. The parliamentary party system is dominated by the People's Rally for Progress and the current President is Ismail Omar Guelleh. The country's current constitution was approved in September 1992. Djibouti is a one party dominant state with the People's Rally for Progress in power. Opposition parties are allowed, but have no real chance of gaining power (*see* Elections in Djibouti).

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| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>جمهورية جيبوتي <i>Jumhūriyyat Jībūtī</i> Jamhuuriyadda Jabuuti <i>République de Djibouti</i> Republic of Djibouti</p> | |
|  <p>Flag</p> |  <p>Coat of arms</p> |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Djibouti</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Djibouti |
| Official languages | Arabic and French |
| Recognised regional languages | Afar, Somali |



The government is seen as being controlled by the Somali Issa clan, though at its head power is shared between a Somali President and an Afar Prime Minister (Scoitas Shilades), with cabinet posts similarly divided. The country has recently come out of a decade long civil war, with the government and the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) signing a peace treaty in 2000. Two FRUD members are part of the current cabinet.

Despite elections of the 1990s being described as "generally fair", Guelleh was sworn in for his second and final six year term as president in a one-man race on 8 April 2005. He took 100% of the votes in a 78.9% turnout.

Djibouti's second president, Guelleh was first elected to office in 1999, taking over from Hassan Gouled Aptidon, who had ruled the country since its independence from France in 1977.

The prime minister, who follows the council of ministers ('cabinet'), is appointed by the President. The parliament - the *Chambre des Députés* - consists of 52 members who are elected every five to nine years.

In 2001, the Djiboutian government leased the former French Foreign Legion base Camp Lemonier to the United States. Camp Lemonier is being used by the United States Central Command in operations as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

France's 13th Foreign Legion Demi-Brigade shares Camp Lemonier with the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) of the United States Central Command, which arrived in 2002. It is from Djibouti that Abu Ali al-Harithi, suspected mastermind of the 2000 USS Cole bombing, and U.S. citizen Ahmed Hijazi, along with four others persons, were killed in 2002 while riding a car in Yemen, by a Hellfire missile sent by a RQ-1 Predator drone actionned from CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. It is also from there that the U.S. Army launched attacks in 2007 against Islamic forces in Somalia.

Djibouti is a member of the Arab League, as well as the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Geography

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Demonym | Djiboutian |
| Government | Parliamentary republic |
| - President | Ismail Omar Guelleh |
| - Prime Minister | Dileita Mohamed Dileita |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | June 27, 1977 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 23,200 km ² (149th) 8,958 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.09 (20 km ² / 7.7 sq mi) |
| Population | |
| - July 2007 estimate | 496,374 (160th) |
| - 2000 census | 460,700 |
| - Density | 34/km ² (168th) 88/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$1.641 billion (164th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,070 (141st) |
| HDI (2007) | 0.516 (medium) (149th) |
| Currency | Franc (DJF) |
| Time zone | EAT (UTC+3) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .dj |
| Calling code | +253 |



Lac Assal area

Djibouti lies in northeast Africa on the Gulf of Aden at the southern entrance to the Red Sea. Djibouti has 314 km (195 mi) of coastline and shares a 113 km (70 mi) border with Eritrea, 337 km (209 mi) with Ethiopia and 58 km (36 mi) with Somalia (total 506 km/314 mi). The country, the size of Massachusetts, is mainly a stony desert, with scattered plateaus and highlands.

Regions and districts

Djibouti is divided into 5 regions and one city. It is further subdivided into 11 districts.

The regions and city are:

- Ali Sabieh Region (*Region d'Ali Sabieh*)
- Arta Region (*Region d'Arta*)
- Dikhil Region (*Region de Dikhil*)
- Djibouti (city) (*Ville de Djibouti*)
- Obock Region (*Region d'Obock*)
- Tadjourah Region (*Region de Tadjourah*)

Economy





The economy of Djibouti is based on service activities connected with the country's strategic location and status as a free trade zone in northeast Africa. Two-thirds of the inhabitants live in the capital city, the remainder being mostly nomadic herders. Scant rainfall limits crop production to fruits and vegetables, and most food must be imported.

In April 2005, the United Nations World Food Programme warned that 30,000 people in Djibouti face serious food shortages following three years of poor rains.



Djibouti City market

Djibouti provides services as both a transit port for the region and an international transshipment and refueling centre. It has few natural resources and little industry. The nation is, therefore, heavily dependent on foreign assistance to help support its balance of payments and to finance development projects. An unemployment rate of 40% to 50% continues to be a major problem. Inflation is not a concern, however, because of the fixed tie of the franc to the U.S. dollar. Per capita consumption dropped an estimated 35% over the last seven years because of recession, civil war, and a high population growth rate (including immigrants and refugees). Renewed fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been beneficial to Djibouti, the Port of Djibouti now serving as landlocked Ethiopia's primary link to the sea. Faced with a multitude of economic difficulties, the government has fallen into arrears on long-term external debt and has been struggling to meet the stipulations of foreign aid donors.



Typical street in the city of Djibouti, Djibouti, Africa. Winter, 2005

Demographics

The population consists of two major groups, the Somali people and the Afar.

The remainder is formed by Europeans (mostly French and Italians), Arabs and Ethiopians. Tensions between the Afar and Issa was the cause of the civil war in the early 1990s.

The Somali ethnic component in Djibouti is mainly composed of the Issas, who form the majority and the Gadabuursi and Isaaq, all of whom are closely related as Dir subclans. The Issas form part of the ciise Madoobe Dir, while the Gadabuursi and Isaaq are part of the Mahe Dir, Mohammed Hiniiftire.

Although French and Arabic are the official languages, Somali and Afar are widely spoken.

The bulk of Djibouti's people are urban residents; the remainder are herders. Health, sanitary, and education services are relatively poor in both urban and rural areas.

Religion



Flea Market in Djibouti City



Djibouti's main religion is Islam. Just like Islam in other countries, every town and village in Djibouti has a mosque, to which people go to worship. Tombs of their former religious leaders and those considered holy are known as sacred spaces. The most famous sacred space for Islam in Djibouti is the tomb of Sheikh Abu Yazid, found in the Goda Mountains. In addition to the Islamic calendar, Muslims in Djibouti also recognize New Year's Day (January 1), and Labor Day (May 1), as holidays.

The Muslim religion comprises 94 percent of Djibouti's population (about 444,440). This leaves six percent for other religions. Christianity is mainly the other prevalent religion.

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Djibouti city mosque



Egypt

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Egypt. For more information see SOS Children in Egypt, Africa

Egypt, officially the **Arab Republic of Egypt**, (iː.dʒɪpt[ⓘ], Egyptian: *Kemet*; Coptic: Ⲭⲏⲙⲓ *Kīmi*; Arabic: مصر *Miṣr*; Egyptian Arabic: *Máṣr*) is a country in North Africa. The Sinai Peninsula is part of northeastern Egypt, which also forms a land bridge to Asia. Covering an area of about 1,001,450 square kilometers (386,660 sq mi), Egypt borders Libya to the west, Sudan to the south and the Gaza Strip and Israel to the east. The northern coast borders the Mediterranean Sea; the eastern coast borders the Red Sea.

Egypt is one of the most populous countries in Africa and the Middle East. The great majority of its estimated 75 million live near the banks of the Nile River, in an area of about 40,000 square kilometers (15,000 sq mi), where the only arable agricultural land is found. The large areas of the Sahara Desert are sparsely inhabited. About half of Egypt's residents live in urban areas, with the majority spread across the densely-populated centres of greater Cairo, Alexandria and other major cities in the Nile Delta.

Egypt is famous for its ancient civilization and some of the world's most famous monuments, including the Giza pyramid complex and its Great Sphinx. The southern city of Luxor contains numerous ancient artifacts, such as the Karnak Temple and the Valley of the Kings. Egypt is widely regarded as an important political and cultural nation of the Middle East.

Etymology

km.t (Egypt)
in hieroglyphs



One of the ancient Egyptian names of the country, *Kemet* (kꜣmt), (from *kem* "black"), is derived from the fertile black soils deposited by the Nile floods, distinct from the *deshret*, or "red land" (dšꜣrt), of the desert. The name is realized as *kīmi* and *kīmā* in the Coptic stage of the Egyptian language, and appeared in early Greek as Χημία (*Khēmía*). Another name was *t3-mry* "land of the riverbank". The names of Upper and Lower Egypt were *Ta-Sheme'aw* (t3-šmꜣw) "sedgeland" and *Ta-Mehew* (t3 mhꜣw) "northland", respectively.

جمهورية مصر العربية
Gumhūriyyat Miṣr al-ʿArabiyyah
Arab Republic of Egypt



Flag



Coat of arms

Anthem: *Bilady, Bilady, Bilady*



| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Capital (and largest city) | Cairo |
| Official languages | Arabic ¹ |
| Demonym | Egyptian |



Miṣr, the Arabic and modern official name of Egypt (Egyptian Arabic: *Maṣr*), is of Semitic origin, directly cognate with other Semitic words for Egypt such as the Hebrew מִצְרַיִם (*Mitzráyim*), literally meaning "the two straits" (a reference to the dynastic separation of upper and lower Egypt). The word originally connoted "metropolis" or "civilization" and also means "country", or "frontier-land".

The English name "Egypt" came via the Latin word *Aegyptus* derived from the ancient Greek word *Aígyptos* (Αἴγυπτος). The adjective *aigýpti*, *aigýptios* was borrowed into Coptic as *gyptios*, *kyptios*, and from there into Arabic as *qubīṯ*, back formed into *qubṯ*, whence English *Copt*. The term is derived from Late Egyptian *Hikuptah* "Memphis", a corruption of the earlier Egyptian name *Hat-ka-Ptah* (ḥwt-k3-ptḥ), meaning "home of the ka (soul) of Ptah", the name of a temple to the god Ptah at Memphis. Strabo provided a folk etymology according to which *Aígyptos* (Αἴγυπτος) had evolved as a compound from *Aegaeon upitiōs* (Αἰγαίου ὑπτίως), meaning "below the Aegean".

History

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Semi-presidential republic |
| - President | Hosni Mubarak |
| - Prime Minister | Ahmed Nazif |
| Establishment | |
| - First Dynasty | c.3150 BCE |
| - Independence from United Kingdom | February 28, 1922 |
| - Republic declared | June 18, 1953 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 980,869 km ² (30th) 378,715 sq mi 386,660 Including Hala'ib Triangle sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.632 |
| Population | |
| - July 2008 estimate | 75,042,000 (16th) |
| - 2006 census | 72,579,030 |
| - Density | 74/km ² (120th) 192/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$329.791 billion (27th) |
| - Per capita | \$4,836 (110th) |
| Gini (1999–00) | 34.5 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.708 (medium) (112nd) |
| Currency | Egyptian pound (EGP) |
| Time zone | EET (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | EEST (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .eg |



Evidence of human habitation in the Nile Valley since the Paleolithic era appears in the form of artifacts and rock carvings along the Nile terraces and in the desert oases. In the 10th millennium BC, a culture of hunter-gatherers and fishers replaced a grain-grinding culture. Climate changes and/or overgrazing

around 8000 BC began to desiccate the pastoral lands of Egypt, forming the Sahara. Early tribal peoples migrated to the Nile River where they developed a settled agricultural economy and more centralized society.



The Nile River in Egypt

By about 6000 BC, organized agriculture and large building construction had appeared in the Nile Valley. During the Neolithic era, several predynastic cultures developed independently in Upper and Lower Egypt. The Badarian culture and the successor Naqada series are generally regarded as precursors to Dynastic Egyptian civilization. The earliest known Lower Egyptian site, Merimda, predates the Badarian by about seven hundred years. Contemporaneous Lower Egyptian communities coexisted with their southern counterparts for more than two thousand years, remaining somewhat culturally separate, but maintaining frequent contact through trade. The earliest known evidence of

Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions appeared during the predynastic period on Naqada III pottery vessels, dated to about 3200 BC.

A unified kingdom was founded circa 3150 BC by King Menes, giving rise to a series of dynasties that ruled Egypt for the next three millennia. Egyptians subsequently referred to their unified country as *tawy*, meaning "two lands", and later *kemet* (Coptic: *kīmi*), the "black land", a reference to the fertile black soil deposited by the Nile river. Egyptian culture flourished during this long period and remained distinctively Egyptian in its religion, arts, language and customs. The first two ruling dynasties of a unified Egypt set the stage for the Old Kingdom period, c.2700–2200 BC., famous for its many pyramids, most notably the Third Dynasty pyramid of Djoser and the Fourth Dynasty Giza Pyramids.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Calling code | +20 |
| 1 Spoken language is Egyptian Arabic. | |



Giza Pyramids

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>tAwy</i> ('Two Lands') in hieroglyphs |
|  |





The Great Sphinx and the Pyramids of Giza, built during the Old Kingdom, are modern national icons that are at the heart of Egypt's thriving tourism industry.

The First Intermediate Period ushered in a time of political upheaval for about 150 years. Stronger Nile floods and stabilization of government, however, brought back renewed prosperity for the country in the Middle Kingdom *c.* 2040 BC, reaching a peak during the reign of Pharaoh Amenemhat III. A second period of disunity heralded the arrival of the first foreign ruling dynasty in Egypt, that of the Semitic Hyksos. The Hyksos invaders took over much of Lower Egypt around 1650 BC and founded a new capital at Avaris. They were driven out by an Upper Egyptian force led by Ahmose I, who founded the Eighteenth Dynasty and relocated the capital from Memphis to Thebes.

The New Kingdom (*c.* 1550–1070 BC) began with the Eighteenth Dynasty, marking the rise of Egypt as an international power that expanded during its greatest extension to an empire as far south as Jebel Barkal in Nubia, and included parts of the Levant in the east. This period is noted for some of the most well-known Pharaohs, including Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti, Tutankhamun and Ramesses II. The first known self-conscious expression of monotheism came during this period in the form of Atenism. Frequent contacts with other nations brought new ideas to the New Kingdom. The country was later invaded by Libyans, Nubians and Assyrians, but native Egyptians drove them out and regained control of their country.

The Thirtieth Dynasty was the last native ruling dynasty during the Pharaonic epoch. It fell to the Persians in 343 BC after the last native Pharaoh, King Nectanebo II, was defeated in battle. Later, Egypt fell to the Greeks and Romans, beginning over two thousand years of foreign rule.

Before Egypt became part of the Byzantine realm, Christianity had been brought by Saint Mark the Evangelist in the AD first century. Diocletian's reign marked the transition from the Roman to the Byzantine era in Egypt, when a great number of Egyptian Christians were persecuted. The New Testament had by then been translated into Egyptian. After the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, a distinct Egyptian Coptic Church was firmly established.

The Byzantines were able to regain control of the country after a brief Persian invasion early in the seventh century, until in AD 639, Egypt was invaded by the Muslim Arabs. The form of Islam the Arabs brought to Egypt was Sunni. Early in this period, Egyptians began to blend their new faith with indigenous beliefs and practices that had survived through Coptic Christianity, giving rise to various Sufi orders that have flourished to this day. Muslim rulers nominated by the Islamic Caliphate remained in control of Egypt for the next six centuries, including a period for which it was the seat of the Caliphate under the Fatimids. With the end of the Ayyubid dynasty, the Mamluks, a Turco- Circassian military caste, took control about AD 1250. They continued to govern even after the conquest of Egypt by the Ottoman Turks in 1517.



First built in the third or fourth century AD, the Hanging Church is Cairo's most famous Coptic church.



Mosque of Mohamed Ali built in the early nineteenth century within the Cairo Citadel.

The brief French Invasion of Egypt led by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 had a great social impact on the country and its culture. Native Egyptians became exposed to the principles of the French Revolution and had a chance to exercise self-governance. A series of civil wars took place between the Ottoman Turks, the Mamluks, and Albanian mercenaries following the evacuation of French troops, resulting in the Albanian Muhammad Ali (Kavalali Mehmed Ali Pasha) taking control of Egypt. He was appointed as the Ottoman viceroy in 1805. He led a modernization campaign of public works, including irrigation projects, agricultural reforms and increased industrialization, which were then taken up and further expanded by his grandson and successor Isma'il Pasha.

In 1866, the Assembly of Delegates was founded to serve as an advisory body for the government. Members of the Assembly were elected from across Egypt and came to have an important influence on governmental decisions. Following the completion of the Suez Canal by Khedive Ismail in 1869, Egypt became an important world transportation and trading hub.

However, the country fell heavily into debt to European powers. As a result, the United Kingdom seized control of Egypt's government in 1882 to protect its financial interests, especially those in the Suez Canal.

Shortly after its political intervention, Britain sent troops into Alexandria and the Canal Zone, taking advantage of Egypt's weak military. With the defeat of the Egyptian army at the Battle of Tel el-Kebir, British troops reached Cairo, eliminated the nationalist government and disbanded the Egyptian military. Technically, Egypt remained an Ottoman province until 1914, when Britain formally declared a protectorate over Egypt and deposed Egypt's last khedive, Abbas II. His uncle, Husayn Kamil, was appointed as Sultan in his place.

Between 1882 and 1906, a local nationalist movement for independence, spurred by British actions, was taking shape. The Dinshaway Incident prompted Egyptian opposition to take a stronger stand against British occupation. The first political parties were founded. After the First World War, Saad Zaghlul and the Wafd Party led the Egyptian nationalist movement, gaining a majority at the local Legislative Assembly. When the British exiled Zaghlul and his associates to Malta on March 8, 1919, the country arose in its first modern revolution. Constant revolting by the Egyptian people throughout the country led Great Britain to issue a unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence on February 22, 1922.

The new Egyptian government drafted and implemented a new constitution in 1923 based on a parliamentary representative system. Saad Zaghlul was popularly-elected as Prime Minister of Egypt in 1924. In 1936 the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was concluded. Continued instability in the government due to remaining British control and increasing political involvement by the king led to the ouster of the monarchy and the dissolution of the parliament in a military *coup d'état* known as the 1952 Revolution. The officers, known as the Free Officers Movement, forced King Farouk to abdicate in support of his son Fuad.

On 18 June 1953, the Egyptian Republic was declared, with General Muhammad Naguib as the first President of the Republic. Naguib was forced to resign in 1954 by Gamal Abdel Nasser – the real architect of the 1952 movement – and was later put under house arrest. Nasser assumed power as President and declared the full independence of Egypt from the United Kingdom on June 18, 1956. His nationalization of the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956 prompted the 1956 Suez Crisis.



View of Cairo, the largest city in Africa and the Middle East.

The Cairo Opera House (bottom-right) is the main performing arts venue in the Egyptian capital.

Three years after the 1967 Six Day War, during which Israel had invaded and occupied Sinai, Nasser died and was succeeded by Anwar Sadat. Sadat switched Egypt's Cold War allegiance from the Soviet Union to the United States, expelling Soviet advisors in 1972. He launched the Infitah economic reform policy, while violently clamping down on religious and secular opposition alike.

In 1973, Egypt, along with Syria, launched the October War, a surprise attack against the Israeli forces occupying the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. It was an attempt to liberate the territory Israel had captured 6 years earlier. Both the US and the USSR intervened and a cease-fire was reached. Despite not being a complete military success, most historians agree that the October War presented Sadat with a political victory that later allowed him to regain the Sinai in return with peace with Israel.

Sadat made a historic visit to Israel in 1977, which led to the 1979 peace treaty in exchange for the complete Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. Sadat's initiative sparked enormous controversy in the Arab world and led to Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League, but it was supported by the vast majority of Egyptians. A fundamentalist military soldier assassinated Sadat in Cairo in 1981. He was succeeded by the incumbent Hosni Mubarak. In 2003, the Egyptian Movement for Change,

popularly known as *Kefaya*, was launched to seek a return to democracy and greater civil liberties.

Identity

The Egyptian Nile Valley was home to one of the oldest cultures in the world, spanning three thousand years of continuous history. When Egypt fell under a series of foreign occupations after 343 BC, each left an indelible mark on the country's cultural landscape. Egyptian identity evolved in the span of this long period of occupation to accommodate, in principle, two new religions, Christianity and Islam; and a new language, Arabic, and its spoken descendant, Egyptian Arabic. The degree to which Egyptians identify with each layer of Egypt's history in articulating a sense of collective identity can vary. Questions of identity came to fore in the last century as Egypt sought to free itself from foreign occupation for the first time in two thousand years. Three chief ideologies came to head: ethno-territorial Egyptian nationalism, secular Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism, and Islamism. Egyptian nationalism predates its Arab counterpart by many decades, having roots in the nineteenth century and becoming the dominant mode of expression of Egyptian anti-colonial activists and intellectuals until the early 20th century. Arab nationalism reached a peak under Nasser but was once again relegated under Sadat; meanwhile, the ideology espoused by radical muslim groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood is present in small segments of the lower-middle strata of Egyptian society.

Geography



Mahmoud Mokhtar's
Egypt's Renaissance
1919-1928, Cairo
University.



White Desert, Farafra

At 1,001,450 square kilometers (386,660 sq mi), Egypt is the world's 38th-largest country (after Mauritania). It is comparable in size to Tanzania, twice the size of France, four times the size of the United Kingdom, and is more than half the size of the US state of Alaska.

Nevertheless, due to the aridity of Egypt's climate, population centres are concentrated along the narrow Nile Valley and Delta, meaning that approximately 99% of the population uses only about 5.5% of the total land area.

Egypt is bordered by Libya to the west, Sudan to the south, and by the Gaza Strip and Israel to the east. Egypt's important role in geopolitics stems from its strategic position: a transcontinental nation, it possesses a land bridge (the Isthmus of Suez) between Africa and Asia, which in turn is traversed by a navigable waterway (the Suez Canal) that connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea.

Apart from the Nile Valley, the majority of Egypt's landscape is a sandy desert. The winds blowing can create sand dunes more than 100 feet (30 m) high. Egypt includes

parts of the Sahara Desert and of the Libyan Desert. These deserts were referred to as the "red land" in ancient Egypt, and they protected the Kingdom of the Pharaohs from western threats.

Towns and cities include Alexandria, one of the greatest ancient cities, Aswan, Asyut, Cairo, the modern Egyptian capital, El-Mahalla El-Kubra, Giza, the site of the Pyramid of Khufu, Hurghada, Luxor, Kom Ombo, Port Safaga, Port Said, Sharm el Sheikh, Suez, where the Suez Canal is located, Zagazig, and Al-Minya. Oases include Bahariya, el Dakhla, Farafra, el Kharga and Siwa. Protectorates include Ras Mohamed National Park, Zaranik Protectorate and Siwa. See Egyptian Protectorates for more information.

Climate

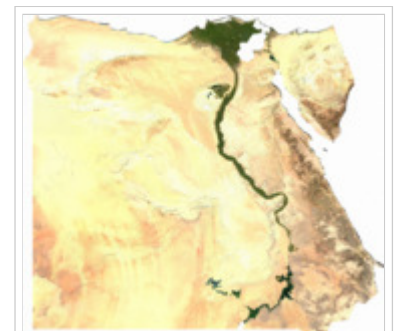
Egypt does not receive much rainfall except in the winter months. South of Cairo, rainfall averages only around 2 to 5 mm (0.1 to 0.2 in) per year and at intervals of many years. On a very thin strip of the northern coast the rainfall can be as high as 410 mm (16 in), with most of the rainfall between October and March. Snow falls on Sinai's mountains and some of the north coastal cities such as Damietta, Baltim, Sidi Barrany, etc. and rarely in Alexandria, frost is also known in mid-Sinai and mid-Egypt.

Temperatures average between 80 °F (27 °C) and 90 °F (32 °C) in summer, and up to 109 °F (43 °C) on the Red Sea coast. Temperatures average between 55 °F (13 °C) and 70 °F (21 °C) in winter. A steady wind from the northwest helps hold down the temperature near the Mediterranean coast. The Khamaseen is a wind that blows from the south in Egypt in spring, bringing sand and dust, and sometimes raises the temperature in the desert to more than 100 °F (38 °C).

The rise in sea levels due to global warming threatens Egypt's densely populated coastal strip and could have grave



The Coastline of Alexandria, Egypt's second largest city



Satellite image of Egypt, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



consequences for the country's economy, agriculture and industry. Combined with growing demographic pressures, a rise in sea levels could turn millions of Egyptians into environmental refugees by the end of the century, according to climate experts.

Politics

National

Egypt has been a republic since 18 June 1953. President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak has been the President of the Republic since October 14, 1981, following the assassination of former-President Mohammed Anwar El-Sadat. Mubarak is currently serving his fifth term in office. He is the leader of the ruling National Democratic Party. Prime Minister Dr. Ahmed Nazif was sworn in as Prime Minister on 9 July 2004, following the resignation of Dr. Atef Ebeid from his office.

Although power is ostensibly organized under a multi-party semi-presidential system, whereby the executive power is theoretically divided between the President and the Prime Minister, in practice it rests almost solely with the President who traditionally has been elected in single-candidate elections for more than fifty years. Egypt also holds regular multi-party parliamentary elections. The last presidential election, in which Mubarak won a fifth consecutive term, was held in September 2005.

In late February 2005, President Mubarak announced in a surprise television broadcast that he had ordered the reform of the country's presidential election law, paving the way for multi-candidate polls in the upcoming presidential election. For the first time since the 1952 movement, the Egyptian people had an apparent chance to elect a leader from a list of various candidates. The President said his initiative came "out of my full conviction of the need to consolidate efforts for more freedom and democracy." However, the new law placed draconian restrictions on the filing for presidential candidacies, designed to prevent well-known candidates such as Ayman Nour from standing against Mubarak, and paved the road for his easy re-election victory. Concerns were once again expressed after the 2005 presidential elections about government interference in the election process through fraud and vote-rigging, in addition to police brutality and violence by pro-Mubarak supporters against opposition demonstrators. After the election, Egypt imprisoned Nour, and the U.S. Government stated the "conviction of Mr. Nour, the runner-up in Egypt's 2005 presidential elections, calls into question Egypt's commitment to democracy, freedom, and the rule of law."

As a result, most Egyptians are skeptical about the process of democratization and the role of the elections. Less than 25 percent of the country's 32 million registered voters (out of a population of more than 72 million) turned out for the 2005 elections. A proposed change to the constitution would limit the president to two seven-year terms in office.

Thirty-four constitutional changes voted on by parliament on March 19, 2007 prohibit parties from using religion as a basis for political activity; allow the drafting of a new anti-terrorism law to replace the emergency legislation in place since 1981, giving police wide powers of arrest and surveillance; give the president power to dissolve parliament; and end judicial monitoring of election. As opposition members of parliament withdrew from voting on the proposed changes, it was expected that the referendum would be boycotted by a great number of Egyptians in protest of what has been considered a breach of democratic practices. Eventually it was reported that only 27% of the registered voters went to the polling stations under heavy police presence and tight political control of the ruling National Democratic Party. It was officially announced on March 27, 2007 that 75.9% of those who participated in the referendum approved of the constitutional amendments introduced by President Mubarak and was endorsed by opposition free parliament, thus allowing the introduction of laws that curb



the activity of certain opposition elements, particularly Islamists.

Human rights

Several local and international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have for many years criticized Egypt's human rights record as poor. In 2005, President Hosni Mubarak faced unprecedented public criticism when he clamped down on democracy activists challenging his rule. Some of the most serious human rights violations, according to HRW's 2006 report on Egypt, are routine torture, arbitrary detentions and trials before military and state security courts.

Discriminatory personal status laws governing marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance which put women at a disadvantage have also been cited. Laws concerning Coptic Christians which place restrictions on church building and open worship have been recently eased, but major construction still requires governmental approval, while sporadic attacks on Christians and churches continue. Intolerance of Bahá'ís and unorthodox Muslim sects, such as Sufis and Shi'a, also remains a problem. The Egyptian legal system only recognizes three religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. When the government moved to computerize identification cards, members of religious minorities, such as Bahá'ís, could not obtain identification documents. An Egyptian court ruled in early 2008 that members of other faiths can obtain identity cards without listing their faiths, and without becoming officially recognized. (For more on the status of religious minorities, see the Religion section.)



Members of the Kefaya democracy movement protesting a fifth term for President Hosni Mubarak. See also video.

In 2005, the Freedom House rated political rights in Egypt as "6" (1 representing the most free and 7 the least free rating), civil liberties as "5" and gave it the freedom rating of "Not Free." It however noted that "Egypt witnessed its most transparent and competitive presidential and legislative elections in more than half a century and an increasingly unbridled public debate on the country's political future in 2005."

In 2007, human rights group Amnesty International released a report criticizing Egypt for torture and illegal detention. The report alleges that Egypt has become an international centre for torture, where other nations send suspects for interrogation, often as part of the War on Terror. The report calls on Egypt to bring its anti-terrorism laws into accordance with international human rights statutes and on other nations to stop sending their detainees to Egypt. Egypt's foreign ministry quickly issued a rebuttal to this report, claiming that it was inaccurate and unfair, as well as causing deep offense to the Egyptian government.

Consensual homosexual conduct between adults is criminalized under Egyptian law as a "practice of debauchery". Since 2001, Egyptian authorities have made hundreds of arbitrary arrests of young gay men, many of whom have been tried and convicted for acts of "debauchery", while hundreds of others have been harassed and tortured, according to HRW. In February 2008, a new round of arrests and torture of HIV-positive citizens followed a man's admission to the police that he was HIV-positive, sparking international outcry that the Egyptian government was treating the AIDS disease as a homosexual "crime" instead of providing care, prevention and education.

The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) is one of the longest-standing bodies for the defence of human rights in Egypt. In 2003, the government established the National Council for Human Rights, headquartered in Cairo and headed by former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali who directly reports to the president. The council has come under heavy criticism by local NGO activists, who contend it undermines human rights work in Egypt by serving

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 138 of 586



as a propaganda tool for the government to excuse its violations and to provide legitimacy to repressive laws such as the recently renewed Emergency Law. Egypt had announced in 2006 that it was in the process of abolishing the Emergency Law, but in March 2007 President Mubarak approved several constitutional amendments to include "an anti-terrorism clause that appears to enshrine sweeping police powers of arrest and surveillance", suggesting that the Emergency Law is here to stay for the long haul.

Foreign relations

Egypt's foreign policy operates along moderate lines. Factors such as population size, historical events, military strength, diplomatic expertise and a strategic geographical position give Egypt extensive political influence in Africa and the Middle East. Cairo has been a crossroads of regional commerce and culture for centuries, and its intellectual and Islamic institutions are at the centre of the region's social and cultural development.

The permanent Headquarters of the Arab League are located in Cairo and the Secretary General of the Arab League has traditionally been an Egyptian. Former Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa is the current Secretary General. The Arab League briefly moved from Egypt to Tunis in 1978, as a protest to the signing by Egypt of a peace treaty with Israel, but returned in 1989.

Egypt was the first Arab state to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, with the signing of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979. Egypt has a major influence amongst other Arab states, and has historically played an important role as a mediator in resolving disputes between various Arab states, and in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Most Arab states still give credence to Egypt playing that role, though its effects are often limited and recently challenged by Saudi Arabia and oil rich Gulf States. It is also reported that due to Egypt's indulgence in internal problems and its reluctance to play a positive role in regional matters had lost the country great influence in Africa and the neighbouring countries.

Former Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali served as Secretary General of the United Nations from 1991 to 1996.

Governorates and markazes



Egypt is divided into 28 governorates (in Arabic, called *muhafazah*, singular *muhafazah*). The governorates are further divided into regions (*markazes*).

Each governorate has a capital, often having the same name as the governorate (*see map, showing names of the 28 capitals*).

The tables (*below*) list the governorates in alphabetical order. In April 2008, Cairo and Giza have divided to 4 governorates, the new governorates are 6th of October and Helwan beside Cairo and Giza

| Governorate | Capital | Location |
|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Alexandria | Alexandria | Northern |
| Aswan | Aswan | Upper |
| Asyut | Asyut | Upper |
| Beheira | Damanhur | Lower |
| Beni Suef | Beni Suef | Upper |
| Cairo | Cairo | Middle |
| Dakahlia | Mansura | Lower |
| Damietta | Damietta | Lower |
| Faiyum | Faiyum | Upper |
| Gharbia | Tanta | Lower |
| Giza | Giza | Upper |
| Helwan | Helwan | Middle |
| Ismailia | Ismailia | Canal |
| Kafr el-Sheikh | Kafr el-Sheikh | Lower |
| Luxor | Luxor | Upper |

| Governorate | Capital | Location |
|-------------|---------------|----------|
| Matruh | Mersa Matruh | Western |
| Minya | Minya | Upper |
| Monufia | Shibin el-Kom | Lower |
| New Valley | Kharga | Western |
| North Sinai | Arish | Sinai |
| Port Said | Port Said | Canal |
| Qalyubia | Banha | Lower |
| Qena | Qena | Upper |
| Red Sea | Hurghada | Eastern |
| Sharqia | Zagazig | Lower |
| Sohag | Sohag | Upper |
| South Sinai | el-Tor | Sinai |
| Suez | Suez | Canal |



Map of Egypt, showing the 26 capitals of governorates, plus the self-governing city of Luxor (numbers label 5 capitals).

Economy



Downtown Cairo is a busy economic centre

Egypt's economy depends mainly on agriculture, media, petroleum exports, and tourism; there are also more than three million Egyptians working abroad, mainly in Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf and Europe. The completion of the Aswan High Dam in 1970 and the resultant Lake Nasser have altered the time-honored place of the Nile River in the agriculture and ecology of Egypt. A rapidly-growing population, limited arable land, and dependence on the Nile all continue to overtax resources and stress the economy.

The government has struggled to prepare the economy for the new millennium through economic reform and massive investments in communications and physical infrastructure. Egypt has been receiving U.S. foreign aid (since 1979, an average of \$2.2 billion per year) and is the third-largest recipient of such funds from the United States following the Iraq war. Its main revenues however come from tourism as well as traffic that goes through the Suez Canal.

Egypt has a developed energy market based on coal, oil, natural gas, and hydro power. Substantial coal deposits are in the north-east Sinai, and are mined at the rate of about 600,000 tonnes (590,000 LT/660,000 ST) per year. Oil and gas are produced in the western desert regions, the Gulf of Suez, and the Nile Delta. Egypt has huge reserves of gas, estimated at over 1,100,000 cubic meters (39,000,000 cu ft) in the 1990s, and LNG is exported to many countries.

Economic conditions have started to improve considerably after a period of stagnation from the adoption of more liberal economic policies by the government, as well as increased revenues from tourism and a booming stock market. In its annual report, the IMF has rated Egypt as one of the top countries in the world undertaking economic reforms. Some major economic reforms taken by the new government since 2003 include a dramatic slashing of customs and tariffs. A new taxation law implemented in 2005 decreased corporate taxes from 40% to the current 20%, resulting in a stated 100% increase in tax revenue by the year 2006.



FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) into Egypt has increased considerably in the past few years due to the recent economic liberalization measures taken by minister of investment Mahmoud Mohieddin, exceeding \$6 billion in 2006. Egypt is slated to overcome South Africa as the highest earner of FDI on the African continent in 2007.

Although one of the main obstacles still facing the Egyptian economy is the trickle down of the wealth to the average population, many Egyptians criticize their government for higher prices of basic goods while their standards of living or purchasing power remains relatively stagnant. Often corruption is blamed by Egyptians as the main impediment to feeling the benefits of the newly attained wealth. Major reconstruction of the country's infrastructure is promised by the government, with a large portion of the sum paid for the newly acquired 3rd mobile license (\$3 billion) by Etisalat. This is slated to be pumped into the country's railroad system, in response to public outrage against the government for disasters in 2006 that claimed more than 100 lives.

The best known examples of Egyptian companies that have expanded regionally and globally are the Orascom Group and Raya. The IT sector has been expanding rapidly in the past few years, with many new start-ups conducting outsourcing business to North America and Europe, operating with companies such as Microsoft, Oracle and other major corporations, as well as numerous SME's. Some of these companies are the Xceed Contact Center, Raya Contact Centre, E Group Connections and C3 along with other start ups in that country. The sector has been stimulated by new Egyptian entrepreneurs trying to capitalize on their country's huge potential in the sector, as well as constant government encouragement.



Tourists ride in traditional Nile boats.

Demographics



Egyptian farm

Egypt is the most populated country in the Middle East and the second-most populous on the African continent, with an estimated 75 million people (as of mid-2008). Almost all the population is concentrated along the banks of the Nile (notably Cairo and Alexandria), in the Delta and near the Suez Canal. Approximately 80-90% of the population adheres to Islam and most of the remainder to Christianity, primarily the Coptic Orthodox denomination. Apart from religious affiliation, Egyptians can be divided demographically into those who live in the major urban centers and the fellahin or farmers of rural villages. The last 40 years have seen a rapid increase in population due to medical advances and massive increase in agricultural productivity, made by the Green Revolution.

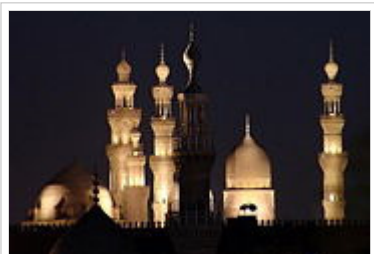
Egyptians are by far the largest ethnic group in Egypt at 94% of the total population. Ethnic minorities include the Bedouin Arab tribes living in the eastern deserts and the Sinai Peninsula, the Berber-speaking Siwis (Amazigh) of the Siwa Oasis, and the ancient Nubian communities clustered along the Nile. There are also tribal communities of Beja concentrated in the south-eastern-most corner of the country, and a number of Dom clans mostly in the Nile Delta and Faiyum who are progressively becoming assimilated as urbanization increases.

Egypt also hosts an unknown number of refugees and asylum seekers, but they are estimated to be between 500,000 and 3 million. There are some 70,000 Palestinian refugees, and about 150,000 recently arrived Iraqi refugees, but the number of the largest group, the Sudanese, is contested. The once-vibrant Jewish



community in Egypt has virtually disappeared, with only a small number remaining in the country, but many Egyptian Jews visit on religious occasions and for tourism. Several important Jewish archaeological and historical sites are found in Cairo, Alexandria and other cities.

Religion



Cairo's unique cityscape with its ancient mosques

Religion plays a central role in most Egyptians' lives. The rolling calls to prayer that are heard five times a day have the informal effect of regulating the pace of everything from business to entertainment. Cairo is famous for its numerous mosque minarets and church towers.

Egypt is predominantly Muslim, at 80-90% of the population, with the majority being adherents of the Sunni branch of Islam. A significant number of Muslim Egyptians also follow native Sufi orders, and there is a minority of Shi'a.

Christians represent 10-20% of the population, more than 95% of whom belong to the native Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria. Other native Egyptian Christians are adherents of the Coptic Catholic Church, the Coptic Evangelical Church and various Coptic Protestant denominations. Non-native Christian communities are largely found in the urban regions of Alexandria and Cairo, and are members of the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Melkite Greek Catholic Church,

the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Maronite Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Syriac Catholic Church, or the Syriac Orthodox Church.

According to the Constitution of Egypt, any new legislation must at least implicitly agree with Islamic laws. The mainstream Hanafi school of Sunni Islam is largely organised by the state, through *Wizaret Al-Awkaf* (Ministry of Religious Affairs). *Al-Awkaf* controls all mosques and oversees Muslim clerics. Imams are trained in Imam vocational schools and at Al-Azhar University. The department supports Sunni Islam and has commissions authorised to give *Fatwa* judgements on Islamic issues.



Egypt hosts two major religious institutions. Al-Azhar University is the oldest Islamic institution of higher studies (founded around 970 A.D) and considered by many to be the oldest extant university. The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, headed by the Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, attests to Egypt's strong Christian heritage. It has a following of approximately 15 million Christians worldwide; affiliated sister churches are located in Armenia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, India, Lebanon and Syria.

Religious freedom in Egypt is hampered to varying degrees by extremist Islamist groups and by discriminatory and restrictive government policies. Being the largest religious minority in Egypt, Coptic Christians are the most negatively affected community. Copts have faced increasing marginalization after the 1952 coup d'état led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Until recently, Christians were required to obtain presidential approval for even minor repairs in churches. Although the law was eased in 2005 by handing down the authority of approval to the governors, Copts continue to face many obstacles in building new or repairing existing churches. These obstacles are not found in building mosques.

In addition, Copts complain of being minimally represented in law enforcement, state security and public office, and of being discriminated against in the workforce on the basis of their religion. The Coptic community, as well as several human rights activists and intellectuals (such as Saad Eddin Ibrahim and Tarek Heggy), maintain that the number of Christians occupying government posts is not proportional to the number of Copts in Egypt, who constitute between 10 and 15% of the population in Egypt. Of the 32 cabinet ministers, two are Copts: Finance Minister Youssef Boutros Ghali and Minister of Environment Magued George; and of the 25 local governors, only one is a Copt (in the Upper Egyptian governorate of Qena). However, Copts have demonstrated great success in Egypt's private business sector; Naguib Sawiris, an extremely successful businessman and one of the world's wealthiest 100 people is a Copt. In 2002, under the Mubarak government, Coptic Christmas (January 7) was recognized as an official holiday. Nevertheless, the Coptic community has occasionally been the target of hate crimes and physical assaults. The most significant was the 2000-2001 El Kosheh attacks, in which 21 Copts and one Muslim were killed. A 2006 attack on three churches in Alexandria left one dead and 17 injured, although the attacker was not linked to any organisation.



Over ten million Egyptians follow the Christian faith as members of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria.



Annex of the *Library of Jewish Heritage in Egypt*, Ben Ezra Synagogue, Old Cairo.

Egypt was once home to one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world. Egyptian Jews, who were mostly Karaites, partook of all aspects of Egypt's social, economic and political life; one of the most ardent Egyptian nationalists, Yaqub Sanu' (Abu Naddara), was a Jew, as were famous musician Dawoud Husni, popular singer Leila Mourad, and prominent filmmaker Togo Mizrahi. For a while, Jews from across the Ottoman Empire and Europe were attracted to Egypt due to the relative harmony that characterized the local religious landscape in the 19th and early 20th centuries. After the 1956 Suez Crisis, a great number of Jews were expelled by Gamal Abdel Nasser, many of whom holding official Egyptian citizenship. Their Egyptian citizenship was revoked and their property was confiscated. A steady stream of migration of Egyptian Jews followed, reaching a peak after the Six-Day War with Israel in 1967. Today, Jews in Egypt number less than 100.

Bahá'ís in Egypt, whose population is estimated to be a few thousand, have long been persecuted, having their institutions and community activities banned. Since their faith is not officially recognized by the state, they were not allowed to use it on their national identity cards; a court case in 2008 allowed Bahá'ís to obtain birth certificates and identification documents, so long



as they omit their religion on court documents.

There are Egyptians who identify as atheist and agnostic, but their numbers are largely unknown, as openly advocating such positions risks legal sanction on the basis of apostasy (if a citizen takes the step of suing the 'apostating' person, though not automatically by the general prosecutor). In 2000, an openly atheist Egyptian writer, who called for the establishment of a local association for atheists, was tried on charges of insulting Islam in four of his books.

While freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Egyptian constitution, according to Human Rights Watch, "Egyptians are able to convert to Islam generally without difficulty, but Muslims who convert to Christianity face difficulties in getting new identity papers and some have been arrested for allegedly forging such documents. The Coptic community, however, takes pains to prevent conversions from Christianity to Islam due to the ease with which Christians can often become Muslim. Public officials, being conservative themselves, intensify the complexity of the legal procedures required to recognize the religion change as required by law. Security agencies will sometimes claim that such conversions from Islam to Christianity (or occasionally vice versa) may stir social unrest, and thereby justify themselves in wrongfully detaining the subjects, insisting that they are simply taking steps to prevent likely social troubles from happening. In 2007, a Cairo administrative court denied 45 citizens the right to obtain identity papers documenting their reversion to Christianity after converting to Islam. However, in February 2008 the Supreme Administrative Court overturned the decision, allowing 12 citizens who had reverted back to Christianity to re-list their religion on identity cards, but they will specify that they had adopted Islam for a brief period of time.

Culture



Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a commemoration of the ancient Library of Alexandria in Egypt's second largest city.

Egyptian culture has five thousand years of recorded history. Ancient Egypt was among the earliest civilizations and for millennia, Egypt maintained a strikingly complex and stable culture that influenced later cultures of Europe, the Middle East and other African countries. After the Pharaonic era, Egypt itself came under the influence of Hellenism, Christianity, and Islamic culture. Today, many aspects of Egypt's ancient culture exist in interaction with newer elements, including the influence of modern Western culture, itself with roots in ancient Egypt.

Egypt's capital city, Cairo, is Africa's largest city and has been renowned for centuries as a centre of learning, culture and commerce. Egypt has the highest number of Nobel Laureates in Africa and the Arab World. Some Egyptian born politicians were or are currently at the helm of major international organizations like Boutros Boutros-Ghali of the United Nations and Mohamed ElBaradei of the IAEA.

Renaissance

The work of early nineteenth-century scholar Rifa'a et-Tahtawi gave rise to the Egyptian Renaissance, marking the transition from Medieval to Early Modern Egypt. His work renewed interest in Egyptian antiquity and exposed Egyptian society to Enlightenment principles. Tahtawi co-founded with education reformer Ali Mubarak a native Egyptology school that looked for inspiration to medieval Egyptian scholars, such as Suyuti and Maqrizi, who themselves studied the history, language and antiquities of Egypt. Egypt's renaissance peaked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the work of people like Muhammad Abduh, Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed, Tawfiq el-Hakim, Louis Awad, Qasim Amin, Salama Moussa, Taha Hussein and Mahmoud Mokhtar. They forged a liberal path



for Egypt expressed as a commitment to individual freedom, secularism and faith in science to bring progress.

Art and architecture

The Egyptians were one of the first major civilizations to codify design elements in art and architecture. The wall paintings done in the service of the Pharaohs followed a rigid code of visual rules and meanings. Egyptian civilization is renowned for its colossal pyramids, colonnades and monumental tombs. Well-known examples are the Pyramid of Djoser designed by ancient architect and engineer Imhotep, the Sphinx, and the temple of Abu Simbel. Modern and contemporary Egyptian art can be as diverse as any works in the world art scene, from the vernacular architecture of Hassan Fathy and Ramses Wissa Wassef, to Mahmoud Mokhtar's famous sculptures, to the distinctive Coptic iconography of Isaac Fanous.

The Cairo Opera House serves as the main performing arts venue in the Egyptian capital. Egypt's media and arts industry has flourished since the late nineteenth century, today with more than thirty satellite channels and over one hundred motion pictures produced each year. Cairo has long been known as the "Hollywood of the Middle East;" its annual film festival, the Cairo International Film Festival, has been rated as one of 11 festivals with a top class rating worldwide by the International Federation of Film Producers' Associations. To bolster its media industry further, especially with the keen competition from the Persian Gulf Arab States and Lebanon, a large media city was built. Some Egyptian-born actors, like Omar Sharif, have achieved worldwide fame.

Literature

Literature constitutes an important cultural element in the life of Egypt. Egyptian novelists and poets were among the first to experiment with modern styles of Arabic literature, and the forms they developed have been widely imitated throughout the Middle East. The first modern Egyptian novel *Zaynab* by Muhammad Husayn Haykal was published in 1913 in the Egyptian vernacular. Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz was the first Arabic-language writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Egyptian women writers include Nawal El Saadawi, well known for her feminist activism, and Alifa Rifaat who also writes about women and tradition. Vernacular poetry is perhaps the most popular literary genre amongst Egyptians, represented by the works of Ahmed Fouad Negm (Fagumi), Salah Jaheen and Abdel Rahman el-Abnudi.

Music



Eighteenth dynasty painting from the tomb of Theban governor Ramose in Deir el-Madinah.



Upper Egyptian folk musicians from Kom Ombo.

Egyptian music is a rich mixture of indigenous, Mediterranean, African and Western elements. In antiquity, Egyptians were playing harps and flutes, including two indigenous instruments: the ney and the oud. Percussion and vocal music also became an important part of the local music tradition ever since. Contemporary Egyptian music traces its beginnings to the creative work of people such as Abdu-I Hamuli, Almaz and Mahmud Osman, who influenced the later work of Egyptian music giants such as Sayed Darwish, Umm Kulthum, Mohammed Abdel Wahab and Abdel Halim Hafez. These prominent artists were followed later by Amr Diab. He is seen by many as the new age "Musical Legend", whose fan base stretches all over the Middle East and Europe. From the 1970s onwards, Egyptian pop music has become increasingly important in Egyptian culture, while Egyptian folk music continues to be played during weddings and other festivities.

Festivals

Egypt is famous for its many festivals and religious carnivals, also known as *mulid*. They are usually associated with a particular Coptic or Sufi saint, but are often celebrated by all Egyptians irrespective of creed or religion. Ramadan has a special flavor in Egypt, celebrated with sounds, lights (local lanterns known as *fawanees*) and much flare that many Muslim tourists from the region flock to Egypt during Ramadan to witness the spectacle. The ancient spring festival of Sham en Nisim (Coptic: Ⲭⲓⲛⲓⲥⲓⲙⲓ *shom en nisim*) has been celebrated by Egyptians for thousands of years, typically between the Egyptian months of Paremoude (April) and Pashons (May), following Easter Sunday.

Sports

Football (soccer) is the *de facto* national sport of Egypt. Egyptian Soccer clubs El Ahly and El Zamalek are the two most popular teams and enjoy the reputation of long-time regional champions. The great rivalries keep the streets of Egypt energized as people fill the streets when their favorite team wins. Egypt is rich in soccer history as soccer has been around for over 100 years. The country is home to many African championships such as the Africa Cup of Nations. While, Egypt's national team has not qualified for the FIFA World Cup since 1990, the Egyptian team won the Africa Cup Of Nations an unprecedented six times, including two times in a row in 1957 and 1959 and again in 2006 and 2008, setting a world record.

Squash and tennis are other popular sports in Egypt. The Egyptian squash team has been known for its fierce competition in international championships since the 1930s. Amr Shabana is Egypt's best player and the winner of the world open three times and the best player of 2006.

The Egyptian Handball team also holds another record; throughout the 34 times the African Handball Nations Championship was held, Egypt won first place five times (including 2008), five times second place, four times third place, and came in fourth place twice. The team won 6th and 7th places in 1995, 1997 at the World Men's Handball Championship, and twice won 6th place at the 1996 and 2000 Olympics.

In 2007, Omar joined Ben Stephens (England), Victoria James (Wales) and Greg Maud (South Africa) in putting together an expedition to climb Mount Everest



Cairo International Stadium during the 2006 African Cup of Nations



from its South side. The Everest expedition began on the 25th of March 2007 and lasted for just over 9 weeks. On the 17th of May at precisely 9:49AM Nepal time, Omar became the first and youngest Egyptian to climb 8,850m Mount Everest. He also became the first Egyptian to climb Everest from its South face, the same route taken by Sir Edmund Hilary and Sherpa Tenzing in 1953.

Egypt has a long history of participation at the Summer Olympics since 1912.

Best results

| Games | Gold | Silver | Bronze | Total |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1928 Amsterdam | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| 1936 Berlin | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| 1948 London | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 1984 Los Angeles | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2004 Athens | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 7 | 8 | 9 | 24 |

Military

The Egyptian Armed forces have a combined troop strength of around 450,000 active personnel. According to the Israeli chair of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Yuval Steinitz, the Egyptian Air Force has roughly the same number of modern warplanes as the Israeli Air Force and far more Western tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft batteries and warships than the IDF. The Egyptian military has recently undergone massive military modernization mostly in their Air Force. Other than Israel, Egypt is speculated by Israel to be the first country in the region with a spy satellite, EgyptSat 1, and is planning to launch 3 more satellites (DesertSat1, EgyptSat2, DesertSat2) over the next two years. Egypt is considered to be the leading military power in the Middle East along with Israel



Two Egyptian Mi-17 helicopters after unloading troops during an exercise.

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Equatorial Guinea

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The **Republic of Equatorial Guinea** (*República de Guinea Ecuatorial*, Spanish pronunciation: [reˈpuβlika de ɣiˈnea ekwatoˈɾjal]) is a country in Central Africa. It is one of the smallest countries in continental Africa, and comprises two regions: **Río Muni**, continental region including several offshore islands; and **Insular Region** containing Annobón island in the South Atlantic Ocean, and Bioko island (formerly *Fernando Po*) that contains the capital, Malabo.

Annobón is the southernmost island of Equatorial Guinea and is situated just north of the equator. Bioko island is the northernmost point of Equatorial Guinea. Between the two islands and to the east is the mainland region. Equatorial Guinea borders Cameroon on the north, Gabon on the south and east, and the Gulf of Guinea on the west, where the island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe is located between Bioko and Annobón. Formerly the colony of Spanish Guinea, its post-independence name is suggestive of its location near both the Equator and the Gulf of Guinea. It is one of the territories in mainland Africa where Spanish is an official language, besides the Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and the UN-recognised but Moroccan-occupied Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara).

Equatorial Guinea is the smallest country in continental Africa in terms of population. (Seychelles and São Tomé and Príncipe are smaller in terms of area, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic has a smaller population but is disputed.) It is also the smallest United Nations member from continental Africa. The discovery of sizeable petroleum reserves in recent years is altering the economic and political status of the country.

Despite its name, no part of Equatorial Guinea's territory lies on the equator.

History

The first inhabitants were of the continental region that is now Equatorial Guinea are believed to have been labelbes, of whom only isolated pockets remain in northern Río Muni. Bantu migrations between the 17th and 19th centuries brought the coastal tribes and later the Fang. Elements of the latter may have

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República de Guinea Ecuatorial (Spanish)
République de Guinée Équatoriale (French)
República da Guiné Equatorial (Portuguese)
Republic of Equatorial Guinea



Flag



Coat of arms

Motto: Unidad, Paz, Justicia (Spanish)

Unité, Paix, Justice (French)

Unidade, Paz, Justiça (Portuguese)

Unity, Peace, Justice

Anthem: Caminemos pisando la senda



generated the Bubi, who emigrated to Bioko from Cameroon and Rio Muni in several waves and succeeded former Neolithic populations. The Bubi were the very first human inhabitants of Bioko Island. The Annobon population, native to Angola, was introduced by the Portuguese via São Tomé Island (São Tomé and Príncipe).

The Portuguese explorer Fernão do Pó, seeking a path to India, is credited as being the first European to discover the island of Bioko in 1472. He called it *Formosa* ("Beautiful"), but it quickly took on the name of its European discoverer. The islands of Fernando Pó and Annobón were colonized by Portugal in 1474. In 1778, the island, adjacent islets, and commercial rights to the mainland between the Niger and Ogoue Rivers were ceded to Spain in exchange for territory in the American continent (Treaty of El Pardo, between Queen Maria I of Portugal and King Charles III of Spain). Between 1778 and 1810, the territory of Equatorial Guinea depended administratively on the viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata, with seat in Buenos Aires. From 1827 to 1843, Britain established a base on the island to combat the slave trade, which was then moved to Sierra Leone upon agreement with Spain in 1843. In 1844, on restoration of Spanish sovereignty, it became known as the *Territorios Españoles del Golfo de Guinea Ecuatorial*. The mainland portion, Rio Muni, became a protectorate in 1885 and a colony in 1900. Conflicting claims to the mainland were settled by the Treaty of Paris (1900), and periodically, the mainland territories were united administratively under Spanish rule. Between 1926 and 1959 they were united as the colony of Spanish Guinea.

Politics



Map of Equatorial Guinea

The current president of Equatorial Guinea is Retired Brig. Gen. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. The 1982 constitution of Equatorial Guinea gives Obiang extensive powers, including naming and dismissing members of the cabinet, making laws by decree, dissolving the Chamber of Representatives, negotiating and ratifying treaties and calling legislative elections. Obiang retains his role as commander in chief of the armed forces and minister of defence, and he maintains close supervision of the military activity. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President and operates under powers designated by the President. The



| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Capital (and largest city) | Malabo |
| Official languages | Spanish, French, Portuguese |
| Recognised regional languages | Fang, Bube, Annobonese, |
| Demonym | Equatorial Guinean, Equatoguinean |
| Government | Presidential Republic |
| - President | Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo |
| - Prime Minister | Ignacio Milam Tang |
| Independence | |
| - from Spain | October 12, 1968 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 28,051 km ² (144th) 10,828 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 504,000 (166th) |
| - Density | 18/km ² (187th) 47/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |



Prime Minister coordinates government activities in areas other than foreign affairs, national defense and security.

On December 15, 2002, Equatorial Guinea's four main opposition parties withdrew from the country's presidential election. Obiang won an election widely considered fraudulent by members of the Western press.

Diplomats and even ministers have been caught smuggling drugs, sometimes using diplomatic bags and even the president's baggage on state trips. The incumbent president has never equalled the bloodthirsty reputation of former dictator Francisco Macías Nguema, whom he overthrew. On Christmas of 1975, Macías had 150 alleged coup plotters executed to the sound of a band playing Mary Hopkin's tune *Those Were the Days* in a national stadium.

A huge proportion of the £370 million revenue is confiscated by the president while most of the 500,000 subjects subsist on less than a dollar a day, sewage runs through the streets of the capital Malabo, and there is no public transport and little drinking water or electricity.

According to a March 2004 BBC profile, politics within the country are currently dominated by tensions between Obiang's son, Teodorin, and other close relatives with powerful positions in the security forces. The tension may be rooted in power shift arising from the dramatic increase in oil production which has occurred since 1997.

A November 2004 report named Mark Thatcher as a financial backer of a March 2004 attempt to topple Obiang, organized by Simon Mann. Various accounts also name Britain's MI6, the United States of America's CIA, and Spain as having been tacit supporters of the coup attempt. Nevertheless, the Amnesty International report released in June 2005 on the ensuing trial of those allegedly involved highlighted the prosecution's failure to produce conclusive evidence that a coup attempt had actually taken place.

On February 29, 2008, President Obiang dissolved parliament and announced that municipal and parliamentary elections would be held on May 4. His decree also called for a presidential election in 2010.

Provinces and districts

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - Total | \$23,796 million (112th) |
| - Per capita | \$12,900 (12th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▼ 0.642 (medium) (127th) |
| Currency | Central African CFA franc (₣ AF) |
| Time zone - Summer (DST) | WAT (UTC+1) not observed (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .gq |
| Calling code | +240 |



Equatorial Guinea is divided into seven provinces (capitals appear in parentheses):

1. Annobón Province (San Antonio de Palé)
2. Bioko Norte Province (Malabo)
3. Bioko Sur Province (Luba)
4. Centro Sur Province (Evinayong)
5. Kié-Ntem Province (Ebebiyín)
6. Litoral Province (Bata)
7. Wele-Nzas Province (Mongomo)

The provinces are further divided into districts.

Economy

Pre-independence Equatorial Guinea counted on cocoa production for hard currency earnings. It had the highest per capita income of Africa in 1959.

The discovery of large oil reserves in 1996 and its subsequent exploitation have contributed to a dramatic increase in government revenue. As of 2004, Equatorial Guinea is the third-largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its oil production has risen to 360,000 barrels/day, up from 220,000 only two years earlier.

Forestry, farming, and fishing are also major components of GDP. Subsistence farming predominates. The deterioration of the rural economy under successive brutal regimes has diminished any potential for agriculture-led growth.

Despite a per capita GDP (PPP) of more than US\$30,000 (CIA Factbook \$50,200) which is as of 2008 the ninth highest in the world, Equatorial Guinea ranks 121st out of 177 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index.

In July 2004, the US Senate published an investigation into Riggs Bank, a Washington-based bank into which most of Equatorial Guinea's oil revenues were paid until recently, and which also banked for Chile's Augusto Pinochet. The Senate report, as to Equatorial Guinea, showed that at least \$35 million were siphoned off by Obiang, his family and senior officials of his regime. The president has denied any wrongdoing. While Riggs Bank in February 2005 paid \$9 million as restitution for its banking for Chile's Augusto Pinochet, no restitution was made with regard to Equatorial Guinea, as reported in detail in an Anti-Money Laundering Report from Inner City Press.

On August 9, 2006, *Harper's Magazine* published an article by Ken Silverstein highlighting Obiang's recent connections with the US State Department and Independence Federal Savings Bank.

While Equatorial Guinea is currently one of the largest producers of oil in Africa, few improvements have been made to the living conditions of the people and most live in poverty.





Demographics



Equatorial Guinean children of Bubi descent.

The majority of the people of Equatorial Guinea are of Bantu origin. The largest tribe, the Fang, is indigenous to the mainland, but substantial migration to Bioko Island has resulted in Fang dominance over the earlier Bantu inhabitants. The Fang constitute 80% of the population and comprise 67 clans. Those in the northern part of Rio Muni speak Fang-Ntumu, while those in the south speak Fang-Okah; the two dialects have differences but are mutually intelligible. Dialects of Fang are also spoken in parts of neighboring Cameroon (Bulu) and Gabon. These dialects, while still intelligible, are more distinct. The Bulu Fang of Cameroon were traditional rivals of Fang in Rio Muni. (The Bubi, who constitute 15% of the population, are indigenous to Bioko Island. The traditional demarcation line between Fang and beach tribes was the village of Niefang (limit of the fang) inland from Bata.

In addition, there are coastal tribes, sometimes referred to as "Playeros" (*Beach People* in Spanish): Ndowes, Bujebas, Balengues, Kombis, and Bengas on the mainland and small islands, and "Fernandinos", a Creole community, on Bioko. Together, these groups compose 5% of the population. Some Europeans (largely of Spanish or Portuguese descent) – among them mixed with African ethnicity – also live in the nation. Most Spaniards left after independence. There is a growing number of foreigners from neighboring Cameroon, Nigeria, and Gabon. Equatorial Guinea received Asians and black Africans from other countries as workers on cocoa and coffee plantations. Other black Africans came from Liberia, Angola, and Mozambique. Most of the Asian population is Chinese, with small numbers of Indians. Equatorial Guinea also allowed many fortune-seeking European settlers of other nationalities, including British, French and Germans. After independence, thousands of Equatorial Guineans went to Spain. Another 100,000 Equatorial Guineans went to Cameroon, Gabon, and Nigeria because of the dictatorship of Francisco Macías Nguema. Some of its communities also live in Latin America, the United States, Portugal, and France.

Oil extraction has contributed to a doubling of the population in Malabo.

Official languages

The Constitutional Law which amends article 4 of the Fundamental Law of the State establishes that "the official languages of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea are Spanish and French. The aboriginal languages are recognized as integral parts of the national culture" (Constitutional Law No. 1/1998 of 21 January). The great majority of Equatorial Guineans speak Spanish, especially those living in the capital, Malabo. Spanish has been an official language since 1844. In July 2007, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema announced his government's decision for Portuguese to become Equatorial Guinea's third official language, in order to meet the requirements to apply for full membership in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). This upgrading from its current Associate Observer condition would result in Equatorial Guinea being able to access several professional and academic exchange programs and the facilitation of cross-border circulation of citizens. Its application is currently being assessed by other CPLP members.



Equatorial Guinean children of Fang descent.



Education and culture

Several cultural dispersion and literacy organizations are located in the country, founded chiefly with the financial support of the Spanish government. The country has one university, the Universidad Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial (UNGE) with a campus in Malabo and a Faculty of Medicine located in Bata on the mainland. The Bata Medical School is supported principally by the government of Cuba and staffed by Cuban medical educators and physicians.

Communications

The principal means of communication within the country are three state-operated FM radio stations. There are also five shortwave radio stations. There are also two newspapers and two magazines. Television Nacional, the television network, is state operated.

Most of the media companies practice heavy self-censorship, and are banned by law from criticising public figures. The state-owned media and the main private radio station are under the directorship of Teodorin Nguema Obiang, the president's son.

Landline telephone penetration is low, with only two lines available for every 100 persons. There is one GSM mobile telephone operator, with coverage of Malabo, Bata, and several mainland cities. As of 2005, approximately twenty percent of the population subscribed to mobile telephone services. The only telephone provider in Equatorial Guinea is Orange.

Equatorial Guinea has one Internet service provider, which serves about 8,000 users.

Sports

Equatorial Guinea has been chosen to co-host the 2012 African Cup of Nations in partnership with Gabon.

- Equatorial Guinea national football team

Equatorial Guinea is also famous for the National Swimming Champion Eric Moussambani, nicknamed "Eric the Eel".

In fiction

Frederick Forsyth's 1974 novel *The Dogs of War* is set in the fictional platinum-rich 'Republic of Zangaro', which is based on Equatorial Guinea. There is also a 1981 film adaptation of the book, also called *The Dogs of War*.

Fernando Pó (now Bioko) is featured prominently in the 1975 science fiction work *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson. The island (and, in turn, the country) experience a series of coups in the story which lead the world to the verge of nuclear war. The story also hypothesizes that

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Fernando Pó is the last remaining piece of the sunken continent of Atlantis.

Most of the action in Robin Cook's book, *Chromosome 6*, takes place at a primate research facility based in Equatorial Guinea due to the country's permissive laws. The book also discusses some of the geography, history, and peoples of the country.

Books

- Max Liniger-Goumaz, *Small is not Always Beautiful: The Story of Equatorial Guinea* (French 1986, translated 1989) ISBN 0-389-20861-2
- Ibrahim K. Sundiata, *Equatorial Guinea: Colonialism, State Terror, and the Search for Stability* (1990, Boulder: Westview Press) ISBN 0-8133-0429-6
- Robert Klitgaard. 1990. *Tropical Gangsters*. New York: Basic Books. (World Bank economist tries to assist pre-oil Equatorial Guinea -clever book, factual account) ISBN 0465087604
- D.L. Claret. *Cien años de evangelización en Guinea Ecuatorial (1883-1983)/ One Hundred Years of Evangelism in Equatorial Guinea* (1983, Barcelona: Claretian Missionaries)
- Adam Roberts, *The Wonga Coup: Guns, Thugs and a Ruthless Determination to Create Mayhem in an Oil-Rich Corner of Africa* (2006, PublicAffairs) ISBN 1-58648-371-4

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Eritrea

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Eritrea (IPA: /, ɛrɪˈtɹeɪə/, /, ɛrɪˈtriːə/) (Ge'ez: ኤርትራ *ʾErtrā*, Arabic: إرتريا *Iritriya*), officially the **State of Eritrea**, is a country situated in Northeast Africa. It is bordered by Sudan in the west, Ethiopia in the south, and Djibouti in the southeast. The east and northeast of the country have an extensive coastline on the Red Sea, directly across from Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The Dahlak Archipelago and several of the Hanish Islands are part of Eritrea.

Eritrea was conquered by Italy and formally consolidated into a colony by the Italian government on January 1, 1890. In 1936 it became a province of Italian East Africa (Africa Orientale Italiana), along with Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. The British expelled the Italians in 1941.

Increasing unrest and resistance in Eritrea against the federation with Ethiopia eventually led to a decision by the Ethiopian government to annex Eritrea as its 14th province in 1962. An Eritrean independence movement formed in the early 1960s which later erupted into a 31 year long civil war against successive Ethiopian governments that ended in 1991. Following a UN supervised referendum in Eritrea dubbed UNOVER in which the Eritrean people overwhelmingly voted for independence from Ethiopia, Eritrea declared its independence and gained international recognition in 1993. Eritrea's constitution, adopted in 1997, stipulates that the state is a presidential republic with a unicameral parliamentary democracy. The constitution, however, has not yet been implemented fully due to, according to the government, the prevailing border conflict with Ethiopia which began in May 1998.

Eritrea is a multilingual and multicultural country with two dominant religions (Coptic Orthodox Christianity and Islam) and nine ethnic groups. The country's dominant language is Tigrinya, natively spoken by around 50% of the population. Along with Tigrinya, Arabic and English are used for official communication. English is also used in all of the government's international communication and is the language of instruction in all education beyond 5th grade.

History

The oldest written reference to the territory now known as Eritrea is the chronicled expedition launched to the fabled *Punt* (or *Ta Netjeru*, meaning land of the Gods) by the Ancient Egyptians in the twenty-fifth

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This article contains **Ethiopic text**.

Without rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes or other symbols instead of Ethiopic characters.

Hagere Ertra

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دولة إرتريا

Dawlat Iritriya

State of Eritrea



Flag

Coat of arms

Anthem: *Ertra, Ertra, Ertra*





century BC under Pharaoh Sahure. Later sources from the Pharaoh Hatshepsut in the fifteenth century BC present a more detailed portrayal of an expedition in search of incense. The geographical location of the missions to Punt is described as roughly corresponding to the southern west coast of the Red Sea.

Pre-history

One of the oldest hominids, representing a possible link between Homo erectus and an archaic Homo sapiens, was found in Buya (Eritrean Danakil) in 1995 by Italian scientists. The cranium was dated to over 1 million years old. Furthermore, the *Eritrean Research Project Team*, composed of Eritrean, Canadian, American, Dutch, and French scientists, discovered in 1999, some of the earliest remains in the world, of humans using tools to harvest marine resources, at a site near the bay of Zula south of Massawa. The site contained obsidian tools dated to over 125,000 years old, from the paleolithic era. Epipaleolithic or mesolithic cave paintings in central and northern Eritrea attest to early hunter-gatherers in this region.

A US paleontologist, William Sanders of the University of Michigan also discovered a possible missing link between ancient and modern elephants in the form of the fossilized remains of a pig-sized creature in Eritrea. Sanders claims that the dating of the fossil to 27 million years ago also pushes the origins of elephants and mastodons five million years further into the past than previously recorded and asserts that modern elephants originated in Africa, in contrast to mammals such as rhinos that had their origins in Europe and Asia and migrated into Africa. In addition to Sanders, the research team included scientists from the Elephant Research Foundation of Wayne State University in Michigan, USA, University of Asmara in Eritrea; Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, USA; the Eritrean ministry of mines and energy; Global Resources in Asmara, Eritrea; the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle in Paris; the National Museum of Eritrea; and German Primate Centre in Gottingen, Germany.

Early history

The earliest evidence of agriculture, urban settlement and trade in Eritrea was found in the western region of the country consisting of archeological remains dating back to 3500 BC in sites called the *Gash group*. Based on the archaeological evidence, there seems to have been a connection between the peoples of the Gash group and the civilizations of the Nile Valley namely Ancient Egypt and Nubia. Ancient Egyptian sources also give references to cities and trading posts along the southwestern Red Sea coast, roughly corresponding to modern day Eritrea, calling this *the land of Punt* famed for its incense. Expeditions to this very land were launched by the Ancient Egyptians as early as the 25th century BC

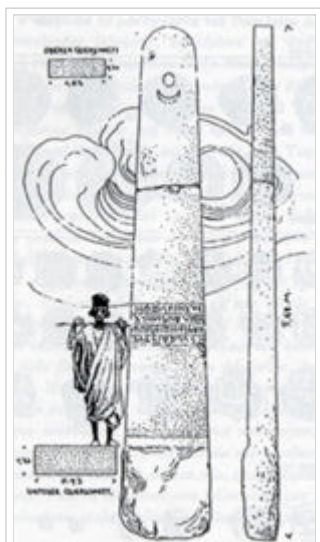
| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Capital (and largest city) | Asmara |
| Official languages | none at national level ¹ (Tigrinya, Arabic) |
| Demonym | Eritrean |
| Government - President | Transitional government Isaias Afewerki |
| Independence - <i>de facto</i> - <i>de jure</i> | from Ethiopia May 24, 1991 May 24, 1993 |
| Area - Total - Water (%) | 117,600 km ² (100th) 45,405 sq mi negligible |
| Population - July 2005 estimate - 2002 census - Density | 4,401,009 (118th) 4,298,270 37/km ² (165th) 96/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) - Total - Per capita | 2005 estimate \$4.471 billion (168th) \$1,000 (147) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.483 (low) (157th) |
| Currency | Nakfa (ERN) |
| Time zone - Summer (DST) | EAT (UTC+3) not observed (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .er |



and were chronicled in more detail in later expeditions during the reign of the female Pharaoh Hatshepsut in the 15th century BC.

In the highlands, in the capital city Asmara's suburbs, scores of ancient sites have been documented, including Sembel, Mai Chiot, Ona Gudo, Mai Temenai, Weki Duba, and Mai Hutsa. Mostly dating to the early and mid-1st millennium BCE (800 to 350 BCE), these communities ranged from small towns, villages, and hamlets built of stone. People practiced a mixed economy of pastoralism and grain agriculture, but little evidence for trade with the outside world has been found. The proximity of these ancient communities to gold mines suggest that part of their prosperity is linked to mining and processing of gold. Around the mid-1st millennium, several sites with Sabaeen remains (inscriptions, artifacts, monuments, etc.) seem to emerge in the central highlands, for example, at Keskesse. There is evidence at Keskesse that older remains, similar to those around Asmara, are present. The Sabaeen remains, however, are not accompanied by evidence for residence of people from that southern Arabian kingdom. It appears to archaeologists that these remains represent the growth of local elites who appropriated powerful symbols from Saba in their quest for legitimacy.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Calling code | +291 |
| 1 Working languages: Tigrigna, Arabic, Italian, English , . | |



1913 sketch by the Deutsche Aksum-Expedition of Hawulti, a pre-Aksumite or early Aksumite stela at Matara.

Between the eighth and fifth century BCE, a kingdom known as D'mt was supposedly established in what is today Eritrea and northern Ethiopia (Tigray), with what some archaeologists speculate was its capital at Yeha in northern Ethiopia. Many speculative theories try to explain the presence of Sabaeen material culture by saying that this area had extensive relations with the Sabaeans in present day Yemen across the Red Sea, but these views are not sustained by archaeological evidence. After D'mt's decline around the fifth century BC, the state of Aksum arose in much of Eritrea and northern Ethiopian Highlands. It grew during the fourth century BC and came into prominence during the first century AD, minting its own coins by the third century, converting in the fourth century to Christianity, as the second official Christian state (after Armenia) and the first country to feature the cross on its coins. According to Mani, it grew to be one of the four greatest civilizations in the world, on a par with China, Persia, and Rome. In the seventh century; with the advent of Islam across the Red Sea in Arabia, and the Arab invasion and subsequent destruction of Adulis, Aksum's trade and power on the Red Sea began to decline and the empire gradually diminished and overtaken by smaller rival Kingdoms.

Medieval history

During the medieval period, contemporary with and following the gradual disintegration of the Axumite state between the 9th and 10th centuries, several states as well as tribal and clan lands emerged in the area known today as Eritrea. Between the eighth and thirteenth century, northern and northwestern Eritrea had largely come under the domination of the Beja, a Cushitic people from northeastern Sudan. They formed five independent islamic kingdoms known as: *Naqis*, *Baqlin*, *Bazin*, *Jarin* and *Qata*. The Beja brought Islam to large parts of Eritrea and connected the region to the greater Islamic world dominated by the Ummayyad Caliphate, followed by the Abbasid (and Mamluk) and later the Ottoman Empire. The Ummayyads had taken the Dahlak archipelago by 702. Christians of the Axumite era continued nonetheless to inhabit these areas and retain their religion. The southeastern parts of Eritrea, inhabited by the independent Afar since ancient times, came to form part of the islamic sultanate of Adal in the early 13th century. Parts of the southwestern lowlands of Eritrea, were under the dominion of the then christian/animist Funj sultanate of Sinnar.



In the main highland area and adjacent coastline of what were previously moslem (Beja) ruled areas, there broke out a christian Kingdom called *Midir Bahr* or *Midri Bahri* (Tigrinya for land of the sea) ruled by the Bahr negus or *Bahr negash*, ("ruler of the sea") in the 15th century. Barely a century later, an invading force of the islamic Ottoman Empire, under Suleiman I, conquered Massawa in 1557 from the christians, building what is now considered the "old town" of Massawa on Batsi island. They also conquered the towns of Hergigo, and Debarwa, the capital city of the contemporary christian Bahr negus (ruler), Yeshaq. Suleiman's forces fought as far south as southeastern Tigray in Ethiopia before being repulsed. Yeshaq was able to retake much of what the Ottomans captured with Ethiopian assistance, but he later twice revolted against the Emperor of Ethiopia with Ottoman support. By 1578, all revolts had ended, leaving the Ottomans in control of the important ports of Massawa and Hergigo and their environs, and leaving the interior domains (province) which they had dubbed: "Habesh", to Beja *Na'ibs* (deputies). The Ottomans maintained their dominion over the coastal areas for nearly 300 years, absorbing the coastal areas of the disintegrated Adal sultanate as vassals in the 16th century. The Funj sultanate of Sinnar converted to Islam in the 16th century but maintained independent control of the southwestern areas of Eritrea until being absorbed into the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century.

The extent of the islamic Beja's rule over the Eritrean interior from the 16th century and on, did not extend very far into the mainly christian highland (*Kebessa*) areas. With the feudal rule of the Bahr negash severely weakened, the area became dubbed *Mereb Mellash* by locals and neighboring Ethiopians alike, meaning "beyond the Mereb" (in Tigrinya). This name defined the territory as being north of the Mareb River which to this day is a natural boundary between the modern states of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Roughly the same area also came to be referred to as Hamasien in the nineteenth century. In these areas, feudal authority was particularly weak or inexistent and the autonomy of the landowning peasantry was particularly strong, a kind of *Republic* was prevalent, governed by local customary laws legislated by elected elder's councils (*shimagile*). In 1770, the Scottish researcher James Bruce describes Hamasien and Abyssinia as "different countries who are often fighting" (SUKÉ, p.25). The name Hamasien later came to designate a much smaller area in Eritrea, a province immediately surrounding the capital, until being absorbed into the new administrative divisions in 1994.

Colonial era

A Roman Catholic Priest by the name of Giuseppe Sapetto acting on behalf of a Genovese shipping company called *Rubattino* in 1869 purchased the locality of Assab from the Afar Sultan of Obock, an Ottoman vassal. This happened in the same year as the opening of the Suez Canal. In the ongoing Scramble for Africa, Italy as one of the European colonial powers, began vying for a possession along the strategic coast of what was to become the world's busiest shipping lane. With the approval of the Italian parliament and King Umberto I of Italy (later succeeded by his son Victor Emmanuel III), the government of Italy bought the Rubattino company's holdings and expanded its possessions northward along the Red Sea coast toward and beyond Massawa, encroaching on and quickly expelling previously 'Egyptian' possessions. The Italians met with stiffer resistance in the Eritrean highlands from the invading army of the Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia.

Nevertheless the Italians consolidated their possessions into one colony, henceforth known as Eritrea, territory of Italy as of New Years Day 1890. This led to Italy's first attempt to colonize Ethiopia, under prime minister Francesco Crispi. Italy had offered to make Ethiopia an Italian protectorate, Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia on the other hand, was intent, like his predecessors, on creating an Ethiopian empire of his own by laying claims to- and invading surrounding territories in competition with the European colonialists. He subsequently declared war on the Italians, defeating an Italian incursion on Ethiopian territory at Adowa in 1896. Upon the treaty with Italy, Emperor Menelik II in 1889 stated



The territories north of the Merab Melash (Modern Eritrea) do not belong to nor are under my rule. I am the Emperor of Abyssinia. The lands referred to as Eritrea is not peopled by Abyssinians, they are Adals, Bejas, and Tigres. Abyssinia will defend her territories but it will not fight for foreign lands of which Eritrea is to my knowledge.

Italy refrained from further attempts at invading Ethiopia, until 1935, when under Fascism and Mussolini, Italy attempted to conquer Ethiopia again, this time fighting against Emperor Haile Selassie - using its colonies of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland as its base, Italy was successful in conquering Ethiopia. The Kingdom of Italy ruled Eritrea from 1890 to 1940. In 1936, fascist dictator Benito Mussolini created the *Italian Empire* (Italian East Africa), with the union of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. Eritrea enjoyed considerable industrialization and development of modern infrastructure during Italian rule (such as roads and the Eritrean Railway).

The Italians remained the colonial power in Eritrea throughout the lifetime of fascism and the beginnings of World War II when they were defeated by Allied forces in 1941, and Eritrea came under British administration. Noted artist Aldo Giorgini was a young child caught up in this difficult transitional period, and his experiences during this time became a recurrent theme in his artwork. The best Italian colonial forces were the Eritrean *Ascari*, who were defined by Amedeo Guillet as "*the Prussians of Africa, but without the defects of the Prussians*". They actively supported even the Italian guerrilla against the British between 1941 and 1943.

After the war, the United Nations conducted a lengthy inquiry regarding the status of Eritrea, with the superpowers each vying for a stake in the state's future. Britain, the last administrator at the time, put forth the suggestion to partition Eritrea between Sudan and Ethiopia, separating Christians and Muslims. The idea was instantly rejected by Eritrean political parties as well as the UN. The United States point of view was expressed by its then chief foreign policy advisor John Foster Dulles who said:



Map of Italian East Africa

From the point of view of justice, the opinions of the Eritrean people must receive consideration. Nevertheless, the strategic interests of the United States in the Red Sea Basin and considerations of security and world peace make it necessary that the country [Eritrea] be linked with our ally, Ethiopia.

—John Foster Dulles, 1952

A UN plebiscite voted 46 to 10 to have Eritrea be federated with Ethiopia which was later stipulated on December 2, 1950 in resolution 390 (V). Eritrea would have its own parliament and administration and would be represented in what had been the Ethiopian parliament and would become the federal parliament. In 1961 the 30-year Eritrean Struggle for Independence began, following the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I's dissolution of the federation and shutting down of Eritrea's parliament. The Emperor declared Eritrea the fourteenth province of Ethiopia in 1962.

Struggle for independence



The sandals worn by the fighters of independence have become iconic. This monument in Asmara was erected in memoriam.

Eritreans formed the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and rebelled. The ELF was initially a conservative grass-roots movement dominated by Muslim lowlanders and thus received backing from Arab socialist governments such as Syria and Egypt. Ethiopia's imperial government received support from the United States which had established a radio listening base (the Kagnew base) in Eritrea's Ethiopian-occupied capital, Asmara. Internal divisions within the ELF based on religion, ethnicity, clan and, sometimes, personalities and ideologies, led to the weakening and factioning of the ELF from which sprung the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. The EPLF professed Marxism and egalitarian values devoid of gender, religion, or ethnic bias. Its leadership was educated in China. It came to be supported by a growing Eritrean diaspora. Bitter fighting broke out between the ELF and EPLF during the late 1970s and 1980s for dominance over Eritrea. The ELF continued to dominate the Eritrean landscape well into the 1970s when the struggle for independence neared victory due to Ethiopia's internal turmoil caused by a socialist revolution against monarchy there.

The ELF's gains suffered when Ethiopia's ailing US-backed Emperor was deposed and replaced by the Derg, a Marxist military junta with backing from the Soviet Union and other communist countries, who continued the Ethiopian policy of repressing Eritrean "separatists" with increased military assistance and fervour. Nevertheless, the Eritrean resistance which saw itself forced to retreat from most of the Eritrean countryside it had previously occupied, became instead entrenched in the northern parts of the country around the Sudanese border from where the most important supply lines came. The heavily bombarded and embattled northern town of Nakfa came to symbolize the Eritrean struggle. (The Eritrean currency is named after it.)

The numbers of the EPLF swelled in the 1980s as did that of Ethiopian resistance movements with which the EPLF struck alliances to overthrow the communist Ethiopian regime, weakening and all but annihilating the precursor ELF. However, due to their own Marxist orientation, neither EPLF nor any of the Ethiopian resistance movements were able to acquire any significant US/Western or Arab support against the Soviet backed might of the Ethiopian military which has since been sub-Saharan Africa's largest, outside of South Africa. The EPLF relied largely on armaments captured from the Ethiopian army itself as well as financial and political support from the Eritrean diaspora and the cooperation of neighbouring states hostile to Ethiopia such as Somalia and Sudan (although the support of the latter was briefly interrupted and turned into hostility against EPLF and Eritrean refugees at large, in agreement with Ethiopia during the Gaafar Nimeiry administration between 1971 and 1985).

Drought, famine, and intensive offensives launched by the Ethiopian army on Eritrea took a heavy toll on the population — more than half a million fled to Sudan as refugees. Amid the culmination of Soviet support to Ethiopia and a major fall-out between Eritrean and Ethiopian anti-government rebels, the EPLF achieved two of its greatest and most decisive victories alone and unsupported. In 1985, Eritrean elite commandos infiltrated the Ethiopian and Soviet held air force base in Asmara and destroyed all 30 fighter jets there, suffering only one casualty. In 1988 during a massive Ethiopian military offensive against Eritrean rebels, a third of the Ethiopian army was annihilated in the northern Eritrean town of Afabet.

Following the decline of the Soviet Union in 1989 and diminishing support for the Ethiopian war, Eritrean rebels advanced further, capturing the port of Massawa and putting the Ethiopian and Soviet naval capabilities there out of action. By 1990 and early 1991 virtually all Eritrean territory had been liberated by EPLF except for the capital, whose only connection with the rest of government-held Ethiopia during the last year of the war was by an air-bridge. In 1991, Eritrean and Ethiopian rebels jointly held the Ethiopian capital under siege as the Ethiopian president Mengistu Haile Mariam fled to Zimbabwe where he lives



to this day despite requests for extradition by both Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian army finally capitulated and Eritrea was completely in Eritrean hands in May 24, 1991 when the rebels marched into Asmara while Ethiopian rebels with Eritrean assistance overtook the government in Ethiopia. The new Ethiopian government conceded to Eritrea's demands to have an internationally (UN) supervised referendum dubbed UNOVER to be held in Eritrea which ended in April 1993 with an overwhelming vote by Eritreans for independence. Independence was declared on May 24, 1993.

Independence

Upon Eritrea's declaration of independence, the leader of the EPLF, Isaias Afewerki, became Eritrea's first Provisional President, and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (later renamed the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, or PFDJ) created a government.

Faced with limited economic resources and a country shattered by decades of war, the government embarked on a reconstruction and defense effort later called the Warsai Yikalo Program based on the labour of national servicemen and women. It is still ongoing and deploys the enlisted into a combination of duties ranging from military service to construction projects, health care, teaching and training/education as well as agricultural work to improve the country's food security.

The government also attempts to tap into the resources of the Eritreans living abroad by levying a 2% tax on the gross income of those who wish to gain full economic rights and access as citizens in Eritrea (land ownership, business licenses and other privileges for nationals etc). while at the same time encouraging tourism and investment both from Eritreans living abroad and other foreign investors.

This has been complicated by Eritrea's tumultuous relations with its neighbours, lack of stability and subsequent political problems.

Eritrea severed diplomatic relations with Sudan in 1994 citing that the latter was hosting islamic terrorist groups to destabilize Eritrea and both countries entered into an acrimonious relationship, each accusing the other of hosting various opposition rebel groups or "terrorists" and soliciting outside support to destabilize the other. Diplomatic relations were resumed over 10 years later in 2005 following a reconciliation agreement reached with the help of Qatar's negotiation in 1999. Eritrea now plays a prominent role in the internal Sudanese peace and reconciliation effort.

Eritrea was also embroiled in a brief war with Yemen over a border dispute surrounding the Hanish Islands in 1996 which was later resolved by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in 1998. Yemen was granted full ownership of the larger islands while Eritrea was awarded the peripheral islands to the southwest of the larger islands. Relations between both states have since normalized.

Perhaps the conflict with the deepest impact on independent Eritrea has been the renewed hostility with Ethiopia. In 1998, a border war with Ethiopia over the town of Badme occurred. The Eritrean-Ethiopian War ended in 2000 with a negotiated agreement known as the Algiers Agreement, which assigned an independent, UN-associated boundary commission known as the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), whose task was to clearly identify the border





between the two countries and issue a final and binding ruling. Along with the agreement the UN established a Temporary Security Zone consisting of a 25 kilometre demilitarized buffer zone within Eritrea running along the length of the disputed border between the two states and patrolled by UN troops in the mission named UNMEE. Ethiopia was to withdraw to positions held before the outbreak of hostilities in May of 1998 there among Badme. The peace agreement would be completed with the implementation of the Border Commission's ruling, also ending the task of the peacekeeping mission of UNMEE. The EEBC's verdict came in April 2002 which awarded Badme to Eritrea. However, Ethiopia refused to withdraw its military from positions in the disputed areas, including Badme, and also refused to implement the EEBC's ruling and the dispute is ongoing. Eritrea's diplomatic relations with Djibouti were briefly severed during the border war with Ethiopia in 1998 due to a dispute over Djibouti's intimate relation with Ethiopia during the war but were restored and normalized in 2000.

Regions and districts



Early morning in a Gash Barka village

Eritrea is divided into six regions (*zobas*) and subdivided into districts ("sub-zobas"). The geographical extent of the regions is based on their respective hydrological properties. This a dual intent on the part of the Eritrean government: to provide each administration with sufficient control over its agricultural capacity and eliminate historical intra-regional conflicts.

The regions, followed by the sub-region, are:

| No. | Region (ዞባ) | Sub-region (ንኡስ ዞባ) |
|-----|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Central (ዞባ ማእከል) | Berikh, Ghala-Nefhi, Semienawi Mibraq, Serejaka, Debubawi Mibraq, Semienawi Mi'erab, Debubawi Mi'erab |
| 2 | Southern (ዞባ ደቡብ) | Adi Keyh, Adi Quala, Areza, Debarwa, Dekemhare, Mai Ayni, Mai Mne, Mendefera, Segeneiti, Senafe, Tserona |
| 3 | Gash-Barka (ዞባ ጋሽ ባርካ) | Agordat, Barentu, Dghe, Forto, Gogne, Haykota, Logo-Anseba, Mensura, Mogolo, Molki, Gulu, Shambuko, Tesseney, La'elay Gash |



Regions of Eritrea



| | | |
|---|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | Anseba (ዞባ ዓንሰባ) | Adi Tekelezan, Asmat, Elabered, Geleb, Hagaz, Halhal, Habero, Keren City, Kerkebet, Sel'a |
| 5 | Northern Red Sea (ዞባ ሰሜናዊ ቀይሕ ባሕሪ) | Afabet, Dahlak, Ghel'alo, Foro, Ghinda, Karura, Massawa, Nakfa, She'eb |
| 6 | Southern Red Sea (ዞባ ደቡባዊ ቀይሕ ባሕሪ) | Are'eta, Central Dankalia, Southern Dankalia, Assab |

Politics and government

Eritrea is a single-party state, run by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). Other political groups are allowed to organise, although the non-implemented Constitution of 1997 provided for the existence of multi-party politics. The National Assembly of 150 seats (of which 75 were occupied by handpicked EPLF guerilla members while the rest went to local candidates and diasporans more or less sympathetic of the regime), formed in 1993 shortly after independence, "elected" the current president, Isaias Afewerki. No time frame was announced for the alleged obscure presidency. National elections have been periodically scheduled and cancelled; none have ever been held in the country. Independent local sources of political information on Eritrean domestic politics are scarce; in September 2001 the government closed down all of the nation's privately owned print media, and outspoken critics of the government have been arrested and held without trial, according to various international observers, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. In 2004 the U.S. State Department declared Eritrea a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for its alleged record of religious persecution (see below). In 2007, Reporters Without Borders, ranked Eritrea bottom in the world for overall press freedom in its annual study.



Government building of Eritrea in Asmara

National elections

Eritrean National elections were set for 1995 and then postponed until 2001; it was then decided that because 20% of Eritrea's land was under occupation that elections would be postponed until the resolution of the conflict with Ethiopia. However, local elections have continued in Eritrea. The most recent round of local government elections were held in May 2004. On further elections, the President's Chief of Staff, Yemane Ghebremeskel said,



“ The electoral commission is handling these elections this time round so that may be the new element in this process. The national assembly has also mandated the electoral commission to set the date for national elections, so whenever the electoral commission sets the date there will be national elections. It's not dependent on regional elections, although that might be a very helpful process.

Multipartyism, in general principle yes, it is there but the law on political parties has to be approved by the national assembly. It was not approved the last time. The view from the beginning was that you don't necessarily need a party law to hold national elections. You can have national elections and the party law can be adopted at any time. So in terms of commitment it's very clear, in terms of the process it has its own pace, its own characteristics. ”

Foreign relations

Eritrea is a member in good standing of the African Union (AU), the successor of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). But it has withdrawn its representative to the AU in protest of the AU's lack of leadership in facilitating the implementation of a binding border decision demarcating the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Eritrea's relationship with the United States is complicated. Although the two nations have a close working relationship regarding the on-going war on terror, there has been a growing tension in other areas. As of September 2007, relations with the US appear to be worsening. US Assistant Secretary of State, Jendayi Frazer, has called the nation a 'state sponsor of terrorism' and the US government is considering adding Eritrea to its list of rogue states, along with Iran, North Korea and Cuba. The reason for this is the presence of Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, an exiled Somali Islamist leader, whom the US suspects of having links to Al Qaeda, at a recent Somalian opposition conference in Asmara. Economic sanctions against Eritrea could soon follow. Eritrea's relationship with Italy and the EU has become equally strained in many areas in the last three years.

Within the region, Eritrea's relations with Ethiopia turned from that of close alliance to a deadly rivalry that led to a war from May 1998 to June 2000 in which approximately 19,000 Eritreans and 123,000 Ethiopians were killed.

External issues include an undemarcated border with Sudan, a war with Yemen over the Hanish Islands in 1996, and a recent border conflict with Ethiopia.

The undemarcated border with Sudan poses a problem for Eritrean external relations. After a high-level delegation to Sudan from the Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ties are being normalized. Meanwhile, Eritrea has been recognized as a broker for peace between the separate factions of the Sudanese civil war. "It is known that Eritrea played a role in bringing about the peace agreement [between the Southern Sudanese and Government]," while the Sudanese Government and Eastern Front rebels have requested Eritrea to mediate peace talks.

A dispute with Yemen over the Hanish Islands in 1996 resulted in a brief war. As part of an agreement to cease hostilities the two nations agreed to refer the issue to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague. At the conclusion of the proceedings, both nations acquiesced to the decision. Since 1996 both governments have remained wary of one another but relations are relatively normal.

The undemarcated border with Ethiopia is the primary external issue facing Eritrea. This led to a long and bloody border war between 1998 and 2000. As a result, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) is occupying a 25 kilometers by 900 kilometers area on the border to help stabilize the

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region. Disagreements following the war have resulted in stalemate punctuated by periods of elevated tension and renewed threats of war. Central to the continuation of the stalemate is Ethiopia's failure to abide by the border delimitation ruling and renegeing on its commitment to demarcation. The stalemate has led the President of Eritrea to urge the UN to take action on Ethiopia. This request is outlined in the Eleven Letters penned by the President to the United Nations Security Council. The situation is further escalated by the continued effort of the Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders in supporting each other's opposition. On July 26, 2007, the Associated Press reported that Eritrea had been supplying weapons to the Somali insurgent group Al-Shabaab, but no evidence was discovered, who is allegedly tied to al Qaeda. The incident has fueled concerns that Somalia may become the grounds for a de-facto war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, who invaded Somalia in December 2006 with U.S. assistance to overthrow the rule of the widely popular Islamic Courts Union which had stabilized the country and unified the capital Mogadishu for the first time since 1991. Amid fears of an emerging islamic and nationalist Somalia, Ethiopia with US assistance invaded Somalia, putting in place the weak and locally unpopular UN/ AU-backed government which without Ethiopian support had been unable to exercise any control beyond its base in Baidoa and along the Ethio-Somali border. For its part, Eritrea is hosting members of the ousted Union of Islamic Courts and the Somali Free Parliament. The Eritrean government has been accused of sponsoring, arming and hosting numerous militant leaderships and separatist rebels in the horn of Africa. According to the United States, the Isaias's government is "sponsoring and supporting the rebel groups" who are "also attacking civilians and are a part of the problem in Darfur." Thus, even though the Eritrean government bringing these same rebels to the table is positive, the US claims that the Eritrean government is doing this "by effectively destabilizing Sudan, because they're paying for rebels who are part of the process of destabilizing that country." The United States is considering to label Eritrea a state sponsor of terrorism which carries sanctions with it.

Army

Geography



A view from the Keren-Asmara Highway.

Eritrea is located in East Africa, more specifically the Horn of Africa, and is bordered on the northeast and east by the Red Sea. The country is virtually bisected by one of the world's longest mountain ranges, the Great Rift Valley, with fertile lands to the west and the descent to desert in the East. Off the sandy and arid coastline is situated the Dahlak Archipelago and its fishing grounds. The land to the south, in the highlands, is slightly drier and cooler. Eritrea at the southern end of the Red Sea is the home of the fork in the rift.

The Afar Triangle or Danakil Depression of Eritrea is the probable location of a triple junction where three tectonic plates are pulling away from one another: the Arabian Plate, and the two parts of the African Plate (the Nubian and the Somali plate) splitting along the East African Rift Zone (USGS). The highest point of the country, Emba Soira, is located in the centre of Eritrea, at 9,902 ft (3,018 metres) above sea level.

The main cities of the country are the capital city of Asmara and the port town of Asseb in the southeast, as well as the towns of Massawa to the east, and Keren to the north.

Environment

Eritrea formerly supported a large population of elephants. Ptolemaic kings of Egypt used it as a source of war elephants in the third century BC. Between 1955 and 2001 there were no reported sightings of elephant herds, and they were thought to have fallen victim to the war of independence. In December 2001 a herd of about 30, including 10 juveniles, was observed in the vicinity of the Gash River. The elephants seemed to have formed a symbiotic relationship with olive baboons. It is estimated that there are around 100 elephants left in Eritrea, the most northerly of East Africa's elephants.

In 2006, Eritrea announced it would become the first country in the world to turn its entire coast into an environmentally protected zone. The 1,347 km (837 mile) coastline, along with another 1,946 km (1,209-miles) of coast around its more than 350 islands, will come under governmental protection.

Economy



Like the economies of many other African nations, the economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture, with 80% of the population involved in farming and herding. The only natural disaster that sometimes affects Eritrea, drought, has often created trouble in the farming areas.

The Eritrean-Ethiopian War severely hurt Eritrea's economy. GDP growth in 1999 fell to less than 1%, and GDP decreased by 8.2% in 2000. The May 2000 Ethiopian offensive into southern Eritrea caused some \$600 million in property damage and loss, including losses of \$225 million in livestock and 55,000 homes. The attack prevented planting of crops in Eritrea's most productive region, causing food production to drop by 62%.

Even during the war, Eritrea developed its transportation infrastructure, asphaltting new roads, improving its ports, and repairing war-damaged roads and bridges as a part of the Warsay Yika'alo Program. The most significant of these projects was the building of a coastal highway of more than 500 km connecting Massawa with Asseb as well as the rehabilitation of the Eritrean Railway. The rail line now runs between the Port of Massawa and the capital Asmara.

Eritrea's economic future remains mixed. The cessation of Ethiopian trade, which mainly used Eritrean ports before the war, leaves Eritrea with a large economic hole to fill. Eritrea's economic future depends upon its ability to master fundamental social problems like illiteracy, and low skills.

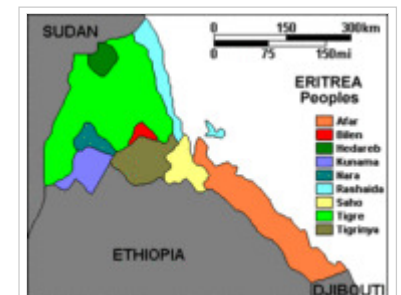
As of May 6th, 2008 Eritrea is the most expensive place in the world to buy fuel. At \$9.58 per gallon, gasoline is 85c a gallon higher than in the next most expensive country, Norway.

Society

Demographics



Men in Agordat



A map indicating the ethnic composition of Eritrea.



A wedding in Eritrea

Eritrean society is ethnically heterogeneous. Independent census has yet to be conducted but the Tigrinya people and the Tigre people together make up about 80%. These form the bulk of the country's predominantly Semitic population which are thought to have originated from massive migrations from Saba in Southern Arabia between 900 and 500 BC. The Sabeans found the same geographical conditions as in their native Saba, suitable to terracing and their pre-existing agricultural modes of production. Later more recent migrations from Arabia includes the Arabic speaking Rashaida who arrived in Eritrea in the late 19th century and comprise less than 1% of the population.

The rest of the population comprises the smaller nations of the Saho, Hedareb, Afar, Bilen who constitute the Cushitic stock of the population and are thought to be some of the oldest inhabitants of the Horn of Africa region along with the Nilotic peoples who are represented in Eritrea by the Kunama and Nara.

Each nationality speaks a different native tongue but, typically, many of the minorities speak more than

one language.

There exist minorities of Italians and Ethiopian Tigrayans. Neither is generally given citizenship unless through marriage or even more rarely: having it conferred upon them by the State.

The most recent addition to the nationalities of Eritrea is the Rashaida. The Rashaida came to Eritrea in the 19th century from the Arabian Coast. The Rashaida do not typically intermarry, are typically nomadic, and number approximately 61,000, less than 1% of the population.

The Kunama are one of the earliest settled peoples in Eritrea. They adopted rain-fed agriculture and settled into communal villages in the "lowlands" of Eritrea.

Languages



Many languages are spoken in Eritrea today. The country has two official languages Tigrinya and Arabic. Italian and English are also widely understood. The two language families that most of the languages stem from are the Semitic and Cushitic families. The Semitic languages in Eritrea are Arabic (spoken natively by the Rashaida Arabs), Tigre, Tigrinya, and the newly recognized Dahlik; these languages (primarily Tigre and Tigrinya) are spoken as a first language by over 80% of the population. The Cushitic languages in Eritrea are just as numerous, including Afar, Beja, Blin, and Saho. Kunama and Nara are also spoken in Eritrea and belong to the Nilo-Saharan language family. English is spoken to a degree by more educated Eritreans. Italian is a legacy of colonial times.

The local Tigrinya and the wider Arabic language are the two predominant languages for official purposes.

Education

There are five levels of education in Eritrea: pre-primary, primary, middle, secondary, and post-secondary. There are nearly 238,000 students in the primary, middle, and secondary levels of education. There are approximately 824 schools in Eritrea and two universities (University of Asmara and the Institute of Science and Technology) as well as several smaller colleges and technical schools.

One of the most important goals of Eritrea's education policy is to provide basic education in each of Eritrea's mother tongues, as well as to develop a self-motivated and conscientious population to fight poverty and disease. Furthermore it is tooled to produce a society that is equipped with the necessary skills to function with a culture of self-reliance in the modern economy.

The education system in Eritrea is also designed to promote private sector schooling, equal access for all groups (i.e., prevent gender discrimination, ethnic discrimination, and class discrimination, etc.) and promote continuing education, both formally and informally.

Barriers to education in Eritrea include traditional taboos, school fees (for registration and materials), and the opportunity costs of low-income households.

Religion



Rashaida children in the Eritrean lowlands.



Enda Mariam Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Cathedral, Al Khulafa Al Rashiudin Mosque (in the foreground, rear left, and rear right respectively) in the capital Asmara.

Eritrea has two dominant religions, Islam and Christianity, with approximately half of the population belonging to each faith. Most Muslims follow Sunni Islam. The Christians consist primarily of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, which is the local Oriental Orthodox church, but small groups of Roman Catholics, Protestants, and other denominations also exist.

Since May 2002, the Government of Eritrea has officially recognized the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, Sunni Islam, Catholicism, and the Evangelical Lutheran church. All other faiths and denominations are required to undergo a registration process. Among other things, the Government's registration system requires religious groups to submit personal information on their membership to be allowed to worship. The few organisations that have met all of the registration requirements have still not received official recognition.

Other faith groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahá'í Faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and numerous Protestant denominations are not registered and cannot worship freely. They have effectively been banned, and measures have been taken against their adherents. Many have been incarcerated for months or even years. None have been charged officially or given access to the judicial process. In its 2006 religious freedom report, the U.S. State Department for the third year in a row named Eritrea a "Country of Particular Concern", designating it one of the worst violators of religious freedom in the world.

There is one last native Jew in Eritrea, formerly from a community of hundreds in Asmara, whose ancestors had crossed from Aden in the late 19th century.

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Ethiopia

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

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Ethiopia (IPA: /ˌiːθiːˈoʊpiə/) (Ge'ez: ኢትዮጵያ Ἴtyōṗṗyā), officially the **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, is a landlocked country situated in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is bordered by Eritrea to the north, Sudan to the west, Kenya to the south, Somalia to the east and Djibouti to the north-east.

Ethiopia is one of the oldest countries in the world and Africa's second-most populous nation. Ethiopia has yielded some of humanity's oldest traces, making the area important in the history of human evolution. Recent studies claim that the vicinity of present-day Addis Ababa was the point from which human beings migrated around the world. Ethiopian dynastic history traditionally began with the reign of Emperor Menelik I in 1000 BC. The roots of the Ethiopian state are similarly deep, dating with unbroken continuity to at least the Aksumite Empire (which adopted the name "Ethiopia" in the 4th century) and its predecessor state, D'mt (with early 1st millennium BC roots). After a period of decentralized power in the 18th and early 19th centuries known as the Zemene Mesafint ("Era of the Judges/Princes"), the country was reunited in 1855 by Kassa Hailu, who became Emperor Tewodros II, beginning Ethiopia's modern history. Ethiopia's borders underwent significant territorial expansion to its modern borders for the rest of the century, especially by Emperor Menelik II and Ras Gobena, culminating in its victory over the Italians at the Battle of Adwa in 1896 with the military leadership of Ras Makonnen, and ensuring its sovereignty and freedom from colonization. It was brutally occupied by Mussolini's Italy from 1936 to 1941, ending with its liberation by British Empire and Ethiopian Patriot forces.

Having converted during the fourth century AD, it is also the second-oldest country to become officially Christian, after Armenia. Since 1974, it has been secular and has also had a considerable Muslim community since the earliest days of Islam. Historically a relatively isolated mountain country, Ethiopia by the mid 20th century became a crossroads of global international cooperation. It became a member of the League of Nations in 1923, signed the Declaration by United Nations in 1942, and was one of the fifty-one original members of the United Nations (UN). The headquarters of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is in Addis Ababa, as is the headquarters of the African Union (formerly the Organisation of African Unity), of which Ethiopia was the principal founder. There are about forty-five Ethiopian embassies and consulates around the world.

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Rīpeblīk

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



Flag



Coat of arms

Anthem: *Wodefit Gesgeshi, Widd Innat Ityopp'ya*
"March Forward, Dear Mother Ethiopia"





Name

It is not certain how old the name *Ethiopia* is; its earliest attested use is in the *Iliad* , where it appears twice, and in the *Odyssey*, where it appears three times. The earliest attested use in the region is as a Christianized name for the Kingdom of Aksum in the 4th century, in stone inscriptions of King Ezana. The Ge'ez name *ʾĪtyōpp̄yā* and its English cognate are thought by some recent scholars to be derived from the Greek word Αἰθιοπία *Aithiopia*, from Αἰθίοψ *Aithiops* ‘an Ethiopian’, derived in turn from Greek words meaning "of burned face". However, the *Book of Aksum*, a Ge'ez chronicle compiled in the 15th century, states that the name is derived from "Ityopp'is" — a son (unmentioned in the Bible) of Cush, son of Ham who according to legend founded the city of Axum. Pliny the Elder similarly states the tradition that the nation took its name from someone named Aethiops. A third etymology, suggested by the late Ethiopian scholar and poet laureate Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin, traces the name to the "old black Egyptian [sic]" words *Et* (Truth or Peace) *Op* (high or upper) and *Bia* (land, country), or "land of higher peace".

In English and generally outside of Ethiopia, the country was also once historically known as **Abyssinia**, derived from *Habesh*, an early Arabic form of the Ethiosemitic name "Ḥabašāt" (unvocalized "ḤBŠT"), modern *Habesha*, the native name for the country's inhabitants (while the country was called "Ityopp'ya"). In a few languages, Ethiopia is still called by names cognate with "Abyssinia," e.g., and modern Arabic *Al Habeshah*, meaning land of the Habesha people. The term *Habesha*, strictly speaking, refers only to the Amhara and Tigray-Tigrinya people who have historically dominated the country politically, and which combined comprise about 36% of Ethiopia's population. However, in contemporary Ethiopian politics, the word Habesha is often used to describe all Ethiopians and Eritreans. Abyssinia can strictly refer to just the North-Western Ethiopian provinces of Amhara and Tigray as well as central Eritrea, while it was historically used as another name for Ethiopia.

History

Early history

Human settlement in Ethiopia dates back to prehistoric times. Fossilized remains of the earliest ancestors to the human species, discovered in Ethiopia, have been assigned dates as long ago as 5.9 million years. Together with Eritrea and the southeastern part of the Red Sea coast of Sudan (Beja lands), it is considered the most likely location of the land known to the ancient Egyptians as *Punt* (or "Ta Netjeru," meaning land of the Gods), whose first mention dates to the twenty-fifth century BC.

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|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Capital (and largest city) | Addis Ababa |
| Official languages | Amharic |
| Demonym | Ethiopian |
| Government | Federal Parliamentary republic ¹ |
| - President | Girma Wolde-Giorgis |
| - Prime Minister | Meles Zenawi |
| Establishment | 10th century BC |
| - Traditional date | c.980 BC |
| - Kingdom of Dʿmt | 8th century BC |
| - Kingdom of Aksum | 1st century BC |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,104,300 km ² (27th) 426,371 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.7 |
| Population | |
| - 2006 estimate | 75,067,000 (16th ²) |
| - 1994 census | 53,477,265 |
| - Density | 70/km ² (123rd) 181/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$69.099 billion (69th) |
| - Per capita | \$823 (175th) |
| Gini (1999–00) | 30 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.406 (low) (169th) |
| Currency | Birr (ETB) |
| Time zone | EAT (UTC+3) |



Around the eighth century BC, a kingdom known as Dʿmt was established in northern Ethiopia and Eritrea, with its capital at Yeha in northern Ethiopia. Most modern historians consider this civilization to be a native African one, although Sabaean-influenced due to the latter's hegemony of the Red Sea, while others view Dʿmt as the result of a mixture of "culturally superior" Sabaeans and indigenous peoples. However, Geʿez, the ancient Semitic language of Ethiopia, is now thought not to have derived from Sabaean (also South Semitic). There is evidence of a Semitic-speaking presence in Ethiopia and Eritrea at least as early as 2000 BC. Sabaean influence is now thought to have been minor, limited to a few localities, and disappearing after a few decades or a century, perhaps representing a trading or military colony in some sort of symbiosis or military alliance with the Ethiopian civilization of Dʿmt or some other proto-Aksumite state.

After the fall of Dʿmt in the fourth century BC, the plateau came to be dominated by smaller successor kingdoms, until the rise of one of these kingdoms during the first century BC, the Aksumite Kingdom, ancestor of medieval and modern Ethiopia, which was able to reunite the area. They established bases on the northern highlands of the Ethiopian Plateau and from there expanded southward. The Persian religious figure Mani listed Aksum with Rome, Persia, and China as one of the four great powers of his time.

In 316 AD, a Christian philosopher from Tyre, Meropius, embarked on a voyage of exploration along the coast of Africa. He was accompanied by, among others, two Syro-Greeks, Frumentius and his brother Aedesius. The vessel was stranded on the coast, and the natives killed all the travelers except the two brothers, who were taken to the court and given positions of trust by the monarch. They both practiced the Christian faith in private, and soon converted the queen and several other members of the royal court. Upon the king's death, Frumentius was appointed regent of the realm by the queen, and instructor of her young son, Prince Ezana. A few years later, upon Ezana's coming of age, Aedesius and Frumentius left the kingdom, the former returning to Tyre where he was ordained, and the latter journeying to Alexandria. Here, he consulted Athanasius, who ordained him and appointed him Bishop of Aksum. He returned to the court and baptized the King Ezana, together with many of his subjects, and in short order Christianity was proclaimed the official state religion again. For this accomplishment, he received the title "*Abba Selama*" ("Father of peace").

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- 1 According to *The Economist* in its Democracy Index, Ethiopia is a "hybrid regime", with a dominant-party system led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.
- 2 Rank based on 2005 population estimate by the United Nations.



The ruins of the temple at Yeha dates to the 7th or 8th century BC.



At various times, including a fifty-year period in the sixth century, Aksum controlled most of modern-day Yemen and some of southern Saudi Arabia just across the Red Sea, as well as controlling southern Egypt, northern Sudan, northern Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and northern Somalia.

The line of rulers descended from the Aksumite kings was broken several times: first by the Jewish (unknown/or pagan) Queen Gudit around 950 (or possibly around 850, as in Ethiopian histories). It was then interrupted by the Zagwe dynasty; it was during this dynasty that the famous rock-hewn churches of Lalibela were carved under King Lalibela, allowed by a long period of peace and stability.

Ethiopian Empire

Around 1270, the Solomonic dynasty came to control Ethiopia, claiming descent from the kings of Aksum. They called themselves *Neguse Negest* ("King of Kings," or Emperor), due to their direct descent from Solomon and the queen of Sheba.

Restored contact with Europe

In the early fifteenth century Ethiopia sought to make diplomatic contact with European kingdoms for the first time since Aksumite times. A letter from King Henry IV of England to the Emperor of Abyssinia survives. In 1428, the Emperor Yeshaq sent two emissaries to Alfons V of Aragon, who sent return emissaries that failed to complete the return trip. The first continuous relations with a European country began in 1508 with Portugal under Emperor Lebna Dengel, who had just inherited the throne from his father.

This proved to be an important development, for when the Empire was subjected to the attacks of the Adal General and Imam, Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi (called "*Grañ*", or "the Left-handed"), Portugal responded to Lebna Dengel's plea for help with an army of four hundred men, who helped his son Gelawdewos defeat Ahmad and re-establish his rule. However, when Emperor Susenyos converted to Roman Catholicism in 1624, years of revolt and civil unrest followed resulting in thousands of deaths. The Jesuit missionaries had offended the Orthodox faith of the local Ethiopians, and on June 25, 1632 Susenyos' son, Emperor Fasilides, declared the state religion to again be Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, and expelled the Jesuit missionaries and other Europeans.

Zemene Mesafint

All of this contributed to Ethiopia's isolation from 1755 to 1855, called the *Zemene Mesafint* or "Age of Princes." The Emperors became figureheads, controlled by warlords like Ras Mikael Sehul of Tigray, and by the Oromo Yeju dynasty, which later led to 17th century Oromo rule of Gondar, changing the language of the court from Amharic to Afaan Oromo. Ethiopian isolationism ended following a British mission that concluded an alliance between the two nations; however, it was not until 1855 that Ethiopia was completely reunited and the power in the Emperor restored, beginning with the reign of Emperor Tewodros II. Upon his ascent, despite still large centrifugal forces, he began modernizing Ethiopia and recentralizing power in the Emperor, and Ethiopia began to take part in world



Bete Giyorgis from above, one of the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela.



King Fasilides' Castle.



affairs once again.



Yohannes IV, Emperor of Ethiopia and King of Zion, with his son, Ras Araya Selassie Yohannis.

By the 1880s, Sahle Selassie, as king of Shewa, and later as Emperor Menilik II, with the help of Ras Gobena's Shewan Oromo militia, began expanding his kingdom to the South and East, expanding into areas that hadn't been held since the invasion of Ahmed Gragh, and other areas that had never been under his rule, resulting in the borders of Ethiopia of today.

European Scramble for Africa

The 1880s were marked by the Scramble for Africa and modernization in Ethiopia, when the Italians began to vie with the British for influence in bordering regions. Asseb, a port near the southern entrance of the Red Sea, was bought in March 1870 from the local Afar sultan, vassal to the Ethiopian Emperor, by an Italian company, which by 1890 led to the Italian colony of Eritrea. Conflicts between the two countries resulted in the Battle of Adwa in 1896, whereby the Ethiopians surprised the world by defeating Italy and remaining independent, under the rule of Menelik II. Italy and Ethiopia signed a provisional treaty of peace on October 26, 1896.

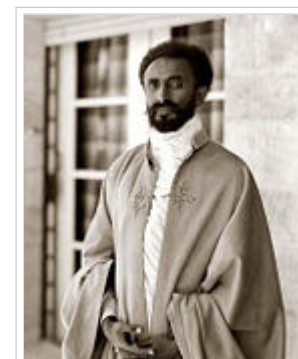
Selassie years

The early twentieth century was marked by the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I, who came to power after Iyasu V was deposed. It was he who undertook the modernization of Ethiopia, from 1916, when he was made a Ras and Regent (Inderase) for Zewditu I and became the de facto ruler of the Ethiopian Empire. Following Zewditu's death he was made Emperor on 2 November 1930.

Being born from parents of the three main Ethiopian ethnicities of Oromo, Amhara and Gurage, and after having played a leading role in the formation of the African Union, Haile Selassie was known as a uniting figure both inside Ethiopia and around Africa.

The independence of Ethiopia was interrupted by the Second Italo-Abyssinian War and Italian occupation (1936–1941). Some of Ethiopia's infrastructure (roads most importantly) was built by the fascist Italian occupation troops (not by corvee) between 1937 and 1940. Following the entry of Italy into World War II, the British Empire forces together with patriot Ethiopian fighters liberated Ethiopia in the course of the East African Campaign (World War II) in 1941, which was followed by sovereignty on January 31, 1941 and British recognition of full sovereignty (i.e. without any special British privileges) with the signing of the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement in December 1944. During 1942 and 1943 there was an Italian guerrilla war in Ethiopia. On August 26, 1942 Haile Selassie I issued a proclamation outlawing slavery.

In 1952 Haile Selassie orchestrated the federation with Eritrea which he dissolved in 1962. This annexation sparked the Eritrean War of Independence. Although Haile Selassie was seen as a national and African hero, opinion within Ethiopia turned against him due to the worldwide oil crisis of 1973, food shortages, uncertainty regarding the succession, border wars, and discontent in the middle class



Haile Selassie's reign as emperor of Ethiopia is the best known and perhaps most influential in all the nation's history. He is seen by Rastafarians as Jah incarnate.



created through modernization.

Haile Selassie's reign came to an end in 1974, when a Soviet backed Marxist-Leninist military junta, the " Derg" led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, deposed him, and established a one-party communist state.

Communism

The ensuing regime suffered several coups, uprisings, wide-scale drought, and a massive refugee problem. In 1977, there was the Ogaden War, but Ethiopia quickly defeated Somalia with a massive influx of Soviet military hardware and a Cuban military presence coupled with East Germany and South Yemen the following year.

Hundreds of thousands were killed due to the red terror, forced deportations, or from using hunger as a weapon. In 2006, after a long trial, Mengistu was found guilty of genocide.

Recent

In 1993 a referendum was held & supervised by the UN mission UNOVER, with universal suffrage and conducted both in and outside Eritrea (among Eritrean communities in the diaspora), on whether Eritreans wanted independence or unity with Ethiopia. Over 99% of the Eritrean people voted for independence which was declared on May 24, 1993. In 1994, a constitution was adopted that led to Ethiopia's first multi-party elections in the following year. In May 1998, a border dispute with Eritrea led to the Eritrean-Ethiopian War that lasted until June 2000. This has hurt the nation's economy, but strengthened the ruling coalition. On May 15, 2005, Ethiopia held another multiparty election, which was a highly disputed one with some opposition groups claiming fraud. Though the Carter Centre appreciated the preelection conditions, it has expressed its dissatisfaction with postelection matters. The 2005 EU election observers continued to accuse the ruling party of vote rigging. Many from the international community are divided about the issue with Irish officials accusing the 2005 EU election observers of corruption for the "inaccurate leaks from the 2005 EU election monitoring body which led the opposition to wrongly believe they had been cheated of victory." In general, the opposition parties gained more than 200 parliament seats compared to the just 12 in the 2000 elections. Despite most opposition representatives joining the parliament, some leaders of the CUD party are in jail following the post-election violence. Amnesty International considers them " prisoners of conscience".

Politics

Politics of Ethiopia takes place in a framework of a federal parliamentary republic, whereby the Prime Minister is the head of government. Executive power is exercised by the government. Federal legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of parliament.

On the basis of Article 78 of the 1994 Ethiopian Constitution, the Judiciary is completely independent of the executive and the legislature. The current realities of this provision are questioned in a report prepared by Freedom House (see discussion page for link).



According to *The Economist* in its Democracy Index, Ethiopia is a "hybrid regime" situated between a "flawed democracy" and an "authoritarian regime". It ranks 106 out of 167 countries (with the larger number being less democratic). Cambodia ranks as more democratic at 105, and Burundi as less democratic at 107, than Ethiopia.

The election of Ethiopia's 547-member constituent assembly was held in June 1994. This assembly adopted the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in December 1994. The elections for Ethiopia's first popularly-chosen national parliament and regional legislatures were held in May and June 1995. Most opposition parties chose to boycott these elections. There was a landslide victory for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). International and non-governmental observers concluded that opposition parties would have been able to participate had they chosen to do so.

The current government of Ethiopia was installed in August 1995. The first President was Negasso Gidada. The EPRDF-led government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi promoted a policy of ethnic federalism, devolving significant powers to regional, ethnically-based authorities. Ethiopia today has nine semi-autonomous administrative regions that have the power to raise and spend their own revenues. Under the present government, some fundamental freedoms, including freedom of the press, are circumscribed. Citizens have little access to media other than the state-owned networks, and most private newspapers struggle to remain open and suffer periodic harassment from the government. At least 18 journalists who had written articles critical of the government were arrested following the 2005 elections on genocide and treason charges. The government uses press laws governing libel to intimidate journalists who are critical of its policies.

Zenawi's government was elected in 2000 in Ethiopia's first ever multiparty elections; however, the results were heavily criticized by international observers and denounced by the opposition as fraudulent. The EPRDF also won the 2005 election returning Zenawi to power. Although the opposition vote increased in the election, both the opposition and observers from the European Union and elsewhere stated that the vote did not meet international standards for fair and free elections. Ethiopian police are said to have massacred 193 protesters, mostly in the capital Addis Ababa, in the violence following the May 2005 elections in the Ethiopian police massacre. The government initiated a crackdown in the provinces as well; in Oromia state the authorities used concerns over insurgency and terrorism to use torture, imprisonment, and other repressive methods to silence critics following the election, particularly people sympathetic to the registered opposition party Oromo National Congress (ONC).

Regions, zones, and districts

Before 1996, Ethiopia was divided into 13 provinces, many derived from historical regions. Ethiopia now has a tiered government system consisting of a federal government overseeing ethnically-based regional states, zones, districts (*woredas*), and neighborhoods (*kebele*).

Ethiopia is divided into nine ethnically-based administrative states (*kililoch*, sing. *kilil*) and subdivided into sixty-eight zones and two chartered cities (*astedader akababiwoch*, sing. *astedader akababi*): Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (subdivisions 1 and 5 in the map, respectively). It is further subdivided into 550 *woredas* and six *special woredas*.

The constitution assigns extensive power to regional states that can establish their own government and democracy according to the federal government's constitution. Each region has its apex regional council where members are directly elected to represent the districts and the council has legislative and executive

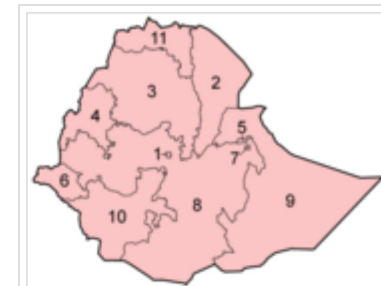


power to direct internal affairs of the regions. Article 39 of the Ethiopian Constitution further gives every regional state the right to secede from Ethiopia. There is debate, however, as to how much of the power guaranteed in the constitution is actually given to the states. The councils implement their mandate through an executive committee and regional sectoral bureaus. Such elaborate structure of council, executive, and sectoral public institutions is replicated to the next level (woreda).

The nine regions and two chartered cities are:

1. *Addis Ababa*
2. Afar
3. Amhara
4. Benishangul-Gumuz
5. *Dire Dawa*
6. Gambela
7. Harari
8. Oromia
9. Somali
10. Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region
11. Tigray

Geography



The regions and chartered cities of Ethiopia, numbered alphabetically



At 435,071 square miles (1,127,127 km²), Ethiopia is the world's 27th-largest country (after Colombia). It is comparable in size to Bolivia, and is about two-thirds as large as the US state of Alaska.

The major portion of Ethiopia lies on the Horn of Africa, which is the eastern-most part of the African landmass. Bordering Ethiopia is Sudan to the west, Djibouti and Eritrea to the north, Somalia to the east, and Kenya to the south. Within Ethiopia is a massive highland complex of mountains and dissected plateaus divided by the Great Rift Valley, which runs generally southwest to northeast and is surrounded by lowlands, steppes, or semi-desert. The great diversity of terrain determines wide variations in climate, soils, natural vegetation, and settlement patterns.

Climate and landforms

Elevation and geographic location produce three climatic zones: the cool zone above 2,400 meters (7,900 ft) where temperatures range from near freezing to 16 °C (32 °–61 ° F); the temperate zone at elevations of 1,500 to 2,400 meters (4,900–7,900 ft) with temperatures from 16 to 30 °C (61–86 ° F); and the hot zone below 1,500 meters (4,900 ft) with both tropical and arid conditions and daytime temperatures ranging from 27 to 50 °C (81–122 ° F). The topography of Ethiopia ranges from several very high mountain ranges (the Semien Mountains and the Bale Mountains), to one of the lowest areas of land in Africa, the Danakil depression.



Ethiopian Highlands with Ras Dashan in the background.

The normal rainy season is from mid-June to mid-September (longer in the southern highlands) preceded by intermittent showers from February or March; the remainder of the year is generally dry.

Ethiopia is an ecologically diverse country, ranging from the deserts along the eastern border to the tropical forests in the south to extensive Afromontane in the northern and southwestern parts. Lake Tana in the north is the source of the Blue Nile. It also has a large number of endemic species, notably the Gelada Baboon, the Walia Ibex and the Ethiopian wolf (or Simien fox). The wide range of altitude has given the country a variety of ecologically distinct areas, this has helped to encourage the evolution of endemic species in ecological isolation.

Endangered Species

Historically, throughout the African continent, wildlife populations have been rapidly declining due to logging, civil wars, hunting, pollution, poaching, and other human interference. A 17-year long civil war along with severe drought, negatively impacted Ethiopia's environmental conditions leading to even greater habitat degradation. Habitat destruction is a factor that leads to endangerment. When changes to a habitat occur rapidly, it doesn't allow animals time to adjust. Human impact threatens many species, with greater threats expected as a result of climate change induced by greenhouse gas emissions.



Map of Ethiopia.



Ethiopia has a large number of species listed as critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable to global extinction. To assess the current situation in Ethiopia, it is critical that the endangered species in this region are identified. The endangered species in Ethiopia can be broken down into three categories; Critically endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable.

| Critically Endangered | Endangered | Vulnerable |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bilen Gerbil | Grevy's Zebra | African Elephant |
| Black Rhinoceros | Mountain Nyala | Ammodile |
| Ethiopian Wolf | Nubian Ibex | Bailey's Shrew |
| Guramba Shrew | Wild Dog | Bale Shrew |
| Haremma Shrew | | Beira Antelope |
| MacMillan's Shrew | | Cheetah |
| Walia Ibex | | Dibatag |
| | | Dorcas Gazelle |
| | | Glass's Shrew |
| | | Large-eared Free-tailed Bat |
| | | Lesser Horseshoe Bat |
| | | Lion |
| | | Moorland Shrew |
| | | Morris's Bat |
| | | Mouse-tailed Bat Species |
| | | Natal Free-tailed Bat |
| | | Nikolaus's Mouse |
| | | Patrizi's Trident Leaf-nosed Bat |
| | | Red-fronted Gazelle |
| | | Rupp's Mouse |
| | | Scott's Mouse-eared Bat |
| | | Soemmerring's Gazelle |



| | | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| | | Speke's Gazelle |
| | | Spotted-necked Otter |
| | | Stripe-backed Mouse |

There are 31 endemic species, meaning that a species occurs naturally only in a certain area, in this case Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Wolf is perhaps the most researched of all the endangered species within Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Wolf

Ethiopian wolves are decreasing rapidly in population. Fewer than 500 remain today due to the increased pressure from agriculture, high altitude grazing, hybridization with domestic dogs, direct persecution, and diseases such as rabies. The EWCP (Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Project) actively works on protecting this species. Scientists working with this project have found that this species has some resistance to the effects of small population sizes and some resilience to fragmentation. A 2003 study on the Ethiopian wolf resulted in the conclusion that the key to its survival resides in securing its habitat and isolating its population from the impact of people, livestock and domestic dogs. The interaction between humans and Ethiopian wolves have become increasingly threatening to their conservation as these negative interactions increase as human density increases. Human interactions include poisoning, persecution in reprisal for livestock losses, and road kills. Mountainous areas are critical for Ethiopian wolves survival to provide a healthy habitat. Protecting this unique creature entails securing protected status for conservation areas where ecological processes are preserved in an ecosystem, and addressing and counteracting direct threats to survival (human persecution, fragmented populations and coexistence with domestic dogs.) Biologists also recommend the goal of preserving a minimum of 90% of the existing genetic diversity of the species for 100 years, which may require establishing a Nucleus I captive breeding population (preferably in Ethiopia). These aspirations are being pursued by a group called the Ethiopian Wolf Recovery Programme (EWRP).

Outreach Several conservation programs are in effect to help endangered species in Ethiopia. A group was created in 1966 called The Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, which focuses on studying and promoting the natural environments of Ethiopia along with spreading the knowledge they acquire, and supporting legislation to protect environmental resources.

There are multiple conservation organizations one can access online to make donations, one which connects directly to the Ethiopian Wolf. Funding supports the World Wildlife Fund's global conservation efforts. The majority of the funds received (83%) goes towards conservation activities, while only 6% goes towards finance and administration. The remaining 11% of funds are allocated for fundraising, which is much needed. The WWF Chairman of the Board, Bruce Babbitt holds this organization accountable for the best practices in accountability, governance and transparency throughout all tiers within the organization.

A critical way to help threatened animals survive would be to protect their habitat permanently through national parks, wilderness areas and nature reserves. By protecting the places where animals live, human interference is limited. Protecting farms, and any place along roadsides that harbour animals helps encourage protection.



Deforestation

Deforestation is a major concern for Ethiopia as studies suggest loss of forest contributes to soil erosion, loss of nutrients in the soil, loss of animal habitats and reduction in biodiversity. At the beginning of the Twentieth century around 420,000 km² or 35% of Ethiopia's land was covered by trees but recent research indicates that forest cover is now approximately 11.9% of the area. Ethiopia is one of the seven fundamental and independent centers of origin of cultivated plants of the world.

Ethiopia loses an estimated 1,410 km² of natural forests each year. Between 1990 and 2005 the country lost approximately 21,000 km².

Current government programs to control deforestation consist of education, promoting reforestation programs and providing alternate raw material to timber. In rural areas the government also provides non-timber fuel sources and access to non-forested land to promote agriculture without destroying forest habitat.

Organizations such as SOS and Farm Africa are working with the federal government and local governments to create a system of forest management. Working with a grant of approximately 2.3 million Euros the Ethiopian government recently began training people on reducing erosion and using proper irrigation techniques that do not contribute to deforestation. This project is assisting more than 80 communities.

Urbanization

Population growth, migration, and urbanization are all straining both governments and ecosystems' capacity to provide people basic services. Urbanization has steadily been increasing in Ethiopia, with two periods of significantly rapid growth. First, in 1936-1941 during the Italian occupation of Mussolini's fascist regime, and from 1967-1975 when the populations of urban centers tripled. In 1936, Italy annexed Ethiopia, building infrastructure to connect major cities, and a dam providing power and water. This along with the influx of Italians and laborers was the major cause of rapid growth during this period. The second period of growth was from 1967-1975 when rural populations migrated to urban centers seeking work and better living conditions. This pattern slowed after to the 1975 Land Reform program instituted by the government provided incentives for people to stay in rural areas. As people moved from rural areas to the cities, there were fewer people to grow food for the population. The Land Reform Act was meant to increase agriculture since food production was not keeping up with population growth over the period of 1970-1983. This program proliferated the formation of peasant associations, large villages based on agriculture. The act did lead to an increase in food production, although there is debate over the cause; it may be related to weather conditions more than the reform act. Urban populations have continued to grow with an 8.1% increase from 1975-2000.

Rural Vs. Urban Life Migration to urban areas is usually motivated by the hope of better living conditions. In peasant associations daily life is a struggle to survive. Only 45% of rural households in Ethiopia consume the World Health Organization's minimum standard of food per day, (2,200 kilocalories), with 42% of children under 5 years old being underweight. Most poor families (75%) share their sleeping quarters with livestock, and 40% of children sleep on the floor, where night time temperatures average 5 degrees Celsius in the cold season. The average family size is six or seven, living in a 30 square meter mud and thatch hut, with less than two hectares of land to cultivate. These living conditions are deplorable, but are the daily lives of peasant associations.

The peasant associations face a cycle of poverty. Since the land holdings are so small, farmers cannot allow the land to lie fallow, which reduces soil fertility.

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This land degradation reduces the production of fodder for livestock, which causes low amounts of milk production. Since the community burns livestock manure as fuel, rather than plowing the nutrients back into the land, the crop production is reduced. The low productivity of agriculture leads to inadequate incomes for farmers, hunger, malnutrition and disease. These unhealthy farmers have a hard time working the land and the productivity drops further.

Although conditions are drastically better in cities, all of Ethiopia suffers from poverty, and poor sanitation. In the capital city of Addis Ababa, 85% of the population lives in slums. Although there are some wealthy neighborhoods with mansions, most people make their houses using whatever materials are available, with walls made of mud or wood. Only 12% of homes have cement tiles or floors. Sanitation is the most pressing need in the city, with most of the population lacking access to waste treatment facilities. This contributes to the spread of illness through unhealthy water.

Despite the living conditions in the cities, the people of Addis Ababa are much better off than people living in the peasant associations due to their educational opportunities. Unlike rural children, 69% of urban children are enrolled in primary school, and 35% of those eligible for secondary school attend. Addis Ababa has its own university as well as many other secondary schools. The literacy rate is 82%.

Health is also much greater in the cities. Birth rates, infant mortality rates, and death rates are lower in the city than in rural areas, due to better access to education and hospitals. Life expectancy is higher at 53, compared to 48 in rural areas. Despite sanitation being a problem, use of improved water sources is also greater; 81% in cities compared to 11% in rural areas. This encourages more people to migrate to the cities in hopes of better living conditions.

The continued urbanization and migration poses a threat to environmental sustainability in Ethiopia. As more migration occurs, there will be decreased food production to sustain the population. Rather than fixing the problems of degraded land and water resources, people move to cities in hopes of a better life. If nothing is done about the problem, the capacity to grow food will decrease as populations continue to increase, while poverty and health conditions get worse.

This is a problem many NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) are working on fixing. But there is clear evidence that most are far apart, less coordinated, and working in isolation, with no effective mechanisms for them to relate with other NGOs. This is why a consortium is required to solve the problem. The good news is that the Sub-Saharan Africa NGO Consortium is already coordinating efforts among NGOs in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sudan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria. By sharing information, techniques, and resources, NGOs are better equipped to help the rural farmers of Ethiopia.

Economy



Ethiopia has remained one of the poorest countries in the world. Recently, Ethiopia has showed a fast growing annual GDP and it is the fastest growing non-oil dependent African nation in 2007. Since 1991, there have been attempts to improve the economy. This is reflected in the ten percent economic growth registered for the past six consecutive years. Yet, a daunting task of maintaining this growth and reducing urban poverty remains to be done.

Provision of telecommunications services is left to a publicly owned monopoly. It is the view of the current government that maintaining public ownership in this vital sector is essential to ensure that telecommunication infrastructures and services are extended to the rural Ethiopia, which would not be attractive to private enterprises.

There are some sectors which are reserved to Ethiopians only. The financial sector is one of them. There are now more than seven private banks in the country but none of them are owned by foreigners.

The Ethiopian constitution defines the right to own land as belonging only to "the state and the people", but citizens may only lease land (up to 99 years), and are unable to mortgage or sell. Renting of land for a maximum of twenty years is allowed and this is expected to ensure that land goes to the most productive user.

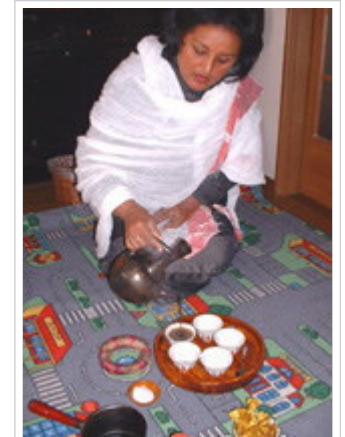
Agriculture accounts for almost 41 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), 80 percent of exports, and 80 percent of the labour force. Many other economic activities depend on agriculture, including marketing, processing, and export of agricultural products. Production is overwhelmingly by small-scale farmers and enterprises and a large part of commodity exports are provided by the small agricultural cash-crop sector. Principal crops include coffee, pulses (*e.g.*, beans), oilseeds, cereals, potatoes, sugarcane, and vegetables. Recently, Ethiopia has had a fast growing annual GDP and it was the fastest growing non-oil dependent African nation in 2007. Exports are almost entirely agricultural commodities, and coffee is the largest foreign exchange earner. Ethiopia is Africa's second biggest maize producer. Ethiopia's livestock population is believed to be the largest in Africa, and as of 1987 accounted for about 15 percent of the GDP. Despite recent improvements, the rapidly exploding population means that Ethiopia remains one of the poorest nations in the world. According to a recent UN report the GNP per capita of Ethiopia has reached \$160. The same report indicated that the life expectancy had improved substantially in recent years. The life expectancy of men is reported to be 52 and women 54 years.

Exports

Ethiopia was the original source of the coffee bean, and coffee beans are the country's largest export commodity.

Ethiopia is also the 10th largest producer of livestock in the world. Other main export commodities are khat, gold, leather products, and oilseeds. Recent development of the floriculture sector means Ethiopia is poised to become one of the top flower and plant exporters in the world.

With the private sector growing slowly, designer leather products like bags are becoming a big export business, with Taytu becoming the first luxury designer label in the country. Additional small-scale export products include cereals, pulses, cotton, sugarcane, potatoes and hides. With the construction of various new dams and growing hydroelectric power projects around the country, it has also begun exporting electric power to its neighbors. However, coffee remains its most important export product and with new trademark deals around the world, including recent deals with Starbucks, the country plans to increase its revenue



Coffee farmer filling cups with coffee



from coffee. Most regard Ethiopia's large water resources and potential as its "white oil" and its coffee resources as "black gold".

The country also has large mineral resources and oil potential in some the less inhabited regions; however, political instability in those regions has harmed progress. Ethiopian geologists were implicated in a major gold swindle in 2008. Four chemists and geologists from the Ethiopian Geological Survey were arrested in connection with a fake gold scandal, following complaints from buyers in South Africa. Gold bars from the National Bank of Ethiopia were found to be gilded metal by police, costing the state around US\$17 million, according to the Science and Development Network website.

Demographics

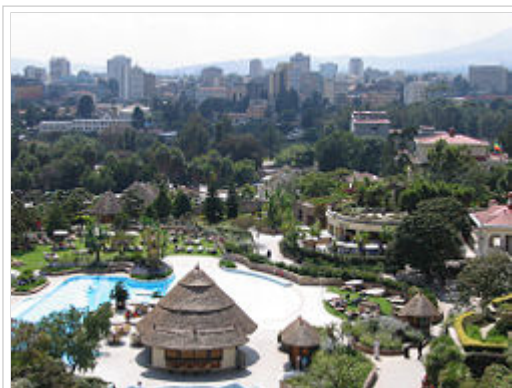
Ethiopia's population has grown from 33.5 million in 1983 to 75.1 million in 2006. The country's population is highly diverse. Most of its people speak a Semitic or Cushitic language. The Oromo, Amhara, and Tigray make up more than three-quarters of the population, but there are more than 80 different ethnic groups within Ethiopia. Some of these have as few as 10,000 members.

Ethiopians and Eritreans, especially Semitic-speaking ones, collectively refer to themselves as *Habesha* or *Abesha*, though others reject these names on the basis that they refer only to certain ethnicities. The Arabic form of this term (Al-Habasha) is the etymological basis of "Abyssinia," the former name of Ethiopia in English and other European languages.

According to the Ethiopian national census of 1994, the Oromo are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia at 32.1%. The Amhara represent 30.2%, while the Tigray people are 6.2% of the population. Other ethnic groups are as follows: Somali 6%, Gurage 4.3%, Sidama 3.4%, Wolayta 2%, Afar 2%, Hadiya 2%, Gamo 1%.



Schoolboys in western Oromia, Ethiopia.



View from the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa.

There are 1.2 million Ethiopians in the US as part of the Ethiopian diaspora.

In 2007, Ethiopia hosted a population of refugees and asylum seekers numbering approximately 201,700. The majority of this population came from Somalia (approximately 111,600 individuals), Sudan (55,400) and Eritrea (23,900). The Ethiopian government required nearly all refugees to live in refugee camps.

Religion



According to the most recent 1994 National Census, Christians make up 61.6% of the country's population, Muslims 32.8%, and practitioners of traditional faiths 5.6%. This agrees with the updated CIA World Factbook, Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in Ethiopia. but the US State department has contradictory figures, putting Islam as being about equal or a slight majority, so a review of the figures might be needed (Sunnis Islam=45%-50%, Orthodoxy= 40%, Protestant 5% and the rest traditional). Orthodox Christianity has a dominant presence in central and northern Ethiopia, while both Orthodox & Protestant Christianity has large representations in the South and Western Ethiopia. A small ancient group of Jews, the Beta Israel, live in northwestern Ethiopia, though most have emigrated to Israel in the last decades of the twentieth century as part of the rescue missions undertaken by the Israeli government, Operation Moses and Operation Solomon. Some Israeli and Jewish scholars consider these Ethiopian Jews as the historical " Lost Tribe of Israel". Sometimes Christianity in Africa is thought of as a European import that arrived with colonialism, but this is not the case with Ethiopia. The Kingdom of Aksum was one of the first nations to officially adopt Christianity, when St. Frumentius of Tyre, called Fremnatos or Abba Selama ("Father of Peace") in Ethiopia, converted King Ezana during the fourth century AD. Many believe that the Gospel had entered Ethiopia even earlier, with the royal official described as being baptised by Philip the Evangelist in chapter eight of the Acts of the Apostles. (Acts 8:26-39) Today, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, part of Oriental Orthodoxy, is by far the largest denomination, though a number of Protestant (Pentay) churches and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tehadeso Church have recently gained ground. Since the eighteenth century there has existed a relatively small Uniate Ethiopian Catholic Church in full communion with Rome, with adherents making up less than 1% of the total population.



This leather painting depicts Ethiopian Orthodox priests playing sistra and a drum.



Mosque in Harar

The name "Ethiopia" (Hebrew *Kush*) is mentioned in the Bible numerous times (thirty-seven times in the King James version). Abyssinia is also mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith. While many Ethiopians claim that the Bible references of Kush apply to their own ancient civilization, pointing out that the Gihon river, a name for the Nile, is said to flow through the land, most non-Ethiopian scholars believe that the use of the term referred to the Kingdom of Kush in particular or Africa outside of Egypt in general. Some have argued that biblical Kush was a large part of land that included Northern Ethiopia, Eritrea and most of present day Sudan. The capital cities of biblical Kush were in Northern Sudan.



Islam in Ethiopia dates back to the founding of the religion; in 615, when a group of Muslims were counseled by Muhammad to escape persecution in Mecca and travel to Ethiopia, which was ruled by Ashama ibn Abjar, a pious Christian king. Moreover, Bilal, the first muezzin, the person chosen to call the faithful to prayer, and one of the foremost companions of Muhammad, was from Ethiopia.

There are numerous indigenous African religions in Ethiopia, mainly located in the far southwest and western borderlands. In general, most of the (largely members of the non-Chalcedonian Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church) Christians generally live in the highlands, while Muslims and adherents of traditional African religions tend to inhabit more lowland regions in the east and south of the country.

Ethiopia is also the spiritual homeland of the Rastafari movement, whose adherents believe Ethiopia is Zion. The Rastafari view Emperor Haile Selassie I as Jesus, the human incarnation of God, a view apparently not shared by Haile Selassie I himself, who was staunchly Ethiopian Orthodox Christian. The concept of Zion is also prevalent among Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, though it represents a separate and complex concept, referring figuratively to St. Mary, but also to Ethiopia as a bastion of Christianity surrounded by Muslims and other religions, much like Mount Zion in the Bible. It is also used to refer to Axum, the ancient capital and religious centre of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, or to its primary church, called Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion. The Bahá'í Faith has been established in Ethiopia since the 1950s, and today is concentrated primarily in Addis Ababa, but also in the suburbs of Yeka, Kirkos and Nefas Silk Lafto.



A traditional Ethiopian depiction of Jesus and Mary.

Health

According to the head of the World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program, Ethiopia has only 1 medical doctor per 100,000 people. However, the World Health Organization in its 2006 World Health Report gives a figure of 1936 physicians (for 2003), which comes to about 2.6 per 100,000. Globalization is said to affect the country, with many educated professionals leaving Ethiopia for a better economic opportunity in the West.

Ethiopia's main health problems are said to be communicable diseases caused by poor sanitation and malnutrition. These problems are exacerbated by the shortage of trained manpower and health facilities.

There are 119 hospitals (12 in Addis Ababa alone) and 412 health centers in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has an incredibly low life expectancy at birth with the current average age being 45 years old. In America the average life expectancy is over three decades longer at the age of 77. In addition to the life expectancy rate being so low, there is also a very high infant mortality rate with over 10 percent of babies dying after or shortly after birth. Currently Ethiopia only has 3 doctors per 100,000 people. These numbers are dangerously low compared to America, which has 550 available for every one hundred thousand Americans. Currently Ethiopia, as a whole is fighting a losing battle against the AIDS epidemic.

The low proportion of doctors with western medical expertise leaves the door wide open for potentially less reliable traditional healers that use home-based



therapies to heal common ailments. High rates of unemployment leave many Ethiopian citizens unable to support their families. In Ethiopia an increasing number of “false healers” using home based medicines have grown with the rising population. The differences between real and false healers are almost impossible to distinguish. However, only about ten percent of practicing healers are true Ethiopian healers. Much of the false practice can be attributed to commercialization of medicine and the high demand for healing. Both men and women are known to practice medicine from their homes. It is most commonly the men that dispense herbal medicine similar to an out of home pharmacy.

Ethiopian healers are more commonly known as traditional medical practitioners. Before the onset of Christian missionaries and westernized medicine, traditional medicine was the only form of treatment available. Traditional healers extract healing ingredients from wild plants, animals and rare minerals. Among the leading number of disease that leads to death include aids, malaria, tuberculosis and dysentery. Largely because of the costs, traditional medicine continues to be the most common form of medicine practiced. Many Ethiopians are unemployed which makes it difficult to pay for most medicinal treatments. Ethiopian medicine is heavily reliant on magical and supernatural beliefs that have little or no relation to the actual disease itself. Many physical ailments are believed to be caused by the spiritual realm which is the reason healers are most likely to integrate spiritual and magical healing techniques. Traditional medicinal practice is strongly related to the rich cultural beliefs of Ethiopia, which explains the emphasis of its use.

In Ethiopian culture there are two main theories of the cause of disease. The first is attributed to God or other supernatural forces, while the other is attributed to external factors such as unclean drinking water and unsanitary food. Most genetic diseases or deaths are viewed as the will of God. Miscarriages are thought to be the result of demonic spirits.

One medical practice that is commonly practiced irrespective of religion or economic status is female genital mutilation. Nearly four out of five Ethiopian women are circumcised. There are three levels of circumcision that involve different degrees of cutting the clitoris and vaginal area. Many of these practices are done with an unsanitary blade with little or no anesthetics. It can result in heavy bleeding, high pain, and sometimes death.

It was not until Christian missionaries traveled to Ethiopia bringing new religious beliefs and education that westernized medicine was infused into Ethiopian medicine. Today there are three medical schools in Ethiopia that began training students in 1965 two of which are linked to Addis Ababa University. There is only one psychiatric facility treatment in the whole country because Ethiopian culture is resistant to psychiatric treatment. Although there have been huge leaps and bounds in medical technology there is still a large problem in the distribution of medicine and doctors in Ethiopia.

Education

Education in Ethiopia has been dominated by the Orthodox Church for many centuries until secular education was adopted in the early 1900s. The elites, mostly Christians and central ethnic Amhara population, had the most privilege until 1974, when the government tried to reach the rural areas. In fact, until right now, it is only the elite Christians who have better chance to higher education. Languages other than Amharic are suppressed. Oromo, for example wasn't allowed in the educational institutions. The current system follows very similar school expansion schemes to the rural areas as the previous 1980s system with an addition of deeper regionalisation giving rural education in their own languages starting at the elementary level and with more budget allocated to the Education Sector. The sequence of general education in Ethiopia is six years of primary school, four years of lower secondary school and two years of higher secondary school.



Cuisine

The best known Ethiopian cuisine consists of various vegetable or meat side dishes and entrees, usually a *wat*, or thick stew, served atop injera, a large sourdough flatbread. One does not eat with utensils, but instead uses injera to scoop up the entrees and side dishes. Tihlo prepared from roasted barley flour is very popular in Amhara, Agame, and Awlaelo (Tigray). Traditional Ethiopian cuisine employs no pork or shellfish of any kind, as they are forbidden in the Islamic, Jewish, and Ethiopian Orthodox Christian faiths. It is also very common to eat from the same big dish in the centre of the table with a group of people.

Music

The Music of Ethiopia is extremely diverse, with each of the country's 80 ethnic groups being associated with unique sounds. Ethiopian music uses a unique modal system that is pentatonic, with characteristically long intervals between some notes. Influences include ancient Christian elements and Muslim and folk music from elsewhere in the Horn of Africa, especially Sudan and Somalia. Popular musicians include teddy Afro, Tilahun Gessesse, Aster Aweke, Hamelmal Abate, Tewodros Tadesse, Ephrem Tamiru, Muluken Melesse, Bizunesh Bekele, Mahmoud Ahmed, Tadesse Alemu, Alemayehu Eshete, Neway Debebe, Asnaketch Worku, Ali Birra, Gigi, Dawit (Messay) Mellese, and Mulatu Astatke.

Sports

Ethiopia has some of the best middle-distance and long-distance runners in the world. Kenya and Morocco are often its opponents in World Championships and Olympic middle and long-distance events. As of March 2006, two Ethiopians dominate the long-distance running scene, mainly: Haile Gebreselassie (World champion and Olympic champion) who has set over twenty new world records and currently holds the 20 km, half-marathon, 25 km, and marathon world record, and Kenenisa Bekele (World champion, World cross country champion, and Olympic champion), who holds the 5,000 m and 10,000 m world records. Ethiopia has also had various successful sweeps by taking all three medals in various world races including during the Olympics. The last few years Ethiopian women runners have joined the men in dominating athletics, particularly the multi-gold medalists Meseret Defar and Tirunesh Dibaba. Ethiopia has added more events to the list of its preeminence in athletics, including the steeplechase which Legese Lamiso recently took the top honours.

Ethiopian distance-runners include Derartu Tulu, Abebe Bikila, Mamo Wolde, Miruts Yifter, Addis Abebe, Gebregziabher Gebremariam, Belayneh Densamo, Werknesh Kidane, Tirunesh Dibaba, Meseret Defar, Million Wolde, Assefa Mezgebu, etc. Derartu Tulu was the first woman from Africa to win an Olympic gold medal, doing so over 10,000 metres at Barcelona. Abebe Bikila, the first Olympic champion representing an African nation, won the Olympic marathon in 1960 and 1964, setting world records both times. He is well-known to this day for winning the 1960 marathon in Rome while running barefoot. Miruts Yifter, the first in a tradition of Ethiopians known for their brilliant finishing speed, won gold at 5,000 and 10,000 metres at the Moscow Olympics. He is the last man



Typical Ethiopian cuisine: *Injera* (pancake-like bread) and several kinds of *wat* (stew).



Mahmoud Ahmed, an Ethiopian singer of Gurage ancestry, in 2005.



to achieve this feat.

Archaeology

Ethiopia offers a greater richness in archaeological finds and historical buildings than any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa (including Sudan). In April 2005 , the Obelisk of Axum, one of Ethiopia's religious and historical treasures, was returned to Ethiopia by Italy. Under the orders of dictator Benito Mussolini, Italian troops seized the obelisk in 1937 and took it to Rome. Italy agreed to return the obelisk in 1947 in a UN agreement, and it was finally returned in 2005 . As of January 2007 the obelisk has not been erected in Ethiopia. The monument was returned to Ethiopia in three or four large segments to facilitate easier transport. The pieces are so large that the Ethiopian government has been unable to erect it or even devise a way it could feasibly be done. The original site of the obelisk is an unexcavated area that would be damaged by heavy machinery, if that were determined to be an appropriate method of erection. There have been plenty of significant discoveries including the oldest known, complete fossilized human skeleton, Lucy. Other discoveries are still being made. Recently, archeologists uncovered the ruins of the legendary ancient Islamic kingdom of Shoa, that included evidence of a large urban settlement as well as a large mosque.

Peoples and Languages

Nations, Nationalities and Peoples

- Afar
- Agnwak
- Agaw- Awi
- Agaw- Himra
- Alaba
- Amhara
- Argobba
- Ari
- Basketo
- Bench
- Benishangul
- Berta
- Bode
- Burji
- Chaha
- Daworo
- Derashe
- Dasanech
- Dime
- Dizi
- Arbore
- Gamo
- Gambella
- Gedio
- Ghidicho
- Gnagnatom
- Gofa
- Gawada
- Gumuz
- Gurage
- Hadiya
- Hamer
- Harari
- Irob
- Kambata
- Kabena
- Kaficho
- Komo
- Konso
- Konta
- Kore
- Kunama
- Kusme
- Majangir
- Maale
- Mao
- Mareko
- Mashillie
- Meinit
- Mursi
- Nao
- Nuer
- Omo
- Opo
- Oromo
- Oyidda
- Shekicho
- Sheko
- Shinasha
- Sidama
- Somali
- Surma
- [[Tigai or Tigray see also [Tigray Online]]]
- Tigre Wurgi
- Timbaro
- Tsamay
- Wolayta
- Yem
- Zayse



- Zulman

Languages

Ethiopia has eighty-four indigenous languages. Some of these are:

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|
| ■ Afar | ■ Burji | ■ Konso | ■ Soddo |
| ■ Amharic | ■ Gamo-Gofa | ■ Ongota | ■ Somali |
| ■ Anfillo | ■ Gurage | ■ Oromo | ■ Tigrinya |
| ■ Awngi | ■ Hadiya | ■ Saho | ■ Wolaytta |
| ■ Berta | ■ Harari | ■ Sidama | ■ Xamtanga |
| ■ Bussa | ■ Kambata | ■ Silt'e | ■ Zay |

English is the most widely spoken foreign language and is the medium of instruction in secondary schools. Amharic was the language of primary school instruction, but has been replaced in many areas by local languages such as Oromifa and Tigrinya. Ethiopia has its own alphabet, called Ge'ez or Ethiopic (ግዕዝ), and calendar.

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Gabon

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Gabon (pronounced /gəˈbɒn/ or /gaˈbɔ̃/ in French) is a country in west central Africa sharing borders with Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Republic of the Congo and the Gulf of Guinea. The capital and largest city is Libreville. Since its independence from France on August 17, 1960, the Republic has been ruled by four presidents. In the early 1990s, Gabon introduced a multi party system and a new democratic constitution that allowed for a more transparent electoral process and reformed many governmental institutions. A small population (less than two million), abundant natural resources, and foreign private investment have helped make Gabon one of the most prosperous countries in the region, with the highest HDI in Sub-Saharan Africa.




History

The earliest inhabitants of the area were Pygmy peoples. They were largely replaced and absorbed by Bantu tribes as they migrated.

In the 15th century, the first Europeans arrived. The nation's name originates from these days as 'Gabão' is Portuguese for cabin, which is roughly the shape of the estuary of the Komo River by Libreville. French explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza led his first mission to the Gabon-Congo area in 1875. He founded the town of Franceville, and was later colonial governor. Several Bantu groups lived in the area that is now Gabon when France officially occupied it in 1885.

In 1910, Gabon became one of the four territories of French Equatorial Africa, a federation that survived until 1959. These territories became independent on August 17, 1960. The first president of Gabon, elected in 1961, was Léon M'ba, with Omar Bongo Ondimba as his vice president. When M'Ba died in 1967, Bongo replaced him as president, and has been the head of state ever since, winning each contested election with a substantial majority.

Government

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République Gabonaise</i> Gabonese Republic | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Anthem: <i>La Concorde</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Libreville |
| Official languages | French |
| Demonym | Gabonese |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Omar Bongo |
| - Prime Minister | Jean Eyeghe Ndong |



President Omar Bongo Ondimba of Gabon (left) in Washington, USA.

In March of 1991, a new constitution was enacted. Among its provisions are a bill of rights, the creation of a body to guarantee those rights (National Council of Democracy) and a governmental advisory board which deals with economic and social issues. Multi-party legislative elections were held in 1990-91 even though opposition parties had not yet been formally declared legal.

President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, in power since 1967 , was re-elected to his third consecutive seven-year term on November 27, 2005. According to figures provided by Gabon's Interior Ministry, he received a 79.1% majority of votes. Voting age in Gabon is 21 years of age. In 2003, the President amended the Constitution of Gabon to remove any restrictions on the number of terms a president is allowed to serve. The president retains strong powers, such as authority to dissolve the National Assembly, declare a state of siege, delay legislation, conduct referendums, and appoint or dismiss the prime minister as well as cabinet members. In provisional results, the ruling Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) won 84 out of 120 parliamentary seats.

As with previous Gabonese elections, the opposition parties have contested the results. There were calls for a boycott and accusations of electoral fraud and bribery. There were also incidences of violence and protest, particularly in the first round of voting held two weeks prior. However, several international observers including the Economic Community of Central African States have reported that the election "met international standards" for democratic voting.

Gabon has a small, professional military of about 5,000 personnel, divided into army, navy, air force, gendarmerie, and national police. Gabonese forces are oriented to the defense of the country and have not been trained for an offensive role. A 1,800-member guard provides security for the president.

In September, 2007, René Ndémezo'o Obiang, the government's spokesperson, announced that Gabon's cabinet council had decided to formally abolish the death penalty, which had not been applied in the country in over a decade.

Provinces and departments

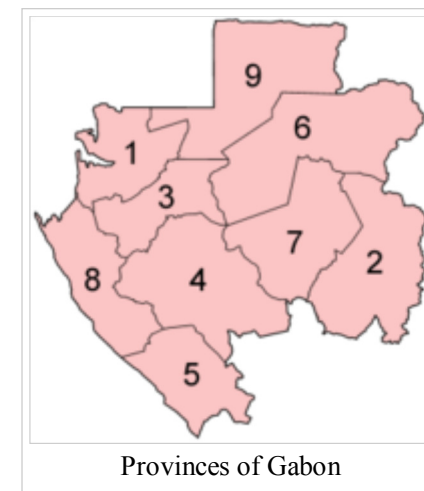
| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Independence | |
| - from France | August 17, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 267,668 km ² 103,347 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 3.76% |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 1,454,867 (150th) |
| - Density | 5.4/km ² (216th) 13.5/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$9.621 billion (136th) |
| - Per capita | \$14,083 (53rd) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.677 (medium) (119th) |
| Currency | CFA franc (XAF) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .ga |
| Calling code | +241 |



Gabon is divided into 9 provinces and further divided into 37 departments.

The provinces are:

1. Estuaire
2. Haut-Ogooué
3. Moyen-Ogooué
4. Ngounié
5. Nyanga
6. Ogooué-Ivindo
7. Ogooué-Lolo
8. Ogooué-Maritime
9. Woleu-Ntem



Geography

Gabon is located on the Atlantic coast of central Africa. Located on the equator, Gabon has an equatorial climate with an extensive system of rainforests covering 85% of the country. There are three distinct regions: the coastal plains (ranging between 20 to 300 km from the ocean's shore), the mountains (the Cristal Mountains to the northeast of Libreville, the Chaillu Massif in the centre, culminating at 1575 m with Mont Iboundji), and the savanna in the east. Gabon's largest river is the Ogooué which is 1200 km long. Gabon has three karst areas where there are hundreds of caves located in the dolomite and limestone rocks. Some of the caves include Grotte du Lastoursville, Grotte du Lebamba, Grotte du Bongolo, and Grotte du Kessipougou. Many caves have not been explored yet. A National Geographic Expedition is heading to the caves in the summer of 2008 to document them (Expedition Website. Gabon is also noted for efforts to preserve the natural environment. In 2002, President Omar Bongo Ondimba put Gabon firmly on the map as an important future ecotourism destination by nominating more than 11% of the nation's territory as National Park (13 in total), which may be the largest area of nature parks in the world. Natural resources include: petroleum, magnesium, iron, gold, uranium, and forests.



Economy

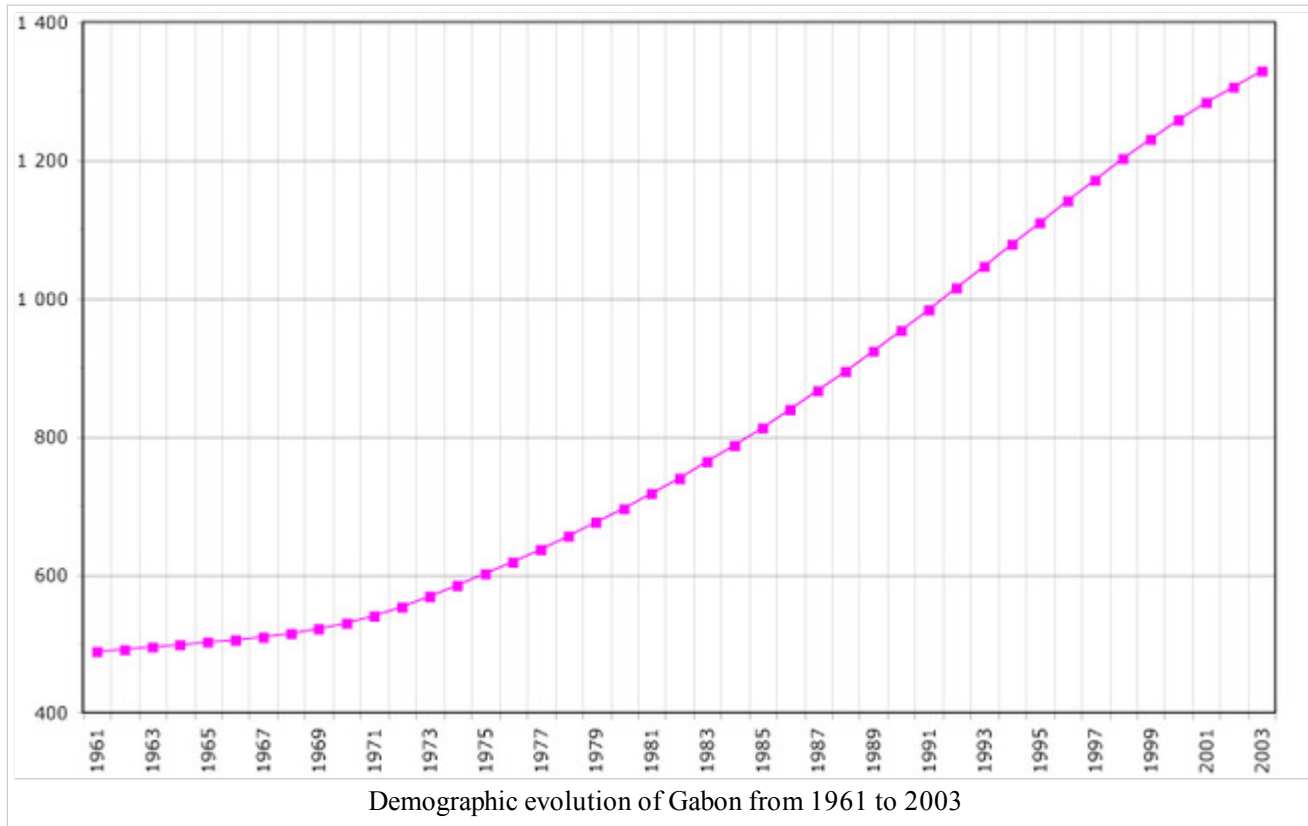
Gabon is more prosperous than most nearby countries, with a per capita income of four times the average for Sub-Saharan Africa. This is in large part due to offshore oil production. Critics note that the income was not invested in modernizing or diversifying the economy and Gabon remains heavily reliant on its natural resources. Gabon was a full member of OPEC from 1975 to 1995. It is an exporter of manganese, iron, and wood. Uranium mines near Franceville were shut down in 2001 with the arrival of new competition on the global market and is work in progress to re-open them. Plans to exploit rich iron deposits north-east of Makokou are foreseen to begin in 2012.



During the 1990s, devaluation of the CFA franc left Gabon struggling to pay its overseas debt; France and the IMF have provided further loans and aid in exchange for the implementation of changes to the economy. Gabon's principal trading partners are the United States, China, and Russia for exports while importing mainly from France.

On December 5, JPMorgan acted as Joint-Bookrunner on the Gabonese Republic's (BB-/BB-) debut international US\$1 billion 10-year bond issue. The issue was very well received despite the challenging market environment.

Demographics



The population of Gabon is nearly 1.5 million (1,454,867). Almost all Gabonese are of Bantu origin, though Gabon has at least forty ethnic groups with separate languages and cultures. The Fang are generally thought to be the largest, although recent census data seem to favour the Bandjabi (or Nzebi). Others include the Myene, Bakota, Eshira, Bapounou, and Okande. Ethnic group boundaries are less sharply drawn in Gabon than elsewhere in Africa. French, the official language, may be regarded as a unifying force. It is estimated that 80% of the country's population are able to speak French, and that one-third of



Libreville residents are native speakers of the language. More than 10,000 French people live in Gabon, and France is the predominant foreign cultural and commercial influence.

Historical and environmental factors caused Gabon's population to decline between 1900 and 1940. It has one of the lowest population densities of any country in Africa, and labor shortages form a major obstacle to development and a draw for foreign workers. Most inhabitants are Christians (with estimates of the Christian population ranging from 55 to 77%), mostly members of the Roman Catholic Church. Other religious groups include animists, Muslims, and practitioners of indigenous African religions. Gabon's literacy rate is 63.2%

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Ghana

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries
SOS Children works in Ghana. For more information see SOS Children in Ghana, Africa

The **Republic of Ghana** is a country in West Africa. It borders Côte d'Ivoire (also known as Ivory Coast) to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. The word "Ghana" means "Warrior King", and was the source of the name "Guinea" (via French *Guinoye*) used to refer to the West African coast (as in Gulf of Guinea).

Ghana was inhabited in pre-colonial times by a number of ancient kingdoms, including the Ga Adangbes on the eastern coast, inland Empire of Ashanti and various Fante states along the coast and inland. Trade with European states flourished after contact with the Portuguese in the 15th century, and the British established a crown colony, Gold Coast, in 1874.

Upon achieving independence from the United Kingdom in 1957, the name Ghana was chosen for the new nation to reflect the ancient Empire of Ghana that once extended throughout much of western Africa. In the Ashanti language it is spelled *Gaana*.

History

Medieval Ghana (4th - 13th Century):The Republic of Ghana is named after the medieval Ghana Empire of West Africa. The actual name of the Empire was Wagadugu. Ghana was the title of the kings who ruled the kingdom. It was controlled by Sundiata in 1240 AD, and absorbed into the larger Mali Empire. (Mali Empire reached its peak of success under Mansa Musa around 1307.) Around 1235 a Muslim leader named Sundiata united warring tribes. He then brought neighboring states under his rule to create the Mali empire.

Geographically, the old Ghana was approximately 500 miles north of the present Ghana, and occupied the area between Rivers Senegal and Niger.

Some inhabitants of present Ghana have ancestors linked with the medieval Ghana. This can be traced down to the Mande and Voltaic people of Northern Ghana--Mamprussi, Dagomba and the Gonja.

| Republic of Ghana | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Freedom and Justice" | |
| Anthem: <i>God Bless Our Homeland Ghana</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Accra |
| Official languages | English |
| Demonym | Ghanaian |
| Government | Constitutional republic |
| - President | John Agyekum Kufuor |
| - Vice-President | Alhaji Aliu Mahama |



Anecdotal evidence connected the Akans to this Empire. The evidence lies in names like Danso shared by the Akans of present Ghana and Mandikas of Senegal/Gambia who have strong links with the Empire.

Ghana was also the site of the Empire of Ashanti which was perhaps the most advanced black state in sub-Saharan Africa. It is said that at its peak, the King of Ashanti could field 500,000 troops.

Up until March 1957, Ghana was known to much of the world as the Gold Coast. The Portuguese who came to Ghana in the 15th Century found so much gold between the rivers Ankobra and the Volta that they named the place Mina - meaning Mine. The Gold Coast was later adopted by English colonists. The French, impressed with the trinkets worn by the coastal people, named the area to the west "Cote d'Ivoire," or Ivory Coast.

In 1481, King John II of Portugal commissioned Diogo d'Azambuja to build Elmina Castle, which was completed the next year. Their aim was to trade in gold, ivory and slaves, consolidating their burgeoning power in the region.

By 1598 the Dutch had joined them, and built forts at Komenda and Kormantsi. In 1637 they captured Elmina Castle from the Portuguese and Axim in 1642 (Fort St Anthony). Other European traders joined in by the mid 17th century, largely English, Danes and Swedes. The coastline was dotted by more than 30 forts and castles built by Dutch, British and Danish merchants. The Gold Coast became the highest concentration of European military architecture outside of Europe. By the latter part of 19th century the Dutch and the British were the only traders left and after the Dutch withdrew in 1874, Britain made the Gold Coast a protectorate.

For most of central sub-Saharan Africa, agricultural expansion marked the period before 500. Farming began earliest on the southern tips of the Sahara, eventually giving rise to village settlements. Toward the end of the classical era, larger regional kingdoms had formed in West Africa, one of which was the Kingdom of Ghana, north of what is today the nation of Ghana. After its fall at the beginning of the 13th century, Akan migrants moved southward then founded several nation-states including the first great Akan empire of the Bono which is now known as the Brong Ahafo region in Ghana. Later Akan groups such as the Ashanti federation and Fante states are thought to possibly have roots in the original Bono settlement at Bono manso. Much of the area was united under the Empire of Ashanti by the 16th century. The Ashanti government operated first as a loose network and eventually as a centralized kingdom with an advanced, highly-specialized bureaucracy centered in Kumasi.

The first contact between the Ghanaian peoples, the Fantes on the coastal area and Europeans occurred in 1482. The Portuguese first landed at Elmina, a coastal city inhabited by the Fanti nation-state in 1482. During the next few centuries parts of the area were controlled by British, Portuguese, and Scandinavian powers, with the British ultimately prevailing. These nation-states maintained varying alliances with the colonial powers and each other, which resulted in the

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Declared | 6 March 1957 |
| - Republic | 1 July 1960 |
| - Constitution | 28 April 1992 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 238,535 km ² (91st) 92,098 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 3.5 |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 23,000,000 (48th) |
| - Density | 93/km ² (103rd) 215/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$65 Billion (75th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,963 (130th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.553 (medium) (135th) |
| Currency | Ghanaian cedi (ghs) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC0) |
| - Summer (DST) | GMT (UTC0) |
| Internet TLD | .gh |
| Calling code | +233 |



1806 Ashanti-Fante War, as well as an ongoing struggle by the Empire of Ashanti against the British. Moves toward regional de-colonization began in 1946, and the area's first constitution was promulgated in 1951.

Formed from the merger of the British colony Gold Coast, The Empire of Ashanti and the British Togoland trust territory by a UN sponsored plebiscite, Ghana became the first democratic sub-Saharan country in colonial Africa to gain its independence in 1957. Kwame Nkrumah, founder and first president of the modern Ghanaian state, was not only an African anti-colonial leader but also one with a dream of a united Africa which would not drift into neo-colonialism. He was the first African head of state to espouse Pan-Africanism, an idea he came into contact with during his studies at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania (United States), at the time when Marcus Garvey was becoming famous for his "Back to Africa Movement." He merged the dreams of both Marcus Garvey and the celebrated African-American scholar W.E.B. Du Bois into the formation of the modern day Ghana. Ghana's principles of freedom and justice, equity and free education for all, irrespective of ethnic background, religion or creed borrow from Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's implementation of Pan-Africanism.

Nkrumah was overthrown by a military coup in 1966. It has been argued that this was supported by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency; that assertion remains generally unproven. A series of subsequent coups ended with the ascension to power of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in 1981. These changes resulted in the suspension of the constitution in 1981 and the banning of political parties. A new constitution, restoring multi-party politics, was promulgated in 1992, and Rawlings was elected as president in the free and fair elections of that year and again won the elections 1996 to serve his second term. The constitution prohibited him from running for a third term. John Kufuor, the current president, is now serving his second term, which ends in 2008 where another election will be held to elect a new president. Last year 2007 marks Ghana's Golden Jubilee celebration of its 50-year anniversary, which was on March 6th, 1957.

Economy

Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana has twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Even so, Ghana remains heavily dependent on international financial and technical assistance as well as the activities of the extensive Ghanaian diaspora. Gold, timber, cocoa, diamond, bauxite, and manganese exports are major sources of foreign exchange. An oilfield which is reported to contain up to 3 billion barrels of light oil was discovered in 2007.

The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 50% of GDP and employs 85% of the work force, mainly small landholders. Ghana made progress under a three-year structural adjustment programme in cooperation with the IMF. On the negative side, public sector wage increases and regional peacekeeping commitments have led to continued inflationary deficit financing, depreciation of the Cedi, and rising public discontent with Ghana's austerity measures. Even so, Ghana remains one of the more economically sound countries in all of Africa.

The country has since July, 2007, embarked on a currency re-denomination exercise, from Cedi (¢) to the new currency, the Ghana Cedi (GH¢). The transfer rate is 1 Ghana Cedi for every 10,000 Cedis. The Bank of Ghana has embarked upon an aggressive media campaign to educate the public about what re-denomination entails. The new Ghana Cedi is now exchanging at a rate of \$1 USD = Gh¢ 0.93

Value Added Tax is a consumption tax administered in Ghana. The tax regime which started in 1998 had a single rate but since September 2007 entered into a multiple rate regime. In 1998, the rate of tax was 10% and amended in 2000 to 12.5%. However with the passage of Act 734 of 2007, a 3% VAT Flat Rate Scheme (VFRS) begun to operate for the retail distribution sector. This allows retailers of taxable goods under Act 546 to charge a marginal 3% on their sales



and account on same to the VAT Service. It is aimed at simplifying the tax system and increasing compliance. It is the hope of government that if properly monitored, it would ultimately increase tax revenue in the country.

Regions and districts

Ghana is a divided into 10 regions, subdivided into a total of 138 districts. The regions are:

- Ashanti
- Brong Ahafo
- Central
- Eastern
- Greater Accra
- Northern
- Upper East
- Upper West
- Volta
- Western



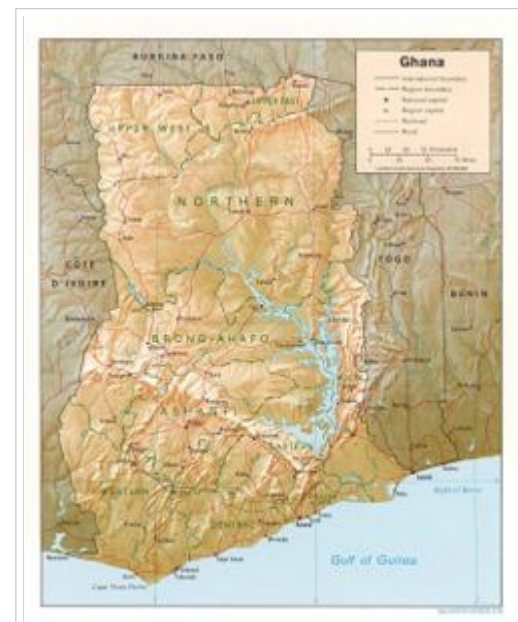
Regions of Ghana

Population of major cities

| City | Population |
|------------------|------------|
| Accra | 2,096,653 |
| Kumasi | 1,604,909 |
| Tamale | 390,730 |
| Sekondi-Takoradi | 260,651 |
| Tema | 229,106 |
| Teshie | 154,513 |
| Cape Coast | 154,204 |
| Obuasi | 147,613 |



Geography



Map of Ghana



Ghana is a country located on the Gulf of Guinea, only a few degrees north of the Equator, therefore giving it a warm climate. The Greenwich Meridian also passes through Ghana, specifically through the industrial city of Ghana-Tema; so it is said that Ghana is geographically closer to the "centre" of the world than any other country. Côte d'Ivoire is located to the west of Ghana while Burkina Faso and Togo are located to its north and east respectively. The coastline is mostly a low, sandy shore backed by plains and scrub and intersected by several rivers and streams. A tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extends northward from the shore. North of this belt, the land is covered by low bush, park-like savannah, and grassy plains.

The climate is tropical. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry (see Dahomey Gap); the southwest corner, hot and humid; and the north, hot and dry. Lake Volta, the world's largest artificial lake, extends through large portions of eastern Ghana.

Demographics

Major Ethnic groups: Akan 49%, Moshi-Dagomba 16%, Ewe 13%, Ga 8%. European and other: 0.2%

Religions: Christian 63%, African beliefs 21%, Muslim 16%, More recent estimates indicate that Muslims make up 30% of the population.

Crime and Punishment

Advance fee fraud (also known as "419" and the "Nigerian scam") is a form of organized crime common in many countries, including Ghana. The scammer persuades the target to advance relatively small sums of money (the advance fee) in the hope of realizing a much larger gain (usually touted as millions).

Languages

More than 100 languages and dialects are spoken in Ghana. English is the country's official language and predominates government and business affairs. It is also the standard language used for educational instruction. Native Ghanaian languages are divided into two linguistic subfamilies of the Niger-Congo language family. Languages belonging to the Kwa subfamily are found predominantly to the south of the Volta River, while those belonging to the Gur subfamily are found predominantly to the north. The Kwa group, which is spoken by about 75% of the country's population, includes the Akan, Ga-Dangme, and Ewe languages. The Gur group includes the Gurma, Grusi, and Dagbani languages.

Nine languages have the status of government-sponsored languages: Akan, Dagaare/Wale, Dagbani, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem, and Nzema. Though not an official language, Hausa is the lingua-franca spoken among Ghana's Muslims, who comprise about 14% of the population.



Satellite image of Ghana, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Education

Presently, Ghana has 18,530 primary schools, 8,850 junior secondary schools, 900 senior secondary schools, 28 training colleges, 20 technical institutions, 4 diploma-awarding institutions, 6 public universities and over 10 private universities. That means that most Ghanaians have relatively easy access to primary and secondary education. These numbers can be contrasted with the single university and handful of secondary and primary schools that existed at the time of independence in 1957. Ghana's spending on education has varied between 28 and 40 percent of its annual budget in the past decade. All teaching is done in English, Ghana's official language.

Ghana has a 6-year primary education system beginning at the age of six and, under the educational reforms implemented in 1987, they pass on to a 3-year junior secondary system all making up the basic education and then afterwards a three year senior secondary system. The new educational reforms programme which was introduced in 2007 has now replaced the previous system. Now the junior secondary school is now junior high school (JHS). At the end of the 3rd year of JHS, there is a Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Those continuing must complete the 4-year senior high school (SHS) program and take an admission exam to enter university. School enrollment totals over 2 million: 1.3 million primary; 550,000 middle; 300,000 secondary; 84,280 technical; 18,000 teacher training, and 89,000 in university.

The shortage of places in post-secondary education is acute; one out of nine senior secondary graduates finds a place in a technical, teacher-training, or four-year university program.

International rankings

| Organization | Survey | Ranking |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Heritage Foundation/ <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> | Index of Economic Freedom | 91 out of 157 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Worldwide Press Freedom Index | 29 out of 168 |
| Transparency International | Corruption Perception Index | 69 out of 179 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index | 135 out of 177 |
| Vision of Humanity | Global Peace Index | 40 out of 121 |
| World Economic Forum | Global Competitiveness Report | not ranked |

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<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 205 of 586



Guinea



2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Guinea, Africa. For more information see SOS Children in Guinea, Africa

Guinea, officially **Republic of Guinea** (pronounced /'ɡɪni/, French: *République de Guinée*), is a country in West Africa, formerly known as French Guinea. Guinea's territory has a curved shape, with its base at the Atlantic Ocean, inland to the east, and turning south. The base borders Guinea-Bissau and Senegal to the north, and Mali to the north and north-east; the inland part borders Côte d'Ivoire to the south-east, Liberia to the south, and Sierra Leone to the west of the southern tip. Its water sources include the Niger, Senegal, and Gambia rivers. Guinea is sometimes called **Guinea-Conakry** (Conakry being its capital) to differentiate it from the neighboring Guinea-Bissau (whose capital is Bissau).



History

The land composing present-day Guinea was part of a series of empires, beginning with the "Ghana Empire" which came into being around 900 CE. This was followed by the Sosso kingdom in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Mali Empire took control of the region after the Battle of Kirina in 1235, but grew weaker over time from internal conflicts, which eventually led to its dissolution. One of the strongest successor states was the Songhai state, which became the Songhai Empire. It exceeded its predecessors in terms of territory and wealth, but it too fell prey to internal wrangling and civil war and was eventually toppled at the Battle of Tondibi in 1591.

A chaotic period followed, until an Islamic state was founded in the eighteenth century, bringing some stability to the region. A simultaneous important development was the arrival of Fulani Muslims in the highland region of Fuuta Jalloo in the early eighteenth century.

Europeans first came to the area during the Portuguese Discoveries in the fifteenth century, which saw the beginning of the slave trade.

Guinea was created as a colony by France in 1890 with Noël Balley as the first governor. The capital Conakry was founded on Tombo Island in the same year. In 1895 the country was incorporated into French West Africa.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>République de Guinée</i> Republic of Guinea | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>Travail, Justice, Solidarité</i> " (French) "Work, Justice, Solidarity" | |
| Anthem: <i>Liberté</i> (French) "Freedom" | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Conakry |
| Official languages | French |
| Demonym | Guinean |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Lansana Conté |
| - Prime Minister | Ahmed Tidiane Souaré |



Monument to commemorate the 1970 military victory over the Mercenaries invasion.

On 28 September 1958, under the direction of Charles de Gaulle, Metropolitan France held a referendum on a new constitution and the creation of the Fifth Republic. The colonies, except Algeria, which was legally a direct part of France, were given the choice between immediate independence or retaining their colonial status. All colonies except Guinea opted for the latter. Thus, Guinea became the first French African colony to gain independence, at the cost of the immediate cessation of all French assistance.

After independence Guinea was governed by the dictator Ahmed Sékou Touré. Touré pursued broadly socialist economic policies, suppressed opposition and free expression with little regard for human rights. Under his leadership, Guinea joined the Non-Aligned Movement and pursued close ties with the Eastern Bloc. After Toure's death in 1984, Lansana Conté assumed power and immediately changed his predecessor's economic policies, but the government remained dictatorial. The first elections since independence were held in 1993, but the results and those of subsequent elections were disputed. Conté faces domestic criticism for the condition of the country's economy and for his heavy-handed approach to political opposition.

While on a visit to France with his family in 2005, Prime Minister François Fall resigned and sought asylum, citing corruption and increasing interference from the President, which he felt limited his effectiveness as the head of the government. Fall's successor, Cellou Dalein Diallo, was removed in April of 2006, and Conté failed to appoint a new one until the end of January 2007 after devastating nationwide strikes and mass demonstrations. During 2006, there were two nationwide strikes by government workers, during which 10 students were shot dead by the military; strikes were suspended when Conté agreed to more favorable wages to civil servants and a reduction of the cost of certain basic amenities (rice and oil).

At the beginning of 2007, citing the government's failure to honour the terms of previous agreements, trade unions called new strikes, protesting of rising costs of living, government corruption, and economic mismanagement. Lasting for more than 2 weeks, these strikes drew some of the largest demonstrations seen during Conté's tenure and resulted in some 60 deaths. Among the unions' demands was that the aging and ailing President name a consensus Prime Minister, to fill the post vacant since Diallo's removal, and relinquish to him certain presidential responsibilities. Conté reluctantly agreed to appoint a new prime minister and lower fuel and rice prices, and the strikes were subsequently suspended.

On 13 February 2007, upon the nomination of Eugene Camara to the post of Prime Minister, viewed as a close ally of Conté, violent demonstrations

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Independence | |
| - from France | 2 October 1958 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 245,857 km ² (78th) 94,926 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 9,402,000 (83rd) |
| - 1996 census | 7,156,406 |
| - Density | 38/km ² (164th) 98/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$18.879 billion (111th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,035 (142nd) |
| Gini (1994) | 40.3 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.456 (low) (160th) |
| Currency | Guinean franc (GNF) |
| Time zone | GMT |
| Internet TLD | .gn |
| Calling code | +224 |



Immediately broke out throughout the country. Strikes resumed, citing the President's failure to nominate a "consensus" prime minister as per the January 27th agreement. A state of martial law was declared after violent clashes with demonstrators, bringing the death toll since January to well over 100, and there were widespread reports of pillaging and rapes committed by men in military uniform. Government buildings and property owned by government officials throughout the country were looted and destroyed by angry mobs. Many feared Guinea to be on the verge of civil war as protesters from all parts of Guinea called for Conté's unequivocal resignation.

After diplomatic intervention from ECOWAS, neighboring heads of state, the EU, the UN, etc., Conté agreed to choose a new Prime Minister from a list of five candidates furnished by the labor unions and civic leaders. On February 26, Lansana Kouyaté, former Guinean ambassador to the UN, was nominated to the post. Strikes were called off, and the nomination was hailed by the strikers.

Government and politics

Politics of Guinea takes place in a framework of a presidential republic, whereby the President of Guinea is both head of state, head of government, and the commander in chief of the Guinean Military. The president is elected to a maximum of two 7 year term, although the current Guinee Lansana Conte who has been in power since 1984 continue to run for further terms. Executive power is exercised by the president and members of his cabinet. To be elected president of Guinea a candidate must be a Guinean born citizen by birth, be at least 35 years of age and must be able to speak and read the French language.

Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly. The National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale) has 114 members, elected for a four year term, 38 members in single-seat constituencies and 76 members by proportional representation. Guinea is a one party dominant state with the Party of Unity and Progress in power. Opposition parties are allowed, but are widely considered to have no real chance of gaining power.

Regions and prefectures

Guinea is divided into seven administrative regions and subdivided into thirty-three prefectures. The national capital, Conakry, ranks as a special zone.

- Boké Region
- Conakry Region
- Faranah Region
- Kankan Region
- Kindia Region
- Labé Region
- Mamou Region
- Nzérékoré Region





Largest cities

1. Conakry (2,000,000)
2. Labé (700,000)
3. Kankan (439,017)
4. Kindia (279,884)
5. Nzérékoré (247,855)
6. Kissidougou (135,900)
7. Guéckédou (116,541)
8. Mamou (105,754)

Geography



At 94,919 square miles (245,857 km²), Guinea is roughly the size of the United Kingdom and slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Oregon. There are 200 miles (320 km) of coastline. The total land border is 2,112 miles (3,399 km). The countries bordering Guinea include Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone. The country is divided into four main regions: the Basse-Cote lowlands in the west along the coast, populated mainly by the Susu ethnic group; the cooler, mountainous Fouta Djallon that run roughly north-south through the middle of the country, populated by Peuls, the Sahelian Haute-Guinea to the northeast, populated by Malinkes, and the forested jungle regions in the southeast, with several ethnic groups. Guinea's mountains are the source for the Niger, the Gambia, and Senegal Rivers, as well as the numerous rivers flowing to the sea on the west side of the range in Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast.



Satellite image of Guinea, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library

The highest point in Guinea is Mont Nimba at 5,748 feet (1,752 m). Although the Guinean and Ivorian sides of the Nimba Massif are a UNESCO Strict Nature Reserve, the portion of the so-called Guinean Backbone continues into Liberia, where it has been mined for decades; the damage is quite evident in the Nzérékoré Region at .

Economy

Richly endowed with minerals, Guinea possesses over 25 billion metric tons (MT) of bauxite -- and perhaps up to one-half of the world's reserves. In addition, Guinea's mineral wealth includes more than 4-billion tons of high-grade iron ore, significant diamond and gold deposits, and undetermined quantities of uranium. Guinea has considerable potential for growth in the agricultural and fishing sectors. Soil, water, and climatic conditions provide opportunities for large-scale irrigated farming and agro industry. Possibilities for investment and commercial activities exist in all these areas, but Guinea's poorly developed infrastructure



and rampant corruption continue to present obstacles to large-scale investment projects.

Joint venture bauxite mining and alumina operations in northwest Guinea historically provide about 80% of Guinea's foreign exchange. The Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinea (CBG) is the main player in the bauxite industry. CBG is a joint venture, in which 49% of the shares are owned by the Guinean Government and 51% by an international consortium led by Alcoa and Alcan. CBG exports about 14 million metric tons of high-grade bauxite every year. The Compagnie des Bauxites de Kindia (CBK), a joint venture between the Government of Guinea and Russki Alumina, produces some 2.5 million MT annually, nearly all of which is exported to Russia and Eastern Europe. Dian Dian, a Guinean/Ukrainian joint bauxite venture, has a projected production rate of 1 million MT per year, but is not expected to begin operations for several years. The Alumina Compagnie de Guinée (ACG), which took over the former Friguia Consortium, produced about 2.4 million tons of bauxite in 2004, which is used as raw material for its alumina refinery. The refinery supplies about 750,000 MT of alumina for export to world markets. Both Global Alumina and Alcoa-Alcan have signed conventions with the Government of Guinea to build large alumina refineries with a combined capacity of about 4 million MT per year.

Diamonds and gold also are mined and exported on a large scale. AREDOR, a joint diamond-mining venture between the Guinean Government (50%) and an Australian, British, and Swiss consortium, began production in 1984 and mined diamonds that are 90% gem quality. Production stopped from 1993 until 1996, when First City Mining of Canada purchased the international portion of the consortium. By far, most diamonds are mined artisanally. The largest gold mining operation in Guinea is a joint venture between the government and Ashanti Gold Fields of Ghana. SMD also has a large gold mining facility in Lero near the Malian border. Other concession agreements have been signed for iron ore, but these projects are still awaiting preliminary exploration and financing results.

The Guinean Government adopted policies in the 1990s to return commercial activity to the private sector, promote investment, reduce the role of the state in the economy, and improve the administrative and judicial framework. Guinea has the potential to develop, if the government carries out its announced policy reforms, and if the private sector responds appropriately. So far, corruption and favoritism, lack of long-term political stability, and lack of a transparent budgeting process continue to dampen foreign investor interest in major projects in Guinea.

Reforms since 1985 include eliminating restrictions on agriculture and foreign trade, liquidation of some parastatals, the creation of a realistic exchange rate, increased spending on education, and cutting the government bureaucracy. In July 1996, President Lansana Conté appointed a new government, which promised major economic reforms, including financial and judicial reform, rationalization of public expenditures, and improved government revenue collection. Under 1996 and 1998 International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank agreements, Guinea continued fiscal reforms and privatizations, and shifted governmental expenditures and internal reforms to the education, health, infrastructure, banking, and justice sectors. Cabinet changes in 1999 as well as increasing corruption, economic mismanagement, and excessive government spending combined to slow the momentum for economic reform. The informal sector continues to be a major contributor to the economy.

The government revised the private investment code in 1998 to stimulate economic activity in the spirit of free enterprise. The code does not discriminate between foreigners and nationals and provides for repatriation of profits. While the code restricts development of Guinea's hydraulic resources to projects in which Guineans have majority shareholdings and management control, it does contain a clause permitting negotiations of more favorable conditions for investors in specific agreements. Foreign investments outside Conakry are entitled to more favorable benefits. A national investment commission has been formed to review all investment proposals. The United States and Guinea have signed an investment guarantee agreement that offers political risk insurance to American investors through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). In addition, Guinea has inaugurated an arbitration court system, which allows



for the quick resolution of commercial disputes.

Until June 2001, private operators managed the production, distribution, and fee-collection operations of water and electricity under performance-based contracts with the Government of Guinea. However, both utilities are plagued by inefficiency and corruption. Foreign private investors in these operations departed the country in frustration.

In 2002, the IMF suspended Guinea's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) because the government failed to meet key performance criteria. In reviews of the PRGF, the World Bank noted that Guinea had met its spending goals in targeted social priority sectors. However, spending in other areas, primarily defense, contributed to a significant fiscal deficit. The loss of IMF funds forced the government to finance its debts through Central Bank advances. The pursuit of unsound economic policies has resulted in imbalances that are proving hard to correct.

Under then-Prime Minister Diallo, the government began a rigorous reform agenda in December 2004 designed to return Guinea to a PRGF with the IMF. Exchange rates have been allowed to float, price controls on gasoline have been loosened, and government spending has been reduced while tax collection has been improved. These reforms have not slowed down inflation, which hit 27% in 2004 and 30% in 2005. Depreciation is also a concern. The Guinea franc was trading at 2550 to the dollar in January 2005. It hit 5554 to the dollar by October 2006.

Despite the opening in 2005 of a new road connecting Guinea and Mali, most major roadways connecting the country's trade centers remain in poor repair, slowing the delivery of goods to local markets. Electricity and water shortages are frequent and sustained, and many businesses are forced to use expensive power generators and fuel to stay open.

Even though there are many problems plaguing Guinea's economy, not all foreign investors are reluctant to come to Guinea. Global Alumina's proposed alumina refinery has a price tag above \$2 billion. Alcoa and Alcan are proposing a slightly smaller refinery worth about \$1.5 billion. Taken together, they represent the largest private investment in sub-Saharan Africa since the Chad-Cameroun oil pipeline. Also, an American oil company, Hyperdynamics, has recently signed an agreement to develop Guinea's offshore oil deposits.

The west coast of Africa is now ripe for oil development, and Guinea is actively being courted in this endeavor. Hyperdynamics and Guinea signed a psa in 2006, and have been diligently bringing oil exploration into the final stages. It is thought by many of the large oil companies that the west coast of Africa, which Guinea centers, might be able to supply the United States with near thirty percent of oil within ten years.

Transportation

The railway which used to operate from Conakry to Kankan, ceased operating in the mid-1980s. Domestic air services are intermittent. Most vehicles in Guinea are some 20 years old, and cabs are mostly any 4-door vehicle which the owner has designated as for hire. Locals, nearly entirely without vehicles of their own, rely upon these taxis (which charge per seat) and small buses to take them around town and across the country. There is some river traffic on the Niger and Milo rivers. Horses and donkeys are also found pulling carts, primarily to transport construction materials.



Development of iron ore deposits at Simandou in the south east of the country in 2007 are likely to see the construction of a new heavy duty standard gauge railway and deepwater port.

Demography

The population of Guinea is estimated at 9,947,814. Conakry, the capital and largest city, is the hub of Guinea's economy, commercial, educational and culture.

Languages

The official language in Guinea is French. Other significant languages spoken are Fula, Maninka, Susu, Arabic, Insula, Kissi, Kpele, and Loma.

Ethnicity

The population of Guinea comprises about 24 ethnic groups. The three largest and most dominant are the Fulani (also known as Fula), comprising 40% of the population. They are mostly found in the Futa Jallon Region. The Mandinka (Also known as Mandingo), comprising 30% of the population, are mostly found in eastern Guinea and are concentrated around the Kankan and Kissidougou Prefectures. The Soussou, comprising 20%, are predominantly in areas around the capital Conakry, Forécariah, and Kindia. Smaller ethnic groups make up the remaining 10% of the population.

Military

The Guinean armed forces are divided into four branches:

The Guinean Army

By far the largest branch of The Republic of the Guinea Armed Forces, with an active force of about 15,000 personnel. The army is mainly responsible for protection of the state borders, the security of administered territories and defending the national interests of Guinea.

The Guinean Air Force

A branch of the Guinean Armed Forces, that primarily conducts aerial warfare. Air force personnel total about 700; its equipment includes several Russian-supplied fighter planes and transport planes.

The Guinean Navy

A branch of the Guinean Armed Forces, The navy has about 900 personnel and operates several small patrol craft and barges.



The Guinean Gendarmerie

A branch of the Guinean Armed Forces responsible for internal security; though, they are not police officers.

Healthcare

Guinea has been reorganizing its health system since the Bamako Initiative of 1987 formally promoted community-based methods of increasing accessibility of drugs and health care services to the population, in part by implementing user fees. The new strategy dramatically increased accessibility through community-based healthcare reform (including community ownership and local budgeting), resulting in more efficient and equitable provision of services. A comprehensive approach strategy was extended to all areas of health care, with subsequent improvement in the health care indicators and improvement in health care efficiency and cost.

Guinea's public health code is defined by Law No. L/97/021/AN of 19 June 1997 promulgating the Public Health Code. The law provides for the protection and promotion of health and for the rights and duties of the individual, the family, and community throughout the territory of the Republic of Guinea.

HIV/AIDS in Guinea

The first cases of HIV/AIDS in Guinea were reported in 1986. Though levels of AIDS in Guinea are significantly lower than in a number of other African countries, as of 2005, Guinea was considered by the World Health Organization to face a generalized epidemic.

An estimated 170 000 adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2004. The spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Guinea was attributed to factors such as proximity to high-prevalence countries, a large refugee population, internal displacement and subregional instability. Polygamy, the low status of women and low rates of condom use have also contributed.

Culture

Like other West African countries, Guinea has a rich musical tradition. The group Bembeya Jazz became popular in the 1960s after Guinean independence. The Vancouver-based guitarist Alpha Yaya Diallo hails from Guinea and incorporates its traditional rhythms and melodies into his original compositions, for which he has won two Juno Awards.

- List of writers from Guinea

Sports

Guinea's main sport is football (soccer) and although the national team has never made the FIFA World Cup, it has appeared at eight African Nations Cup finals; it was a runner-up in 1976 and reached the quarter-finals in 2004 and 2006. The current national coach is Robert Nouzaret. Swimming is popular near the



capital, Conakry, and hiking is possible in the Fouta Djallon region.

Notables

- Bobo Balde
 - Lansana Conté
 - Mohammed Camara
 - Mohammed Sylla
 - Titi Camara
 - Teresa Chikaba
 - Amadou Diallo
 - Lansine Kaba
 - Djibril Tamsir Niane
 - Abdulrahman Ibrahim Ibn Sori
 - Alfa Yaya of Labé
 - Samori Touré
 - Soumaoro Kanté
 - Sékou Touré
 - Umar Tall
 - Katoucha Niane model
-
- Shekou Thomas: prominent and rich Guinean during the 1800s and early 1900s.

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Guinea-Bissau

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SOS Children works in Guinea-Bissau, Africa. For more information see SOS Children in Guinea-Bissau, Africa

The **Republic of Guinea-Bissau** (pronounced /ˈɡɪniˈbiːsaʊ/; Portuguese: *República da Guiné-Bissau*, IPA: [ʁɛˈpublikɐ dɐ ɡiˈnɛ biˈsau]) is a country in western Africa, and one of the smallest nations in continental Africa. It is bordered by Senegal to the north, and Guinea to the south and east, with the Atlantic Ocean to its west. Formerly the Portuguese colony of Portuguese Guinea, upon independence, the name of its capital, Bissau, was added to the country's name in order to prevent confusion between itself and the Republic of Guinea.

History

Guinea-Bissau was once part of the kingdom of Gabu (Kaabu), part of the Mali Empire; parts of this kingdom persisted until the eighteenth century. Portuguese Guinea was known also, from its main economic activity, as the Slave Coast. Although the rivers and coast of this area were among the first places colonized by the Portuguese, since the 16th century, the interior was not explored until the nineteenth century. The local African rulers in Guinea, who prospered greatly from the slave trade, had no interest in allowing the Europeans any further inland than the fortified coastal settlements where the trading takes place. The Portuguese presence in Guinea was therefore largely limited to the port of Bissau and Cacheu. For a brief period in the 1790s the British attempt to establish a rival foothold on an offshore island, at Bolama. But by the 19th century the Portuguese were sufficiently secure in Bissau to regard the neighbouring coastline as their own special territory, also up North in part of the present South Senegal.

An armed rebellion beginning in 1956 by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) under the leadership of Amílcar Cabral gradually consolidated its hold on the country. Unlike guerilla movements in other Portuguese colonies, the PAIGC rapidly extended its military control over large portions of the country, aided by the jungle-like terrain, its easily-reached borderlines with neighbouring countries and large quantities of arms from Cuba, China, the Soviet Union, and other African countries. Cuba also agreed to supply artillery experts, doctors and technicians. The PAIGC even

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>República da Guiné-Bissau</i> Republic of Guinea-Bissau | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Emblem |
| Motto: <i>Unidade, Luta, Progresso</i> " (Portuguese) "Unity, Struggle, Progress" | |
| Anthem: <i>Esta é a Nossa Pátria Bem Amada</i> (Portuguese) | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Bissau |
| Official languages | Portuguese |
| Recognised regional languages | Crioulo |



managed to acquire a significant anti-aircraft capability in order to defend itself against aerial attack. By 1973, the PAIGC was in control of most of the country. Independence was unilaterally declared on September 24, 1973, and was recognized by a 93-7 UN General Assembly vote in November 1973. Recognition became universal following the 1974 socialist-inspired military coup in Portugal.



Bissau

Following independence local soldiers that fought along with the Portuguese Army against the PAIGC guerrillas were slaughtered by the thousands. A small number escaped to Portugal or to other African nations. The most famous massacre occurred in Bissorã. In 1980 PAIGC admitted in its newspaper "Nó Pintcha" (dated 29/11/1980) that many were executed and buried in unmarked collective graves in the woods of Cumerá, Portogole and Mansabá.

The country was controlled by a revolutionary council until 1984. The first multi-party elections were held in 1994, but an army uprising in 1998 led to the president's ousting and the Guinea-Bissau Civil War.

Elections were held again in 2000 and Kumba Ialá was elected president.

In September 2003, a coup took place in which the military arrested Ialá on the charge of being "unable to solve the problems." After being delayed several times, legislative elections were held in March 2004. A mutiny of military factions in October 2004 resulted in the death of the head of the armed forces, and caused widespread unrest.

In June 2005, presidential elections were held for the first time since the coup that deposed Ialá. Ialá returned as the candidate for the PRS, claiming to be the legitimate president of the country, but the election was won by former president João Bernardo Vieira, deposed in the 1998 coup. Vieira was a candidate for one of the factions of the PAIGC. Vieira beat Malam Bacai Sanhá in a runoff-election, but Sanhá refused initially to concede, claiming that the elections have been fraudulent in two constituencies, including the capital, Bissau.

Despite reports that there had been an influx of arms in the weeks leading up to the election and reports of some "disturbances during campaigning" - including attacks on the presidential palace and the Interior Ministry by as-yet-unidentified gunmen - European monitors labelled the election as "calm and organized".

Politics

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| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demonym | Guinean |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | João Bernardo Vieira |
| - Prime Minister | Martinho Ndafo Kabi |
| Independence | from Portugal |
| - Declared | September 24, 1973 |
| - Recognised | September 10, 1974 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 36,544 km ² (136th) 13,948 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 22.4 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 1,586,000 (148th) |
| - 2002 census | 1,345,479 |
| - Density | 44/km ² (154th) 114/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$1.167 billion (165th) |
| - Per capita | \$736 (177th) |
| Gini (1993) | 47 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.374 (low) (175th) |
| Currency | West African CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .gw |
| Calling code | +245 |



Ministry of Justice, Bissau

Guinea-Bissau is a republic. In the past, the government has been highly centralized and multiparty governance has been in effect since mid-1991. The president is the head of state and the prime minister is the head of government. At the legislative level, there is a unicameral "Assembleia Nacional Popular" (National People's Assembly) made up of 100 members. They are popularly elected from multi-member constituencies to serve a four-year term. At the judicial level, there is a "Supremo Tribunal da Justiça" (Supreme Court) which consists of nine justices appointed by the president. They serve at the pleasure of the president.

João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira became President of Guinea-Bissau in 2005. Vieira returned to power in 2005 after winning the presidential election only six years after being ousted from office during a civil war. Previously, he held power for 19 years after taking power in 1980 in a bloodless coup. In that action, he toppled the government of Luís Cabral.

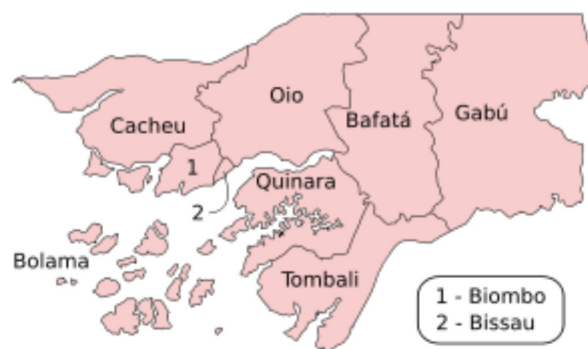


João Bernardo Vieira

Regions and sectors

Guinea-Bissau is divided into 8 regions (*regiões*) and one autonomous sector (*sector autónomo*). These in turn are subdivided into thirty-seven sectors. The regions are:

- Bafata
- Biombo
- Bissau*
- Bolama
- Cacheu
- Gabu
- Oio
- Quinara
- Tombali



* autonomous sector

Geography



Typical scenery in Guinea-Bissau

At 13,945 sq mi. (36,120 km²), Guinea-Bissau is nearly identical in size to Taiwan, and somewhat larger than the US state of Maryland. This small, tropical country lies at a low altitude; its highest point is 984 feet (300 m). The interior is savanna, and the coastline is swampy plain. Its monsoon-like rainy season alternates with periods of hot, dry harmattan winds blowing from the Sahara. The Bijagos Archipelago extends out to sea.

Major cities

| Cities in Guinea-Bissau | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|---------|
| Rank | City | Population | | Region |
| | | 1979 Census | 2005 estimate | |
| 1 | Bissau | 109,214 | 388,028 | Bissau |
| 2 | Bafatá | 13,429 | 22,521 | Bafatá |
| 3 | Gabú | 7,803 | 14,430 | Gabú |
| 4 | Bissorã | <i>N/A</i> | 12,688 | Oio |
| 5 | Bolama | 9,100 | 10,769 | Bolama |
| 6 | Cacheu | 7,600 | 10,490 | Cacheu |
| 7 | Bubaque | 8,400 | 9,941 | Bolama |
| 8 | Catió | 5,170 | 9,898 | Tombali |
| 9 | Mansôa | 5,390 | 7,821 | Oio |
| 10 | Buba | <i>N/A</i> | 7,779 | Quinara |
| 11 | Quebo | <i>N/A</i> | 7,072 | Quinara |
| 12 | Canchungo | 4,965 | 6,853 | Cacheu |
| 13 | Farim | 4,468 | 6,792 | Oio |
| 14 | Quinhámel | <i>N/A</i> | 3,128 | Biombo |
| 15 | Fulacunda | <i>N/A</i> | 1,327 | Quinara |



Satellite image of Guinea-Bissau, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library





Climate

Guinea-Bissau is warm all year around and there is little temperature fluctuation averaging 26.3 degrees Celsius. The average rainfall for Bissau is 2024 mm although this is almost entirely accounted for during the rainy season which falls between June and September/October. During the months of December, January, February, March and April, the country experiences drought.

Economy



The village of Bula

Guinea-Bissau achieved its independence from Portugal in 1974 after a protracted independence war that brought tremendous damages to the country's economic infrastructure. In 1997, Guinea Bissau's entered the CFA franc monetary system, bringing about some internal monetary stability. The civil war that took place in 1998 and 1999 and a military coup in September 2003 again disrupted economic

activity, leaving a substantial part of the economic and social infrastructure in ruins and intensifying the already widespread poverty. Following the parliamentary elections in March 2004 and presidential elections in July 2005, the country is trying to recover from the long period of instability despite a still-fragile political situation.

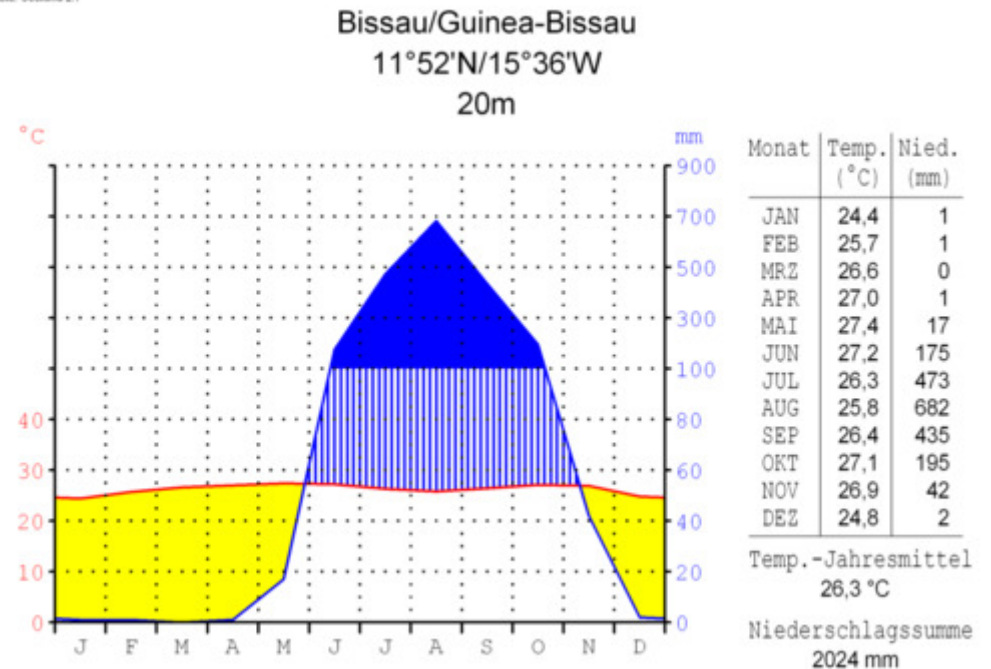
Guinea-Bissau is one of the world's poorest countries, with more than two-thirds of its population living below the poverty line. The economy depends mainly on agriculture; fishing, cashew nuts and ground nuts are its major exports. A long period of political instability has resulted in depressed economic activity, deteriorating social conditions, and increased macroeconomic imbalances. The key challenges for the country in the period ahead will be to restore fiscal discipline, rebuild public administration, improve the economical climate for private investment, and promote economic diversification.

In April 2007, UN Office on Drugs and Crime head, Antonio Maria Costa, said he feared Guinea-Bissau could become a "narco-state" following several large cocaine seizures in the country. Sadly, this seems to be occurring as Columbian cartels have used Guinea-Bissau as a transshipment point to Europe in pursuit of the European market for cocaine.

Demographics

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Quelle: Geoklima 2.1





The population of Guinea-Bissau is ethnically diverse and has many distinct languages, customs, and social structures. Guinea-Bissauans can be divided into the following three ethnic groups: Fula and the Mandinka-speaking people, who comprise the largest portion of the population and are concentrated in the north and northeast; the Balanta and Papel people, who live in the southern coastal regions; and the Manjaco and Mancanha, who occupy the central and northern coastal areas. Most of the remainder are *mestiços* of mixed Portuguese and African descent, including a Cape Verdean minority. Portuguese natives comprise a very small percentage of Guinea-Bissauans. This deficit was directly caused by the exodus of Portuguese settlers that took place after Guinea-Bissau gained independence. The country has also a tiny Chinese population, including those of mixed Portuguese and Chinese ancestry from Macau, a former Asian Portuguese colony. Only 14% of the population speaks the official language Portuguese. 44% speak Kriol, a Portuguese-based creole language, and the remainder speaks native African languages. Most Portuguese and Mestiços speak one of the African languages and Kriol as second languages. French is also learned in schools, as the country is surrounded by French-speaking countries and a full member of the Francophonie. Most people are farmers with traditional religious beliefs (animism); 45% are Muslim, principally the Fula and Mandinka peoples; and fewer than 8% are Christian, mostly Roman Catholics.



Culture

The music of Guinea-Bissau is usually associated with the polyrhythmic *gumbe* genre, the country's primary musical export. However, civil unrest other factors have combined over the years to keep *gumbe*, and other genres, out of mainstream audiences, even in generally syncretist African countries.

The calabash is the primary musical instrument of Guinea-Bissau, and is used in extremely swift and rhythmically complex dance music. Lyrics are almost always in Guinea-Bissau Creole, a Portuguese-based creole language, and are often humorous and topical, revolving around current events and controversies, especially AIDS.

The word *gumbe* is sometimes used generically, to refer to any music of the country, although it most specifically refers to a unique style that fuses about ten of the country's folk music traditions. Tina and tinga are other popular genres, while extent folk traditions include ceremonial music used in funerals, initiations and other rituals, as well as Balanta *brosca* and *kussundé*, Mandinga *djambadon* and the *kundere* sound of the Bijagos islands.

Matriarchy



In the Bolama archipelago, a matriarchal or matrilineal social system has survived to the present day, although it is currently being eroded by globalization and Christian missionary influence.

In this system, women choose husbands who are compelled to marry them, and religious affairs are controlled by a female priesthood.

Retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinea-Bissau>"

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Caravela beach



Kenya




2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries
SOS Children works in Kenya. For more information see SOS Children in Kenya

The **Republic of Kenya** is a country in Eastern Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia to the north, Somalia to the east, Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, and Sudan to the northwest, with the Indian Ocean running along the southeast border. The country is named after Mount Kenya, a very significant landmark, and both were originally usually pronounced 'ki:njə in English although the native pronunciation and the one intended by the original transcription *Kenia* was 'kenia. During the presidency of Jomo Kenyatta in the 1960s, the current pronunciation 'kenjə became widespread in English too because his name was pronounced according to the original native pronunciation. Before 1920, the area now known as Kenya was known as the British East Africa Protectorate and so there was no need to mention *mount* when referring to the mountain.

History

Paleontologists have discovered many fossils of prehistoric animals in Kenya. At one of the rare dinosaur fossil sites in Africa, two hundred Cretaceous theropod and giant crocodile fossils have been discovered in Kenya, dating from the Mesozoic Era, over 200 million years ago. The fossils were found in an excavation conducted by a team from the University of Utah and the National Museums of Kenya in July-August 2004 at Lokitaung Gorge, near Lake Turkana.

Fossils found in East Africa suggest that primates roamed the area more than 20 million years ago. Recent finds near Kenya's Lake Turkana indicate that hominids such as *Homo habilis* (1.8 and 2.5 million years ago) and *Homo erectus* (1.8 million to 350,000 years ago) are possible direct ancestors of modern *Homo sapiens* and lived in Kenya during the Pleistocene epoch. In 1984 one particular discovery made at Lake Turkana by famous palaeoanthropologist Richard Leakey and Kamoya Kimeu was the skeleton of a Turkana boy belonging to *Homo erectus* from 1.6 million years ago. Previous research on early hominids is particularly identified to Louis Leakey and Mary Leakey, who are responsible for the preliminary archaeological research at Olorgesailie and Hyrax Hill. Later work at the former was undertaken by Glynn Isaac.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Jamhuri ya Kenya</i> Republic of Kenya | |
|  |  |
| Flag Coat of arms | |
| Motto: " Harambee" (Swahili) "Let us all pull together" | |
| Anthem: <i>Ee Mungu Nguvu Yetu</i> "O God of All Creation" | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Nairobi |
| Official languages | Swahili (since 1963), English |
| Demonym | Kenyan |



Pre-colonial history



Site of the Great Mosque of Gedi which dates from the 13th century

Cushitic- speaking people from northern Africa moved into the area that is now Kenya beginning around 2000 BC. Arab traders began frequenting the Kenya coast around the 1st century AD. Kenya's proximity to the Arabian Peninsula invited colonization, and Arab and Persian settlements sprouted along the coast by the 8th century. During the first millennium AD, Nilotic and Bantu peoples moved into the region, and the latter now comprise three-quarters of Kenya's population.

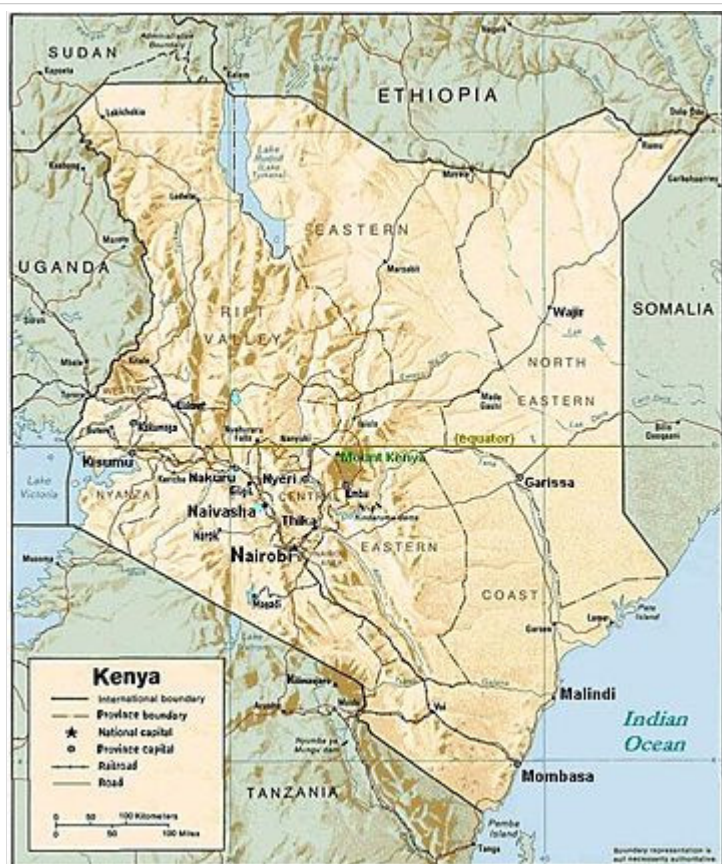
In the centuries preceding colonization, the Swahili coast of Kenya was part of the east African region which traded with the Arab world and India especially for ivory and slaves (the Ameru tribe is said to have originated from slaves escaping from Arab lands some time around the year 1700.). Initially these traders came mainly from Arab states, but later many also came from Zanzibar (such as Tippu Tip).

Swahili, a Bantu language with many Arabic loan words, developed as a *lingua franca* for trade between the different peoples.

The Luo of Kenya descend from early agricultural and herding communities from western Kenya's early pre-colonial history. The Luo people and dialects of their language have historic roots across the Lake Victoria region. Chief among the powerful families to which the Luo trace their ancestry were the Sahkarias of Kano, the Jaramogis of Ugenya, and the Owuors of Kisumo, whose clans married several wives and had multitudes of grandchildren and heirs to various chieftainships. Leaders of these lineages typically had multiple wives and intermarried with their neighbours in Uganda and Sudan. The Luo tribe, through intermarriages and wars, are part of the genetic admixture that includes all modern East African ethnic groups as well as members of Buganda Kingdom, the Toro Kingdom, and the Nubians of modern day Sudan. In recent times, the Luo have had many enemies with whom they fought for access to water, cattle, and land including the Nandi, Kipsigis and the Kisii. As a result of these wars were peace treaties and intermarriages were resolved resulting in a mixture of cultural ideals and practices. As with all so-called tribes of modern day East Africa, Luo history is intricately interwoven with the histories of their friends, enemies and neighbors and attest to the complexity of East African precolonial history.

Colonial history

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Mwai Kibaki |
| - Vice President | Kalonzo Musyoka |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Date | December 12, 1963 |
| - Republic declared | December 12, 1964 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 580,367 km ² (47th) 224,080 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 2.3 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 34,707,817 ¹ (34th) |
| - 8 February 2007 census | 31,138,735 |
| - Density | 59/km ² (140th) 153/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$48.33 billion (76th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,445 (156th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.521 (medium) (148th) |
| Currency | Kenyan shilling (kes) |
| Time zone | EAT (UTC+3) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .ke |
| Calling code | [[+254 ²]] |
| 2. 005 from Tanzania and Uganda. | |



Seaport Mombasa, below Malindi, has railway to Nairobi (centre), south of Naivasha & Nyeri. (click map to enlarge)

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to explore the region of current-day Kenya, Vasco da Gama having visited Mombasa in 1498. Gama's voyage was successful in reaching India and this permitted the Portuguese to trade with the Far East directly by sea, thus challenging older trading networks of mixed land and sea routes, such as the Spice trade routes that utilized the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and caravans to reach the eastern Mediterranean. The Republic of Venice had gained control over much of the trade routes between Europe and Asia. Portugal hoped to use the route pioneered by Gama to break the Venetian trading monopoly. Portuguese rule in East Africa focused mainly on a coastal strip centred in Mombasa. The Portuguese presence in East Africa officially began after 1505, when flagships under the command of Don Francisco De Almeida conquered Kilwa, an island located in what is now southern Tanzania. In March 1505, having received from Manuel I the appointment of viceroy of the newly conquered territory in India, he set sail from Lisbon in command of a large and powerful fleet, and arrived in July at Quiloa (Kilwa), which yielded to him almost without a struggle. A much more vigorous resistance was offered by the Moors of Mombasa, but the town was taken and destroyed, and its large treasures went to strengthen the resources of Almeida. Attacks followed on Hoja (now known as Ungwana, located at the mouth of the Tana River), Barawa, Angoche, Pate and other coastal towns until the western Indian Ocean was a safe haven for Portuguese commercial interests. At other places on his way, such as the island of Angediva, near Goa, and Cannanore, the Portuguese built forts, and adopted measures to secure the Portuguese supremacy. Portugal's main goal in the east coast of Africa was to take control of the spice trade from the Arabs. At this stage, the Portuguese presence in East Africa served the purpose of control trade within the Indian Ocean and secure the sea routes linking Europe to Asia. Portuguese naval vessels were very disruptive to the commerce of Portugal's enemies within the western Indian Ocean and were able to demand high tariffs on items transported through the sea due to their strategic control of ports and shipping lanes. The construction of Fort Jesus in Mombasa in 1593 was meant to solidify Portuguese hegemony in the region, but their influence was clipped by the British, Dutch and Omani Arab incursions into the

region during the 17th century. The Omani Arabs posed the most direct challenge to Portuguese influence in East Africa and besieged Portuguese fortresses, openly attacked naval vessels and expelled the Portuguese from the Kenyan and Tanzanian coasts by 1730.

Omani Arab colonization of the Kenyan and Tanzanian coasts brought the once independent city-states under closer foreign scrutiny and domination than was experienced during the Portuguese period. Like their predecessors, the Omani Arabs were primarily able only to control the coastal areas, not the interior. However, the creation of clove plantations, intensification of the slave trade and relocation of the Omani capital to Zanzibar in 1839 by Seyyid Said had the effect of consolidating the Omani power in the region. Arab governance of all the major ports along the East African coast continued until British interests aimed particularly at ending the slave trade and creation of a wage-labour system began to put pressure on Omani rule. By the late nineteenth century, the slave trade on the open seas had been completely outlawed by the British and the Omani Arabs had little ability to resist the British navy's ability to enforce the directive. The Omani presence continued in Zanzibar and Pemba until the 1964 revolution, but the official Omani Arab presence in Kenya was checked by



German and British seizure of key ports and creation of crucial trade alliances with influential local leaders in the 1880s. However, the Omani Arab legacy in East Africa is currently found through their numerous descendants found along the coast that can directly trace ancestry to Oman and are typically the wealthiest and most politically influential members of the Kenyan coastal community.

However, most historians consider that the colonial history of Kenya dates from the establishment of a German protectorate over the Sultan of Zanzibar's coastal possessions in 1885, followed by the arrival of the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888. Incipient imperial rivalry was forestalled when Germany handed its coastal holdings to Britain in 1890. This followed the building of the Kenya-Uganda railway passing through the country. This was resisted by some tribes, notably the Nandi led by *Orkoiyot* Koitalel Arap Samoei for ten years from 1895 to 1905, the British eventually built the railway. It is believed that the *Nandi* were the first tribe to be put in a native reserve to stop them from disrupting the building of the railway. During the railway construction era, there was a significant inflow of Indian peoples who provided the bulk of the skilled manpower required for construction. These people remained in Kenya and formed the core of several distinct Indian communities such as the Ismaili muslim and Sikh communities.



Kenya-Uganda railway near Mombasa, about 1899

At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, the governors of British East Africa (as the Protectorate was generally known) and German East Africa agreed a truce in an attempt to keep the young colonies out of direct hostilities. However Lt Col Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck took command of the German military forces, determined to tie down as many British resources as possible. Completely cut off from Germany by the British Navy, von Lettow conducted an effective guerrilla warfare campaign, living off the land, capturing British supplies, and remaining undefeated. He eventually surrendered in Zambia eleven days after the Armistice was signed in 1918. To chase von Lettow the British deployed Indian Army troops from India and then needed large numbers of porters to overcome the formidable logistics of transporting supplies far into the interior by foot. The Carrier Corps was formed and ultimately mobilised over 400,000 Africans, contributing to their long-term politicisation.

During the early part of the twentieth century, the interior central highlands were settled by British and other European farmers, who became wealthy farming coffee and tea. By the 1930s, approximately 30,000 white settlers lived in the area and were offered undue political powers because of their effects on the economy. The area was already home to over a million members of the Kikuyu tribe, most of whom had no land claims in European terms (but the land belonged to the ethnic group), and lived as itinerant farmers. To protect their interests, the settlers banned the growing of coffee, introduced a hut tax, and the landless were granted less and less land in exchange for their labour. A massive exodus to the cities ensued as their ability to provide a living from the land dwindled.

Image:Paul
vonLettow-
vorbeck.jpg
Lt Col Paul von
Lettow-Vorbeck

In 1951, Sir Horace Hector Hearne became Chief Justice in Kenya (coming from Ceylon, where he had also been Chief Justice) and sat in the Supreme Court in Nairobi. He held that position until 1954 when he became an Appeal Justice of the West African Court of Appeal. On the night of the death of King George VI, 5 February 1952, Hearne escorted The Princess Elizabeth, Duchess of Edinburgh, as she then was, to a state dinner at the Treetops Hotel, which is now a very popular tourist retreat. It was there that she "went up a princess and came down a Queen". She returned immediately to England, accompanied by Hearne.



From October 1952 to December 1959, Kenya was under a state of emergency arising from the Mau Mau rebellion against British rule. The governor requested and obtained British and African troops, including the King's African Rifles. In January 1953, Major General Hinde was appointed as director of counter-insurgency operations. The situation did not improve for lack of intelligence, so General Sir George Erskine was appointed commander-in-chief of the colony's armed forces in May 1953, with the personal backing of Winston Churchill.

The capture of Warūhiū Itote (a.k.a. General China) on 15 January 1954 and the subsequent interrogation led to a better understanding of the Mau Mau command structure. Operation Anvil opened on 24 April 1954 after weeks of planning by the army with the approval of the War Council. The operation effectively placed Nairobi under military siege, and the occupants were screened and the Mau Mau supporters moved to detention camps. May 1953 also saw the Home Guard officially recognized as a branch of the Security Forces. The Home Guard formed the core of the government's anti-Mau Mau strategy as it was composed of loyalist Africans, not foreign forces like the British Army and King's African Rifles. By the end of the emergency the Home Guard had killed 4,686 Mau Mau, amounting to 42% of the total insurgents. The capture of Dedan Kimathi on 21 October 1956 in Nyeri signified the ultimate defeat of the Mau Mau and essentially ended the military offensive.

Post-colonial history

The first direct elections for Africans to the Legislative Council took place in 1957. Despite British hopes of handing power to "moderate" African rivals, it was the Kenya African National Union (KANU) of Jomo Kenyatta, that formed a government shortly before Kenya became independent on 12 December 1963. In the same year the Kenyan army fought the Shifta War against Somali ethnics determined to see NFD join with the Republic of Somalia, the Shifta's inflicted heavy casualties on the Kenyan armed forces but were defeated in 1967.

Kenya, fearing an invasion from militarily stronger Somalia, signed a defence pact with Ethiopia in 1969 which is still intact . Suffering from droughts and floods NFD is the least developed region in Kenya. However, throughout the 1990s wealthy Somali refugees turned businessmen have transformed Eastleigh from a residential community to the commercial centre of Eastlands, and increasingly much of Nairobi.



Lake Victoria

In 1964, Kenyatta became Kenya's first president. At Kenyatta's death in 1978, Daniel arap Moi became President. Daniel arap Moi retained the Presidency, being unopposed in elections held in 1979, 1983 (snap elections) and 1988, all of which were held under the single party constitution. The 1983 elections were held a year early, and were a direct result of an abortive military coup attempt on August 1, 1982.

The abortive coup was masterminded by a lowly ranked Air Force serviceman, Senior Private Hezekiah Ochuka and was staged mainly by enlisted men in the Air Force. The attempt was quickly suppressed by Loyalist forces led by the Army, the General Service Unit (GSU) — paramilitary wing of the police — and later the regular police, but not without civilian casualties. This event led to the disbanding of the entire Air Force and a large number of its former members were either dismissed or court-martialled.

The election held in 1988 saw the advent of the *mlolongo* (queuing) system where voters were supposed to line up behind their favoured candidates instead of secret ballot. This was seen as the climax of a very undemocratic regime and it led to widespread agitation for constitutional reform. Several contentious

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clauses, including the one allowing only one political party were changed in the following years. In democratic, multiparty elections in 1992 and 1997, Daniel arap Moi won re-election. In 2002, Moi was constitutionally barred from running, and Mwai Kibaki, running for the opposition coalition "National Rainbow Coalition" — NARC, was elected President. The elections, judged free and fair by local and international observers, marked a turning point in Kenya's democratic evolution. This year we expect another showdown between the incumbent and ODM presidential aspirant Raila Odinga. Kenya is one of the most politically distinguished countries in Africa.

Origins of the country's name

See

Politics

Politics of Kenya takes place in a framework of a presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Kenya is both head of state and head of government, and of a pluriform multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the National Assembly. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

Since independence, Kenya has maintained remarkable stability despite changes in its political system and crises in neighbouring countries. A cross-party parliamentary reform initiative in the fall of 1997 revised some oppressive laws inherited from the colonial era that had been used to limit freedom of speech and assembly. This improved public freedoms and contributed to generally credible national elections in December 1997.

In December 2002, Kenyans held democratic and open elections, most of which were judged free and fair by international observers. The 2002 elections marked an important turning point in Kenya's democratic evolution in that power was transferred peacefully from the Kenya African Union (KANU), which had ruled the country since independence to the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc), a coalition of political parties.

Under the presidency of Mwai Kibaki, the new ruling coalition promised to focus its efforts on generating economic growth, combating corruption, improving education, and rewriting its constitution. A few of these promises have been met. There is free primary education. From next year, secondary education will be almost free, with the government footing all tuition fees. Under president Kibaki, the democratic space has expanded. The media is freer than before. Kenyans can associate and express themselves without fearing being harassed by security agents as it used to be the case during the Moi administration. In November 2005, the Kenyan electorate resoundingly defeated a new draft constitution supported by Parliament and President Kibaki. Kibaki responded by dismissing his entire cabinet. Kibaki eventually appointed a new slate of ministers.

The last general elections were held on December 27, 2007. In them, President Kibaki under the Party of National Unity ran for re-election against the main opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). After a split which would take a crucial 8% of the votes away from the ODM to the newly formed



Current president Mwai Kibaki



Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya (ODM-K)'s candidate, Kalonzo Musyoka, the race tightened between ODM candidate Raila Odinga and Kibaki. As the count came in to the Kenyan Election Commission, Odinga was shown to have a slight, and then substantial lead. However, as the ECK Electoral Commission of Kenya continued to count the votes, Kibaki closed the gap and then overtook his opponent by a substantial margin amid largely substantiated claims of rigging (notably by the EU Observers). This led to protests and riots, open discrediting of the ECK for complicity and to Odinga declaring himself the "people's president" and calling for a recount and Kibaki to resign. More information is available in clashes in Kenya (2007–present).

Country subdivisions

Kenya comprises 8 provinces each headed by a Provincial Commissioner (centrally appointed by the president). The provinces (*mkoa* singular *mikoa* plural in Swahili) are subdivided into districts (*wilaya*). There were 69 districts as of 1999 census. Districts are then subdivided into 497 divisions (*taarafa*). The divisions are then subdivided into 2,427 locations (*kata*) and then 6,612 sublocations (*kata ndogo*). The City of Nairobi enjoys the status of a full administrative province. The government supervises administration of districts and provinces. The provinces are:

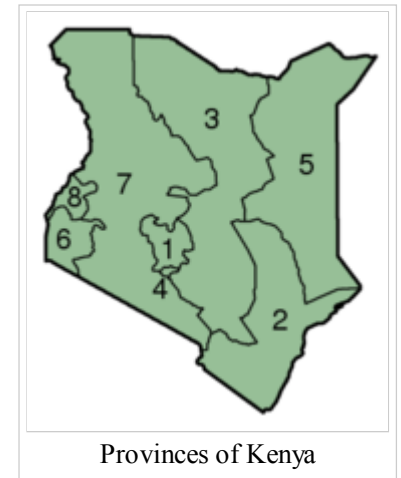
- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| 1. Central | 5. North Eastern |
| 2. Coast | 6. Nyanza |
| 3. Eastern | 7. Rift Valley |
| 4. Nairobi | 8. Western |

Local governance in Kenya is practised through local authorities. Many urban centres host city, municipal or town councils. Local authorities in rural areas are known as county councils. Local councillors are elected by civic elections, held alongside general elections.

Constituencies are an electoral subdivision. There are 210 Constituencies in Kenya .

Population of major cities

| City | Population |
|---------|------------|
| Nairobi | 2,510,800 |
| Mombasa | 707,400 |
| Nakuru | 337,200 |
| Kisumu | 273,400 |





| | |
|----------|---------|
| Eldoret | 249,100 |
| Nyeri | 213,000 |
| Machakos | 179,500 |
| Meru | 140,900 |

Geography



Mount Kenya is the highest peak in Kenya at 5,199 m (17,042 ft). Kenya is named after the mountain.

At 224,961 square miles (582,646 km²), Kenya is the world's forty-seventh largest country (after Madagascar). From the coast on the Indian Ocean the Low plains rise to central highlands. The highlands are bisected by the Great Rift Valley; a fertile plateau in the west. The Kenyan Highlands comprise one of the most successful agricultural production regions in Africa. The highlands are the site of the highest point in Kenya (and the second highest in Africa): Mount Kenya, which reaches 5,199 meters (17,057 ft) and is also the site of glaciers. Climate varies from tropical along the coast to arid in the interior. There is also Mount Kilimanjaro (19,341 ft) which is located on the Kenya- Tanzania border.

Environment

Kenya has considerable land area of wildlife habitat, including the Masai Mara, where blue wildebeest and other bovids participate in a large scale annual migration. Up to 250,000 blue wildebeest perish each year in the long and arduous movement to find forage in the dry season. The "Big Five" animals of Africa can also be found in Kenya: the lion, leopard, buffalo, rhinoceros and elephant. A significant population of other wild animals, reptiles and birds can be found in the national parks and game reserves in the country. The environment of Kenya is threatened by high population growth and its side effects.

Climate



A giraffe at Nairobi National Park, with Nairobi's skyline in background



Kenya enjoys a tropical climate. It is hot and humid at the coast, temperate inland and very dry in the north and northeast parts of the country. There is however a lot of rain between the months March and May. The temperature does remain high throughout these months.

Average annual temperatures

| City | | Elevation (m) | Max (°C) | Min (°C) |
|---------|----------------------|---------------|----------|----------|
| Mombasa | coastal town | 17 | 30.3 | 22.4 |
| Nairobi | capital city | 1,661 | 25.2 | 13.6 |
| Eldoret | | 3,085 | 23.6 | 9.5 |
| Lodwar | dry north plainlands | 506 | 34.8 | 23.7 |
| Mandera | dry north plainlands | 506 | 34.8 | 25.7 |



Safari

The country receives a great deal of sunshine all the year round and summer clothes are worn throughout the year. However, it is usually cool at night and early in the morning.

The long rain season occurs from April to June. The short rain season occurs from October to December. The rainfall is sometimes heavy and often falls in the afternoons and evenings. The hottest period is from February to March and coldest in July to August.

The annual migration occurs between June and September with millions of wildlife taking part. It has been a popular event for filmmakers to capture.

Economy

After independence, Kenya promoted rapid economic growth through public investment, encouragement of smallholder agricultural production, and incentives for private (often foreign) industrial investment. Gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an annual average of 6.6% from 1963 to 1973. Agricultural production grew by 4.7% annually during the same period, stimulated by redistributing estates, diffusing new crop strains, and opening new areas to cultivation.

Between 1974 and 1990, however, Kenya's economic performance declined. Inappropriate agricultural policies, inadequate credit, and poor international terms of trade contributed to the decline in agriculture. Kenya's inward-looking policy of import substitution and rising oil prices made Kenya's manufacturing sector uncompetitive. The government began a massive intrusion in the private sector. Lack of export incentives, tight import controls, and foreign exchange controls made the domestic environment for investment even less attractive.



20 shilling note from 1994, depicting then-President Daniel arap Moi



From 1991 to 1993, Kenya had its worst economic performance since independence. Growth in GDP stagnated, and agricultural production shrank at an annual rate of 3.9%. Inflation reached a record 100% in August 1993, and the government's budget deficit was over 10% of GDP. As a result of these combined problems, bilateral and multilateral donors suspended programme aid to Kenya in 1991.

In 1993, the Government of Kenya began a major programme of economic reform and liberalization. A new minister of finance and a new governor of the Central Bank of Kenya undertook a series of economic measures with the assistance of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As part of this programme, the government eliminated price controls and import licensing, removed foreign exchange controls, privatized a range of publicly owned companies, reduced the number of civil servants, and introduced conservative fiscal and monetary policies. From 1994-96, Kenya's real GDP growth rate averaged just over 4% a year.

In 1997, however, the economy entered a period of slowing or stagnant growth, due in part to adverse weather conditions and reduced economic activity prior to general elections in December 1997. In 2000, GDP growth was negative, but improved slightly in 2001 as rainfall returned closer to normal levels. Economic growth continued to improve slightly in 2002 and reached 1.4% in 2003; it was 4.3% in 2004 and 5.8% in 2005.

In July 1997, the Government of Kenya refused to meet commitments made earlier to the IMF on governance reforms. As a result, the IMF suspended lending for 3 years, and the World Bank also put a \$90-million structural adjustment credit on hold. Although many economic reforms put in place in 1993-94 remained, conservative economists believe that Kenya needs further reforms, particularly in governance, in order to increase GDP growth and combat the poverty that afflicts more than 57% of its population.

The Government of Kenya took some positive steps on reform, including the 1999 establishment of the Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority (KACA), and measures to improve the transparency of government procurements and reduce the government payroll. In July 2000, the IMF signed a \$150 million Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF), and the World Bank followed suit shortly after with a \$157 million Economic and Public Sector Reform credit. The Anti-Corruption Authority was declared unconstitutional in December 2000, and other parts of the reform effort faltered in 2001. The IMF and World Bank again suspended their programs. Various efforts to restart the programme through mid-2002 were unsuccessful.



An aerial of the cargo terminal at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, the largest and busiest airport in East Africa

Under the leadership of President Kibaki, who took over on December 30, 2002, the Government of Kenya began an ambitious economic reform programme and has resumed its cooperation with the World Bank and the IMF. The new National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government enacted the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act and Public Officers Ethics Act in May 2003 aimed at fighting graft in public offices. Other reforms especially in the judiciary, public procurement etc., have led to the unlocking of donor aid and a renewed hope at economic revival. In November 2003, following the adoption of key anti-corruption laws and other reforms by the new government, donors reengaged as the IMF approved a three-year \$250 million Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and donors committed \$4.2 billion in support over 4 years. The renewal of donor involvement has provided a much-needed boost to investor confidence.

The Privatization Bill has been enacted although the setting up of a privatization commission is yet to be finalized, civil service reform has been implemented and in the year 2007 the country won the UN Public Service reform award. However a lot of work need to be done to make the country catch up with the rest



of economic giants especially the Far East. The main challenges include taking candid action on corruption, enacting anti-terrorism and money laundering laws, bridging budget deficits, rehabilitating and building infrastructure. This hopefully will help in maintaining sound macroeconomic policies, and speed up the rapidly accelerating economic growth, which is projected to grow to 7.2% in 2007. However all this is tied to the outcome of the forthcoming General Election in 2007.

Nairobi continues to be the primary communication and financial hub of East Africa. It enjoys the region's best transportation linkages, communications infrastructure, and trained personnel, although these advantages are less prominent than in past years. A wide range of foreign firms maintain regional branch or representative offices in the city. In March 1996, the Presidents of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda re-established the East African Community (EAC). The EAC's objectives include harmonizing tariffs and customs regimes, free movement of people, and improving regional infrastructures. In March 2004, the three East African countries signed a Customs Union Agreement.

Economic summary

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GDP | \$17.43 billion (2005) at Market Price. \$ 41.36 billion (Purchasing Power Parity, 2006) There also exists a large, informal economy that is never counted as part of the official GDP figures. |
| Annual growth rate | 5.8% (2005): 2006 = 6.1% : Estimate for 2007 = 7.2% |
| Per capita income | Per Capita Income (PPP)= \$1,200 |
| Natural resources | Wildlife, land (5% arable) |
| Agricultural produce | tea, coffee, sugarcane, horticultural products, corn, wheat, rice, sisal, pineapples, pyrethrum, dairy products, meat and meat products, hides, skins |
| Industry | petroleum products, grain and sugar milling, cement, beer, soft drinks, textiles, vehicle assembly, paper and light manufacturing, tourism |

Trade in 2002

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exports | \$2.2 billion | tea, coffee, horticultural products, petroleum products, cement, pyrethrum, soda ash, sisal, hides and skins, fluorspar |
| Major markets | Uganda, Tanzania, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Egypt, South Africa, United States | |
| Imports | \$3.2 billion | machinery, vehicles, crude petroleum, iron and steel, resins and plastic materials, refined petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, paper and paper products, fertilizers, wheat |
| Major suppliers | United Kingdom, Japan, South Africa, Germany, United Arab Emirates, Italy, India, France, United States, Saudi Arabia | |

Oil exploration

Early in 2006 Chinese President Hu Jintao signed an oil exploration contract with Kenya; the latest in a series of deals designed to keep Africa's natural resources flowing to China's booming economy.



The deal allowed for China's state-controlled offshore oil and gas company, CNOOC Ltd., to prospect for oil in Kenya, which is just beginning to drill its first exploratory wells on the borders of Sudan and Somalia and in coastal waters. No oil has been produced yet, and there has been no formal estimate of the possible reserves.

Demographics

Kenya is a country of great ethnic diversity.

Ethnic groups

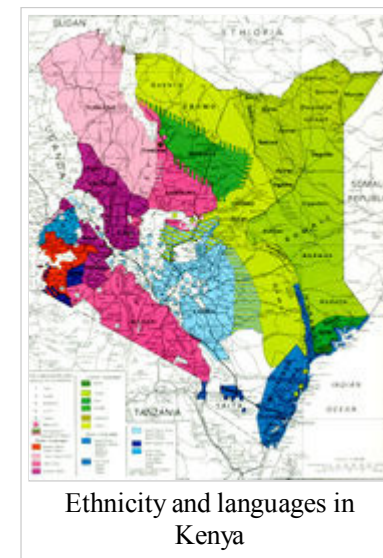
Kikuyu 23%, Luhya 14%, Luo 13%, Kalenjin 11%, Kamba 10%, Kisii 6%, Meru 5%, Maasai 1.8%, Turkana 1.5%, Embu 1.2%, other African (including Somali, Taita, Swahili, Samburu, Pokomo, Giriama, Rabai, Duruma, Chonyi, Digo, Kauma, Orma, Oromo Wasanye, Wanyoyaya, Borana, Rendille, El Moran, Malakote, Teso, Gabra, Ndorobo) 15%, non-African (Asian/ Desi, Anglo-African/European, and Arab) 1%.

Religious affiliation

Protestant and Quaker 45%, Roman Catholic 25%, Islam 10%, Traditional Religions 10%. Others include Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism and the Bahá'í Faith. Kenya contains the largest body of Quakers in a single nation (see: Quakers in Kenya).

Largest cities

Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret.
See also: List of cities in Kenya



Education

Kenya's education system consists of early childhood education, primary, secondary and college. Early childhood education takes at least three years, primary eight years, secondary four and university four or six years depending on the course. Preschooling, which targets children from age three to five, is an integral component of the education system and is a key requirement for admission to Standard One (First Grade). At the end of primary education, pupils sit the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), which determines those who proceed to secondary school or vocational training. Primary school age is 6/7-13/14 years. For those who proceed to secondary level, there is a national examination at the end of Form Four – the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), which determines those proceeding to the universities, other professional training or employment. The Joint Admission Board (JAB) is responsible for selecting students joining the public universities. The minimum university entry grade is C+ at KCSE. However, due to stiff competition, only those with higher grades such as B+ and above are guaranteed admission. Private universities admit students on their own but are guided by the rules and regulations provided by the Commission for Higher Education. Other than the public schools, there are many private schools in the country, mainly in urban areas. Similarly, there are a number of international schools catering for various educational systems such as American, British, French, German, Japanese and Swedish.

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Literary perspective

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one of the best known writers of Kenya. His book, *Weep Not, Child* is an illustration of life in Kenya during the British occupation. This is a story about the effects of the Mau Mau on the lives of black Kenyans. Its combination of themes - colonialism, education, and love - help to make it one of the best-known novels in Africa.

M.G. Vassanji's 2003 novel *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* won the Giller Prize in 2003. It is the fictional memoir of a Kenyan of Indian heritage and his family as they adjust to the changing political climates in colonial and post-colonial Kenya.

Since 2003, the literary journal *Kwani?* has been publishing Kenyan contemporary literature.

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Lesotho

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries
SOS Children works in Lesotho. For more information see SOS Children in Lesotho, Africa

Lesotho (pronounced /lɪˈsuːtuː/ listen[ⓘ]), officially the **Kingdom of Lesotho**, is a land-locked country and enclave — entirely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. Formerly Basutoland, it is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The name Lesotho roughly translates into "the land of the people who speak Sesotho."




History

The earliest inhabitants of the area were Khoisan hunter-gatherers. They were largely replaced by Bantu-speaking tribes during Bantu migrations.

The present Lesotho (then called Basutoland) emerged as a single polity under paramount chief Moshoeshe I in 1822. It was recognized by the United Kingdom on 13 December 1843, and on 12 March 1868 became one of the High Commission Territories. On 30 April 1965 it was granted autonomy. Its name changed when Lesotho gained full independence within the Commonwealth of Nations on October 4, 1966.

In January 1970 the ruling Basotho National Party (BNP) lost the first post-independence general elections, with 23 seats to the Basutoland Congress Party's 36. Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan refused to cede power to the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), declared himself Tona Kholo (Sesotho translation of prime minister), and imprisoned the BCP leadership.

The BCP began a rebellion and then received training in Libya for its Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) under the pretence of being Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) soldiers of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Deprived of arms and supplies by the Sibeko faction of the PAC in 1978, the 178-strong LLA was rescued from their Tanzanian base by the financial assistance of a Maoist PAC officer but launched the guerrilla war with a handful of old weapons. The main force was defeated in northern Lesotho and later guerrillas launched sporadic but usually ineffectual attacks. The campaign was severely compromised when BCP's leader, Ntsu Mokhehle, went to Pretoria. In the early 1980s, several Basotho who sympathized with the exiled BCP were threatened with death and attacked by the government of

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Muso oa Lesotho</i> Kingdom of Lesotho | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Khotso, Pula, Nala" (Sesotho) "Peace, Rain, Prosperity" | |
| Anthem: <i>Lesotho Fatse La Bontata Rona</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Maseru |
| Official languages | Southern Sotho, English |
| Demonym | Mosotho (singular), Basotho (plural) |
| Government | Constitutional monarchy |



Leabua Jonathan. In September 1981 the family of Benjamin Masilo was attacked. A few days later, Edgar Mahlomola Motuba was taken from his home and murdered.

The BNP ruled by decree until January 1986 when a military coup forced it out of office. The Military Council that came to power granted executive powers to King Moshoeshoe II, who was until then a ceremonial monarch. But in 1987 the King was forced into exile after a falling out with the army. His son was installed as King Letsie III.

The chairman of the military junta, Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya, was ousted in 1991 and replaced by Major General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, who handed over power to a democratically elected government of the BCP in 1993. Moshoeshoe II returned from exile in 1992 as an ordinary citizen. After the return to democratic government, King Letsie III tried unsuccessfully to persuade the BCP government to reinstate his father (Moshoeshoe II) as head of state.

In August 1994, Letsie III staged a military-backed coup that deposed the BCP government. The new government did not receive full international recognition. Member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) engaged in negotiations to reinstate the BCP government. One of the conditions Letsie III put forward for this was that his father should be re-installed as head of state. After protracted negotiations, the BCP government was reinstated and Letsie III abdicated in favour of his father in 1995, but Moshoeshoe II died in a car 'accident' in 1996 and was again succeeded by his son.

In 1997, the ruling BCP split over leadership disputes. Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle formed a new party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), and was followed by a majority of Members of Parliament, which enabled him to form a new government. Pakalitha Mosisili succeeded Mokhehle as party leader and the LCD won the general elections in 1998. Although the elections were pronounced free and fair by local and international observers and a subsequent special commission appointed by SADC, the opposition political parties rejected the results.

Opposition protests in the country intensified, culminating in a peaceful demonstration outside the royal palace in August 1998. Exact details of what followed are greatly disputed and it remain contested even within South Africa, but in September that year, a SADC task force operating on orders of unclear provenance entered the capital Maseru. While the Botswana Defence Force troops were welcomed, tensions with South African National Defence Force troops were high, resulting in fighting. Incidences of sporadic rioting intensified when South African troops hoisted a South African flag over the Royal Palace. By the time the SADC forces withdrew in May 1999, much of Maseru lay in ruins, and the southern provincial capital towns of Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek had seen the loss of over a third of their commercial real estate. A number of South Africans and Basotho also died in the fighting.

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| - King | Letsie III |
| - Prime Minister | Pakalitha Mosisili |
| Independence | |
| - from the United Kingdom | October 4, 1966 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 30,355 km ² (140th) 11,717 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 1,795,000 ¹ (146th) |
| - 2004 census | 2,031,348 |
| - Density | 59/km ² (138th) 153/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$4.996 billion (150th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,113 (139th) |
| Gini (1995) | 63.2 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.549 (medium) (138th) |
| Currency | Loti (LSL) |
| Time zone | (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .ls |
| Calling code | +266 |

¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.



An Interim Political Authority (IPA), charged with reviewing the electoral structure in the country, was created in December 1998. The IPA devised a proportional electoral system to ensure that the opposition would be represented in the National Assembly. The new system retained the existing 80 elected Assembly seats, but added 40 seats to be filled on a proportional basis. Elections were held under this new system in May 2002, and the LCD won again, gaining 54% of the vote. But for the first time, opposition political parties won significant numbers of seats, and despite some irregularities and threats of violence from Major General Lekhanya, Lesotho experienced its first peaceful election. Nine opposition parties now hold all 40 of the proportional seats, with the BNP having the largest share (21). The LCD has 79 of the 80 constituency-based seats. Although its elected members participate in the National Assembly, the BNP has launched several legal challenges to the elections, including a recount; none has been successful.

Politics

The Lesotho Government is a constitutional monarchy. The Prime Minister, Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, is head of government and has executive authority. The king serves a largely ceremonial function; he no longer possesses any executive authority and is proscribed from actively participating in political initiatives.

The Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) controls a majority in the National Assembly (the lower house of parliament) with 62 seats. The All Basotho Convention (ABC), a party formed shortly before the poll under the leadership of former foreign minister Tom Thabane, is the main opposition. The Basotho National Party (BNP), the Alliance of Congress Parties (ACP) and the newly formed Basotho Batho Democratic Party (BBDP) and the Basotho Democratic National Party (BDNP) Lesotho are among the other five opposition parties represented.

The ABC has brought a dramatic change in the Lesotho's politics, due to it having won 17, mainly urban, seats out of 80 Constituency seats, only a few months after it was formed in September 2006. Of the 40 Proportional Representation (PR) seats, the National Independent Party (NIP), a parliamentary ally of the ruling party, has the highest number of seats at 21. The Lesotho Workers Party has the next highest number of proportional seats with 10. The BNP is the opposition party with the biggest loss in the February 2007 election with its representation reduced from 21 to 3 seats. A total of 12 political parties are represented in the 120-member parliament.

The upper house of parliament, called the Senate, is composed of twenty-two principal chiefs whose membership is hereditary, and eleven appointees of the king, acting on the advice of the prime minister.

The constitution provides for an independent judicial system, made up of the High Court, the Court of Appeal, Magistrate's Courts, and traditional courts that exist predominantly in rural areas. All but one of the Justices on the Court of Appeal are South African jurists. There is no trial by jury; rather, judges make rulings alone, or, in the case of criminal trials, with two other judges as observers.

The constitution also protects basic civil liberties, including freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of the press, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of religion.

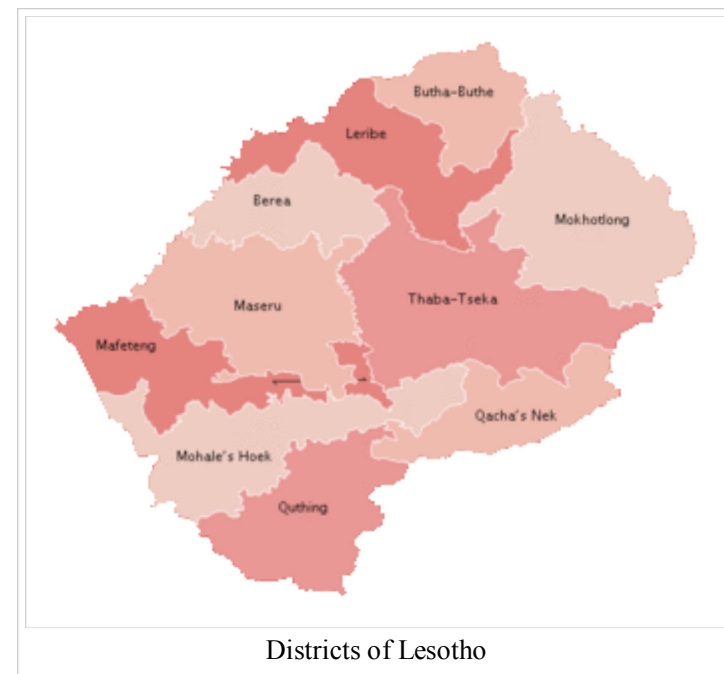
Districts



Administratively, Lesotho is divided into ten districts, each headed by a district administrator. Each district has a capital known as a *camptown*.

- Berea
- Butha-Buthe
- Leribe
- Mafeteng
- Maseru
- Mohale's Hoek
- Mokhotlong
- Qacha's Nek
- Quthing
- Thaba-Tseka

The districts are further subdivided into 80 constituencies, which consists of 129 local community councils.



Geography



Snow on the Lesotho Moteng pass

Lesotho covers 30,355 square kilometres (11,720 sq mi). The most notable geographic fact about Lesotho, apart from its status as an enclave, is that it is the only independent state in the world that lies entirely above 1,000 metres (3,300 ft) in elevation. Its lowest point is 1,400 metres (4,593 ft), and over 80% of the country lies above 1,800 metres (5,900 ft).

Climate

Due to its altitude, Lesotho remains cooler throughout the year than other regions at the same latitude. Most of the rain falls as summer thunderstorms. Maseru and surrounding lowlands often reach 30 °C (86 °F) in summer. Winters can be cold with the lowlands getting down to -7 °C (19 °F) and the highlands to -18 °C (0 °F) at times. Snow is common in the deserts and low valleys between May and September; the higher peaks can experience snowfalls year-round.



Satellite image of Lesotho, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Economy

Lesotho's economy is based on exports of water sold to South Africa, manufacturing, agriculture, livestock, and to some extent the earnings of laborers employed in South Africa. Lesotho also exports diamonds, wool, mohair, clothing, and footwear. One of Levi's jeans manufacturing facilities is located there. Also in Lesotho is one of Russell Athletics plants. Lesotho is geographically surrounded by South Africa and economically integrated with it as well. The majority of households subsist on farming or migrant labor, primarily miners who remain in South Africa for 3 to 9 months. The western lowlands form the main agricultural zone. Almost 50% of the population earns some income through crop cultivation or animal husbandry, with over half the country's income coming from the agricultural sector.



Gorges of the River Makhaleng in Lesotho's highlands.

Water is Lesotho's only significant natural resource. It is utilised through the 21-year, multi-billion-dollar Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), which began in 1986. The LHWP is designed to capture, store, and transfer water from the Orange River system to South Africa's Free State and greater Johannesburg area, which features a large concentration of South African industry, population, and agriculture. Completion of the first phase of the project has made Lesotho almost completely self-sufficient in the production of electricity and generated approximately \$24 million annually from the sale of electricity and water to South Africa. The World Bank, African Development Bank, European Investment Bank, and many other bilateral donors financed the project. Lesotho has taken advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to become the largest exporter of garments to the US from sub-Saharan Africa. Exports totaled over \$320 million in 2002. Employment reached over 50,000, marking the first time that manufacturing sector workers outnumbered government employees.

Lesotho has nearly 6,000 kilometers of unpaved and modern all-weather roads. There is a short freight rail line linking Lesotho with South Africa that is owned and operated by South Africa.

The official currency is the loti (plural: maloti), but can be used interchangeably with the South African rand. Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, and South Africa also form a common currency and exchange control area known as the Common Monetary Area (CMA). The loti is at par with the rand, while one hundred lisente equal one loti.

Lesotho is a member of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), in which tariffs have been eliminated on the trade of goods between other member countries Botswana, Namibia,

South Africa, and Swaziland.

Lesotho has received economic aid from a variety of sources, including the United States, the World Bank, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Germany.

Tourism is a slowly growing industry. A ski resort recently opened in the high Maluti Mountains is drawing tourists from South Africa.



The Afriski resort in the Maluti Mountains of Lesotho.



Significant levels of child labour exist in Lesotho, and the country is in the process of formulating an Action Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (APEC), which is likely to be adopted in the period 2006-2007 (see Child labour in Lesotho).

Demographics

Population

Lesotho has a population of approximately 1.881 million, according to 2006 Census. The population distribution of Lesotho is 23.8 percent urban and 76.2 percent rural. Population density is lower in the highlands than in the western lowlands. Although the majority of the population -- 57.6 percent -- is between 15 and 64 years of age, Lesotho has a substantial youth population numbering around 37 percent. The annual population growth is -0.46%.

Languages

Lesotho's ethno-linguistic structure consists almost entirely of the Basotho, a Bantu-speaking people. The Kwena (Bakoena) are the largest subgroup of the Sotho; other Basotho subgroups include the Natal (North) Nguni, Batlounge (the Tlou), Baphuthi (the Phuti), Bafokeng, Bataung (the Tau), Bats'oeneng (the tso'ene) and the Cape (South) Nguni (Thembu). Sesotho (Southern Sotho) and English languages are both official. Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa and French are also spoken.

Religion

Roman Catholics, the largest religious group, make up more than two-fifths of the population; smaller groups include the Lesotho Evangelical Church which comprises more than one-fourth of the population; Anglican, one-ninth; and other Christian and tribal religions.

Education and literacy

An estimated 85 percent of the population 15 and over was literate, according to recent estimates. As such, Lesotho boasts one of the higher literacy rates in Africa. Although education is not compulsory, the Government of Lesotho is incrementally implementing a programme for free primary education. It was expected that the program would be fully in place by 2006.

HIV/AIDS



Lesotho is severely afflicted by HIV/AIDS. According to recent estimates, the prevalence is about 29%, one of the highest in the world. The United Nations projects that this will rise to 36% within fifteen years, resulting in a sharp drop in life expectancy. According to the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, in 2001 life expectancy was estimated at forty-eight years for men and fifty-six for women. Recent statistics estimate about thirty-seven years. Many children have lost parents. Traditionally lavish funerals leave survivors with another burden.

The government of Lesotho was initially slow to recognise the scale of the crisis, and its efforts to date in combating the spread of the disease have had limited success. In 1999, the government finalised its Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, a diagram for addressing the education, prevention, counseling, and treatment needs of the populace. In late 2003, the government announced that it was forming a new National AIDS Commission to coordinate society-wide anti-AIDS activities. Also in 2003 the government hosted a SADC Extraordinary Summit on HIV/AIDS.

In 2005, programs for the distribution of anti-retrovirals were initiated. One such program is in Hlotse, Leribe at Tsepong Clinic which is part of Motebang Hospital. However, such programs remain limited in resources and have relatively few participants.

The government has also started a proactive program called "Know your status" to test for HIV everyone in the country who wants to be tested. The program is funded by the Clinton Foundation and started in June of 2006. Bill Clinton and Microsoft chairman Bill Gates visited Lesotho in July 2006 to assess its fight against AIDS. Dubbed "The two Bills" by the media, the two men visited the Mafeteng Hospital which is about 80 kilometres (50 miles) south of the capital, Maseru, to assess progress in public health endeavours funded by their respective foundations.



A house in Lesotho.



Malealea, situated in a remote part of Western Lesotho.

Taxation

The taxation system in Lesotho has undergone major revisions in recent years (in part due to the establishment of the Lesotho Revenue Authority in 2003 - www.lra.org.ls).

Personal income tax: Personal income tax is due on income above M14,000 per annum, with a tax credit of M3,500. The standard rate is 25%, with a 35% rate on income over a certain threshold.

Company / corporate tax: The headline rate is 25%, with a special 10% rate on income generated from manufacturing, and a 0% rate for income generated from exporting manufactures to outside the Southern African Customs Union (the so called extra-SACU rate). Capital depreciation allowances exist and are 25% for most types of capital asset.

Value Added Tax: VAT was introduced in 2003 at 14% (replacing a 10% Government Sales Tax). An upfront VAT refund facility is in operation that effectively means that no VAT is paid on inputs into goods destined for export (a big help to Lesotho's garment exporters).



Dividends paid to non-residents and interest are subject to a 25 percent withholding tax. Resident companies that pay dividends must make an advance income tax payment of 53.8 percent, unless the dividends are paid out of manufacturing income or out of dividends paid by another resident company. Manufacturing companies pay no tax on dividends. Repatriated income is subject to a 25 percent tax.

Foreign relations

Lesotho's geographic location makes it extremely vulnerable to political and economic developments in South Africa. It is a member of many regional economic organizations including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). It is also active in the United Nations (UN), the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, and many other international organizations.

South Africa, the United States, Libya, Ireland, China, Botswana and the European Union all currently retain resident diplomatic missions in Lesotho. The British High Commission closed in 2005 and the UK is now represented in Lesotho by its High Commissioner resident in South Africa.

His Excellency, Prince Seeiso Bereng Seeiso is the present High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the Court of St. James's. The UN is represented by a resident mission as well, including UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, WFP, and UNAIDS.

Historically, Lesotho has maintained generally close ties with Ireland, but also with the United Kingdom (Wales in particular), Germany, the United States and other Western states. Although in 1990 it broke relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and re-established relations with Taiwan, it later restored ties with the PRC.

Lesotho also recognises the State of Palestine. In the past, it was a strong public supporter of the end of apartheid in South Africa and granted a number of South African refugees political asylum during the apartheid era.

Culture

Traditional musical instruments include lekolulo, a kind of flute used by herding boys, setolo-tolo, played by men using their mouth, and the women's stringed thomo.

The national anthem of Lesotho is "Lesotho Fatše La Bo-ntata Rona," which literally translates into "Lesotho, Land Of Our Fathers."

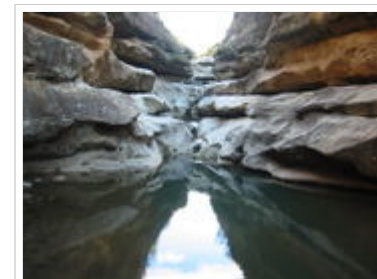
The traditional style of housing in Lesotho is called a rondavel.

The Morija Arts & Cultural Festival is a prominent Sesotho arts and music festival. It is held annually in the historical town of Morija, where the first missionaries arrived in 1833.

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The flag used by Lesotho until October 2006.



A gorge in Lesotho.



Human rights

Lesotho is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. King Letsie III is the head of state but has no executive authority. In 2002, Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili was re-elected in what were judged to be free and fair elections. The government works to respect the civil and human rights of its citizens; however some serious abuses were reported in the past year. Police and security forces have been known to use excessive force and torture against detainees, often with impunity. The judiciary is subject to external influences and due process cannot be guaranteed. Lengthy pre-trial detention and long delays in trial are problems. Child labor and discrimination against persons with disabilities and HIV/AIDS are other known abuses committed in the region.

Assassinated leaders

- Selometsi Baholo, Deputy Prime Minister
- Makhele
- Motuba
- Seheri
- Selala Sekhonyana
- Sixishe

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Liberia

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Liberia, officially the **Republic of Liberia**, is a country on the west coast of Africa, bordered by Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Atlantic Ocean. Liberia has a hot equatorial climate with most rainfall arriving in summer with harsh harmattan winds in the dry season. Liberia's populated Pepper Coast is comprised of mostly mangrove forests while the sparse inland is forested, later opening to a plateau of drier grasslands. Since 1989, Liberia has been in a state of flux witnessing two civil wars, the First Liberian Civil War (1989–1996), and the Second Liberian Civil War (1999–2003), displacing hundreds of thousands of people and devastating the country's economy.




Etymology

The name Liberia stands for "liberty" or "Land of the Free" as the country was colonized by freed African American slaves in 1822, and founded the country in 1847 with the support of Government of the United States creating a new ethnic group called the Americo-Liberians. However, this introduction of a new ethnic mix compounded ethnic tensions with the additional sixteen other main ethnicities.

History

Indigenous peoples of West Africa

Anthropological research shows the region of Liberia was inhabited at least as far back as the 12th century, perhaps earlier. Mende speaking people expanded westward, forcing many smaller ethnic groups southward towards the Atlantic sea. The Deys, Bassa, Kru, Gola and Kissi were some of the earliest recorded arrivals. This influx was compounded during the ancient decline of the Western Sudanic Mali Empire in 1375 and later in 1591 with the Songhay Empire. Additionally, inland regions underwent desertification, and inhabitants were pressured to move to the wetter Pepper Coast. These new inhabitants brought skills such as cotton spinning, cloth weaving, iron smelting, rice and sorghum cultivation, and social and political institutions from the Mali and Songhay Empires.

| Republic of Liberia | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "The love of liberty brought us here" | |
| Anthem: <i>All Hail, Liberia, Hail!</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Monrovia |
| Official languages | English |
| Demonym | Liberian |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf |
| - Vice-President | Joseph Boakai |



Shortly after the Manes conquered the region there was a migration of the Vai people into the region of Grand Cape Mount. The Vai were part of the Mali Empire who were forced to migrate when the empire collapsed in the fourteenth century. The Vai chose to migrate to the coastal region.

The ethnic Kru opposed the migration of the Vai into their region. An alliance of the Manes and Kru were able to stop the further migration of the Vai but the Vai remained in the Grand Cape Mount region (where the city of Robertsport is now located).

Littoral coast people built canoes and traded with other West Africans from Cap-Vert to the Gold Coast. Later European traders would barter various commodities and goods with local people, sometimes hoisting their canoes aboard. When the Kru began trading with Europeans, they initially traded in non-slave commodities but later became active participants in the African slave trade.

Kru laborers left their territory to work on plantations and in construction as paid laborers. Some even worked building the Suez and Panama Canals.

Another tribal group in the area was the Glebo. The Glebo were driven, as a result of the Manes invasion, to migrate to the coast of what later became Liberia.

Settlers from America

In 1822, the American Colonization Society established Liberia as a place to send freed African-American slaves. African-Americans gradually immigrated to the colony and became known as Americo-Liberians, where many present day Liberians trace their ancestry. On July 26, 1847, the Americo-Liberian settlers declared the independence of the Republic of Liberia.

The settlers regarded Africa as a "Promised Land", but they did not integrate into an African society. Once in Africa, they referred to themselves as "Americans" and were recognized as such by local Africans and by British colonial authorities in neighbouring Sierra Leone. The symbols of their state — its flag, motto, and seal — and the form of government that they chose reflected their American background and diaspora experience. Lincoln University (founded as Ashmun Institute for educating young blacks in Pennsylvania in 1854) played an important role in supplying Americo-Liberians leadership for the new Nation. The first graduating class of Lincoln University, James R. Amos, his brother Thomas H. Amos, and Armistead Miller sailed for Liberia on the brig *Mary C. Stevens* in April, 1859 after graduation.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Formation | by African-Americans |
| - ACS colonies consolidation | 1821-1842 |
| - Independence (from the United States) | 26 July 1847 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 111,369 km ² (103rd) 43,000 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 13.514 |
| Population | |
| - July 2007 estimate | 3,195,935 (132nd) |
| - Density | 29/km ² (174th) 75/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$3.292 billion (158th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,003 (169th) |
| HDI (1993) | 0.311 (low) (n/a) |
| Currency | Liberian dollar ¹ (LRD) |
| Time zone | GMT |
| Internet TLD | .lr |
| Calling code | +231 |
| ¹ United States dollar also in common usage. | |



The religious practices, social customs and cultural standards of the Americo-Liberians had their roots in the antebellum American South. These ideals strongly influenced the attitudes of the settlers toward the indigenous African people. The new nation, as they perceived it, was coextensive with the settler community and with those Africans who were assimilated into it. Mutual mistrust and hostility between the "Americans" along the coast and the "Natives" of the interior was a recurrent theme in the country's history, along with (usually successful) attempts by the Americo-Liberian minority to dominate the what they identified to be savage native peoples. They named the land "Liberia," which in the Romance languages, and in Latin in particular, means "Land of the Free," as an homage to their freedom from slavery.

Historically, Liberia has enjoyed the support and unofficial cooperation of the United States government. Liberia's government, modeled after that of the United States, was democratic in structure, if not always in substance. After 1877 the True Whig Party monopolized political power in the country, and competition for office was usually contained within the party, whose nomination virtually ensured election. Two problems confronting successive administrations were pressure from neighboring colonial powers, Britain and France, and the threat of financial insolvency, both of which challenged the country's sovereignty. Liberia retained its independence during the Scramble for Africa, but lost its claim to extensive territories that were annexed by Britain and France. Economic development was retarded by the decline of markets for Liberian goods in the late nineteenth century and by indebtedness on a series of loans, payments on which drained the economy.



Indigenous Liberian women in 1910.



Joseph Jenkins Roberts, First President of Liberia



President Edwin Barclay (right) and President Franklin D. Roosevelt during World War II, 1943

Significant mid-twentieth century events

Two events were of particular importance in releasing Liberia from its self-imposed isolation. The first was the grant in 1926 of a large concession to the American-owned Firestone Plantation Company; that move became a first step in the (limited) modernization of the Liberian economy. The second occurred during World War II, when the United States began providing technical and economic assistance that enabled Liberia to make economic progress and introduce social change.

In a late night raid on April 12, 1980, a successful military coup was staged by a group of noncommissioned army officers led by Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe. The soldiers were a mixture of the various ethnic groups that had claimed marginalization from the hands of the minority Americo-Liberian settlers. They killed William R. Tolbert, Jr. in his mansion. He had been president for nine years. Constituting themselves the People's Redemption Council, Doe and his associates seized control of the government and brought an end to Africa's first republic. Significantly, Doe was the first Liberian head of state who was not a member of the Americo-Liberian elite. In the early 1980s, the United States provided Liberia more than \$500 million for pushing the Soviet Union out of the country, and for providing the US exclusive rights to use Liberia's ports and land (including allowing the CIA to use Liberian territory to spy on Libya).

Doe favored authoritarian policies, banning newspapers and outlawing various opposition parties. His tactic was to brand popular opposition parties as



"socialist", and therefore illegal according to the Liberian constitution, while allowing less popular minor parties to remain as a token opposition. Unfortunately for Doe, popular support would then tend to realign behind one of these smaller parties, causing them to be labeled "socialist" in their turn.

In October 1985, Liberia held the first post-coup elections, ostensibly to legitimize Doe's regime. Virtually all international observers agreed that the Liberia Action Party (LAP) led by Jackson Doe (no relation) had won the election by a clear margin. After a week of counting the votes, however, Samuel Doe fired the count officials and replaced them with his own Special Election Committee (SECOM), which announced that Samuel Doe's ruling National Democratic Party of Liberia had won with 50.9% of the vote. In response, on November 12th, a counter-coup was launched by Thomas Quiwonkpa, whose soldiers briefly occupied the Executive Mansion and the national radio station, with widespread support throughout the country. Three days later, Quiwonkpa's coup was overthrown. Following this failed coup, government repression intensified, as Doe's troops killed more than 2000 civilians and imprisoned more than 100 opposing politicians, including Jackson Doe, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and BBC journalist Isaac Bantu.

1989 and 1999 civil wars

In late 1989, a civil war began. The harsh dictatorial atmosphere that gripped the country was due in large part to Sergeant Samuel Doe's rule. An Americo-Liberian named Charles Taylor with the backing of neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire invaded Liberia. These troops gained high levels of support with the local population who were disillusioned with their present government. A large section of the country came under the invaders' control as a result. By this time a new player had also emerged. Yormie Prince Johnson (former ally of Taylor) had formed his own army and had gained tremendous support from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups.

In August 1990, the Economic Community Monitoring Group under the Economic Community of West African States organized its own military task force to intervene in the crisis. The troops were largely from Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana. After the meeting and on his way out, Doe who was traveling only with his personal staff, was ambushed and captured by members of the Gio Tribe who were loyal to Prince Yormie Johnson. The soldiers took him to the headquarters of Johnson in neighboring Caldwell, tortured and killed him.

With some financial support from the U.S., after prompting from Taylor that the Nigerians and Ghanainas were opposed to him, Senagalese troops were brought in. Their service were however shortlived, after a major outing with Taylor forces.

By September 1990 Doe's forces controlled only a small area just outside the capital of Monrovia. After his death, and as a condition for the end of the conflict, interim president Amos Sawyer resigned in 1994, handing power to the Council of State. Prominent warlord Charles G. Taylor was elected as President in 1997, after leading a bloody insurgency backed by Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi. Taylor's brutal regime targeted several leading opposition and political activists. In 1998, the government sought to assassinate child rights activist Kimmie Weeks for a report he had published on its involvement in the training of child soldiers, which forced him into exile. Taylor's autocratic and dysfunctional government led to a new rebellion in 1999. More than 200,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the civil wars. The conflict intensified in mid-2003, and the fighting moved into Monrovia. As the power of the government shrank and with increasing international and American pressure for him to resign, President Taylor accepted an asylum offer from Nigeria, but vowed: "God willing, I will be back." On March 29, 2006 he was extradited from Nigeria to Sierra Leone, where he had been indicted by the Special Court (a war crimes tribunal). Charles Taylor's trial by that court is being held in the Hague, for security. He is charged with crimes against humanity, violations of the Geneva



Conventions and "other serious violations of international humanitarian law".

Transitional government and elections

After the exile of Taylor, Gyude Bryant was appointed Chairman of the transitional government in late 2003. Because of failures of the Transitional Government in curbing corruption, Liberia signed onto GEMAP, a novel anti-corruption program. The primary task of the transitional government was to prepare for fair and peaceful democratic elections. With UNMIL troops safeguarding the peace, Liberia successfully conducted presidential elections in the fall of 2005. Twenty three candidates stood for the October 11, 2005 general election, with the early favorite George Weah, internationally famous footballer, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and member of the Kru ethnic group expected to dominate the popular vote. No candidate took the required majority in the general election, so that a run-off between the top two vote getters, Weah and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, was necessary. The November 8, 2005 presidential runoff election was won decisively by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a Harvard-trained economist. Both the general election and runoff were marked by peace and order, with thousands of Liberians waiting patiently in the Liberian heat to cast their ballots.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf presidency

Daughter of the first indigenous Liberian to be elected to the national legislature, Jahmale Carney Johnson, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was born in rural Liberia. Widely celebrated for being the first elected female head of state in Africa, Johnson-Sirleaf's election focused much international attention on Liberia. A former Citibank and World Bank employee, Johnson-Sirleaf's career also includes heading the U.N. Development Programme for Africa. Johnson-Sirleaf was jailed twice during the Doe administration before escaping and going into exile. As president, Johnson-Sirleaf hopes to bring her credentials as an economist to bear and enlist the help of the international community in rebuilding Liberia's economy and infrastructure. Her efforts to have Liberia's external debt of \$3.5 billion cancelled were at least partially rewarded on November 12, 2007, when the IMF agreed to begin providing debt relief. She has extended a special invitation to the Nigerian business community to participate in business opportunities in Liberia, in part as thanks for Nigeria's help in securing Liberia's peace. Exiled Liberians are also investing in the country and participating in Liberia's rebuilding efforts.

In addition to focusing her early efforts to restore basic services like water and electricity to the capital of Monrovia, Johnson-Sirleaf has established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address crimes committed during the later stages of Liberia's long civil war. She is also working to re-establish Liberia's food independence. Johnson-Sirleaf also requested that Nigeria extradite accused war criminal and profiteer Charles Taylor.

Human rights situation

Amnesty International summarizes in its Annual Report 2006: "Sporadic outbreaks of violence continued to threaten prospects of peace. Former rebel fighters who should have been disarmed and demobilized protested violently when they did not receive benefits. Slow progress in reforming the police, judiciary and the criminal justice system resulted in systematic violations of due process and vigilante violence against criminal suspects. Laws establishing an Independent National Commission on Human Rights and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission were adopted. Over 200,000 internally displaced people and refugees returned to their homes, although disputes over land and property appropriated during the war raised ethnic tensions. UN sanctions on the trade in diamonds and timber were renewed. Those responsible for human rights abuses during the armed conflict continued to enjoy impunity. The UN Security Council gave



peacekeeping forces in Liberia powers to arrest former President Taylor and transfer him to the Special Court for Sierra Leone if he should return from Nigeria, where he continued to receive asylum. Liberia made a commitment to abolish capital punishment. A new law on rape, which initially proposed imposition of the death penalty for gang rape, was amended to provide a maximum penalty of life imprisonment." ^ Former 22nd president Charles Taylor was captured trying to escape across the border of Cameroon and has been sent to the International Criminal Court in The Hague for trial.

Politics and Government

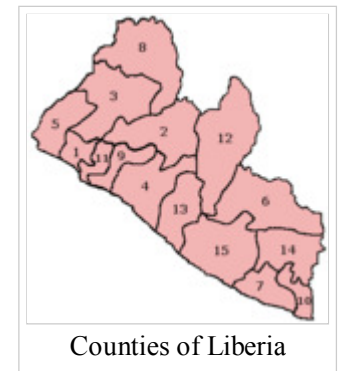
Liberia has a dual system of statutory law based on Anglo-American common law for the modern sector and customary unwritten law for the native sector for exclusively rural tribes. Liberia's modern sector has three equal branches of government in the constitution, though in practice the executive branch headed by President of Liberia is the strongest of the three. Following the dissolution of the Republican Party in 1876, the True Whig Party dominated the Liberian government until the 1980 coup. Currently, no party has majority control of the legislature. The longest serving president in Liberian history was William Tubman, serving from 1944 until his death in 1971. The shortest term was held by James Skivring Smith, who controlled the government for two months. However, the political process from Liberia's founding in 1847, despite widespread corruption, was very stable until the end of the First Republic in 1980.

Counties and districts

Liberia is divided into 15 counties, which are subdivided into districts. The counties are:

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Bomi | 6. Grand Gedeh | 11. Montserrado |
| 2. Bong | 7. Grand Kru | 12. Nimba |
| 3. Gbarpolu | 8. Lofa | 13. River Cess |
| 4. Grand Bassa | 9. Margibi | 14. River Gee |
| 5. Grand Cape Mount | 10. Maryland | 15. Sinoe |

Geography





Liberia is situated in West Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean to the countries southwest. The landscape is characterized by mostly flat to rolling coastal plains, which rise to a rolling plateau and low mountains in the northeast. The equatorial climate is hot year-round with heavy rainfall from May to October with a short two-week interlude in August. During the winter months of November to March dry dust-laden harmattan winds blow inland causing many problems for residents.

Liberia's watershed tends to move in a southwestern pattern towards the sea as new rains move down the forested plateau off of the inland mountain range of Guinée Forestière, in Guinea. The country's main northwestern boundary is traversed by the Mano River while its southeast limits are bounded by the river Cavalla. Liberia's three largest rivers are St. Paul exiting near Monrovia, the river St. John at Buchanan and the Cestos River, all of which flow into the Atlantic Ocean.

Liberia's highest point is Mount Wuteve at 1440 meters (4,724 feet) above sea level in the northwestern Liberia range of the West Africa Mountains and the Guinea Highlands. However, Mount Nimba near Yekepa, is taller at 1,752 meters (5,748 feet) above sea level but is not wholly within Liberia as Nimba shares a border with Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire and is their tallest mountain as well.



Economy

Historically, the Liberian economy depended heavily on iron ore and rubber exports, foreign direct investment, as well as the export of its other natural resources, such as timber. Foreign trade was primarily conducted for the benefit of the Americo-Liberian elite, with trade between foreigners and indigenous Liberians severely restricted throughout most of its history by the 1864 Ports of Entry Act. Little foreign direct investment benefited the 95% majority population, who were often subjected to forced labor on foreign concessions. Liberian law often did not protect indigenous Liberians from the extraction of rents and arbitrary taxation, with the majority surviving on subsistence farming and low wage work on foreign concessions.

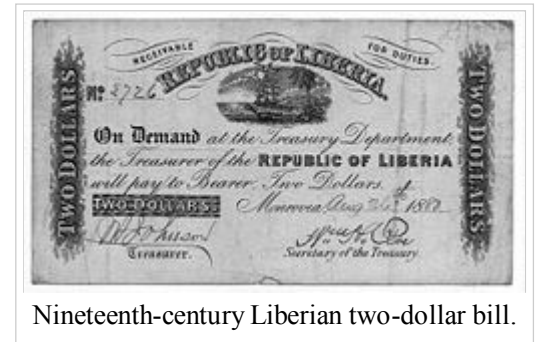
While official export figures for commodities declined during the 1990's civil war as many investors fled, Liberia's wartime economy featured the exploitation of the region's diamond wealth, with the country acting as a major trader in Liberian, Sierra Leonian and Angolan conflict diamonds, exporting over \$300 million in diamonds annually. More recently, the UN ban on Liberian diamond exports as well as the enforcement of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme by international diamond traders has effectively shut down Liberia's diamond industry, (although there were fears that foreign traders are hoarding the country's diamonds during the ban). On April 27, 2007 the UN voted unanimously to rescind the ban in recognition of advances in Liberian efforts to ensure that diamonds are mined legally.

Timber, iron ore, rubber, and other commodity exports continued during the war, in part due to illicit agreements struck between Liberia's warlords and foreign concessionaires. Looting and war profiteering destroyed nearly the entire infrastructure of the country, such that the Monrovia capital was without running water and electricity (except for fuel-powered generators) by the time the first elected post-war government began to institute development and reforms in 2006. Although some official exporting and legitimate business activity resumed once the hostilities ended (for instance, Liberia signed a new deal with steel giant Mittal for the export of iron ore in summer 2005), as of mid-2006 Liberia is dependent on foreign aid, and carries a debt overhang of \$3.5 billion.



Liberia currently has an approximate 85% unemployment rate, the second highest in the world.

The Liberia dollar currently trades against the US dollar at a ratio of 57:1. Liberia used the US dollar as its currency from 1943 until it reversed dollarization in 1982. Its external debt (\$3.5 billion) is huge in comparison to its GDP (approx \$2.5 billion/year); it annually imports approximately \$4.839 billion in goods while it exports only about \$910 million. Inflation is falling, but still significant (dropping from 15% in 2003 to 4.9% in the 3rd quarter of 2005); interest rates are high, with the average lending rate listed by the Central Bank of Liberia at 17.6% for 3rd quarter 2005 (although the average time deposit rate was only .4%, and CD rate only 4.4%, barely keeping pace with inflation). It continues to suffer with poor economic performance due to a fragile security situation, the devastation wrought by its long war, its lack of infrastructure, and necessary human capital to help the country recover from the scourges of conflict and corruption.



Nineteenth-century Liberian two-dollar bill.

In 2005, a lawsuit was brought by the International Labour Rights Fund against the company Bridgestone/Firestone for its alleged role in using child labour in its rubber plantations in Liberia and abusing the environment. Workers also briefly staged a strike at the company's million-acre (4,000 km²) plantation at Harbel in early 2006, but the strike could not be sustained by the poorly funded labour union. However, an international campaign called Stop Firestone is actively campaigning to pressure the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company to change its policies.

Liberia has one of the world's largest national registries of ships, due to its status as a "flag of convenience".

According to the managing-director of Liberia's National Port Authority, Togba Ngangana, Chinese investors have signed a memorandum of understanding to build a manufacturing zone outside the southern port of Buchanan which would produce 50,000 jobs. This is in addition to an undisclosed amount of low-interest loans, debt relief and other incentives.

Demographics

The population of over 3 million comprises 16 indigenous ethnic groups and various foreign minorities. Indigenous peoples comprise about 85% of the population, the largest of which are the Kpelle in central and western Liberia. Americo-Liberians, who are descendants of freed slaves that arrived in Liberia as of 1821, make up an estimated 15% of the population, of whom half from US origin and half from the Caribbean. There also is a sizable number of Lebanese, Indians, and other West African nationals who make up a significant part of Liberia's business community. A few whites (estimated at 18,000 in 1999; probably fewer now) reside in the country.

As of 2006, Liberia has the highest population growth rate in the world (4.50%). Similar to its neighbors, it has a large youth population, with half of the population being under the age of 18.

Culture



Liberia was traditionally noted for its hospitality, academic institutions, cultural skills, and arts/craft works— Liberia has a long, rich history in textile arts and quilting. The free and former US slaves who emigrated to Liberia brought with them their sewing and quilting skills. The 1843 Liberian census indicated a variety of occupations, including hatter, milliner, seamstress and tailor. Liberia hosted National Fairs in 1857 and 1858 in which prizes were awarded for various needle arts. One of the most well-known Liberian quilters was Martha Ann Ricks, who presented a quilt featuring the famed Liberian coffee tree to Queen Victoria in 1892.

In modern times, Liberian presidents would present quilts as official government gifts. The John F. Kennedy Library and Museum collection includes a cotton quilt by Mrs. Jemima Parker which has portraits of both Liberian president William Tubman and JFK. Zariah Wright-Titus founded the Arthington (Liberia) Women's Self-Help Quilting Club (1987). In the early 1990s, Kathleen Bishop documented examples of appliquéd Liberian quilts. When current Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf moved into the Executive Mansion, she had a Liberian-made quilt in her presidential office, according to one report.

Education

The University of Liberia is located in Monrovia. Opened in 1862, it is one of Africa's oldest institutes of higher learning. Civil war severely damaged the university in the 1990s, but the university has begun to rebuild following the restoration of peace.

Cuttington University was established by the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) in 1889; its campus is currently located in Suakoko, Bong County (120 miles north of Monrovia).

According to statistics published by UNESCO for 2004 65% of primary-school age and 24% of secondary-school age children were enrolled in school. This is a significant increase on previous years, the statistics also show substantial numbers of older children going back to earlier school years.

Famous Liberians

- American NFL football players: Thomas W. Sieh (attended training camp with the Baltimore Ravens in 1999), Ashton Youboty, Tamba Hali, Bhawoh Jue, Martin Coleman, Tim Massaquoi, Thomas Tapeh.
- Other American football players: Matthew Shaughnessy, University of Wisconsin.
- Actors - Clarence Moniba - Son of former Vice President Harry Moniba appeared in the Hollywood blockbuster movies *Invincible*, *Radio*, and *We Are Marshall*. Also played Arena League Football
- Football players: Christopher Wreh, Louis Crayton, Jimmy Dixon, Willis Forko, Zizi Roberts and Aaron Paye
- George Weah, football player turned politician.
- Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi, journalist/author (*Jet* and *Ebony* magazines).
- Momolu V.O. Sirleaf, journalist and former president of the Sports Writers Association of Liberia
- Rev. John P. Golokeh, Local reverend also the late father to Fred Bass-Golokeh, the former advisor to the president in Liberia.

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Libya



2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Libya (Arabic: ليبيا *Lībiyā*; Libyan vernacular: *Lībya*; Amazigh: ⵍⵢⵢⵓⵔ), officially the **Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya** (الجمهورية العربية الليبية الشعبية الاشتراكية العظمى *Al-Jamāhīriyyah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Lībiyyah aš-Šaʿbiyyah al-Ištirākiyyah al-ʿUẓmā* pronunciation), is a country in North Africa. Bordering the Mediterranean Sea to the north, Libya lies between Egypt to the east, Sudan to the southeast, Chad and Niger to the south, and Algeria and Tunisia to the west. With an area of almost 1.8 million square kilometres (700,000 sq mi), 90% of which is desert, Libya is the fourth largest country in Africa by area, and the 17th largest in the world. The capital, Tripoli, is home to 1.7 million of Libya's 5.7 million people. The three traditional parts of the country are Tripolitania, the Fezzan and Cyrenaica.

The name "Libya" is an indigenous (i.e. Berber) one, which is attested in ancient Egyptian texts as



, *R'bw* (= *Libu*), which refers to one of the tribes of Berber peoples living west of the Nile. In Greek the tribesmen were called *Libyēs* and their country became "Libya", although in ancient Greece the term had a broader meaning, encompassing all of North Africa west of Egypt. Later on, at the time of Ibn Khaldun, the same big tribe was known as *Lawata*.

Libya has the third highest GDP (PPP) per capita of Africa, behind Seychelles and South Africa. This is largely due to its large petroleum reserves and low population.

The Flag of Libya is the only national flag in the world with just one colour - green - with no design, insignia, or other details.

History

Archaeological evidence indicates that from as early as the 8th millennium BC, Libya's coastal plain was inhabited by a Neolithic people who were skilled in the domestication of cattle and the cultivation of crops. The area known in modern times as Libya was later occupied by a series of peoples, with the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Vandals and Byzantines ruling all or part of the area. Although the Greeks and Romans left ruins at Cyrene, Leptis Magna and Sabratha, little other evidence remains of these ancient cultures.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>الجمهورية العربية الليبية الشعبية الاشتراكية العظمى <i>Al-Jamāhīriyyah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Lībiyyah aš-Šaʿbiyyah al-Ištirākiyyah al-ʿUẓmā</i></p> <p>Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Republic</p> | |
|  <p>Flag</p> |  <p>Coat of arms</p> |
| <p>Anthem: Allahu Akbar <i>God is the Greatest</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Tripoli |
| Official languages | Arabic |
| Demonym | Libyan |
| Government | Jamahiriya |



Ruins of the theatre in the Roman city of Sabratha, west of Tripoli



Arch of Roman emperor Lucius Septimius Severus (AD 146-211) in Leptis Magna

Phoenicians

The Phoenicians were the first to establish trading posts in Libya, when the merchants of Tyre (in present-day Lebanon) developed commercial relations with the Berber tribes and made treaties with them to ensure their cooperation in the exploitation of raw materials. By the 5th century BC, Carthage, the greatest of the Phoenician colonies, had extended its hegemony across much of N.Africa, where a distinctive civilization, known as Punic, came into being. Punic settlements on the Libyan coast included Oea (Tripoli), Libdah (Leptis Magna) and Sabratha. All these were in an area that was later called Tripolis, or "Three Cities". Libya's current-day capital Tripoli takes its name from this.

Greeks

The Greeks conquered Eastern Libya when, according to tradition, emigrants from the crowded island of Thera were commanded by the oracle at Delphi to seek a new home in North Africa. In 630 BC, they founded the city of Cyrene. Within 200 years, four more important Greek cities were established in the area: Barce (Al Marj); Euhesperides (later Berenice, present-day Benghazi); Teuchira (later Arsinoe, present-day Tukuran); and Apollonia (Susah), the port of Cyrene. Together with Cyrene, they were known as the Pentapolis (Five Cities).

Romans

The Romans unified all three regions of Libya, and for more than 600 years Tripolitania and Cyrenaica became prosperous Roman provinces. Roman ruins, such as those of Leptis Magna, attest to the vitality

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| - Leader and Guide of the Revolution | Muammar al-Gaddafi |
| - Secretary General of the General People's Congress | Miftah Muhammed K'eba |
| - Prime Minister | Baghdadi Mahmudi |
| Independence | |
| - Relinquished by Italy | 10 February 1947 |
| - From France/United Kingdom under United Nations Trusteeship | 24 December 1951 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,759,540 km ² (17th) 679,359 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | Negligible |
| Population | |
| - estimate | 6,173,579 (July 2008) (105th) |
| - 2006 census | 5,670,688 ¹ |
| - Density | 3.2/km ² (218th) 8.4/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | |
| - Total | 2007 estimate \$78.79 billion (67th) |
| - Per capita | \$13,100 (58th) |
| HDI (2005) | ▲ 0.818 (High) (56th) |
| Currency | Dinar (LYD) |
| Time zone | |
| - Summer (DST) | EET (UTC+2) Not observed (UTC+2) |



of the region, where populous cities and even small towns enjoyed the amenities of urban life. Merchants and artisans from many parts of the Roman world established themselves in North Africa, but the character of the cities of Tripolitania remained decidedly Punic and, in Cyrenaica, Greek.

Arabs

Arabs under General **Abdullah ibn Saad** conquered Libya in the 7th century AD during the reign of Caliph Usman. In the following centuries, many of the indigenous peoples adopted Islam, and also the Arabic language and culture.

Ottoman Turks

The Ottoman Turks conquered the country in the mid-16th century, and the three States or " Wilayat" of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan (which make up Libya) remained part of their empire with the exception of the virtual autonomy of the Karamanlis. The Karamanlis ruled from 1711 until 1835 mainly in Tripolitania, but had influence in Cyrenaica and Fezzan as well by the mid 18th century. This constituted a first glimpse in recent history of the united and independent Libya that was to re-emerge two centuries later. Ironically, reunification came about through the unlikely route of an invasion (Italo-Turkish War, 1911-1912) and occupation starting from 1911 when Italy simultaneously turned the three regions into colonies.

Italian Colony

From 1912 to 1927, the territory of Libya was known as Italian North Africa. From 1927 to 1934, the territory was split into two colonies, Italian Cyrenaica and Italian Tripolitania run by Italian governors.

In 1934, Italy adopted the name "Libya" (used by the Greeks for all of North Africa, except Egypt) as the official name of the colony (made up of the three Provinces of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fezzan). King Idris I, Emir of Cyrenaica, led Libyan resistance to Italian occupation between the two World Wars. Between 1928 and 1932 the Italian military "killed half the Bedouin population (directly or through starvation in camps)." From 1943 to 1951, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were under British administration, while the French controlled Fezzan. In 1944, Idris returned from exile in Cairo but declined to resume permanent residence in Cyrenaica until the removal of some aspects of foreign control in 1947. Under the terms of the 1947 peace treaty with the Allies, Italy relinquished all claims to Libya.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Internet TLD | .ly |
| Calling code | +218 |
| <small>¹ Includes 350,000 foreigners; Libyan 2006 census, accessed September 15, 2006;</small> | |



Omar Mukhtar (1858–1931) was the leader of the Libyan uprising against Italian occupation.

United Kingdom of Libya

On November 21, 1949, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution stating that Libya should become independent before January 1, 1952. Idris represented Libya in the subsequent UN negotiations. On December 24, 1951, Libya declared its independence as the United Kingdom of Libya, a constitutional and hereditary monarchy under King Idris.

The discovery of significant oil reserves in 1959 and the subsequent income from petroleum sales enabled one of the world's poorest nations to establish an extremely wealthy state. Although oil drastically improved the Libyan government's finances, popular resentment began to build over the increased concentration of the nation's wealth in the hands of King Idris and the national elite. This discontent continued to mount with the rise of Nasserism and Arab nationalism throughout North Africa and the Middle East.

Coup of Muammar Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi

On September 1, 1969, a small group of military officers led by then 27-year-old army officer Muammar Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi staged a *coup d'état* against King Idris. At the time, Idris was in Turkey for medical treatment. His nephew, Crown Prince Sayyid Hasan ar-Rida al-Mahdi as-Sanussi, became King. It was clear

that the revolutionary officers who had announced the deposition of King Idris did not want to appoint him over the instruments of state as King. Sayyid quickly found that he had substantially less power as the new King than he had earlier had as a mere Prince. Before the end of September 1, Sayyid Hasan ar-Rida had been formally deposed by the revolutionary army officers and put under house arrest. Meanwhile, revolutionary officers abolished the monarchy, and proclaimed the new Libyan Arab Republic. Gaddafi was, and is to this day, referred to as the "Brother Leader and Guide of the Revolution" in government statements and the official press.

Politics

There are two branches of government in Libya. The "revolutionary sector" comprises Revolutionary Leader Gaddafi, the Revolutionary Committees and the remaining members of the 12-person Revolutionary Command Council, which was established in 1969. The historical revolutionary leadership is not elected and cannot be voted out of office; they are in power by virtue of their involvement in the revolution.

Constituting the legislative branch of government, this sector comprises Local People's Congresses in each of the 1,500 urban wards, 32 Sha'biyat People's Congresses for the regions, and the National General People's Congress. These legislative bodies are represented by corresponding executive bodies (Local People's Committees, Sha'biyat People's Committees and the National General People's Committee/Cabinet).

Every four years, the membership of the Local People's Congresses elects their own leaders and the secretaries for the People's Committees, sometimes after many debates and a critical vote. The leadership of the Local People's Congress represents the local congress at the People's Congress of the next level. The members of the National General People's Congress elect the members of the National General People's Committee (the Cabinet) at their annual meeting.

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History of Libya Periods

Ancient Libya

Islamic Tripolitania
and Cyrenaica

Ottoman Libya

Italian Colony

Kingdom of Libya

Modern Libya

See also [Hide]



The government controls both state-run and semi-autonomous media. In cases involving a violation of "certain taboos", the private press, like The Tripoli Post, has been censored, although articles that are critical of policies have been requested and intentionally published by the revolutionary leadership itself as a means of initiating reforms.

Political parties were banned by the 1972 Prohibition of Party Politics Act Number 71. According to the Association Act of 1971, the establishment of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is allowed. However, because they are required to conform to the goals of the revolution, their numbers are small in comparison with those in neighbouring countries. Trade unions do not exist, but numerous professional associations are integrated into the state structure as a third pillar, along with the People's Congresses and Committees. These associations do not have the right to strike. Professional associations send delegates to the General People's Congress, where they have a representative mandate.

Foreign relations

Libya's foreign policies have undergone much fluctuation and change since the state was proclaimed on December 24, 1951. As a Kingdom, Libya maintained a definitively pro-Western stance, yet was recognized as belonging to the conservative traditionalist bloc in the League of Arab States (Arab League), of which it became a member in 1953. The government was in close alliance with Britain and the United States; both countries maintained military base rights in Libya. Libya also forged close ties with France, Italy, Greece, and established full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1955.

Although the government supported Arab causes, including the Moroccan and Algerian independence movements, it took little active part in the Arab-Israeli dispute or the tumultuous inter-Arab politics of the 1950s and early 1960s. The Kingdom was noted for its close association with the West, while it steered an essentially conservative course at home.

After the 1969 coup, Gaddafi closed American and British bases and partially nationalized foreign oil and commercial interests in Libya. He also played a key role in promoting oil embargoes as a political weapon for challenging the West, hoping that an oil price rise and embargo in 1973 would persuade the West, especially the United States, to end support for Israel. Gaddafi rejected both Eastern (Soviet) communism and Western (United States) capitalism and claimed he was charting a middle course for his government.

In the 1980s, Libya increasingly distanced itself from the West, and was accused of committing mass acts of state-sponsored terrorism. When evidence of Libyan complicity was discovered in the Berlin discotheque terrorist bombing that killed two American servicemen, the United States responded by launching an aerial bombing attack against targets near Tripoli and Benghazi in April 1986.

In 1991, two Libyan intelligence agents were indicted by federal prosecutors in the U.S. and Scotland for their involvement in the December 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103. Six other Libyans were put on trial in absentia for the 1989 bombing of UTA Flight 772. The UN Security Council demanded that Libya surrender the suspects, cooperate with the Pan Am 103 and UTA 772 investigations, pay compensation to the victims' families, and cease all support for



Foreign Minister Abd al-Rahman Shalgam with his US counterpart U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. Libya is keen to shake off its pariah status and rejoin the international community.



terrorism. Libya's refusal to comply led to the approval of UNSC Resolution 748 on March 31, 1992, imposing sanctions on the state designed to bring about Libyan compliance. Continued Libyan defiance led to further sanctions by the UN against Libya in November 1993.

In 2003, more than a decade after the sanctions were put in place, Libya began to make dramatic policy changes in regard to the Western world with the open intention of pursuing a Western-Libyan détente. The Libyan government announced its decision to abandon its weapons of mass destruction programs and pay almost 3 billion US dollars in compensation to the families of Pan Am flight 103 as well as UTA Flight 772. The decision was welcomed by many western nations and was seen as an important step for Libya toward rejoining the international community. Since 2003 the country has made efforts to normalize its ties with the European Union and the United States and has even coined the catchphrase, 'The Libya Model', an example intended to show the world what can be achieved through negotiation rather than force when there is goodwill on both sides.

An event considered pivotal by many in Libyan-Western relations is the HIV trials (1999–2007) of five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor. Their release is seen as marking new stage in Libyan-Western relations.

On May 15, 2006 the United States State Department announced it would fully restore diplomatic relations with Libya if it dismantled its weapons programs. The State Department also removed Libya from their state sponsored terrorism list which it had been on for 27 years.

On October 16, 2007, Libya was voted to serve on the United Nations Security Council for two years starting January 2008.

Human rights

According to the U.S. Department of State's annual human rights report for 2004, Libya's authoritarian regime continued to have a poor record in the area of human rights. Some of the numerous and serious abuses on the part of the government include poor prison conditions, arbitrary arrest and detention, prisoners held incommunicado, and political prisoners held for many years without charge or trial. The judiciary is controlled by the state, and there is no right to a fair public trial. Libyans do not have the right to change their government. Freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion are restricted. Independent human rights organizations are prohibited. Ethnic and tribal minorities suffer discrimination, and the state continues to restrict the labor rights of foreign workers.

In 2005, the Freedom House rated political rights in Libya as "7" (1 representing the most free and 7 the least free rating), civil liberties as "7" and gave it the freedom rating of "Not Free," although the organization itself has been criticized as politically slanted. *See Freedom House#Criticism*

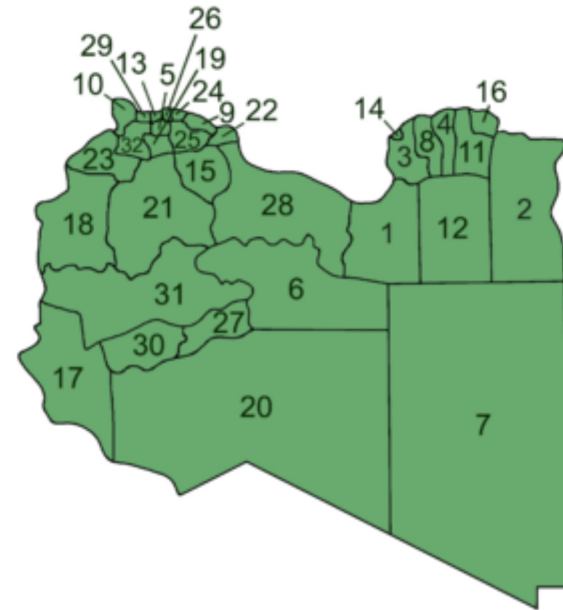
Municipalities

Libya was divided into several governorates (*muhafazat*) before being split into 25 municipalities (*baladiyah*), see map of 25 baladiyah in *Municipalities of Libya*. Recently, Libya was divided into thirty two *sha'biyah*. These were then further rearranged into twenty two. The following list and map show the previous arrangement which is slightly different than the current one.



The 32 municipalities are:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Ajdabiya | 17 Ghat |
| 2 Al Butnan | 18 Ghadamis |
| 3 Al Hizam Al Akhdar | 19 Gharyan |
| 4 Al Jabal al Akhdar | 20 Murzuq |
| 5 Al Jfara | 21 Mizdah |
| 6 Al Jufrah | 22 Misratah |
| 7 Al Kufrah | 23 Nalut |
| 8 Al Marj | 24 Tajura Wa Al Nawahi AlArba' |
| 9 Al Murgub | 25 Tarhuna Wa Msalata |
| 10 An Nuqat al Khams | 26 Tarabulus (Tripoli) |
| 11 Al Qubah | 27 Sabha |
| 12 Al Wahat | 28 Surt |
| 13 Az Zawiyah | 29 Sabratha Wa Surman |
| 14 Benghazi | 30 Wadi Al Hayaa |
| 15 Bani Walid | 31 Wadi Al Shatii |
| 16 Darnah | 32 Yafran |



Geography



Map of Libya

Libya extends over 1,759,540 square kilometres (679,182 sq. mi), making it the 17th largest nation in the world by size. Libya is somewhat smaller than Indonesia, and roughly the size of the US state of Alaska. It is bound to the north by the Mediterranean Sea, the west by Tunisia and Algeria, the southwest by Niger, the south by Chad and Sudan and to the east by Egypt. At 1770 kilometres (1100 miles), Libya's coastline is the longest of any African country bordering the Mediterranean. The portion of the Mediterranean Sea north of Libya is often called the Libyan Sea. The climate is mostly dry and desert-like in nature. However, the northern regions enjoy a milder Mediterranean climate.

Natural hazards come in the form of hot, dry, dust-laden sirocco (known in Libya as the *gibli*). This is a southern wind blowing from one to four days in spring and autumn. There are also dust storms and sandstorms. Oases can also be found scattered throughout Libya, the most important of which are Ghadames and Kufra as well as others.



The Jabal Al Akdhar near Benghazi is Libya's wettest region. Annual rainfall averages at between 400 and 600 millimetres (15-24 inches).

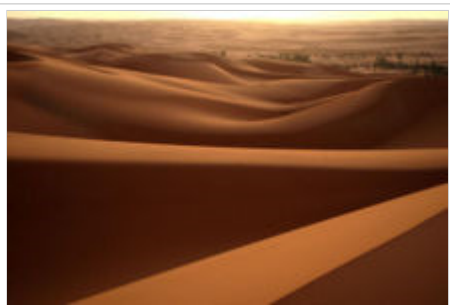
Libyan Desert



The Libyan Desert, which covers much of eastern Libya, is one of the most arid places on earth. In places, decades may pass without rain, and even in the highlands rainfall happens erratically, once every 5–10 years. At Uweinat, the last recorded rainfall was in September 1998. There is a large depression, the Qattara Depression, just to the south of the northernmost scarp, with Siwa oasis at its western extremity. The depression continues in a shallower form west, to the oases of Jaghub and Jalo.

Likewise, the temperature in the Libyan desert can be extreme; in 1922, the town of Al 'Aziziyah, which is located west of Tripoli, recorded an air temperature of 57.8 ° C (136.0 ° F), generally accepted as the highest recorded naturally occurring air temperature reached on Earth.

There are a few scattered uninhabited small oases, usually linked to the major depressions, where water can be found by digging to a few feet in depth. In the west there is a widely dispersed group of oases in unconnected shallow depressions, the Kufra group, consisting of Tazerbo, Rebianae and Kufra. Aside from the scarps, the general flatness is only interrupted by a series of plateaus and massifs near the centre of the Libyan Desert, around the convergence of the Egyptian-Sudanese-Libyan Borders.



Desert landscape in Libya; 90% of the country is desert

Slightly further to the south are the massifs of Arkenu, Uweinat and Kissu. These granite mountains are very ancient, having formed much before the sandstones surrounding them. Arkenu and Western Uweinat are ring complexes very similar to those in the Air Mountains. Eastern Uweinat (the highest point in the Libyan Desert) is a raised sandstone plateau adjacent to the granite part further west. The plain to the north of Uweinat is dotted with eroded volcanic features.

With the discovery of oil in the 1950s also came the discovery of a massive aquifer underneath much of the country. The water in this aquifer pre-dates the last ice ages and the Sahara desert itself. The country is also home to the Arkenu craters, double impact craters found in the desert.

Economy



Moving sand dunes in Tadrart Acacus



Satellite image of Libya, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



The infrastructure of Libya's capital Tripoli has benefited from the country's oil wealth.

The Libyan economy depends primarily upon revenues from the oil sector, which constitute practically all export earnings and about one-quarter of gross domestic product (GDP). These oil revenues and a small population give Libya one of the highest GDPs per person in Africa and have allowed the Libyan state to provide an extensive and impressive level of social security, particularly in the fields of housing and education.

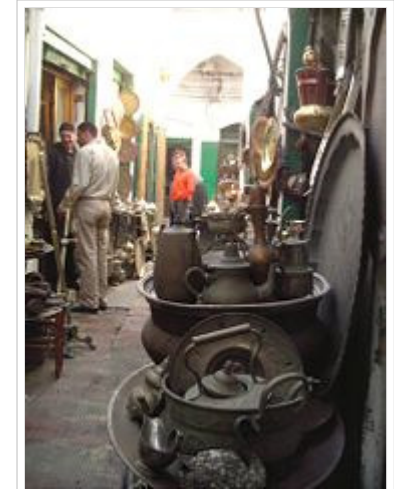
Compared to its neighbours, Libya enjoys an extremely low level of both absolute and relative poverty. Libyan officials in the past three years have carried out economic reforms as part of a broader campaign to reintegrate the country into the global capitalist economy. This effort picked up steam after UN sanctions were lifted in September 2003, and as Libya announced in December 2003 that it would abandon programs to build weapons of mass destruction.

Libya has begun some market-oriented reforms. Initial steps have included applying for membership of the World Trade Organisation, reducing subsidies, and announcing

plans for privatisation. The non-oil manufacturing and construction sectors, which account for about 20% of GDP, have expanded from processing mostly agricultural products to include the production of petrochemicals, iron, steel and aluminium. Climatic conditions and poor soils severely limit agricultural output, and Libya imports about 75% of its food. Water is also a problem, with some 28% of the population not having access to safe drinking water in 2000.

Under the previous Prime Minister, Shukri Ghanem, and current prime minister Baghdadi Mahmudi, Libya is undergoing a business boom. Many government-run industries are being privatised. Many international oil companies have returned to the country, including oil giants Shell and ExxonMobil. Tourism is on the rise, bringing increased demand for hotel accommodation and for capacity at airports such as Tripoli International. A multi-million dollar renovation of Libyan airports has recently been approved by the government to help meet such demands. At present 130,000 people visit the country annually; the Libyan government hopes to increase this figure to 10,000,000 tourists. Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi, the oldest son of Muammar al-Gaddafi, is involved in a green development project called the Green Mountain Sustainable Development Area, which seeks to bring tourism to Cyrene and to preserve Greek ruins in the area.

Demographics



Tripoli's Old City - (El-Madina El-Kadima) - situated in the city centre, is one of the classical sites of the Mediterranean and an important tourist attraction.



Libya has a small population within its large territory, with a population density of about 3 people per square kilometre (8.5/mi²) in the two northern regions of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and less than one person per square kilometre (1.6/mi²) elsewhere. Libya is thus one of the least densely populated nations by area in the world. 90% of the people live in less than 10% of the area, mostly along the coast. More than half the population is urban, concentrated to a greater extent, in the two largest cities, Tripoli and Benghazi. Native Libyans are a mixture of indigenous Berber peoples and the later arriving Arabs.

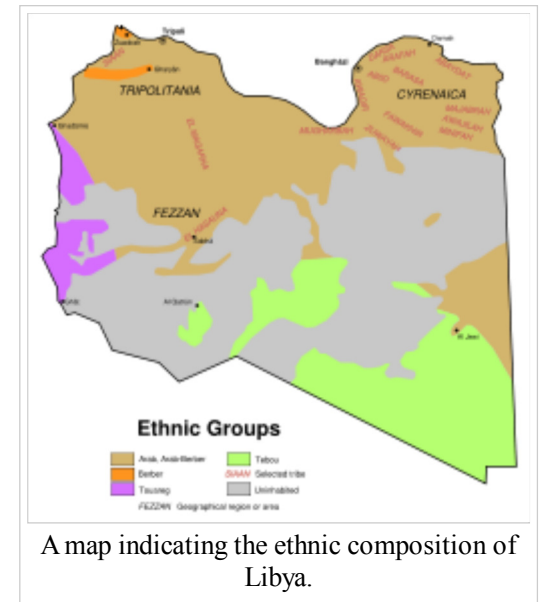
There are small Tuareg (a Berber population) and Tebu tribal groups concentrated in the south, living nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles. Among foreign residents, the largest groups are citizens of other African nations, including North Africans (primarily Egyptians and Tunisians), and Sub-Saharan Africans. According to the CIA Factbook, Libyan Berbers and Arabs constitute 97% of the population; the other 3% are Greeks, Maltese, Italians, Egyptians, Afghans, Turks, Indians, and Sub-Saharan Africans. However, this only counts legal residents, as Libya is also home to a large illegal Sub-Saharan African population which according to some estimates numbers as much as a million.

The main language spoken in Libya is Arabic, which is also the official language. Tamazight (i.e. Berber languages), which do not have official status, are spoken by Libyan Berbers. Berber speakers live above all in the Jebel Nafusa region (Tripolitania), the town of Zuwarah on the coast, and the city-oases of Ghadames, Ghat and Awjila. In addition, Tuaregs speak Tamahaq, the only known Northern Tamasheq language. Italian and English are sometimes spoken in the big cities, although Italian speakers are mainly among the older generation.

Family life is important for Libyan families, the majority of which live in apartment blocks and other independent housing units, with precise modes of housing depending on their income and wealth. Although the Libyan Arabs traditionally lived nomadic lifestyles in tents, they have now settled in various towns and cities. Because of this, their old ways of life are gradually fading out. An unknown small number of Libyans still live in the desert as their families have done for centuries. Most of the population has occupations in industry and services, and a small percentage is in agriculture.

According to the *World Refugee Survey 2008*, published by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Libya hosted a population of refugees and asylum seekers numbering approximately 16,000 in 2007. Of this group, approximately 9,000 persons were from the Former Palestine, 3,200 from Sudan, 2,500 from Somalia and 1,100 from Iraq. Libya reportedly deported thousands of illegal entrants in 2007 without giving them the opportunity to apply for asylum. Refugees faced discrimination from Libyan officials when moving in the country and seeking employment.

Education





Libya's population includes 1.7 million students, over 270,000 of whom study at the tertiary level. Education in Libya is free for all citizens, and compulsory up until secondary level. The literacy rate is the highest in North Africa; over 82% of the population can read and write. After Libya's independence in 1951, its first university, the University of Libya, was established in Benghazi. In academic year 1975/76 the number of university students was estimated to be 13,418. As of 2004, this number has increased to more than 200,000, with an extra 70,000 enrolled in the higher technical and vocational sector. The rapid increase in the number of students in the higher education sector has been mirrored by an increase in the number of institutions of higher education. Since 1975 the number of universities has grown from two to nine and after their introduction in 1980, the number of higher technical and vocational institutes currently stands at 84 (with 12 public universities). Libya's higher education is financed by the public budget. In 1998 the budget allocated for education represented 38.2% of the national budget.

The main universities in Libya are:

- Al Fateh University (Tripoli)
- Garyounis University (Benghazi)

Religion

By far the predominant religion in Libya is Islam with 97% of the population associating with the faith. The vast majority of Libyan Muslims adhere to Sunni Islam, which provides both a spiritual guide for individuals and a keystone for government policy, but a minority (between 5 and 10%) adhere to Ibadism (a branch of Kharijism), above all in the Jebel Nefusa and the town of Zuwarah.

Before the 1930s, the Sanusi Movement was the primary Islamic movement in Libya. This was a religious revival adapted to desert life. Its *zawaayaa* (lodges) were found in Tripolitania and Fezzan, but Sanusi influence was strongest in Cyrenaica. Rescuing the region from unrest and anarchy, the Sanusi movement gave the Cyrenaican tribal people a religious attachment and feelings of unity and purpose. This Islamic movement, which was eventually destroyed by both Italian invasion and later the Gaddafi government, was very conservative and somewhat different from the Islam that exists in Libya today. Gaddafi asserts that he is a devout Muslim, and his government is taking a role in supporting Islamic institutions and in worldwide proselytizing on behalf of Islam. A Libyan form of Sufism is also common in parts of the country.

Other than the overwhelming majority of Sunni Muslims, there are also small foreign communities of Christians. Coptic Orthodox Christianity, which is the Christian Church of Egypt, is the largest and most historical Christian denomination in Libya. There are over 60,000 Egyptian Copts in Libya, as they comprise of over 1% of the population alone. There is also a small Anglican community, made up mostly of African immigrant workers in Tripoli; it is part of the Anglican Diocese of Egypt. There is also an estimated 40,000 Roman Catholics in Libya who



The Benghazi campus of the former University of Libya (Al-Jami'a al-Libiya), Libya's first university.



Mosque in Ghadames, close to the Tunisian and Algerian border. About 97% of Libyans are followers of Islam.



are served by two Bishops, one in Tripoli (serving the Italian community) and one in Benghazi (serving the Maltese community).

Libya was until recent times the home of one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world, dating back to at least 300 BC. A series of pogroms beginning in November 1945 lasted for almost three years, drastically reducing Libya's Jewish population. In 1948, about 38,000 Jews remained in the country. Upon Libya's independence in 1951, most of the Jewish community emigrated. After the Suez Crisis in 1956, all but about 100 Jews were forced to flee.

Culture

Libya is culturally similar to its neighboring Maghrebian states. Libyans consider themselves very much a part of a wider Arab community. The Libyan state tends to strengthen this feeling by considering Arabic as the only official language, and forbidding the teaching and even the use of the Berber language. Libyan Arabs have a heritage in the traditions of the nomadic Bedouin and associate themselves with a particular Bedouin tribe.

As with some other countries in the Arab world, Libya boasts few theatres or art galleries. Conversely, for many years there have been no public theatres, and only a few cinemas showing foreign films. The tradition of folk culture is still alive and well, with troupes performing music and dance at frequent festivals, both in Libya and abroad. The main output of Libyan television is devoted to showing various styles of traditional Libyan music. Tuareg music and dance are popular in Ghadames and the south. Libyan television programmes are mostly in Arabic with a 30-minute news broadcast each evening in English and French. The government maintains strict control over all media outlets. A new analysis by the Committee to Protect Journalists has found Libya's media the most tightly controlled in the Arab world. To combat this, the government plans to introduce private media, an initiative intended to bring the country's media in from the cold.

Many Libyans frequent the country's beaches. They also visit Libya's beautifully-preserved archaeological sites—especially Leptis Magna, which is widely considered to be one of the best preserved Roman archaeological sites in the world.

The nation's capital, Tripoli, boasts many good museums and archives; these include the Government Library, the Ethnographic Museum, the Archaeological Museum, the National Archives, the Epigraphy Museum and the Islamic Museum. The Jamahiriya Museum, built in consultation with UNESCO, may be the country's most famous. It houses one of the finest collections of classical art in the Mediterranean.

International rankings



Coastline of Benghazi, Libya's second largest city. With the longest Mediterranean coastline among African nations, Libya's mostly unspoilt beaches are a social gathering place.



| Organization | Survey | Ranking |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Heritage Foundation/ <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> | 2007 Index of Economic Freedom | 154 out of 157 |
| <i>The Economist</i> | The World in 2005 - Worldwide quality-of-life index, 2005 | 70 out of 111 |
| Energy Information Administration | Greatest Oil Reserves by Country, 2006 | 9 out of 20 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Press Freedom Index (2005) | 162 out of 167 |
| Transparency International | Corruption Perceptions Index 2007 | 131 out of 180 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index 2005 | 56 out of 177 |

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Madagascar

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Madagascar. For more information see SOS Children in Madagascar, Africa

Madagascar, or **Republic of Madagascar** (older name **Malagasy Republic**), is an island nation in the Indian Ocean off the southeastern coast of Africa. The main island, also called Madagascar, is the fourth-largest island in the world, and is home to 5% of the world's plant and animal species, of which more than 80% are endemic to Madagascar. They include the lemur infraorder of primates, the carnivorous fossa, three bird families and six baobab species.

History



Madagascar, as part of East Gondwana, split from Africa approximately 160 million years ago; the island of Madagascar was created when it separated from India 80 to 100 million years ago. Archaeologists estimate human settlement of Madagascar to be between 200 and 500 A.D., when seafarers from southeast Asia (probably from Borneo or the southern Celebes) arrived in outrigger sailing canoes. Bantu settlers probably crossed the Mozambique Channel to Madagascar at about the same time or shortly afterwards.

The written history of Madagascar begins in the 7th century, when Arabs established trading posts along the northwest coast and first transcribed the Malagasy language into Sorabe.

During the Middle Ages, the chiefs began to extend their power through trade with Indian Ocean neighbors, notably East Africa, the Middle East and India. Large chiefdoms began to dominate considerable areas of the island. Among these were the Sakalava chiefdoms of the Menabe, centred in what is now the town of Morondava, and of Boina, centred in what is now the provincial capital of Mahajanga (Majunga). The influence of the Sakalava extended across what is now the provinces of Antsiranana, Mahajanga and Toliara.

European contact began in the year 1500, when Portuguese sea captain Diogo Dias sighted the island after his ship separated from a fleet going to India. The Portuguese continued trading with the islanders and named the island as "São Lourenço" (St. Lawrence). In 1665, Francois Caron, the Director General

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| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Republikan'i Madagasikara</i> <i>République de Madagascar</i> Republic of Madagascar</p> | |
|  <p>Flag</p> |  <p>Coat of arms</p> |
| <p>Motto: <i>Tanindrazana, Fahafahana, Fandrosoana</i> (Malagasy) <i>Patrie, liberté, progrès</i> (French) "Fatherland, Liberty, Progress"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Ry Tanindrazanay malala ô!</i> <i>Oh, Our Beloved Ancestral-land</i></p> | |
|  | |
| <p>Capital (and largest city)</p> | <p>Antananarivo</p> |



of the newly formed French East India Company, sailed to Madagascar. The Company failed to establish a colony on Madagascar but established ports on the nearby islands of Bourbon and Ile-de-France (today's Reunion and Mauritius). In the late 17th century, the French established trading posts along the east coast.

From about 1774 to 1824, Madagascar was a favourite haunt for pirates, including Americans, one of whom brought Malagasy rice to South Carolina. Many European sailors were shipwrecked on the coasts of the island, among them Robert Drury whose journal is one of the only written depictions of life in southern Madagascar during the 18th century.

Beginning in the 1790s, Merina rulers succeeded in establishing hegemony over most of the island, including the coast. In 1817, the Merina ruler and the British governor of Mauritius concluded a treaty abolishing the slave trade, which had been important in Madagascar's economy. In return, the island received British military and financial assistance. British influence remained strong for several decades, during which the Merina court was converted to Presbyterianism, Congregationalism and Anglicanism.

With the domination of the Indian Ocean by the Royal Navy and the end of the Arab slave trade, the western Sakalava lost their power to the emerging Merina state. The Betsimisaraka of the east coast also unified, but this union soon faltered.

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Official languages | Malagasy, French, English ¹ |
| Demonym | Malagasy |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Marc Ravalomanana |
| - Prime Minister | Charles Rabemananjara |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | 26 June 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 587,041 km ² (45th) 226,597 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.13% |
| Population | |
| - July 2007 estimate | 19,448,815 (55th) |
| - 1993 census | 12,238,914 |
| - Density | 33/km ² (171st) 86/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$5 billion (123rd) |
| - Per capita | \$290 (169th) |
| Gini (2001) | 47.5 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.533 (medium) (143rd) |
| Currency | Malagasy ariary (MGA) |
| Time zone | EAT (UTC+3) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .mg |
| Calling code | +261 |



Poster of a H. Galli book about the French war in Madagascar.

France invaded Madagascar in 1883 in what became known as the first Franco-Hova War seeking to restore property that had been confiscated from French citizens. (*Hova* is one of three Merina classes: *andriana* - aristocracy, *hova* - common people, *andevo* - slaves. The term *hova* was wrongly used by the French to mean Merina.) At the wars end, Madagascar ceded Antsiranana (Diego Suarez) on the northern coast to France and paid 560,000 gold striper francs to the heirs of Joseph-François Lambert. In 1890 the British accepted the full formal imposition of a French protectorate.

¹Official languages since 27 April 2007

In 1895, a French flying column landed in Mahajanga (Majunga) and marched to the capital, Antananarivo, where the city's defenders were taken by surprise, as they were expecting an attack from the much closer east coast. Twenty French soldiers died fighting and 6,000 died of malaria and other diseases before the second Franco-Hova War ended.

After the conclusion of hostilities, in 1896 the French Parliament voted to annex Madagascar. The 103-year-old Merina monarchy ended with the royal family being sent into exile in Algeria. In December 1904, the Russian Baltic Fleet docked at Antsiranana (Diego Suarez) for coal and provisions before sailing on to its doomed encounter with the Japanese fleet in the Battle of Tsushima. Before leaving port the Russian sailors were required to put ashore the animals they had acquired, including monkeys, boa constrictors and one crocodile.

During World War II, Malagasy troops fought in France, Morocco, and Syria. Just before the fall of France, Germany planned to forcibly deport all of Europe's Jews to Madagascar in what was known as the Madagascar Plan. But action on the plan was never begun. After France fell to Germany, the Vichy government administered Madagascar. During the Battle of Madagascar, British troops occupied the strategic island in 1942 to preclude its seizure by the Japanese, after which the Free French took over.

In 1947, with French prestige at low ebb, a nationalist uprising was suppressed after several months of bitter fighting with 90,000 people killed. The French later established reformed institutions in 1956 under the Loi Cadre (Overseas Reform Act), and Madagascar moved peacefully towards independence. The Malagasy Republic was proclaimed on October 14, 1958, as an autonomous state within the French Community. A period of provisional government ended with the adoption of a constitution in 1959 and full independence on June 26, 1960.

Politics

Madagascar is a semi-presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the Prime Minister of Madagascar is head of government, and of a pluriform multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the Senate and the National Assembly. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

Provinces and regions



Madagascar is divided into six autonomous provinces (*faritany mizakatena*), and 22 regions. The regions will be the highest subdivision level when the provinces are dissolved by 2009.



- Antananarivo (1)
 - Analamanga
 - Bongolava
 - Itasy
 - Vakinankaratra
- Antsiranana (2)
 - Diana
 - Sava
- Fianarantsoa (3)
 - Amoron'i Mania
 - Atsimo Atsinanana
 - Haute-Matsiatra
 - Ihorombe
 - Vatovavy-Fitovinany
- Mahajanga (4)
 - Betsiboka
 - Boeny
 - Melaky
 - Sofia
- Toamasina (5)
 - Alaotra Mangoro
 - Analanjirifo
 - Atsinanana
- Toliara (6)
 - Androy
 - Anosy
 - Atsimo Andrefana
 - Menabe

The regions are further subdivided into 116 districts, 1,548 communes, and 16,969 fokontany. The major cities have a special status as "commune urbaine", at the same level as the districts.

Geography

At 587,041 km² (226,657.8 sq mi), Madagascar is the world's 46th-largest country and the fourth largest island. It is slightly larger than France and it also is one of 11 distinct physiographic provinces of the South African Platform physiographic division.

Towards the east, a steep escarpment leads from the central highlands down into a ribbon of rain forest with a narrow coastal further east. The Canal des Pangalanes is a chain of natural and man-made lakes connected by canals that runs parallel to the east coast for some 460 km (about two-thirds of the island). The descent from the central highlands toward the west is more gradual, with remnants of deciduous forest and savanna-like plains (which in the south and southwest, are quite dry and host spiny desert and baobabs). On the west coast are many protected harbours, but silting is a major problem caused by sediment from the high levels of erosion inland.

Along the crest of this ridge lie the central highlands, a plateau region ranging in altitude from 2,450 to 4,400 ft (750 to 1350m) above sea level. The central highlands are characterised by terraced, rice-growing valleys lying between



Isalo National Park

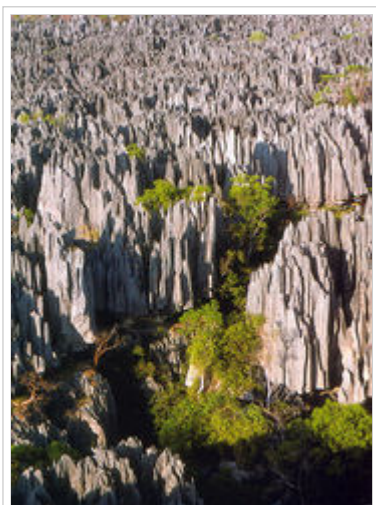


barren hills. Here, the red laterite soil that covers much of the island has been exposed by erosion, showing clearly why the country is often referred to as the "Red Island".

The island's highest peak, Maromokotro, at 2,876 m (9,436 ft), is found in the Tsaratanana Massif, located in the far north of the country. The Ankaratra Massif is in the central area south of the capital Antananarivo and hosts the third highest mountain on the island, Tsiafajavona, with an altitude of 2,642 m (8,668 ft). On very rare occasions, this region experiences snow in winter due to its high altitude. Further south is the Andringitra massif which has several peaks over 2400 m (about 8,000 ft) including the second and fourth highest peaks, Pic Boby (8,720 ft, 2,658 m) and Pic Bory (8,626 ft, 2,630 m). Other peaks in the massif include Pic Soaindra (8,594 ft, 2,620 m) and Pic Ivangomena (8,385 ft, 2,556 m). This massif also contains the Andringitra Reserve.

There are two seasons: a hot, rainy season from November to April, and a cooler, dry season from May to October. South-eastern trade winds predominate, and the island occasionally experiences cyclones.

Ecology



Tsingy in Madagascar

Madagascar's long isolation from the neighboring continents has resulted in a unique mix of plants and animals, many found nowhere else in the world; some ecologists refer to Madagascar as the "eighth continent". Of the 10,000 plants native to Madagascar, 90% are found nowhere else in the world.

Madagascar's varied fauna and flora are endangered by human activity, as a third of its native vegetation has disappeared since the 1970s, and only 18% remains intact.

The eastern, or windward side of the island is home to tropical rainforests, while the western and southern sides, which lie in the rain shadow of the central highlands, are home to tropical dry forests, thorn forests, and deserts and xeric shrublands. Madagascar's dry deciduous rain forest have been preserved generally better than the eastern rainforests or the high central plateau, presumably due to historically low population density and scarce water supplies.

Extensive deforestation has taken place in parts of the country. Slash-and-burn activity, locally called *tavy*, has occurred in the eastern and western dry forests as well as the on the central high plateau, reducing certain forest habitat and applying pressure to some endangered species. Slash-and-burn is a method sometimes used by shifting cultivators to create short-term yields from marginal soils. When practiced repeatedly without intervening fallow periods, the nutrient-poor soils may be exhausted or eroded to an unproductive state. The resulting increased surface runoff from burned lands has caused significant

erosion and resulting high sedimentation to western rivers.

Economy

Agriculture, including fishing and forestry, is a mainstay of the economy. Major exports are coffee, vanilla, sugarcane, cloves, cocoa, rice, cassava (tapioca),



beans, bananas, peanuts and livestock products. Vanilla has historically been of particular importance, and when in 1985 Coca-cola switched to New Coke which involved less vanilla, Madagascar's economy took a marked downturn, but returned to previous levels after the return of Coke Classic.

Structural reforms began in the late 1980s, initially under pressure from international financial institutions, notably the World Bank. An initial privatization program (1988-1993) and the development of an export processing zone (EPZ) regime in the early 1990s were key milestones in this effort. A period of significant stagnation from 1991-96 was followed by 5 years of solid economic growth and accelerating foreign investment, driven by a second wave of privatizations and EPZ development. Although structural reforms advanced, governance remained weak and perceived corruption in Madagascar was extremely high. During the period of solid growth from 1997 to 2001, poverty levels remained stubbornly high, especially in rural areas. A six-month political crisis triggered by a dispute over the outcome of the presidential elections held in December 2001 virtually halted economic activity in much of the country in the first half of 2002. Real GDP dropped 12.7% for the year 2002, inflows of foreign investment dropped sharply, and the crisis tarnished Madagascar's budding reputation as an AGOA standout and a promising place to invest. After the crisis, the economy rebounded with GDP growth of over 10% in 2003. Currency depreciation and rising inflation in 2004 have hampered economic performance, but growth for the year reached 5.3%, with inflation reaching around 25% at the end of the year. In 2005 inflation was brought under control by tight monetary policy of raising the *Taux Directeur* (central bank rate) to 16% and tightening reserve requirements for banks. Thus growth was expected to reach around 6.5% in 2005.

Following the 2002 political crisis, the government attempted to set a new course and build confidence, in coordination with international financial institutions and donors. Madagascar developed a recovery plan in collaboration with the private sector and donors and presented it at a "Friends of Madagascar" conference organized by the World Bank in Paris in July 2002. Donor countries demonstrated their confidence in the new government by pledging \$1 billion in assistance over five years. The Malagasy Government identified road infrastructure as its principle priority and underlined its commitment to public-private partnership by establishing a joint public-private sector steering committee.

In 2000, Madagascar embarked on the preparation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. The boards of the IMF and World Bank agreed in December 2000 that the country had reached the decision point for debt relief under the HIPC Initiative and defined a set of conditions for Madagascar to reach the completion point. In October 2004, the boards of the IMF and the World Bank determined that Madagascar had reached the completion point under the enhanced HIPC Initiative.

The Madagascar-U.S. Business Council was formed in Madagascar in 2002. The U.S.-Madagascar Business Council was formed in the United States in May 2003, and the two organisations continue to explore ways to work for the benefit of both groups.

The government of President Ravalomanana is aggressively seeking foreign investment and is tackling many of the obstacles to such investment, including combating corruption, reforming land-ownership laws, encouraging study of American and European business techniques, and active pursuit of foreign investors. President Ravalomanana rose to prominence through his agro-foods TIKO company, and is known for attempting to apply many of the lessons learned in the world of business to running the government. Some recent concerns have arisen about the conflict of interest between his policies and the activities of his firms. Most notable among them the preferential treatment for rice imports initiated by the government in late 2004 when responding to a production shortfall in the country.

Madagascar's sources of growth are tourism; textile and light manufacturing exports (notably through the EPZs); agricultural products and mining. Madagascar

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is the world's leading producer of vanilla and accounts for about half the world's export market. Tourism targets the niche eco-tourism market, capitalizing on Madagascar's unique biodiversity, unspoiled natural habitats, national parks and lemur species. Exports from the EPZs, located around Antananarivo and Antsirabe, consist the most part of garment manufacture, targeting the US market under AGOA and the European markets under the Everything But Arms (EBA) agreement. Agricultural exports consist of low-volume high-value products like vanilla, litchies and essential oils. A small but growing part of the economy is based on mining of ilmenite, with investments emerging in recent years, particularly near Tulear and Fort Dauphin. Mining corporation Rio Tinto expects to begin operations near Fort Dauphin in 2008, following several years of infrastructure preparation. The mining project is highly controversial, with Friends of the Earth and other environmental organizations filing reports to detail their concerns about effects on the local environment and communities.

Several major projects are underway in the mining and oil and gas sectors that, if successful, will give a significant boost to the Malagasy economy. In the mining sector, these include the development of coal at Sakoa and nickel near Tamatave. In oil, Madagascar Oil is developing the massive onshore heavy oil field at Tsimiroro and ultra heavy oil field at Bemolanga.

Foreign relations

Madagascar was historically perceived as being on the margin of mainstream African affairs. But it eagerly rejoined the African Union in July 2003 after a 14-month hiatus triggered by the 2002 political crisis. From 1978 to 1991, President Ratsiraka emphasized independence and nonalignment and followed an "all points" policy stressing ties with socialist and radical regimes, including North Korea, Cuba, Libya, and Iran. But President Albert Zafy, taking office in 1993, expressed his desire for diplomatic relations with all countries. Early in his tenure, he established formal ties with South Korea and sent emissaries to Morocco.

Starting in 1997, globalisation encouraged the government and President Ratsiraka to adhere to market-oriented policies and to engage world markets. External relations reflect this trend, although Madagascar's physical isolation and strong traditional insular orientation have limited its activity in regional economic organisations and relations with its East African neighbours. It enjoys closer and generally good relations with its Indian Ocean neighbours -- Mauritius, Réunion, and Comoros. Active relationships with Europe, especially France, Germany, and Switzerland, as well as with Britain, Russia, Japan, India, and China have been strong since independence. More recently, President Ravalomanana has cultivated strong links with the United States, and Madagascar was the first country to benefit from the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). Madagascar is also a member of the International Criminal Court with a Bilateral Immunity Agreement of protection for the US-military (as covered under Article 98).

President Ravalomanana has stated that he welcomes relations with all countries interested in helping Madagascar to develop. He travels widely promoting Madagascar abroad and has consciously sought to strengthen relations with Anglophone countries as a means of balancing traditionally strong French influence. He has also cultivated strong ties with China during his tenure.

In November 2004, after an absence of almost 30 years, Madagascar re-opened its embassy in London. On 15 December 2004 the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, announced the closure of the British embassy in Antananarivo to save £250,000 a year. He also announced an end to the DFID-funded Small Grants Scheme, the only aid Britain gave to this, one of the world's poorest countries. The embassy closed in August 2005 despite petitions and protests from African heads of state, a European commissioner, the Malagasy Senate, many British companies, 30 or so NGOs operating in Madagascar, and members of the public.



The British Embassy was previously closed (also for financial reasons) from 1975 to 1980. The Anglo-Malagasy Society are campaigning to have it re-opened once again.

Demographics



A village

Madagascar's population is predominantly of mixed Austronesian (i.e. Pacific Islander) and African origin. Those who are visibly Austronesian in appearance and culture are the minority, found mostly in the highland regions. Recent research suggests that the island was uninhabited until Austronesian seafarers arrived about 1,500 to 2,000 years ago. Recent DNA research shows that the Malagasy people are approximately of half Austronesian and half East African descent, although some Arab, Indian and European influence is present along the coast. Malagasy language shares some 90% of its basic vocabulary with the Maanyan language from the region of the River Barito in southern Borneo.



Antananarivo, Madagascar

Subsequent migrations from the East Indies and Africa consolidated this original mixture, and 36 separate tribal groups emerged. Austronesian features are most predominant in the Merina (3 million) ; the coastal people (called *côtiers*) are of more clearly African origin. The largest coastal groups are the Betsimisaraka (1.5 million) and the Tsimihety and Sakalava (700,000 each). The Vezo live in the southwest. Two of the southern tribes are the Antandroy and the Antanosy.

During the French colonial administration (1895-1960) and some time after independence, people were officially classified in ethnic groups. This practice was abandoned in the first census (1975) after independence, so any recent classification and figures for ethnic groups is an unofficial estimate. There is for instance no mention of ethnicity or religion in the national identity cards. Also, territorial divisions (provinces, regions) do not follow any ethnic division lines, despite an attempt by the colonial administration in the early 20th century. Ethnic divisions continue, and may cause violence, but their role is limited in today's society. Regional political parties are also rare, although some parties have their most of their support in certain areas.

Only two general censuses, 1975 and 1993, have been carried out after independence.

In 1993 (last census) there were 18,497 foreign residents on Madagascar, or 0.15% of the population.

Language



The Malagasy language (pronounced Mala-gass) is of Malayo-Polynesian origin and is generally spoken throughout the island. French is spoken among the educated population of this former French colony. English, although still rare, is becoming more widely spoken and in 2003 the government began a pilot project of introducing the teaching of English into the primary grades of 44 schools, with hopes of taking the project nationwide. Many Peace Corps volunteers are serving to further this effort and train teachers.

In the first Constitution of 1958, Malagasy and French were named the "official languages of the Malagasy Republic".

No official languages were recorded in the Constitution of 1992. Instead, Malagasy was named the "national language". However, many sources still claimed that Malagasy and French were official languages, as they were *de facto*. In April 2000 a citizen brought a legal case on the grounds that the publication of official documents in the French language only was unconstitutional. The High Constitutional Court observed in its decision that, in the absence of a language law, French still had the character of an official language.

In the Constitution of 2007, Malagasy remains the national language, while official languages are reintroduced: Malagasy, French and English. The motivation for the inclusion of English is partly to improve relations with the neighbouring countries where English is used, and to encourage foreign direct investment.

Religion

Approximately 50% of the country's population practice traditional religion, which tends to emphasize links between the living and the dead. The Merina in the highlands particularly tend to hold tightly to this practice. They believe that the dead join their ancestors in the ranks of divinity and that ancestors are intensely concerned with the fate of their living descendants. The Merina and Betsileo reburial practice of *famadihana*, or "turning over the dead", celebrates this spiritual communion. In this ritual, relatives' remains are removed from the family tomb, rewrapped in new silk shrouds, and returned to the tomb following festive ceremonies in their honour where sometimes the bodies are lifted and carried high above the celebrants heads with singing and dancing before returning them to the tomb.

About 45% of the Malagasy are Christian, divided almost evenly between Catholics and Protestants. Many incorporate the cult of the dead with their other religious beliefs and bless their dead at church before proceeding with the traditional burial rites. They also may invite a pastor to attend a *famadihana*. The Roman Catholic church is open to its members continuing these practices, while more conservative Protestant denominations tend to condemn them to be superstitions or demon worship that should be abandoned. Many of the Christian churches are influential in politics. The best example of this is the Malagasy Council of Churches (FFKM) comprised of the four oldest and most prominent Christian denominations (Roman Catholic, Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, Lutheran and Anglican).

Islam in Madagascar constitutes about 7% of the population. The Muslim traders who first brought Islam in the 10th century had a deep influence on the west coast. For example, many Malagasy converted to Islam and the Malagasy language was, for the first time, transcribed into an alphabet, based on the Arabic alphabet, called Sorabe. Muslims are concentrated in the provinces of Mahajanga and Antsiranana (Diego Suarez). Muslims are divided between those of



A girl in a Madagascar village



Malagasy ethnicity, Indo-Pakistanis, and Comorians. The number of mosques in the south-east region has increased from 10 to 50 in the last ten years. Recently, there has been some growth in Islam through conversion.

Culture

- Cuisine of Madagascar
- Music of Madagascar
- List of writers from Madagascar
- Salegy is a popular music form. There is a sudden interest in American culture and European popular culture, which is eroding the more traditional culture, and especially the music.

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Malawi

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The **Republic of Malawi** ([malaʒi]; formerly **Nyasaland**) is a democratic, densely populated country located in southeastern Africa. It is bordered by Zambia to the north-west, Tanzania to the north and Mozambique, which surrounds it on the east, south and west. The origin of the name Malawi remains unclear; it is held to be either derived from that of southern tribes, or noting the "glitter of the sun rising across the lake" (as seen in its flag).




History

The earliest inhabitants of the area were Khoisan hunter-gatherers.

They were largely replaced by Bantu tribes during Bantu migrations. What is now called Malawi was the Maravi state, founded by the Chewa people in the 16th century. The Chewa were themselves an off-shoot of the Luba Empire. In the early to mid 19th century, they were joined by Zulu-related Ndwandwe people from KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, the Ngoni, under their king Zwangendaba.

The first significant Western contact was the arrival of David Livingstone along the north shore of Lake Malawi in 1859, and subsequently Scottish Presbyterian churches establishing missions. In 1883, a consul of the British Government was accredited to the "Kings and Chiefs of Central Africa," and in 1891, the British established the British Central Africa Protectorate, by 1907, the Nyasaland Protectorate. Although the British remained in control during the first half of the 20th century, this period was marked by a number of unsuccessful Malawian attempts to obtain independence. During the 1950s, pressure for independence increased when Nyasaland was joined with Northern and Southern Rhodesia in 1953 to form the Central African Federation. In July 1958, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda returned to the country after a long absence. He assumed leadership of the NAC, which later became the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). In 1959, Banda was sent to Gwelo Prison in Southern Rhodesia (now Gweru) for his political activities but was released in 1960 to participate in a constitutional conference in London.

On April 15, 1961 the MCP won an overwhelming victory in elections for a new Legislative Council. In a second constitutional conference in London in November 1962, the British Government agreed to give

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Dziko la Malawî</i> Republic of Malawi | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: Unity and Freedom | |
| Anthem: <i>Mulungu dalitsa Malawî</i> (Chichewa) "Oh God Bless Our Land of Malawi" | |
|  | |
| Capital | Lilongwe |
| Largest city | Blantyre |
| Official languages | English (official) Chichewa (national) |
| Demonym | Malawian |



Nyasaland self-governing status the following year. This announcement sealed the fate of the Central African Federation, which lost its reason for existence with an independent Nyasaland. Banda became Prime Minister on February 1, 1963, although the British still controlled Malawi's financial, security, and judicial systems. A new constitution took effect in May 1963, providing for virtually complete internal self-government. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved on December 31, 1963, and Malawi became a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth on July 6, 1964. Two years later, Malawi became a republic with Dr. Banda as its first President, and was also declared a one-party state. In 1970 Banda was declared President for life (Ngwazi) of the MCP, and in 1971 Banda consolidated his power and was named President for Life of Malawi itself.

However, increasing domestic unrest and pressure from Malawian churches and from the international community led to a referendum in which the Malawian people were asked to vote for a new form of government. On June 14, 1993, the people of Malawi voted overwhelmingly in favour of multi-party democracy. Free and fair national elections were held on May 17, 1994. Bakili Muluzi, leader of the United Democratic Front (UDF), was elected President in those elections. The UDF won 82 of the 177 seats in the National Assembly and formed a coalition government with the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD). That coalition disbanded in June 1996, but some of its members remained in the government. Malawi's newly written constitution (1995) eliminated special powers previously reserved for the Malawi Congress Party. Accelerated economic liberalization and structural reform accompanied the political transition.

Malawi saw its first transition between democratically elected presidents in May 2004, when the UDF's presidential candidate Bingu wa Mutharika defeated MCP candidate John Tembo and Gwanda Chakuamba, who was backed by a grouping of opposition parties. Through the politicking of party chairperson and former President Bakili Muluzi, the party successfully secured a majority by forming a "government of national unity" with several opposition parties.

Politics

For almost thirty years, the government of Malawi and the Malawi Congress Party were one. When Malawi was declared a republic in 1966, the country was formally declared a one-party state. Under Banda, all citizens had to be members of the party. This situation changed in a 1993 referendum, which instituted a multiparty system. In the country's first democratic elections, Banda and the MCP were soundly defeated.

Under the 1995 constitution, the president, who is both chief of state and head of the government, is

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| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Multi-party democracy |
| - President | Bingu wa Mutharika |
| Independence | from the UK |
| - Independence declared | July 6, 1964 |
| - Republic | July 6, 1966 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 118,484 km ² (99th) 45,747 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 20.6% |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 12,884,000 (69th) |
| - 1998 census | 9,933,868 |
| - Density | 109/km ² (91st) 282/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$7.67 billion (143rd) |
| - Per capita | \$596 (181st) |
| Gini (1997) | 50.3 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▼ 0.437 (low) (164th) |
| Currency | Kwacha (D) (<i>MWK</i>) |
| Time zone | CAT (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .mw |
| Calling code | +265 |
| ¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than | |



chosen through universal direct election every five years. Malawi has a vice president who is elected with the president which is currently Bingu wa Mutharika. The president has the option of appointing a second vice president, who must be from a different political party. The members of the presidentially appointed cabinet can be drawn from either within or outside of the legislature. Malawi's National Assembly has 193 seats, all directly elected to serve 5-year terms. The constitution also provides for a second chamber, a Senate of 80 seats, but to date no action has been taken to create the Senate. The Senate is intended to provide representation for traditional leaders and the different geographical districts, as well as various special interest groups, such as women, youth, and the disabled .

would otherwise be expected.

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary. Malawi's judicial system, based on the English model, is made up of magisterial lower courts, a High Court, and a Supreme Court of Appeal. Local government is carried out in 27 districts within three regions administered by regional administrators and district commissioners who are appointed by the central government. Local elections, the first in the multi-party era, took place in on November 21, 2000. The UDF party won 70% of the seats in this election.

The third multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections, originally planned for May 18, 2004 were postponed by two days following a High Court appeal by the main opposition Mgwirizano (Unity) coalition. The run-up to the poll was overshadowed by opposition claims of irregularities in the voters' roll. European Union and Commonwealth observers said although voting passed peacefully, they were concerned about "serious inadequacies" in the poll.

Regions and districts

Malawi is divided into three regions (the Northern, Central and Southern regions), which are further divided into twenty-seven districts, which in turn are further divided into 137 traditional authorities and 68 sub-chiefdoms. The districts are:

- Balaka
- Blantyre
- Chikwawa
- Chiradzulu
- Chitipa
- Dedza
- Dowa
- Karonga
- Kasungu
- Likoma
- Lilongwe
- Machinga
- Mangochi
- Mchinji
- Mulanje
- Mwanza
- Mzimba
- Neno
- Nkhata Bay
- Nkhotakota
- Nsanje
- Ntcheu
- Ntchisi
- Phalombe
- Rumphu
- Salima
- Thyolo
- Zomba

Religions: Christians 80% (mainly Protestants), Muslims 12% (Sunni), Other Religions 8%.

Geography



Satellite image of Malawi, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Malawi is situated in southeastern Africa. The Great Rift Valley runs through the country from north to south. In this deep trough lies Lake Malawi (also called Lake Nyasa), the third-largest lake in Africa, and the 10th largest in the world, making about 20% of Malawi's area. The Shire River flows from the south end of the lake and joins the Zambezi River 400 km (250 mi) farther south in Mozambique. East and west of the Rift Valley are high plateaus, generally between 900 and 1,200 m (3,000–4,000 ft) above sea level. The Nyika Uplands rise as high as 2,600 m (8,500 ft) in the north; south of the lake lie the Shire Highlands, with an elevation of 600–1,600 m (2,000–5,000 ft), rising to the Zomba Plateau and the Mulanje Massif, 2,130 and 3,002 m (7,000 and 10,000 ft). In the extreme south, the elevation is only 60–90 m (200–300 ft) above sea level.

Malawi is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's most densely populated countries. Lilongwe, Malawi's capital since 1971, has a population which exceeds 400,000. All government ministries and the Parliament are located in Lilongwe. Blantyre remains Malawi's major commercial centre and largest city, having grown from an estimated 109,000 inhabitants in 1966 to nearly 500,000 in 1998. Malawi's President resides in Lilongwe. The Supreme Court is seated in Blantyre.

Malawi's climate is subtropical. A rainy season runs from November through April. There is little to no rainfall throughout most of the country from May to October. It is hot and humid from October to April along the lake and in the Lower Shire Valley. Lilongwe is also hot and humid during these months, a little less than in the south. The rest of the country is warm during those months. From June through August, the lake areas and far south are comfortably warm, but the rest of Malawi can be chilly at night, with temperatures ranging from 5 °–14 °C (41°–57°F).

Lake Malawi is sometimes called the Calendar Lake as it is about 365 miles long and 52 miles wide.

Malawi has five national parks: Cape Maclear; Kasungu; Lengwe; Liwonde; and Nyika.

Economy

Malawi has a GDP per capita of 596 US dollars. It is a landlocked, densely populated country. Its economy is heavily dependent on agriculture. Malawi has few exploitable mineral resources. Its three most important export crops are (in order) tobacco, tea and sugar. Malawi's president recently urged farmers to consider growing other crops, such as cotton, as an alternative to the country's principal crop, tobacco, as cigarette consumption in the West continues to decline.



Mulanje Mountain in Malawi



A rural market in Malawi

Traditionally Malawi has been self-sufficient in its staple food, maize, and during the 1980s exported substantial quantities to its drought-stricken neighbors. Agriculture represents 38.6% of the GDP, accounts for over 80% of the labor force, and represents about 80% of all exports. Nearly 90% of the population engages in subsistence farming. Smallholder farmers produce a variety of crops, including maize (corn), beans, rice, cassava, tobacco, groundnuts (peanut) and coffee. The agricultural sector contributes about 63.7% of total income for the rural population, 65% of manufacturing sector's raw materials, and approximately 87% of total employment. Financial wealth is generally concentrated in the hands of a small elite. Malawi's manufacturing industries are situated around the city of Blantyre.

Malawi's economic reliance on the export of agricultural commodities renders it particularly vulnerable to external shocks such as declining terms of trade and drought. High transport costs, which can comprise over 30% of its total import bill, constitute a serious impediment to economic development and trade. Malawi

must import all its fuel products. Paucity of skilled labor; difficulty in obtaining expatriate employment permits; bureaucratic red tape; corruption; and inadequate and deteriorating road, electricity, water, and telecommunications infrastructure further hinder economic development in Malawi. However, recent government initiatives targeting improvements in the road infrastructure, together with private sector participation in railroad and telecommunications, have begun to render the investment environment more attractive.



Crafts market in Lilongwe

Malawi has undertaken economic structural adjustment programs supported by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other donors since 1981. Broad reform objectives include stimulation of private sector activity and participation through the elimination of price controls and industrial licensing, liberalization of trade and foreign exchange, rationalization of taxes, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and civil service reform. Malawi qualifies for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief.

As of late May 2004, the IMF program (begun in 2000) was cancelled and a Staff-Monitored Program (SMP) was implemented. In the wake of questions about fiscal credibility, the SMP's goal is to give Malawi's newly-elected government the chance to establish a track record of fiscal discipline.

Real GDP increased by an estimated 3.9% in 2004, from 4.3% in 2003 and 2.4% in 2002. Inflation has been largely under control since 2003, averaging 10% in that year and 11.1% (est.) in 2004. Discount and commercial lending rates also declined from 40%-45% in 2003 to 25% in early 2004. The Kwacha slid from 90 to 101 against the U.S. dollar in mid-2003 and was at 108 to the U.S. dollar at the end of 2004.

Malawi has bilateral trade agreements with its two major trading partners, South Africa and Zimbabwe, both of which allow duty-free entry of Malawian products into their countries.



Humanitarian situation

Some of the more significant problems facing Malawians include:

- insufficient nutrition
- poor access to medical treatment
- extreme lack of foresight by Government
- Mis-use of international donations
- insufficient school education
- spread of HIV/AIDS
- government economic restrictions
- corruption
- climate change

Health



People collecting water in Malawi



Child mortality is 103/1,000. There are more than a million orphans, 700,000 of whom became orphans when their parents died of AIDS.

The Malawi government estimates that 14.2% of the population are HIV-positive, and that 90,000 deaths in 2003 were due to AIDS. Unofficial estimates based on private hospital entries give a HIV infection percentage of 30%. Their life expectancy is 43.35 for men and 42.61 for women.

Nutrition

Malawi's staple food is maize but like other countries in Southern Africa, Malawi has repeatedly been affected by famines since 2002, when food was scarce for almost one third of the population. In 2003, 30 percent of the population were affected.

These repeated famines are caused by different factors including:

- widespread monocultures
- poor distribution of fertilizers
- droughts
- government corruption

- widespread AIDS epidemic
- bilharzia
- malaria

Some relief organisations, such as the Community of Sant'Egidio, Catholic Relief Services and other local and international organisations try to respond to the famine by distributing food parcels. The government also had a starter pack farm input programme for maize seed and fertilizer. The scheme was however subject to gross abuses and sometimes the poorest people did not receive any of the items that were purportedly earmarked for them. This programme was discontinued by the Bingu wa Mutharika administration, which instead subsidised fertilizer for the local subsistence farmers.

It has been reported that Mutharika's program is radically improving Malawi's agriculture, and causing Malawi to become a net exporter of food to nearby countries.

The government of Taiwan has also donated millions of bags of rice each year and has a permanent agricultural and medical technical aid mission in Malawi.

Foreign relations

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Livingstonia, Malawi



Malawi has continued the pro-Western foreign policy established by former President Banda. It maintains excellent diplomatic relations with principal Western countries. Malawi's close relations with South Africa throughout the apartheid era strained its relations with other African nations. Following the collapse of apartheid in 1990-94, Malawi developed and currently maintains strong diplomatic relations with all African countries.

Between 1985 and 1995 Malawi accommodated more than a million refugees from Mozambique. The refugee crisis placed a substantial strain on Malawi's government but also drew significant inflows of international assistance. The accommodation and eventual repatriation of the Mozambicans is considered a major success by international organizations. In 1996, Malawi received a number of Rwandan and Congolese refugees seeking asylum. The government did not turn away refugees, but it did invoke the principle of "first country of asylum." Under this principle, refugees who requested asylum in another country first, or who had the opportunity to do so, would not subsequently be granted asylum in Malawi. There were no reports of the forcible repatriation of refugees.

Important bilateral donors, in addition to the U.S., include Canada, Libya, Germany, Iceland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Sweden, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Flanders and the United Kingdom. Multilateral donors include the World Bank, the IMF, the European Union, the African Development Bank, and the United Nations organizations.

Malawi is a member of the following international organizations: UN and some of its specialized and related agencies (i.e. UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO), the Commonwealth, IMF, World Bank, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Berne Convention, Universal Copyright Convention, African Union, Lome Convention, African Development Bank (AFDB), Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Nonaligned Movement, G-77, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Malawi is also a member of the International Criminal Court with a Bilateral Immunity Agreement of protection for the US-military (as covered under Article 98).

Malawi and the People's Republic of China (Chinese Mainland) established diplomatic relations secretly on December 28, 2007. On January 14, 2008, Malawi broke ties with the Republic of China (Taiwan) in public.

Demographics



Malawi derives its name from the Maravi, a Bantu people who came from the southern Congo basin circa 1400. On reaching the area north of Lake Malawi, the Maravi divided. One branch, the ancestors of the present-day Chewas, moved south to the west bank of the lake. The other, the ancestors of the Nyanjas, moved down the east bank to the southern part of the country. By 1500, the two divisions of the tribe had established a kingdom stretching from north of the present-day city of Nkhotakota to the Zambezi River in the south, and from Lake Malawi in the east, to the Luangwa River in Zambia in the west.

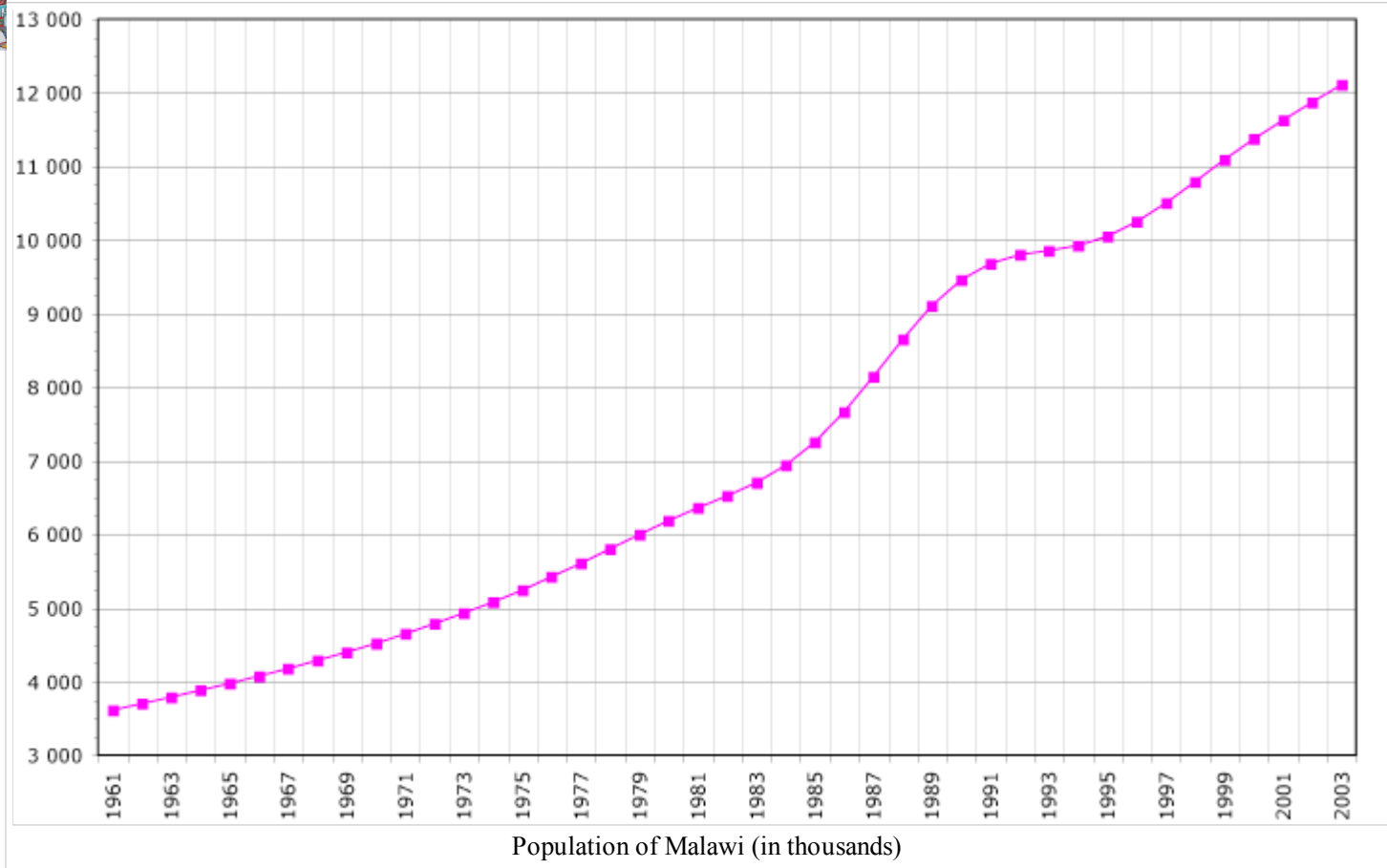
Migrations and tribal conflicts precluded the formation of a cohesive Malawian society until the turn of the 20th century. In more recent years, ethnic and tribal distinctions have diminished, although regional distinctions and rivalries persist. Despite some clear differences, no significant friction currently exists between tribal groups, and the concept of a Malawian nationality has begun to take hold. Predominantly a rural people, Malawians are generally traditionalist, which includes nonviolence.

The Chewas constitute 90% of the population of the central region; the Nyanja tribe predominates in the south and the Tumbuka in the north. In addition, significant numbers of the Tongas live in the north; Ngonis—an offshoot of the Zulus who came from South Africa in the early 1800s—live in the lower northern and lower central regions; and the Yao, who are mostly Muslim, live along the southeastern border with Mozambique. Bantus of other tribes came from Mozambique as refugees.

Europeans and Asians also live in Malawi. Most Europeans are British and Portuguese from Mozambique, and Asians are mostly Indians.



Man in Malawi



Geographic locale

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Mali

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

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Mali, officially the **Republic of Mali** (French: *République du Mali*), is a landlocked nation in Western Africa. Mali is the seventh largest country in Africa, bordering Algeria on the north, Niger on the east, Burkina Faso and the Côte d'Ivoire on the south, Guinea on the south-west, and Senegal and Mauritania on the west.

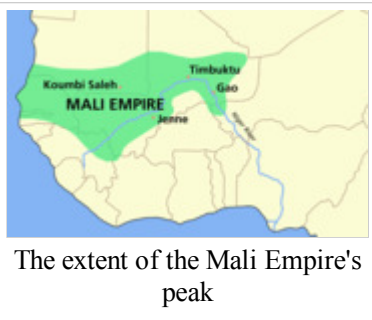
Consisting of eight regions, Mali's borders on the north reach deep into the middle of the Sahara, while the country's southern region, where the majority of inhabitants live, features the Niger and Senegal rivers. The country's economic structure centers around agriculture and fishing. Some of Mali's natural resources include gold, uranium, and salt. Due to a high incidence of poverty, Mali is considered to be one of the poorest nations in the world.

Present-day Mali was once part of three West African empires that controlled trans-Saharan trade: the Ghana Empire, the Mali Empire (from which Mali is named), and the Songhai Empire. In the late 1800s, Mali fell under French control, becoming part of French Sudan. Mali gained independence in 1959 with Senegal, as the Mali Federation in 1959. A year later, the Mali Federation became the independent nation of Mali in 1960. After a long period of one-party rule, a 1991 coup led to the writing of a new constitution and the establishment of Mali as a democratic, multi-party state.

History

Mali was once part of three famed West African empires which controlled trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, and other precious commodities. These Sahelian kingdoms had neither rigid geopolitical boundaries nor rigid ethnic identities. The earliest of these empires was the Ghana Empire, which was dominated by the Soninke, a Mande-speaking people. The nation expanded throughout West Africa from the 8th century until 1078, when it was conquered by the Almoravids.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République du Mali</i> Republic of Mali | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Un peuple, un but, une foi" "One people, one goal, one faith" | |
| Anthem: <i>Pour l'Afrique et pour toi, Mali</i> "For Africa and for you, Mali" | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Bamako |
| Official languages | French |
| Demonym | Malian |



The extent of the Mali Empire's peak

The Mali Empire later formed on the upper Niger River, and reached the height of power in the fourteenth century. Under the Mali Empire, the ancient cities of Djenné and Timbuktu were centers of both trade and Islamic learning. The empire later declined as a result of internal intrigue, ultimately being supplanted by the Songhai Empire in the 15th century. The Songhai people originated in current northwestern Nigeria. The Songhai Empire long been a major power in West Africa and remained subject to the Mali Empire's rule. In the late 14th century, the Songhai gradually gained independence from the Mali Empire and expanded, ultimately subsuming the entire eastern portion

of the Mali Empire. The empire's eventual collapse was largely the result of a Berber invasion in 1591. The fall of the Songhai Empire marked the end of the region's role as a trading crossroads. Following the establishment of sea routes by the European powers, the trans-Saharan trade routes lost significance.

In the colonial era, Mali fell under the control of the French beginning in the late 1800s. By 1905, most of the area was under firm French control as a part of French Sudan. In early 1959, Mali (then the Sudanese Republic) and Senegal united to become the Mali Federation. The Mali Federation gained independence from France on June 20, 1960. Senegal withdrew from the federation in August 1960, which allowed the Sudanese Republic to form the independent nation of Mali on September 22, 1960. Modibo Keita was elected the first president. Keita quickly established a one-party state, adopted an independent African and socialist orientation with close ties to the East, and implemented extensive nationalization of economic resources.

In November 1968, following progressive economic decline, the Keita regime was overthrown in a bloodless military coup led by Moussa Traoré. The subsequent military-led regime, with Traoré as president, attempted to reform the economy. However, his efforts were frustrated by political turmoil and a devastating drought between 1968 to 1974. The Traoré regime faced student unrest beginning in the late 1970s and three coup attempts. However, the Traoré regime repressed all dissenters until the late 1980s. The government continued to attempt economic reforms, and the populace became increasingly dissatisfied. In response to growing demands for multi-party democracy, the Traoré regime allowed some limited political liberalization, but refused to usher in a full-fledged democratic system. In 1990, cohesive opposition movements began to emerge, and was complicated by the turbulent rise of ethnic violence in the north following the return of many Tuaregs to Mali.

Anti-government protests in 1991 led to a coup, a transitional government, and a new constitution. In 1992, Alpha Oumar Konaré won Mali's first democratic, multi-party presidential election. Upon his reelection in 1997, President Konaré pushed through political and economic reforms and fought corruption. In 2002, he was succeeded in democratic elections by Amadou Toumani Touré, a retired general, who had been the leader of the military aspect of the 1991 democratic

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Government | semi-presidential republic |
| - President | Amadou Toumani Touré |
| - Prime Minister | Modibo Sidibé |
| Independence | from France |
| - Declared | September 22, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,240,192 km ² (24th) 478,839 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.6 |
| Population | |
| - July 2007 estimate | 11,995,402 (73rd) |
| - Density | 11/km ² (207th) 28/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$14.400 billion (125th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,154 (166th) |
| Gini (1994) | 50.5 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.380 (low) |
| Currency | CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .ml |
| Calling code | +223 |

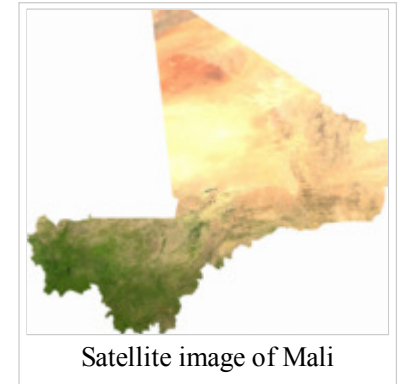


uprising. Today, Mali is one of the most politically and socially stable countries in Africa.

Geography

Mali is a landlocked nation in West Africa, located southwest of Algeria. At 1,240,000 square kilometres (479,000 sq mi), Mali is the world's 24th-largest country and is comparable in size to South Africa or Peru. Most of the country lies in the southern Sahara, which produces a hot, dust-laden harmattan haze common during dry seasons. The country extends southwest through the subtropical Sahel to the Sudanian savanna zone. Mali is mostly flat, rising to rolling northern plains covered by sand. The Adrar des Ifoghas lies in the northeast.

The country's climate ranges from subtropical in the south to arid in the north. Most of the country receives negligible rainfall; droughts are frequent. Late June to early December is the rainy season. During this time, flooding of the Niger River is common. The nation has considerable natural resources, with gold, uranium, phosphates, kaolinite, salt and limestone being most widely exploited. Mali faces numerous environmental challenges, including desertification, deforestation, soil erosion, and inadequate supplies of potable water.



Satellite image of Mali

Regions and cercles

Mali is divided into eight regions (*régions*) and one district. Each region has a governor. Since Mali's regions are huge, the country is subdivided into 49 cercles, totaling 288 arrondissements. Mayors and elected members of the city councils officiate the arrondissements.

The regions and district are:

- Gao
- Kayes
- Kidal
- Koulikoro
- Mopti
- Ségou
- Sikasso
- Tombouctou (Timbuktu)
- Bamako (capital district)



Politics and government

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Mali is a constitutional democracy governed by the constitution of January 12, 1992, which was amended in 1999. The constitution provides for a separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The system of government can be described as "semi-presidential."

Executive power is vested in a president, who is elected to a five-year term by universal suffrage and is limited to two terms. The president serves as chief of state and commander in chief of the armed forces. A prime minister appointed by the president serves as head of government and in turn appoints the Council of Ministers. The unicameral National Assembly is Mali's sole legislative body, consisting of deputies elected to five-year terms. Following the 2007 elections, the Alliance for Democracy and Progress held 113 of 160 seats in the assembly. The assembly holds two regular sessions each year, during which it debates and votes on legislation that has been submitted by a member or by the government.

Mali's constitution provides for an independent judiciary, but the executive continues to exercise influence over the judiciary by virtue of power to appoint judges and oversee both judicial functions and law enforcement. Mali's highest courts are the Supreme Court, which has both judicial and administrative powers, and a separate Constitutional Court that provides judicial review of legislative acts and serves as an election arbiter. Various lower courts exist, though village chiefs and elders resolve most local disputes in rural areas.

Foreign relations and military

Mali's foreign policy orientation has become increasingly pragmatic and pro-Western over time. Since the institution of a democratic form of government in 2002, Mali's relations with the West in general and with the United States in particular have improved significantly. Mali has a longstanding yet ambivalent relationship with France, a former colonial ruler. Mali is active in regional organizations such as the African Union. Working to control and resolve regional conflicts, such as in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, is one of Mali's major foreign policy goals. Mali feels threatened by the potential for the spillover of conflicts in neighboring states, and relations with those neighbors are often uneasy. General insecurity along borders in the north, including cross-border banditry and terrorism, remain troubling issues in regional relations.

Mali's military forces consist of an army, which includes land forces and a small navy and air force, as well as the paramilitary Gendarmerie and Republican Guard, all of which are under the control of Mali's Ministry of Defense and Veterans, headed by a civilian. The military is underpaid, poorly equipped, and in need of rationalization. Organization has suffered from the incorporation of Tuareg irregular forces into the regular military following a 1992 agreement between the government and Tuareg rebel forces. The military has generally kept a low profile since the democratic transition of 1992. The incumbent president, Amadou Toumani Touré, is a former army general and as such reportedly enjoys widespread military support. In the annual human rights report for 2003, the U.S. Department of State rated civilian control of security forces as generally effective but noted a few "instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authority."



Mali President Amadou
Toumani Touré



Malian President Amadou
Toumani Touré with U.S.
President George W. Bush



Economy

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world. The average worker's annual salary is approximately US\$1,500. Between 1992 to 1995, Mali implemented an economic adjustment program that resulted in economic growth and a reduction in financial imbalances. The program increased social and economic conditions, and led to Mali joining the World Trade Organization on May 31, 1995. The gross domestic product (GDP) has risen as a result. In 2002, the GDP amounted to US\$3.4 billion, and increased to US\$5.8 billion in 2005, which amounts to approximately 17.6% annual growth rate.

Mali's key industry is agriculture. Cotton is the country's largest crop export and is exported west throughout Senegal and the Ivory Coast. During 2002, 620,000 tons of cotton were produced in Mali but declining cotton prices in 2003 reduced demand for the crop. In addition to cotton, Mali produces rice, millet, corn, vegetables, tobacco, and tree crops. Gold, livestock and agriculture amount to eighty percent of Mali's exports. Eighty percent of Malian workers are employed in agriculture while fifteen percent work in the service sector. However, seasonal variations lead to regular temporary unemployment of agricultural workers.

In 1991, with the assistance of the International Development Association, Mali relaxed the enforcement of mining codes which led to renewed foreign interest and investment in the mining industry. Gold is mined in the southern region and Mali has the third highest gold production in Africa (after South Africa and Ghana). The emergence of gold as Mali's leading export product since 1999 has helped mitigate some of the negative impact of the cotton and Côte d'Ivoire crises. Other natural resources include kaolin, salt, phosphate, and limestone.

Electricity and water are maintained by the Energie du Mali, or EDM, and textiles are generated by Industry Textile du Mali, or ITEMA. Mali has made efficient use hydroelectricity, consisting of over half of Mali's electrical power. In 2002, 700 kWh of hydroelectric power were produced in Mali.

The Malian government participates in foreign involvement, concerning commerce and privatization. Mali underwent economic reform, beginning in 1988 by signing agreements with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. During 1988 to 1996, Mali's government largely reformed public enterprises. Since the agreement, sixteen enterprises were privatized, twelve partially privatized, and twenty liquidated. In 2005, the Malian government conceded a railroad company to the Savage Corporation, which is based in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. Two major companies, Société de Telecommunications du Mali (SOTELMA) and the Cotton Ginning Company (CMDT), are expected to be privatized in 2008.

Demographics



Market scene in Kati



A porter hauling hay



In July 2007, Mali's population was an estimated 12 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.7%. The population is predominantly rural (68% in 2002), and 5–10% of Malians are nomadic. More than 90% of the population lives in the southern part of the country, especially in Bamako, which has over 1 million residents.

In 2007, about 48% of Malians were less than fifteen years old, 49% were 15–64 years old, and 3% were 65 and older. The median age was 15.9 years. The birth rate in 2007 was 49.6 births per 1,000, and the total fertility rate was 7.4 children per woman. The death rate in 2007 was 16.5 deaths per 1,000. Life expectancy at birth was 49.5 years total (47.6 for males and 51.5 for females). Mali has one of the world's highest rates of infant mortality, with 106 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007.

Mali's population encompasses a number of sub-Saharan ethnic groups, most of which have historical, cultural, linguistic, and religious commonalities. The Bambara are by far the largest single ethnic group, making up 36.5% of the population. Collectively, the Bambara, Soninké, and Malinké, all part of the broader Mandé group, constitute 50% of Mali's population. Other significant groups are the Peul (17%), Voltaic (12%), Songhai (6%), and Tuareg and Moor (10%). Mali historically has enjoyed reasonably good inter-ethnic relations; however, some hereditary servitude relationships exist, as do ethnic tensions between the Songhai and the Tuareg.

Mali's official language is French, but numerous (40 or more) African languages also are widely used by the various ethnic groups. About 80% of Mali's population can communicate in Bambara, which is the country's principal lingua franca and marketplace language. An estimated 90% of Malians are Muslim (mostly Sunni), 9% adhere to indigenous or traditional animist beliefs, and 1% are Christian (about two-thirds Roman Catholic and one-third Protestant). Atheism and agnosticism are believed to be rare among Malians, most of whom practice their religion on a daily basis. Islam as practiced in Mali is moderate, tolerant, and adapted to local conditions; relations between Muslims and practitioners of minority religious faiths are generally amicable. The constitution establishes a secular state and provides for freedom of religion, and the government largely respects this right.



A Bozo girl in Bamako



Great Mosque of Djenné

Health and education

Mali faces numerous health challenges related to poverty, malnutrition, and inadequate hygiene and sanitation. Mali's health and development indicators rank among the worst in the world. In 2000, only 62–65 percent of the population was estimated to have access to safe drinking water and only 69 percent to sanitation services of some kind. In 2001, the general government expenditures on health totaled about US\$4 per capita at an average exchange rate. Medical facilities in Mali are very limited, and medicines are in short supply. Malaria and other arthropod-borne diseases are prevalent in Mali, as are a number of infectious diseases such as cholera and tuberculosis. Mali's population also suffers from a high rate of child malnutrition and a low rate of immunization. An estimated 1.9 percent of the adult population was afflicted with HIV/AIDS that year, among the lowest rates in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Public education in Mali is in principle provided free of charge and is compulsory for nine years between the ages of seven and 16. The system encompasses six years of primary education beginning at age seven, followed by six years of secondary education. However, Mali's actual primary school enrollment rate is low, in large part because families are unable to cover the cost of uniforms, books, supplies, and other fees required to attend. In the 2000–01 school year, the primary school enrollment rate was 61% (71% of males and 51% of females); in the late 1990s, the secondary school enrollment rate was 15% percent (20% of males and 10% of females). The education system is plagued by a lack of schools in rural areas, as well as shortages of teachers and materials. Estimates of literacy rates in Mali range from 27–30% to 46.4%, with literacy rates significantly lower among women than men.



High school students in Kati,
Mali

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Mauritania

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Mauritania (Arabic: موريتانيا *Mūrītāniyā*), officially the **Islamic Republic of Mauritania**, is a country in North-West Africa. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the west, by Senegal on the southwest, by Mali on the east and southeast, by Algeria on the northeast, and by the Morocco-controlled Western Sahara on the northwest. It is named after the ancient Berber kingdom of Mauretania. The capital and largest city is Nouakchott, located on the Atlantic coast.

History

From the fifth to seventh centuries, the migration of Berber tribes from North Africa displaced the Bafours, the original inhabitants of present-day Mauritania and the ancestors of the Soninke. The Bafours were primarily agriculturalist, and among the first Saharan people to abandon their historically nomadic lifestyle. With the gradual desiccation of the Sahara, they headed south. Following them came a migration of not only Central Saharans into West Africa, but in 1076, Moorish Islamic warrior monks (Almoravid or Al Murabitun) attacked and conquered the ancient Ghana Empire. Over the next 500 years, Arabs overcame fierce resistance from the local population (Berber and non-Berber alike) and came to dominate Mauritania. The Mauritanian Thirty-Year War (1644-74) was the unsuccessful final effort to repel the Yemeni Maqil Arab invaders led by the Beni Hassan tribe. The descendants of the Beni Hassan warriors became the upper stratum of Moorish society. Berbers retained influence by producing the majority of the region's Marabouts—those who preserve and teach Islamic tradition. Many of the Berber tribes claimed Yemeni (and sometimes other Arab) origin: there is little evidence to suggest this, though some studies do make a connection between the two. Hassaniya, a Berber-influenced Arabic dialect that derives its name from the Beni Hassan, became the dominant language among the largely nomadic population.

French colonization gradually absorbed the territories of present-day Mauritania from the Senegal river area and upwards, starting in the late 1800s. In 1901, Xavier Coppolani took charge of the colonial mission. Through a combination of strategic alliances with Zawiya tribes and military pressure on the Hassane warrior nomads, he managed to extend French rule over the Mauritanian emirates: Trarza, Brakna and Tagant quickly submitted to treaties with the colonial power (1903-04), but the northern

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>الجمهورية الإسلامية الموريتانية <i>Al-Jumhūriyyah al-Islāmiyyah</i> <i>al-Mūrītāniyyah</i> <i>République islamique de Mauritanie.</i> Islamic Republic of Mauritania</p> | |
|  <p>Flag</p> |  <p>Coat of arms</p> |
| <p>Motto: شرف إخاء عدل (Arabic) (English: Honour, Fraternity, Justice)</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: National Anthem of Mauritania</p> | |
|  | |
| <p>Capital (and largest city)</p> | <p>Nouakchott</p> |
| <p>Official languages</p> | <p>Arabic (<i>de jure</i>)</p> |



emirate of Adrar held out longer, aided by the anticolonial rebellion (or jihad) of shaykh Maa al-Aynayn. It was finally defeated militarily in 1912, and incorporated into the territory of Mauritania, which had been drawn up in 1904. Mauritania would subsequently form part of French West Africa, from 1920.

French rule brought legal prohibitions against slavery and an end to interclan warfare. During the colonial period, the population remained nomadic, but many sedentary peoples, whose ancestors had been expelled centuries earlier, began to trickle back into Mauritania. As the country gained independence in 1960, the capital city Nouakchott was founded at the site of a small colonial village, the Ksar, while 90% of the population was still nomadic. With independence, larger numbers of indigenous Sub-Saharan African peoples (Haalpulaar, Soninke, and Wolof) entered Mauritania, moving into the area north of the Senegal River. Educated in French language and customs, many of these recent arrivals became clerks, soldiers, and administrators in the new state. This, occurring as France militarily suppressed the most intransigent hassane tribes of the Moorish north, shifted old balances of power, and created new cause for conflict between the southern populations and Moors. Between these groups stood the Haratin, a very large population of Arabized slaves, who lived within Moorish society, integrated into a low-caste social position. Modern day slavery is still a common practice in this country.

Moors reacted to the change, and to Arab nationalist calls from abroad, by increasing pressure to Arabize many aspects of Mauritanian life, such as law and language. A schism developed between those Moors who consider Mauritania to be an Arab country and those who seek a dominant role for the non-Moorish peoples, with various models for containing the country's cultural diversity suggested, but none implemented successfully. This ethnic discord was evident during intercommunal violence that broke out in April 1989 (the " 1989 Events" and " Mauritania-Senegal Border War"), but has since subsided. The ethnic tension and the sensitive issue of slavery - past and, in some areas, present - is still a powerful theme in the country's political debate. A significant number from all groups, however, seek a more diverse, pluralistic society.

Politics

Politics in Mauritania has always been determined by personalities and tribes more than ideologies, with any leader's ability to exercise political power dependent upon control over resources; perceived ability and integrity; and tribal, ethnic, family, and personal considerations. Conflict between white Moor, black Moor (Haratine), and non-Moor ethnic groups (Haal Pulaars, Soninkes, Wolofs and Bambaras), centering on language, land tenure, and other issues, continues to be the dominant challenge to national unity.

The government bureaucracy is composed of traditional ministries, special agencies, and parastatal

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| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | French (<i>de facto</i>) |
| Demonym | Mauritanian |
| Government | Parliamentary republic |
| - President | Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi |
| - Prime Minister | Yahya Ould Ahmed El Waghef |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | November 28, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,030,700 km ² (29th) 397,954 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.03 |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 3,069,000 (135th) |
| - 1988 census | 1,864,236 |
| - Density | 3.0/km ² (221st) 7.8/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$7.159 billion (144th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,402 (132nd) |
| Gini (2000) | 39 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.550 (medium) (137th) |
| Currency | Ouguiya (MRO) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .mr |
| Calling code | +222 |



companies. The Ministry of Interior spearheads a system of regional governors and prefects modeled on the French system of local administration. Under this system, Mauritania is divided into thirteen regions (*wilaya*), including the capital district, Nouakchott. Control is tightly concentrated in the executive branch of the central government, but a series of national and municipal elections since 1992 have produced some limited decentralization.

Mauritania, along with Morocco, annexed the territory of Western Sahara in 1976, with Mauritania taking the lower one-third at the request of former colonial power, Spain. After several military losses to Polisario, heavily armed and supported by Algeria, the local hegemon and rival to Morocco, Mauritania retreated in 1979, and its claims were taken over by Morocco. Due to economic weakness, Mauritania has been a negligible player in the territorial dispute, with its official position being that it wishes for an expedient solution that is mutually agreeable to all parties. While most of the former Spanish or Western Sahara has been woven into Morocco, the UN still considers the Western Sahara a territory that needs to express its wishes with respect to statehood: a referendum is still supposed to be held sometimes in the future, under UN auspices, to determine whether the "saharaouis" wish to remain part of Morocco or not. The Moroccan authorities, on their part, wish the saharaouis to remain part of Morocco and, as such, have made significant investments in the area.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy signed an agreement in Washington DC, USA on October 28th,1999, establishing full diplomatic relations with Mauritania, an Islamic country and a member of the Arab League.

The signing ceremony was held at the U.S. State Department in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright – who invited the Israeli Foreign Minister and his Mauritanian counterpart, Ahmed Sid' Ahmed, to sign the agreement in Washington DC. The United States of America views this important development as a product of, among other things, the September 24th,1999, New York City meeting initiated by the United States of America, and attended by the Foreign Ministers of Israel, Mauritania and a series of other Arab states.

Earlier this year, Israel announced its first project in Mauritania, an eye clinic operated by the Foreign Ministry's Centre for International Cooperation (MASHAV).

Both Israel and the United States view the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Israel and Mauritania as a milestone in the promotion of normalization, which is widely seen as the goal of the peace process which has evolved since the Madrid Conference. Mauritania joins Egypt and Jordan as the only members of the Arab League to post ambassadors in Israel. The Israeli Foreign Ministry will continue to work for the development and strengthening of Israel's relations with other countries in the region. On February 1, 2008 at least one gunman opened fire on the Israeli embassy, injuring at least three people

On 31 January (2008) Permanent representative of Republic of Armenia to the United Nations (New York) Armen Martirosyan has signed a protocol with Abderahim Ould Hadrami (Mauritanian representative to UN) in New York establishing full diplomatic relations with Mauritania.

The discovery of oil in 2001 in the offshore Chinguetti deposit will be a test for the current government since, according to human rights activists, it can be a blessing for one of the poorest countries in the world as well as a curse bringing corruption and violence to the country.

The Ould Daddah era (1960-78)

After independence, President Moktar Ould Daddah, originally installed by the French, formalized Mauritania into a one-party state in 1964 with a new

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constitution, which set up an authoritarian presidential regime. Daddah's own Parti du Peuple Mauritanien (PPM) became the ruling organization in a single-party system. The President justified this decision on the grounds that he considered Mauritania unready for western-style multi-party democracy. Under this one-party constitution, Daddah was reelected in uncontested elections in 1966, 1971 and 1976. He was ousted in a bloodless coup on July 10, 1978, after bringing the country to near-collapse through a disastrous war to annex the southern part of Western Sahara, in an attempt to create a " Greater Mauritania".

CMRN and CMSN military governments (1978-84)

Col. Mustafa Ould Salek's CMRN *junta* proved incapable of either establishing a strong base of power or extracting the country from its destabilizing conflict with the Sahrawi resistance movement, the Polisario Front. It quickly fell to be replaced by another military government, the CMSN. The energetic Col. Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidallah soon emerged as its main strongman, and by giving up all claims to Western Sahara he found peace with the Polisario, and improved relations with its main backer, Algeria - but relations with the other party to the conflict, Morocco, and its European ally France, deteriorated. Instability continued, and Haidallah's ambitious reform attempts foundered. His regime was plagued by attempted coups and intrigue within the military establishment; in 1984, finally, he was deposed by Col. Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya.

Ould Taya's rule (1984-2005)

The *Parti Républicain Démocratique et Social* (PRDS), formerly led by President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, dominated Mauritanian politics following the country's first multi-party elections in April 1992 following the approval by referendum of the current constitution in July 1991. President Taya, who won elections in 1992 and 1997, first became chief of state through a December 12, 1984 bloodless coup which made him chairman of the committee of military officers that governed Mauritania from July 1978 to April 1992.

Political parties, illegal during the military period, were legalized again in 1991. By April 1992, as civilian rule returned, 16 major political parties had been recognized; 12 major political parties were active in 2004. Most opposition parties boycotted the first legislative election in 1992, and for nearly a decade the parliament was dominated by the PRDS. The opposition participated in municipal elections in January-February 1994 and subsequent Senate elections, most recently in April 2004, gained representation at the local level as well as three seats in the Senate.

Mauritania's presidential election, its third since adopting the democratic process in 1992, took place on November 7, 2003. Six candidates, including Mauritania's first female and first Haratine (former slave family) candidates, represented a wide variety of political goals and backgrounds. Incumbent President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya won reelection with 67.02% of the popular vote, according to the official figures, with Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla finishing second.

Sid'Ahmed Taya recognized Israel (see Foreign relations of Mauritania), which made Mauritania the only Arab country not neighbouring Israel which recognized the latter (Morocco and Qatar have official ties with Israel, but do not fully recognize it). He also started cooperating with the United States in antiterrorism activities, which was criticized by human rights NGOs, who talked of an exaggeration and instrumentation of alleged terrorist activities for geopolitical aims.



A group of current and former Army officers launched a bloody but unsuccessful coup attempt on June 8, 2003. The leaders of the attempted coup were never caught.

August 2005 military coup

On 3 August 2005, a military coup led by Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall ended Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya's twenty-one years of strong-arm rule.

On August 3, the Mauritanian military, including members of the presidential guard, seized control of key points in the capital of Nouakchott. They took advantage of President Taya's attendance at the funeral of Saudi King Fahd to organize the coup, which took place without loss of life. The officers, calling themselves the Military Council for Justice and Democracy, released the following statement:

"The national armed forces and security forces have unanimously decided to put a definitive end to the oppressive activities of the defunct authority, which our people have suffered from during the past years." (BBC)

The Military Council later issued another statement naming Colonel Vall as president and director of the national police force, the *Sûreté Nationale*. Sixteen other officers were listed as members. Colonel Vall was once regarded as a firm ally of the now-ousted president Rashed sheik adan even aiding him in the original coup that brought him to power, and later serving as his security chief.

Applauded by the Mauritanian people, but cautiously watched by the international community, the coup has since been generally accepted, while the military *junta* has organized elections within the promised two year timeline. In a referendum on 26 June 2006, Mauritians overwhelmingly (97%) approved a new constitution which limited the duration of a president's stay in office. The leader of the junta, Col. Vall, promised to abide by the referendum and relinquish power peacefully. Mauritania's establishment of relations with the State of Israel - it is one of only four Arab states to recognize Israel - was maintained by the new regime, despite widespread criticism from the opposition, who viewed it as a legacy of the Taya regime's attempts to curry favour with the West.

Parliamentary and municipal elections in Mauritania took place on 19 November and 3 December 2006.

2007 Presidential election

The first fully democratic Presidential election since 1960 occurred on 11 March 2007. The election is the final transfer from military to civilian rule following the military coup in 2005. This is the first time the president has been selected in a multi-candidate election in the country's post-independence history.

The election was won in a second round of voting by Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, with Ahmed Ould Daddah a close second.

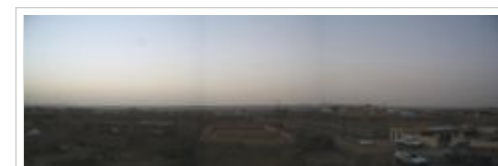
Regions and departments



Mauritania is divided into 12 regions (*régions*) and one capital district, which in turn are subdivided into 44 departments (*départements*). The regions and capital district (in alphabetical order) and their capitals are:

| Region | Capital |
|--------------------|------------|
| Adrar | Atar |
| Assaba | Kifa |
| Brakna | Aleg |
| Dakhlet Nouadhibou | Nouadhibou |
| Gorgol | Kaédi |
| Guidimaka | Sélibaby |
| Hodh Ech Chargui | Néma |

| Region | Capital |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Hodh El Gharbi | Ayoum el Atrous |
| Inchiri | Akjoujt |
| Nouakchott (capital district) | |
| Tagant | Tidjikdja |
| Tiris Zemmour | F'dérik |
| Trarza | Rosso |



Atar, Mauritania



Chinguetti mosque

Geography



Sand dunes altered by traces of the Dakar Rally; Desert scenes continue to define the Mauritanian landscape.



Satellite image of Mauritania, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



At 397,929 mi² (1,030,700 km²), Mauritania is the world's 29th-largest country (after Bolivia). It is comparable in size to Egypt.

Mauritania is generally flat, its 1,030,700 square kilometers (397,850 sq mi) forming vast, arid plains broken by occasional ridges and clifflike outcroppings. A series of scarps face southwest, longitudinally bisecting these plains in the centre of the country. The scarps also separate a series of sandstone plateaus, the highest of which is the Adrar Plateau, reaching an elevation of 500 meters (1,640 ft). Spring-fed oases lie at the foot of some of the scarps. Isolated peaks, often rich in minerals, rise above the plateaus; the smaller peaks are called guelbs and the larger ones kedias. The concentric Guelb er Richat (also known as the Richat Structure) is a prominent feature of the north-central region. Kediet Ijill, near the city of Zouïrât, has an elevation of 1,000 meters (3,280 ft) and is the highest peak.



Richat Structure, Mauritania

Approximately three quarters of Mauritania is desert or semidesert. As a result of extended, severe drought, the desert has been expanding since the mid-1960s. To the west, between the ocean and the plateaus, are alternating areas of clayey plains (regs) and sand dunes (ergs), some of which shift from place to place, gradually moved by high winds. The dunes generally increase in size and mobility toward the north.

Economy

A majority of the population still depends on agriculture and livestock for a livelihood, even though most of the nomads and many subsistence farmers were forced into the cities by recurrent droughts in the 1970s and 1980s. Mauritania has extensive deposits of iron ore, which account for almost 50% of total exports. With the current rises in metal prices, gold and copper mining companies are opening mines in the interior. The nation's coastal waters are among the richest fishing areas in the world, but overexploitation by foreigners threatens this key source of revenue. The country's first deepwater port opened near Nouakchott in 1986. In recent years, drought and economic mismanagement have resulted in a buildup of foreign debt. In March 1999, the government signed an agreement with a joint World Bank- IMF mission on a \$54 million enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF). The economic objectives have been set for 1999-2002. Privatization remains one of the key issues. Mauritania is unlikely to meet ESAF's annual GDP growth objectives of 4%-5%.

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Mauritius

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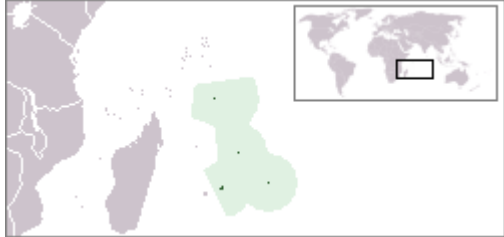
SOS Children works in Mauritius. For more information see SOS Children in Mauritius, Africa

Mauritius (pronounced: IPA: /məˈrɪʃəs/; French: *Île Maurice* /il mɔˈʁis/; Mauritian Creole: *Maurice*), officially the **Republic of Mauritius**, French: *République de Maurice*, is an island nation off the coast of the African continent in the southwest Indian Ocean, about 900 kilometres (560 mi) east of Madagascar. In addition to the island of Mauritius, the republic includes the islands of St. Brandon, Rodrigues and the Agalega Islands. Mauritius is part of the Mascarene Islands, with the French island of Réunion 200 km (125 mi) to the southwest and the island of Rodrigues 570 km to the northeast.

History

The first record of Mauritius comes from Dravidian and Austronesian sailors as early as the 10th century. The Portuguese sailors first visited it in 1507 and established a visiting base leaving the island uninhabited. Three ships of the eight Dutch *Second Fleet* that were sent to the Spice Islands were blown off course during a cyclone and landed on the island in 1598, naming it in honour of Prince Maurice of Nassau, the Stadtholder of the Netherlands. In 1638, the Dutch established the first permanent settlement. Because of tough climatic conditions including cyclones and the deterioration of the settlement, the Dutch abandoned the island some decades later. France, which already controlled the neighbouring Île Bourbon (now Réunion) seized Mauritius in 1715 and later renamed it *Île de France* (Isle of France). Under French rule, the island developed a prosperous economy based on sugar production. This economic transformation was initiated in part by governor François Mahé de Labourdonnais.

During their numerous military conflicts with Great Britain, the French harboured the outlawed "corsairs" (privateers or pirates) who frequently took British vessels as they sailed between India and Britain, laden with valuable trade goods. In the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) the British set out to gain control of the island. Despite winning the Battle of Grand Port, Napoleon's only naval victory over the British, the French lost to the British at Cap Malheureux three months later. They formally surrendered on 3 December 1810, on terms allowing settlers to keep their land and property and to use the French

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Republic of Mauritius <i>République de Maurice</i> | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>Stella Clavisque Maris Indici</i> " (Latin) "Star and Key of the Indian Ocean" | |
| Anthem: <i>Motherland</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Port Louis |
| Official languages | English ¹ |
| Recognised regional languages | Mauritian Creole, French, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Chinese (Mandarin), Telugu, |



language and law of France in criminal and civil matters. Under British rule, the island's name reverted to the original *Mauritius*.

In 1965, the United Kingdom split the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius to create the British Indian Ocean Territory in order to use the strategic islands for defence purposes in co-operation with the United States. Although the Government of Mauritius agreed to the move at the time, subsequent administrations have laid claim to the islands stating that the divestment was illegal under international law, a claim recognised by the United Nations.



A postcard c.1900-1910 showing the Port Louis theatre.

Mauritius attained independence in 1968 and the country became a republic within the Commonwealth in 1992. Mauritius has been a stable democracy with regular free elections and a positive human rights record, and has attracted considerable foreign investment earning one of Africa's highest per capita incomes.

Politics

Mauritius is a parliamentary democracy similar in structure to the United Kingdom. The head of state of Mauritius is the President, who is elected for a five-year term by the National Assembly, the unicameral Mauritian parliament. The National Assembly consists of 62 members elected directly by popular vote, with between four and eight further members appointed from "best losers" election candidates to represent ethnic minorities, if under represented after the elections. The government is headed by the prime minister and a council of ministers.

The Government is elected on a five-year basis. The most recent general elections took place on 3 July 2005 in all the 20 mainland constituencies, as well as the constituency covering the island of Rodrigues.

Historically, elections have always had a tendency to adhere to a system comprising two major coalitions of parties.

In international affairs, Mauritius is part of the Indian Ocean Commission, the Southern African Development Community and the Commonwealth of Nations and La Francophonie (French speaking countries) amongst others. A more complete list can be found in the main Politics of Mauritius article.

In 2006, Mauritius asked to be an observing member of Community of Portuguese Language Countries

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Mauritian Bhojpuri |
| Demonym | Mauritian |
| Government | Parliamentary republic |
| - President | Anerood Jugnauth |
| - Prime Minister | Navinchandra Ramgoolam |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Date | March 12, 1968 |
| - Republic | March 12, 1992 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 2,040 km ² (179th) 787 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.05 |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 1,264,866 ² (151st) |
| - Density | 616/km ² (18th) 1,564/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$16.0 billion (119th) |
| - Per capita | \$13,703 (51st) |
| HDI (2004) | ▲ 0.804 (high) (65th) |
| Currency | Mauritian rupee (MUR) |
| Time zone | MUT (UTC+4) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+4) |
| Internet TLD | .mu |
| Calling code | +230 |
| ¹ | |
| ² | The population estimate is for the whole republic. For the island of Mauritius only , as at 31 December 2007, it is 1,227,078 |



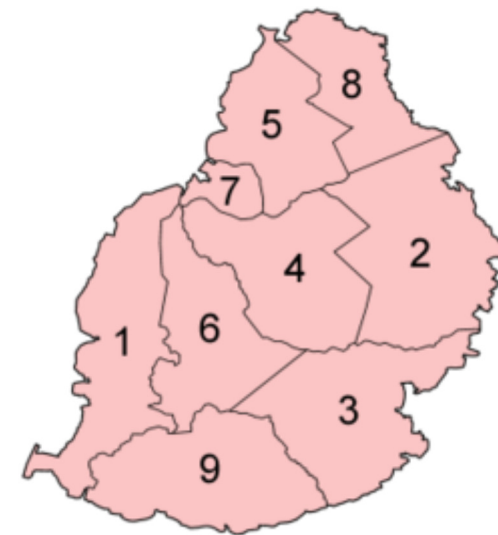
(CPLP) in order to become closer to those countries.

Mauritius does not have a standing army but it does have an military structure (like Coast Guard officers) and does have security and police forces.

Districts and dependencies

The island of Mauritius itself is divided into nine districts:

1. Black River (Capital: Bambous)
2. Flacq (Capital: Centre de Flacq)
3. Grand Port (Capital: Mahebourg)
4. Moka (Capital: Quartier Militaire)
5. Pamplemousses (Capital: Triolet)
6. Plaines Wilhems (Capital: Rose Hill/ Curepipe)
7. Port Louis (Capital of Mauritius)
8. Rivière du Rempart (Capital: Mapou)
9. Savanne (Capital: Souillac)



Dependencies

- Rodrigues, an island 560 kilometres north-east of Mauritius, which attained limited autonomy in October 2002. Had the status of the 10th administrative district of Mauritius before autonomy was attained.
- Agalega, two small islands about 933 kilometres (580 mi) north of Mauritius.
- Cargados Carajos Shoals, also known as the Saint Brandon islands, about 402 kilometres (250 mi) north of Mauritius.

Other Mauritian territories

- Soudan Banks (including East Soudan Bank)
- Nazareth Bank
- Saya de Malha Bank
- Hawkins Bank

Mauritius also claims the following territories:

- Tromelin Island, currently in French possession.
- Chagos Archipelago, currently a British possession as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).



Geography

Together with Réunion and Rodrigues, Mauritius is part of the Mascarene Islands. This archipelago was formed in a series of undersea volcanic eruptions, as the African plate drifted over the Réunion hotspot. Mauritius and Rodrigues were formed 8-10 million years ago. They are no longer volcanically active, and the hotspot now rests under Réunion. The island of Mauritius itself is formed around a central plateau, with its highest peak in the southwest, Piton de la Petite Rivière Noire at 828 metres (2,717 ft). Around the plateau, the original crater can still be distinguished from several mountains.



Satellite image of Mauritius, February 2003, with traced outline of island.

The local climate is tropical, modified by southeast trade winds; there is a warm, dry winter from May to November and a hot, wet, and humid summer from November to May. Anti-cyclones affect the country during May to September. Cyclones affect the country during November-April. Hollanda (1994) and Dina (2002) were the worst two last cyclones to have affected the island.

The island's capital and largest city is Port Louis, in the northwest. Other important towns are Curepipe, Vacoas, Phoenix, Quatre Bornes, Rose-Hill and Beau-Bassin .

The island is well known for its natural beauty. Author Mark Twain, for example, noted in *Following the Equator*, his personal travelogue, "You gather the idea that Mauritius was made first and then heaven, and that heaven was copied after Mauritius". (This quote is often taken out of context. Twain actually wrote: "From one citizen you gather the idea that Mauritius was made first, and then heaven; and that heaven was copied after Mauritius. Another one tells you that this is an exaggeration...")

Economy



Map of Mauritius



Since independence in 1968, Mauritius has developed from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a middle income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial, and tourist sectors. For most of the period, annual growth has been of the order of 5% to 6%. This has been reflected in increased life expectancy, lowered infant mortality and an improved infrastructure.

Estimated at US\$10,155 for 2005 at purchasing power parity (PPP), Mauritius has the seventh-highest GDP per capita in Africa, behind Réunion (US\$19,233 at real exchange rates), Seychelles (US\$13,887 at PPP), Gabon (US\$12,742 at PPP), Botswana (US\$12,057 at PPP), Equatorial Guinea (US\$11,999 at PPP), and Libya (US\$10,727 at PPP). The economy is mainly dependent on sugarcane plantations, tourism, textiles, and services, but other sectors are rapidly developing as well. Mauritius, Libya, and Seychelles are the only three African nations with a "high" Human Development Index rating (Réunion, as part of France, is not listed by the UN in their Human Development Index ranking).



Skyline of Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius.

Sugar cane is grown on about 90% of the cultivated land area and accounts for 25% of export earnings. However, a record-setting drought severely damaged the sugar crop in 1999. The government's development strategy centres on foreign investment. Mauritius has attracted more than 9,000 offshore entities; many aimed at commerce in India and South Africa while investment in the banking sector alone has reached over \$1 billion. Economic performance during the period from 2000 through 2004 combined strong economic growth with unemployment at 7.6% in December 2004. France is the country's biggest trading partner, has close ties with the country, and provides technical assistance in various forms.

In order to provide locals with access to imports at lower prices and attract more tourists going to Singapore and Dubai, Mauritius is gearing towards becoming a duty-free island within the next four years. Duty has been eliminated for several products and decreased for more than 1850 products including clothing, food, jewelry, photographic equipment, audio visual equipment and lighting equipment. In addition, reforms aimed at attracting new business opportunities have also been implemented. Recently, in the 2007-2008 budget, Finance Minister Rama Sithanen reduced the corporate tax to 15%. The British American Investment Company represents Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot, Mitsubishi and Saab car sales in Mauritius.

A plan by ADB Networks calls for Mauritius to become the first nation to have coast-to-coast wireless internet access. The wireless hot spot currently covers about 60% of the island and is accessible by about 70% of its population.

Mauritius ranks first in respect of FDI inflows to India amongst all the countries, with cumulative inflows amounting to US\$10.98 billion. The top sectors attracting FDI inflows from Mauritius between January 2000 and December 2005 are electrical equipment, telecommunications, fuels, cement and gypsum products and services sector (financial and non-financial).

Demographics

Mauritian society includes people from many different ethnic groups. A majority of the republic's residents are the descendants of people from the Indian subcontinent with substantial populations from continental Africa, Madagascar, France, Great Britain, and China, among other places.



Language

The official language of Mauritius is English. All government administrative documents are therefore drawn up in English. Together with English, French is also used in instruction in the educational system. French, however, predominates in the media, both broadcast and printed as well as with business and in corporate affairs.

The most widely-spoken language of the country is Mauritian Creole, which has close ties with French pronunciation, but with a few marked differences. Mauritian Creole is considered the native tongue of the country.

Hindi and Urdu also has numerous speakers in the country, although both are used mainly in the Indo-Mauritian community. Several other languages including Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Punjabi and dialects of Chinese, such as Cantonese, Hakka and Mandarin, are also spoken by significant parts of the population. Arabic is also taught in Mosques around Mauritius.

Religion

The largest religions present in the republic are Hinduism (48%), Roman Catholicism (23.6%), Islam (16.6%), and other Christian denominations (8.6%); followers of other faiths totaled 2.5%.

Culture

The cuisine of Mauritius is a blend of Creole, Chinese, European and Indian influences. It is common for a combination of cuisines to form part of the same meal. The "cari poule" or chicken curry, for example, is a very popular dish. Other common Mauritian dishes include the "dholl puri" (a type of bread, made from lentils) the "mine-frit" (Chinese fried noodle), and "niouk nien" (dumplings). A common Mauritian drink is "alouda", a milk-based drink containing basil seeds.

The production of rum is widespread on the island. Sugarcane was first introduced to Mauritius by the Dutch in 1638. The Dutch mainly cultivated sugarcane for the production of " arrack", a precursor to rum. However, it was during the French and British administrations that sugar production was fully exploited, which considerably contributed to the economical development of the island. Pierre Charles François Harel was the first to propose the concept of local distillation of rum in Mauritius, in 1850.

The *sega* is a local folklore music. Sega has African roots, and main traditional instruments for producing the music are goat-skin percussion instruments called *ravane* and metallic clicks using metal *triangles*. The songs usually describe the miseries of slavery, and has been adapted nowadays as social satires to voice out inequalities as felt by the blacks. Men are usually at the instruments while women perform an accompanying dance. Shows are regularly hosted in the coastal hotels.



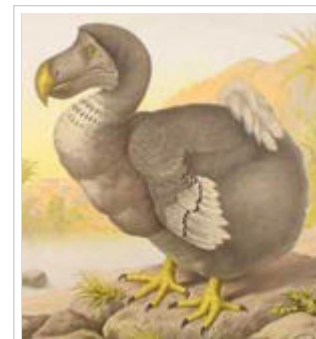
In 1847, Mauritius became the fifth country in the world to issue postage stamps. The two types of stamps issued then, known as the *Mauritius Post Office* stamps, consisting of a Red Penny and Blue Two Pence denomination, are probably the most famous and valuable stamps in the world.

When discovered, the island of Mauritius was home to a previously unknown species of bird, which the Portuguese named the dodo (simpleton), as they appeared not too bright. However, by 1681, all dodos had been killed by settlers or their domesticated animals. An alternate theory suggests that the imported wild boar destroyed the slow breeding dodo population. Nevertheless, the dodo is prominently featured as a supporter of the national coat-of-arms (see above).

The island has also given rise to a diversified literature, prominent in French, English, and Creole.

International rankings

| Organisation | Survey | Ranking |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------|
| Heritage Foundation/The Wall Street Journal | 2008 Index of Economic Freedom | 18 out of 157 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Press Freedom Index (2006) | 32 out of 168 |
| Transparency International | 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index 2007 | 53 out of 179 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index 2006 | 65 out of 177 |



Mauritius was the only known habitat of the extinct Dodo bird.

Retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauritius>"

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Morocco

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Morocco. For more information see SOS Children in Morocco, Africa

Morocco (Arabic: المغرب "al-Maghrib"), officially the **Kingdom of Morocco** (Arabic: المملكة المغربية), is a country in North Africa with a population of 33,757,175. It has a coast on the Atlantic Ocean that reaches past the Strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea. Morocco has international borders with Algeria to the east, Spain to the north (a water border through the Strait and land borders with two small Spanish autonomous cities, Ceuta and Melilla), and Mauritania to the south.

Morocco is the only African country that is not currently a member of the African Union. However, it is a member of the Arab League at present, Arab Maghreb Union, the Francophonie, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mediterranean Dialogue group, and Group of 77, and is a major non-NATO ally of the United States.

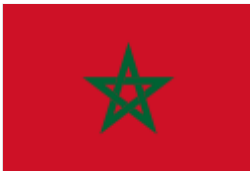

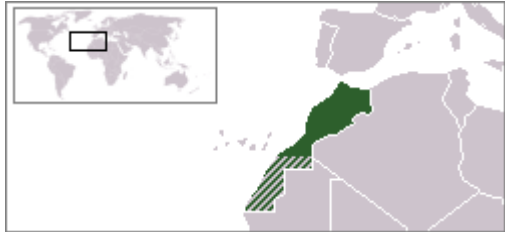
Name

The full Arabic name *Al-Mamlaka al-Maghribiya* translates to "The Western Kingdom." *Al-Maghrib* (meaning "The West") is commonly used. For historical references, medieval Arab historians and geographers used to refer to Morocco as *Al-Maghrib al Aqṣá* ("The Farthest West"), disambiguating it from neighboring historical regions called *al-Maghrib al Awsat* ("The Middle West", Algeria) and *al-Maghrib al Adna* ("The Nearest West", Tunisia).

The Latinized name "Morocco" originates from medieval Latin "Morroch," which referred to the name of the former Almoravid and Almohad capital, Marrakech. The Persians straightforwardly call it "Marrakech" while the Turks call it "Fas" which comes from the ancient Idrisid and Marinid capital, Fès.

The word "Marrakech" is presumably derived from the Berber word *Mur-Akush* meaning *Land of God*.

History

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>المملكة المغربية Al-Mamlaka al-Maghribiyya Kingdom of Morocco</p> | |
|  <p>Flag</p> |  <p>Coat of arms</p> |
| <p>Motto: "Allāh, al Waṭan, al Malik" (transliteration) "God, Nation, King"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: " Hymne Chérifien"</p> | |
|  <p>The striped area on the map shows Western Sahara, most of which is de facto administered by Morocco as its "Southern Provinces". Its sovereignty, however, is currently in dispute.</p> | |
| Capital | Rabat |
| Largest city | Casablanca |



Berber Morocco

The area of present-day Morocco has been inhabited since Neolithic times (at least since 8000 BC, as attested by signs of the Capsian culture), a period when the Maghreb was less arid than it is today. Many theorists believe the Amazigh people, commonly referred to as Berbers or by their regional ethnic identity (e.g. Chleuh), probably arrived at roughly the same time as the inception of agriculture in the region. In the classical period, Morocco was known as Mauretania, although this should not be confused with the modern country of Mauritania.

Roman and pre-Roman Morocco

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Official languages | Arabic, others commonly used unofficially. |
| Demonym | Moroccan |
| Government | Constitutional monarchy |
| - King | Mohammed VI |
| - Prime Minister | Abbas El Fassi |
| Unification | 1554 |
| - Unified by Saadi dynasty | 1554 |
| - Alaouite dynasty (present) | 1666 |
| - Independence from France | March 2, 1956 |
| - Independence from Spain | April 7, 1956 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 446,550* km ² (57th) 172,414 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 250km ² |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 33,757,175 (37th) |
| - Density | 70/km ² (122nd) 181/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$152.5 billion (54th) |
| - Per capita | \$4,600 (109th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.646 (medium) (126th) |
| Currency | Moroccan dirham (MAD) |
| Time zone | WET (UTC+0) |



North Africa and Morocco were slowly drawn into the wider emerging Mediterranean world by Phoenician trading colonies and settlements in the late Classical period. The arrival of Phoenicians heralded a long engagement with the wider Mediterranean, as this strategic region formed part of the Roman Empire, as Mauretania Tingitana. In the fifth century, as the Roman Empire declined, the region fell to the Vandals, Visigoths, and then Byzantine Greeks in rapid succession. During this time, however, the high mountains of most of modern Morocco remained unsubdued, and stayed in the hands of their Berber inhabitants.

Medieval Morocco

By the seventh century, Islamic expansion was at its greatest. In 670 AD, the first Islamic conquest of the North African coastal plain took place under Uqba ibn Nafi, a general serving under the Umayyads of Damascus. His delegates went to what is now Morocco, which he called "Maghreb al Aqsa" or "The Far West," in the year 683. The delegates supported the assimilation process that took about a century.

What became modern Morocco in the seventh century, was an area of Berbers influenced by the Arabs, who brought their customs, culture, and Islam, to which most of the Berbers converted, forming states and kingdoms such as the Kingdom of Nekor and Barghawata, sometimes after long-running series of civil wars. Under Idris ibn Abdallah who founded the Idrisid Dynasty, the country soon cut ties and broke away from the control of the distant Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad and the Umayyad rule in Al-Andalus. The Idrisids established Fes as their capital and Morocco became a centre of learning and a major regional power.

After the reign of the Idrisids, Arab settlers lost political control in the region of Morocco. After adopting Islam, Berber dynasties formed governments and reigned over the country. Morocco would reach its height under these Berber dynasties that replaced the Arab Idrisids after the 11th century. The Almoravids, the Almohads, then the Marinid and finally the Saadi dynasties would see Morocco rule most of Northwest Africa, as well as large sections of Islamic Iberia, or Al-Andalus.

Alaouite Dynasty 1666–1912

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| - Summer (DST) | WEST (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .ma |
| Calling code | +212 |
| *All data excludes Western Sahara, much of which is under Moroccan <i>de facto</i> administrative control. | |
| 1 French is widely used in the government in official texts, and in the business community, though neither instance is 'official.' Moroccan Arabic, an Arabic vernacular is the most common native language. Amazigh or Berber languages are also widely spoken. | |



A Roman mosaic in Volubilis.



High Atlas, Boumalne du Dades.



The last page of 1786 treaty of friendship, sealed by Mohammed III of Morocco, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.

After the Saadi, the Arab Alaouite Dynasty eventually gained control. Morocco was facing aggression from Spain and the Ottoman Empire that was sweeping westward. The Alaouites succeeded in stabilizing their position, and while the kingdom was smaller than previous ones in the region, it remained quite wealthy. In 1684, they annexed Tangier.

Morocco was the first nation to recognize the fledgling United States as an independent nation in 1777. In the beginning of the American Revolution, American merchant ships were subject to attack by the Barbary Pirates while sailing the Atlantic Ocean. At this time, American envoys tried to obtain protection from European powers, but to no avail. On 20 December 1777, Morocco's Sultan Mohammed III declared that the American merchant ships would be under the protection of the sultanate and could thus enjoy safe passage.

The Moroccan-American Treaty of Friendship stands as the U.S.'s oldest non-broken friendship treaty. Signed by John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, it has been in continuous effect since 1786. Following the reorganization of the U.S. federal government upon the 1787 Constitution, President George Washington wrote a now venerated letter to the Sultan Sidi Mohamed strengthening the ties between the two countries. The United States legation (consulate) in Tangier is the first property the American government ever owned abroad. The building now houses the Tangier American Legation Museum.

European influence

Successful Portuguese efforts to invade and control the Atlantic coast in the fifteenth century did not profoundly affect the Mediterranean heart of Morocco. After the Napoleonic Wars, Egypt and the North African maghreb became increasingly ungovernable from Istanbul, the resort of pirates under local beys, and as Europe industrialized, an increasingly prized potential for colonization. The Maghreb had far greater proven wealth than the unknown rest of Africa and a location of strategic importance affecting the exit from the Mediterranean. For the first time, Morocco became a state of some interest in itself to the European Powers. France showed a strong interest in Morocco as early as 1830. Recognition by the United Kingdom in 1904 of France's sphere of influence in Morocco provoked a German reaction; the crisis of June 1905 was resolved at the Algeiras Conference, Spain in 1906, which formalized France's "special position" and entrusted policing of Morocco to France and Spain jointly. A second Moroccan crisis provoked by Berlin, increased tensions between European powers. The Treaty of Fez (signed on March 30, 1912) made Morocco a protectorate of France. By the same treaty, Spain assumed the role of protecting power over the northern and southern Saharan zones on November 27 that year.

Many Moroccan soldiers (Goumieres) served in the French army in both World War I and World War II, and in the Spanish Nationalist Army in the Spanish Civil War and after (*Regulares*).

Resistance

Nationalist political parties, which subsequently arose under the French protectorate, based their arguments for Moroccan independence on such World War II declarations as the Atlantic Charter (a joint U.S.-British statement that set forth, among other things, the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they live). A manifesto of the Istiqlal Party (Independence party in English) in 1944 was one of the earliest public demands for independence. That



party subsequently provided most of the leadership for the nationalist movement.

France's exile of Sultan Mohammed V in 1953 to Madagascar and his replacement by the unpopular Mohammed Ben Aarafa, whose reign was perceived as illegitimate, sparked active opposition to the French protectorate all over the country. The most notable occurred in Oujda where Moroccans attacked French and other European residents in the streets. Operations by the newly created "Jaish al-tahrir" (Liberation Army), were launched on October 1, 1955. Jaish al-tahrir was created by "Comité de Libération du Maghreb Arabe" (Arab Maghreb Liberation Committee) in Cairo, Egypt to constitute a resistance movement against occupation. Its goal was the return of King Mohammed V and the liberation of Algeria and Tunisia as well. France allowed Mohammed V to return in 1955, and the negotiations that led to Moroccan independence began the following year.

All those events helped increase the degree of solidarity between the people and the newly returned king. For this reason, the revolution that Morocco knew was called "Taourat al-malik wa shaab" (The revolution of the King and the People) and it is celebrated every August 20.

Modern Morocco

On November 18, 2006, Morocco celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence. Morocco recovered its political independence from France on March 2, 1956, and on April 7, France officially relinquished its protectorate. Through agreements with Spain in 1956 and 1958, Moroccan control over certain Spanish-ruled areas was restored, though attempts to claim other Spanish colonial possessions through military action were less successful. The internationalized city of Tangier was reintegrated with the signing of the Tangier Protocol on October 29, 1956 (see Tangier Crisis). Hassan II became King of Morocco on March 3, 1961. His early years of rule would be marked by political unrest. The Spanish enclave of Ifni in the south was reintegrated to the country in 1969. Morocco annexed the Western Sahara during the 1970s after demanding its reintegration from Spain since independence, but final resolution on the status of the territory remains unresolved. (See History of Western Sahara.)

Political reforms in the 1990s resulted in the establishment of a bicameral legislature in 1997. Morocco was granted Major non-NATO ally status by the United States in June 2004 and has signed free trade agreements with the United States and the European Union.

Politics



Morocco is a *de jure* constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament. The King of Morocco, with vast executive powers, can dissolve government and deploy the military, among other prerogatives. Opposition political parties are legal, and several have been formed in recent years.

Human rights and reforms

Morocco's history after independence and at the beginning of the reign of Hassan II was marked by a period of political tensions between the monarchy and opposition parties. Those years of tension are labeled by the opposition as the Years of Lead. Politically-motivated persecutions were common, especially when General Oufkir became responsible for home security.

However, during the last decade of the rule of King Hassan II, especially under the reign of Mohammed VI and with the launch of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER) to investigate abuses committed in the name of the state, Morocco is trying to reconcile with the victims. Many new laws and codes concerning all aspects of life are being or have been passed, most notable of which was the creation of the *Mudawana* — a family code which represented the first unique initiative of its kind in the Arab and Muslim world. The code gives women more rights. Other issues such as the abolition of capital punishment and the reform of the Moroccan nationality law are being debated. The Moroccan parliament is due to vote on these issues in spring 2007.

The 2003 Casablanca bombings and the need to fight the terrorist threat have led the government to pass a controversial anti-terrorism law that cracked down on terror suspects. Moroccan and international organizations continue to criticize the human rights situation in Morocco, mainly the arrests of suspected Islamist extremists during 2004 and 2005 in relation to the 2003 Casablanca bombings, and in Western Sahara.

In mid-February 2007, a study published by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies called "Arab Reform and Foreign Aid: Lessons from Morocco" concluded that Morocco provides a valuable lesson in political and economic reform, which others in the Arab world can draw on and that the Moroccan model confirms that it is possible to adopt both forms of reform simultaneously.

Regions and prefectures



King Mohammed VI with George W. Bush at the Oval Office in April 2002.



Morocco is divided into 16 regions, and subdivided into 62 prefectures and provinces.

As part of a 1997 decentralization/regionalization law passed by the legislature, sixteen new regions were created. These regions are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ Chaouia-Ouardigha | ■ Meknès-Tafilalet |
| ■ Doukkala-Abda | ■ Oriental |
| ■ Fès-Boulemane | ■ Oued Ed-Dahab-Lagouira* |
| ■ Gharb-Chrarda-Béni Hssen | ■ Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer |
| ■ Greater Casablanca | ■ Souss-Massa-Draâ |
| ■ Guelmim-Es Semara | ■ Tadla-Azilal |
| ■ Laâyoune-Boujdour-Sakia El Hamra* | ■ Tangier-Tétouan |
| ■ Marrakech-Tensift-El Haouz | ■ Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate |

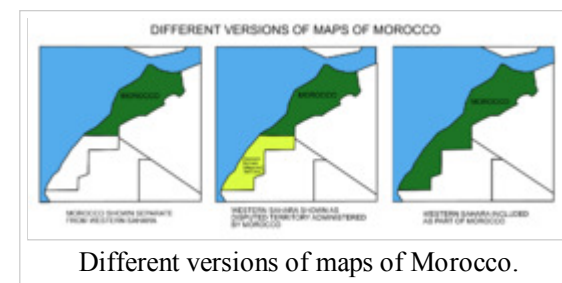
Western Sahara status

Because of the conflict over Western Sahara, the status of both regions of " Saguia el-Hamra" and " Río de Oro" is disputed.

The government of Morocco has suggested that a self-governing entity, through the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS), should govern the territory with some degree of autonomy for Western Sahara. The project was presented to the United Nations Security Council in mid-April 2007. The stalemating of the Moroccan proposal options has led the UN in the recent "Report of the UN Secretary-General" to ask the parties to enter into direct and unconditional negotiations to reach a mutually accepted political solution. The autonomy is rejected by the group Polisario which fought against the Spanish colonial rule and now for the Western Sahara decolonization with the name of Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

Geography

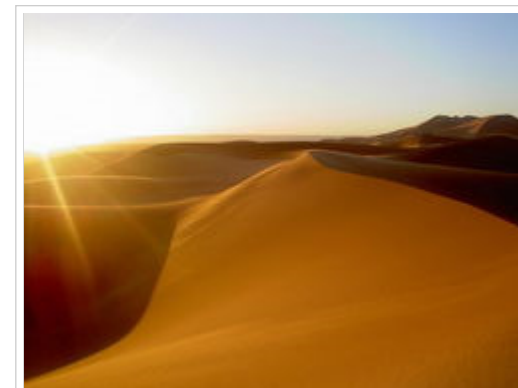
At 172,402 sq.mi (446,550 sq.km), Morocco is the fifty-seventh largest country in the world (after Uzbekistan). It is comparable in size to Iraq, and is somewhat larger than the US state of California.



Different versions of maps of Morocco.



Algeria borders Morocco to the east and southeast though the border between the two countries has been closed since 1994. There are also four Spanish enclaves on the Mediterranean coast: Ceuta, Melilla, Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera, Peñón de Alhucemas, and the Chafarinas islands, as well as the disputed islet Perejil. Off the Atlantic coast the Canary Islands belong to Spain, whereas Madeira to the north is Portuguese. To the north, Morocco is bordered by and controls part of the Strait of Gibraltar, giving it power over the waterways in and out of the Mediterranean sea. The Rif mountains occupy the region bordering the Mediterranean from the north-west to the north-east. The Atlas Mountains run down the backbone of the country, from the south west to the north east. Most of the south east portion of the country is in the Sahara Desert and as such is generally sparsely populated and unproductive economically. Most of the population lives to the north of these mountains, while to the south is the desert. To the south, lies the Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony that was annexed by Morocco in 1975 (see Green March). Morocco claims that the Western Sahara is part of its territory and refers to that as its Southern Provinces.



A dune in Morocco.

Morocco's capital city is Rabat; its largest city is its main port, Casablanca.

Other cities include Agadir, Essaouira, Fes, Marrakech, Meknes, Mohammadia, Oujda, Ouarzazat, Safi, Salè, Tangier and Tétouan.

Climate

The climate is Mediterranean, which becomes more extreme towards the interior regions where it is mountainous. The terrain is such that the coastal plains are rich and accordingly, they comprise the backbone for agriculture. Forests cover about 12% of the land while arable land accounts for 18%. 5% is irrigated.

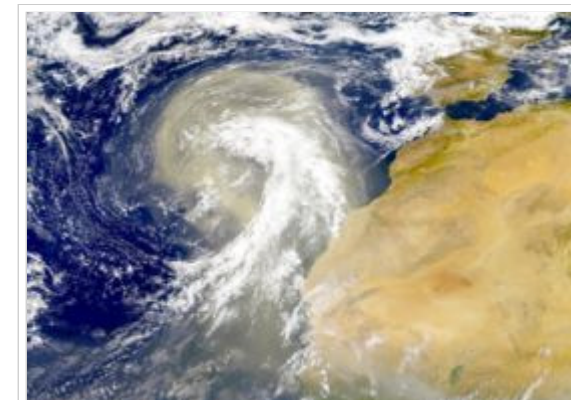
Wildlife

Morocco is known for its wildlife biodiversity. Birds represent the most important fauna. The avifauna of Morocco includes a total of 454 species, of which five have been introduced by humans, and 156 are rare or accidental.

Encoding

Morocco is represented in the ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 geographical encoding standard by the symbol *MA*. This code was used as the basis for Morocco's internet domain, .ma.

Economy



Satellite image of a dust plume off the coast of Morocco.



According to the African Development Bank, the GDP of Morocco accounts for 7% of the African continent. Morocco is the fifth economic power of Africa with a 2006 GDP of \$152.5 billion at PPP (\$58.1 billion at official exchange rates), after South Africa, Egypt, Algeria and Nigeria.(2001)

Morocco's largest industry is the mining of phosphates. Its second largest source of income is from nationals living abroad who transfer money to relatives living in Morocco. The country's third largest source of revenue is tourism; 7.45 million tourists visited the country in 2007.

Morocco ranks among the world's largest producers and exporters of cannabis, and its cultivation and sale provide the economic base for much of the population of northern Morocco. The cannabis is typically processed into hashish. This activity represents about 0.5% of Morocco's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A UN survey estimated cannabis cultivation at about 1,340 square kilometres (515 sq mi) in Morocco's five northern provinces. This represents 10 % of the total area and 27 per cent of the arable lands of the surveyed territory and 1.5 per cent of Morocco's total arable land. Morocco is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention and in 1992 Morocco passed legislation designed to implement the Convention.

Morocco has an unemployment rate of 7.7% (2006 Data) and a 1999 estimate by the CIA puts 19% of the Moroccan population under the poverty line..

Though working towards change, Morocco historically has utilized child labor on a large scale. In 1999, the Moroccan Government stated that over 500,000 children under the age of 15 were in the labor force.

Morocco has signed Free Trade Agreements with the European Union (to take effect 2010) and the United States of America. The United States Senate approved by a vote of 85 to 13, on July 22, 2004, the US-Morocco Free Trade Agreement, which will allow for 98% of the two-way trade of consumer and industrial products to be without tariffs. The agreement entered into force in January 2006.

Demographics



Casablanca Twin Centre.



Morocco is the third most populous Arab country, after Egypt and Sudan. Most Moroccans are Sunni Muslims of Arab, Berber, or mixed Arab-Berber stock. About three-quarters of all present-day Moroccans are of Berber descent, while Arabs form the second largest ethnic group. The Arabs invaded Morocco in the seventh century and established their culture there.

There is no significant genetic difference between Moroccan Arabs and Moroccan non-Arabs (i.e. Berbers). Thus, it is likely that Arabization was mainly a cultural process without genetic replacement. However, according to the European Journal of Human Genetics, North-Western Africans were genetically closer to Iberians and to other Europeans than to sub-Saharan Africans.

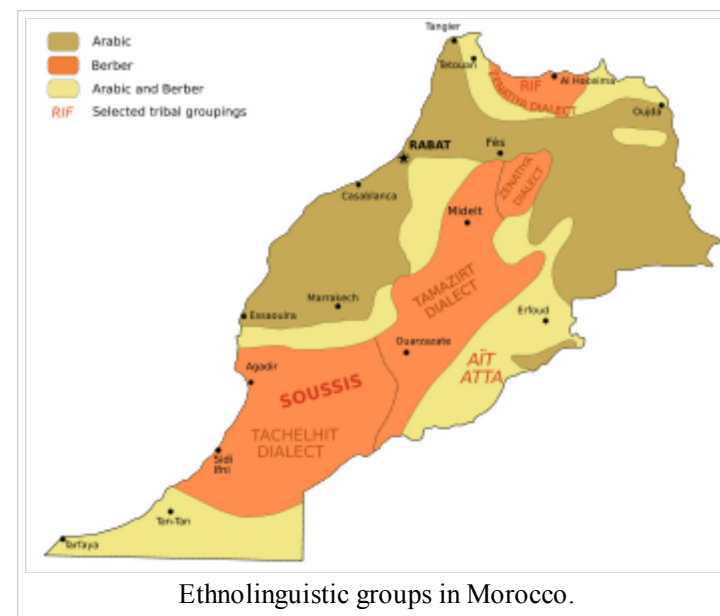
Morocco's official language is classical Arabic. The country's distinctive Arabic dialect is called Moroccan Arabic. Approximately 12 million (40% of the population), mostly in rural areas, speak Berber – which exists in Morocco in three different dialects (Tarifit, Tashelhiyt, and Tamazight) – either as a first language or bilingually with the spoken Arabic dialect. French, which remains Morocco's unofficial second language, is taught universally and still serves as Morocco's primary language of commerce and economics. It also is widely used in education and government. About 20,000 Moroccans in the northern part of the country speak Spanish as a second language in parallel with Tarifit. English, while still far behind French and Spanish in terms of number of speakers, is rapidly becoming the third foreign language of choice among educated youth (after Arabic and French). As a result of national education reforms entering into force in late 2002, English will be taught in all public schools from the fourth year on. French however, will remain the second foreign language because of Morocco's close economic and social links with other French-speaking countries and especially France.

Most people live west of the Atlas Mountains, a range that insulates the country from the Sahara Desert. Casablanca is the centre of commerce and industry and the leading port; Rabat is the seat of government; Tangier is the gateway to Morocco from Spain and also a major port; Fez is the cultural and religious center; and Marrakech is a major tourist centre.

There is a European expatriate population of 100,000, mainly of French or Spanish descent; many are teachers or technicians and more and more retirees, especially in Marrakech.

Education in Morocco is free and compulsory through primary school (age 15). Nevertheless, many children – particularly girls in rural areas – still do not attend school. The country's illiteracy rate has been stuck at around 50% for some years, but reaches as high as 90% among girls in rural regions. On September 2006, UNESCO awarded Morocco amongst other countries; Cuba, Pakistan, Rajasthan (India) and Turkey the "UNESCO 2006 Literacy Prize".

Morocco has about 230,000 students enrolled in fourteen public universities. The Mohammed V University in Rabat and Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (a private university) are highly regarded. Al-Akhawayn, founded in 1993 by King Hassan II and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, is an English-language American-style university comprising about 1,000



The Kasbah of Ait Benhaddou, High Atlas.



students. The University of Al Karaouine, in Fez, is considered the oldest university in the world and has been a centre of learning for more than 1,000 years.

Moroccan Jews

Morocco's Jewish minority has decreased significantly and numbers about 7,000 (see Jewish exodus from Arab lands). Prior to mass emigration, Morocco was home to more Jews than any other Muslim country in the world. The Jewish community of Morocco, which dates back more than 2,000 years, has experienced various waves of both tolerance and discrimination. The worst outbreaks of antisemitic violence occurred during the Middle Ages, when Jews were massacred in Fez in 1033 and in Marrakech in 1232. Following the establishment of the French protectorate in 1912, Jews began to enjoy greater equality.

Moroccan Jews are of two main stocks. One group is composed by those descended from the Jewish community of Spain (known as Sephardi Jews), who emigrated and settled in Morocco after a wave of anti-Jewish rioting in 1391, and especially after the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. An example of such a community was the Jewish population of Debdou, who constituted a majority of the town's population. The other grouping is Jews of indigenous descent, probably Berber converts to Judaism.

Transport

Military

The military of Morocco is composed of the following main divisions:

- Royal Armed Forces
 - Army
 - Navy
 - Air Force
 - Gendarmerie
 - Auxiliary Forces
 - Moroccan Royal Guard
 - Marche Verte

Technology

- Casablanca Technopark

Universities



Sport

International rankings

- The 2002 Reporters Without Borders' worldwide press freedom index ranked Morocco 119th out of 167 countries.
- *The Economist's* worldwide quality-of-life index 2005 PDF (67.1 KiB) ranked Morocco 65th out of 111 countries.

Affiliations

| Organization | Dates |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| United Nations | since November 12, 1956 |
| Arab League | since October 1, 1958 |
| International Olympic Committee | since 1959 |
| Organization of African Unity | co-founder May 25, 1963; withdrew November 12, 1984 |
| Group of 77 | since June 15, 1964 |
| Organization of the Islamic Conference | since September 22, 1969 |
| World Trade Organization | since January 1, 1995 |
| Mediterranean Dialogue group | since February 1995 |
| Major non-NATO ally of the United States | since January 19, 2004 |

Bilateral and multilateral agreements

- GAFTA
- Middle East Free Trade Area
- General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
- Euro-Mediterranean free trade area
- US-Morocco Free Trade Agreement



Sufism

- **Dar-Sirr.com:** Portal to Moroccan Sufism

Retrieved from " <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco>"

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Mozambique

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries




SOS Children works in Mozambique. For more information see SOS Children in Mozambique, Africa

Mozambique, officially the **Republic of Mozambique** (Portuguese: *Moçambique* or *República de Moçambique*, pronounced [ʁɛˈpublikɐ dɨ musɐ̃ˈbiki]), is a country in southeastern Africa bordered by the Indian Ocean to the east, Tanzania to the north, Malawi and Zambia to the northwest, Zimbabwe to the west and Swaziland and South Africa to the southwest. It was explored by Vasco da Gama in 1498 and colonized by Portugal in 1505. By 1510, the Portuguese had control of all of the former Arab sultanates on the east African coast. From about 1500, Portuguese trading posts and forts became regular ports of call on the new route to the east.

It is a member of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries and the Commonwealth of Nations. Mozambique (Moçambique) was named after *Muça Alebique*, a sultan.

History

Between the first and fourth centuries AD, waves of Bantu-speaking people migrated from the west and north through the Zambezi River valley and then gradually into the plateau and coastal areas. The Bantu were farmers and ironworkers.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>República de Moçambique</i> Republic of Mozambique | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>none</i> | |
| Anthem: <i>Pátria Amada</i> (formerly <i>Viva, Viva a FRELIMO</i>) | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Maputo |
| Official languages | Portuguese |
| Demonym | Mozambican |



The Island of Mozambique is a small coral island at the mouth of Mossuril Bay on the Nacala coast of northern Mozambique, first explored by Europeans in the late 1400s.

When Portuguese explorers reached Mozambique in 1498, Arab commercial and slave trading settlements had existed along the coast and outlying islands for several centuries. From about 1500, Portuguese trading posts and forts became regular ports of call on the new route to the east. Later, traders and prospectors penetrated the interior regions seeking gold and slaves. Although Portuguese influence gradually expanded, its power was limited and exercised through individual settlers and officials who were granted extensive autonomy. As a result, investment lagged while Lisbon devoted itself to the more lucrative trade with India and the Far East and to the colonisation of Brazil.

By the early 20th century the Portuguese had shifted the administration of much of Mozambique to large private companies, like the Mozambique Company, the Zambezi Company and the Niassa Company, controlled and financed mostly by the British, which established railroad lines to neighbouring countries and supplied cheap – often forced – African labor to the mines and plantations of the nearby British colonies and South Africa. Because policies and development plans were primarily designed by the ruling authorities for the benefit of Mozambique's Portuguese population, little attention was paid to Mozambique's tribal integration and the development of its native communities. This affected a majority of the indigenous population who suffered both state-sponsored discrimination and enormous social pressure. Many felt they had received too little opportunity or resources to upgrade their skills and improve their economic and social situation to a degree comparable to that of the Europeans.

The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), initiated a guerrilla campaign against Portuguese rule in September 1964. This conflict, along with the two others already initiated in the other Portuguese colonies of Angola and Guinea-Bissau, became part of the so-called Portuguese Colonial War (1961-1974).

After 10 years of sporadic warfare and Portugal's return to democracy through a leftist military coup in Lisbon (the Carnation Revolution of April 1974), FRELIMO took control of the territory. Within a year, almost all Portuguese population had left – some expelled by the government of the newly-independent territory, some fleeing in fear –, and Mozambique became independent from Portugal on June 25, 1975.

Conflict and civil war

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Armando Guebuza |
| - Prime Minister | Luísa Diogo |
| Independence | |
| - from Portugal | June 25, 1975 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 801,590 km ² (35th) 309,496 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 2.2 |
| Population | |
| - 2007 census | 21,397,000 (52nd) |
| - Density | 25/km ² (178th) 65/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$27.013 billion (100th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,389 (158th) |
| Gini (1996-97) | 39.6 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▼ 0.384 (low) (172nd) |
| Currency | Mozambican metical (Mtn) (MZN) |
| Time zone | CAT (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .mz |
| Calling code | +258 |
| <p>¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of</p> | |



The new government, under president Samora Machel, gave shelter and support to South African (African National Congress) and Zimbabwean (Zimbabwe African National Union) liberation movements while the governments of first Rhodesia and later South Africa (at that time still operating the Apartheid laws) fostered and financed an armed rebel movement in central Mozambique called the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). Hence, civil war, sabotage from neighbouring white-ruled states such as Rhodesia and the Apartheid regime of South Africa, and economic collapse characterized the first decade of Mozambican independence. Also marking this period were the mass exodus of Portuguese nationals and Mozambicans of Portuguese heritage, a weak infrastructure, and government nationalisation of privately owned industries. During most of the civil war, the government was unable to exercise effective control outside of urban areas, many of which were cut off from the capital. An estimated one million Mozambicans perished during the civil war, 1.7 million took refuge in neighbouring states, and several million more were internally displaced. On October 19, 1986 Samora Machel was on his way back from an international meeting in Zambia in the presidential Tupolev Tu-134 aircraft when the plane crashed in the Lebombo Mountains, near Mbuzini. There were nine survivors but President Machel and twenty-four others died, including ministers and officials of the Mozambique government. The United Nations' Soviet Union delegation issued a minority report contending that their expertise and experience had been undermined by the South Africans. Representatives of the Soviet Union advanced the theory that the plane had been intentionally diverted by a false navigational beacon signal, using a technology provided by military intelligence operatives of the South African government (at that time still operating the laws of Apartheid). Machel's successor, Joaquim Chissano, continued the reforms and began peace talks with RENAMO. The new constitution enacted in 1990 provided for a multi-party political system, market-based economy, and free elections. The civil war ended in October 1992 with the Rome General Peace Accords, brokered by the Community of Sant'Egidio. Under supervision of the ONUMOZ peacekeeping force of the United Nations, peace returned to Mozambique.

population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

By mid-1995 the more than 1.7 million Mozambican refugees who had sought asylum in neighbouring Malawi, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Zambia, Tanzania, and South Africa as a result of war and drought had returned, as part of the largest repatriation witnessed in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, a further estimated four million internally displaced persons returned to their areas of origin.

Foreign relations

While allegiances dating back to the liberation struggle remain relevant, Mozambique's foreign policy has become increasingly pragmatic. The twin pillars of Mozambique's foreign policy are maintenance of good relations with its neighbours and maintenance and expansion of ties to development partners.

During the 1970s and the early 1980s, Mozambique's foreign policy was inextricably linked to the struggles for majority rule in Rhodesia and South Africa as well as superpower competition and the Cold War. Mozambique's decision to enforce UN sanctions against Rhodesia and deny that country access to the sea led Ian Smith's government to undertake overt and covert actions to destabilize the country. Although the change of government in Zimbabwe in 1980 removed this threat, the government of South Africa (at that time still operating under the laws of Apartheid) continued to finance the destabilization of Mozambique. It also belonged to the Front Line States.

The 1984 Nkomati Accord, while failing in its goal of ending South African support to RENAMO, opened initial diplomatic contacts between the Mozambican and South African governments. This process gained momentum with South Africa's elimination of apartheid, which culminated in the establishment of full diplomatic relations in October 1993. While relations with neighbouring Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, and Tanzania show occasional strains, Mozambique's ties



to these countries remain strong.

In the years immediately following its independence, Mozambique benefited from considerable assistance from some Western countries, notably the Scandinavians. The Soviet Union and its allies, however, became Mozambique's primary economic, military, and political supporters and its foreign policy reflected this linkage. This began to change in 1983; in 1984 Mozambique joined the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Western aid quickly replaced Soviet support, with the Scandinavians countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. Finland and the Netherlands are becoming increasingly important sources of development assistance. Italy also maintains a profile in Mozambique as a result of its key role during the peace process. Relations with Portugal, the former colonial power, continue to play an important role as Portuguese investors play a visible role in Mozambique's economy.

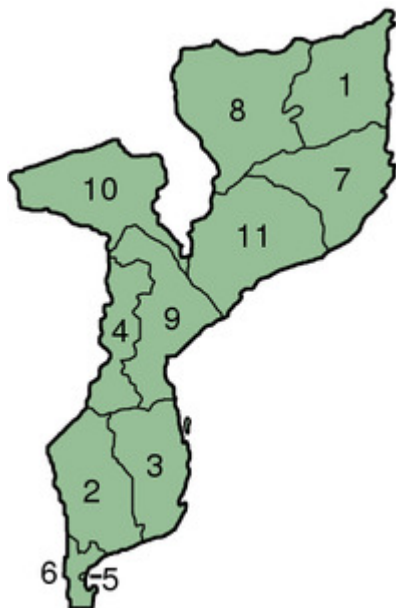
Mozambique is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and ranks among the moderate members of the African bloc in the United Nations and other international organisations. Mozambique also belongs to the African Union (formerly the Organisation of African Unity) and the Southern African Development Community. In 1994, the government became a full member of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, in part to broaden its base of international support but also to please the country's sizable Muslim population. Similarly, in early 1996 Mozambique joined its Anglophone neighbours in the Commonwealth of Nations. It is the only nation to join the Commonwealth that was never part of the British Empire. In the same year, Mozambique became a founding member and the first President of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), and maintains close ties with other Lusophone states.

Provinces, districts, and postos

Mozambique is divided into ten provinces (*provincias*) and one capital city (*cidade capital*) with provincial status. The provinces are subdivided into 129 districts (*distritos*). The districts are further divided in 405 "Postos Administrativos" (Administrative Posts) and then into Localidades (Localities), the lowest geographical level of the central state administration. Since 1998, 33 "Municípios" (Municipalities) have been created in Mozambique.



1. Cabo Delgado
2. Gaza
3. Inhambane
4. Manica
5. Maputo (city)
6. Maputo
7. Nampula
8. Niassa
9. Sofala
10. Tete
11. Zambezia



Geography and climate



At 309,475 square miles (801,590 km²), Mozambique is the world's 35th-largest country (after Pakistan). It is comparable in size to Turkey.

Mozambique is located on the southeast coast of Africa. It is bound by Swaziland to the south, South Africa to the southwest, Zimbabwe to the west, Zambia and Malawi to the northwest, Tanzania to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east. The country is divided into two topographical regions by the Zambezi River. To the North of the Zambezi River, the narrow coastline moves inland to hills and low plateaux, and further west to rugged highlands, which include the Niassa highlands, Namuli or Shire highlands, Angonia highlands, Tete highlands and the Makonde plateau. To the South of the Zambezi River, the lowlands are broader with the Mashonaland plateau and Lebomo mountains located in the deep south.



Mount Murrusse and tea plantations near Gurùè, Zambezia Province, northern Mozambique.

The country is drained by five principal rivers and several smaller ones with the largest and most important the Zambezi. The country has three lakes, Lake Niassa or Malawi, Lake Chiuta and Lake Shirwa, all in the north. The major cities are Maputo, Beira, Nampula, Tete, Quelimane, Chimoio, Pemba, Inhambane, Xai-Xai and Lichinga.

Mozambique has a tropical climate with two seasons. A wet season from October to March and a dry season from April to September. Climatic conditions, however, vary depending on altitude. Rainfall is heavy along the coast and decreases in the north and south. Annual precipitation varies from 500 to 900 mm (20 to 35 inches) depending on the region with an average of 590 mm (23 inches). Cyclones are also common during the

wet season. Average temperature ranges in Maputo are from 13 to 24 degrees Celsius (55 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit) in July to 22 to 31 degrees Celsius (72 to 88 degrees Fahrenheit) in February.

Politics

Mozambique is a multi-party democracy under the 1990 constitution. The executive branch comprises a president, prime minister, and Council of Ministers. There is a National Assembly and municipal assemblies. The judiciary comprises a Supreme Court and provincial, district, and municipal courts. Suffrage is universal at eighteen.

In the 1994 elections. Joaquim Chissano was elected President with 53% of the vote, and a 250-member National Assembly was voted in with 129 Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) deputies, 112 Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) deputies, and nine representatives of three smaller parties that formed the Democratic Union (UD). Since its formation in 1994, the National Assembly has made progress in becoming a body increasingly more independent of the executive. By 1999, more than one-half (53%) of the legislation passed originated in the Assembly.

After some delays, in 1998 the country held its first local elections to provide for local representation and some budgetary authority at the municipal level. The principal opposition party, RENAMO, boycotted the local elections, citing flaws in the registration process. Independent slates contested the elections and won



Satellite image of Mozambique, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



seats in municipal assemblies. Turnout was very low.

In the aftermath of the 1998 local elections, the government resolved to make more accommodations to the opposition's procedural concerns for the second round of multiparty national elections in 1999. Working through the National Assembly, the electoral law was rewritten and passed by consensus in December 1998. Financed largely by international donors, a very successful voter registration was conducted from July to September 1999, providing voter registration cards to 85% of the potential electorate (more than seven million voters).

The second general elections were held December 3-5, 1999, with high voter turnout. International and domestic observers agreed that the voting process was well organised and went smoothly. Both the opposition and observers subsequently cited flaws in the tabulation process that, had they not occurred, might have changed the outcome. In the end, however, international and domestic observers concluded that the close result of the vote reflected the will of the people.

President Chissano won the presidency with a margin of 4% points over the RENAMO-Electoral Union coalition candidate, Afonso Dhlakama, and began his five-year term in January, 2000. FRELIMO increased its majority in the National Assembly with 133 out of 250 seats. RENAMO-UE coalition won 116 seats, one went independent, and no third parties are represented.

The opposition coalition did not accept the National Election Commission's results of the presidential vote and filed a formal complaint to the Supreme Court. One month after the voting, the court dismissed the opposition's challenge and validated the election results. The opposition did not file a complaint about the results of the legislative vote.

The second local elections, involving thirty-three municipalities with some 2.4 million registered voters, took place in November 2003. This was the first time that FRELIMO, RENAMO-UE, and independent parties competed without significant boycotts. The 24% turnout was well above the 15% turnout in the first municipal elections. FRELIMO won twenty-eight mayoral positions and the majority in twenty-nine municipal assemblies, while RENAMO won five mayoral positions and the majority in four municipal assemblies. The voting was conducted in an orderly fashion without violent incidents. However, the period immediately after the elections was marked by objections about voter and candidate registration and vote tabulation, as well as calls for greater transparency.



Mozambique's president,
Armando Guebuza.

In May 2004, the government approved a new general elections law that contained innovations based on the experience of the 2003 municipal elections.

Presidential and National Assembly elections took place on December 1-2, 2004. FRELIMO candidate Armando Guebuza won with 64% of the popular vote. His opponent, Afonso Dhlakama of RENAMO, received 32% of the popular vote. FRELIMO won 160 seats in Parliament. A coalition of RENAMO and several small parties won the 90 remaining seats. Armando Guebuza was inaugurated as the President of Mozambique on February 2, 2005. RENAMO and some other opposition parties made claims of election fraud and denounced the result. These claims were supported by international observers (among others by the European Union Election Observation Mission to Mozambique and the Carter Centre) to the elections who criticised the fact that the National Electoral Commission (CNE) did not conduct fair and transparent elections. They listed a whole range of shortcomings by the electoral authorities that benefited the ruling party FRELIMO. However, according to EU observers, the elections shortcomings have probably not affected the final result in the presidential election. On the other hand, the observers have declared that the outcome of the parliamentary election and thus the distribution of seats in the National Assembly does not reflect the will of the Mozambican people and is clearly to the disadvantage of RENAMO.

The Reporters Without Borders' Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2006 ranked Mozambique 45th out of 168 countries.

Economy



The official currency is the New Metical (as of 2007, 1 USD is roughly equivalent to 25 Meticals), which replaced old Meticals in rate thousand to one. The old currency will be redeemed by the Bank of Mozambique until the end of 2012. The US dollar, South African rand, and recently the Euro are also widely accepted and used in business transactions. The minimum legal salary is around US\$60 per month. Mozambique is member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The SADC free trade protocol is aimed at making the Southern African region more competitive by eliminating tariffs and other trade barriers.

Rebounding growth

The resettlement of civil war refugees and successful economic reform have led to a high growth rate: the average growth rate from 1993 to 1999 was 6.7%; from 1997 to 1999 it averaged more than 10% per year. The devastating floods of early 2000 slowed GDP growth to 2.1%. A full recovery was achieved with growth of 14.8% in 2001. In 2003, the growth rate was 7%. The government projects the economy to continue to expand between 7%-10% a year for the next five years, although rapid expansion in the future hinges on several major foreign investment projects, continued economic reform, and the revival of the agriculture, transportation, and tourism sectors. More than 75% of the population engages in small scale agriculture, which still suffers from inadequate infrastructure, commercial networks, and investment. However, 88% of Mozambique's arable land is still uncultivated. In addition, the profitable exploitation of valuable titanium reserves has the potential to uplift this poverty stricken region of Africa. As a natural resource, it could play a significant role in solving unemployment and poverty.

Inflation

The government's tight control of spending and the money supply, combined with financial sector reform, successfully reduced inflation from 70% in 1994 to less than 5% in 1998-99. Economic disruptions stemming from the devastating floods of 2000 caused inflation to jump to 12.7% that year, and it was 13% in 2003. The Mozambique's currency, the Metical (MZN), devaluated by 50% to the dollar in 2001, although in late 2001 it began to stabilize. Since then, it has held steady at about 24,000 MZN to 1 U.S. dollar. New Metical replaced old Meticals in rate thousand to one on January 1, 2007 bringing the exchange rate to 25 (new) MZN to 1 USD.

Economic reforms

More than 1,200 state-owned enterprises (mostly small) have been privatised. Preparations for privatisation and/or sector liberalisation are underway for the remaining parastatal enterprises, including telecommunications, energy, ports, and the railways. The government frequently selects a strategic foreign investor when privatising a parastatal. Additionally, customs duties have been reduced, and customs management has been streamlined and reformed. The government introduced a value-added tax in 1999 as part of its efforts to increase domestic revenues. Plans for 2003-04 include Commercial Code reform; comprehensive judicial reform; financial sector strengthening; continued civil service reform; and improved government budget, audit, and inspection capability. Further political instability resulting from the floods left thousands homeless, displaced within their own country.

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 335 of 586



Women in Mozambique with maize.



A view of the Cahora Bassa reservoir.



Improving trade imbalance

Imports remain almost 40% greater than exports, but this is a significant improvement over the 4:1 ratio of the immediate post-war years. In 2003, imports were \$1.24 billion and exports were \$910 million. Support programs provided by foreign donors and private financing of foreign direct investment mega-projects and their associated raw materials, have largely compensated for balance-of-payments shortfalls. The medium-term outlook for exports is encouraging, since a number of foreign investment projects should lead to substantial export growth and a better trade balance. MOZAL, a large aluminium smelter that commenced production in mid-2000, has greatly expanded the nation's trade volume. Traditional Mozambican exports include cashews, shrimp, fish, copra, sugar, cotton, tea, and citrus fruits. Most of these industries are being rehabilitated. As well, Mozambique is less dependent on imports for basic food and manufactured goods because of steady increases in local production.

Demographics

The north-central provinces of Zambezia and Nampula are the most populous, with about 45% of the population. The estimated four million Macua are the dominant group in the northern part of the country; the Sena and Shona (mostly Ndau) are prominent in the Zambezi valley, and the Shangaan (Tsonga) dominate in southern Mozambique. Other groups include Makonde, Yao, Swahili, Tonga, Chopi, and Nguni (including Zulu). Bantu people comprise 99.66% of the population, the remaining 0.34% include Europeans 0.06% (largely of Portuguese ancestry), Euro-Africans 0.2% (*mestiço* people of mixed Bantu and Portuguese heritage), and Indians 0.08%. During Portuguese colonial rule, a large minority of people of Portuguese descent lived permanently in almost all areas of the country, and Mozambicans with Portuguese blood at the time of independence numbered about 260,000. Most of these left the region after independence from Portugal in 1975. The remaining minorities in Mozambique claim heritage from Pakistan, Portuguese India and Arab countries. There are also some 7,000 Chinese.

Despite the influence of Islamic coastal traders and European colonisers, the people of Mozambique have largely retained an indigenous culture based on small-scale agriculture. Mozambique's most well-known art forms are wood sculpture, for which the Makonde in northern Mozambique are particularly renowned, and dance. The middle and upper classes continue to be heavily influenced by the Portuguese colonial and linguistic heritage.

Languages

Portuguese is the official and most widely spoken language of the nation, because Bantus speak several of their different languages (most widely used of these are Swahili, Makhuwa, Sena, Ndau, and Shangaan — these have many Portuguese-origin words), but 40% of all people speak it — 33.5%, mostly Bantus, as their second language and only 6.5%, mostly white Portuguese and mestiços, speak it as their first language. Arabs, Chinese, and Indians speak their own languages (Indians from Portuguese India speak any of the Portuguese Creoles of their origin) aside from Portuguese as their second language. Most educated



An old 1000 metical note, prior to redenomination on 1 July 2006



Children in Mozambique



Mozambicans speak English, which is used in schools and business as second or third language.

Education

Under Portuguese rule, educational opportunities for poor Mozambicans were limited; Most of the Bantu population was illiterate, and many could not speak Portuguese. In fact, most of today's political leaders were educated in missionary schools. After independence, the government placed a high priority on expanding education, which reduced the illiteracy rate to about two-thirds as primary school enrollment increased. Unfortunately in recent years, school construction and teacher training enrollments have not kept up with population increases. With post-war enrollments reaching all-time highs, the quality of education has suffered. All Mozambicans are required by law to attend school through the primary level. After grade 7, students must take standardised national exams to enter secondary school, which runs from 8th to 10th grade. Secondary school students study Portuguese, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, history, geography, physical education, technical drawing, and English (which all schoolchildren begin in grade 6). Another round of national exams after grade 10 allows passage into pre-university school (grades 11 and 12), in which students have the opportunity to study all of the former subjects (minus physical education) plus philosophy and French. Space in Mozambican universities is extremely limited; thus most students who complete pre-university school do not immediately proceed onto university studies. Many go to work as teachers or are unemployed. There are also institutes specialising in agricultural, technical, or pedagogical studies which students may attend after grade 10 in lieu of a pre-university school, which give more vocational training. A lot of children in Mozambique don't go to primary school because they have to work for their families' subsistence farms for a living.

Religion

According to the 1997 Second General Population and Housing Census, the religions of the polled population were as follows: 34.2% identified themselves as Roman Catholic; 24.25% claimed to not be affiliated with a religion; 18.7% adhering to Zionism (an African form of Christianity); 7.8% of the population were cited as Muslims; 11.45% as other non-Catholic Christians; 3.6% as "other".

The Roman Catholic Church has established twelve dioceses (Beira, Chimoio, Gurué, Inhambane, Lichinga, Maputo, Nacala, Nampula, Pemba, Quelimane, Tete, and Xai-Xai - archdioceses are Beira, Maputo and Nampula). Statistics for the dioceses range from a low 7.44% Catholics in the population in the diocese of Chimoio, to 87.50% in Quelimane diocese (2006 official Catholic figures).

Muslims are particularly present in the north of the country. They are organised in several "tariqa" or brotherhoods (of the Qadiriya or Shadhuliyyah branch). Two national organisations also exist - the Conselho Islamico de Moçambique (reformists) and the Congresso Islamico de Mocambique (pro-sufi). There are also important Indo-Pakistani associations as well as some Shia and particularly Ismaili communities.

Among the main Protestant churches are Igreja União Baptista de Moçambique, the Assembleias de Deus, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Igreja do Evangelho Completo de Deus, the Igreja Metodista Unida, the Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique, the Igreja de Cristo and the Assembleia Evangélica de Deus. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is also present as well as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Brazilian Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, and the Salvation Army.



Music

Mozambique has distinct styles of music and distinct patterns of use of instruments. Some of the music styles fall into the classification of Lusophone musical culture.

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Namibia

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Namibia. For more information see SOS Children in Namibia, Africa

Namibia, officially the **Republic of Namibia**, is a country in southern Africa on the Atlantic coast. It shares borders with Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana to the east, and South Africa to the south. It gained independence from South Africa in 1990 and its capital city is Windhoek (German: *Windhuk*). Namibia is a member state of the United Nations (UN), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), and the Commonwealth of Nations. It is named after the Namib Desert.

History




The dry lands of Namibia were inhabited since early times by Bushmen, Damara, Namaqua, and since about the 14th century AD, by immigrating Bantu who came with the Bantu expansion. The region was not extensively explored by Europeans until the 19th century. Namibia became a German colony and was known as German South-West Africa (*Deutsch-Südwestafrika*) — apart from Walvis Bay, which was under British control. South Africa occupied the colony during World War I and administered it as a League of Nations mandate territory until after World War II, when it unilaterally annexed the territory, without international recognition.

In 1966, the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) military wing, People's Liberation Army of Namibia, a guerrilla group launched a war of independence, but it was not until 1988 that South Africa agreed to end its administration of Namibia, in accordance with a United Nations peace plan for the entire region. Independence came in 1990, and Walvis Bay was ceded to Namibia in 1994 upon the end of Apartheid in South Africa.

Regions and constituencies

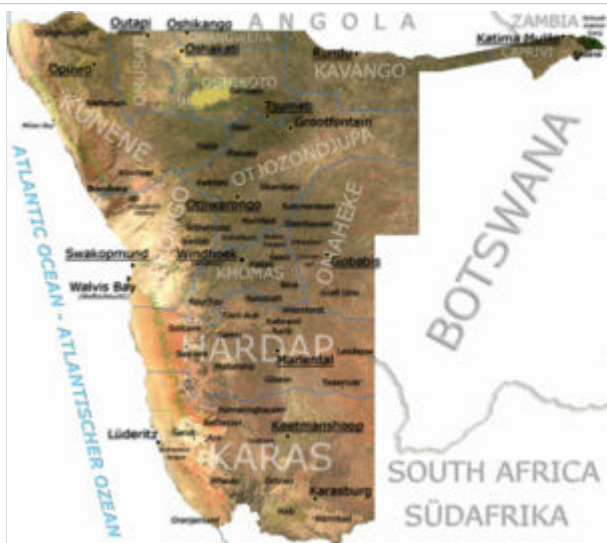
Namibia is divided into 13 regions and subdivided into 102 constituencies.

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| Republic of Namibia | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Unity, Liberty, Justice" | |
| Anthem: <i>Namibia, Land of the Brave</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Windhoek |
| Official languages | English ¹ |
| Recognised regional languages | German, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo |
| Demonym | Namibian |
| Government | Republic |



| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Hifikepunye Pohamba |
| - Prime minister | Nahas Angula |
| Independence | from South Africa |
| - Date | March 21, 1990 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 825,418 km ² (34th) 318,696 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 1,820,916 ² (144th) |
| - 2002 census | 1,820,916 |
| - Density | 2.5/km ² (225th) 6.5/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$15.14 billion (123rd) |
| - Per capita | \$7,478 (77th) |
| Gini (2003) | 70.7 (high) (1st) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.650 (medium) (125th) |
| Currency | Namibian dollar (NAD) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | WAST (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .na |
| Calling code | +264 |
| ¹ German and Afrikaans were official languages until independence in 1990. The majority of the population speaks Afrikaans as a second language, while Oshiwambo is the first language of approximately half the population. German is spoken by 32% of the European community whereas English is only spoken by 7%. Estimates for this country | |



A detailed map of Namibia, based on radar images from The Map Library.

explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.



Dune in Namibia.



Namib Desert.



Petroglyphs near Twyfelfontein.



Fish River Canyon.



Quivertree forest.



At 825.418 km² (318.7 sq mi), Namibia is the world's thirty-fourth largest country (after Venezuela). After Mongolia, Namibia is the least densely populated country in the world (2.5 inhabitants per square kilometre (6.5 /sq mi)).

The Namibian landscape consists generally of five geographical areas, each with characteristic abiotic conditions and vegetation with some variation within and overlap between them: the Central Plateau, the Namib Desert, the Escarpment, the Bushveld, and the Kalahari Desert. Although the climate is generally extremely dry, there are a few exceptions. The cold, north-flowing Benguela current accounts for some of the low precipitation.

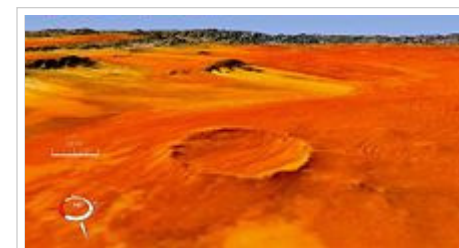
The Central Plateau runs from north to south, bordered by the Skeleton Coast to the north west, the Namib Desert and its coastal plains to the south west, the Orange River to the south, and the Kalahari Desert to the east. The Central Plateau is home to the highest point in Namibia at Königstein elevation 2,606 meters (8,550 ft). Within the wide, flat Central Plateau is the majority of Namibia's population and economic activity. Windhoek, the nation's capital, is located here, as well as most of the arable land. Although arable land accounts for only 1% of Namibia, nearly half of the population is employed in agriculture.

The abiotic conditions here are similar to those found along the Escarpment, described below; however the topographic complexity is reduced. Summer temperatures in the area can reach 40°C during the summer, and in the winter, frosts are common.

The Namib Desert is a broad expanse of hyper-arid gravel plains and dunes that stretches along the entire coastline, which varies in width between 100 to many hundreds of kilometres. Areas within the Namib include the Skeleton Coast and the Kaokoveld in the north and the extensive Namib Sand Sea along the central coast. The sands that make up the sand sea are a consequence of erosional processes that take place within the Orange River valley and areas further to the south. As sand-laden waters drop their suspended loads into the Atlantic, onshore currents deposit them along the shore. The prevailing south west winds then pick up and redeposit the sand in the form of massive dunes in the widespread sand sea. In areas where the supply of sand is reduced because of the inability of the sand to cross riverbeds, the winds also scour the land to form large gravel plains. In many areas within the Namib Desert, there is little vegetation with the exception of lichens found in the gravel plains, and in dry river beds where plants can access subterranean water.

The Great Escarpment swiftly rises to over 2,000 meters (6,562 ft). Average temperatures and temperature ranges increase as you move further inland from the cold Atlantic waters, while the lingering coastal fogs slowly diminish. Although the area is rocky with poorly developed soils, it is nonetheless significantly more productive than the Namib Desert. As summer winds are forced over the Escarpment, moisture is extracted as precipitation. The water, along with rapidly changing topography, is responsible for the creation of microhabitats which offer a wide range of organisms, many of them endemic. Vegetation along the Escarpment varies in both form and density, with community structure ranging from dense woodlands to more shrubby areas with scattered trees. A number of Acacia species are found here, as well as grasses and other shrubby vegetation.

The Bushveld is found in north eastern Namibia along the Angolan border and in the Caprivi Strip which is the vestige of a narrow corridor demarcated for the German Empire to access the Zambezi River. The area receives a significantly greater amount of precipitation than the rest of the county, averaging around 400 millimetres per year. Temperatures are also cooler and more moderate, with approximate seasonal variations of between 10 °C (50 °F) and 30 °C (90 °F). The area is generally flat and the soils sandy, limiting their ability to retain water.



Roter Kamm crater, in the Namib Desert (Landsat image)



Namibian Escarpment.



Located adjacent to the Bushveld in north-central Namibia is one of nature's most spectacular features: the Etosha Pan. For most of the year it is a dry, saline wasteland, but during the wet season, it forms a shallow lake covering more than 6000 square kilometres. The area is ecologically important and vital to the huge numbers of birds and animals from the surrounding savannah that gather in the region as summer drought forces them to the scattered waterholes that ring the pan.

The Kalahari Desert is perhaps Namibia's best known geographical feature. Shared with South Africa and Botswana, it has a variety of localized environments ranging from hyper-arid sandy desert, to areas that seem to defy the common definition of desert. One of these areas, known as the Succulent Karoo, is home to over 5,000 species of plants, nearly half of them endemic; fully one third of the world's succulents are found in the Karoo.



Namibian sunset.

The reason behind this high productivity and endemism may be the relatively stable nature of precipitation. The Karoo apparently does not experience drought on a regular basis, so even though the area is technically desert, regular winter rains provide enough moisture to support the region's interesting plant community. Another feature of the Kalahari, indeed many parts of Namibia, are Inselbergs, isolated mountains that create microclimates and habitat for organisms not adapted to life in the surrounding desert matrix.

Besides the capital city Windhoek in the centre of the country, other important towns are the ports of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, as well as Oshakati and Grootfontein.

Economy

Namibia's economy consists primarily of mining and manufacturing which represent 8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) respectively. Namibia has a 30-40% unemployment rate and recently passed a 2004 labour act to protect people from job discrimination stemming from pregnancy and HIV/AIDS status. Namibia's economy is tied closely to South Africa's due to their shared history. The Central Plateau serves as a transportation corridor from the more densely populated north to South Africa, the source of four-fifths of Namibia's imports. Namibia is the fourth largest exporter of non-fuel minerals in Africa and the world's fifth largest producer of uranium. There has been significant investment in uranium mining and Namibia is set to become the largest exporter of uranium by 2015. Rich alluvial diamond deposits make Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds. Namibia also produces large quantities of lead, zinc, tin, silver, and tungsten. About half of the population depends on agriculture (largely subsistence agriculture) for its livelihood, but Namibia must still import some of its food. Although per capita GDP is five times the per capita GDP of Africa's poorest countries, the majority of Namibia's people live in rural areas and exist on a subsistence way of life. Namibia has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the world, due in part to the fact that there is an urban economy and a more rural cash-less economy. The inequality figures thus take into account people who do not actually rely on the formal economy for their survival. Agreement has been reached on the privatisation of several more enterprises in coming years, with hopes that this will stimulate much needed foreign investment. However, reinvestment of environmentally derived capital has hobbled Namibian per capita income. One of the fastest growing areas of economic development in Namibia is the growth of wildlife conservancies. These conservancies are particularly important to the rural generally unemployed population.

Child labour occurs in Namibia, and key stakeholders including government ministries endorsed the Action Programme towards the Elimination of Child Labour



in January 2008.

Tourism



Windhoek skyline.

Namibia generally attracts eco-tourists with the majority visiting to experience the different climates and natural geographical landscapes such as the great eastern desert and plains. There are many lodges and reserves to accommodate eco-tourists.

The most visited regions include, although are not limited to, the Sossosvlei, Etosha Park and the coastal activity areas of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay.

Language

Until 1990, the official languages were German, Afrikaans and English.

When Namibia became independent of South Africa, the new Namibian government wanted to avoid accusations of preferential treatment for either the Afrikaans- or the German-speaking groups. Therefore, English became the sole official language of Namibia. German, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo became recognised regional languages.

German is the native language of 30,000 Germans living in Namibia. It is also spoken as a second language by a large group of the white population. A part of the black population also speak German as a second language, although it is used primarily for trading purposes.

Politics

The politics of Namibia takes place in a framework of a presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Namibia is elected to a five year term and is both the head of state and the head of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the bicameral Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council. The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

Communal Wildlife Conservancies

Namibia is the only country in the world to specifically address conservation and protection of natural resources in its constitution. Article 95 states, “The State shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting international policies aimed at the following: maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity of Namibia, and utilization of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future.”

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In 1993, the newly formed government of Namibia received funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Project. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism with the financial support from organizations such as USAID, Endangered Wildlife Trust, WWF, and Canadian Ambassador's Fund, together form a Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) support structure. The main goal of this project is promote sustainable natural resource management by giving local communities rights to wildlife management and tourism. Namibia is home to the African bull snake

Sports

The most popular sport in Namibia is association football (soccer). Rugby union and cricket are also popular. Namibia were participants in the 1999, 2003 and 2007 Rugby World Cups. They also played in the 2003 Cricket World Cup.

Demographics



Among the sovereign countries with the lowest population density, Namibia lies in second place, after Mongolia. The majority of the Namibian population is Black African — mostly of the Ovambo ethnicity, which forms about half of the population — and concentrated in the north of the country. There are also the Herero and Himba people who speak a similar language. In addition to the Bantu majority, there are large groups of Khoisan (e.g. Nama and Bushmen), who are descendants of the original inhabitants of Southern Africa. Khoisan differ significantly in appearance from both Bantu and White Africans. Blacks of other Bantu descent are descendants of refugees from Angola. There are also two smaller groups of people with mixed racial origins, called " Coloureds" and " Basters", who together make up 8% (with the Coloureds outnumbering the Basters two to one). Whites of Portuguese, Dutch, German, British and French ancestry make up about 5% of the population (about 85,000) — which is the second largest proportion and number in sub-Saharan Africa, after South Africa. Most of Namibian whites and nearly all those of mixed race are Afrikaans speakers and share similar origins, culture, religion and genealogy as the white and coloured populations of neighbouring South Africa. A smaller proportion of whites (around 13,000) trace their family origins directly back to German settlers and maintain German cultural and educational institutions. Nearly all Portuguese are miners and settlers from their former colony of Angola.

Half of all Namibians speak Oshiwambo as their first language, whereas the most widely understood languages are Afrikaans and German. Among the younger generation, the most widely understood language is English.

Both Afrikaans and English are used primarily as a second language reserved for public sphere communication, but small first language groups exist throughout the country. While the official language is English, most of the white population speaks either Afrikaans or German, both official languages until 1990 when Namibia became independent. Portuguese is spoken by blacks and whites from Angola.



A group of Herero women, Windhoek, Namibia



A group of Himba women, near Opuwo, Namibia



A Himba teenager, north of Opuwo, Namibia



Although its official language is English, Namibia is a multilingual country as it is illustrated on these examples in English, German, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo.

Religion

Christianity is the major religion, with the Lutheran Church being the largest then followed by the Roman Catholic. The government of Namibia puts the number of people who practice Islam in Namibia at about 70,000 or about 3% of the population of Namibia. The Namaqua ethnic group makes up the largest group in Namibia's Muslim community.

HIV / AIDS in Namibia

The AIDS epidemic is a very large problem in Namibia as the country's infection rate is one of the highest on the continent and it shares its eastern border with Botswana which has the second highest rate of over 24%. In 2001, there were an estimated 210,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, and the estimated death toll in 2003 was 16,000. In north and central Namibia, malaria is also a pressing problem. The malaria problem seems to



be compounded by the epidemic. Research has shown in Namibia, that the risk of contracting malaria is 14.5% greater if a person is also infected with HIV. The risk of death from malaria is also raised by approximately 50% with a concurrent HIV infection. Given infection rates this large as well as a looming malaria problem, it may be very difficult for the government to deal with both the medical and economic impacts of this epidemic.

Foreign relations

Namibia follows a largely independent foreign policy, with lingering affiliations with states that aided the independence struggle, including Libya and Cuba.

With a small army and a fragile economy, the Namibian Government's principal foreign policy concern is developing strengthened ties within the Southern African region. A dynamic member of the Southern African Development Community, Namibia is a vocal advocate for greater regional integration.

Namibia became the 160th member of the United Nations on April 23, 1990. On its independence it became the fiftieth member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Reporters Without Borders' Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2007 ranks Namibia as 25th out of 169 countries, as compared with 56th out of 166 in 2003, and 31st out of 139 in 2002.

International disputes

Namibia is involved in several minor international disputes, including:

- Small residual disputes with Botswana along the Caprivi Strip, including the Situngu marshlands and specifically Kasikili or Sedudu Island.
- A dormant dispute over where the boundaries of Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe converge.
- Disputes over Angolan rebels and refugees residing in Namibia.

Military

The constitution of Namibia defined the role of the military as "*defending the territory and national interests.*" Namibia formed the National Defence Force (NDF), comprising former enemies in a 23-year bush war: the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and South West African *Territorial Force* (SWATF). The British formulated the force integration plan and began training the NDF, which consists of five battalions and a small headquarters element. The United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG)'s Kenyan infantry battalion remained in Namibia for three months after independence to assist in training the NDF and stabilize the north. According to the Namibian Defence Ministry, enlistments of both men and women will number no more than 7,500. Defence and security account for approximately 3.7% of government spending.

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Niger

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Niger. For more information see SOS Children in Niger, Africa

Niger (pronounced /niːˈʒɛər/ or /ˈnaɪdʒər/); in French pronounced [niʒɛʁ]), officially the **Republic of Niger**, is a landlocked country in Western Africa, named after the Niger River. It borders Nigeria and Benin to the south, Burkina Faso and Mali to the west, Algeria and Libya to the north and Chad to the east. The capital city is Niamey.

History

While most of what is now Niger has been subsumed into the inhospitable Sahara desert in the last two thousand years, five thousand years ago the north of the country was fertile grasslands. Populations of pastoralists have left paintings of abundant wildlife, domesticated animals, chariots, and a complex culture that dates back to at least 10,000 BCE.




One of the first empires in what is now Niger was the Songhai Empire. During recent centuries, the nomadic Tuareg formed large confederations, pushed southward, and, siding with various Hausa states, clashed with the Fulani Empire of Sokoto, which had gained control of much of the Hausa territory in the late 18th century.



The Kaouar escarpment, forming an oasis in the Ténéré desert.

In the 19th century, contact with the West began when the first European explorers—notably Mungo Park (British) and Heinrich Barth (German)—explored the area, searching for the source of the Niger River. Although French efforts at "pacification" began before 1900, dissident ethnic groups, especially the desert Tuareg, were not fully subdued until 1922, when Niger became a French colony.

Niger's colonial history and development parallel that of other French West African territories. France administered its West African colonies through a governor general in

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République du Niger</i> Republic of Niger | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Fraternité, Travail, Progrès" (French) "Fraternity, Work, Progress" | |
| Anthem: <i>La Nigérienne</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Niamey |
| Official languages | French |
| Demonym | Nigerien |



Dakar, Senegal, and governors in the individual territories, including Niger. In addition to conferring French citizenship on the inhabitants of the territories, the 1946 French constitution provided for decentralization of power and limited participation in political life for local advisory assemblies.

Early independence

A further revision in the organization of overseas territories occurred with the passage of the Overseas Reform Act (*Loi Cadre*) of July 23, 1956, followed by reorganizing measures enacted by the French Parliament early in 1957. In addition to removing voting inequalities, these laws provided for creation of governmental organs, assuring individual territories a large measure of self-government. After the establishment of the Fifth French Republic on December 4, 1958, Niger became an autonomous state within the French Community. Following full independence on August 3, 1960, however, membership was allowed to lapse.

Geography

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Parliamentary democracy |
| - President | Tandja Mamadou |
| - Prime Minister | Seyni Oumarou |
| Independence | from France |
| - Declared | August 3, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,267,000 km ² (22nd) 489,678 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.02 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 13,957,000 (64th) |
| - Density | 11/km ² (216th) 28/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$910.951 million (132nd) |
| - Per capita | \$872 (171st) |
| Gini (1995) | 50.5 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.374 (low) (174th) |
| Currency | West African CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .ne |
| Calling code | +227 |



Map of Niger

Niger is a landlocked nation in West Africa located along the border between the Sahara and Sub-Saharan regions. Its geographic coordinates are latitude 16°N and longitude 8°E. Its area is 1,267,000 square kilometres (489,000 sq mi) of which 300 square kilometres (115 sq mi) is water. This makes Niger slightly less than twice the size of the U.S. state of Texas, and the world's twenty-second largest country (after Chad). Niger is comparable in size to Angola.

Niger borders seven countries on all sides and has a total of 5,697 kilometres (3,540 mi) of borders. The longest border is with Nigeria to the south (1,497 km; 930 mi). This is followed by Chad to the east, at 1,175 kilometres (730 mi), Algeria to the north-northwest (956 km; 594 mi), and Mali at 821 kilometres (510 mi). Niger also has small borders in its far southwest frontier with Burkina Faso at 628 kilometres (390 mi) and Benin at 266 kilometres (165 mi) and to the north-northeast (Libya at 354 kilometres (220 mi)).

Niger's subtropical climate is mainly very hot and dry, with much desert area. In the extreme south there is a tropical climate on the edges of the Niger River basin. The terrain is predominantly desert plains and sand dunes, with flat to rolling savanna in the south and hills in the north.

The lowest point is the Niger River, with an elevation of 200 metres (722 ft). The highest point is Mont Idoukal-n-Taghès in the Air Massif at 2,022 metres (6,634 ft).

Politics

For its first fourteen years as an independent state, Niger was run by a single-party civilian regime under the presidency of Hamani Diori. In 1974, a combination of devastating drought and accusations of rampant corruption resulted in a coup d'état that overthrew the Diori regime. Col. Seyni Kountché and a small military group ruled the country until Kountché's death in 1987. He was succeeded by his Chief of Staff, Col. Ali Saibou, who released political prisoners, liberalized some of Niger's laws and policies, and promulgated a new constitution. However, President Saibou's efforts to control political reforms failed in the face of union and student demands to institute a multi-party democratic system. The Saibou regime acquiesced to these demands by the end of 1990. New political parties and civic associations sprang up, and a national peace conference was convened in July 1991 to prepare the way for the adoption of a new constitution and the holding of free and fair elections. The debate was often contentious and accusatory, but under the leadership of Prof. André Salifou, the conference developed consensus on the modalities of a transition government. A transition government was installed in November 1991 to manage the affairs of state until the institutions of the Third Republic were put into place in April 1993. While the economy deteriorated over the course of the transition, certain accomplishments stand out, including the successful conduct of a constitutional referendum; the adoption of key legislation such as the electoral and rural codes; and the holding of several free, fair, and non-violent nationwide elections. Freedom of the press flourished with the appearance of several new independent newspapers.

The results of the January 1995 parliamentary election meant cohabitation between a rival president and prime minister; this led to governmental paralysis,

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The Erg of Bilma in the east of Niger.



Satellite image of Niger, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



which provided Col. Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara a rationale to overthrow the Third Republic in January 1996. While leading a military authority that ran the government (Conseil de Salut National) during a 6-month transition period, Baré enlisted specialists to draft a new constitution for a Fourth Republic announced in May 1996. Baré organized a presidential election in July 1996. While voting was still going on, he replaced the electoral commission. The new commission declared him the winner after the polls closed. His party won 57% of parliament seats in a flawed legislative election in November 1996. When his efforts to justify his coup and subsequent questionable elections failed to convince donors to restore multilateral and bilateral economic assistance, a desperate Baré ignored an international embargo against Libya and sought Libyan funds to aid Niger's economy. In repeated violations of basic civil liberties by the regime, opposition leaders were imprisoned; journalists often arrested, and deported by an unofficial militia composed of police and military; and independent media offices were looted and burned.

As part of an initiative started under the 1991 national conference, however, the government signed peace accords in April 1995 with all, meaning Tuareg and Toubou groups that had been in rebellion since 1990. The Tuareg claimed they lacked attention and resources from the central government. The government agreed to absorb some former rebels into the military and, with French assistance, help others return to a productive civilian life.



On April 9, 1999, Baré was killed in a coup led by Maj. Daouda Malam Wanké, who established a transitional National Reconciliation Council to oversee the drafting of a constitution for a Fifth Republic with a French style semi-presidential system. In votes that international observers found to be generally free and fair, the Nigerien electorate approved the new constitution in July 1999 and held legislative and presidential elections in October and November 1999. Heading a coalition of the National Movement for a Developing Society (MNSD) and the Democratic and Social Convention (CDS), Mamadou Tandja won the election.

Niger's new constitution was approved in July 1999. It restored the semi-presidential system of government of the December 1992 constitution (Third Republic) in which the president of the republic, elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term, and a prime minister named by the president share executive power. As a reflection of Niger's increasing population, the unicameral National Assembly was expanded in 2004 to 113 deputies elected for a 5 year term under a majority system of representation. Political parties must attain at least 5% of the vote in order to gain a seat in the legislature.

The constitution also provides for the popular election of municipal and local officials, and the first-ever successful municipal elections took place on July 24, 2004. The National Assembly passed in June 2002 a series of decentralization bills. As a first step, administrative powers will be distributed among 265 communes (local councils); in later stages, regions and departments will be established as decentralized entities. A new electoral code was adopted to reflect the decentralization context. The country is currently divided into 8 regions, which are subdivided into 36 districts (departments). The chief administrator (Governor) in each department is appointed by the government and functions primarily as the local agent of the central authorities.

The current legislature elected in December 2004 contains seven political parties. President Mamadou Tandja was re-elected in December 2004 and reappointed Hama Amadou as Prime Minister. Mahamane Ousmane, the head of the CDS, was re-elected President of the National Assembly (parliament) by his peers. The new second term government of the Fifth Republic took office on December 30, 2002. In August 2002, serious unrest within the military occurred in Niamey, Diffa, and Nguigmi, but the government was able to restore order within several days.

In June 2007, Seyni Oumarou was nominated as the new Prime Minister after Hama Amadou was democratically forced out of office by the National Assembly through a motion of no confidence.

From 2007 to 2008, the Second Tuareg Rebellion took place in northern Niger, worsening economic prospects and shutting down political progress.

Regions, Departments, and Communes



Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger.



Niger is divided into 7 Regions and one capital district. These Regions are subdivided into 36 departments. The 36 Departments are currently broken down into Communes of varying types. As of 2006 there were 265 communes, including communes urbaines (Urban Communes: as subdivisions of major cities), communes rurales (Rural Communes, in sparsely populated areas and postes administratifs (Administrative Posts) for largely uninhabited desert areas or military zones. Rural communes may contain official villages and settlements, while Urban Communes are divided into quarters. Niger subdivisions were renamed in 2002, in the implementation of a decentralisation project, first begun in 1998. Previously, Niger was divided into 7 Departments, 36 Arrondissements, and Communes. These subdivisions were administered by officials appointed by the national government. These offices will be replaced in the future by democratically elected councils at each level.

The departments and capital district are:

- Agadez Region
- Diffa Region
- Dosso Region
- Maradi Region
- Tahoua Region
- Tillabéri Region
- Zinder Region
- Niamey (capital district)

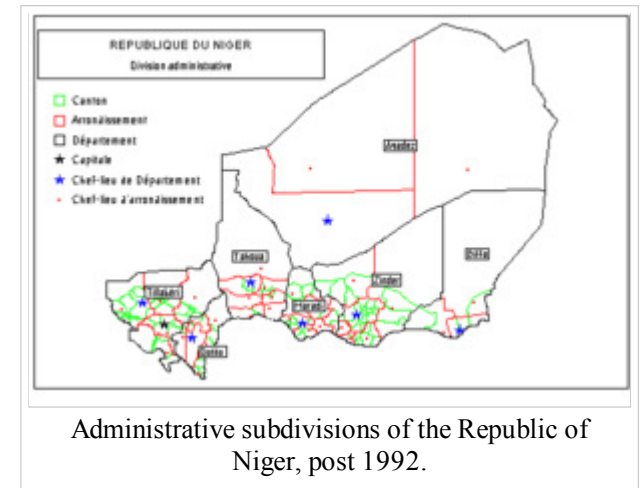
Foreign relations

Niger pursues a moderate foreign policy and maintains friendly relations with the West and the Islamic world as well as nonaligned countries. It belongs to the United Nations and its main specialized agencies and in 1980-81 served on the UN Security Council. Niger maintains a special relationship with France and enjoys close relations with its West African neighbors. It is a charter member of the African Union and the West African Monetary Union and also belongs to the Niger River and Lake Chad Basin Commissions, the Economic Community of West African States, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). The westernmost regions of Niger are joined with contiguous regions Mali and Burkina Faso under the Liptako-Gourma Authority.

The border dispute with Benin, inherited from colonial times and concerning inter alia Lete Island in the River Niger was finally solved by the ICJ in 2005 to Niger's advantage.

Military

The Niger Armed Forces total 12,000 personnel with approximately 3,700 gendarmes, 300 air force, and 6,000 army personnel. The air force has four operational transport aircraft. The armed forces include general staff and battalion task force organizations consisting of two paratroop units, four light armored units, and nine motorized infantry units located in Tahoua, Agadez, Dirkou, Zinder, Nguigmi, N'Gourti, and Madewela. Since January 2003, Niger has deployed





a company of troops to Côte d'Ivoire as part of the ECOWAS stabilization force. In 1991, Niger sent four hundred military personnel to join the American-led allied forces against Iraq during the Gulf War.

Niger's defense budget is modest, accounting for about 1.6% of government expenditures. France provides the largest share of military assistance to Niger. Morocco, Algeria, China, and Libya have also provided military assistance. Approximately 15 French military advisers are in Niger. Many Nigerien military personnel receive training in France, and the Nigerien Armed Forces are equipped mainly with material either given by or purchased in France. In the past, U.S. assistance focused on training pilots and aviation support personnel, professional military education for staff officers, and initial specialty training for junior officers. A small foreign military assistance program was initiated in 1983. A U.S. Defense Attaché office opened in June 1985 and assumed Security Assistance Office responsibilities in 1987. The office closed in 1996 following a coup d'état. A U.S. Defense Attaché office reopened in July 2000. The United States provided transportation and logistical assistance to Nigerien troops deployed to Cote d'Ivoire in 2003. Additionally, the U.S. provided initial equipment training on vehicles and communications gear to a select contingent of Nigerien soldiers as part of the Department of State Pan Sahel Initiative.



Nigerien soldiers in 2007

Transport

Air transport

Niger's main international airport is Diori Hamani International Airport at Niamey. Other airports in Niger include Mano Dayak International Airport at Agadez and Zinder Airport near Zinder.

Economy



The economy of Niger centers on subsistence crops, livestock, and some of the world's largest uranium deposits. Drought cycles, desertification, a 2.9% population growth rate, and the drop in world demand for uranium have undercut the economy.

Niger shares a common currency, the CFA franc, and a common central bank, the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), with seven other members of the West African Monetary Union.

In December 2000, Niger qualified for enhanced debt relief under the International Monetary Fund program for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and concluded an agreement with the Fund for Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). Debt relief provided under the enhanced HIPC initiative significantly reduces Niger's annual debt service obligations, freeing funds for expenditures on basic health care, primary education, HIV/AIDS prevention, rural infrastructure, and other programs geared at poverty reduction. In December 2005, it was announced that Niger had received 100% multilateral debt relief from the IMF, which translates into the forgiveness of approximately \$86 million USD in debts to the IMF, excluding the remaining assistance under HIPC. Nearly half of the government's budget is derived from foreign donor resources. Future growth may be sustained by exploitation of oil, gold, coal, and other mineral resources. Uranium prices have recovered somewhat in the last few years. A drought and locust infestation in 2005 led to food shortages for as many as 2.5 million Nigeriens.



Niamey, Niger's capital and economic hub.

Exports

Uranium is Niger's largest export. Foreign exchange earnings from livestock, although difficult to quantify, are second. Actual exports far exceed official statistics, which often fail to detect large herds of animals informally crossing into Nigeria. Some hides and skins are exported, and some are transformed into handicrafts. Substantial deposits of phosphates, coal, iron, limestone, and gypsum also have been found in Niger.

Uranium

The persistent uranium price slump has brought lower revenues for Niger's uranium sector, although uranium still provides 72% of national export proceeds. The nation enjoyed substantial export earnings and rapid economic growth during the 1960s and 1970s after the opening of two large uranium mines near the northern town of Arlit. When the uranium-led boom ended in the early 1980s, however, the economy stagnated, and new investment since then has been limited. Niger's two uranium mines—SOMAIR's open pit mine and COMINAK's underground mine—are owned by a French-led consortium and operated by French interests. However, as of 2007, many licences have been given to other companies from countries such as Canada and Australia in order to exploit new deposits.



Gold

Exploitable deposits of gold are known to exist in Niger in the region between the Niger River and the border with Burkina Faso. On October 5, 2004, President Tandja announced the official opening of the Samira Hill Gold Mine in Tera Department and the first Nigerien gold ingot was presented to him. This marked a historical moment for Niger as the Samira Hill Gold Mine represents the first commercial gold production in the country. Samira Hill is owned by a company called SML (Societe des Mines du Liptako) which is a joint venture between a Moroccan company, Societe Semafo, and a Canadian company, Etruscan Resources. Both companies own 80% (40% - 40%) of SML and the Government of Niger 20%. The first year's production is predicted to be 135,000 troy ounces (4,200 kg; 9,260 lb avoirdupois) of gold at a cash value of USD 177 per ounce (\$5.70/g). The mine reserves for the Samira Hill mine total 10,073,626 tons at an average grade of 2.21 grams per ton from which 618,000 troy ounces (19,200 kg; 42,400 lb) will be recovered over a 6 year mine life. SML believes to have a number of significant gold deposits within what is now recognized as the gold belt known as the "Samira Horizon", which is located between Gotheye and Ouallam.



A farmer collecting millet in Koremairwa village in the Dosso department.

Coal

The parastatal SONICHAR (Societe Nigerienne de Charbon) in Tchirozerine (north of Agadez) extracts coal from an open pit and fuels an electricity generating plant that supplies energy to the uranium mines. There are additional coal deposits to the south and west that are of a higher quality and may be exploitable.

Oil

Niger has oil potential. In 1992, the Djado permit was awarded to Hunt Oil, and in 2003 the Tenere permit was awarded to the China National Petroleum Company. An ExxonMobil- Petronas joint venture was sold sole rights to the Agadem block, in the Diffa Region north of Lake Chad, but never went beyond exploration. In June 2008, the government transferred the Agadem block rights to CNPC. Niger announced that in exchange for the USD\$5 Billion investment, the Chinese company would build wells, 11 of which would open by 2012, a 20,000 barrel a day refinery near Zinder and a pipeline out of the nation. The government estimates the area has reserves of 324 million barrels, and is seeking further oil in the Tenere Desert and near Bilma. Niger has said that it hopes to produce it's first barrels of oil for sale by 2009.



A test Oil well in the Tenere Desert, January 2008.

Growth rates

The economic competitiveness created by the January 1994 devaluation of the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc contributed to an annual average economic growth of 3.5% throughout the mid-1990s. But the economy stagnated due to the sharp reduction in foreign aid in 1999 (which gradually resumed in 2000) and poor rains in 2000. Reflecting the importance of the agricultural sector, the return of good rains was the primary factor underlying economic growth of 5.1% in 2000, 3.1% in 2001, 6.0% in 2002, and 3.0% in 2003.

In recent years, the Government of Niger drafted revisions to the investment code (1997 and 2000), petroleum code (1992), and mining code (1993), all with attractive terms for investors. The present government actively seeks foreign private investment and considers it key to restoring economic growth and development. With the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it has undertaken a concerted effort to revitalize the private sector.

Foreign aid

The importance of external support for Niger's development is demonstrated by the fact that about 45% of the government's FY 2002 budget, including 80% of its capital budget, derived from donor resources. The most important donors in Niger are France, the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF, and UN agencies— UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, and UNFPA. Other donors include the United States, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, China, Italy, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Iran, Denmark, Canada, and Saudi Arabia. While the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) does not have an office in Niger, the United States is a major donor, contributing on average \$8 million each year to Niger's development increasing to \$12 million in FY 2004. The United States also is a major partner in policy coordination in food security, education, water management and HIV/AIDS sectors.

Economic reform

In January 2000, Niger's newly elected government inherited serious financial and economic problems, including a virtually empty treasury, past-due salaries (11 months of arrears) and scholarship payments, increased debt, reduced revenue performance, and lower public investment. In December 2000, Niger qualified for enhanced debt relief under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and concluded an agreement with the Fund on a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). In January 2001, Niger reached its decision point and subsequently reached its completion point in 2004. Total relief from all of Niger's creditors is worth about \$890 million, corresponding to about \$520 million in net present value (NPV) terms, which is equivalent to 53.5% of Niger's total debt outstanding as of 2000.

The debt relief provided under the enhanced HIPC initiative significantly reduces Niger's annual debt service obligations, freeing about \$40 million per year over the coming years for expenditures on basic health care, primary education, HIV/AIDS prevention, rural infrastructure, and other programs geared at poverty reduction. The overall impact on Niger's budget is substantial. Debt service as a percentage of government revenue will be slashed from nearly 44% in 1999 to 10.9% in 2003 and average 4.3% during 2010-19. The debt relief cuts debt service as a percentage of export revenue from more than 23% to 8.4% in 2003, and decreases it to about 5% in later years.



In addition to strengthening the budgetary process and public finances, the Government of Niger has embarked on an ambitious program to privatize 12 state-owned companies. To date, seven have been fully privatized, including the water and telephone utilities, with the remainder to be privatized in 2005. A newly installed multisectoral regulatory agency will help ensure free and fair competition among the newly privatized companies and their private sector competitors. In its effort to consolidate macroeconomic stability under the PRGF, the government is also taking actions to reduce corruption, and as the result of a participatory process encompassing civil society, has devised a Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan that focuses on improving health, primary education, rural infrastructure, agricultural production, environmental protection, and judicial reform.

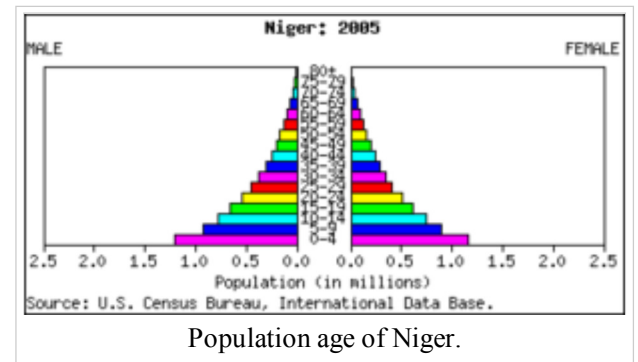
Privatization and liberalization have however also been the subject of strong criticism. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, for instance, has noted that privatization affects the poorest and most vulnerable members of Niger's society. Critics have argued that the obligations to creditor institutions and governments have locked Niger in to a process of trade liberalization that is harmful for small farmers and in particular, rural women.

Demographics

The largest ethnic groups in Niger are the Hausa, who also constitute the major ethnic group in northern Nigeria, the Djerma-Songhai, who also are found in parts of Mali. Both groups, along with the Gourmantche, are sedentary farmers who live in the arable, southern tier of the country. The remainder of Nigeriens are nomadic or semi-nomadic livestock-raising peoples— Fulani, Tuareg, Kanuri, Arabs, and Toubou. With rapidly growing populations and the consequent competition for meager natural resources, lifestyles of agriculturalists and livestock herders have come increasingly into conflict in Niger in recent years.



A market in Maradi



Population age of Niger.



Niger's high infant mortality rate is comparable to levels recorded in neighboring countries. However, the child mortality rate (deaths among children between the ages of 1 and 4) is exceptionally high (248 per 1,000) due to generally poor health conditions and inadequate nutrition for most of the country's children. According to the organization Save the Children, Niger has the world's highest infant mortality rate . Nonetheless, Niger has the highest fertility rate in the world (7.2 births per woman); this means that nearly half (49%) of the Nigerien population is under age 15. Between 1996 and 2003, primary school attendance was around 30% , including 36% of males and only 25% of females. Additional education occurs through madrassas.

The majority of Niger's population practises Islam: 80%, while 15% practises Animism, and 5% practise Protestant and Catholic Christianity.

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Nigeria

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries
SOS Children works in Nigeria. For more information see SOS Children in Nigeria, Africa

Nigeria, officially named the **Federal Republic of Nigeria**, is a federal constitutional republic comprising thirty-six states and one Federal Capital Territory. The country is located in West Africa and shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. Its coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea, part of the Atlantic Ocean, in the south. The capital city is Abuja.

The people of Nigeria have an extensive history, and archaeological evidence shows that human habitation of the area dates back to at least 9000 BC. The Benue-Cross River area is thought to be the original homeland of the Bantu migrants who spread across most of central and southern Africa in waves between the 1st millennium BC and the 2nd millennium AD.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the eighth most populous country in the world with a population of over 140 million. The country is listed among the "Next Eleven" economies.

History

The Nok people in central Nigeria produced terracotta sculptures that have been discovered by archaeologists. In the northern part of the country, Kano and Katsina has recorded history which dates back to around AD 999. Hausa kingdoms and the Kanem-Bornu Empire prospered as trade posts between North and West Africa.

The Yoruba people date their presence in the area of modern republics of Nigeria, Benin and Togo to about 8500 BC. The kingdoms of Ife and Oyo in the western block of Nigeria became prominent about 700-900 BC and 1400 BC respectively. Yoruba mythology believes that Ile-Ife is the source of the human race and that it predates any other civilization. Ife produced the terra cotta and bronze heads, the Oyo extended as far as modern Togo. Another prominent kingdom in south western Nigeria was the Kingdom of Benin whose power lasted between the 15th and 19th century. Their dominance reached as far as the well known city of Eko which was named Lagos by the Portuguese traders and other early European settlers.

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 362 of 586

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| <p><i>Ìjòba-Àpapọ̀ Orílẹ̀-èdè Naìjíríà</i> Republik Nijeriya جمهورية نيجيريا Republic nde Naigeria Republik Federaal bu Niiseriya <i>Federal Republic of Nigeria</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: "Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: " Arise O Compatriots, Nigeria's Call Obey"</p> | |
|  | |
| Capital | Abuja |
| Largest city | Lagos |
| Official languages | English |



On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the United Kingdom. The new republic incorporated a number of people with aspirations of their own sovereign nations. Newly independent Nigeria's government was a coalition of conservative parties: the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC), a party dominated by Northerners and those of the Islamic faith, and the Igbo and Christian dominated National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, who became Nigeria's maiden Governor-General in 1960. Forming the opposition was the comparatively liberal Action Group (AG), which was largely dominated by Yorubas and led by Obafemi Awolowo.

An imbalance was created in the polity by the result of the 1961 plebiscite. Southern Cameroon opted to join the Republic of Cameroon while northern Cameroon chose to remain in Nigeria. The northern part of the country was now far larger than the southern part. The nation parted with its British legacy in 1963 by declaring itself a Federal Republic, with Azikiwe as the first president. When elections came about in 1965, the AG was outmanoeuvred for control of Nigeria's Western Region by the Nigerian National Democratic Party, an amalgamation of conservative Yoruba elements backed heavily by the Federal Government amid dubious electoral circumstances. This left the Igbo NCNC to coalesce with the remnants of the AG in a weak progressive alliance.

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recognised regional languages | Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba |
| Demonym | Nigerian |
| Government | Presidential Federal republic |
| - President | Umaru Yar'Adua (PDP) |
| - Vice President | Goodluck Jonathan (PDP) |
| - Senate President | David Mark (PDP) |
| - Speaker of the House | Dimeji Bankole (PDP) |
| - Chief Justice | Idris Kutigi |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Declared and recognized | October 1, 1960 |
| - Republic declared | October 1, 1963 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 923,768 km ² (32nd) 356,667 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.4 |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 133,530,000 ¹ (9th) |
| - 2006 census | 140,003,542 (Not approved & preliminary) |
| - Density | 145/km ² (71st) 374/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$191.4 billion (47th ²) |
| - Per capita | \$1,500 (165th ²) |
| Gini (2003) | 43.7 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.470 (low) (158th) |
| Currency | Nigerian naira (₦) (NGN) |



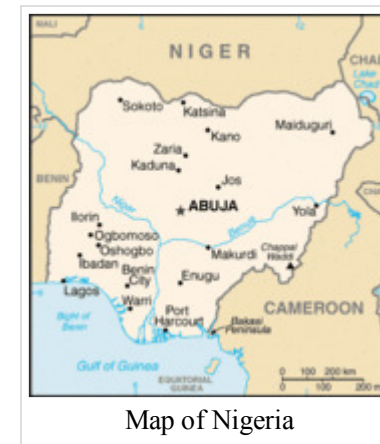
This disequilibrium and perceived corruption of the electoral and political process led in 1966 to several back-to-back military coups. The first was in January and led by a collection of young leftists under Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna & Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, it was partially successful - the coupists overthrew the embattled government but could not install their choice, jailed opposition leader Chief Obafemi Awolowo, General Johnson Aguiyi-ironsi, then head of the army was invited by the rump of the Balewa regime to take over the affairs of the country as head of state. This coup was counter-acted by another successful plot, supported primarily by Northern military officers and Northerners who favoured the NPC, it was engineered by Northern officers, which allowed Lt Colonel Yakubu Gowon to become head of state. This sequence of events led to an increase in ethnic tension and violence. The Northern coup, which was mostly motivated by ethnic and religious reasons was a bloodbath of both military officers and civilians, especially those of Igbo extraction.

The violence against Igbos increased their desire for autonomy and protection from the military's wrath. By May 1967, the Eastern Region had declared itself an independent state called the Republic of Biafra under the leadership Lt Colonel Emeka Ojukwu in line with the wishes of the people. The Nigerian side attacked Biafra on July 6, 1967 at Garkem signalling the beginning of the 30 month war that ended on January 1970. Following the war, Nigeria became to an extent even more mired in ethnic strife, as the defeated southeast and indeed southern Nigeria was now conquered territory for the federal military regime, which changed heads of state twice as army officers staged a bloodless coup against Gowon and enthroned Murtala Mohammed; Olusegun Obasanjo succeeded the former after an assassination.

During the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria joined OPEC and billions of dollars generated by production in the oil-rich Niger Delta flowed into the coffers of the Nigerian state. However, increasing corruption and graft at all levels of government squandered most of these earnings. The northern military clique benefited immensely from the oil boom to the detriment of the Nigerian people and economy. As oil revenues fuelled the rise of federal subventions to states and precariously to individuals, the Federal Government soon became the centre of political struggle and the centre became the threshold of power in the country. As oil production and revenue rose, the Nigerian government created a dangerous situation as it became increasingly dependent on oil revenues and the international commodity markets for budgetary and economic concerns eschewing economic stability. That spelled doom to federalism in Nigeria.

Beginning in 1979, Nigerians participated in a brief return to democracy when Obasanjo transferred power to the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari. The Shagari government was viewed as corrupt and incompetent by virtually all sectors of Nigerian society, so when the regime was overthrown by the military coup of Muhammadu Buhari shortly after the regime's fraudulent re-election in 1984, it was generally viewed as a positive development by most of the population. Buhari promised major reforms but his government fared little better than its predecessor, and his regime was overthrown by yet another military coup in 1985. The new head of state, Ibrahim Babangida, promptly declared himself President and Commander in chief of the Armed Forces and the ruling Supreme Military Council and also set 1990 as the official deadline for a return to democratic governance. Babangida's tenure was marked by a flurry of political activity: he instituted the International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to aid in the repayment of the country's crushing international debt, which

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| Time zone | WAT (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+1) |
| Internet TLD | .ng |
| Calling code | +234 |
| <p>¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected. ² The GDP estimate is as of 2006; the total and per capita ranks, however, are based on 2005 numbers.</p> | |





most federal revenue was dedicated to servicing. He also inflamed religious tensions in the nation and particularly the south by enrolling Nigeria in the Organization of the Islamic Conference,

After Babangida survived an abortive coup, he pushed back the promised return to democracy to 1992. When free and fair elections were finally held on the 12th of June, 1993, Babangida declared that the results showing a presidential victory for Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola null and void, sparking mass civilian violence in protest which effectively shut down the country for weeks and forced Babangida to keep his shaky promise to relinquish office to a civilian run government. Babangida's regime is adjudged to be at the apogee of corruption in the history of the nation as it was during his time that corruption became officially diluted in Nigeria.

Babangida's caretaker regime headed by Ernest Shonekan survived only until late 1993 when General Sani Abacha took power in another military coup. Abacha proved to be perhaps Nigeria's most brutal ruler and employed violence on a wide scale to suppress the continuing pandemic of civilian unrest. Abacha was not only brutal but very corrupt. While Babaginda encouraged his friends, family and himself to steal money, Abacha made corruption a family affair. Money had been found in various western European countries banks traced to him. He avoided coup plots by bribing army generals. Several hundred millions dollars in accounts traced to him were unearthed in 1999.

The regime would come to an end in 1998 when the dictator was found dead amid dubious circumstances. Abacha's death yielded an opportunity for return to civilian rule. Nigeria re-achieved democracy in 1999 when it elected Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba and former military head of state, as the new President ending almost thirty three-years of military rule (between from 1966 until 1999) excluding the short-lived second republic (between 1979-1983) by military dictators who seized power in coups d'état and counter-coups during the Nigerian military juntas of 1966-1979 and 1983-1998.

Although the elections which brought Obasanjo to power in 1999 and again in 2003 were condemned as unfree and unfair, Nigeria has shown marked improvements in attempts to tackle government corruption and to hasten development. While Obasanjo showed willingness to fight corruption, he was accused by others of the same.

Umaru Yar'Adua, of the People's Democratic Party, came into power in the general election of 2007 - an election that was witnessed and condemned by the international community as being massively flawed.

Ethnic violence over the oil producing Niger Delta region (see Conflict in the Niger Delta), interreligious relations and inadequate infrastructure are current issues in the country.

Government and politics

Nigeria is a Federal Republic modelled after the United States, with executive power exercised by the president and with overtones of the Westminster System model in the composition and management of the upper and lower houses of the bicameral legislature.



Umaru Yar'Adua of the People's Democratic Party is the current president of Nigeria



The current president of Nigeria is Umaru Musa Yar'Adua who was elected in 2007. The president presides as both Chief of State and Head of Government and is elected by popular vote to a maximum of two four-year terms. The president's power is checked by a Senate and a House of Representatives, which are combined in a bicameral body called the National Assembly. The Senate is a 109-seat body with three members from each state and one from the capital region of Abuja; members are elected by popular vote to four-year terms. The House contains 360 seats and the number of seats per state is determined by population.

Ethnocentrism, tribalism, sectarianism (especially religious), and prebendalism have played a visible role in Nigerian politics both prior and subsequent to independence in 1960. Kin-selective altruism has made its way into Nigerian politics and has spurred various attempts by tribalists to concentrate Federal power to a particular region of their interests. Nationalism has also led to active secessionist movements such as MASSOB, Nationalist movements such as Oodua Peoples Congress, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and a civil war. Nigeria's three largest ethnic groups have maintained historical preeminence in Nigerian politics; competition amongst these three groups, the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, has fuelled corruption and graft.

Due to the above issues, Nigeria's current political parties are declaredly pan-national and irreligious in character (though this does not preclude the continuing preeminence of the dominant ethnicities). The major political parties at present include the ruling People's Democratic Party of Nigeria which maintains 223 seats in the House and 76 in the Senate (61.9% and 69.7% respectively) and is led by the current President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua; the opposition All Nigeria People's Party under the leadership of Muhammadu Buhari has 96 House seats and 27 in the Senate (26.6% and 24.7%). There are also about twenty other minor opposition parties registered. The outgoing president, Olusegun Obasanjo, acknowledged fraud and other electoral "lapses" but said the result reflected opinion polls. In a national television address he added that if Nigerians did not like the victory of his handpicked successor they would have an opportunity to vote again in four years.

Like in many other African societies, Prebendalism and extremely excessive corruption continue to constitute major challenges to Nigeria, as vote rigging and other means of coercion are practised by all major parties in order to remain competitive. In 1983, it was adjudged by the policy institute at Kuru that only the 1959 and 1979 elections witnessed minimal rigging.

Law

There are four distinct systems of law in Nigeria:

- English Law which is derived from its colonial past with Britain;
- common law, a development of its post colonial independence;
- customary law which is derived from indigenous traditional norms and practice, including the dispute resolution meetings of pre-colonial Yorubaland secret societies;
- Sharia law, used only in the predominantly Muslim north of the country. It is an Islamic legal system which had been used long before the colonial administration in Nigeria but recently politicised and spearheaded in Zamfara in late 1999 and eleven other states followed suit. These states are Kano, Katsina, Niger, Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Gombe, Sokoto, Jigawa, Yobe, and Kebbi.

The country has a judicial branch, the highest court of which is the Supreme Court of Nigeria.



States and local government areas

Nigeria is divided into thirty-six states and one Federal Capital Territory, which are further sub-divided into 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The plethora of states, of which there were only three at independence, reflect the country's tumultuous history and the difficulties of managing such a heterogeneous national entity at all levels of government.

Nigeria has six cities with a population of over 1 million people (from largest to smallest: Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, and Benin City). Lagos is the largest city in sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of over 10 million in its urban area alone.

Foreign relations and military

Foreign relations

Upon gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria made the liberation and restoration of the dignity of Africa the centrepiece of its foreign policy and played a leading role in the fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa; Nigeria's foreign policy was soon tested in the 1970s after the country emerged united from its own civil war and quickly committed itself to the liberation struggles going on in the Southern Africa sub-region. Though Nigeria never sent an expeditionary force in that struggle, it offered more than rhetoric to the African National Congress (ANC) by taking a committed tough line with regard to the racist regime and their incursions in southern Africa, in addition to expediting large sums to aid anti-colonial struggles. Nigeria was also a founding member of the Organization for African Unity (now the African Union), and has tremendous influence in West Africa and Africa on the whole. Nigeria has additionally founded regional cooperative efforts in West Africa, functioning as standard-bearer for ECOWAS and ECOMOG, economic and military organizations respectively.

With this African-centred stance, Nigeria readily sent troops to the Congo at the behest of the United Nations shortly after independence (and has maintained membership since that time); Nigeria also supported several Pan African and pro-self government causes in the 1970s, including garnering support for Angola's MPLA, SWAPO in Namibia, and aiding anti-colonial struggles in Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) military and economically.

Nigeria retains membership in the Non-Aligned Movement, and in late November 2006 organized an Africa-South America Summit in Abuja to promote what some attendees termed "South-South" linkages on a variety of fronts. Nigeria is also a member of the International Criminal Court, and the Commonwealth of Nations, from which it was temporarily expelled in 1995 under the Abacha regime.

Nigeria has remained a key player in the international oil industry since the 1970s, and maintains membership in Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries OPEC which it joined in July, 1971. Its status as a major petroleum producer figures prominently in its sometimes vicissitudinous international relations with both developed countries, notably the United States and more recently China and developing countries, notably Ghana, Jamaica and Kenya.



States of Nigeria



National Assembly complex in Abuja



Millions of Nigerians have emigrated at times of economic hardship to Europe, North America and Australia among others. It is estimated that over a million Nigerians have emigrated to the United States and constitute the Nigerian American populace. Of such Diasporic communities include the "Egbe Omo Yoruba" society.

Military of Nigeria

The military in Nigeria have played a major role in the country's history since independence. Various juntas have seized control of the country and ruled it through most of its history. Its last period of rule ended in 1999 following the sudden death of dictator Sani Abacha in 1998.

Taking advantage of its role of sub-Saharan Africa's most populated country, Nigeria has repositioned its military as an African peacekeeping force. Since 1995, the Nigerian military through ECOMOG mandates have been deployed as peacekeepers in Liberia (1997), Ivory Coast (1997-1999), Sierra Leone 1997-1999, and presently in Sudan's Darfur region under an African Union mandate.



Nigerian troops

Active duty personnel in the three Nigerian armed services total approximately 115,000. The Nigerian Army, the largest of the services, has about 99,000 personnel deployed in two mechanized infantry divisions, one armoured division, one composite division (airborne and amphibious), the Lagos Garrison Command (a division size unit), the Abuja-based Brigade of Guards and other regimental size units (e.g. artillery brigade). It has demonstrated its capability to mobilize, deploy, and sustain battalions in support of peacekeeping operations in Liberia, former Yugoslavia, Angola, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sierra Leone. The Nigerian Navy (7,000 members) is equipped with frigates, fast attack craft, corvettes, and coastal patrol boats. The Nigerian Air Force (9,000 members) flies transport, trainer, helicopter, and fighter aircraft, many of which are currently non-operational, but there is an ongoing policy of reorganization, and the provision of a very professional armed forces with high capability. Nigeria also has pursued a policy of developing domestic training and military production capabilities.

Nigeria has continued a strict policy of diversification in military procurement from various countries. After the imposition of sanctions by many Western nations, Nigeria turned to the People's Republic of China, Russia, North Korea, and India for the purchase of military equipment and training.

Geography



Nigeria is located in western Africa on the Gulf of Guinea and has a total area of 923,768 km² (356,669 mi²), making it the world's 32nd-largest country (after Tanzania). It is comparable in size to Venezuela, and is about twice the size of California. It shares a 4047 km (2515-mile) border with Benin (773 km), Niger (1497 km), Chad (87 km), Cameroon (1690 km), and has a coastline of at least 853 km.

The highest point in Nigeria is Chappal Waddi at 2,419 m (7,936 feet).

Nigeria has a varied landscape. From the Obudu Hills in the southeast through the beaches in the south, the rainforest, the Lagos estuary and savannah in the middle and southwest of the country and the Sahel to the encroaching Sahara in the extreme north.

Nigeria's main rivers are the Niger and the Benue which converge and empty into the Niger Delta, the world's largest river deltas.

Nigeria is also an important centre for biodiversity. It is widely believed that the areas surrounding Calabar, Cross River State, contain the world's largest diversity of butterflies. The drill monkey is only found in the wild in Southeast Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon.

Environment

Environmental degradation

Nigeria's Delta region, home of the large oil industry, experiences serious oil spills and other environmental problems. See [Environmental issues in the Niger Delta](#) for more details, and [Conflict in the Niger Delta](#) about strife which has arisen in connection with those issues.

Waste management including sewage treatment, the linked processes of deforestation and soil degradation, and climate change or global warming are the major environmental problems in Nigeria.

Waste management presents problems in a mega city like Lagos and other major Nigerian cities which are linked with economic development, population growth and the inability of municipal councils to manage the resulting rise in industrial and domestic waste. Haphazard industrial planning, increased urbanization, poverty and lack of competence of the municipal government are seen as the major reasons for high levels of waste pollution in major Nigerian cities. Some of the 'solutions' have been disastrous to the environment, resulting in untreated waste being dumped in places where it can pollute waterways and groundwater.

In terms of global warming, Africans contribute only about one metric ton of carbon dioxide per person per year. It is perceived by many climate change experts



Satellite image of Nigeria, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Map of vegetation in Nigeria



that food production and security in the northern sahel region of the country will suffer as semi-arid areas will have more dry periods in the future.

Economy

The currency unit of Nigeria is the Nigerian Naira.

Years of military rule, corruption, and mismanagement have hampered economic activity and output in Nigeria and continue to do so, despite the restoration of democracy and subsequent economic reform. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit and the World Bank, Nigerian GDP at purchasing power parity was only at \$170.7 billion as of FY 2005. The GDP per head is at \$692.

Petroleum plays a large role in the Nigerian economy, accounting for 40% of the GDP. It is the 12th largest producer of petroleum in the world and the 8th largest exporter, and has the 10th largest proven reserves and the country was also a founding member of OPEC. However, due to crumbling infrastructure, corruption, and ongoing civil strife in the Niger Delta, its main oil producing region, oil production and export is not at 100% capacity.

Mineral resources that are present in Nigeria but not yet fully exploited are coal and tin. Other natural resources in the country include iron ore, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, and arable land. Despite huge deposits of these natural resources, the mining industry in Nigeria is almost non-existent. About 60% of Nigerians are employed in the agricultural sector. Agriculture used to be the principal foreign exchange earner of Nigeria. Perhaps, one of the most daunting ramifications of the discovery of oil was the decline of agricultural sector. So tragic was this neglect that Nigeria, which in the 1960s grew 98% of his own food and was a net food exporter, now must import much of the same cash crops it was formerly famous for as the biggest exporter. Agricultural products include groundnuts, palm oil, cocoa, coconut, citrus fruits, maize, pearl millet, cassava, yams and sugar cane. It also has a booming leather and textile industry, with industries located in Kano, Abeokuta, Onitsha, and Lagos.

Like many Third World nations, Nigeria accumulated a significant foreign debt. Many of the projects financed by these debts were inefficient, bedeviled by corruption or failed to live up to expectations. Eventually, Nigeria defaulted on its principal debt repayments as arrears and penalty interest accumulated and increased the size of the debt. However, after a long campaign by the Nigeria authorities, in October 2005 Nigeria and its Paris Club creditors reached an agreement that reduced Nigeria's debt by approximately 60%. Nigeria used part of its oil windfall to pay the residual 40%, freeing up at least \$1.15 billion annually for poverty reduction programmes. As of April 2006, Nigeria became the first African Country to fully pay off her debt (estimated \$30billion) owed to the Paris Club.

Nigeria also has significant production and manufacturing facilities such as factories for the French car manufacturer Peugeot, the English truck manufacturer Bedford, now a subsidiary of General Motors. Nigeria also manufactures t-shirts and processed food.

Demographics

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Two slightly differing Okpoho Manillas, an archaic form of Nigerian money.



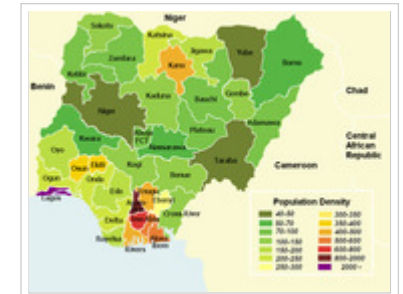
Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa but exactly how populous is a subject of speculation. The United Nations estimates that the population in 2004 was at 131,530,000 , with the population distributed as 48.3% Urban and 51.7% rural and population density at 139 people per square km. National census results in the past few decades have been disputed. The results of the most recent census by the Government of Nigeria have been released 29 December 2006. The census gave a population of 140.003.542. The only breakdown available was Total: 140.003.542 Men: 71.709.859 Women: 68.293.083

According to the United Nations, Nigeria has been undergoing explosive population growth and one of the highest growth and fertility rates in the world. By their projections, Nigeria will be one of the countries in the world that will account for most of the world's total population increase by 2050. According to current data, one out of every four Africans is Nigerian. Presently, Nigeria is the ninth most populous country in the world, and even conservative estimates conclude that more than 20% of the world's black population lives in Nigeria. 2006 estimates claim 42.3% of the population is between 0-14 years of age, while 54.6% is between 15-65; the birth rate is significantly higher than the death rate, at 40.4 and 16.9 per 1000 people respectively.

Health, health care, and general living conditions in Nigeria are poor. Life expectancy is 47 years (average male/female) and just over half the population has access to potable water and appropriate sanitation; the percentage of children under five has gone up rather than down between 1990 and 2003 and infant mortality is 97.1 deaths per 1000 live births. HIV/AIDS rate in Nigeria is much lower compared to the other African nations such as Kenya or South Africa whose prevalence (percentage) rates are in the double digits. Nigeria, like many developing countries, also suffers from a polio crisis as well as periodic outbreaks of cholera, malaria, and sleeping sickness. As of 2004, there has been a vaccination drive, spearheaded by the W.H.O., to combat polio and malaria that has been met with controversy in some regions.

Education is also in a state of neglect, though after the oil boom on the oil price in the early 1970s, tertiary education was improved so it would reach every subregion of Nigeria. Education is provided free by the government, but the attendance rate for secondary education is only 29% (average male 32%/female 27%). The education system has been described as "dysfunctional" largely due to decaying institutional infrastructure. 68% of the population is literate, and the rate for men (75.7%) is higher than that for women (60.6%).

Ethno-linguistic groups



Population density in Nigeria



Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups, with varying languages and customs, creating a country of rich ethnic diversity. The largest ethnic groups are the Fulani/ Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, accounting for 68% of population, while the Edo, Ijaw (10%), Kanuri, Ibibio, Ebiru Nupe and Tiv comprise 27%; other minorities make up the remaining 7 percent. The middle belt of Nigeria is known for its diversity of ethnic groups, including the Pyem, Goemai, and Kofyar.

There are small minorities of British, Americans, East Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Syrian, Lebanese and refugees and immigrants from other West African or East African nations. These minorities mostly reside in major cities such as Lagos and Abuja, or in the Niger Delta as employees for the major oil companies. A number of Cubans settled Nigeria as political refugees following the Cuban Revolution. A number of them include Afro-Cubans and mixed-raced Cubans.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a number of ex-slaves of Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian descent and emigrants from Sierra Leone established communities in Lagos, Ibadan and other regions of Nigeria. Many ex-slaves came to Nigeria following the emancipation of slaves in Latin America. Many of the immigrants, sometimes called Saros (immigrants from Sierra Leone) and Amaro (ex-slaves from Brazil) later became prominent merchants and missionaries in Lagos and Abeokuta.

Language

The number of languages currently estimated and catalogued in Nigeria is 521. This number includes 510 living languages, two second languages without native speakers and 9 extinct languages. In some areas of Nigeria, ethnic groups speak more than one language. The official language of Nigeria, English, was chosen to facilitate the cultural and linguistic unity of the country. The choice of English as the official language was partially related to the fact that a part of Nigerian population spoke English as a result of British colonization that ended in 1960.

The major languages spoken in Nigeria represent three major families of African languages - the majority are Niger-Congo languages, such as Yoruba, Ibo, the Hausa language is Afro-Asiatic; and Kanuri, spoken in the northeast, primarily Borno State, is a member of the Nilo-Saharan family. Even though most ethnic groups prefer to communicate in their own languages, English, being the official language, is widely used for education, business transactions and for official purposes. English as a first language, however, remains an exclusive preserve of a small minority of the country's urban elite, and is not spoken at all in some rural areas. With the majority of Nigeria's populace in the rural areas, the major languages of communication in the country remain indigenous languages. Some of the largest of these, notably Yoruba and Ibo, have derived standardized languages from a number of different dialects and are widely spoken by those ethnic groups. Hausa is a *lingua franca* throughout much of West Africa, and serves this function in Northern Nigeria as well, particularly amongst the Muslim population. Nigerian Pidgin English, often known simply as 'Pidgin' or 'Broken' (Broken English), is also as a popular lingua franca, though with varying





regional influences on dialect and slang. The pidgin English or Nigerian English is widely spoken within the Niger Delta Regions, predominately in Warri, Sapele, Port-Harcourt, Agenebode, Benin City etc. The Yoruba language has the most varied forms and dialects. This variation is usually based on the different towns or as it were Kingdoms that existed before the advent of Europeans. They are as diverse as the number of city states that there are. Examples are Awori, Ondo/Ekiti, Egba/Yewa, Oyo/Ibadan, Ijebu, Ijesa/Ife, Ilorin, Kabba/Okun.

Crime and Punishment

Advance fee fraud (also known as "419" and the "Nigerian scam") is a form of organized crime that is commonly associated with Nigeria, though it is now used in other places. The scammer persuades the target to advance relatively small sums of money (the advance fee) in the hope of realizing a much larger gain (usually touted as millions). In 2003, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (or EFCC) was created to combat this and other forms of organized financial crime. It has succeeded in bringing several "419" kingpins to justice and in some cases has been able to return the stolen money to victims.

Societal issues

Despite its vast government revenue from the mining of petroleum, Nigeria is beset by a number of societal problems due primarily to a history of inept governance. Some of these problems are listed below.

New Nations

There is dynamic dissonance between the Nigerian federation and some of its encapsulated sovereign peoples. At different times, the Hausa (Arewa), Igbo/Ibo (Biafra), Niger Delta region, and Yoruba (Oduduwa) have threatened or agitated to form break-away republics. No secession attempt has yet succeeded, although the clamour grows as each change of government is followed by bitter wrangling about control of mineral resources. Arewa and Biafra would be land-locked countries. The Delta is an oil enclave. Yorubaland is on the Atlantic coast and sustains a diversified and vibrant economy.

Human rights

Homosexuality is illegal in Nigeria as it runs counter to the country's deeply ingrained cultural and religious morals. Homosexual intercourse is punishable by imprisonment in the south and possibly death in the Muslim north.

On February 14, 2007 The National Assembly held public hearings on a bill to ban gay marriage and criminalize virtually all forms of gay expression. The bill reads as follows:

Any person who is involved in the registration of gay clubs, societies and organizations, sustenance, procession or meetings, publicity and public show of same sex amorous relationship directly or indirectly in public and in private is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a term of five years imprisonment.



In April 2007, the voluntary Sharia police of Nigeria known as the Hisbah issued arrest warrants against an alleged lesbian who married four women in a large celebration in Kano, Nigeria.

Strife and sectarian violence

Due to its multitude of diverse, sometimes competing ethno-linguistic groups, Nigeria has been beset since prior to independence with sectarian tensions and violence. This is particularly true in the oil-producing Niger Delta region, where both state and civilian forces employ varying methods of coercion in attempts to gain control over regional petroleum resources. The civilian population, and especially certain ethnic groups like the Ogoni, have experienced severe environmental degradation due to petroleum extraction, but when these groups have attempted to protest these injustices, they have been met with repressive measures by Nigerian government and military forces. As a result, strife and deterioration in this region continues as of 2006.

There are also significant tensions on a national scale, especially between the primarily Muslim, highly conservative northern population and the Christian population from the Southern part of the country.

Since the end of the civil war in 1970, ethnic and religious violence has continued. Violence between Muslims and Christians occurred until early 2004. There has subsequently been a period of relative harmony since the Federal Government introduced tough new measures against religious violence in all affected parts of the country.

In 2002, organizers of the Miss World Pageant announced that they would move the pageant from the Nigerian capital, Abuja, to London in the wake of violent protests in the Northern part of the country that left more than 100 people dead and over 500 injured. The rioting erupted after a newspaper suggested Muhammad would have approved of the Miss World beauty contest for personal reasons. Muslim rioters in Kaduna killed an estimated 105 men, women, and children with a further 521 injured taken to hospital. Angry mobs in the mainly Muslim city 600 kilometres (375 miles) northeast of Lagos burnt churches and rampaged through the streets, stabbing, bludgeoning, and burning bystanders to death.

Health issues

Nigeria has been reorganizing its health system since the Bamako Initiative of 1987 formally promoted community-based methods of increasing accessibility of drugs and health care services to the population, in part by implementing user fees. The new strategy dramatically increased accessibility through community-based healthcare reform, resulting in more efficient and equitable provision of services. A comprehensive approach strategy was extended to all areas of health care, with subsequent improvement in the health care indicators and improvement in health care efficiency and cost.

The state of health care in Nigeria has been worsened by a shortage of doctors as a consequence of severe 'brain drain'. Many Nigerian doctors have emigrated to North America and Europe. In 1995, 21,000 Nigerian doctors were practising in the US alone, about the same as the number of doctors then in the Nigerian public service. Retaining these expensively-trained professionals has been identified as an urgent goal.

National well-being

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In 2003, Nigerians were reported to be the happiest people in a scientific survey carried out in 65 nations in 1999-2000. The research was reported by one of the world's top science magazines, *New Scientist*, and was picked up by a number of news outlets. See *Nigeria tops happiness survey*. The report considered that the country's family life and culture were more important than its problems and material wealth in determining happiness.

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Republic of the Congo

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

The **Republic of the Congo** (French: *République du Congo*; Kongo: *Repubilika ya Kongo*; Lingala: *Republiki ya Kongó*), also known as **Congo-Brazzaville** or the **Congo**, is a country in Central Africa. It is bordered by Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Angolan exclave province of Cabinda, and the Gulf of Guinea.



The republic is a former French colony. Upon independence in 1960, the former French region of Middle Congo became the Republic of the Congo. After a quarter century of Marxism, Congo became a multi-party democracy in 1992. However, a brief civil war in 1997 ended in the restoration of former Marxist President Denis Sassou Nguesso to power.

History

The earliest inhabitants of the area were Pygmy peoples. They were largely replaced and absorbed by Bantu tribes during Bantu expansions. The Bakongo are Bantu groups that also occupied parts of present-day Angola, Gabon, and Democratic Republic of the Congo, forming the basis for ethnic affinities and rivalries among those countries. Several Bantu kingdoms—notably those of the Kongo, the Loango, and the Teke—built trade links leading into the Congo River basin. The first European contacts came in the late 15th century with Portuguese explorations, and commercial relationships were quickly established with the kingdoms—trading for slaves captured in the interior. The coastal area was a major source for the transatlantic slave trade, and when that commerce ended in the early 19th century, the power of the Bantu kingdoms eroded.

Following independence as the Congo Republic on August 15, 1960, Fulbert Youlou ruled as the country's first president until labour elements and rival political parties instigated a three-day uprising that ousted him. The Congolese military took charge of the country briefly and installed a civilian provisional government headed by Alphonse Massamba-Débat.

Under the 1963 constitution, Massamba-Débat was elected President for a five-year term but it was ended abruptly with an August 1968 coup d'état. Capt. Marien Ngouabi, who had participated in the

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p><i>République du Congo</i> (French) <i>Repubilika ya Kongo</i> (Kituba) <i>Republiki ya Kongó</i> (Lingala) Republic of the Congo</p> | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: <i>Unité, Travail, Progrès</i> (French) "Unity, Work, Progress"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>La Congolaise</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Brazzaville |
| Official languages | French |



coup, assumed the presidency on December 31, 1968. One year later, President Nguabi proclaimed Congo to be Africa's first "people's republic" and announced the decision of the National Revolutionary Movement to change its name to the Congolese Labour Party (PCT). On March 16, 1977, President Nguabi was assassinated. An 11-member Military Committee of the Party (CMP) was named to head an interim government with Col. (later Gen.) Joachim Yhombi-Opango to serve as President of the Republic.

After decades of turbulent politics bolstered by Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Congo completed a transition to multi-party democracy with elections in August 1992. Denis Sassou Nguesso conceded defeat and Congo's new president, Prof. Pascal Lissouba, was inaugurated on August 31, 1992.

However, Congo's democratic progress was derailed in 1997. As presidential elections scheduled for July 1997 approached, tensions between the Lissouba and Sassou camps mounted. On June 5, President Lissouba's government forces surrounded Sassou's compound in Brazzaville and Sassou ordered members of his private militia (known as "Cobras") to resist. Thus began a four-month conflict that destroyed or damaged much of Brazzaville and caused tens of thousands of civilian deaths. In early October, Angolan troops invaded Congo on the side of Sassou and, in mid-October, the Lissouba government fell. Soon thereafter, Sassou declared himself President. The Congo Civil War continued for another year and a half until a peace deal was struck between the various factions in December 1999.

Sham elections in 2002 saw Sassou win with almost 10% of the vote cast. His two main rivals Lissouba and Bernard Kolelas were prevented from competing and the only remaining credible rival, Andre Milongo, advised his supporters to boycott the elections and then withdrew from the race. A new constitution, agreed upon by referendum in January 2002, granted the president new powers and also extended his term to seven years as well as introducing a new bicameral assembly. International observers took issue with the organization of the presidential election as well as the constitutional referendum, both of which were reminiscent in their organization of Congo's era of the single-party state.

Government and politics

The most important of the many political parties are the Democratic and Patriotic Forces or FDP [Denis Sassou Nguesso, president], an alliance consisting of:

- Convention for Alternative Democracy
- Congolese Labour Party (PCT)

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recognised regional languages | Kongo/ Kituba, Lingala |
| Demonym | Congolese |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Denis Sassou Nguesso |
| - Prime Minister | Isidore Mvouba |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | 15 August 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 342,000 km ² (64th) 132,047 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 3.3 |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 3,999,000 (128th) |
| - census | n/a |
| - Density | 12/km ² (204th) 31/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$4.585 billion (154th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,369 (161st) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.547 (medium) (139th) |
| Currency | Central African CFA franc (₣ AF) |
| Time zone | WAT |
| Internet TLD | .cg |
| Calling code | +242 |



- Liberal Republican Party
- National Union for Democracy and Progress
- Patriotic Union for the National Reconstruction
- National Republic Party of Helasia
- Union for the National Renewal

Other significant parties include:

- Congolese Movement for Democracy and Integral Development or MCDDI [Michel Mampouya]
- Pan-African Union for Social Development or UPADS [Martin Mberi]
- Rally for Democracy and Social Progress or RDPS [Jean-Pierre Thystere Tchicaya, president]
- Rally for Democracy and the Republic or RDR [Raymond Damasge Ngollo]
- Union for Democracy and Republic or UDR leader NA
- Union of Democratic Forces or UFD, Sebastian Ebao

Regions and districts

The Republic of the Congo is divided into 10 *régions* (regions) and one commune, the capital Brazzaville. These are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| ■ Bouenza | ■ Likouala |
| ■ Cuvette | ■ Niari |
| ■ Cuvette-Ouest | ■ Plateaux |
| ■ Kouilou | ■ Pool |
| ■ Lékoumou | ■ Sangha |
| ■ Commune of <i>Brazzaville</i> | |

The regions are subdivided into forty-six districts.



Regions of the Republic of the Congo

Geography



Congo is located in the central-western part of sub-Saharan Africa, along the Equator. To the south and east of it is the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is also bounded by Gabon to the west, Cameroon and the Central African Republic to the north, and Cabinda (Angola) to the southwest. It has a short Atlantic coast.

The capital, Brazzaville, is located on the Congo River, in the south of the country, immediately across from Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The southwest of the country is a coastal plain for which the primary drainage is the Kouilou-Niari River; the interior of the country consists of a central plateau between two basins to the south and north.

Economy

The economy is a mixture of village agriculture and handicrafts, an industrial sector based largely on petroleum, support services, and a government characterized by budget problems and overstaffing. Petroleum extraction has supplanted forestry as the mainstay of the economy, providing a major share of government revenues and exports. In the early 1980s, rapidly rising oil revenues enabled the government to finance large-scale development projects with GDP growth averaging 5% annually, one of the highest rates in Africa. The government has mortgaged a substantial portion of its petroleum earnings, contributing to a shortage of revenues. The January 12, 1994 devaluation of Franc Zone currencies by 50% resulted in inflation of 46% in 1994, but inflation has subsided since. Economic reform efforts continued with the support of international organizations, notably the World Bank and the IMF. The reform program came to a halt in June 1997 when civil war erupted. When Sassou Nguesso returned to power at the war ended in October 1997, he publicly expressed interest in moving forward on economic reforms and privatization and in renewing cooperation with international financial institutions. However, economic progress was badly hurt by slumping oil prices and the resumption of armed conflict in December 1998, which worsened the republic's budget deficit. The current administration presides over an uneasy internal peace and faces difficult economic problems of stimulating recovery and reducing poverty, despite record-high oil prices since 2003. Natural gas and diamonds are also recent major Congolese exports, although Congo was excluded from the Kimberley Process in 2004 amid allegations that most of its diamond exports were in fact being smuggled out of the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo; it was re-admitted to the group in 2007.

Demographics



Map of the Republic of the Congo



Satellite image of Congo, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



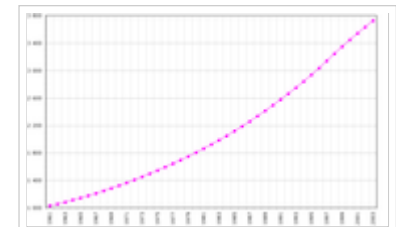
The Republic of the Congo's sparse population is concentrated in the southwestern portion of the country, leaving the vast areas of tropical jungle in the north virtually uninhabited. Thus, Congo is one of the most urbanized countries in Africa, with 85% of its total population living in a few urban areas, namely in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, or one of the small cities or villages lining the 332-mile (534 km) railway which connects the two cities. In rural areas, industrial and commercial activity has declined rapidly in recent years, leaving rural economies dependent on the government for support and subsistence. Before the 1997 war, about 15,000 Europeans and other non-Africans lived in Congo, most of whom were French. Presently, only about 9,500 remain.

Weather and Climate

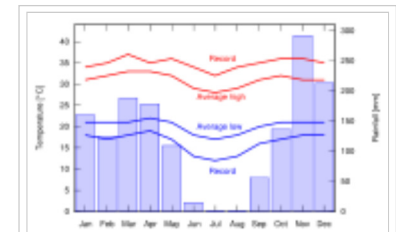
Since the country is located on the Equator, the climate is consistent year-round, with the average day temperature being a humid 24 °C (75 °F) and nights generally between 16-21 °C (60-70 °F). The average yearly rainfall ranges from 1,100 millimetres (43 in) in south in the Niari valley to over 2,000 millimetres (79 in) in central parts of the county. The dry season is from June to August while in the majority of the country the wet season has two rainfall maxima: one in March–May and another in September–November.

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Population of the Republic of the Congo (FAO, 2005); number of inhabitants given in thousands.



Climate diagram for Brazzaville



Réunion

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Réunion (French: *Réunion* or formally *La Réunion*; previously *Île Bourbon*) is an island located in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar, about 200 km (130 miles) south west of Mauritius, the nearest island.

Administratively, Réunion is one of the overseas *départements* of France. Like the other overseas departments, Réunion is also one of the twenty-six regions of France (being an overseas region) and an integral part of the Republic with the same status as those situated on the European mainland.

Réunion is an outermost region of the European Union, and thus the currency used is the euro. In fact, due to its location in a time zone to the east of Europe, Réunion was the first region in the world to use the euro, and the first ever purchase using the euro occurred at 12.01 a.m., when the former mayor of Saint-Denis René-Paul Victoria bought a bag of lychees at a market.

History

Arab sailors formerly called the island *Adna Al Maghribain* ("Western Island"). The Portuguese were the first Europeans to visit, finding it uninhabited in 1513, and naming it *Santa Apollonia*, after Saint Apollonia.

The island was then occupied by France and administered from Port Louis, Mauritius. Although the French flag was hoisted by François Cauche in 1638, Santa Apollonia was officially claimed by Jacques Pronis of France in 1642, when he deported a dozen French mutineers to the island from Madagascar. The convicts were returned to France several years later, and in 1649, the island was named *Île Bourbon* after the royal house.

"Réunion" was the name given to the island in 1793 by a decree of the Convention with the fall of the House of Bourbon in France, and the name commemorates the union of revolutionaries from Marseille with the National Guard in Paris, which took place on August 10, 1792. In 1801, the island was renamed "Île Bonaparte," after Napoleon Bonaparte. The island was taken by the British navy led by Commodore Josias Rowley in 1810, who used the old name of "Bourbon". When it was restored to France by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the island retained the name of "Bourbon" until 1848, when the fall of the restored Bourbons during the revolutions during that year meant that the island became "Réunion" once again.

Région Réunion



Region flag



Region logo

Location



Administration

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Capital | Saint-Denis |
| Regional President | Paul Vergès (PCR) (since 1998) |
| Departments | Réunion |
| Arrondissements | 4 |



| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cantons | 49 |
| Communes | 24 |
| Statistics | |
| Land area ¹ | 2,512 km ² |
| Population | (Ranked 21st) |
| - January 1, 2007 est. | 793,000 |
| - March 8, 1999 census | 706,300 |
| - Density (2007) | 316/km ² |

¹ French Land Register data, which exclude lakes, ponds, and glaciers larger than 1 km² (0.386 sq. mi. or 247 acres) as well as the estuaries of rivers



Map of Réunion



From the 17th to the 19th centuries, French immigration supplemented by influxes of Africans, Chinese, Malays, and Indians gave the island its ethnic mix. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 cost the island its importance as a stopover on the East Indies trade route.

Réunion became a *département d'outre-mer* (overseas department) of France on March 19, 1946. Its département code is 974.

Between 15 and 16 March 1952, Cilaos at the centre of Réunion received 1,869.9 mm (73.6 in) of rainfall. This is the greatest 24-hour precipitation total ever recorded on earth. The island also holds the record for most rainfall in 72 hours, 3,929 mm (154.7 in) at Commerson's Crater in March, 2007.

In 2005 and 2006 Réunion was hit by a crippling epidemic of chikungunya, a disease spread by mosquitoes. According to the BBC News, 255,000 people on Réunion had contracted the disease as of 26 April 2006. The disease also spread to Madagascar and to mainland France through airline travel. The disease led to more than 200 deaths on Réunion. The French government under Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin sent an emergency aid package worth 36 million euros (\$42.8M U.S. dollars) and deployed approximately five hundred French troops in an effort to eradicate mosquitoes. Chikungunya means "that which bends" in the Makonde language of the Tanzania/Mozambique border region where it was first identified. It can cause dehydration, extreme pain and high fevers and in some rare cases can be fatal. There is no known cure.



Plaine-des-Palmistes

Politics

Réunion sends five deputies to the French National Assembly and three senators to the French Senate.

Arrondissements, cantons, and communes

Administratively, Réunion is divided into 4 arrondissements, 24 cantons, and 24 communes. It is a French overseas *département* as well as a French region. The low number of communes, compared to French metropolitan departments of similar size and population, is unique; most Réunionnaises communes encompass several localities, sometimes separated by significant distances. Réunion is part of the Indian Ocean Commission.

Major communities

- Saint-Benoît
- Le Port
- Le Tampon
- Saint-André



- Saint-Denis
- Saint-Louis
- Saint-Paul
- Saint-Pierre

Geography

The island is 63 kilometres (39 miles) long; 45 kilometres (28 miles) wide; and covers 2512 square kilometres (970 square miles). It is similar to the island Hawaii insofar as both are located above hotspots in the Earth's crust.

The Piton de la Fournaise, a shield volcano on the eastern end of Réunion Island, rises more than 2631 metres (8632 ft) above sea level and is sometimes called a sister to Hawaiian volcanoes because of the similarity of climate and volcanic nature. It has erupted more than 100 times since 1640 and is under constant monitoring. It most recently erupted on 4 April 2007. The lava flow from this eruption has been estimated at 3 million m³ (about 4 million cubic yards) per day. The Piton de la Fournaise is created by a hotspot volcano, which also created the Piton des Neiges and the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The Piton des Neiges volcano, the highest point on the island at 3070 metres (10,069 ft) above sea level, is north west of the Piton de la Fournaise. Collapsed calderas and canyons are south west of the mountain. Like Kohala on the Big Island of Hawaii, the Piton des Neiges is extinct. Despite its name, snow (French: *neige*) practically never falls on the summit.

The slopes of both volcanoes are heavily forested. Cultivated land and cities like the capital city of Saint-Denis are concentrated on the surrounding coastal lowlands.

Réunion also has three calderas: the Cirque de Salazie, the Cirque de Cilaos and the Cirque de Mafate. The last is accessible only by foot or helicopter.

Economy

Sugar was traditionally the chief agricultural product and export. Tourism is now an important source of income. In 2006 the GDP per capita of Réunion at market exchange rates, not at PPP, was 16,244 euros (US\$20,406).

Demographics



View from satellite.



Réunion contains most of the same ethnic populations as Mauritius: Indian, African, Malagasy, Chinese and ethnic French - but in different proportions. Creoles (a name given to those born on the island, of various ethnic origins), make up the vast majority of the population. Whites make up approximately one-quarter of the population, Indians make up 21%, and people of Chinese ancestry form most of the remainder. There are also some people of Vietnamese ancestry on the island, though they are very few in number.

While Gujarati, followed closely by Tamil people make up the majority of the Indo-Réunionnaise people, people of Hindi, Urdu and other origins form the remainder of the population.

Réunion is very similar in culture, ethnic makeup, language and traditions to Mauritius and Seychelles.

Historical population

Historical population

| 1671 estimate | 1696 estimate | 1704 estimate | 1713 estimate | 1717 estimate | 1724 estimate | 1764 estimate | 1777 estimate | 1789 estimate |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 90 | 269 | 734 | 1,171 | 2,000 | 12,550 | 25,000 | 35,100 | 61,300 |
| 1826 estimate | 1830 estimate | 1848 estimate | 1849 estimate | 1860 estimate | 1870 estimate | 1887 census | 1897 census | 1926 census |
| 87,100 | 101,300 | 110,300 | 120,900 | 200,000 | 212,000 | 163,881 | 173,192 | 182,637 |
| 1946 census | 1954 census | 1961 census | 1967 census | 1974 census | 1982 census | 1990 census | 1999 census | 2007 estimate |
| 241,708 | 274,370 | 349,282 | 416,525 | 476,675 | 515,814 | 597,823 | 706,300 | 793,000 |

Official figures from past censuses and INSEE estimates.



Manapany

Religion



The predominant religion is Roman Catholicism (86% of the population in 1995), with Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism also represented amongst others. Rastafarism is very present, too, but is not officially recognized.

Language

Réunionnaise Creole is the main language of the country, though French is more commonly spoken. Mandarin, Hakka and Cantonese are spoken by the Chinese community, but their numbers are dropping as younger generations start to converse in French. The number of speakers of Indian languages is also dropping sharply. Arabic is taught in mosques and spoken by a small community of Arabs. The island's community of Muslims from North Western India and elsewhere are also commonly referred to as Arabs.



Moufia Mosque in Saint-Denis

Public health

Réunion experienced in 2005/2006 an epidemic of Chikungunya, a viral disease that infected almost a third of the population. See the History section for more details.

Culture

Réunionese culture is a blend (*métissage*) of European, African, Indian, Chinese and insular traditions.

The most widely spoken language, Réunion Creole, derives from French, with many idiosyncrasies. Réunion Creole is now taught in some schools. However, an official orthography has yet to be agreed upon.

Local food and music blend influences from Africa, India, China and Europe.

Wildlife



Réunion is home to a variety of birds such as the paille en queue. Its largest native land animal is the tenrec. Much of the West coast is ringed by coral reef which harbours, amongst others, sea urchins, conga eels and parrot fish. Sea turtles also visit the coastal waters.

Transport

Roland Garros Airport, handling flights to Africa and Europe serves the island. Pierrefonds Airport, a smaller airport, has some flights to Africa and Madagascar.

Retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9union>"

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Furcifer Pardalis



Roland Garros Airport



Rwanda

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The **Republic of Rwanda** (pronounced /ruːˈændə/ or /rəˈwɑːndə/ in English, IPA: [rʷanda] or [rɡwanda] in Kinyarwanda) is a small landlocked country in the Great Lakes region of east-central Africa, bordered by Uganda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania. Home to approximately 10.1 million people, Rwanda supports the densest population in continental Africa, with most of the population engaged in subsistence agriculture. A verdant country of fertile and hilly terrain, the small republic bears the title "Land of a Thousand Hills" (French: *Pays des Mille Collines* [pe.i de mil kɔ.lin]; Kinyarwanda: *Igihugu cy'Imisozi Igihumbi*).

The country has garnered international attention most markedly for the infamous Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Rwanda has applied to become a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and a decision on its application is expected in 2009.

History

Precolonial history

The Twa, the aboriginal Pygmy inhabitants, have probably lived in the region in and around Rwanda for 35,000 years.

The current demographic makeup of Rwanda, consisting of a majority of Hutus and a minority of Tutsi, is the result of prehistorical migrations (the Bantu expansion) which reduced the Twa to a tiny minority.

At the time of the arrival of the Europeans, there existed a Kingdom of Rwanda that covered modern-day Rwanda and parts of modern-day Congo-Kinshasa around Lake Kivu. It constituted a highly organized society that included its own religion and creation myths. The Banyarwanda were known even then for their military discipline, which enabled them to fend off attacks from outsiders and mount raids into the Kingdom of Burundi and the lands west of Lake Kivu.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Repubulika y'u Rwanda</i> <i>République du Rwanda</i> Republic of Rwanda | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>Ubumwe, Umurimo, Gukunda Igihugu</i> "Unity, Work, Patriotism" | |
| Anthem: <i>Rwanda nziza</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Kigali |
| Official languages | Kinyarwanda, French, English |



All three classes paid tribute to the king in return for protection and various favours. Tutsi, who lost their cattle due to a disease epidemic such as Rinderpest, sometimes would be considered Hutu and likewise Hutu who obtained cattle would come to be considered Tutsi, thus climbing the ladder of the social strata. This social mobility ended abruptly with the onset of colonial administration. What had hitherto been often considered social classes took a fixed ethnic outlook.

A traditional local justice system called Gacaca predominated in much of the region as an institution for resolving conflict, rendering justice and reconciliation. The Tutsi king was the ultimate judge and arbiter for those cases that ever reached him. Despite the traditional nature of the system, harmony and cohesion had been established among Rwandans and within the kingdom.

Colonial Era

After signing treaties with chiefs in the Tanganyika region in 1884-1885, Germany claimed Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi as its own territory. Count von Götzen met the Tutsi Mwami for the first time in 1894. However, with only 2500 soldiers in East Africa, Germany did little to change societal structures in much of the region, especially in Rwanda. After the Mwami's death in 1895, a period of unrest followed. Germans and missionaries then began to enter the country from Tanganyika in 1897-98.

By 1899 the Germans exerted some influence by placing advisors at the courts of local chiefs. Much of the Germans' time was spent fighting uprisings in Tanganyika, especially the Maji Maji war of 1905-1907. On May 14, 1910 the European Convention of Brussels fixed the borders of Uganda, Congo, and German East Africa which included Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi. In 1911, the Germans helped the Tutsi put down a rebellion of Hutus in the northern part of Rwanda who did not wish to submit to central Tutsi control.

During World War I, 1916, Belgian forces advanced from the Congo into Germany's East African colonies. After Germany lost the War, Belgium accepted the League of Nations Mandate of 1923 to govern Ruanda-Urundi along with the Congo, while Great Britain accepted Tanganyika and other German colonies. After World War II Ruanda-Urundi became a United Nations (UN) "trust territory" administered by Belgium. The Belgian involvement in the region was far more direct than German involvement and extended its interests into education and agricultural supervision. The latter was especially important in the face of two droughts and subsequent famines in 1928-29 and in 1943. These famines forced large migrations of Rwandans to neighboring Congo. In 1933 ethnic identification cards were needed to classify one's ethnicity.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demonym | Rwandan, Rwandese |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Paul Kagame |
| - Prime Minister | Bernard Makuza |
| Independence | from Belgium |
| - Date | July 1, 1962 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 26,798 km ² (147th) 10,169 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 5.3 |
| Population | |
| - April 2008 estimate | 10,186,063 (83rd) |
| - 2002 census | 8,128,553 |
| - Density | 343/km ² (29th) 829/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$11.24 billion (130th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,300 (160th) |
| Gini (2003) | 45.1 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.452 (low) (161st) |
| Currency | Rwandan franc (rwf) |
| Time zone | CAT (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .rw |
| Calling code | +250 |
| ¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, | |



The Belgian colonizers also accepted the prevailing class rule already in place, i.e., the minority Tutsi upper class and the lower classes of Hutus and Tutsi commoners. However, in 1926 the Belgians abolished the local posts of "land-chief", "cattle-chief" and "military chief," and in doing so they stripped the Hutu of their limited local power over land. In the 1920s, under military threat, the Belgians finally helped to bring the northwest Hutu kingdoms, who had maintained local control of land not subject to the Mwami, under the Tutsi royalty's central control. These two actions disenfranchised the Hutu. Large, centralized land holdings were then divided into smaller chiefdoms.

higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

The fragmenting of Hutu lands angered Mwami Yuhi IV, who had hoped to further centralize his power enough to rid himself of the Belgians. In 1931 Tutsi plots against the Belgian administration resulted in the Belgians deposing the Tutsi Mwami Yuhi. This caused the Tutsis to take up arms against the Belgians, but because of their fear of the Belgians' military superiority, they did not openly revolt.

The Roman Catholic Church and Belgian colonial authorities considered the Hutus and Tutsis different ethnic races based on their physical differences and patterns of migration. However, because of the existence of many wealthy Hutu who shared the financial (if not physical) stature of the Tutsi, the Belgians used an expedient method of classification based on the number of cattle a person owned. Anyone with ten or more cattle was considered a member of the aristocratic Tutsi class. From 1935 on, "Tutsi", "Hutu" and "Twa" were indicated on identity cards.

The Roman Catholic Church, the primary educators in the country, subscribed to and reinforced the differences between Hutu and Tutsi. They developed separate educational systems for each. In the 1940s and 1950s the vast majority of students were Tutsi. In 1943, Mwami Mutari III became the first Tutsi monarch to convert to Catholicism.

The Belgian colonialists continued to depend on the Tutsi aristocracy to collect taxes and enforce Belgian policies. It maintained the dominance of the Tutsi in local colonial administration and expanded the Tutsi system of labor for colonial purposes. The United Nations later decried this policy and demanded a greater self-representation of the Hutu in local affairs. In 1954 the Tutsi monarchy of Ruanda-Urundi demanded independence from Belgian rule. At the same time it agreed to abolish the system of indentured servitude (*ubuhake* and *uburetwa*) the Tutsis had practiced over the Hutu until then.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, a wave of Pan-Africanism swept through Central Africa, with leaders such as Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and Patrice Lumumba in the Congo. Anti-colonial sentiment stirred throughout central Africa, and a socialist platform of African unity and equality for all Africans was forwarded. Nyerere himself wrote about the elitism of educational systems, which Hutus interpreted as an indictment of the elitist educations provided for Tutsis in their own country.

Encouraged by the Pan-Africanists, Hutu advocates in the Catholic Church, and by Christian Belgians (who were increasingly influential in the Congo), Hutu sentiment against the aristocratic Tutsi was increasingly inflamed. The United Nations mandates, the Tutsi overlord class, and the Belgian colonialists themselves added to the growing unrest.

The Hutu "emancipation" movement was soon spearheaded by Gregoire Kayibanda, founder of PARMEHUTU, who wrote his "Hutu Manifesto" in 1957. The group quickly became militarized.



In reaction, in 1959, the UNAR party was formed by Tutsis who desired an immediate independence for Ruanda-Urundi, to be based on the existing Tutsi monarchy. This group also became quickly militarized. Skirmishes began between UNAR and PARMEHUTU groups.

Then in July 1959, the Tutsi Mwami (King) Mutara III Charles was believed by Rwandan Tutsis to have been assassinated when he died following a routine vaccination by a Flemish physician in Bujumbura. His younger half-brother then became the next Tutsi monarch, Mwami (King) Kigeli V.

In November 1959, Tutsi forces beat up a Hutu politician, Dominique Mbonyumutwa, and rumors of his death set off a violent backlash against the Tutsi known as "the wind of destruction." Thousands of Tutsis were killed and many thousands more, including the Mwami, fled to neighboring Uganda before Belgian commandos arrived to quell the violence. Several Belgians were subsequently accused by Tutsi leaders of abetting the Hutus in the violence.

Tutsi refugees also fled to the South Kivu province of the Congo, where they called themselves *Bunyamalengi*. They eventually became a primary force in the First and Second Congo Wars.

In 1960, the Belgian government agreed to hold democratic municipal elections in Ruanda-Urundi, in which Hutu representatives were elected by the Hutu majorities. This precipitous change in the power structure threatened the centuries-old system by which Tutsi superiority had been maintained through monarchy.

An effort to create an independent Ruanda-Urundi with Tutsi-Hutu power sharing failed, largely due to escalating violence. The Belgian government, with UN urging, therefore decided to divide Ruanda-Urundi into two separate countries, Rwanda and Burundi. Each had elections in 1961 in preparation for independence.

In 1961, Rwandans voted, by referendum and with the support of the Belgian colonial government, to abolish the Tutsi monarchy and instead establish a republic. Dominique Mbonyumutwa, who had survived his previous attack, was named the first president of the transitional government.

Burundi, by contrast, established a constitutional monarchy, and in the 1961 elections leading up to independence, Louis Rwagasore, the son of the Tutsi Mwami and a popular politician and anti-colonial agitator, was elected as Prime Minister. However, he was soon assassinated. The monarchy, with the aid of the military, therefore assumed control of the country, and allowed no further elections until 1965.

Between 1961 and 1962, Tutsi guerrilla groups staged attacks into Rwanda from neighboring countries. Rwandan Hutu-based troops responded and thousands more were killed in the clashes.

Conflict between the two ethnic groups began to break out when the Tutsi started calling for independence from the Belgium colonial rule in the 1950s. This upset the Belgians who then looked to the Hutu because they believed that the Hutu would be easier to control. Therefore, they began replacing the Tutsi chiefs with Hutus. This created the civil unrest between the two groups. The Belgians allowed the Hutu to commit violent acts against the Tutsis such as burning down the Tutsis' houses.

On July 1, 1962, Belgium, with UN oversight, granted full independence to the two countries. Rwanda was created as a republic governed by the majority Party



of the Hutu Emancipation Movement (PARMEHUTU), which had gained full control of national politics by this time.

In 1963, a Tutsi guerrilla invasion into Rwanda from Burundi unleashed another anti-Tutsi backlash by the Hutu government in Rwanda, and an estimated 14,000 people were killed. In response, a previous economic union between Rwanda and Burundi was dissolved and tensions between the two countries worsened. Rwanda also now became a Hutu-dominated one-party state. In fact it was thought that in excess of 70,000 people had been killed, this certainly was the figure published in British newspapers at the time, it was thought for a while that British Royal Marines then stationed in Tanzania might be sent to Rwanda to stop the horrific loss of life there.

Post-Independence

Gregoire Kayibanda, founder of PARMEHUTU (and a Hutu) was the first president (from 1962 to 1973), followed by Juvenal Habyarimana (who was president from 1973 to 1994). The latter, also a Hutu (from the northwest of Rwanda), took power from Kayibanda in a 1973 coup, claiming the government to have been ineffective and riddled with favoritism. He installed his own political party into government. This occurred partially as a reaction to the Burundi genocide of 1972, with the resultant wave of Hutu refugees and subsequent social unrest. Rwanda enjoyed relative economic prosperity during the early part of his regime.

Inter-relationship with events in Burundi

The situation in Rwanda had been influenced in great detail by the situation in Burundi. Both countries had a Hutu majority, yet an army-controlled Tutsi government in Burundi persisted for decades. After the assassination of Rwagasore, his UPRONA party was split into Tutsi and Hutu factions. A Tutsi Prime Minister was chosen by the monarch, but, a year later in 1963, the monarch was forced to appoint a Hutu prime minister, Pierre Ngendandumwe, in an effort to satisfy growing Hutu unrest. Nevertheless, the monarch soon replaced him with another Tutsi prince. In Burundi's first elections following independence, in 1965, Ngendandumwe was elected Prime Minister. He was immediately assassinated by a Tutsi extremist and he was succeeded by another Hutu, Joseph Bamina. Hutus won 23/33 seats in national elections a few months later, but the monarch nullified the elections. Bamina was soon also assassinated and the Tutsi monarch installed his own personal secretary, Leopold Biha, as the Prime Minister in his place. This led to a Hutu coup from which the Mwami fled the country and Biha was shot (but not killed). The Tutsi-dominated army, led by Michel Micombero brutally responded: almost all Hutu politicians were killed. Micombero assumed control of the government and a few months later deposed the new Tutsi monarch (the son of the previous monarch) and abolished the role of the monarchy altogether. He then threatened to invade Rwanda. A military dictatorship persisted in Burundi for another 27 years, until the next free elections, in 1993.

Another 7 years of sporadic violence in Burundi (from 1965 - 1972) existed between the Hutus and Tutsis. In 1969 another purge of Hutus by the Tutsi military occurred. Then, a localized Hutu uprising in 1972 was fiercely answered by the Tutsi-dominated Burundi army in the largest Burundi genocide of Hutus, with a death toll nearing 200,000.

This wave of violence led to another wave of cross border refugees into Rwanda of Hutus from Burundi. Now there were large numbers of both Tutsi and Hutu refugees throughout the region, and tensions continued to mount.



In 1988, Hutu violence against Tutsis throughout northern Burundi again resurfaced, and in response the Tutsi army massacred approximately 20,000 more Hutu. Again thousands of Hutu were forced into exile into Tanzania and Congo to flee another genocide of Hutu.

Civil War & Genocide of Tutsi

In 1986, Yoweri Museveni's guerrilla forces in Uganda had succeeded in taking control of the country, overthrowing the Ugandan dictatorship of Milton Obote. Many exiled refugee Rwandan Tutsis in Uganda had joined its rebel forces and had then become part of the Ugandan military, now made up from Museveni's guerrilla forces.

However, Ugandans resented the Rwandan presence in the new Ugandan army, and in 1986 Paul Kagame, a Tutsi who had become head of military intelligence in Museveni's new Ugandan army, founded the RPF, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, together with Fred Rwigema. They began to train their army to invade Rwanda from Uganda, and many Tutsis who had been in the Ugandan military now joined the RPF. Kagame also received military training in the United States. In 1991, a radio station broadcasting RPF propaganda from Uganda was established by the RPF.

In 1990, the Tutsi-dominated RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda. Some members allied with the military dictatorship government of Habyarimana responded in 1993 to the RPF invasion with a radio station that began anti-Tutsi propaganda and with pogroms against Tutsis, whom it claimed were trying to re-enslave the Hutus. Nevertheless, after 3 years of fighting and multiple prior "cease-fires," the government and the RPF signed a "final" cease-fire agreement in August 1993, known as the Arusha accords, in order to form a power sharing government. Neither side appeared ready to accept the accords, however, and fighting between the two sides continued unabated. By that time, over 1.5 million civilians had left their homes to flee the selective massacres against Hutus by the RPF army. They were living in camps, the most famous of them was called Nyacyonga.

The situation worsened when the first elected Burundian president, Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, was assassinated by the Burundian Tutsi-dominated army in October 1993. In Burundi, a fierce civil war then erupted between Tutsi and Hutu following the army's massacre, and tens of thousands, both Hutu and Tutsi, were killed in this conflict.

This conflict spilled over the border into Rwanda and caused the fragile Rwandan Arusha accords to quickly crumble. Tutsi-Hutu hatred rapidly intensified.

Although the UN sent a peacekeeping force named the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), it was underfunded, under-staffed, and largely ineffective in the face of a two country civil-war, as detailed in Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire's book *Shake Hands with the Devil*.

During the armed conflict in Rwanda, the RPF was blamed for the bombing of the capital Kigali. On April 6, 1994, the Hutu president of Rwanda and the second newly elected president of Burundi (also a Hutu) were both assassinated when their jet was shot down, allegedly by missiles from the Ugandan army, while landing in Kigali. A French tribunal has blamed this action on Kagame's RPF forces. Kagame and several members of Habyarimana's government, however, have claimed that disgruntled Hutus killed their own Hutu president, as well as the Hutu president of Burundi, to justify the upcoming genocide.

In response to the April killing of the two state presidents, over the next three months (April - July 1994) the Hutu-led military and *Interahamwe* militia groups killed about 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates in the Rwandan genocide. The Tutsi-led RPF continued to advance on the capital, however, and soon occupied



the northern, eastern, and southern parts of the country by June. Thousands of additional civilians were killed in the conflict. UN member states refused to answer UNAMIR's requests for increased troops and money. Meanwhile, although French troops were dispatched during Opération Turquoise to "stabilize the situation," they were only able to evacuate foreign nationals and in some cases the genocide continued in zones they occupied while many high-profile Hutu war criminals escaped the RPF though French-controlled areas.

Between July and August, 1994, Kagame's Tutsi-led RPF troops first entered Kigali and soon thereafter captured the rest of the country. Over 2 million Hutus then fled the country, causing the Great Lakes refugee crisis. Many went to Eastern Zaire (notably Northern Kivu province).

Between 1994 and 1996, the Tutsi-controlled RPA government of Paul Kagame continued its retribution against Hutu in Rwanda. It destroyed the Nyacyonga camp for internally displaced people with heavy artillery. The RPF killed thousands of fresh returnees from Zaire in Kibeho camp. To continue its attacks against the Hutu Interahamwe forces, which had fled to Eastern Zaire, Kagame's RPF forces invaded Zaire in 1996, following talks by Kagame with US officials earlier the same year.

In this invasion Kagame allied with Laurent Kabila, a marxist revolutionary in Eastern Zaire who had been a foe of Zaire's long-time dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko. Kagame was also supported by Yoweri Museveni's Ugandan forces, with whom he had trained in the late 1980s, which then invaded Eastern Zaire from the northeast. This became known as the First Congo War.

In this war, militarized Tutsi refugees in the South Kivu area of Zaire, known as Banyamulenge to disguise their original Rwandan Tutsi heritage, allied with the Tutsi RDF forces against the Hutu refugees in the North Kivu area, which included the Interahamwe militias.

In the midst of this conflict, Kabila, whose primary intent had been to depose Mobutu, moved his forces to Kinshasa, and in 1997, the same year Mobutu Sese Seko died of prostate cancer, Kabila captured Kinshasa and then became president of Zaire, which he then renamed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With Kabila's success in the Congo, he no longer desired an alliance with the Tutsi-RPF Rwandan army and the Ugandan forces, and in August 1998 ordered both the Ugandans and Tutsi-Rwandan army out of the DRC.

However, neither Kagame's Rwandan Tutsi forces nor Museveni's Ugandan forces had any intention of leaving the Congo, and the framework of the Second Congo War was laid.

In the Second Congo War, Tutsi militias among the Banyamulenge in the Congo province of Kivu desired to annex themselves to Rwanda (now dominated by Tutsi forces under the Kagame government). Kagame also desired this, both to increase the resources of Rwanda by adding those of the Kivu region, and also to add the Tutsi population, which the Banyamulenge represented, back into Rwanda, thereby reinforcing his political base and protecting the indigenous Tutsis living there, who had also suffered massacres from the Interhamwe.

In the Second Congo War, Uganda and Rwanda attempted to wrest much of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from Kabila's forces, and nearly succeeded. However, due to the personal financial stakes of many leaders around Southern Africa in the Congo (such as Robert Mugabe and Sam Nujoma), armies were sent to aid Kabila, most notably those of Angola and Zimbabwe. These armies were able to beat back Kagame's Rwandan-Tutsi advances and the Ugandan



forces.

In the great conflict between 1998 and 2002, during which Congo was divided into three parts, multiple opportunistic militias, called Mai Mai, sprang up, supplied by the arms dealers around the world that profit in small arms trading, including the US, Russia, China, and other countries. Over 3.8 million people died in the conflict, as well as the majority of animals in the region.

Laurent Kabila was assassinated in the DRC (Congo) in 2001, and was succeeded by his son, Joseph Kabila. It is claimed by many in the Congo that Joseph Kabila was the son of a Rwandan Tutsi mother and his real father was a friend of Laurent Kabila's; he was adopted by Laurent Kabila only when Laurent took Joseph's Rwandan mother as one of his many wives. Joseph speaks fluent Kinyarwanda and was trained in Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and China. After serving 5 years as the transitional government president, he was freely-elected in the Congo to be president, in 2006, largely on the basis of his support in the Eastern Congo.

Ugandan and Rwandan forces within Congo began to battle each other for territory, and Congolese Mai Mai militias, most active in the South and North Kivu provinces (in which most refugees were located) took advantage of the conflict to settle local scores and widen the conflict, battling each other, Ugandan and Rwandan forces, and even Congolese forces.

Ironically, it was the Banyamulenge, the large Tutsi refugee group in the Congo, that appeared to have ended the war. Tired of the prolonged war, they rebelled against Kagame's Rwandan troops and forced them to return to Rwanda, allowing Kabila to retake control of the Eastern Congo with the aid of the Angolan and Zimbabwean forces.

Rwandan RPF troops finally left Congo in 2002, leaving a wake of disease and malnutrition that continued to kill thousands every month. However, Rwandan rebels continue to operate (as of May 2007) in the northeast Congo and Kivu regions. These are claimed to be remnants of Hutu forces that cannot return to Rwanda without facing genocide charges, yet are not welcomed in Congo and are pursued by DRC troops. In the first 6 months of 2007, over 260,000 civilians were displaced. Congolese Mai Mai rebels also continue to threaten people and wildlife. Although a large scale effort at disarming militias has succeeded, with the aid of the UN troops, the last militias are only being disarmed in 2007. However, fierce confrontations in the northeast regions of the Congo between local tribes in the Ituri region, initially uninvolved with the initial Hutu-Tutsi conflict but drawn into the Second Congo War, still continue.

In Burundi, the Burundi Civil War from 1993 to 2006 coincided with the First and Second Congo Wars. At least 300,000 Burundians were killed, and refugees into Tanzania and Congo contributed to the region's major population displacements. In August 2005, a Hutu born-again Christian, Pierre Nkurunziza, was elected as Burundi president. At least three cease-fires between rebel groups and Burundi forces, in 2003, 2005, and September 2006, have been signed.

Rwandan stability is undoubtedly dependent both on stability in Eastern DRC (Congo) and in Burundi.

French-Government and Military Help To The Genocide And Its Perpetrators

"An unprecedented public inquiry into France's role in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda held hearings in Kigali last week, where the French army was accused of complicity in massacres of Tutsi.

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 395 of 586



The seven-person examining commission is hearing testimony from 20 survivors, some claiming serious human rights abuses, including rape and murder, by the French military.

The commission is also examining Operation Turquoise, the 1994 French military intervention that was ostensibly aimed at saving Rwandan lives. Human rights groups in France claim French soldiers tricked thousands of Tutsi survivors out of hiding, and abandoned them to the Interahamwe militia. The three-month genocide claimed up to one million Tutsi victims.

Close links existed between France and Rwanda, the tiny African country ruled by a Hutu dictatorship for 20 years. France was its biggest supplier of heavy military equipment, and sent troops in 1990 to help repel a military offensive from Uganda by the largely Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front, (RPF), against the corrupt president, Juvenal Habyarimana.

During nearly three years of civil war, in some instances senior French officers took operational battlefield control. In 1993, an international peace agreement replaced the French with UN peacekeepers, to monitor creation of a power-sharing democracy.

For years, the French government denied any part in the genocide. Its own parliamentary enquiry in 1997, calling the genocide one of the greatest tragedies of the century, admitted only that France had underestimated the threat. But the enquiry did reveal that the former French president, François Mitterrand, had largely been responsible for French policy in Rwanda.

By 1994, the Rwandan army had become a "military protégé" of France. Before the genocide, 47 high-ranking French army and gendarmerie officers were with the Rwanda military. French officers were attached to the élite battalions, the Presidential Guard, the para-commandos and the reconnaissance battalion.

In April, 1994, French-trained officers from the Presidential Guard eliminated the pro-democracy and political opposition and French-trained soldiers from the para-commando and the reconnaissance battalion began killing anyone with a Tutsi identity card.

The Rwanda Commission has evidence that the French trained the Interahamwe, and French officers were in commando training centres, where torture was perpetrated, and where political opponents disappeared. Yet in meetings of the Security Council to decide UN policy on Rwanda, France had sat silent. Later, the then French ambassador to the UN, Jean-Bernard Mérimée, blamed the UK and US ambassadors for the international failure over Rwanda.

During the genocide, French diplomats told the UN many had died as civil war casualties, diverting attention from systematic massacres of civilians. France refused to allow the Council to invoke the 1948 Genocide Convention to try to stop the genocide.

Then after five weeks of murders, France launched its own military intervention, with Council blessing, to secure humanitarian areas for survivors and protect displaced people. This was Operation Turquoise.

The French did create a safe zone, but this allowed the political, military and administrative leadership of the genocide to flee. Although the RPF won the civil war, the national treasury, the killers and 37,000 troops moved to Zaire (now the DRC). This is why there are so many fugitive genocidaires; the ringleaders of the genocide took sanctuary in other countries, notably France and Belgium, where they enjoy protection today."



(cf. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/french-accused-of-complicity-in-genocide-that-killed-a-million-in-rwanda-423029.html>)

Post-civil war

After the Tutsi RPF took control of the government, Kagame installed a Hutu president, Pasteur Bizimungu, in 1994. Many believed him to be a puppet president, however, and when Bizimungu became critical of the Kagame government in 2000, he was removed as president and Kagame took over the presidency himself. Bizimungu immediately founded an opposition party (the PDR), but it was banned by the Kagame government. Bizimungu was arrested in 2002 for treason, sentenced to 15 years in prison, but released by a presidential pardon in 2007.

After it took control of the government in 1994 following the civil war, the Tutsi-dominated RDF party then wrote the history of the genocide and enshrined its version of events in the current constitution of 2003. It made it a crime to question the government's version of the genocide. In 2004, a ceremony was held in Kigali at the Gisozi Memorial (sponsored by the Aegis Trust and attended by many foreign dignitaries) to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the genocide, and the country observes a national day of mourning each year on April 7. Hutu Rwandan genocidal leaders are on trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in the Rwandan National Court system, and, most recently, through the informal Gacaca village justice program. Recent reports highlight a number of reprisal killings of survivors for giving evidence at Gacaca.

Many claim that memorialisation of the genocide without admission of the crimes by the Tutsi-RDF are one sided, and is part of ongoing propaganda by the Tutsi-led Rwandan government, which is essentially a one-party government at this time. The author of *Hotel Rwanda*, Paul Rusesabagina, has demanded that Paul Kagame, the current Rwandan president, be tried as a war criminal. Kagame's invasion of Rwanda in 1990 and of Zaire / Congo in the First and Second Congo Wars was responsible for the death of more than 4 million people during those conflicts.

The first elections since the invasion of Rwanda by Kagame's forces in 1990 (and the subsequent creation of a military government by Kagame in 1994) were held in 2003. Kagame, who had already been appointed president by his own government in 2000, was then "elected" president by over 95% of the vote, with little opposition. Opposition parties were banned until just before the 2003 elections. Following the elections, in 2004, a constitutional amendment banned political parties from denoting themselves as being aligned with "Hutu" or "Tutsi." However, the RPF, a primarily Tutsi political organisation, was not disbanded and therefore continues its dominance. Most observers therefore do not believe the 2003 elections to have been fair nor representative. Elections have been compared to the "fair elections" of Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party in Zimbabwe. The next presidential elections are due to be held in 2010.

Rebuilding

Rwanda today struggles to heal and rebuild, but shows signs of rapid development. Some Rwandans continue to grapple with the legacy of almost 60 years of intermittent war.

One agent in Rwanda's rebuilding effort is the Benedikira Sisters, a Catholic order of nuns whose ministry is dedicated to education and healthcare. Since the genocide, the Sisters have housed and supported hundreds of orphans, and created and staffed schools to educate the next generation of Rwandans.



The major markets for Rwandan exports are Belgium, Germany, and China. In April 2007, an investment and trade agreement, 4 years in the making, was worked out between Belgium and Rwanda. Belgium contributes €25-35 million per year to Rwanda.

Belgian co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry continues to develop and rebuild agricultural practices in the country. It has distributed agricultural tools and seed to help rebuild the country. Belgium also helped in re-launching fisheries in Lake Kivu, at a value of US\$470,000, in 2001.

In Eastern Rwanda, The Clinton Hunter Development Initiative, along with Partners in Health, are helping to improve agricultural productivity, improve water and sanitation and health services, and help cultivate international markets for agricultural products.

Since 2000, the Rwandan government has expressed interest in transforming the country from agricultural subsistence to a knowledge-based economy, and plans to provide high-speed broadband across the entire country.

Politics

After its military victory in July 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front organized a coalition government loosely based on the 1993 Arusha accords. The National Movement for Democracy and Development – Habyarimana's party that had instigated and implemented the genocidal ideology – along with the CDR (another Hutu extremist party) were banned, with most of its leaders either arrested or in exile. It is not clear whether any Hutu parties are currently allowed in Rwanda.

After the 1994 genocide, the RPF installed a single-party "coalition-based" government. Paul Kagame became Vice-President. In 2000, he was elected president of Rwanda by the parliament.

A new constitution, written by the Kagame government, was adopted by referendum in 2003. The first post-war presidential and legislative elections were held in August and September 2003, respectively. Opposition parties were banned until just before the elections, so no true opposition to the ruling RPF existed. The RPF-led government has continued to promote reconciliation and unity amongst all Rwandans as enshrined in the new constitution that forbids any political activity or discrimination based on race, ethnicity or religion. Right of return to Rwandans displaced between 1959 and 1994, primarily Tutsis, was enshrined in the constitution, but no mention of the return of Hutus that fled Kagame's RPF forces into the Congo in the great refugee crisis of 1994-1998 or subsequently, is made in the constitution. Nevertheless, the constitution guarantees "All persons originating from Rwanda and their descendants shall, upon their request, be entitled to Rwandan nationality" and "No Rwandan shall be banished from the country."

By law, at least a third of the Parliament representation must be female. It is believed that women will not allow the mass killings of the past to be repeated. Rwanda topped a recently conducted global survey on the percentage of women in Parliament with as much as 49 percent female representation, currently the highest in the world.

The Senate has at least 26 members, each with an 8 year term. Eight posts are appointed by the president. 12 are elected representatives of the 11 provinces and



President Paul Kagame in 2007



the city of Kigali. Four members are designated by the Forum of Political Organizations (a quasi-governmental organization that currently is an arm of the dominant political party); one member is a university lecturer or researcher elected by the public universities; one member is a university lecturer or researcher elected by the private universities. Any past President has permanent membership in the Senate. Under this scheme, up to 12 appointees to the Senate are appointed by the President and his party. The elected members must be approved by the Supreme Court.

The 14 Supreme Court members are designated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

The Chamber of Deputies has 80 members, each with a 5 year term; 24 posts are reserved for women and are elected by province; 53 posts can be men or women and are also are elected by local elections; 2 posts are elected by the National Youth Council; 1 post is elected by Federation of the Associations of the Disabled.

The President and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies must be from different political parties. The President is elected every 7 years, and may serve a maximum of 2 terms.

In 2006, however, the structure of the country was reorganized. It is unclear how this affects current elected representation proportions.

The current Rwandan government, led by Paul Kagame, has been praised by many for establishing security and promoting reconciliation and economic development, but is also criticized by some for being overly militant and opposed to dissent. The country now has many international visitors and is regarded as a safer place for tourists, with only a single isolated mortar attack in early 2007 around Volcanoes National Park near Gisenyi.

With new independent radio stations and other media arising, Rwanda is attempting a free press, but there are reports of journalists disappearing and being apprehended whenever articles question the government. The transmitter for Radio France International was banned by the government in Rwanda in 2006 when it became critical of Kagame and the RPF.

Administrative divisions



Rwanda is divided into five provinces (*intara*) and subdivided into thirty districts (*akarere*). The provinces are:

- North Province
- East Province
- South Province
- West Province
- Kigali Province

Prior to 1 January 2006, Rwanda was composed of twelve provinces, but these were abolished in full and redrawn as part of a program of decentralization and reorganization.

Geography

This small country is located near the centre of Africa, a few degrees south of the Equator. It is separated from the Democratic Republic of the Congo by Lake Kivu and the Rusizi River valley to the west; it is bounded on the north by Uganda, to the east by Tanzania, and to the south by Burundi. The capital, Kigali, is located in the centre of the country.

Rwanda's countryside is covered by grasslands and small farms extending over rolling hills, with areas of rugged mountains that extend southeast from a chain of volcanoes in the northwest. The divide between the Congo and Nile drainage systems extends from north to south through western Rwanda at an average elevation of almost 9,000 feet (2,740 m). On the western slopes of this ridgeline, the land slopes abruptly toward Lake Kivu and the Ruzizi River valley, and constitutes part of the Great Rift Valley. The eastern slopes are more moderate, with rolling hills extending across central uplands at gradually reducing altitudes, to the plains, swamps, and lakes of the eastern border region. Therefore the country is also fondly known as "Land of a Thousand Hills" (*Pays des milles collines*). In 2006, a British-led exploration announced that they had located the longest headstream of the River Nile in Nyungwe Forest.

Transport

The transport system in Rwanda centres primarily around the road network, with paved roads between the capital, Kigali and most other major cities and towns in the country. Rwanda is also linked by road to other countries in East Africa. This is an important trade route. The country has an international airport at Kigali, serving a domestic and several international destinations. There is limited water transport between the port cities on Lake Kivu. A large amount of investment in the transport infrastructure has been made by the government since the 1994 genocide, with aid from the USA, European Union, China, Japan and others.

The principal form of public transport in the country is share taxi, with express routes linking the major cities and local services serving most villages along the



Map of Rwanda



Satellite image of Rwanda, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



main roads of the country. Coach services are available to various destinations in neighbouring countries.

In 2006, the Chinese government proposed funding a study for the building of a railway link from Bujumbura in Burundi to Kigali in Rwanda to Isaki in Tanzania. A delegation from the American railroad BNSF also met with President Paul Kagame to discuss a route from Kigali to Isaki and at the same time the government announced that it had selected a German consulting company to undertake pilot work for the proposed mail line.

Economy

Rwanda is a rural country with about 90% of the population engaged in (subsistence) agriculture. It is landlocked with few natural resources and minimal industry. Its primary exports are coffee, tea, flowers and minerals (mainly Coltan, which is used in the manufacture of electronic and communication devices (such as mobile phones) . Tourism is a growing sector, notably ecotourism (Nyungwe Forest, Lake Kivu) and the world famous and unique mountain gorillas in the Virunga park. It has a low gross national product (GNP), and it has been identified as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC). In 2005, its economic performance and governance achievements prompted International Funding Institutions to cancel nearly all its debts.

According to the World Food Programme, it is estimated that 60% of the population live below the poverty line and 10-12% of the population suffer from food insecurity every year.

Land management is the single most important factor in the conflicts in west Africa.

Interestingly, although the feudal system of land use disappeared with the "Social Revolution" of 1959, sharecropping reappeared following the return of the RPF government in 1994, with the land use policies of the new RPF government being formalized in the 2005 land use laws.

These land-use laws were meant to transform a jumble of small, fragmented, and minimally productive plots into more prosperous larger holdings producing for global (as well as for local) markets. The government is to determine how land holdings will be regrouped, which crops will be grown, and which animals will be raised. If farmers fail to follow the national plan, their land may be requisitioned with no compensation, and their land can be given to others.

Although a movement for individual ownership of land arose at the time of independence, land scarcity over much of Rwanda made this impractical over the long term. The current land reform system is somewhat similar to the "igikingi" system of land control that the Tutsi monarchy, and then the Belgian colonial government, used prior to the time leading up to independence.

Northwest Rwanda had traditionally used a system of locally controlled land collectivization schemes, which were not under the Mwami's central control, called "ubukonde bw' isuka" in pre-colonial times.

It is therefore the northwest of Rwanda that objects most strongly to the central control of land policy reminiscent of igikingi, taking control away from local owners. Some farmers who resisted the policy when it was begun in the 1990s were punished by fines or jail sentences; the policy remains the source of many disputes.



The law also affirms the policy of obligatory grouped residence under which persons living in dispersed homesteads must move to government-established "villages" called imidugudu.

Instead of each family living on his own land, communal villages would be re-established, freeing up, presumably, more arable land.

When implemented on a large-scale in the late 1990s, authorities in some cases used force, fines, and prison terms to make Rwandans relocate.

At least two imidugudu were created in northwestern Rwanda in 2005, leading to land loss for local farmers. Although the law claimed to accept the validity of customary rights to land, it rejected the customary use of marshlands by the poor and abolished important rights of prosperous landlords (abakonde) in the northwest.

However, the policy also ensured the ability of the government to exercise eminent domain for environmental reasons, which it did in 2007 by evicting encroaching settlers from the shores of Lake Kivu in an effort to protect the fragile environment there.

The government has also looked at ways to extract methane from Lake Kivu to help with the country's energy needs.

The Capital Market Advisory Council [CMAC] of Rwanda was established in 2008. The monetary and financial markets are dominated by 9 banks and 6 insurance companies in which the state continues to be a major shareholder. Over 200 micro-credit institutions (also known as micro-finance institutions), often financed by international donors, sprung up in Rwanda (especially since 2004), but many were unregistered, unregulated, and often mismanaged. Several were shut down by the Rwandan government in 2006.

In September 2006, the World Bank approved a US\$10 million grant to Rwanda to develop information and communication technology.

Investment

Rwanda Investment and Export Promotion Agency (RIEPA) has been set up to facilitate local and foreign investors.

Demographics

Most Rwandans speak Kinyarwanda. Before the arrival of European colonists, there was no written history. Today, the nation is roughly 84% Hutu, 15% Tutsi, and 1% Twa, with smaller minorities of South Asians, Arabs, French, British, and Belgians. The nation is some 56.5% Roman Catholic, 26% Protestant, 11.1% Adventist, and 4.6% Muslim, original beliefs 0.1%, none 1.7% (2001).

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Saint Helena

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Saint Helena (pronounced *saint he-LEE-na*), named after St. Helena of Constantinople, is an island of volcanic origin and a British overseas territory in the South Atlantic Ocean. The territory consists of the island of Saint Helena, and the dependencies of Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha.

The island has a history of over 500 years since it was first discovered as an uninhabited island by the Portuguese in 1502. Claiming to be Britain's second oldest colony, this is one of the most isolated islands in the world and was for several centuries of vital strategic importance to ships sailing to Europe from Asia and South Africa. For several centuries the British have used the island as a place of exile, most notably for Napoleon Bonaparte, Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo and over 5,000 Boer prisoners.

Saint Helena is a member of the International Island Games Association.




History

Early History, 1502 - 1658



Picture of St. Helena in its entirety.

The island was discovered on 21 May 1502 by the Portuguese navigator João da Nova, on his voyage home from India, and he named it "Saint Helena" after Helena of Constantinople. However, suggestions have been made that it may only have been discovered on 30 July 1503 by a squadron under the command of Estavao da Gama. The Portuguese found it uninhabited, with an abundance of trees and fresh water. They imported livestock (mainly goats), fruit trees and vegetables, built a chapel and one or two houses, and left their sick suffering from scurvy and other ailments to be taken home, if they recovered, by the next ship, but they formed no permanent

| Saint Helena | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Loyal and Unshakeable" | |
| Anthem: " God Save the Queen" " My Saint Helena Island" (unofficial) | |
|  | |
| Capital | Jamestown |
| Official languages | English |
| Government | British Overseas Territory |
| - Monarch | Elizabeth II |
| - Governor | Andrew Gurr |
| UK overseas territory | |



settlement. The island thereby became crucially important for the collection of food and as a rendezvous point for homebound voyages from Asia. The island was directly in line with the Trade Winds which took ships rounding the Cape of Good Hope into the South Atlantic. St Helena was much less frequently visited by Asia-bound ships, the northern trade winds taking ships towards the American continent rather than the island.

The Portuguese managed to keep the location of this remote island a secret until almost the end of the century. Thus, the first residents all arrived on Portuguese vessels. Its first known permanent resident was Portuguese, Fernão Lopez who had turned traitor in India and had been mutilated by order of Albuquerque, the Governor of Goa. Fernando Lopes preferred being marooned to returning to Portugal in his maimed condition, and lived on Saint Helena from about 1516. By royal command, Lopez returned to Portugal about 1526 and then travelled to Rome, where Pope Clement VII granted him an audience. Lopez returned to Saint Helena, where he died in 1545.

When the island was discovered, it was covered with unique (indigenous) vegetation, including many tropical trees. The island's interior must have been a dense tropical forest but the coastal areas were probably quite green as well. The modern landscape is very different, with mostly bare rock in the lower areas, and a high interior that is green - but mainly of imported vegetation. The change in landscape can be attributed to the impact of humans, the introduction of goats and the introduction of new vegetation.

Sometime before 1557 two slaves from Mozambique, one from Java and two females escaped from a ship and remained hidden on the island for many years, long enough for their numbers to rise to twenty. Bermudez, the Patriarch of Abyssinia landed at St Helena in 1557 on a voyage to Portugal, remaining on the island for a year. Three Japanese ambassadors on an embassy to the Pope also visited St Helena in 1583.

No firm evidence supports the idea that Sir Francis Drake may have located the island on the final lap of his circumnavigation of the world (1577-1580). The existence of St Helena was certainly known to the English before they finally located it, for example the Elizabethan adventurer Edward Fenton made plans in 1582 to find and seize the island. In 1588 Thomas Cavendish became the first Englishman known to have visited the island during his first attempt to circumnavigate the world. He stayed for 12 days and described the valley (initially called Chapel Valley) where Jamestown is situated as “*a marvellous fair and pleasant valley, wherein divers handsome buildings and houses were set up, and especially one which was a church, which was tiled, and whitened on the outside very fair, and made with a porch, and within the church at the upper end was set an alter.... This valley is the fairest and largest low plot in all the island, and it is marvellous sweet and pleasant, and planted in every place with fruit trees or with herbs.... There are on this island thousands of goats, which the Spaniards call cabritos, which are very wild: you shall sometimes see one or two hundred of them together, and sometimes you may behold them going in a flock almost a mile long.*”

Another English seaman, Captain Abraham Kendall, visited Saint Helena in 1591, and in 1593 Sir James Lancaster stopped at the island on his way home from the East. Once the secret of St Helena's location had been revealed, English ships of war began to lie in wait in the area to attack Portuguese India carracks on their way home. As a result, in 1592 Philip II of Spain and I of Portugal (1527–1598) ordered the annual fleet returning from Goa on no account to touch at St

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| - Charter granted | 1659 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 420 km ² 162 sq mi |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 4,299 (n/a) |
| - n/a census | n/a |
| - Density | 18.1/km ² (n/a) 46.9/sq mi |
| Currency | Saint Helenian pound (<small>SHP</small>) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .sh |
| Calling code | +290 |



Helena. In developing their Far East trade, the Dutch also began to frequent the island. One of their first visits was in 1598 when an expedition of two vessels piloted by John Davis (English explorer) attacked a large Spanish Caravel, only to be beaten off and forced to retreat to Ascension Island for repairs. The Italian merchant Francesco Carletti, sailing on board a Portuguese ship, was robbed of his valuable possessions by Dutch (or more precise, *Zeeuws*) mariners in 1602 [in his autobiography entitled *My Voyage Around the World: The Chronicles of a 16th Century Florentine Merchant* and his story is confirmed in Dutch archives]. The Portuguese and Spanish soon gave up regularly calling at the island, partly because they used ports along the West African coast, but also because of attacks on their shipping, desecration to their chapel and images, destruction of their livestock and destruction of plantations by Dutch and English sailors. In 1603 Lancaster again visited Saint Helena on his return from the first voyage equipped by the British East India Company. In 1610, by which time most Dutch and English ships visited the island on their home voyage, François Pyrard de Laval deplored the deterioration since his last visit in 1601, describing damage to the chapel and destruction of fruit trees by the expedient of cutting down trees to pick the fruit. Whilst Thomas Best, commander of the tenth British East India Company expedition reported plentiful supplies of lemons in 1614, only 40 lemon trees were observed by the traveller Peter Mundy in 1634.

The Dutch Republic formally made claim to St Helena in 1633, although there is no evidence that they ever occupied, colonised or fortified it. A Dutch territorial stone, undated but certainly later than 1633, is presently kept in the island's archive office. By 1651, the Dutch had mainly abandoned the island in favour of their colony founded at the Cape of Good Hope.

British East India Company, 1658 - 1815

The idea for the English to make claim to the island was first made in a 1644 pamphlet by Richard Boothby. By 1649, the East India Company ordered all homeward-bound vessels to wait for one another at St Helena and in 1656 onward the Company petitioned the government to send a man-of-war to convoy the fleet home from there. Having been granted a charter to govern the island by Richard Cromwell in 1657, the following year the Company decided to fortify and colonise St Helena with planters. A fleet commanded by Captain John Dutton (first governor, 1659-1661) in the *Marmaduke* arrived at St Helena in 1659. It is from this date that St Helena claims to be Britain's second oldest colony (after Bermuda). A fort, originally named the Castle of St John, was completed within a month and further houses were built further up the valley. It soon became obvious that the island could not be made self-sufficient and in early 1658, the East India Company ordered all homecoming ships to provide one ton of rice on their arrival at the island.

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the fort was renamed James Fort, the town Jamestown and the valley James Valley, all in honour of the Duke of York, later James II of England. The East India Company immediately sought a Royal Charter, possibly to give their occupation of St Helena legitimacy. This was issued in 1661 and gave the Company the sole right to fortify and colonise the island "*in such legal and reasonable manner the said Governor and Company should see fit*". Each planter was allocated one of 130 pieces of land, but the Company had great difficulty attracting new immigrants, the population falling to only 66 including 18 slaves by 1670. John Dutton's successors as governor, Robert Stringer (1661-1670) and Richard Coney (1671-1672), repeatedly warned the Company of unrest amongst the inhabitants, Coney complaining the inhabitants were drunks and ne'er-do-wells. In 1672 Coney was seized by rebellious members of the island's council and shipped back to England. Coincidentally, the Company had already sent a replacement governor, Anthony Beale (1672-1673).

Finding that the cape was not the ideal harbour they originally envisaged, the Dutch East India Company launched an armed invasion of St Helena from the Cape colony over Christmas 1672. Governor Beale was forced to abandon the island in a Company ship, sailing to Brazil where he hired a fast ship. This he



used to locate an East India Company flotilla sent to reinforce St Helena with fresh troops. The island was retaken in May 1673 without loss of life and reinforced with 250 troops. The same year the Company petitioned a new Charter from Charles II of England and this granted the island free title as though it was a part of England “*in the same manner as East Greenwich in the County of Kent*”. Acknowledging that St Helena was a place where there was no trade, the Company was permitted to send from England any provisions free of Customs and to convey as many settlers as required.

In 1674 Richard Keigwin (1673-1674), the next acting governor, was seized by discontented settlers and troops and was only rescued by the lucky arrival of an East India Company fleet under the command of Captain William Basse. By 1675, the part-time recruitment of settlers in a Militia enabled the permanent garrison to be reduced to 50 troops. Edmund Halley was a visitor the following year, observing the positions of 341 stars in the Southern hemisphere. Amongst the most significant taxes levied on imports was a requirement for all ships trading with Madagascar to deliver one slave. Slaves were also brought from Asia by incoming shipping. Thus, most slaves came from Madagascar and Asia rather than the African mainland. By 1679, the number of slaves had risen to about 80. An uprising by soldiers and planters in 1684 during the governorship of John Blackmore (1678-1689) led to the death of three mutineers in an attack on Fort James and the later execution of four others. The formation of the Grand Alliance and outbreak of war against France in 1698 meant that for several years ships from Asia avoided the island for fear of being attacked by French men-of-wars. Soldiers at the end of their service thereby had restricted opportunities to obtain a passage back to Britain. Governor Joshua Johnson (1690-1693) also prevented soldiers smuggling themselves aboard ships by ordering all outgoing ships to only leave during daylight hours. This led to a mutiny in 1693 in which a group of mutineer soldiers seized a ship and made their escape, during the course of which Governor Johnson was killed. Meanwhile, savage punishment was meted out to slaves during this period, some being burnt alive and others starved to death. Rumours of an uprising by slaves in 1694 led to the gruesome execution of three slaves and cruel punishment of many others.

The clearance of the indigenous forest for the distillation of spirits, tanning and agricultural development began to lead to shortage of wood by the 1680s. The numbers of rats and goats had reached plague proportions by the 1690's, leading to the destruction of food crops and young tree shoots. Neither an increase on duty on the locally produced arrack nor a duty on all firewood helped reduce the deforestation whilst attempts to reforest the island by governor John Roberts (1708-11) were not followed up by his immediate successors. The Great Wood, which once extended from Deadwood Plain to Prosperous Bay Plain, was reported in 1710 as not having a single tree left standing. An early mention of the problems of soil erosion was made in 1718 when a waterspout broke over Sandy Bay, on the southern coast. Against the background of this erosion, several years of drought and the general dependency of St Helena, in 1715 governor Isaac Pyke (1714-1719) made the serious suggestion to the Company that appreciable savings could be made by moving the population to Mauritius, evacuated by the French in 1710. However, with the outbreak of war with other European countries, the Company continued to subsidise the island because of its strategic location. An ordinance was passed in 1731 to preserve the woodlands through the reduction in the goat population. Despite the clear connection between deforestation and the increasing number of floods (in 1732, 1734, 1736, 1747, 1756 and 1787) the East India Company's Court of Directors gave little support to efforts by governors to eradicate the goat problem. Rats were observed in 1731 building nests in trees two feet across, a visitor in 1717 commenting that the vast number of wild cats preferred to live off young partridges than the rats. An outbreak of plague in 1742 was attributed to the release of infected rats from ships arriving from India. By 1757, soldiers were employed in killing the wild cats.

Following commercial rivalries between the original English East India Company and a New East India Company created in 1698, a new Company was formed in 1708 by amalgamation, and entitled the “United Company of Merchants of England, trading to the East Indies”. St. Helena was then transferred to this new United East India Company. The same year, extensive work began to build the present Castle. Because of a lack of cement, mud was used as the mortar for many buildings, most of which had deteriorated into a state of ruin. In a search for lime on the island, a soldier in 1709 claimed to have discovered gold and



silver deposits in Breakneck Valley. For a short period, it is believed that almost every able-bodied man was employed in prospecting for these precious metals. The short-lived Breakneck Valley Gold Rush ended with the results of an assay of the deposits in London, showing that they were iron pyrites.

A census in 1723 showed that out of a total population 1,110, some 610 were slaves. In 1731, a majority of tenant planters successfully petitioned governor Edward Byfield (1727-1731) for the reduction of the goat population. The next governor, Isaac Pyke (1731-1738), had a tyrannical reputation but successfully extended tree plantations, improved fortifications and transformed the garrison and militia into a reliable force for the first time. In 1733 Green Tipped Bourbon Coffee seeds were brought from the coffee port of Mocha in Yemen, on a Company ship *The Houghton* and were planted at various locations around the Island where the plants flourished, despite general neglect.

Robert Jenkins, of “ Jenkins Ear” fame (governor 1740-1742) embarked on a programme of eliminating corruption and improving the defences. The island’s first hospital was built on its present site in 1742. Governor Charles Hutchinson (1747-1764) tackled the neglect of crops and livestock and also brought the laws of the island closer to those in England. Nevertheless, racial discrimination continued and it was not until 1787 that the black population were allowed to give evidence against whites. In 1758 three French warships were seen lying off the island in wait for the Company’s India fleet. In an inconclusive battle, these were engaged by warships from the Company’s China fleet. Nevil Maskelyne and Robert Waddington set up an observatory in 1761 to observe the transit of Venus, following a suggestion first made by Halley. In the event, observations were obscured by cloud. Most of the cattle were destroyed this year through an unidentified sickness.

Attempts by governor John Skottowe (1764-1782) to regularise the sale of arrack and punch led to some hostility and desertions by a number of troops who stole boats and were probably mostly lost at sea - however, at least one group of seven soldiers and a slave succeeded in escaping to Brazil in 1770. It was from about this date that the island began, for the first time, to enjoy a prolonged period of prosperity. The first Parish Church in Jamestown had been showing signs of decay for many years, and finally a new building was erected in 1774. St. James’ is now the oldest Anglican church south of the Equator. Captain James Cook visited the island in 1775 on the final leg of his second circumnavigation of the world.

An order by governor Daniel Corneille (1782–1787) banning garrison troops and sailors from punch-taverns, only allowing them to drink at army canteens, led to a mutiny over Christmas 1787 when some 200 troops skirmished with loyal troops over a three day period. Ninety-nine mutineers were condemned to death and were then decimated whereby lots were drawn, with one in every ten being shot and executed. Saul Solomon is believed to have arrived at the island about 1790, where he eventually formed the Solomon’s company, initially based at an emporium, today occupied by the Rose and Crown shop. Captain Bligh arrived at St Helena in 1792 during his second attempt to ship a cargo of bread-fruit trees to Jamaica.

In 1795 governor Robert Brooke (1787–1801) was alerted that the French had overrun the Netherlands, forcing the Dutch to become their allies. Some 411 troops were sent from the garrison to support General Sir James Craig in his successful capture of the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. As a result of a policy of recruiting time-expired soldiers calling at the island on their voyage home from India, the St Helena Regiment was built up to 1,000 men by 1800. At the same time, every able-bodied man joined the island’s militia. Fortifications were improved and a new system of visual signalling introduced. The importation of slaves was made illegal in 1792. Since most slaves were owned by the wealthier town dwellers, governor Robert Patton (1802–1807) recommended that Company import Chinese labour to supplement the rural workforce. These arrived in 1810, their numbers rising to about 600 by 1818, many were allowed to stay on after 1836 and their descendents became integrated into the population.



Action taken by governor Alexander Beatson (1808–1813) to reduce drunkenness by prohibiting the public sale of spirits and the importation of cheap Indian spirits resulted in a mutiny by about 250 troops in December 1811. After surrendering to loyal troops, nine leading mutineers were executed. Under the aegis of governor Mark Wilks (1813-1816) farming methods were improved, a rebuilding programme initiated and the first public library opened. A census in 1814 showed the number of inhabitants was 3,507.

Napoleon's exile, British rule, 1815-1821



Longwood House, St Helena: site of Napoleon's captivity

In 1815 the British government selected Saint Helena as the place of detention of Napoleon I of France. He was brought to the island in October 1815 and lodged at Longwood, where he died in May 1821. For more details about Napoleon on Saint Helena, see Exile in Saint Helena and death.

During this period the island was strongly garrisoned by the regular British regimental troops, local St Helena Regiment troops and naval shipping circling the island. Agreement was reached that St Helena would remain in the East India Company's possession, the British government meeting additional costs arising from guarding Napoleon and the East India Company. Governor, Sir Hudson Lowe (1816–1821), was appointed by, and directly reported to, the Lord Bathurst, Secretary for War and the Colonies in London. Brisk business was enjoyed catering for the additional 2,000 troops and personnel on the island over the six-year period, although restrictions placed against ships landing during this period posed a challenge for local traders to import the necessary goods.

The 1817 census recorded 821 white inhabitants, a garrison of 820 men, 618 Chinese indentured labourers, 500 free blacks and 1,540 slaves. In 1818, whilst admitting that nowhere in the world did slavery exist in a milder form than on St Helena, Lowe initiated the first step in emancipating the slaves by persuading slave owners to give all slave children born after Christmas of that year their freedom once they had reached their late teens. Solomon Dickson & Taylor issued £147-worth of copper halfpenny tokens sometime before 1821 to enhance local trade.

British East India Company, 1821-1834

After Napoleon's death the thousands of temporary visitors were soon withdrawn. The East India Company resumed full control of Saint Helena and life returned to the pre-1815 standards, the fall in population causing a sharp change in the economy. The next governors, Thomas Brooke (temporary governor, 1821-1823) and Alexander Walker (1823-1828), successfully brought the island through this post-Napoleonic period with the opening of a new farmer's market in Jamestown, the foundation of an Agricultural and Horticultural Society and improvements in education. In 1832 the East India Company abolished slavery in St Helena (freeing 614 slaves), a year before legislation to ban slavery in the colonies was passed by Parliament. An abortive attempt was made to set up a whaling industry in 1830 (also in 1875). Following praise of St Helena's coffee given by Napoleon during his exile on the island, the product enjoyed a brief popularity in Paris during the years after his death.

British rule, a Crown colony, 1834 - 1981



The British Parliament passed the India Act in 1833, a provision of which transferred control of St Helena from the East India Company to the Crown with effect from 2 April 1834. In practice, the transfer did not take effect until 24 February 1836 when Major-General George Middlemore (1836-1842), the first governor appointed by the British government, arrived with 91st Regiment troops. He summarily dismissed St Helena Regiment and, following orders from London, embarked on a savage drive to cut administrative costs, dismissing most officers previously in the Company employ. This triggered the start of a long-term pattern whereby those who could afford to do so tended to leave the island for better fortunes and opportunities elsewhere. The population was to fall gradually from 6,150 in 1817 to less than 4,000 by 1890. Charles Darwin spent six days of observation on the island in 1836 during his return journey on HMS Beagle. Dr James Barry (surgeon) the first British female to qualify as a medical doctor, also arrived that year as principal medical officer (1836-1837). In addition to reorganising the hospital, Barry highlighted the heavy incidence of venereal diseases in the civilian population, blaming the government for the removal of the St Helena Regiment, which resulted in destitute females resorting to prostitution.

In 1838 agreement was reached with Sultan of Lahej to permit a coaling station at Aden, thereby allowing the journey time to the Far East (via the Mediterranean, the Alexandria to Cairo overland crossing and the Red Sea) to be roughly halved compared with the traditional South Atlantic route. This precursor to the affects of the Suez Canal (1869), coupled with the advent of steam shipping that was not reliant on trade winds led to a gradual reduction in the number of ships calling at St Helena and to a decline in its strategic importance to Britain and economic fortunes. The number of ships calling at the island fell from 1,100 in 1855; to 853 in 1869; to 603 in 1879 and to only 288 in 1889.

In 1839, London coffee merchants Wm Burnie & Co stated described St Helena coffee as being of “*very superior quality and flavour*”. In 1840 the British Government deployed a naval station to suppress the African slave trade. The squadron was based at St Helena and a Vice Admiralty Court was based at Jamestown to try the crews of the slave ships. Most of these were broken up and used for salvage. Surviving slaves (about 10,000 between 1840-1874) were incarcerated to regain their health in Liberated African Depots at Rupert’s Bay, Lemon Valley and High Knoll. About a third of ex-slaves died and were buried at Rupert’s Bay. A few survivors were employed as servants or labourers, their descendents being absorbed into the population, representing the main source of African ethnicity. Most were shipped out to plantations on the West Indies, only a few returning to Africa.

It was also in 1840 that the British government acceded to a French request for Napoleon’s body to be returned to France. The body, in excellent state of preservation, was exhumed on 15 October 1840 and ceremonially handed over to the Prince de Joinville in the French ship *La Belle Poule*.

A European Regiment, called the St Helena Regiment, comprising five companies was formed in 1842 for the purpose of garrisoning the island. William A Thorpe, the founder of the Thorpe business, was born on the island the same year. The first Baptist minister arrived from Cape Town in 1845. The same year, St Helena coffee was sold in London at 1d per pound, making it the most expensive and exclusive in the world. In 1846, St James church was considerably repaired, a steeple replacing the old tower. The same year, huge waves, or “rollers”, hit the island causing 13 ships anchored off Jamestown bay to be wrecked. The foundation stone for St Paul’s country church, also known as “The Cathedral”, was laid in 1850. Following instructions from London to achieve economies, Governor Thomas Gore Brown (1851-1856) further reduced the civil establishment. He also tackled the problems of overpopulation of Jamestown posed by the restrictions of the valley terrain by establishing a village at Rupert’s Bay. A census in 1851 showed a total of 6,914 inhabitants living on the island. In 1859 a new diocese was set up for St Helena, including Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha (initially also including the Falkland Islands, Rio de Janeiro and other towns along the east coast of South America), the first Bishop of St Helena arriving on the island that year. Islanders later complained that succeeding governors were mainly retired senior military officers with an undynamic approach to the job. St John’s church was built in upper Jamestown in 1857, one motivation



being to counter the levels of vice and prostitution at that end of the town.

The following year, the lands forming the sites of Napoleon's burial and of his home at Longwood House were vested in Napoleon III and his heirs and a French representative or consul has lived on the island ever since, the French flag now flying over these areas. The title deeds of Briars Pavilion, where Napoleon lived during his earliest period of exile, were much later given to the French Government in 1959.

St. Helena coffee grown on the Bamboo Hedge Estate at Sandy Bay won a premier award at the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851. Saul Solomon was buried at St Helena in 1853. The first postage stamp was issued for the island in 1856, the six-pence blue, marking the start of considerable philatelic interest in the island.

By the 1860's it was apparent that wood sourced from some condemned slave ships (possibly a Brazilian ship) from the 1840s were infested by termites ("white ants"). Eating their way through house timbers (also documents) the termites caused the collapse of a number of buildings and considerable economic damage over several decades. Extensive reconstruction made use of iron rails and termite-proof timbers. The termite problem persists to the present day. The corner stone for St Matthew's church at Hutt's Gate was laid in 1861.

The withdrawal of the British naval station in 1864 and closure of the Liberated African Station ten years later (several hundred Africans were deported to Lagos and other places on the West African coast) resulted in a further deterioration in the economy. A small earthquake was recorded the same year. The gaol in Rupert's Bay was destroyed and the Castle and Supreme Court were reconstructed in 1867. Cinchona plants were introduced in 1868 by Charles Elliot (1863-1870) with a view to exporting quinine but the experiment was abandoned by his successor Governor C. G. E. Patey (1870-1873), who also embarked on a programme of reducing the civil establishment. The latter action led to another phase of emigration from the island. An experiment in 1874 to produce flax from Phomium Tenax (New Zealand flax) failed (the cultivation of flax recommenced in 1907 and eventually became the island's largest export). In 1871, the Royal Engineers constructed Jacob's Ladder up the steep side of the valley from Jamestown to Knoll Mount Fort, with 700 steps, one step being covered over in later repairs. A census in 1881 showed 5,059 inhabitants lived on the island. Jonathan, claimed to be the world's oldest tortoise, is thought to have arrived on the island in 1882.

Jamestown was lighted for the first time in 1888, the initial cost being born by the inhabitants. Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo, son of the Zulu king Cetshwayo, was exiled at St Helena between 1890 and 1897. In 1890 a great fall of rock killed nine people in Jamestown, a fountain being erected in Main Street in their memory. A census in 1891 showed 4,116 inhabitants lived on the island. A submarine cable en-route to Britain from Cape Town was landed in November 1899 and extended to Ascension by December and was operated by the Eastern Telegraph Company. For the next two years over six thousand Boer prisoners were imprisoned at Deadwood and Broadbottom. The population reached its all-time record of 9,850 in 1901. Although a number of prisoners died, being buried at Knollcombes, the islanders and Boers developed a relationship of mutual respect and trust, a few Boers choosing to remain on the island when the war ended in 1902.

The departure of the Boers and later removal of the remaining garrison in 1906 (with the disbandment of the St Helena Volunteers, this was the first time the island was left without a garrison) both impacted on the island economy, which was only slightly offset by growing philatelic sales. The successful reestablishment of the flax industry in 1907 did much to counter these problems, generating considerable income during the war years. Lace making was encouraged as an island-industry during the pre-war period, initiated by Emily Jackson in 1890 and a lace-making school was opened in 1908. Two men, known



as the Prosperous Bay Murderers, were hanged in 1905. A fish-canning factory opened in 1909 but failed due to an unusual shortage of fish that year. *S.S. Papanui*, en route from Britain to Australia with emigrants, arrived in James Bay in 1911 on fire. The ship burned out and sank, but its 364 passengers and crew were rescued and looked after on the island. A census in 1911 showed the population had fallen from its peak in 1901 to only 3,520 inhabitants. Some 4,800 rats tails were presented to the Government in 1913, who paid a penny per tail.

Islanders were made aware of their vulnerability to naval attack, despite extensive fortifications, following a visit by a fleet of three German super-dreadnoughts in January 1914. With the outbreak of the Great War, the defunct St. Helena Volunteer Corps was re-established. Some 46 islanders gave their lives in the First World War. The self-proclaimed Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Khalid Bin Barghash, was exiled in St Helena from 1917 to 1921 before being transferred to the Seychelles.

William A. Thorpe was killed in an accident in 1918, his business continuing to operate on the island to the present day. In 1920 the Norwegian ship *Spangereid* caught fire and sank at her mooring at James Bay, depositing quantities of coal on the beach below the wharf. A census in 1921 showed the islands population was 3,747. The first islanders left to work at Ascension Island in 1921, which was made a dependency of St Helena in 1922. Thomas R. Bruce (postmaster 1898-1928) was the first islander to design a postage stamp, the 1922-1937 George V ship-design - this significantly contributed to island revenues for several years. South African coinage became legal tender in 1923, reflecting the high level of trade with that country. The first car, an Austin 7, was imported into the island in 1929. A census in 1931 showed a population of 3,995 (and a goat population of nearly 1,500). Cable and Wireless absorbed the Eastern Telegraph Company in 1934. Tristan da Cunha was made a dependency of St Helena in 1938.

Some six islanders gave their lives during the Second World War. The German battle cruiser *Admiral Graf Spee* was observed passing the island in 1939 and the British oil tanker *Darkdale* was torpedoed off Jamestown bay. As part of the Lend-Lease agreement, America built Wideawake airport on Ascension in 1942, but no military use was made of St Helena. As in the previous war, the island enjoyed increased revenues through the sale of flax.

A census in 1946 showed 4,748 inhabitants lived on the island. Solomon's became a limited company in 1951. Flax prices continued to rise after the war, rising to their zenith in 1951. However, this St Helena staple industry fell into decline because of competition from synthetic fibres and also because the delivered price of the island's flax was substantially higher than world prices. The decision by a major buyer, the British Post Office, to use synthetic fibres for their mailbags was a major blow, all of which contributed in the closure of the island's flax mills in 1965. Many acres of land are still covered with flax plants. A census in 1956 showed the population had fallen only slightly, to 4,642. 1957 witnessed the arrival of three Bahrain princes as prisoners of Britain, who remained until released by a writ of habeas corpus in 1960. Another attempt to cooperate a fish cannery led to closure in 1957. From 1958, the Union Castle shipping line gradually reduced their service calls to the island. A census in 1966 showed a relatively unchanged population of 4,649 inhabitants.

A South African company (The South Atlantic Trading and Investment Corporation, SATIC) bought a majority share in Solomon and Company in 1968. Following several years of losses and to avoid the economic affects of a closure of the company, the St Helena government eventually bought a majority share in the company in 1974. In 1969 the first elections were held under the new constitution for twelve-member Legislative Council. By 1976, the population had grown slightly to 5,147 inhabitants. Based from Avonmouth, Curnow Shipping replaced the Union-Castle Line mailship service in 1977, using the RMS St. Helena, a coastal passenger and cargo vessel that had been used between Vancouver and Alaska. Due to structural weakness, the spire of St James church was demolished in 1980. The endemic flowering shrub, the St. Helena Ebony, believed to have been extinct for over a century, was discovered on the island in 1981.



1981 to present

The British Nationality Act 1981 reclassified St Helena and the other crown colonies as British Dependent Territories. The islanders lost their status as citizens of the United Kingdom and colonies (as defined in the British Nationality Act 1948) and were stripped of their right of abode in Britain. For the next 20 years, many could only find low-paid work with the island government and the only available employment overseas for the islanders was restricted to the Falkland Islands and Ascension Island, a period during which the island was often referred to as the “South Atlantic Alcatraz”.

The RMS St. Helena was requisitioned in 1982 by the Ministry of Defence to help in support of the Falklands Conflict, and sailed south with the entire crew volunteering for duty. The ship was involved in supporting minesweeper operations but the volunteers were refused South Atlantic Medals. Prince Andrew began his relationship with St Helena in 1984 with a visit to the island as a member of the armed forces.

The 1987 census showed that the island population stood at 5,644. The Development & Economic Planning Department, which still operates, was formed in 1988 to contribute to raising the living standards of the people of St Helena by planning and managing sustainable economic development through education, participation and planning, improving decision making by providing statistical information and by improving the safety and operation of the wharf and harbour operations. After decades of planning, the realisation of the three-tier school system began in 1988 under the aegis of the Head of Education, Basil George, when the Prince Andrew School was opened for all pupils of 12 onwards. Middle schools would take the 8 to 12 year old children and the First schools from 5 year olds.

Prince Andrew launched the replacement RMS St. Helena in 1989 at Aberdeen. The vessel was specially built for the Cardiff-Cape Town route, and featured a mixed cargo/passenger layout. At the same time, a shuttle service between St. Helena and Ascension was planned, for the many Saint Helenians working there and on the Falklands. In 1995 the decision was made to base the ship from Cape Town and limit the number of trips to the UK to just four a year.

The 1988 St Helena Constitution took effect in 1989 and provided that the island would be governed by a Governor and Commander-in-Chief, and an Executive and Legislative Council. The Executive Council members would be elected for nomination by the elected members of the Legislative Council, and subsequently appointed by the Governor and could only be removed from office by the votes of a majority of the five members of the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council Members would be re-elected by the voters every four years. With few exceptions the Governor would be obliged to abide by the advice given to him by the Executive Council. Five Council Committees would be made up from the membership of the Legislative Council and civil servants so that at any time there would always be a majority of elected members. The five Chairpersons of these committees would comprise the elected membership of the Executive Council.

The Bishop's Commission on Citizenship was established at the Fifteenth Session of Diocesan Synod in 1992 with the aim of restoring full citizenship of the islanders and restore the right of abode in the UK. Research began (Prof. T. Charlton) in 1993, two years before its introduction on the island and five years after, to measure the influence that television has on the behaviour of children in classrooms and school playgrounds. This concluded that the island children continued to be hard working and very well behaved and that family and community social controls were more important in shaping children's behaviour than exposure to television. The Island of St Helena Coffee Company was founded in 1994 by David Henry and continues to operate independently from the island Government. Using Green Tipped Bourbon Coffee plants imported in 1733, crops are grown on several sites, including the Bamboo Hedge Estate Sandy Bay estate used for the 1851 Great Exhibition entry. In 1997, the acute employment problem at St Helena was brought to the attention of the British public following

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reports in the tabloid press of a “riot” following an article in the Financial Times describing how the Governor, David Smallman (1995-1999), was jostled by a small crowd who believed he and the Foreign Office had rejected plans to build an airport on the island.

Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997, and the same year the British government published a review of the Dependent Territories. This included a commitment to restore the pre-1981 status for citizenship. This was effected by the British Overseas Territories Act 2002, which restored full passports to the islanders, and renamed the Dependent Territories the British Overseas Territories. The St Helena National Trust was also formed the same year with the aim of promoting the island's unique environmental and culture heritage. The last full census was conducted in 1998 when the population was 5,008 persons. Annual estimates since 1998 showed an accelerated decline in the population, to an estimated figure of 4,299 in 2005 . The next full census in 2008 is expected to show less than 4,000 inhabitants.

The island’s two-floor museum situated in a building near the base of Jacob’s Ladder was opened in 2002 and is operated by the St Helena Heritage Society. The Bank of St. Helena, located next to the Post Office, commenced operations in 2004, inheriting the assets and accounts of the former St Helena Government Savings and the Ascension Island Savings Banks, both of which then ceased to exist. In April 2005 the British Government announced plans to construct an airport on Saint Helena to bolster the Island's economy, and reduce the dependence on boats to supply the Island. The Airport is currently expected to be open in 2012, though no firm date has yet been announced. At that time the Royal Mail ship is expected to cease operations.

A comparative review of the different sources for the history of St Helena has been published on the St Helena Institute web site .

Demographics



Saint Helena has a small population of almost four thousand inhabitants, mainly descended from people from Europe (mostly planters, government employees and ex-soldiers serving in the local St Helena Regiment), Chinese (itinerate workers from about 1810) and slaves (mostly from Madagascar and Asia, only a few coming from Africa from 1840 onward). In recent decades, many have migrated to the Falkland Islands or to the United Kingdom. According to the 2007 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, Saint Helena has the largest proportion of Jehovah's Witnesses of any country or territory in the world: one person in thirty, in total 129 people.

Tristan da Cunha has a population of about three hundred inhabitants of mainly British descent. Christianity is the main religion, with the largest denominations being Anglican and Roman Catholic.

Ascension Island has no native inhabitants officially. A transient population of approximately 3,000 live on the Island, made up mainly of members of the American and British militaries, supporting civilian contractors who serve on the joint Anglo-American airbase, and members of their families (a few of whom were born on the island).

The citizens of Saint Helena and its Dependencies hold British Overseas Territories citizenship. On 21 May 2002 they were granted access to full British citizenship by the British Overseas Territories Act 2002. Also see British nationality law.

There was large migration to South Africa in the past and very many Indian and Black South Africans have grand parents or great grand parents who were from St. Helena.

Economy

The island had a monocrop economy until 1966, based on the cultivation and processing of New Zealand flax for rope and string. St Helena's economy is now very weak, and the island is almost entirely sustained by aid from London.

The Saint Helena tourist industry is heavily based around the promotion of Napoleon's imprisonment. A golf course also exists and the possibility for sportfishing tourism is great.

Saint Helena also produces what is said to be the most expensive coffee in the world.

Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha and Saint Helena all issue their own postage stamps which provide a significant income.

Saint Helena also produces and exports Tungi Spirit, made from the fruit of the prickly or cactus pears, *Opuntia vulgaris*. Tungi is the local St Helenian name for the prickly or cactus pear.

The Saint Helenian pound is the local currency, and is on a par with the Pound Sterling. The government of Saint Helena produces its own coinage and banknotes. The first coin was a half penny produced by the East India Company in 1821. It remains readily available to collectors.

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Jamestown, the capital of Saint Helena.



Jamestown, from above.



The territory has its own bank, the Bank of St. Helena, which has two branches in Jamestown on Saint Helena, and Georgetown, Ascension Island.

Geography



Map of St. Helena.

Saint Helena

Saint Helena has a total area of 420 km² (162 mi²), consisting of three island groups: Saint Helena itself, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha. Each island group has its own distinct geography.

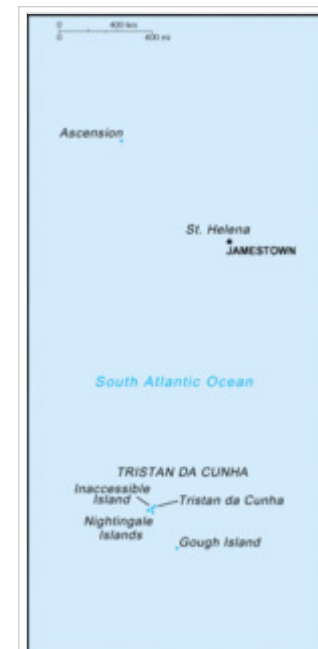
Saint Helena has a rugged, volcanic terrain. There are several rocks and islets off the coast, including: Castle Rock, Speery Island, The Needle, Lower Black Rock, Upper Black Rock (South), Bird Island (Southwest), Black Rock, Thompson's Valley Island, Peaked Island, Egg Island, Lady's Chair, Lighter Rock (West), Long Ledge (Northwest), Shore Island, George Island, Rough Rock Island, Flat Rock (East), The Buoys, Sandy Bay Island, The Chimney, White Bird Island and Frightus Rock (Southeast), all of which are within one kilometre of the shore. The centre of Saint Helena is covered by forest, of which some has been planted, including the new Millennium Forest Project. The temperature is also two to three degrees

cooler in the highlands, and it has a few inches a year more rainfall than the rest of the island. It is more tropical in nature, and contains most of the island's endemic flora, fauna, insects and birds. The coastal areas are barren, covered in volcanic rock and are warmer and drier than the centre of the island.

When the island was discovered, it was covered with unique (indigenous) vegetation, including the remarkable cabbage tree species of St Helena. The flora of St Helena contains a high proportion of endemic species, i.e., those found nowhere else. The island's interior must have been a dense subtropical forest but the coastal areas were probably quite green as well. The modern landscape is very different, with a lot of naked rock in the lower areas, and a high interior that is green, mainly due to *imported* vegetation. The dramatic change in landscape must be attributed to the introduction of goats and the introduction of new vegetation. As a result, the string tree (*Acalypha rubrinervis*) and the St Helena olive (*Nesiota elliptica*) are now extinct, and many of the other endemic plants are threatened with extinction.

Ascension

Ascension Island includes the main island and several uninhabited tiny satellite islands and rocks such as Boatswain Bird Island, Boatswain Bird Rock (east), White Rocks (south), and Tartar Rock. The main island has an area of approximately 35 square miles (91 km²) and is formed by volcanic peak rising from just west of the mid-Atlantic Ridge known as Green Mountain. Most of the island is a moonscape of rugged black lava flows and red windwhipped cinder cones. Where lava has penetrated to the ocean a striking seashore is dotted with white sand. The climate is subtropical, with temperatures at the coast ranging from



Map of Saint Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha.



about 68 to 88 degrees Fahrenheit (20 to 31 degrees Celsius). The current administrator of Ascension Island is Michael Hill.

Tristan da Cunha

Tristan da Cunha includes the main Tristan da Cunha Island — the world's most remote inhabited island — and several other uninhabited islands: Gough Island, Inaccessible Island, and the three Nightingale Islands. The islands are all mountainous and volcanic. Queen Mary's Peak on Tristan da Cunha at 2,062 m (6,765 ft) is the highest peak.

Isolation

Saint Helena is one of the most isolated places in the world, located more than 2000 km (1200 mi) from the nearest major landmass. As there is currently no airport on Saint Helena, travel to the island is by ship only. The RMS *Saint Helena* berths in James Bay approximately thirty times per year. The ship calls on such other ports as Cape Town, Ascension Island, Tenerife, Vigo, Walvis Bay and Isle of Portland, UK.

Administrative divisions

Administratively, the territory is divided into three areas:

| Group | Type | Area km ² | Area sq mi | Population | Administrative Centre |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Saint Helena | <i>administrative area</i> | 122 | 47 | 3,751 | Jamestown |
| Ascension | <i>dependency</i> | 91 | 35 | 1,122 | Georgetown |
| Tristan da Cunha | <i>dependency</i> | 207 | 80 | 284 | Edinburgh of the Seven Seas |
| Total | | 420 | 162 | 6,563 | Jamestown |

Subdivisions

Saint Helena is divided into the following districts

| District | Area sq km | Area sq mi | Pop. (1998) |
|----------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | | |



| | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Alarm Forest | 5.9 | 2.3 | 279 |
| Blue Hill | 36.5 | 14.1 | 175 |
| Half Tree Hollow | 1.6 | 0.6 | 1,126 |
| Jamestown | 3.6 | 1.4 | 864 |
| Levelwood | 14.0 | 5.4 | 373 |
| Longwood | 33.4 | 12.9 | 951 |
| Sandy Bay | 15.3 | 5.9 | 254 |
| Saint Paul's | 11.4 | 4.4 | 893 |
| Total | 121.7 | 47.0 | 4,915 |

Politics

Executive authority in Saint Helena is invested in Queen Elizabeth II and is exercised on her behalf by the Governor of Saint Helena. The Governor is appointed by the Queen on the advice of the British Government. Defence and Foreign Affairs remain the responsibility of the United Kingdom.

There are fifteen seats in the Legislative Council, a unicameral legislature. Twelve of the fifteen members are elected in elections held every four years. The other three members are the Governor and two *ex officio* officers. The Executive Council consists of the Governor, two *ex officio* officers, and six elected members of the Legislative Council appointed by the Governor. There is no elected Chief Minister, and the Governor acts as the head of government. The current Governor, since November 2007, is Andrew Gurr, who succeeded Michael Clancy.

Both Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha have an Administrator appointed to represent the Governor of Saint Helena.

Transport and telecommunications

Saint Helena and its dependencies are among some of the most remote islands in the world. Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha can only be reached by boat, although a large military airfield is located on Ascension Island, with weekly flights to RAF Brize Norton, England.

These RAF flights offer a limited number of seats to civilians. The RMS *Saint Helena* runs between the United Kingdom, Ascension, St Helena and Cape Town. It no longer calls at Tristan da Cunha. However, the RMS Saint Helena is due for eventual decommissioning and may be partly replaced by an expanded airfield on Saint Helena Island.



The British Government announced plans to construct an airport in Saint Helena in March 2005. The airport was originally expected to be completed by 2010, but is now expected to be completed by 2011/2012 due to unresolved disputes between contractors and HM Government.

Also, a van serves as a bus to carry people around Saint Helena, especially from the Half Tree Hollow neighbourhood of Jamestown.

Radio broadcasting

SaintFM provides a local radio service for the island which is also available on Internet Radio and relayed in Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands.

Radio Saint Helena provides a local radio service that has a range of about 100 km from the island, and also broadcasts internationally on Amateur Radio Wavelengths on one day a year.

Internet

Saint Helena has a 1.5 Mbit internet link via Virgin Media.

Local newspapers

The island has two local newspapers, both of which are available on the internet. The St. Helena Independent and the St. Helena Herald

Culture and society

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of 5 and 15.

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São Tomé and Príncipe

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

São Tomé and Príncipe (English pronunciation IPA: [səʊ tʰə 'meɪ ənd 'pʰɪnsɪpɪ], Portuguese pronunciation IPA: [sẽũ tu'mɛ i 'pɾĩsɨpi]), officially the **Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe**, is an island nation in the Gulf of Guinea, off the western equatorial coast of Africa. It consists of two islands: São Tomé and Príncipe, located about 140 kilometres apart and about 250 and 225 kilometres, respectively, off the northwestern coast of Gabon. Both islands are part of an extinct volcanic mountain range. São Tomé, the sizable southern island, is situated just north of the equator. It was named in honour of Saint Thomas by Portuguese explorers who happened to arrive at the island on his feast day.


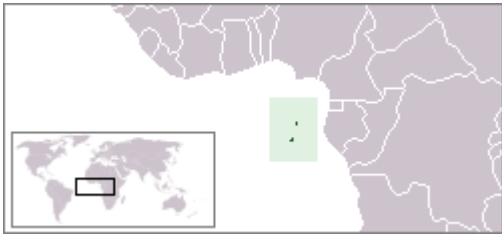
São Tomé and Príncipe is the second-smallest African country in terms of population (the Seychelles being the smallest). It is the smallest country in the world that is not a former British overseas territory, a former United States trusteeship, or one of the European microstates. It is also the smallest Portuguese-speaking country.

History

The islands of São Tomé and Príncipe were uninhabited before the arrival of the Portuguese sometime around 1470. The islands were discovered by João de Santarém and Pedro Escobar and bore his name until the 20th century. Portuguese navigators explored the islands and decided that they would be good locations for bases to trade with the mainland.

The dates of discovery are sometimes given as December 21 (St Thomas's Day), 1471 for São Tomé, and January 17 (St Anthony's Day), 1472 for Príncipe, though other sources give different nearby years. Príncipe was initially named *Santo Antão* ("Saint Anthony"), changing its name in 1502 to *Ilha do Príncipe* ("Prince's Island"), in reference to the Prince of Portugal to whom duties on the island's sugar crop were paid.

The first successful settlement of São Tomé was established in 1493 by Álvaro Caminha, who received the land as a grant from the crown. Príncipe was settled in 1500 under a similar arrangement. Attracting settlers proved difficult, however, and most of the earliest inhabitants were "undesirables" sent from

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe</i> Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Anthem: <i>Independência total</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | São Tomé |
| Official languages | Portuguese |
| Recognised regional languages | Forro, Angolar, Principense |
| Demonym | Santomean |



Portugal, mostly Jews. In time these settlers found the volcanic soil of the region suitable for agriculture, especially the growing of sugar.

The cultivation of sugar was a labour-intensive process and the Portuguese began to import large numbers of slaves from the mainland. By the mid-1500s the Portuguese settlers had turned the islands into Africa's foremost exporter of sugar. São Tomé and Príncipe were taken over and administered by the Portuguese crown in 1522 and 1573, respectively.

However, superior sugar colonies in the western hemisphere began to hurt the islands. The large slave population also proved difficult to control, with Portugal unable to invest many resources in the effort. Sugar cultivation thus declined over the next 100 years, and by the mid-17th century, the economy of São Tomé had changed. It was now primarily a transit point for ships engaged in the slave trade between the West and continental Africa.

In the early 19th century, two new cash crops, coffee and cocoa, were introduced. The rich volcanic soils proved well suited to the new cash crop industry, and soon extensive plantations (roças), owned by Portuguese companies or absentee landlords, occupied almost all of the good farmland. By 1908, São Tomé had become the world's largest producer of cocoa, which remains the country's most important crop.

The roças system, which gave the plantation managers a high degree of authority, led to abuses against the African farm workers. Although Portugal officially abolished slavery in 1876, the practice of forced labor continued. In the early 20th century, an internationally publicized controversy arose over charges that Angolan contract workers were being subjected to forced labor and unsatisfactory working conditions. Sporadic labor unrest and dissatisfaction continued well into the 20th century, culminating in an outbreak of riots in 1953 in which several hundred African laborers were killed in a clash with their Portuguese rulers. This "Batepá Massacre" remains a major event in the colonial history of the islands, and its anniversary is officially observed by the government.

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Democratic semi-presidential Republic |
| - President | Fradique de Menezes |
| - Prime Minister | Patrice Trovoada |
| Independence | from Portugal |
| - Date | 12 July 1975 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 964 km ² (183rd) 372 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0 |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 157,000 (188th) |
| - Density | 171/km ² (65th) 454/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$214 million (218th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,266 (205th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.654 (medium) (123rd) |
| Currency | Dobra (STD) |
| Time zone | UTC (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .st |
| Calling code | +239 |



By the late 1950s, when other emerging nations across the African Continent were demanding independence, a small group of São Toméans had formed the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (MLSTP), which eventually established its base in nearby Gabon. Picking up momentum in the 1960s, events moved quickly after the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal in April 1974. The new Portuguese regime was committed to the dissolution of its overseas colonies; in November 1974, their representatives met with the MLSTP in Algiers and worked out an agreement for the transfer of sovereignty. After a period of transitional government, São Tomé and Príncipe achieved independence on July 12, 1975, choosing as the first president the MLSTP Secretary General Manuel Pinto da Costa.



The cathedral - Sé - of Sao Tomé

In 1990, São Tomé became one of the first African countries to embrace democratic reform, and changes to the constitution — the legalization of opposition political parties — led to elections in 1991 that were nonviolent, free, and transparent. Miguel Trovoada, a former prime minister who had been in exile since 1986, returned as an independent candidate and was elected president. Trovoada was re-elected in São Tomé's second multi-party presidential election in 1996. The Party of Democratic Convergence (PCD) overtook the MLSTP to take a majority of seats in the National Assembly, with the MLSTP becoming an important and vocal minority party. Municipal elections followed in late 1992, in which the MLSTP came back to win a majority of seats on five of seven regional councils. In early legislative elections in October 1994, the MLSTP won a plurality of seats in the Assembly. It regained an outright majority of seats in the November 1998 elections. The Government of São Tomé fully functions under a multi-party system. Presidential elections were held in July 2001. The candidate backed by the Independent Democratic Action party, Fradique de Menezes, was elected in the first round and inaugurated on September 3. Parliamentary elections were held in March 2002. For the next four years, a series of short-lived opposition-led governments were formed.

The army seized power for one week in July 2003, complaining of corruption and that forthcoming oil revenues would not be divided fairly. An accord was negotiated under which President de Menezes was returned to office.

The cohabitation period ended in March 2006, when a pro-presidential coalition won enough seats in National Assembly elections to form and head a new government.

In the 30 July 2006 presidential election, Fradique de Menezes easily won a second five-year term in office, defeating two other candidates Patrice Trovoada (son of former President Miguel Trovoada) and independent Nilo Guimarães. Local elections, the first since 1992, took place on 27 August 2006 and were dominated by members of the ruling coalition.

Politics



São Tomé has functioned under a multiparty system since 1990. The president of the republic is elected to a 5-year term by direct universal suffrage and a secret ballot, and must gain an outright majority to be elected. The president may hold up to two consecutive terms. The prime minister is named by the president, and the fourteen members of cabinet are chosen by the prime minister.

The National Assembly, the supreme organ of the state and the highest legislative body, is made up of 55 members, who are elected for a 4-year term and meet semiannually. Justice is administered at the highest level by the Supreme Court. The judiciary is independent under the current constitution.

With regards to human rights, there exists the freedom of speech and the freedom to form opposition political parties.

Geography

The islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, situated in the equatorial Atlantic about 300 and 250 kilometers (200 and 150 miles), respectively, off the northwest coast of Gabon, constitute Africa's smallest country. Both are part of the Cameroon volcanic mountain line, which also includes the islands of Annobón to the southwest, Bioko to the northeast (both part of Equatorial Guinea), and Mount Cameroon on the African west coast.



The São Tomé and Príncipe rainforest

São Tomé is 50 kilometers (31 miles) long and 32 kilometers (20 miles) wide and the more mountainous of the two islands. Its peaks reach 2,024 meters (6,640 ft). Príncipe is about 30 kilometers (19 miles) long and 6 kilometers (4 miles) wide. Swift streams radiating down the mountains through lush forest and cropland to the sea cross both islands.

At sea level, the climate is tropical—hot and humid with average yearly temperatures of about 27°C (80°F) and little daily variation. The temperature rarely rises beyond 32°C. At the interior's higher altitudes, the average yearly temperature is 20°C (68°F), and nights are generally cool. Annual rainfall varies from 5 m (200 inches) on the southwestern slopes to 1 m (40 in) in the northern lowlands. The rainy season runs from October to May.

The equator lies immediately south of São Tomé Island, passing through or near the islet named Ilhéu das Rolas.

Economy

Since the 1800s, the economy of São Tomé and Príncipe has been based on plantation agriculture. At the time of independence, Portuguese-owned plantations occupied 90% of the cultivated area. After independence, control of these plantations passed to various state-owned agricultural enterprises. The main crop on

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President Fradique de Menezes



Map of São Tomé and Príncipe



São Tomé is cocoa, representing about 95% of exports. Other export crops include copra, palm kernels, and coffee.

Domestic food-crop production is inadequate to meet local consumption, so the country imports some of its food. Efforts have been made by the government in recent years to expand food production, and several projects have been undertaken, largely financed by foreign donors.

Other than agriculture, the main economic activities are fishing and a small industrial sector engaged in processing local agricultural products and producing a few basic consumer goods. The scenic islands have potential for tourism, and the government is attempting to improve its rudimentary tourist industry infrastructure. The government sector accounts for about 11% of employment.

Following independence, the country had a centrally directed economy with most means of production owned and controlled by the state. The original constitution guaranteed a “mixed economy,” with privately owned cooperatives combined with publicly owned property and means of production. In the 1980s and 1990s, the economy of São Tomé encountered major difficulties. Economic growth stagnated, and cocoa exports dropped in both value and volume, creating large balance-of-payments deficits. Efforts to redistribute plantation land resulted in decreased cocoa production. At the same time, the international price of cocoa slumped.

In response to its economic downturn, the government undertook a series of far-reaching economic reforms. In 1987, the government implemented an International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment program, and invited greater private participation in management of the parastatals, as well as in the agricultural, commercial, banking, and tourism sectors. The focus of economic reform since the early 1990s has been widespread privatization, especially of the state-run agricultural and industrial sectors.



Fisherman landing their catch in São Tomé



São Tomé market

The São Toméan Government has traditionally obtained foreign assistance from various donors, including the UN Development Programme, the World Bank, the European Union (EU), Portugal, Taiwan, and the African Development Bank. In April 2000, in association with the central bank, the Banco Nacional São Tomé e Príncipe, the IMF approved a poverty reduction and growth facility for São Tomé aimed at reducing inflation to 3% for 2001, raising ideal growth to 4%, and reducing the fiscal deficit. In late 2000, São Tomé qualified for significant debt reduction under the IMF-World Bank’s Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The reduction is currently being reevaluated by the IMF, due to the attempted coup d’etat in July 2003 and subsequent emergency spending. Following the truce, the IMF decided to send a mission to São Tomé to evaluate the macroeconomic state of the country. This evaluation is ongoing, reportedly pending oil legislation to determine how the government will manage incoming oil revenues.

Portugal remains one of São Tomé's major trading partners, particularly as a source of imports. Food, manufactured articles, machinery, and transportation equipment are imported primarily from the EU.



Petroleum exploration

In 2001, São Tomé and Nigeria reached agreement on joint exploration for petroleum in waters claimed by the two countries of the Niger Delta geologic province. After a lengthy series of negotiations, in April 2003 the joint development zone (JDZ) was opened for bids by international oil firms. The JDZ was divided into 9 blocks; the winning bids for block one, ChevronTexaco, ExxonMobil, and the Norwegian firm, Equity Energy, were announced in April 2004, with São Tomé to take in 40% of the \$123 million bid, and Nigeria the other 60%. Bids on other blocks were still under consideration in October 2004. São Tomé stands to gain significant revenue both from the bidding process and from follow-on production, should reserves in the area match expectations.

Demographics

Of São Tomé and Príncipe's total population, about 137,500 live on São Tomé and 6,000 on Príncipe. All are descended from various ethnic groups that have migrated to the islands since 1485. Seven groups are identifiable:

- *Mestiços*, or mixed-blood, descendants of Portuguese colonists and African slaves brought to the islands during the early years of settlement from Benin, Gabon, and Congo (these people also are known as *filhos da terra* or "sons of the land");
- *Angolares*, reputedly descendants of Angolan slaves who survived a 1540 shipwreck and now earn their livelihood fishing;
- *Forros*, descendants of freed slaves when slavery was abolished;
- *Serviçais*, contract laborers from Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde, living temporarily on the islands;
- *Tongas*, children of *serviçais* born on the islands; and
- Europeans, primarily Portuguese.
- Asians, mostly Chinese minority, including Macanese people of mixed Portuguese and Chinese ancestry from Macau.

In the 1970s, there were two significant population movements—the exodus of most of the 4,000 Portuguese residents and the influx of several hundred São Toméan refugees from Angola. The islanders have been absorbed largely into a common Luso-African culture. Almost all belong to the Roman Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, or Seventh-day Adventist Churches, with a small but growing Muslim population.

Although a small country, São Tomé and Príncipe has four national languages: Portuguese (the official language, spoken by 95% of the population), and the Portuguese-based creoles Forro (85%), Angolar (3%) and Principense (0.1%). French is also learned in schools, as the country is a member of Francophonie.

Culture



- Music of São Tomé and Príncipe
- List of writers from São Tomé and Príncipe

Culturally, the people are African but have been highly influenced by the Portuguese rulers of the islands.

São Toméans are known for ússua and socopé rhythms, while Príncipe is home to the dêxa beat. Portuguese ballroom dancing may have played an integral part in the development of these rhythms and their associated dances.

Tchiloli is a musical dance performance that tells a dramatic story. The danço-congo is similarly a combination of music, dance and theatre.

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The equator marked as it crosses Ilhéu das Rolas, in São Tomé and Príncipe. The shadow points SW indicating that the Sun is several degrees North likely late April or early August about 1-2 hours before Noon.



Senegal

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Senegal. For more information see SOS Children in Senegal, Africa

Senegal (French: *le Sénégal*), officially the **Republic of Senegal**, is a country south of the Sénégal River in western Africa. Senegal is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east, and Guinea and Guinea-Bissau to the south. The Gambia lies almost entirely within Senegal, surrounded on the north, east and south; from its western coast, Gambia's territory follows the Gambia River more than 300 kilometres (186 miles) inland. Dakar is the capital city of Senegal, located on the Cape Verde Peninsula on the country's Atlantic coast.

History

Archaeological findings throughout the area indicate that Senegal was inhabited in prehistoric times.

Eastern Senegal was once part of the Empire of Ghana. It was founded by the Tukulor in the middle valley of the Senegal River. Islam, the dominant religion in Senegal, first came to the region in the 11th century. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the area came under the influence of the Mandingo empires to the east; the Jolof Empire of Senegal also was founded during this time.

Various European powers—Portugal, the Netherlands, and Great Britain—competed for trade in the area from the 15th century onward, until in 1677, France ended up in possession of what had become an important slave trade departure point—the infamous island of Gorée next to modern Dakar. Millions of West African people were shipped from here. It was only in the 1850s that the French began to expand their foothold onto the Senegalese mainland, at the expense of native kingdoms such as Waalo, Cayor, Baol, and Jolof.

In January 1959 Senegal and the French Sudan merged to form the Mali Federation, which became fully independent on June 20, 1960, as a result of the independence and the transfer of power agreement signed with France on April 4, 1960. Due to internal political difficulties, the Federation broke up on August 20. Senegal and Sudan (renamed the Republic of Mali) proclaimed independence. Léopold Senghor was elected Senegal's first president in September 1960.

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| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République du Sénégal</i> Republic of Senegal | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Un Peuple, Un But, Une Foi" (French) "One People, One Goal, One Faith" | |
| Anthem: <i>Pincez Tous vos Koras, Frappez les Balafons</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Dakar |
| Official languages | French |



After the breakup of the Mali Federation, President Senghor and Prime Minister Mamadou Dia governed together under a parliamentary system. In December 1962 their political rivalry led to an attempted coup by Prime Minister Dia. Although this was put down without bloodshed, Dia was arrested and imprisoned, and Senegal adopted a new constitution that consolidated the president's power. In 1980 President Senghor decided to retire from politics, and he handed power over in 1981 to his handpicked successor, Abdou Diouf.

Senegal joined with The Gambia to form the nominal confederation of Senegambia on February 1 1982. However, the union was dissolved in 1989. Despite peace talks, a southern separatist group in the Casamance region has clashed sporadically with government forces since 1982. Senegal has a long history of participating in international peacekeeping.

Abdou Diouf was president between 1981 and 2000. He encouraged broader political participation, reduced government involvement in the economy, and widened Senegal's diplomatic engagements, particularly with other developing nations. Domestic politics on occasion spilled over into street violence, border tensions, and a violent separatist movement in the southern region of the Casamance. Nevertheless, Senegal's commitment to democracy and human rights strengthened. Diouf served four terms as president.

In the presidential election of 2000, opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade defeated Diouf in an election deemed free and fair by international observers. Senegal experienced its second peaceful transition of power, and its first from one political party to another. On December 30, 2004 President Abdoulaye Wade announced that he would sign a peace treaty with the separatist group in the Casamance region. This, however, has yet to be implemented. There was a round of talks in 2005, but the results did not yet yield a resolution.

Politics

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recognised regional languages | Wolof (spoken by 94 percent) |
| Demonym | Senegalese |
| Government | Semi-presidential republic |
| - President | Abdoulaye Wade |
| - Prime Minister | Cheikh Hadjibou Soumaré |
| Independence | |
| - from France | 20 August 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 196,723 km ² (87th) 76,000 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 2.1 |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 11,658,000 (72nd) |
| - Density | 59/km ² (137th) 153/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$20.504 billion (109th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,759 (149th) |
| Gini (1995) | 41.3 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.499 (low) (156th) |
| Currency | CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | UTC |
| Internet TLD | .sn |
| Calling code | +221 |



Abdoulaye Wade,
current president of
Senegal.

Senegal is a republic with a powerful presidency; the president is elected every seven years, amended in 2001 to every five years, by universal adult suffrage. The current president is Abdoulaye Wade, re-elected in March 2007.

Senegal has more than 80 political parties. The unicameral National Assembly has 120 members elected separately from the president. An independent judiciary also exists in Senegal. The nation's highest courts that deal with business issues are the constitutional council and the court of justice, members of which are named by the president.

Today Senegal has a democratic political culture, being one of the more successful post-colonial democratic transitions in Africa. Local administrators are appointed by, and responsible to, the president. The marabouts, religious leaders of the various Senegalese Muslim brotherhoods, also exercise a strong political influence in the country, most notably the leader of the Mouride brotherhood, Serigne Mouhamadou Lamine Bara Mbacke.

Geography

Senegal is located on the west of the African continent. The Senegalese landscape consists mainly of the rolling sandy plains of the western Sahel which rise to foothills in the southeast. Here is also found Senegal's highest point, an otherwise unnamed feature near Nepen Diakha at 584 m (1926 ft). The northern border is formed by the Senegal River, other rivers include the Gambia and Casamance Rivers. The capital Dakar lies on the Cap-Vert peninsula, the westernmost point of continental Africa.

The local climate is tropical with well-defined dry and humid seasons that result from northeast winter winds and southwest summer winds. Dakar's annual rainfall of about 600 mm (24 in) occurs between June and October when maximum temperatures average 27 °C (81 °F); December to February minimum temperatures are about 17 °C (63°F). Interior temperatures can be substantially higher than along the coast, and rainfall increases substantially farther south, exceeding 1.5 m (59.1 in) annually in some areas. The far interior of the country, in the region of Tambacounda, particularly on the border or Mali, temperatures can reach as high as 130 °F (54 °C).

The Cape Verde islands lie some 560 kilometers (348 mi) off the Senegalese coast, but Cap Vert ("Cape Green") is a maritime placemark, set at the foot of "Les Mammelles" , a 105-metre (344 ft) cliff resting at one end of the Cap Vert peninsula onto which is settled Senegal's capital Dakar, and 1 kilometre (1,100 yd) south of the "Pointe des Almadies", the western-most point in Africa.

Population of major cities



Map of Senegal



| City | Population |
|-------------|------------|
| Dakar | 1,998,635 |
| Touba | 428,059 |
| Thiès | 240,152 |
| Rufisque | 187,203 |
| Saint-Louis | 178,782 |
| Kaolack | 173,782 |
| M'Bour | 170,699 |
| Ziguinchor | 130,750 |

Regions, departments, and arrondissements

Senegal is subdivided into 11 regions, each administered by a *Conseil Régional* (Regional Council) elected by population weight at the *Arrondissement* level. The country is further subdivided by 34 *Départements*, 103 *Arrondissements* (neither of which have administrative function) and by *Collectivités Locales*, which elect administrative officers.

Regional capitals have the same name as their respective regions:

- Dakar
- Diourbel
- Fatick
- Kaolack
- Kolda
- Louga
- Matam
- Saint-Louis
- Tambacounda
- Thiès
- Ziguinchor



Economy



Grand Market in Kaolack

In January 1994 Senegal undertook a bold and ambitious economic reform programme with the support of the international donor community. This reform began with a 50 percent devaluation of Senegal's currency, the CFA franc, which was linked at a fixed rate to the former French franc and now to the euro. Government price controls and subsidies have been steadily dismantled. After seeing its economy retract by 2.1 percent in 1993, Senegal made an important turnaround, thanks to the reform programme, with real growth in GDP averaging 5 percent annually during the years 1995–2001. Annual inflation was reduced to less than 1 percent, but rose again to an estimated 3.3 percent in 2001. Investment increased steadily from 13.8 percent of GDP in 1993 to 16.5 percent in 1997.

The main industries include food processing, mining, cement, artificial fertilizer, chemicals, textiles, refining imported petroleum, and tourism. Exports include fish, chemicals, cotton, fabrics, groundnuts, and calcium phosphate, and the principal foreign market is India at 26.7 percent of exports (as of 1998). Other foreign markets include the US, Italy, and

the UK.

As a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Senegal is working toward greater regional integration with a unified external tariff. Senegal also realized full Internet connectivity in 1996, creating a mini-boom in information technology-based services. Private activity now accounts for 82 percent of GDP. On the negative side, Senegal faces deep-seated urban problems of chronic unemployment, socioeconomic disparity, juvenile delinquency, and drug addiction.

Demographics

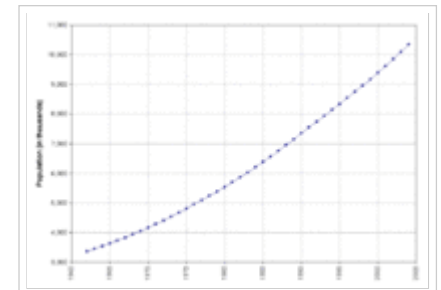


Senegal has a population of over 11 million, about 70 percent of whom live in rural areas. Density in these areas varies from about 77 inhabitants per square kilometre (199/sq mi) in the west-central region to 2 inhabitants per square kilometre (5/sq mi) in the arid eastern section. According to the *World Refugee Survey 2008*, published by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Senegal has a population of refugees and asylum seekers numbering approximately 23,800 in 2007. The majority of this population (20,200) is from Mauritania. Refugees live in N'dioum, Dodel, and small settlements along the Senegal River valley.

Ethnicity

Senegal has a wide variety of ethnic groups and, as in most West African countries, several languages are widely spoken. The Wolof are the largest single ethnic group in Senegal at 43 percent; the Peul and Toucouleur (also known as Halpulaar, Fulbe or Fula) (24 percent) are the second biggest group, followed by others that include the Serer (15 percent), Lebou (10 percent), Jola (4 percent), Mandinka (3 percent), Maures or Naarkajors, Soninke, Bassari and many smaller communities (9 percent). (See also the Bedick ethnic group.) About 50,000 Europeans (1 percent) (mostly French) as well as smaller numbers of Mauritians and Lebanese reside in Senegal, mainly in the cities. Also located primarily in urban settings are the minority Vietnamese communities. From the time of earliest contact between Europeans and Africans along the coast of Senegal, particularly after the establishment of coastal trading posts during the fifteenth century, communities of mixed African and European (mostly French and Portuguese) origin have thrived. Cape Verdeans living in urban areas and in the Casamance region represent another recognized community of mixed African and European background. French is the official language, used regularly by a minority of Senegalese educated in a system styled upon the colonial-era schools of French origin (Koranic schools are even more popular, but Arabic is not widely spoken outside of this context of recitation). Most people also speak their own ethnic language while, especially in Dakar, Wolof is the lingua franca. Pulaar is spoken by the Peuls and Toucouleur. Portuguese Creole is a prominent minority language in Ziguinchor, regional capital of the Casamance, where some residents speak Kriol, primarily spoken in Guinea-Bissau. Cape Verdeans speak their native creole, Cape Verdean Creole, and standard Portuguese.

Religion



Population in Senegal, 1962–2004



A street market in Dakar



The *Mosquée de la Divinité* in Ouakam



Ritual in Kaolack (1967)

Islam is the predominant religion, practiced by approximately 95 percent of the country's population; the Christian community, at 4 percent of the population, includes Roman Catholics and diverse Protestant denominations. There is also a 1 percent population who maintain animism in their beliefs, particularly in the southeastern region of the country.

Islam

Islamic communities are generally organized around one of several Islamic Sufi orders or brotherhoods, headed by a *khalif* (*xaliifa* in Wolof, from Arabic *khalīfa*), who is usually a direct descendant of the group's founder. The two largest and most

prominent Sufi orders in Senegal are the Tijaniyya, whose largest sub-groups are based in the cities of Tivaouane and Kaolack, and the Murīdiyya (Murid), based in the city of Touba. The Halpulaar, a widespread ethnic group found along the Sahel from Chad to Senegal, representing 20 percent of the Senegalese population, were the first to be converted to Islam. The Halpulaar, composed of various Fula people groups, named *Peuls* and *Toucouleurs* in Senegal. Many of the *Toucouleurs*, or sedentary Halpulaar of the Senegal River Valley in the north, converted to Islam around a millennium ago and later contributed to Islam's propagation throughout Senegal. Most communities south of the Senegal River Valley, however, were not thoroughly Islamized until the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the mid-19th century, Islam became a banner of resistance against the traditional aristocracies and French colonialism, and Tijānī leaders Al-Hajj Umar Tall and Mābba Jaxu Ba established short-lived but influential Islamic states but were both killed in battle and their empires than annexed by the French.

The spread of formal Quranic school (called *daara* in Wolof) during the colonial period increased largely through the effort of the Tijaniyya. In Murid communities, which place more emphasis on the work ethic than on literary Quranic studies, the term *daara* often applies to work groups devoted to working for a religious leader. Other Islamic groups include the much older Qādiriyya order and the Senegalese Laayeen order, which is prominent among the coastal Lebu. Today, most Senegalese children study at *daaras* for several years, memorizing as much of the Qur'an as they can. Some of them continue their religious studies at informal Arabic schools (*majlis*) or at the growing number of private Arabic schools and publicly funded Franco-Arabic schools.

Christianity

Small Roman Catholic communities are mainly found in coastal Serer, Jola, Mankanya and Balant populations, and in eastern Senegal among the Bassari and Coniagui. In Dakar Catholic and Protestant rites are practiced by the Lebanese, Capeverdean, European, and American immigrant population, and among certain Africans of other countries. Although Islam is Senegal's majority

Other religions

Animism is the other main religion practiced. There are also small numbers of adherents of Judaism and Buddhism. Judaism is followed by members of several ethnic groups, while Buddhism is followed by a number of Vietnamese.



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Seychelles

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Seychelles (pronounced /serˈʃɛl/ or /serˈʃɛlz/ in English and IPA: [seʃɛl] in French), officially the **Republic of Seychelles** (French: *République des Seychelles*; Creole: *Repiblik Sesel*), is an archipelago nation of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean, some 1,500 kilometres (930 mi) east of mainland Africa, northeast of the island of Madagascar. Other nearby island countries and territories include Zanzibar to the west, Mauritius and Réunion to the south, Comoros and Mayotte to the southwest, and the Suvadives of the Maldives to the northeast. Seychelles has the smallest population of any sovereign state of Africa.

History



Colonial Governor of the Seychelles inspecting police guard of honour in 1972


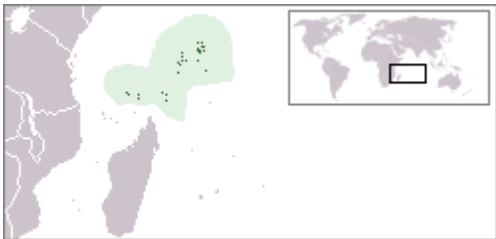
While Austronesian seafarers or Arab traders may have been the first to visit the uninhabited Seychelles, the first recorded sighting of them took place in 1502, by the Portuguese Admiral Vasco da Gama, who passed through the Amirantes and named them after himself (islands of the Admiral). The first recorded landing and first written account was by the crew of the English East Indiaman *Ascension* in 1609. As a transit point for trading between Africa and Asia, they were occasionally used by pirates until the French began to take control of the islands starting in 1756 when a Stone of Possession was laid by Captain Nicholas Morphey. The islands were named after Jean Moreau de Séchelles, Louis XV's Minister of Finance.

The British contested control over the islands with the French between 1794 and 1812. Jean Baptiste Quéau de Quincy, French administrator of Seychelles during the years of war with the United Kingdom, declined to

resist when armed enemy warships arrived. Instead, he successfully negotiated the status of capitulation to Britain, which gave the settlers a privileged position of neutrality.

Britain eventually assumed full control upon the surrender of Mauritius in 1812 and this was formalised in 1814 at the Treaty of Paris. The Seychelles became a crown colony separate from Mauritius in 1903 and independence was granted in 1976, as a republic within the Commonwealth. In 1977, a coup d'état ousted

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| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Repiblik Sesel</i> <i>République des Seychelles</i> Republic of Seychelles</p> | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: "Finis Coronat Opus" (Latin) "The End Crowns the Work"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Koste Seselwa</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Victoria |
| Official languages | English, French, Seychellois Creole |
| Demonym | Seychellois |



the first president of the republic, James Mancham, replacing him with France Albert René. The 1979 constitution declared a socialist one-party state, which lasted until 1991. The first draft of a new constitution failed to receive the requisite 60 percent of voters in 1992, but in 1993 an amended version was approved.

Politics

The Seychelles president, who is both head of state and head of government, is elected by popular vote for a five-year term of office. The previous president, France Albert René, first came to power in a coup d'état in 1977, one year after independence. He was democratically elected after the constitutional reforms of 1992. He stood down in 2004 in favour of his vice-president, James Michel, who was re-elected in 2006. The cabinet is presided over and appointed by the president, subject to the approval of a majority of the legislature.

The unicameral Seychellois parliament, the National Assembly or *Assemblée Nationale*, consists of 34 members, of whom 25 are elected directly by popular vote, while the remaining 9 seats are appointed proportionally according to the percentage of votes received by each party. All members serve five-year terms.

Politics is a topic of hot debate in the country - The main rival parties are the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF) and the Seychelles National Party (SNP). Since the inception of politics in the early sixties, politics has been an integral part of the Seychellois lives. The range of opinion spans socialist and liberal democrat ideology.

The Seychelles are part of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), La Francophonie (the union of French Speaking countries) SADEC and Commonwealth organisation.

Administrative divisions

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Republic |
| - President | James Michel |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Date | 29 June 1976 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 451 km ² (197th) 176 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 80,699 (205th) |
| - Density | 178/km ² (60th) 458/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$1404 million (165th) |
| - Per capita | \$17829 (IMF) (39th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.843 (high) (50th) |
| Currency | Seychellois rupee (SCR) |
| Time zone | SCT (UTC+4) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+4) |
| Internet TLD | .sc |
| Calling code | +248 |



State House, Victoria - the seat of the President



Seychelles is divided into twenty-five administrative regions, called districts:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ■ Anse aux Pins | ■ Beau Vallon | ■ La Digue | ■ Port Glaud |
| ■ Anse Boileau | ■ Bel Air | ■ English River | ■ Roche Caiman |
| ■ Anse Etoile | ■ Bel Ombre | ■ Les Mamelles | ■ Saint Louis |
| ■ Anse Royale | ■ Cascade | ■ Mont Buxton | ■ Takamaka |
| ■ Au Cap | ■ Glacis | ■ Mont Fleuri | |
| ■ Baie Lazare | ■ Grand' Anse (Mahe) | ■ Plaisance | |
| ■ Baie Sainte Anne | ■ Grand' Anse (Praslin) | ■ Pointe La Rue | |



The famous clock tower in the centre of Victoria, capital of Seychelles.

Geography



Beau Vallon Beach

An island nation, the Seychelles is located in the Indian Ocean northeast of Madagascar and about 1,600 km (1,000 mi) east of Kenya. The number of islands in the archipelago is often given as 115 but the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles lists 155. The islands as per the Constitution are divided into various groups as follows.

There are 42 granitic islands, in descending order of size: Mahé, Praslin, Silhouette, La Digue, Curieuse, Félicité, Frégate, St. Anne, North, Cerf, Marianne, Grand Sœur, Thérèse, Aride, Conception, Petite Sœur, Cousin, Cousine, Long, Récif, Round (Praslin), Anonyme, Mamelles, Moyenne, Ile aux Vaches Marines, L'Islette, Beacon (Ile Sèche), Cachée, Cocos, Round (Mahé), L'Ilot Frégate, Booby, Chauve Souris (Mahé), Chauve Souris (Praslin), Ile La Fouche, Hodoul, L'Ilot, Rat, Souris, St. Pierre (Praslin), Zavé, Harrison Rocks (Grand Rocher).

There are two coral sand cays north of the granitics: Denis, Bird.

There are two coral islands south of the granitics: Coëtivy, Platte.

There are 29 coral islands in the Amirantes group, west of the granitics: Desroches, Poivre Atoll (comprising 3 islands : Poivre, Florentin and South Island), Alphonse, D'Arros, St. Joseph Atoll (comprising 14 islands: St. Joseph Ile aux Fouquets, Ressource, Petit Carcassaye, Grand Carcassaye, Benjamin, Bancs Ferrari, Chiens, Pélicans, Vars, Ile Paul, Banc de Sable, Banc aux Cocos and Ile aux Poules), Marie Louise, Desnoeuvs, African Banks (comprising 2 islands: African Banks and South Island), Rémire, St. François, Boudeuse, Etoile, Bijoutier.

There are 13 coral islands in the Farquhar Group, south-south west of the Amirantes: Farquhar Atoll (comprising 10 islands: Bancs de Sable Déposés Ile aux Goëlettes Lapins Ile du Milieu North Manaha South Manaha Middle Manaha North Island and South Island), Providence Atoll (comprising two islands: Providence and Bancs Providence) and St Pierre.



Berjaja Mahé Beach

There are 67 raised coral islands in the Aldabra Group, west of the Farquhar Group: Aldabra Atoll (comprising 46 islands: Grande Terre, Picard, Polymnie, Malabar, Ile Michel, Ile Esprit, Ile aux Moustiques, Ilot Parc, Ilot Emile, Ilot Yangué, Ilot Magnan, Ile Lanier, Champignon des Os, Euphrate, Grand Mentor, Grand Ilot, Gros Ilot Gionnet, Gros Ilot Sésame, Heron Rock, Hide Island, Ile aux Aigrettes, Ile aux Cèdres, Iles Chalands, Ile Fangame, Ile Héron, Ile Michel, Ile Squacco, Ile Sylvestre, Ile Verte, Ilot Déder, Ilot du Sud, Ilot du Milieu, Ilot du Nord, Ilot Dubois, Ilot Macoa, Ilot Marquoix, Ilots Niçois, Ilot Salade, Middle Row Island, Noddy Rock, North Row Island, Petit Mentor, Petit Mentor Endans, Petits Ilots, Pink Rock and Table Ronde), Assumption, Astove and Cosmoledo Atoll (comprising 19 islands: Menai, Ile du Nord (West North), Ile Nord-Est (East North), Ile du Trou, Goëlettes, Grand Polyte, Petit Polyte, Grand Ile (Wizard), Pagode, Ile du Sud-Ouest (South), Ile aux Moustiques, Ile Baleine, Ile aux Chauve-Souris, Ile aux Macaques, Ile aux Rats, Ile du Nord-Ouest, Ile Observation, Ile Sud-Est and Ilot la Croix).

Economy

Since independence in 1976, per capita output has expanded to roughly seven times the old near-subsistence level. Growth has been led by the tourist sector, which employs about 30% of the labour force and provides more than 70% of hard currency earnings, and by tuna fishing. In recent years the government has encouraged foreign investment in order to upgrade hotels and other services. These incentives have given rise to an enormous amount of investment in real estate projects and new (mostly 5 star) resort properties. Hilton, Four Seasons and Banyan Tree are all new entrants to Seychelles. Development projects projected in the hundreds of millions of dollars each are in the beginning stages for Emirates Airlines, Qatar Airlines, Raffles, Shangri-La, etc. Other private developments such as Ile Aurore, Per Aquam and Eden Island are projected at over \$2 billion.



Coconut oil making in the early 1970s

At the same time, the government has moved to reduce the dependence on tourism by promoting the development of farming, fishing, small-scale manufacturing and most recently the offshore sector. The vulnerability of the tourist sector was illustrated by the sharp drop in 1991-1992 due largely to the country's significantly overvalued exchange rate and the Gulf War, and once again following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. Other issues facing the government are the curbing of the budget deficit, including the containment of social welfare costs, and further privatisation of public enterprises. The government has a pervasive presence in economic activity, with public enterprises active in petroleum product distribution, insurance (has now been privatized), banking (is being privatized very soon), imports of basic products (now being privatized), telecommunications (4 private ISP/telecom companies), and a wide range of other businesses. Beginning at the turn of the millennium the Seychelles Petroleum Company (SEPEC) started to develop the first fleet of modern Petroleum double-hull tankers (five vessels), which was completed by late 2007/early 2008 with the possibility to build more in the near future. The Seychelles President claims that this has opened the door to a new industry for his country and encourage economic growth by further removing over-reliance on traditional trades like fisheries and tourism which is now falling

rapidly as the country's main income but nevertheless, has experienced significant growth in recent years.

Growth slowed in 1998–2001, due to sluggish tourist and tuna sectors. Also, tight controls on exchange rates and the scarcity of foreign exchange have impaired short-term economic prospects. The black market value of the Seychellois rupee is anywhere from two thirds to one half the official exchange rate. The next few years were also a bit slow due to the worldwide economic downturn and the fear of flying brought on by September 11, 2001. More recently though, tourism has roared back at a record pace setting successive records in 2006 and again in 2007 for number of visitors. The increased availability of flights to and from the archipelago due in part to new entrants Emirates and Qatar airlines is also beginning to show. New 5 star properties and the devaluation of the currency by nearly 33% by the Seychelles Government is having a positive influence on the tourism sector as well.

Both at official exchange rates and at purchasing power parity (PPP), Seychelles remains the second-richest territory in Africa in terms of GDP per capita (US\$8,551 at real exchange rates and US\$13,887 at PPP as of 2005), behind Réunion (US\$19,233 at real exchange rates).. However, in real terms it can be considered the richest independent African/Indian Ocean country as Reunion is a French dependent territory which is part of the EU and uses the Euro currency. Because of economic contraction (the economy declined by about 2% in 2004 and 2005 and lost another 1.4% in 2006 according to the IMF) the country was moving downwards in terms of per capita income; however, the economy came roaring back in 2007 growing by 5.3% due in part to the record tourism numbers, but also the booming building and offshore industries which also continue to set records.

It is important to note that Seychelles is, per capita, the most highly indebted country in the world according to the World Bank, with total public debt around 122.8% of GDP. Approximately two thirds of this debt is owed domestically, with the balance due to multilaterals, bilaterals, and commercial banks. Current external debt is estimated at 35.5% according to the IMF (2007). The country is in arrears to most of its international creditors and has had to resort to pledged commercial debt to continue to be able to borrow. This high debt burden is a direct consequence of the overvalued exchange rate — in essence, the country is living beyond its means, and financing its lifestyle by borrowing domestically and internationally.

New detailed studies and exploration show that the Seychelles potentially have large off-shore petroleum reservoirs which is yet to be discovered.

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Seychelles is the smallest nation in the world issuing its own currency (i.e., not pegged to a foreign currency and not shared with any other country).

Demographics

As the islands of the Seychelles had no indigenous population, the current Seychellois are composed of people who have immigrated to the island. The largest ethnic groups are those of French, African, Indian, and Chinese descent. French and English are official languages along with Seychellois Creole, which is primarily based upon French. Most Seychellois are Christians; the Roman Catholic Church is the main denomination.

Flora and fauna

In common with many fragile island ecosystems, the early human history of Seychelles saw the loss of biodiversity including the disappearance of most of the giant tortoises from the granitic islands, felling of coastal and mid-level forests and extinction of species such as the chestnut flanked white eye, the Seychelles Parakeet and the saltwater crocodile. However, extinctions were far fewer than on other islands such as Mauritius or Hawaii, partly due to a shorter period of human occupation (since 1770). The Seychelles today is known for success stories in protecting its flora and fauna.

The granitic islands of Seychelles are home to about 75 endemic plant species, with a further 25 or so species in the Aldabra group. Particularly well-known is the Coco de mer, a species of palm that grows only on the islands of Praslin and neighbouring Curieuse. Sometimes nicknamed the 'love nut' because of its suggestive shape, the coco-de-mer is the world's largest seed. The jellyfish tree is to be found in only a few locations today. This strange and ancient plant has resisted all efforts to propagate it. Other unique plant species include the Wrights Gardenia found only on Aride Island Special Reserve.



Victoria, Seychelles.





The giant tortoises from Aldabra now populate many of the islands of the Seychelles. The Aldabra population is the largest in the world. These unique reptiles can be found even in captive herds. It has been reported that the granitic islands of Seychelles supported distinct species of Seychelles giant tortoises, the status of the different populations is currently unclear.

Seychelles hosts some of the largest seabird colonies in the world. Islands such as Bird, Aride Island, Cousin, Aldabra and Cosmoledo host many species of seabirds including the sooty tern, fairy tern, white-tailed tropicbird, noddies and frigatebirds. Aride Island has more species of seabird and greater numbers than the other 40 granite islands combined including the world's largest colony of Audubon's Shearwater and Lesser Noddy.

The marine life around the islands, especially the more remote coral islands, can be spectacular. More than 1000 species of fish have been recorded. Since the use of spearguns and dynamite for fishing was banned through efforts of local conservationists in the 1960s, the wildlife is unafraid of snorkelers and divers. Coral bleaching in 1998 has unfortunately damaged most reefs, but some reefs show healthy recovery (e.g. Silhouette Island). The reefs comprise a vast selection of soft corals and hard corals alike. There is great diving and snorkeling opportunity. The taking of marine turtles was completely stopped in 1994, turtle populations are now recovering on several protected islands, most notably Cousin Island, Aride Island, Silhouette Island and Aldabra. However, they continue to decline at unprotected sites. The use of gill nets for shark fishing as well as the practice of shark finning are now banned.

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Giant Tortoise (*Dipsochelys hololissa*)



Sierra Leone

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Sierra Leone, officially the **Republic of Sierra Leone**, is a nation in West Africa, comprising three Provinces and one Area. It is bordered by Guinea on the north and Liberia on the south, with the Atlantic Ocean on the west. During the 18th century, Sierra Leone was an important centre of the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans. The capital Freetown was founded in 1787 by the Sierra Leone Company as a home for formerly enslaved African Americans and West Indians who had fought for the British in the American Revolutionary War. In 1808, Freetown became a British Crown Colony, and in 1896, the interior of the country became a British Protectorate. The Crown Colony and Protectorate joined and gained independence in 1961. There was instability due to rebel activities between 1991 and 2002, which were resolved by UN and British forces disarming 17,000 militia and rebels, and the country has been peaceful since then. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the country.

History

Early History and Slavery

European contacts with Sierra Leone were among the first in West Africa. In 1462, Portuguese explorer Pedro da Cintra mapped the hills surrounding what is now Freetown Harbour, naming shaped formation *Serra Lyoa* (Portuguese for *Lion Mountains*). Its Italian rendering is *Sierra Leone*, which became the country's name. During the 1700s the major slave trading base in Sierra Leone was Bunce Island, located about 20 miles into the Sierra Leone River, now called the "Freetown Harbour." The British slave traders on Bunce Island sent many of their captives to the rice plantations of South Carolina and Georgia. But some like Gullah people today inhabiting the coastal regions of these states were taken to America as hired labor, because of their rice-farming skills. They originally came from the Gola Forests of Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In 1787 a plan was implemented to settle some of London's *Black Poor* in Sierra Leone in what was called the "Province of Freedom." A number of *Black Poor* and White women arrived off the shore of Sierra Leone on May 15, 1787. They were accompanied by some English tradesmen. This was organized

| Republic of Sierra Leone | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of Arms |
| Motto: "Unity - Freedom - Justice" | |
| Anthem: <i>High We Exalt Thee, Realm of the Free</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Freetown |
| Official languages | English |
| Demonym | Sierra Leonean |
| Government - President | Constitutional republic Ernest Bai Koroma |
| Independence | |



by the St George's Bay Company, composed of British philanthropists who preferred it as a solution to continuing to financially support them in London. Many of the *Black poor* were Black Loyalists, enslaved Africans who had been promised their freedom for joining the British Army during the American Revolution, though they also included other African and Asian inhabitants of London. Disease and hostility from the indigenous people nearly eliminated the first group of colonists. Through the intervention of Thomas Peters, the Sierra Leone Company was established to relocate another group of nearly 2,000 Black Loyalists, originally settled in Nova Scotia. Given the most barren land in Nova Scotia, many had died from the harsh winters there. They established a settlement at Freetown in 1792. This settlement led by Thomas Peters was joined by other groups of freed slaves and became one of Britain's first colonies in West Africa.

Though Sierra Leone was originally planned as a utopian community by Granville Sharp, the English abolitionist, the directors of the Sierra Leone Company refused to allow the settlers to take freehold of the land. Aware of how Highland Clearances benefited the landlord but not the tenant, the settlers revolted in 1799. The revolt was only put down by the arrival of over 500 Jamaican Maroons, who also arrived via Nova Scotia.

Thousands of slaves were returned to or liberated in Freetown. Most chose to remain in Sierra Leone. These returned Africans were from all areas of Africa. They joined the previous settlers and together became known as Creole or Krio people. Cut off from their homes and traditions by the experience of slavery, they assimilated some aspects of British styles of life and built a flourishing trade on the West African coast. The lingua franca of the colony was Krio, a creole language rooted in eighteenth century African American English, which quickly spread across the region as a common language of trade and Christian proselytizing. British and American abolitionist movements envisioned Freetown as embodying the possibilities of a post-slave trade Africa.

Britain and British seafarers – among them Sir Francis Drake, James Hawkins, Forbisher and Captain Brown - played a major role in the transatlantic trade in captured Africans between 1530 and 1810. The Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the Spanish War of Succession, granted Britain, among other things, the exclusive rights over the shipment of captured Africans across the Atlantic. Over 10 millions captured Africans were shipped to the Caribbean Islands and the Americas and many more died during the raids, the long marches to the coast and as a result of the inhuman conditions in the slave ships. Britain outlawed slavery in 1807 – on the 29 March 1807 – and the British marine operating from Freetown took active measures to stop the Atlantic trade in human beings. In 1998 Pope John-Paul II apologized for the role of the catholic church in transatlantic trade. And during their respective African trips both President Bill Clinton (April 1998) and President George W Bush (July 2003) visited the slave fort in the Island Gorée before Dakar, and condemned the slave trade but stopped short of an apology, to avoid providing the basis for compensation claims. But so far neither Britain nor any other European country has so apologized for the crimes of the slave trade. In 2001, on the initiative of left wing groups, members of the European Parliament discussed the possibility of writing off some foreign debts

| | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - from the United Kingdom | April 27, 1961 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 71,740 km ² (119th) 27,699 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.0 |
| Population | |
| - July 2007 estimate | 5,866,000 (103rd ¹) |
| - Density | 83/km ² (114th ¹) 199/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$4.921 billion (151st) |
| - Per capita | \$903 (172nd) |
| Gini (2003) | 62.9 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.336 (low) (177th) |
| Currency | Leone (SLL) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .sl |
| Calling code | +232 |
| ¹ Rank based on 2007 figures. | |



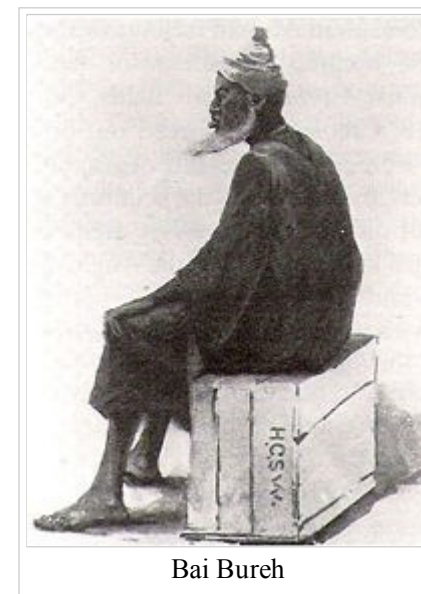
as form of compensation for the slave trade. The suggestion found little or no sympathy among the European parliamentarians.

The colonial era

In the early 20th century, Freetown served as the residence of the British governor who also ruled the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and the Gambia settlements. Sierra Leone served as the educational centre of British West Africa as well. Fourah Bay College, established in 1827, rapidly became a magnet for English-speaking Africans on the West Coast. For more than a century, it was the only European-style university in western Sub-Saharan Africa.

The colonial history of Sierra Leone was not placid. The indigenous people mounted several unsuccessful revolts against British rule and Krio domination. Of these, the most notable was Bai Bureh rebellion against British rule in 1898. Bai Bureh refused to recognise the hut tax the British had imposed in 1893 in Sierra Leone. He did not believe the Sierra Leonean people had a duty to pay taxes to foreigners, and he wanted all British to return to Britain and let the Sierra Leoneans solve their own problems. After refusing to pay his taxes on several occasions, the British issued a warrant to arrest him. In 1896 Bureh declared war on British in Sierra Leone. He brought fighters from several temne villages under his command, as well as fighters from Limba, Loko, Soso, Kissi, and Mandinka villages. He had the advantage over the vastly more powerful British for several months of the war. Hundreds of British troops were killed, and hundreds of Bureh's fighters also died during the war.

Bai Bureh was finally captured on November 11, 1898 and taken under guard to Freetown.



Bai Bureh

Most of the 20th century history of the colony was peaceful; however, one notable event during the 20th century was the granting of a monopoly on mineral mining to the De Beers run Sierra Leone Selection Trust in 1935, which was scheduled to last for 99 years. The 1951 constitution provided a framework for decolonization. Local ministerial responsibility was introduced in 1953, when Sir Milton Margai was appointed Chief Minister. He became Prime Minister after successful completion of constitutional talks in London in 1960. Independence came in April 1961, and Sierra Leone opted for a parliamentary system within the Commonwealth of Nations.

An independent nation

On April 27, 1961, Sir Milton Margai led Sierra Leone to independence from the United Kingdom. Margai, then Chief Minister, became nation's first prime minister, after he had won by large margins in the nation's first general election under universal adult franchise held in May 1962. Margai's Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) also won majority of seat in parliament. Upon Sir Milton Margai's death in 1964, his brother, Sir Albert Margai succeeded him as prime minister. Albert Margai was highly criticized during his three year reign as prime minister. He was accused of corruption and of a policy of affirmative action in favour of the Mende ethnic group. He also attempted to establish a one-party state but met fierce resistance from the opposition All People's Congress (APC). He ultimately abandoned the idea.



In a closely contested general elections in March 1967, Sierra Leone Governor General Henry Josiah Lightfoot Boston declared Siaka Stevens, candidate of the All People's Congress (APC) and Mayor of Freetown as the new prime minister of Sierra Leone. Within a few hours after taking office, Stevens was ousted in a bloodless coup led by Brigadier David Lansana, the Commander of The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, on grounds that the determination of office should await the election of the tribal representatives to the house. Stevens was placed under house arrest and Martial law was declared. A group of senior military officers overrode this action by seizing control of the government on March 23, 1968, arresting Brigadier Lansana, and suspending the constitution. The group constituted itself as the National Reformation Council (NRC) with Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith as its chairman. In April 1968, the NRC was overthrown by a group of military officers who called themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM), led by Brigadier John Amadu Bangura. The ACRM imprisoned senior NRC members, restored the constitution and reinstated Stevens as Prime Minister.

The return to civilian rule led to by-elections beginning in the fall of 1968 and the appointment of an all-APC cabinet. Tranquillity was not completely restored. In November 1968, Stevens declared a state of emergency after provincial disturbances. In March 1971 the government survived an unsuccessful military coup and in July 1974, it uncovered an alleged military coup plot. The leaders of both unsuccessful coup plot were tried and executed. In 1977, student demonstrations against the government disrupted Sierra Leone politics.

On April 19, 1971, parliament declared Sierra Leone to be a Republic, Siaka Stevens, then prime minister, became the nation's first president. Guinean troops requested by Stevens to support his government were in the country from 1971 to 1973. An alleged plot to overthrow Stevens failed in 1974, the leaders of the unsuccessful coup were executed and in March 1976, he was elected without opposition for a second five-year term as president. In the national parliamentary election that followed in May 1977, the APC won 74 seats and the opposition SLPP won 15. In 1978, a new constitution was adopted, making the country a one-party state. The 1978 referendum made the APC the only legal political party in Sierra Leone.

Siaka Probyn Stevens, who had been President of Sierra Leone for fourteen years, retired from that position in November 1985, although he continued his role as chairman of the ruling APC party. In August 1985, the APC named commander of the Republic of Sierra Leone armed forces, Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh, Stevens' own choice, as the party candidate to succeed him. Momoh was elected President in a one-party referendum on October 1, 1985. A formal inauguration was held in January 1986, and new parliamentary elections were held in May 1986. Following an alleged attempt to overthrow president Momoh in March 1987, more than sixty senior government officials were arrested, including Vice-President Francis Minah, who was removed from office and was executed by hanging in 1989, along with five others after being convicted for plotting the 1987 coup.

Multi-party constitution and RUF rebellion

In October 1990, President Momoh set up a constitutional review commission to review the 1978 one-party constitution with a view to broadening the existing political process, guaranteeing fundamental human rights and the rule of law, and strengthening and consolidating the democratic foundation and structure of the nation. The commission, in its report presented January 1991, recommended re-establishment of a multi-party system of government. Based on that recommendation, a constitution was approved by Parliament in July 1991 and ratified in September; it became effective on October 1, 1991. There was great suspicion that Momoh was not serious, however, and APC rule was increasingly marked by abuses of power.

The outbreak of corruption within the government and mismanagement of diamond resources are the main reasons civil war broke out in Sierra Leone. With the



breakdown of state structures and the effective suppression of civilian opposition, wide corridors were opened for trafficking of arms and ammunition and drugs, all of which eroded national and regional security and facilitated crime within the country and between Sierra Leone and Liberia and even Guinea.

Besides the internal ripeness, the brutal civil war going on in neighbouring Liberia played an undeniable role for the actual outbreak of fighting in Sierra Leone. Charles Taylor - then leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia - reportedly helped form the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under the command of former Sierra Leone army corporal Foday Sankoh. In return, Taylor was awarded with diamonds from Sierra Leone. The RUF, led by Foday Sankoh and backed by Charles Taylor, launched its first attack in villages in Kailahun District in the diamond-rich Eastern Province of Sierra Leone on March 23, 1991. The government of Sierra Leone, overwhelmed by a crumbling economy and corruption, was unable to put up significant resistance. Within a month of entering Sierra Leone from Liberia, the RUF controlled much of the Eastern Province of the country. Forced recruitment of child soldiers was also an early feature of the rebel strategy

On April 29, 1992, a group of young officers in the Sierra Leonean army including 25 year old Captain Valentine Strasser, Sergeant Solomon Anthony James Musa, Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio, Lieutenant Colonel Tom Nyuma, Colonel Yahya Kanu, Lieutenant Colonel Komba Mondeh, and Captain Samuel Komba Kambo apparently frustrated by the government failure to deal with rebels, the young soldiers launched a military coup, which sent president Momoh into exile in Guinea and they established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) with Colonel Yahya Kanu as its chairman and Head of State of the country. Kanu was assassinated by his fellow members of the NPRC, who accused him of trying to negotiate with the toppled APC administration. On May 1, Captain Valentine Strasser took over as the chairman of the NPRC and Head of State of Sierra Leone. A 26-year-old Sergeant Solomon Musa, one of the leaders of the coup and a best friend of Strasser took over as Vice-Chairman of the NPRC. Many Sierra Leoneans nationwide rush into the streets to welcome the NPRC Administration from the twenty-three year dictatorial APC regime, that was perceived as corrupt. The NPRC junta immediately suspended the 1991 Constitution, declared a state of emergency, limited freedom of speech, and freedom of the press and enacted a rule-by-decree policy. The army and police officers were granted unlimited powers of administrative detention without charge or trial, and challenges against such detentions in court were precluded.

The NPRC proved to be nearly as ineffectual as the Momoh lead APC government in repelling the RUF. More and more of the country fell to RUF fighters, so that by 1995 they held much of the diamond-rich Eastern Province and were on the doorsteps of Freetown. To rectify the situation, the NPRC hired several hundred mercenaries from the private firm Executive Outcomes. Within a month they had driven RUF fighters back to enclaves along Sierra Leone's borders. During this time corruption had erupted within senior NPRC members. On July 5, Strasser dismissed his childhood friend Sergeant Solomon James Musa as deputy and appointed Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio to succeed him. Some senior NPRC members including Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio, Lieutenant Colonel Tom Nyuma and Colonel Komba Mondeh, were unhappy with Strasser's handling of the peace process. In January 1996, after nearly four years in power, Strasser was ousted in a coup by his fellow NPRC members, lead by his deputy Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio. Bio reinstated the Constitution, and called for general elections. Promises of a return to civilian rule were fulfilled by Bio, who handed power over to Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, of the Sierra Leone People's party (SLPP), after he had defeated John Karefa-Smart of the United National People's Party (UNPP) in the second round of presidential elections in early 1996. Kabbah's SLPP party also won majority of the seats in Parliament.

In 1996, Major General Johnny Paul Koroma, was allegedly involved in an attempt to overthrow the government of President Kabbah. He was arrested, put on trial and convicted. He was imprisoned at Freetown's Pademba Road Prison. Some top rank officers in the Sierra Leone Army were unhappy with President Kabbah's decision, and on May 25, 1997, a group of soldiers who called themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) overthrew President



Kabbah. The AFRC released Koroma from prison and installed him as their chairman and Head of State of the country. Koroma suspended the constitution, banned demonstrations, shut down all of the country's private radio stations and invited the RUF to join his government. After 10 months in office the junta was ousted by the Nigeria-led ECOMOG forces, and the democratically elected government of President Kabbah was reinstated in March 1998. Following the reinstatement of Kabbah's government, hundreds of civilians who had been accused of helping the AFRC government were illegally detained. Courts-martial were held for soldiers accused of assisting the AFRC government. 24 of these were found guilty and were executed without appeal in October 1998. On January 6, 1999, another unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the government by the AFRC resulted in massive loss of life and destruction of property in Freetown and its environs.

In October, the United Nations agreed to send peacekeepers to help restore order and disarm the rebels. The first of the 6,000-member force began arriving in December, and the Security Council voted in February 2000 to increase the UN force to 11,000 (and subsequently to 13,000). In May, when nearly all Nigerian forces had left and UN forces were attempting to disarm the RUF in eastern Sierra Leone, Sankoh's forces clashed with the UN troops, and some 500 peacekeepers were taken hostage as the peace accord effectively collapsed.

Government and politics

Sierra Leone is a constitutional republic with a directly elected president and a unicameral legislature. The current system of government in Sierra Leone, established under the 1991 Constitution, is modeled on the following structure of government:

- The Legislature
- The Executive
- The Judiciary

Within the confines of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, supreme legislative powers are vested in Parliament, which is the law making body of the nation. Supreme executive authority rests in the president and members of his cabinet and judicial power with the judiciary of which the Chief Justice is head.

The president is the head of state, the head of government and the commander-in-chief of the The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. The president appoints and heads a cabinet of ministers (including the vice president), which must be approved by the Parliament. The president is elected by popular vote to a maximum of two five-year terms. To be elected president of Sierra Leone, a candidate must gain at least 55 percent of the vote. If no candidate gets the 55 percent requirement, there will be a second-round runoff between the top two candidates with the most votes in the first round. For qualification to be elected President of Sierra Leone, the person must be a Sierra Leonean citizen by birth; Should have attained the age of 40 years; should be a member of a political party; and should be able to speak and read the English language. The current president of Sierra Leone is Ernest Bai Koroma. Koroma was sworn in as president on September 17, 2007, shortly after being declared the winner of a tense run-off election.

The Parliament of Sierra Leone is unicameral, with 124 seats. Each of the country's fourteen districts is represented in parliament. 112 members are elected concurrently with the presidential elections; the other twelve seats are filled by Paramount chief from each of the country's twelve administrative districts. All members serve five-year terms. To be elected as a member of Parliament, a candidate must be a Sierra Leonean citizen; be at least 21 years old; should be a



member of a political party; and should be able to speak and read the English language. The most recent parliamentary elections were held on August 11, 2007. The All People's Congress (APC), won 59 of 112 parliamentary seats; the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) won 43 seats; and the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) won 10 seats.

The Judiciary Section 120(1) of the Constitution states that the judicial power of Sierra Leone shall be vested in the judiciary. The judiciary of Sierra Leone, headed by the Chief Justice comprises the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court. These constitute the Superior Court of Jurisdiction. The inferior courts comprise the Magistrates courts and the Local courts. The Magistrates Courts exist in each district. Local courts administer customary law. The president appoints and parliament approves justices for the three courts. The current Chief Justice is Ade Renner Thomas. He was appointed to the position by former president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Administrative divisions

The Republic of Sierra Leone is composed of three provinces and one area called the Western Area; the provinces are further divided into twelve districts. The Western Area is also divided into two districts.

| District | Capital | Area km ² | Province | Population (2004 census) |
|--------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Bombali District | Makeni | 7,895 | Northern Province | 408,390 |
| Koinadugu District | Kabala | 12,121 | | 265,765 |
| Tonkolili District | Magburaka | 7,003 | | 347,197 |
| Port Loko District | Port Loko | 5,719 | | 453,746 |
| Kambia District | Kambia | 3,108 | | 270,460 |
| Kenema District | Kenema | 6,053 | Eastern Province | 497,948 |
| Kono District | Koidu Town | 5,641 | | 355,401 |
| Kailahun District | Kailahun | 3,859 | | 358,190 |
| Bo District | Bo | 7,003 | Southern Province | 463,668 |
| Bonthe District | Bonthe | 3,468 | | 139,687 |
| Moyamba District | Moyamba | 6,902 | | 260,910 |





| | | | | |
|------------------|---------|-------|--|---------|
| Pujehun District | Pujehun | 4,105 | | 228,392 |
|------------------|---------|-------|--|---------|

Figures taken from this source: Sierra Leone Encyclopedia

The Western Area

- Comprises Freetown, the nation's capital, and its surrounding countryside. It covers an area of 557 km² and has a population of 1,246,624.

The Western Area is divided into two districts:

- Western Area Urban District
- Western Area Rural District

Population of major cities

Sierra Leone's cities with a population over 80,000 (2004 census).

| City | Population |
|------------|------------|
| Freetown | 772,873 |
| Bo | 149,957 |
| Kenema | 128,402 |
| Koidu Town | 80,025 |
| Makeni | 82,840 |
| Magburaka | 144,396 |
| Kailahun | 129,658 |

Foreign relations

Sierra Leone has maintained cordial relations with the west, in particular with the United States. Sierra Leone also maintains diplomatic relations with China, Libya, Iran, and Cuba. Former President of Sierra Leone Siaka Stevens' government had sought closer relations with other West African countries under the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The present government is continuing this effort.

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Sierra Leone is a member of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the Commonwealth, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Development Bank (AFDB), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Sierra Leone, along with Liberia, and Guinea formed the Mano River Union (MRU). The Mano River Union is primarily designed to implement development projects and promote regional economic integration between the three nations.

Sierra Leone is also a member of the International Criminal Court with a Bilateral Immunity Agreement of protection for the US-military (as covered under Article 98).

The government maintains 16 embassies/high commissioners across the world including presence in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Libya, People's Republic of China, Iran, Belgium, Germany, United Kingdom, Russia, United Nations, and the United States.

Geography and climate

Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa, north of the equator. With a land area of 71,740 square kilometers (27,699 square miles). Sierra Leone is bordered by Guinea to the north and northeast, Liberia to the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

There are a wide variety of ecological and agricultural zones to which people have adapted. Starting in the west, Sierra Leone has some 400 kilometres (250 miles) of coastline, giving it both bountiful marine resources and attractive tourist potential. This is followed by low-lying mangrove swamps, rain-forested plains and farmland, and finally a mountainous plateau in the east, where Mount Bintumani rises to 1,948 meters (6,390 ft). The climate is tropical, with two seasons determining the agricultural cycle: the rainy season from May to November, followed by the dry season from December to May, which includes harmattan, when cool, dry winds blow in off the Sahara Desert. The national capital Freetown sits on a coastal peninsula, situated next to the Sierra Leone Harbour, the world's third largest natural harbour. This prime location historically made Sierra Leone the centre of trade and colonial administration in the region.



Satellite image of Sierra Leone, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library

Economy

Sierra Leone is emerging from a protracted civil war and is showing signs of a successful transition. Investor and consumer confidence continue to rise, adding impetus to the country's economic recovery. In addition to this there is greater freedom of movement and the successful re-habitation and resettlement of residential areas. In 2001, Sierra Leone attracted US\$4 million in foreign direct investment.

Rich in minerals, Sierra Leone has relied on the mining sector in general, and diamonds in particular, for its economic base. In the 1970s and early 1980s, economic growth rate slowed because of a decline in the mining sector and increasing corruption among government officials. By the 1990s economic activity was declining and economic infrastructure had become seriously degraded. Over the next decade much of Sierra Leone's formal economy was destroyed in the

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country's civil war. Since the cessation of hostilities in January 2002, massive infusions of outside assistance have helped Sierra Leone begin to recover. Much of Sierra Leone's recovery will depend on the success of the Government of Sierra Leone's efforts to limit official corruption, which many feel was the chief culprit for the country's descent into civil war. A key indicator of success will be the effectiveness of government management of its diamond sector.

About two-thirds of the population engages in subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 52.5% of national income. The government is trying to increase food and cash crop production and upgrade small farmer skills. Also, the government works with several foreign donors to operate integrated rural development and agricultural projects.

Mineral exports remain Sierra Leone's principal foreign exchange earner. Sierra Leone is a major producer of gem-quality diamonds. Though rich in this resource, the country has historically struggled to manage its exploitation and export. Annual production estimates range between \$250-300 million. However, not all of that passes through formal export channels, although formal exports have dramatically improved since the days of civil war. The balance is smuggled, where it is possibly used for money laundering or financing illicit activities. Efforts to improve the management of the export trade have met with some success. In October 2000, a UN-approved export certification system for exporting diamonds from Sierra Leone was put into place that led to a dramatic increase in legal exports. In 2001, the Government of Sierra Leone created a mining community development fund, which returns a portion of diamond export taxes to diamond mining communities. The fund was created to raise local communities' stake in the legal diamond trade.

Sierra Leone has one of the world's largest deposits of rutile, a titanium ore used as paint pigment and welding rod coatings. Sierra Rutile Limited, owned by a consortium of United States and European investors, began commercial mining operations near the city of Bonthé, in the Southern Province, in early 1979. Sierra Rutile was then the largest nonpetroleum United States investment in West Africa. The export of 88,000 tons realized \$75 million in export earnings in 1990. The company and the Government of Sierra Leone concluded a new agreement on the terms of the company's concession in Sierra Leone in 1990. Rutile and bauxite mining operations were suspended when rebels invaded the mining sites in 1995, but exports resumed in 2005.

Despite its successes and development, the Sierra Leone economy still faces some significant challenges. There is a high rate of unemployment particularly among the youth and ex-combatants. Authorities have been slow to implement reforms in the civil service and the pace of the privatisation programme is also slacking and donors have urged its advancement.

Currency

Sierra Leone's currency is the Leone. The central bank of the country is the Bank of Sierra Leone which is located in the capital, Freetown. The bank is run by the bank Governor and directors. This Governor is Dr. Samura Kamara. The central Bank objectives include:

- promotion of monetary stability and sound financial structure
- maintenance of the internal and external values of the Leone
- promotion of credit and exchange conditions
- issuance and distribution of notes and currency in the country
- conducive to balanced economy growth
- formulation and implementation of monetary policy



- banker and advisor to the Government in financial and economic matters
- management of domestic and foreign debt
- acting as custodian of the country's reserve approved foreign exchange
- acting as banker to the Commercial Banks
- supervision and regulation of activities of commercial banks and other financial institutions
- administration of the operations of structural adjustment programmes where the bank has specific responsibilities
- diamond certification

the Bank of Sierra Leone is a 100 percent state-owned corporate body.

Sierra Leone operates a floating exchange rate system and foreign currencies can be exchanged at any of the commercial banks, recognised foreign exchange bureaux and most hotels.

Credit Card use is limited in Sierra Leone, though they may be utilised at some hotels and restaurants, for which visitors should check in advance with local managements. Sierra Leone does not have internationally linked ATM machines.

Demographics

The 2007 estimate of Sierra Leone's population stands at 5,866,000, the majority being youth and children. Freetown, with an estimated population of 1,070,200, is the capital, largest city and the hub of Sierra Leone economy, commercial, educational and cultural centre of the country. Bo is the second city with a population of 349,957. Other major cities with a population of over 100,000 are Kenema, Koidu Town, Makeni, Magburaka and Kailahun.

Although English is the official language spoken at schools and government administration, Krio (language derived from English and several African languages and is native to The Sierra Leone Krio people) is the Lingua franca. The Krio language is widely spoken throughout the country. The Language unites all the different ethnic groups, especially in their trade and interaction with each other.

Ethnicity

The population of Sierra Leone is comprised of fourteen ethnic groups, each with its own language and costumes. The two largest of these are the Mende and Temne, each comprises 30% of the population, together they represent 60% of the country's total population. The Mende predominate in the Southern and the Eastern Provinces; the Temne likewise predominate in the Northern Province. The remaining 40% is split between twelve ethnic groups, including tthe third largest ethnic group the Limba who represent about 9.8% of the population. Like their ally the Temne, the Limba primarily live in the Northern Province. Sierra Leone's politics have traditionally been dominated by two ethnic groups, the Mende and Limba. The country's two dominant political party, The Sierra Leone's People's Party (SLPP) is traditionally based among the Mende in the south of the country, while the All People's Congress (APC) is based among the Limba and Temne in the north. The fourth largest ethnic group, the Kono comprises 8.6% of the population. The Kono are mostly found in the Eastern Province, particularly in the diamond-rich Kono District. The Krio (descendants of freed slaves from the West Indies, North America, and Britain landed in Freetown



between 1787 and about 1855) make up about 3.5% of the population and their language is widely spoken throughout the Country. Most Krios live in the Western Area, particularly in the nation's capital Freetown. Other minority ethnic groups are the Mandingo, Sherbro, Loko, Kissi, Kuranko, Fula, Susu, Yalunka and the Sierra Leonean-Lebanese (descendants of Lebanese settlers who came to Sierra Leone during the late 19th century) Most of the country's businesses and local shops are run by the Lebanese community.

Religion

The Sierra Leone constitution provides freedom of religion and the government generally protects this right, and does not tolerate its abuse.

With regard to religion in Sierra Leone, the predominant faith is Islam, which is practiced by around 60% of the population; 30% adhere to Christianity; and 10% adhere to their indigenous religions.

Unlike many other African countries, the religious and tribal mix of Sierra Leone rarely cause religious or tribal conflict.

Education

Education System

Sierra Leone has an education system with six years of primary school (Class 1-6), and six years of secondary school (Form 1-6); secondary schools are further divided into Junior secondary school (Form 1-3) and Senior secondary school (Form 4-6). Primary schools usually start from ages 6 to 12, and secondary schools usually start from ages 13 to 18. Primary Education is free and compulsory in government-sponsored public schools.

The country's two main Universities are the Fourah Bay College, the oldest university in West Africa, founded in 1827, and Njala University in Njala, Moyamba District and Bo, founded in 1963. Teacher training colleges and religious seminaries are found in many parts of the country.

Transportation

There are a number of systems of transport in Sierra Leone, which possesses road, air, water infrastructure, including a network of highways and several airports.

Air

There are ten Regional airports in Sierra Leone, and one international airport, called the Lungi International Airport, located in the city of Lungi, across the sea from Freetown. It serves as the primary airport for domestic and international travel to or from Sierra Leone. Passengers have the choice of hovercraft, ferry or



a helicopter to cross the river to Aberdeen Heliports in Freetown. Helicopters are also available from the airport to other major cities in the country. The airport has paved runways (the length of which exceeds 3,047m). Of the remaining airports, all of which having unpaved runways, seven have runways of lengths between 914 and 1,523 metres; the remaining two having runways of shorter length.

Water

Sierra Leone has the third largest natural harbour in the world where shipping from all over the globe berth at Freetown's famous Queen Elizabeth II Quay in Government Wharf in central Freetown. There are 800 km of waterways in Sierra Leone, of which 600 km are navigable year-round. Major port city of Sierra Leone are Bonthe, Freetown, Sherbro Island and Pepel.

Highways

There are 11,700 kilometres of highways in Sierra Leone, of which 936 km are paved. Sierra Leone highways are linked to Conakry, Guinea, and Monrovia, Liberia.

Sports

Football

Football (soccer) is by far the most popular sport in Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone national football team, popularly known as the Leone Stars, represents the country in international football competitions. The team has never qualified for the FIFA World Cup but they have participated in the 1994 and 1996 African Cup of Nations. The country's national television network, The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) broadcasts the live match, along with several radio stations throughout the country.

The Sierra Leone National Premier League is the top football league in Sierra Leone. The league is controlled by the Sierra Leone Football Association. East End Lions and Mighty Blackpool are the two biggest and most successful football clubs in the country, but Kallon F.C. is closing in on them. Kallon F.C. won the Premier League and the Sierra Leonean FA Cup in 2006, and eliminated 2006 Nigerian Premier League Champions Ocean Boys FC in the 2007 CAF Champions League first qualifying round, but later lost to ASEC Mimosas of Ivory Coast in the second qualifying round for the group stage.

The Sierra Leone U-17 football team nickname the Sierra Stars finished as runner-up at the 2003 African U-17 Championship in Swaziland, but came in last place in their group at the 2003 FIFA U-17 World Championship in Finland.

Many Sierra Leoneans follow the major European football leagues, Particularly the English Premier League, Italian Serie A, and Spain La Liga. Cinema are often overcrowded as fans gather to watch the likes of Manchester United, Arsenal, Barcelona, AC Milan, Real Madrid, Chelsea, Liverpool, and Inter Milan matches that are being shown live on television. Many Sierra Leoneans follow the UEFA Champions League more than the CAF Champions League. It is



common in Sierra Leone to find local children nicknamed Zinedine Zidane, Ronaldo, Thierry Henry, Francesco Totti, Ronaldinho, Steven Gerrard, Patrick Vieira, Lionel Messi and Filippo Inzaghi.

Cricket

The Sierra Leone cricket team represents Sierra Leone in international cricket competitions, and is among the best in West Africa. They became an affiliate member of the International Cricket Council in 2002. They made their international debut at the 2004 African Affiliates Championship, where they finished last out of the eight teams. They returned at the equivalent tournament in 2006, Division Three of the African region of the World Cricket League, where they had a major improvement, this time finishing as runners-up to Mozambique, and only just missing out on promotion to Division Two.

Basketball

The Sierra Leone national basketball team represents Sierra Leone in international men's basketball competitions and is controlled by the Sierra Leone Basketball Federation. The squad is mostly home-based, with a few foreign-based players.

Environment

Logging, mining, slash and burn, and deforestation for alternative land use - such as cattle grazing - have produced a dramatic decrease of forested land in Sierra Leone since the 1980s.

Until 2002, Sierra Leone lacked a forest management system due to a brutal civil war that resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. On paper, 55 protected areas covered 4.5 percent of Sierra Leone as of 2003. The country has 2,090 known species of higher plants, 147 mammals, 626 birds, 67 reptiles, 35 amphibians, and 99 fish species.

In June 2005, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Bird-life International agreed to support a conservation-sustainable development project in the Gola Forest in southeastern Sierra Leone, the most important surviving fragment of rainforest in Sierra Leone.

Deforestation rates have increased 7.3 percent since the end of the civil war.

Sierra Leone in literature and film

Two major Hollywood films have so far been produced that relate to Sierra Leone. Steven Spielberg's Film " Amistad" (1997 with Morgan Freeman, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Mathew McCounaghey) is about an 1839 mutiny aboard a slave ship that was travelling towards the Northeast Coast of America. But much of the plot revolves around the court-room drama that lead to the historic supreme court decision recognizing the captives rights to freedom. The heroic role of Sengbe Pieh (Cinque), who organized and led the revolt was virtually marginalized. Edward Zwick's film Blood Diamond (2006 Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer



Connelly and Djimon Hounsou) is about conflict diamonds mined in Sierra Leone, Angola and Congo and sold in major diamond cutting centers – Antwerp, Tel Aviv and Mumbai – to finance (and prolong) armed conflicts in Africa. The film is centered in Sierra Leone and portrays many of the atrocities including the practice of cutting off people's limbs to spread fear and insecurity in the country side and to gain control over the diamond, gold, bauxite and rutile mining areas. But the action is focused mostly on Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio), a white mercenary from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), who trades arms for diamonds with an RUF commander (Corporal Foday Sankoh) and Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connelly), an American journalist covering the war and investigating the illegal diamond trade. The role of De Beers Group, which is the major player in the diamond trade, was bracketed out. It has been suggested that the company pressured the producers of the film to include a disclaimer saying the events are fictional and in the past - De Beers has denied this. This film and the Nollywood Video films (Nigerian Productions) on Blood Diamonds have establish Sierra Leone as the Blood Diamond Country in the minds of people all over the world.

In literature, Sierra Leone is the setting for Graham Greene's classic novel *The Heart of the Matter*, which deals with diamond smuggling during World War II. Since the rebel incursion in the early 1990s a number of books have written about the "diamonds or minerals for weapons" trade - including Hugh Paxton's horror/action novel and Ishmael Beah ("*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*"). Hugh Paxton's novel *Homunculus* juxtaposes the realities of the war in Sierra Leone with a fantasy of the exploitation of the war for the trade in blood diamonds and for the testing, demonstration and sale by auction of bio-weapons to a select clientele of international arms dealers and mercenaries. *Trial by Rebellion* written by Retired Captain Francis Ken Josiah was recently published in United States.

Other Sierra Leone writers of note include Abioseh Nicol ("*The Truly Married Woman And Other Stories*"), Robert Wellesley Cole ("*Kossoh Town Boy*"), Syl Cheney-Coker ("*The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar*"), William Conton ("*Kissimi Kamara*"), Amadu Yullisa Maddy ("*No Past, No Present, No Future*") and Sheikh Gibril Kamara ("*The Spirit of Badenia*").

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Somalia

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Somalia (Somali: *Soomaaliya*; Arabic: الصومال transliteration: *aṣ-Ṣūmāl*), officially the **Somali Republic** (Somali: *Jamhuuriyadda Soomaaliya*, Arabic: جمهورية الصومال transliteration: *Jumhūrīyyat aṣ-Ṣūmāl*) and formerly known as the **Somali Democratic Republic**, is a country located on the Horn of Africa in East Africa. It is bordered by Djibouti to the northwest, Kenya on its southwest, the Gulf of Aden with Yemen on its north, the Indian Ocean at its east, and Ethiopia to the west.

Italian Somaliland gained its independence from Italy on 1 July 1960. On the same day, it united with British Somaliland, which gained independence on 26 June 1960 to form the Somali republic. The Somali state currently exists largely in a *de jure* capacity; Somalia has a weak but largely recognised central government authority, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), but this currently controls only the central region of Somalia, and before the end of 2006 controlled only the city of Baidoa.

De facto control of the north of the country resides in the local authorities; of these Puntland, Maakhir, Galmudug, acknowledge the authority of the TFG and maintain their declaration of autonomy within a federated Somalia, while Southwestern Somalia and Jubaland in the south have largely abandoned the idea of autonomy. Their political capital, Baidoa, is currently the TFG capital, and their commercial capital, Kismayo, is being disputed. On the other hand, Somaliland in the north, with its capital in Hargeisa, has declared independence and does not recognise the TFG as governing authority.



History

Continuously inhabited for the last 2,500 years by numerous and varied ethnic groups, some of Oromo or other Kushitic ancestry, and the majority Somalis. From the 1st century numerous ports including Hafun and Mosylon-Bandar Gori were trading with Roman and Greek sailors.

The northwest was part of the Aksumite Empire from about the 3rd century to the 7th but between 700 AD and 1200 AD Islam became firmly established, especially with the founding of Mogadishu in 900.

The period following, 1200 AD to 1500 AD, saw the rise of numerous Somali city-states and kingdoms.

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| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Soomaaliya</i> الصومال Somalia Somali Republic</p> | |
|  <p>Flag</p> |  <p>Coat of arms</p> |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Soomaaliyeey Toosoow</i> Somalia, Wake Up</p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Mogadishu |
| Official languages | Somali ¹ |
| Demonym | Somali |
| Government | Transitional Federal |



In northwestern Somalia, the Sultanate of Adal (a multi-ethnic state comprised of Afars, Somalis and Hararis) with Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi as their leader in 1520, successfully conquered three-quarters of Ethiopia before being defeated by a joint Ethiopian-Portuguese force at the Battle of Wayna Daga on February 21, 1543.

The Ajuuraan Sultanate flourished from the 14th to the 17th centuries. Following the collapse of Adal and Ajuuraan in the 17th century, the region saw the emergence of new city states such as the Sultanates of eastern Sanaag, of Bari, of Geledi-Afgoye, of Gasar Gudde-Lugh Ganane, of Mogadishu and the Benadir coast, and of Hobyo.

Colonial period

Competition between the Somali clans that lived in these states persisted through the colonial period, when various parts of the region were colonised by Britain and Italy. This era began in the year 1884, the end of a long period of comparative peace. At the Berlin Conference of 1884, the scramble for Africa started the long and bloody process of the imperial partition of Somali lands. The French, British, and Italians came to Somalia in the late 19th century.

The British signed treaties with the clans in what was known after as British Somaliland which was a protectorate in 1886 after the withdrawal of Egypt. Egypt sought to prevent European colonial expansion in Northeast Africa. The southern area, was colonised by Italy in 1889, became known as Italian Somaliland.

Mohammed Abdullah Hassan (Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan, Sayyid), born in the north of the Somali peninsula, was a religious, nationalist and controversial leader of. Known to the British as the "Mad Mullah", he spent 20 years leading armed resistance to the British, Italian, and Ethiopian forces in Somalia. Born into the Ogaden sub-clan of the Darod, he belonged to the Saliyah sect.

Between 1900 and 1907, the Italian leaders tried several times to negotiate a land deal with the Geledi Sultan based in ASfgoye and his Biyo-maal and Digil warriors. In 1905 more than 1,000 Biyo-maal and Tunni warriors, along with a large number of Italians, were killed when the Italian army attacked in an attempt to gain their objectives. Though many Somali warriors were killed during the war, they still defeated the enemy and succeeded in protecting the Benadir coast. After a long and bloody battle, the Italian leaders allied with other Somali tribes and their combined strength finally destroyed the Sultan's forces.

Sheikh Uways al-Barawi of the Tunni sub-clan of the Rahanweyn (Digil and Mirifle) in Barawa, lived at the same time as Hassan and led the Qadiriyyah sect. He resisted the Italian occupation in a non-violent method. He was murdered in Biyoley, in today's Bakool region, by the Dervish in 1920 as Hassan was seeking to recruit forces from Italian Somaliland. This was after the British used aircraft to destroy Hassan's base in Taleex. Sheikh Aweys rejected violence and

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| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Government |
| Independence - Date | from the UK and Italy June 26 & July 1, 1960 |
| Area - Total - Water (%) | 637,661 km ² (42nd) 246,201 sq mi 1.6 |
| Population - 2007 estimate - Density | 9,118,773 ² (59th) 13/km ² (198th) 34/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) - Total - Per capita | 2006 estimate \$5.26 billion (157th) \$600 (148th) |
| HDI (2007) | N/A (low) (Not Ranked) |
| Currency | Somali shilling (sos) |
| Time zone - Summer (DST) | EAT (UTC+3) not observed (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .so (currently non-operational) |
| Calling code | +252 |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 CIA Factbook 2 BBC News country profile 3 Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic |



Hassan's ways were based on violent resistance.

As a result of Hassan and his followers being chased by the followers of Sheikh al-Barawi, Hassan had to escape through the thick forest along the Jubba River until he reached Imi, Ethiopia, where he died of influenza, and, reportedly, wounds inflicted on him during his escape.

To this day the annual pilgrimage to Sheikh al-Barawi's grave in Biyoley is held where people of the Qadiriyyah sect and admirers of al-Barawi attend.

Sheikh Hassan Barsane of the Gugundhabe, a sub-clan of the Hawiye, and a member of the Ahmadi, was another Somali religious leader who resisted the Italian rule in a non-violent manner. He, like al-Barawi, rejected Hassan's approaches.

World War II

Fascist Italy, under Benito Mussolini attacked Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), with an aim to colonise it, in 1935. The invasion was condemned by the League of Nations, but little was done to stop it or to liberate occupied Ethiopia.

On August 3, 1940, Italian troops, including Somali colonial units, crossed from Ethiopia to invade British Somalia and by August 14 succeeded in taking of Berbera from the British.

A British force, including Somali troops, launched a campaign in January 1942 from Kenya to liberate British Somaliland and Italian-occupied Ethiopia and conquer Italian Somaliland. By February, most of Italian Somaliland was captured and in March, British Somaliland was retaken from the sea. The British Empire forces operating in Somaliland comprised three divisions of South African, West and East African troops. They were assisted by Somali patriot forces led by Abdulahi Hassan with Somalis of the Isaaq, Dhulbahante, and Warsangali clans.

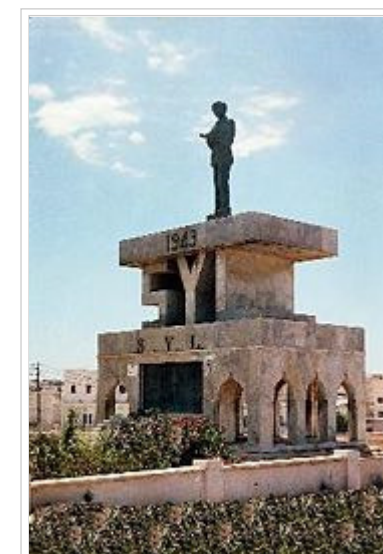
Following the war the United Nations gave Somalia as a protectorate to Italy in 1949. The Ogaden province of Somalia was given to the re-established Ethiopian government by the British Empire, which kept British Somaliland under its protection/rule. The French also kept Djibouti under colonial administration, until eventual independence in 1977.

The State of Somalia

Though Somalis and other Africans fought hard on the Allied side in World War II, they were re-subjugated soon after the conflict. The bitterness of lost hope strengthened the long struggle against colonialism, and in most parts of Africa, including Somalia, independence movements began.

The major political parties that fought for Somalia's independence were Somali Youth Club (SYC) which later became Somali Youth League (SYL); Hizbia Digil Mirifle Somali (HDMS) which later became Hizbia Dastur Mustaqbal Somali HDMS; and the Somali National League (SNL).

The independence of the British Somaliland Protectorate from the United Kingdom was proclaimed on 26 June 1960 and unification with the former Italian



Somali Youth League Monument



Somaliland took place immediately. Now most of Somali clans were independent and the country of Somalia was formed, albeit within boundaries drawn up by Italy and Britain. A government was formed by Abdullahi Issa with Aden Abdullah Osman Daar as President, and Abdirashid Ali Shermarke as Prime Minister, later to become President (from 1967-1969).

However inter-tribal rivalry persisted with many clans claiming to have been forced into the state of Somalia. In 1967, Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Egal became Prime Minister, appointed by Shermarke (Egal was later to become President of the breakaway independent Somaliland).

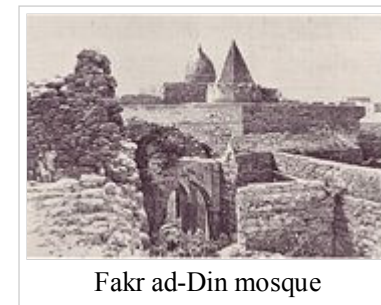
In late 1969 following the assassination of President Shermarke a military government assumed power in a coup d'état led by General Siad Barre and Chief of Police Jama Korshel. Barre became President and Korshel vice-president. The revolutionary army established large-scale public works programmes and successfully implemented an urban and rural literacy campaign, which helped dramatically increase the literacy rate from 5% to 55% by the mid-1980s.

However, struggles continued during Barre's rule. At one point he assassinated a major figure in his cabinet, Major General Gabiere, and two other officials.

It was in July 1976 when the real dictatorship of the Somali military commenced with the founding of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (Xisbiga Hantiwadaagga Kacaanka Soomaaliyeed, XHKS). It was the single party that ruled Somalia until the fall of the military government in December 1990 - January 1991. It was violently overthrown by the combined armed revolt of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (Jabhadda Diimuqraadiga Badbaadinta Soomaaliyeed, SDDF), United Somali Congress (USC), Somali National Movement (SNM), and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) together with the non-violent political oppositions of the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), the Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA) and the Somali Manifesto Group (SMG).

The Ogaden War

In 1977 and 1978 Somalia fought with its neighbour Ethiopia in the Ogaden War, in which Somalia aimed to liberate and unite the Somali lands that had been divided and subjugated under colonialism and to win the right of self-determination for ethnic Somalis in those countries. Somalia first engaged Kenya and Ethiopia diplomatically, but this failed while Somalis were being expelled from Ogaden province in Ethiopia. Somalia, already preparing for war, supported the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF, then called the Western Somali Liberation Front, WSLF) and eventually sought to capture Ogaden. Somalia acted unilaterally without consulting the international community, which was generally opposed to redrawing colonial boundaries, while the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries, refused to help Somalia, and instead, backed Communist Ethiopia. For most of the war, Somalia appeared to be winning in most of Ogaden, but with Somali forces at the gates of Addis Ababa, Soviet and Cuban forces and weapons came to the aid of Ethiopia. The Somali Army was decimated and Somalia sought the help of the United States. Although the Carter Administration originally expressed interest in helping Somalia he later declined, as did American allies in the Middle East and Asia. The Americans perhaps did not want to engage the Soviets in this period of détente.



Fakr ad-Din mosque

The Somali Civil War

By 1978, the moral authority of the Somali government had collapsed. Many Somalis had become disillusioned with life under military dictatorship and the



regime was weakened further in the 1980s as the Cold War drew to a close and Somalia's strategic importance was diminished. The government became increasingly totalitarian, and resistance movements, encouraged by Ethiopia, sprang up across the country, eventually leading to the Somali Civil War.

1991 saw great changes in Somalia. President Barre was ousted by a combined northern and southern clan based forces all of whom were backed and armed by Ethiopia. And following a meeting of the SNM and northern clans' elders, the northern former British portion of the country declared its independence as Somaliland in May 1991; although de facto independent and relatively stable compared to the tumultuous south, it has not been recognised by any foreign government.

In January 1991, President Ali Mahdi Muhammad was selected by the anisfesto group as an interim president for the whole of Somalia until a conference between all stakeholders to be held in Dajibuout in February of the same year to select a national leader. However, USC military leader General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, the SNM leader Abdirahman Toor and the SPM leader Col Jess refused to recognise Mahdi as president. This caused a split between the armed groups SNM, USC and SPM and the armed groups Manifesto, SDM and SNA on the one hand and within the USC forces. This led efforts to remove Barre who still claimed to be the legitimate president of Somalia from Somalia. He and his armed supporters remained in the south of the country until mid 1992 caused further escalation in violence, especially in Gedo, Bay, Bakool, Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba, Middle Juba regions. The armed conflict within the USC devastated the Mogadishu area.

The civil war disrupted agriculture and food distribution in southern Somalia. The basis of most of the conflicts was clan allegiances and competition for resources between the warring clans. James Bishop, the United States last ambassador to Somalia, explained that there is "competition for water, pasturage, and... cattle. It is a competition that used to be fought out with arrows and sabers... Now it is fought out with AK-47s." The resulting famine caused the United Nations Security Council in 1992 to authorise the limited peacekeeping operation United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I). UNOSOM's use of force was limited to self-defence and it was soon disregarded by the warring factions. In reaction to the continued violence and the humanitarian disaster, the United States organised a military coalition with the purpose of creating a secure environment in southern Somalia for the conduct of humanitarian operations. This coalition, (Unified Task Force or UNITAF) entered Somalia in December 1992 on Operation Restore Hope and was successful in restoring order and alleviating the famine. In May 1993, most of the United States troops withdrew and UNITAF was replaced by the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II).

However, Aidid saw UNOSOM II as a threat to his power and in June 1993 his militia attacked Pakistan Army troops, attached to UNOSOM II, (see Somalia (March 1992 to February 1996)) in Mogadishu inflicting over 80 casualties. Fighting escalated until 18 American troops and more than 1,000 Somalis were killed in a raid in Mogadishu during October 1993. The UN withdrew Operation United Shield in 3 March 1995, having suffered significant casualties, and with the rule of government still not restored.

In June 1996, Mohamed Farrah Aidid was killed in Mogadishu.

2000 – Present



Following the civil war the Majeerteen clan declared a self-governing state in the northeast, which took the name Puntland, but maintained that it would participate in any Somali reconciliation to form a new central government.

Then in 2002, Southwestern Somalia, comprising Bay, Bakool, Jubbada Dhexe (Middle Juba), Gedo, Shabeellaha Hoose (Lower Shabele) and Jubbada Hoose (Lower Juba) regions of Somalia declared itself autonomous. Although initially the instigators of this, the Rahanweyn Resistance Army, which had been established in 1995, was only in full control of Bay, Bakool and parts of Gedo and Jubbada Dhexe, they quickly established the de facto autonomy of Southwestern Somalia. Although conflict between Hasan Muhammad Nur Shatigadud and his two deputies, weakened the Rahanweyn militarily from February 2006, the Southwest became central to the TFG based in the city of Baidoa. Shatigadud became Finance Minister, his first deputy Adan Mohamed Nur Madobe became Parliamentary Speaker and his second deputy Mohamed Ibrahim Habsade became Minister of Transport. Shatigadud also held the Chairmanship of the Rahanwein Traditional Elders' Court.

In 2004, the TFG met in Nairobi, Kenya and published a charter for the government of the nation. The TFG capital is presently in Baidoa.

Meanwhile Somalia was one of the many countries affected by the tsunami which struck the Indian Ocean coast following the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake, destroying entire villages and killing an estimated 300 people and in 2006, Somalia was deluged by torrential rains and flooding that struck the entire Horn of Africa affecting 350,000 people.

The tribal rivalry continued in 2006 with the declaration of regional autonomy by the state of Jubaland, consisting of parts of Gedo, Jubbada Dhexe, and the whole of Jubbada Hoose. Barre Adan Shire Hiiraale, chairman of the Juba Valley Alliance, who comes from Galguduud in central Somalia is the most powerful leader there. Like Puntland this regional government did not want full statehood, but some sort of federal autonomy.

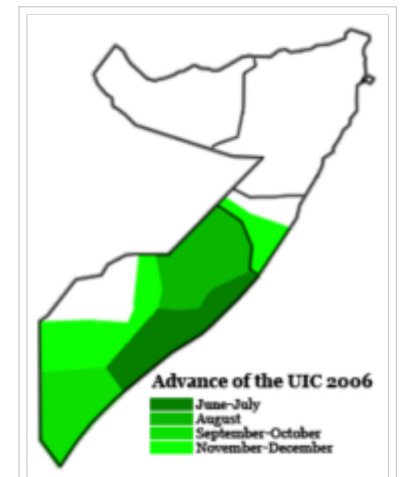
The 2006 civil war and invasion by Ethiopia

Conflict broke out again in early 2006 between an alliance of Mogadishu warlords known as the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (or "ARPCT") and a militia loyal to the Islamic Courts Union (or "I.C.U."), seeking to institute Sharia law in Somalia. Social law changes, such as the forbidding of chewing khat, and even the prohibition against watching movies and football in public, were part of moves by the ICU to change behaviours and impose strict social morals.

The Union was led by Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. When asked if the ICU plans to extend its control to the rest of Somalia, Sheikh Ahmed responded in an interview:



Areas directly administered by the Transitional Federal Government



Advance of the ICU 2006
Somalia at the height of I.C.U. power, December 2006



"Land is not our priority. Our priority is the people's peace, dignity and that they could live in liberty, that they could decide their own fate. That is our priority. Our priority is not land; the people are important to us."

Several hundred people, mostly civilians caught in the crossfire, died during this conflict. Mogadishu residents described it as the worst fighting in more than a decade. The Islamic Courts Union accused the U.S. of funding the warlords through the Central Intelligence Agency and supplying them with arms in an effort to prevent the Islamic Courts Union from gaining power. The United States Department of State, while neither admitting nor denying this, said the U.S. had taken no action that violated the international arms embargo of Somalia. A few e-mails describing covert illegal operations by private military companies in breach of U.N. regulations have been reported by the UK Sunday newspaper *The Observer*.

By early June 2006 the Islamic Militia had control of Mogadishu, following the Second Battle of Mogadishu, and the last A.R.P.C.T. stronghold in southern Somalia, the town of Jowhar, then fell with little resistance. The remaining A.R.P.C.T. forces fled to the east or across the border into Ethiopia and the alliance effectively collapsed.

The Ethiopian-supported Transitional Government then called for intervention by a regional East African peacekeeping force. The I.C.U. meanwhile were fiercely opposed to foreign troops — particularly Ethiopians — in Somalia. claiming that Ethiopia, with its long history as an imperial power including the occupation of Ogaden, seeks to occupy Somalia, or rule it by proxy.

Meanwhile the I.C.U. and their militia took control of much of the southern half of Somalia, normally through negotiation with local clan chiefs rather than by the use of force. However the Islamic militia stayed clear of areas close to the Ethiopian border, which had become a place of refuge for many Somalis including the Transitional Government itself, headquartered in the town of Baidoa. Ethiopia said it would protect Baidoa if threatened. But on September 25, 2006, the I.C.U. moved into the southern port of Kismayo, the last remaining port held by the transitional government and issued a declaration of war against Ethiopia on October 9, 2006.

On November 1, 2006, peace talks between the Transitional Government and the ICU broke down. The international community feared an all-out civil war, with Ethiopian and rival Eritrean forces backing opposing sides in the power-struggle.

War erupted on December 21, 2006 when the leader of ICU, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys said: "Somalia is in a state of war, and all Somalis should take part in this struggle against Ethiopia", and heavy fighting broke out between the Islamic militia on one side and the Somali Transitional Government allied with Ethiopian forces on the other.

In late December 2006, Ethiopia launched airstrikes against Islamic troops and strong points across Somalia. Ethiopian Information Minister Berhan Hailu stated that targets included the town of Buurhakaba, near the Transitional Government base in Baidoa. An Ethiopian jet fighter strafed Mogadishu International Airport (now Aden Adde International Airport), without apparently causing serious damage but prompting the airport to be shut down. Other Ethiopian jet



fighters attacked a military airport west of Mogadishu. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi then announced that his country was waging war against the ICU to protect his country's sovereignty. "Ethiopian defence forces were forced to enter into war to protect the sovereignty of the nation and to blunt repeated attacks by Islamic courts terrorists and anti-Ethiopian elements they are supporting," he said.

Days of heavy fighting followed as Ethiopian and government troops backed by tanks and jets pushed against Islamic forces between Baidoa and Mogadishu. Both sides claimed to have inflicted hundreds of casualties, but the Islamic infantry and vehicle artillery were badly beaten and forced to retreat toward Mogadishu. On 28 December 2006, the allies entered Mogadishu after Islamic fighters fled the city. Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi declared that Mogadishu had been secured, after meeting with local clan leaders to discuss the peaceful hand-over of the city. Yet as of November 2007, the Transitional Federal Government and its Ethiopian allies still face frequent attacks from an Islamic insurgency.

The Battle of Ras Kamboni

The Islamists retreated south, towards their stronghold in Kismayo, fighting rearguard actions in several towns. They abandoned Kismayo, too, without a fight, claiming that their flight was a strategic withdrawal to avoid civilian casualties, and entrenched around the small town of Ras Kamboni, at the southernmost tip of Somalia and on the border with Kenya. In early January, the Ethiopians and the Somali government attacked, resulting in the Battle of Ras Kamboni, and capturing the Islamic positions and driving the surviving fighters into the hills and forests after several days of combat. On January 9, 2007, the United States openly intervened in Somalia by sending Lockheed AC-130 gunships to attack Islamic positions in Ras Kamboni. Dozens were killed and by then the ICU were largely defeated.

As of November 30, 2007, the fighting continued in Mogadishu between transitional government Somali and Ethiopian official troops, on one hand, and Islamic militants, on the other.

Politics

Somalia has had no effective national government since 1991. The internationally recognized *Transitional Federal Government*, controls only parts of Southern Somalia from its base in the town of Baidoa, and is not recognized by most Somalis. On October 14, 2004, the Somali Transitional Federal Parliament elected Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, previously president of Puntland, to be president of Somalia. Because of the situation in Mogadishu, the election was held in a sports centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Yusuf was elected with 189 of the 275 votes from members of parliament.

Many other small political organisations exist, some clan-based, others seeking a Somalia free from clan-based politics. Many of them have come into existence since the civil war. The political situation therefore remains unstable; for example, on September 18, 2006, Abdullah Yusuf barely survived a suicide attack on his convoy in Baidoa, although twelve other people were killed.

In the northwest, there is the breakaway republic of Somaliland with its capital in Hargeisa, which declared its independence in 1991. This governing zone is not internationally recognised although it has remained more stable and certainly more peaceful than the rest of the country.



In the northeast Puntland also remains autonomous but supports the Transitional Government and unlike Somaliland considers itself still within the Somali Republic.

Sanaag Region and some parts of Bari region there is newly declared state of Maakhir which is a self-proclaimed autonomous state within **Somalia** on an area disputed by Somaliland and Puntland. Declared in July 1, 2007, it remains unrecognized by the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.

Maakhir is mainly inhabited by the Warsangali clan, a member of the Harti confederation of clans (along with the Dhulbahante and Majeerteen) and a clan of the Darod tribe.

In the southwestern interior, Jubaland and Southwestern Somalia have both recognised the TFG and local leaders are part of the government.

The southern half of the country, with the bulk of the population, as of November 2007, is unstable, following the 2006 Civil War between the Transitional Government and the Islamic Courts Union.

Westerners and those working for western organisations continue to be targets of the violence. Two aid workers, one British and the other Kenyan, were abducted in Puntland on 8 May 2007 and a western nurse and her escort were shot dead in Mogadishu on 17 September 2006.

Capital

Mogadishu is the capital of Somalia. However during the conflict in 2006, Mogadishu became part of the territory controlled by the Islamic Courts Union, while the Transitional Federal Government had its seat in Baidoa. The Government returned to Mogadishu in December 2006 with the help of the invasion of Ethiopia.

Geography



Hargeisa and much of the de-facto republic of Somaliland is desert or hilly terrain. Here the Naasa Hablood hills are shown.

Somalia is located on the east coast of Africa on and north of the Equator between the Gulf of Aden on the north and Indian Ocean on the east. Together with Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti it is often referred to as the Horn of Africa. It borders Djibouti on the northwest, Ethiopia on the west, and Kenya to the southwest. Somalia has the longest coastline in Africa.

Climate

Major climatic factors are a year-round hot climate, seasonal monsoon winds, and irregular rainfall with recurring droughts. Mean daily maximum temperatures range from 30 °C to 40 °C (85–105 °F), except at higher elevations and along the east coast. Mean daily minimums usually vary from about 15 °C to 30 °C (60–85 °F). The southwest monsoon, a sea breeze, makes the period from about May to October the mildest season at Mogadishu. The December-February period of the northeast monsoon is also relatively mild, although prevailing climatic conditions in Mogadishu are rarely pleasant. The "tangambili" periods that intervene between the two monsoons (October–November and March–May) are hot and humid.

Administrative divisions

Prior to the civil war, Somalia was divided into eighteen regions (*gobollada*, singular *gobol*), which were in turn subdivided into districts. The regions are:

| | | |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Awdal | 7 Gedo | 13 Shabeellaha Dhexe |
| 2 Bakool | 8 Hiiraan | 14 Nugaal |
| 3 Banaadir | 9 Jubbada Hoose | 15 Sanaag |
| 4 Bari | 10 Shabeellaha Hoose | 16 Sool |
| 5 Bay | 11 Mudug | 17 Togdheer |
| 6 Galguduud | 12 Jubbada Dhexe | 18 Woqooyi Galbeed |

On a *de facto* basis, northern Somalia is now divided up among the quasi-independent states of Puntland, Somaliland, Galmudug and Maakhir. The south is at least nominally controlled by the Transitional Federal Government, although resistance by Islamic groups continues in many areas. Under the *de facto* arrangements there are now 27 regions.

HIV/AIDS



Political map of Somalia.



Somalia continues to have one of the highest child mortality rates in the world, with 10% of children dying at birth and 25% of those surviving birth dying before age five. On the other hand, Somalia also has one of the lowest HIV infection rates in Africa.

The breadth of the AIDS pandemic has led to the idea in the West that the entire continent is ravaged by the disease. But Somalia — isolated for 14 years since the civil war began and populated by devout Muslims — has an infection rate of perhaps only 1.5 or 2 per cent of the adult population.

– Stephanie Nolan

Education

Education



School classroom in Hargeisa

With the collapse of the central government in 1991, the education system is now private. Primary schools have risen from 600 before the civil war to 1,172 schools today, with an increase of 28% in primary school enrolment over the last 3 years. In 2006, Puntland, an autonomous state, was the second in Somalia (after Somaliland) to introduce free primary schools with teachers now receiving their salaries from the Puntland administration. In Mogadishu, the Benadir University, the Somalia National University, and the Mogadishu University are three of the eight universities that teach Higher education in Southern Somalia. In Puntland, higher education is provided by the Puntland State University and East Africa University. In Somaliland, it is provided by Amoud University, University of Hargeisa and Burao University. Three Somali Universities are currently

ranked in the top 100 of Africa. Qur'anic schools (also known as duqsis) remain the basic system of instruction for religion in Somalia. They provide Islamic education for children, thereby filling a clear religious and social role in the country. Known as the most stable, local, and non-formal education providing basic religious and moral instruction, their strength rests on community support and their use of locally made and widely available teaching materials.

The Qu'ranic system, which teaches the greatest number of students relative to the other education sub-sectors, is the only system accessible to nomadic Somalis compared to the urban Somalis who have easier access to education. In 1993, a survey by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was conducted in which it found, among other things, that about 40% of pupils in Qu'ranic schools were girls].



A Somali school roster board

Economy

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Hargeisa market

Since the collapse of the state, Somalia has transformed from what Siad Barre referred to as "Scientific Socialism" to a free market economy.

Agriculture is the most important sector, with livestock accounting for about 40% of GDP and about 65% of export earnings. Nomads and semi-nomads, who are dependent upon livestock for their livelihood, make up a large portion of the population. After livestock, bananas are the principal export; sugar, sorghum, maize, and fish are products for the domestic market. The small industrial sector, based on the processing of agricultural products, accounts for 10% of GDP.



Bosaso is the fastest growing city of Somalia, having quadrupled in size during the Somali civil war.

Telecommunications

Somalia's public telecommunications system has been almost completely destroyed or dismantled. However, private wireless companies thrive in most major cities and actually provide better services than in neighbouring countries. Wireless service and Internet cafés are provided. Somalia was the last African country to access the Internet in August 2000, with only 57 web sites known as of 2003. Internet usage in Somalia grew 44,900% from 2000 to 2007, registering the highest growth rate in Africa. Somalia has the cheapest cellular calling rates in Africa, with some companies charging less than a cent a minute. Competing phone companies have agreed on interconnection standards, which were brokered by the United Nations funded Somali Telecom Association.

Companies providing telecommunication services are:

- Golis Telecom Somalia
- Somali Telecom Group
- Galkom
- Global Internet Company
- Hormuud
- Telkom
- NationLink Telecom
- Netco
- Somafone

Environment

Somalia is a semi-arid country with about 2% arable land. The civil war had a huge impact on the country's tropical forests by facilitating the production of charcoal with ever present, recurring, but damaging droughts. Somali environmentalist and Goldman Environmental Prize winner, Fatima Jibrell, became the first Somali to step in and do a much-needed effort to save the rest of the environment through local initiatives that organised local communities to protect the



rural and coastal habitat. Jibrell trained a team of young people to organise awareness campaigns about the irreversible damage of unrestricted charcoal production. Jibrell also joined the Buran rural institute that formed and organised the Camel Caravan program in which young people loaded tents and equipment on camels to walk for three weeks through a nomadic locale and educate the people about the careful use of fragile resources, health care, livestock management and peace.

She has consistently fought against the burning of charcoal, logging and other man-induced environmental degradation. Her efforts have born fruits to the local communities across Somalia and international recognition when she won the prestigious Environmental Goldman award from San Francisco. Jibrell is also the executive director of Horn Relief and Development Organisation.

Demographics

Somalia has a population of around 10,700,000 according to U.N. estimates in 2003, 85% of which constitute ethnic Somalis.

There is little reliable statistical information on urbanisation in Somalia. However, rough estimates have been made indicating an urbanisation of 5% and 8% per annum with many towns rapidly growing into cities. Currently, 34% of the Somali population lives in towns and cities with the percentage rapidly increasing.

Because of the civil war, the country has a large diaspora community, one of the largest of the whole continent. There are over a million Somalis outside of Africa, and this excludes those who have inhabited the Ogaden province, northeastern Kenya, and Djibouti.



Somali children

Languages

Somali is the main language and is used virtually everywhere and nearly every Somali citizen speaks it. Minority languages do exist, such as Af-Maay, which is spoken in areas in South-Central Somalia by the Rahanweyn tribes and Jareer, as well as variants of Swahili (Barawe), which are spoken along the coast by Arabs. Mashungulis are part of the Somali Bantu (Jareer) people and speak Zigua and Swahili

A considerable number of Somalis speak Arabic due to religious reasons and ties with the Arab World and media. English is also widely used and taught, Italian used to be a major language but due to the civil war and lack of education only the older generation still uses it.

Religion



The Somalis are almost entirely Sunni Muslims. Christianity's influence was significantly reduced in the 1970s when church-run schools were closed and missionaries sent home. There has been no Archbishop of the Catholic cathedral in the country since 1989; the cathedral in Mogadishu was severely damaged in the civil war of January-February 1992. The Somali constitution discourages the promotion and propagation of any religion other than Islam. This sets Somalis apart from their immediate African neighbours, many of whom are either Christians (particularly the Amhara people and others of Ethiopia and Kenya) or adherents of indigenous African faiths.

Retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia>"

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Eid celebrations in Mogadishu



South Africa

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries
SOS Children works in South Africa. For more information see SOS Children in South Africa

The **Republic of South Africa** (also known by other official names) is a country located at the southern tip of Africa. It borders the Atlantic and Indian oceans and Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Lesotho, an independent enclave surrounded by South African territory. South Africa is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The South African economy is the largest in Africa and 24th largest in the world. Due to this it is the most socially, economically and infrastructurally developed country on the continent.



South Africa has experienced a different history from other nations in Africa because of early immigration from Europe and the strategic importance of the Cape Sea Route. European immigration began shortly after the Dutch East India Company founded a station at what would become Cape Town, in 1652. The closure of the Suez Canal during the Six-Day War highlighted its significance to East-West trade. The country's relatively developed infrastructure made its mineral wealth available and important to Western interests, particularly throughout the late nineteenth century and, with international competition and rivalry, during the Cold War. South Africa is ethnically diverse, with the largest Caucasian, Indian, and racially mixed communities in Africa. Black South Africans, who speak nine officially recognised languages, and many more dialects, account for slightly less than 80% of the population.

Racial strife between the white minority and the black majority has played a large part in South Africa's history and politics, culminating in *apartheid*, which was instituted in 1948 by the National Party (although segregation existed before that time). The laws that defined apartheid began to be repealed or abolished by the National Party in 1990, after a long and sometimes violent struggle (including economic sanctions from the international community) by the Black majority as well as many White, Coloured, and Indian South Africans.

Several philosophies and ideologies have developed in South Africa, including *ubuntu* (the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity) and Jan Smuts's holism.

Regular elections have been held for almost a century; but the majority of South Africans were not enfranchised until 1994.

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| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Republic of South Africa [Show] | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: <i>!ke e: ǀxarra ǁke</i> (ǀXam) “Unity In Diversity” (literally “Diverse People Unite”) | |
| Anthem: National anthem of South Africa | |
|  | |
| Capital | Pretoria (executive) Bloemfontein (judicial) Cape Town (legislative) |
| Largest city | Johannesburg (2006) |
| Official languages | 11 [Show] |

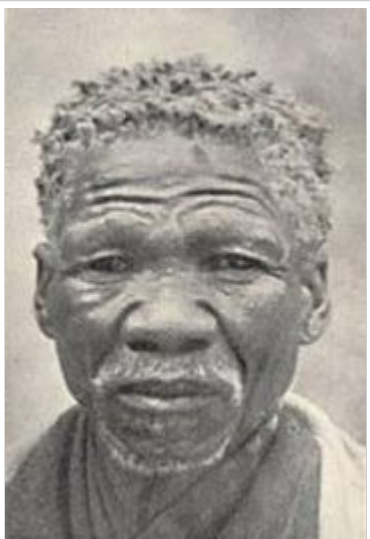


South Africa is often called the "Rainbow Nation", a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and later adopted by then President Nelson Mandela. Mandela used the term "Rainbow Nation" as a metaphor to describe the country's newly developing multicultural diversity after segregationist apartheid ideology. The country's socially progressive policies are rare in Africa, for example, by 2007, the country had joined Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, and Spain in legalizing same-sex marriage.

History

South Africa contains some of the oldest archaeological sites in Africa. Extensive fossil remains at the Sterkfontein, Kromdraai and Makapansgat caves suggest that various australopithecines existed in South Africa from about three million years ago. These were succeeded by various species of *Homo*, including *Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus* and modern man, *Homo sapiens*. Settlements of Bantu-speaking peoples, who were iron-using agriculturists and herdsmen, were already present south of the Limpopo River by the fourth or fifth century (see Bantu expansion) displacing and absorbing the original KhoiSan speakers. They slowly moved south and the earliest ironworks in modern-day KwaZulu-Natal Province are believed to date from around 1050. The southernmost group was the Xhosa people, whose language incorporates certain linguistic traits from the earlier KhoiSan people, reaching the Fish River, in today's Eastern Cape Province. These Iron Age populations displaced earlier peoples, who often had hunter-gatherer societies, as they migrated.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demonym | South African |
| Government | Parliamentary republic |
| - President | Thabo Mbeki |
| - Deputy President | Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka |
| - Chairperson | M. J. Mahlangu |
| - National Assembly Speaker | Baleka Mbete |
| - Chief Justice | Pius Langa |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Union | 31 May 1910 |
| - Statute of Westminster | 11 December 1931 |
| - Republic | 31 May 1961 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 1,221,037 km ² (25 th) 471,443 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | Negligible |
| Population | |
| - 2007 (mid-year) estimate | 47.9 million (25 th) |
| - 2001 census | 44,819,278 |
| - Density | 39/km ² (136 th) 101/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$587.5 billion ▲ (18 th) |
| - Per capita | \$13,300 ▲ (56 th) |
| Gini (2000) | 57.8 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | 0.674 ▲ (medium) (121 st) |



Indigenous people of what is now South Africa include the Khoikhoi and the San.



A group of Xhosa people

Image:JanVanRiebeckArrival.j

Painting of an account of the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck, the first European to settle in South Africa, with Devil's Peak in the background.

The

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Currency | South African rand (ZAR) |
| Time zone | SAST (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .za |
| Calling code | +27 |

written history of South Africa begins with the arrival of the Portuguese. In

1487, Bartolomeu Dias became the first European to reach the southernmost tip of Africa.

When he returned to Lisbon carrying news of the discovery, which he called *Cabo das Tormentas* (Cape of Storms) due to the stormy conditions he had encountered in the region, his royal sponsor, John II of Portugal, chose a different name, *Cabo da Boa Esperança* or Cape of Good Hope, for it promised a sea route to the riches of India then being sought by Portugal. Later, the great Portuguese poet Camões immortalized Dias' voyage in the epic poem *The Lusíads*, specifically via the mythological character, Adamastor, which symbolizes the forces of nature the Portuguese navigators had to overcome during the circumnavigation of the Cape.

Along with the accounts of the early navigators, the accounts of shipwreck survivors provide the earliest written accounts of Southern Africa. In the two centuries following 1488, a number of small fishing settlements were made along the coast by

Portuguese sailors, but no written account of these settlements survives. In 1652 a victualling station was established at the Cape of Good Hope by Jan van Riebeeck on behalf of the Dutch East India Company. For most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the slowly-expanding settlement was a Dutch possession. The Dutch settlers eventually met the south-westerly expanding Xhosa people in the region of the Fish River. A series of wars, called Cape Frontier Wars, ensued, mainly caused by conflicting land and livestock interests.

To ease Cape labour shortages slaves were brought from Indonesia, Madagascar, and India. Furthermore, troublesome leaders, often of royal descent, were banished from Dutch colonies to South Africa. This group of slaves eventually gave rise to a population that now identifies themselves as " Cape Malays". Cape Malays have traditionally been accorded a higher social status by the European colonists - many became wealthy landowners, but became increasingly dispossessed as apartheid developed. Cape Malay mosques in District Six were spared, and now serve as monuments for the destruction that occurred around them.

Most of the descendants of these slaves, who often married with Dutch settlers, were later classified together with the remnants of the Khoikhoi (aka Khoisan) as Cape Coloureds. Further intermingling within the Cape Coloured population itself, as well as with Xhosa and other South African people, now means that they constitute roughly 50% of the population in the Western Cape Province.

Great Britain seized the Cape of Good Hope area in 1795 ostensibly to stop it falling into the hands of the French, but also seeking to use Cape Town in particular as a stop on the route to Australia and India. It was returned to the Dutch in 1803, but soon afterwards the Dutch East India Company declared bankruptcy, and the

Historical nation-states of present-day South Africa
(including Boer republics and TBVC states)



British annexed the Cape Colony in 1806. The British continued the frontier wars against the Xhosa, pushing the eastern frontier eastward through a line of forts established along the Fish River and consolidating it by encouraging British settlement. Due to pressure of abolitionist societies in Britain, the British parliament first stopped its global slave trade in 1807, then abolished slavery in all its colonies in 1833.

The discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1884 in the interior encouraged economic growth and immigration, intensifying the subjugation of the natives. The Boers successfully resisted British encroachments during the First Boer War (1880–1881) using guerrilla warfare tactics, much better suited to local conditions. However, the British returned in greater numbers without their red jackets in the Second Boer War (1899–1902). The Boers' attempt to ally themselves with German South-West Africa provided the British with yet another excuse to take control of the Boer Republics.

The Boers resisted fiercely, but the British eventually overwhelmed the Boer forces, using their superior numbers, improved tactics and external supply chains. Also during this war, the British used controversial concentration camps and scorched earth tactics, forcing whole families into crowded tents and burning their houses. Crops were burnt and all livestock slaughtered to demoralize the resisting Boers. The appalling conditions in British concentration camps were brought to light by Welfare Campaigner Emily Hobhouse in her report "Report of a Visit to the Camps of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies". Maltreatment and undernourishment were common in camps. Food was often poisoned and glass pieces and hooks were found in many rations. The death toll reached 26,370 of which 24,000 were children.

The Treaty of Vereeniging specified full British sovereignty over the South African republics, and the British government agreed to assume the £3 000 000 war debt owed by the Afrikaner governments. One of the main conditions of the treaty ending the war was that "Blacks" would not be allowed to vote, except in the Cape Colony.

After four years of negotiations, the Union of South Africa was created from the Cape and Natal colonies, as well as the republics of Orange Free State and Transvaal, on May 31, 1910, exactly eight years after the end of the Second Boer War. The newly-created Union of South Africa was a dominion. The Natives' Land Act of 1913 severely restricted the ownership of land by 'blacks', at that stage to a mere 7% of the country, although this amount was eventually increased marginally. In 1934, the South African Party and National Party merged to form the United Party, seeking reconciliation between Afrikaners and English-speaking "Whites", but split in 1939 over the Union's entry into World War II as an ally of the United Kingdom, a move which the National Party strongly opposed.

In 1948 the National Party was elected to power, and began implementing a series of harsh segregationist laws that would become known collectively as apartheid. Not surprisingly, this segregation also applied to the wealth acquired during rapid industrialisation of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. While the White minority enjoyed the highest standard of living in all of Africa, often comparable to "First World" western nations, the Black majority remained disadvantaged by almost every standard, including income, education, housing, and life expectancy. However, the average income and life expectancy of a black, Indian or

Mapungubwe (1050-1270)
 Swellendam (1795)
 Graaff Reinet (1795-1796)
 Waterboer's Land (1813-1871)
 Adam Kok's Land (1825-1861)
 Winburg (1836-1844)
 Potchefstroom (1837-1844)
 Potchefstroom, North West (1844-1848)
 Republic of Utrecht (1854-1858)
 Lydenburg Republic (1856-1860)
 Nieuw Republiek (1884-1888)
 Griqualand East (1861-1879)
 Griqualand West (1870)
 Klein Vrystaat (1886-1891)
 Stellaland (1882-1885)
 Goshen (South Africa) (1882-1883)
 Zululand (1816-1897)
 Natalia Republic (1839–1843)
 Orange Free State (1854-1902)
 South African Republic (1857-1902)
 Union of South Africa (1910–1961)
 Bophuthatswana (1977-1994)
 Ciskei (1981-1994)
 Transkei (1976-1994)
 Venda (1979-1994)
Republic of South Africa (1961-present)



"Coloured" South African compared favourably to many other African states, such as Ghana and Tanzania as education and health were provided, though selectively.

Apartheid became increasingly controversial, leading to widespread sanctions and divestment abroad and growing unrest and oppression within South Africa. (See also the article on the History of South Africa in the apartheid era.) A long period of harsh suppression by the government, and at times violent resistance, strikes, marches, protests, and sabotage by bombing and other means, by various anti-apartheid movements, most notably the African National Congress (ANC), followed. In the late 1970s, South Africa began a program of nuclear weapons, and in the following decade it produced six deliverable nuclear weapons. The rationale for the nuclear arsenal is disputed, but it is believed that Vorster and P.W. Botha wanted to be able to catalyse American intervention in the event of a war between South Africa and the Cuban-supported MPLA government of Angola.

In 1990 the National Party government took the first step towards negotiating itself out of power when it lifted the ban on the African National Congress and other left-wing political organisations, and released Nelson Mandela from prison after twenty-seven years' incarceration on a sabotage sentence. Apartheid legislation was gradually removed from the statute books, and South Africa also destroyed its nuclear arsenal and acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The first multi-racial elections were held in 1994, which the ANC won by an overwhelming majority. It has been in power ever since.

Despite the end of apartheid, millions of South Africans, mostly black, continue to live in poverty. This is partly attributed to the legacy of the apartheid system and, increasingly, what many see as the failure of the current government to tackle social issues, coupled with the monetary and fiscal discipline of the current government to ensure both redistribution of wealth and economic growth. Since the ANC government took power, South Africa's United Nations Human Development Index has fallen dramatically, while it was steadily rising until the mid-1990s. Much of this could be attributed to the AIDS pandemic and the government's failure to take steps to address it. However, the ANC's social housing policy has produced some improvement in living conditions in many areas by redirecting fiscal spending and improving the efficiency of the tax collection system.

Government and politics

South Africa is the only nation in the world with three capital cities: Cape Town, the largest of the three, is the *legislative* capital; Pretoria is the *administrative* capital; and Bloemfontein is the *judicial* capital. South Africa has a bicameral parliament: the ninety members of the National Council of Provinces (the upper house); and the four hundred members of the National Assembly (the lower house). Members of the lower house are elected on a population basis by proportional representation: half of the members are elected from national lists and half are elected from provincial lists. Ten members are elected to represent each province in the National Council of Provinces, regardless of the population of the province. Elections for both chambers are held every five years. The government is formed in the lower house, and the leader of the majority party in the National Assembly is the President.

Current South African politics are dominated by the African National Congress (ANC), which received 69.7% of the vote during the last 2004 general election and 66.3% of the vote in the 2006 municipal election. The current (2004-2009 term) President of South Africa is Thabo Mbeki, who succeeded former President Nelson Mandela. The main challenger to the ANC's rule is the Democratic Alliance party, which received 12.4% of the



The central area of Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa



vote in the 2004 election and 14.8% in the 2006 election. The leader of this party is Helen Zille (elected 6 May 2007). The previous leader of the party was Tony Leon. The formerly dominant New National Party, which introduced apartheid through its predecessor, the National Party, suffered increasing humiliation at election polls since 1994, and finally voted to disband. It chose to merge with the ANC on 9 April 2005. Other major political parties represented in Parliament are the Inkatha Freedom Party, which mainly represents Zulu voters, and the Independent Democrats, who took 6.97% and 1.7% of the vote respectively, in the 2004 election.

However since 2004 the country has suffered many thousands of popular protests, some violent, making it, according to one academic, the "most protest-rich country in the world". Many of these protests have been organised from the growing shanty towns that surround South African cities.

Law

The primary sources of South Africa law were Roman-Dutch mercantile law and personal law with English Common law, as imports of Dutch settlements and British colonialism. The first European based law in South Africa was brought by the Dutch East India Company and is called Roman-Dutch law. It was imported before the codification of European law into the Napoleonic Code and is comparable in many ways to Scottish law. This was followed in the 19th century by British law both common and statutory. Starting in 1910 with unification, South Africa had its own parliament which passed laws specific for South Africa, building on those previously passed for the individual member colonies.

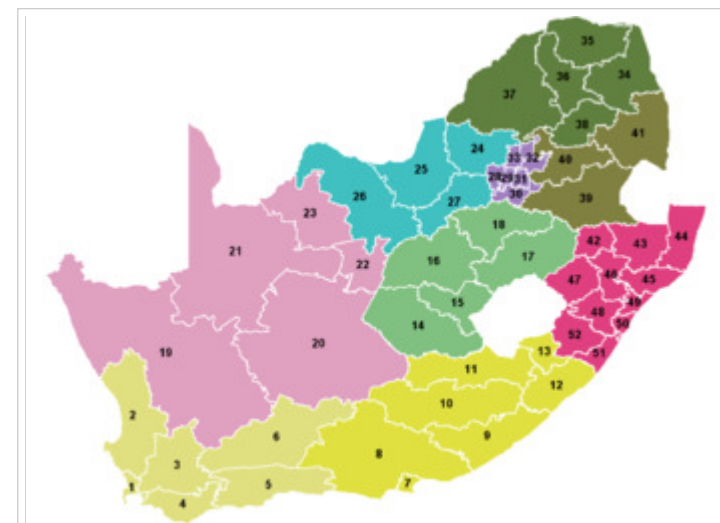
Provinces, districts and municipalities



When apartheid ended in 1994, the South African government had to integrate the formerly independent and semi-independent Bantustans into the political structure of South Africa. To this end, it abolished the four former provinces of South Africa (Cape Province, Natal, Orange Free State, and Transvaal) and replaced them with nine fully integrated provinces. The new provinces are usually much smaller than the former provinces, which theoretically gives local governments more resources to distribute over smaller areas.

The nine provinces are further subdivided into 52 districts: 6 metropolitan and 46 district municipalities. The 46 district municipalities are further subdivided into 231 local municipalities. The district municipalities also contain 20 district management areas (mostly game parks) that are directly governed by the district municipalities. The six metropolitan municipalities perform the functions of both district and local municipalities. The new provinces are:

| Province | Former homelands and provinces | Capital | Area (km ²) | Area (sq mi) | Population (2001) |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Eastern Cape | Cape Province, Transkei, Ciskei | Bhisho | 169,580 | 65,475 | 6,436,761 |
| Free State | Orange Free State, QwaQwa | Bloemfontein | 129,480 | 49,992 | 2,706,776 |
| Gauteng | Transvaal | Johannesburg | 17,010 | 6,568 | 8,837,172 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | Natal, KwaZulu | Pietermaritzburg | 92,100 | 35,560 | 9,426,018 |
| Limpopo | Transvaal, Venda, Lebowa, Gazankulu | Polokwane | 123,900 | 47,838 | 5,273,637 |
| Mpumalanga | Transvaal, KwaNdebele, KaNgwane, Bophuthatswana, Lebowa | Nelspruit | 79,490 | 30,691 | 3,122,994 |
| Northern Cape | Cape Province | Kimberley | 361,830 | 139,703 | 822,726 |
| North West | Transvaal, Cape Province, Bophuthatswana | Mafikeng | 116,320 | 44,911 | 3,669,349 |
| Western Cape | Cape Province | Cape Town | 129,370 | 49,950 | 4,524,335 |
| Total | | | 1,219,080 | 470,688 | 44,819,768 |



Map showing the provinces and districts (numbered) of South Africa.

Northern Cape
North West
Gauteng
Limpopo
Mpumalanga

KwaZulu-Natal
Eastern Cape
Free State
Western Cape



Geography

South Africa is located at the southernmost region of Africa, with a long coastline that stretches more than 2,500 kilometres (1,550 mi) and across two oceans (the Atlantic and the Indian). At 470,979 sq mi (1,219,912 km²), South Africa is the world's 25th-largest country (after Mali). It is comparable in size to Colombia. Njesuthi in the Drakensberg at 3,408 m (11,424 ft) is the highest peak in South Africa.

South Africa has a generally temperate climate, due in part to it being surrounded by the Atlantic and Indian Oceans on three sides, by its location in the climatically milder southern hemisphere and due to the average elevation rising steadily towards the north (towards the equator) and further inland. Due to this varied topography and oceanic influence, a great variety of climatic zones exist.

The climatic zones vary, from the extreme desert of the southern Namib in the farthest northwest to the lush subtropical climate in the east along the Mozambique border and the Indian ocean. From the east, the land quickly rises over a mountainous escarpment towards the interior plateau known as the Highveld. Even though South Africa is classified as semi-arid, there is considerable variation in climate as well as topography.

The interior of South Africa is a vast, rather flat, and sparsely populated scrubland, Karoo, which is drier towards the northwest along the Namib desert. In contrast, the eastern coastline is lush and well-watered, which produces a climate similar to the tropics. The extreme southwest has a climate remarkably similar to that of the Mediterranean with wet winters and hot, dry summers, hosting the famous Fynbos Biome. This area also produces much of South Africa's wine. This region is also particularly known for its wind, which blows intermittently almost all year. The severity of this wind made passing around the Cape of Good Hope particularly treacherous for sailors, causing many shipwrecks. Further east on the country's south coast, rainfall is distributed more evenly throughout the year, producing a green landscape. This area is popularly known as the Garden Route.

The Free State is particularly flat due to the fact that it lies centrally on the high plateau. North of the Vaal River, the Highveld becomes better watered and does not experience subtropical extremes of heat. Johannesburg, in the centre of the Highveld, is at 1,740 metres (5,709 ft) and receives an annual rainfall of 760 millimetres (30 in). Winters in this region are cold, although snow is rare.

To the north of Johannesburg, the altitude drops beyond the Highveld's escarpment, and turns into the lower lying Bushveld, an area of mixed dry forest and an abundance of wildlife. East of the Highveld, beyond the eastern escarpment, the Lowveld stretches towards the Indian ocean. It has particularly high temperatures, and is also the location of extended subtropical agriculture. The mountains of the



Map of South Africa



Satellite picture of South Africa



Barberton Greenstone belt in the lowveld are the oldest mountains on Earth, dating back 3.5 Billion years. The earliest reliable proof of life (dated 3.2–3.5 Billion years old) has been found in these mountains.

The high Drakensberg mountains, which form the south-eastern escarpment of the Highveld, offer limited skiing opportunities in winter. Many people think that the coldest place in South Africa is Sutherland in the western Roggeveld Mountains, where midwinter temperatures can reach as low as -15 degrees Celsius (5° F). In fact, the coldest place is actually Buffelsfontein, which is in the Molteno district of the Eastern Cape. Buffelsfontein recorded a low of -18.6 degrees Celsius (-1.5° F). The deep interior has the hottest temperatures: A temperature of 51.7° C (125° F) was recorded in 1948 in the Northern Cape Kalahari near Upington.

South Africa also has one possession, the small sub-Antarctic archipelago of the Prince Edward Islands, consisting of Marion Island ($290\text{ km}^2/112\text{ sq mi}$) and Prince Edward Island ($45\text{ km}^2/17.3\text{ sq mi}$) (not to be confused with the Canadian province of the same name).

Flora and fauna

South Africa is one of only 17 countries worldwide considered Megadiverse. It has more than 20,000 different plants, or about 10% of all the known species of plants on Earth, making it particularly rich in plant biodiversity. South Africa is the third most biodiverse country in the world, after Brazil and Indonesia and has greater biodiversity than any country of equal or smaller size (Brazil being roughly seven times South Africa's size, and Indonesia more than 50% larger).

South Africa's most prevalent biome is grassland, particularly on the Highveld, where the plant cover is dominated by different grasses, low shrubs, and acacia trees, mainly camel-thorn and whitethorn. Vegetation becomes even more sparse towards the northwest due to low rainfall. There are several species of water-storing succulents like aloes and euphorbias in the very hot and dry Namaqualand area. The grass and thorn savannah turns slowly into a bush savannah towards the north-east of the country, with more dense growth. There are significant numbers of baobab trees in this area, near the northern end of Kruger National Park.



Fynbos, a floral kingdom unique to South Africa, is found near Cape Town

The Fynbos Biome, which makes up the majority of the area and plant life in the Cape floristic region, one of the six floral kingdoms, is located in a small region of the Western Cape and contains more than 9,000 of those species, making it among the richest regions on earth in terms of floral biodiversity. The majority of the plants are evergreen hard-leaf plants with fine, needle-like leaves, such as the sclerophyllous plants. Another uniquely South African plant is the protea genus of flowering plants. There are around 130 different species of protea in South Africa.

While South Africa has a great wealth of flowering plants, it has few forests. Only 1% of South Africa is forest, almost exclusively in the humid coastal plain along the Indian Ocean in KwaZulu-Natal (see KwaZulu-Cape coastal forest mosaic). There are even smaller reserves of forests that are out of the reach of fire, known as montane forests (see Knysna-Amatole montane forests). Plantations of imported tree species are predominant, particularly the non-native eucalyptus and pine. South Africa has lost a large area of natural habitat in the last four decades, primarily due to overpopulation, sprawling development patterns and deforestation during the nineteenth century. South Africa is one of the worst affected countries in the world when it comes to invasion by alien species with



many (e.g. Black Wattle, Port Jackson, Hakea, Lantana and Jacaranda) posing a significant threat to the native biodiversity and the already scarce water resources. The original temperate forest that met the first European settlers to South Africa was exploited ruthlessly until only small patches remained. Currently, South African hardwood trees like Real Yellowwood (*Podocarpus latifolius*), stinkwood (*Ocotea bullata*), and South African Black Ironwood (*Olea laurifolia*) are under government protection.

Numerous mammals are found in the bushveld habitats including lions, leopards, white rhinos, blue wildebeest, kudus, impalas, hyenas, hippopotamus, and giraffes. A significant extent of the bushveld habitat exists in the north-east including Kruger National Park and the Mala Mala Reserve, as well as in the far north in the Waterberg Biosphere.

Climate change is expected to bring considerable warming and drying to much of this already semi-arid region, with greater frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, flooding and drought. According to computer generated climate modelling produced by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) (along with many of its partner institutions), parts of southern Africa will see an increase in temperature by about one degree Celsius along the coast to more than four degrees Celsius in the already hot hinterland such as the Northern Cape in late spring and summertime by 2050.

The Cape Floral Kingdom has been identified as one of the global biodiversity hotspots since it will be hit very hard by climate change and has such a great diversity of life. Drought, increased intensity and frequency of fire and climbing temperatures are expected to push many of these rare species towards extinction. The book *Scorched : South Africa's changing climate* takes much of the modelling produced by SANBI and presents it in an accessible travelogue-style collection of essays.

South Africa houses many endemic species, among them the critically endangered Riverine Rabbit (*Bunolagus monticullaris*) in the Karoo.

Economy



By UN classification South Africa is a middle-income country with an abundant supply of resources, well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors, a stock exchange (the JSE Limited), that ranks among the top twenty in the world, and a modern infrastructure supporting an efficient distribution of goods to major urban centres throughout the region. South Africa is ranked 25th in the world in terms of GDP(PPP).

In many respects, South Africa can be considered a developed country. However, advanced development is significantly localised around four areas: Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, and Pretoria/Johannesburg. Beyond these four economic centres, development is marginal and poverty is still prevalent despite government efforts. Consequently the vast majority of South Africans are poor. However, key marginal areas have experienced rapid growth recently. Such areas include: Mossel Bay to Plettenberg Bay; Rustenburg area; Nelspruit area; Bloemfontein; Cape West Coast; KwaZulu-Natal North Coast amongst others.

Even though South Africa has the fourth highest per capita income in Africa, only behind Seychelles, Botswana and the European possessions located in Africa, it suffers from large income gaps and a dual economy marking it as a developing country. South Africa has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the world. A decade of continual economic growth has helped to lower unemployment, but daunting economic and social problems remain. The average South African household income decreased considerably between 1995 and 2000. As for racial inequality, Statistics South Africa reported that in 1995 the average white household earned four times as much as the average black household. In 2000 the average white household was earning 6 times the average black household. The implementation of affirmative action policies have seen a rise in black economic wealth and an emerging black middle class. Other problems are crime, corruption, and HIV/AIDS.

At the start of 2000, President Thabo Mbeki vowed to promote economic growth and foreign investment by relaxing restrictive labour laws, stepping up the pace of privatisation, and cutting unneeded governmental spending. His policies face strong opposition from organised labour. South Africa is also the continent's largest energy producer and consumer.

The South African rand (ZAR), the world's most actively-traded emerging market currency, has joined an elite club of fifteen currencies, the Continuous linked settlement (CLS), where forex transactions are settled immediately, lowering the risks of transacting across time zones. The rand was the best-performing currency against the United States dollar (USD) between 2002 and 2005, according to the Bloomberg Currency Scorecard.

The volatility of the rand has affected economic activity, falling sharply during 2001 and hitting a historic low of 13.85 ZAR to the USD, raising fears of inflation, and causing the Reserve Bank to increase interest rates. The rand has since recovered, trading at 7.13 ZAR to the dollar as of January 2008. However, as exporters are put under considerable pressure from a stronger domestic currency, many call for government intervention to help soften the rand.

Refugees from poorer neighbouring countries include many immigrants from the DRC, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi and others, representing a large portion of the informal sector. With high unemployment levels amongst poorer South Africans, xenophobia is prevalent and many people born in South Africa feel resentful of immigrants who are seen to be depriving the native population of jobs, a feeling which has been given credibility by the fact that many South African employers have employed migrants from other countries for lower pay than South African citizens, especially in the construction, tourism, agriculture



The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town with Table Mountain in the background. Cape Town has become an important retail and tourism centre for the country, and attracts the largest number of foreign visitors in South Africa



and domestic service industries. Illegal immigrants are also heavily involved in informal trading. However, many immigrants to South Africa continue to live in poor conditions, and the South African immigration policy has become increasingly restrictive since 1994.

Electricity crisis

After unsuccessful attempts by the government to encourage private construction of electricity generation capacity, in 2007 the state-owned electricity supplier (Eskom) started experiencing a lack of capacity in the electrical generating and reticulation infrastructure. This led to an inability to meet the routine demands of industry and consumers, resulting in countrywide rolling blackouts. Initially the lack of capacity was triggered by a failure at Koeberg nuclear power station, but since then a general lack of capacity became evident. The supplier has been widely criticised for failing to adequately plan for and construct adequate electric generating capacity.

Agriculture

South Africa has a large agricultural sector and is a net exporter of farming products. There are almost a thousand agricultural cooperatives and agribusinesses throughout the country, and agricultural exports have constituted 8% of South Africa's total exports for the past five years. The agricultural industry contributes around 10% of formal employment, relatively low compared to other parts of Africa, as well as providing work for casual labourers and contributing around 2.6% of GDP for the nation. However, due to the aridity of the land, only 13.5% can be used for crop production, and only 3% is considered high potential land.

Although the commercial farming sector is relatively well developed, people in some rural areas still survive on subsistence agriculture. It is the eighth largest wine producer in the world, and the eleventh largest producer of sunflower seed. South Africa is a net exporter of agricultural products and foodstuffs, the largest number of exported items being sugar, grapes, citrus, nectarines, wine and deciduous fruit. The largest locally produced crop is maize (corn), and it has been estimated that 9 million tons are produced every year, with 7.4 million tons being consumed. Livestock are also popular on South African farms, with the country producing 85% of all meat consumed. The dairy industry consists of around 4,300 milk producers providing employment for 60,000 farm workers and contributing to the livelihoods of around 40,000 others.

In recent years, the agricultural sector has introduced several reforms, some of which are controversial, such as land reform and the deregulation of the market for agricultural products. Land reform has been criticised both by farmers' groups and by landless workers, the latter alleging that the pace of change has not been fast enough, and the former alleging racist treatment and expressing concerns that a similar situation to Zimbabwe's land reform policy may develop, a fear exacerbated by comments made by the country's deputy president. The sector continues to face problems, with increased foreign competition and crime being two of the major challenges for the industry. The government has been accused of not devoting enough time and money to tackle the problem of farm attacks as opposed to other forms of violent crime.



Workers planting on a farm in the central area of Mpumalanga.



Farm workers.



Another issue which affects South African agriculture is environmental damage caused by misuse of the land and global climate change. South Africa is unusually vulnerable to climate change and resultant diminution of surface waters. Some predictions shows surface water supply could decrease by 60% by the year 2070 in parts of the Western Cape. To reverse the damage caused by land mismanagement, the government has supported a scheme which promotes sustainable development and the use of natural resources.

Demographics

South Africa is a nation of more than 47 million people of diverse origins, cultures, languages, and religions. The last census was held in 2001 and the next will be in 2011. Statistics South Africa provided five racial categories by which people could classify themselves, the last of which, "unspecified/other" drew negligible responses, and these results were omitted. The 2006 midyear estimated figures for the other categories were Black African at 79.5%, White at 9.2%, Coloured at 8.9%, and Indian or Asian at 2.5%. Even though South Africa's population has increased in the past decade (primarily due to immigration), the country had an annual population growth rate of -0.46% in 2007.

By far the major part of the population classified itself as African or black, but it is not culturally or linguistically homogeneous. Major ethnic groups include the Zulu, Xhosa, Basotho (South Sotho), Bapedi (North Sotho), Venda, Tswana, Tsonga, Swazi and Ndebele, all of which speak Bantu languages (see *Bantu peoples of South Africa*).

Some, such as the Zulu, Xhosa, Bapedi and Venda groups, are unique to South Africa. Other groups are distributed across the borders with South Africa's neighbours: The Basotho group is also the major ethnic group in Lesotho. The Tswana ethnic group constitute the majority of the population of Botswana. The Swazi ethnic group is the major ethnic group in Swaziland. The Ndebele ethnic group is also found in Matabeleland in Zimbabwe, where they are known as the Matabele. These Ndebele people are however in effect Zulu people because the language they speak is Zulu and they are the descendants of a faction under the warrior Mzilikazi that escaped persecution from Shaka by migrating to their current territory. The Tsonga ethnic group is also found in southern Mozambique, where they are known as the Shangaan.

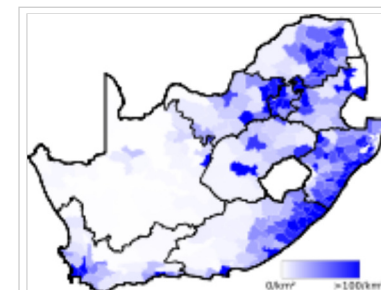
The white population is not ethnically homogenous and descend from many ethnic groups: Dutch, German, French Huguenot, and British. Culturally and linguistically, they are divided into the Afrikaners, who speak Afrikaans, and English-speaking groups, many of whom are descended from British immigrants (see *Anglo African*). Many small communities that have immigrated over the last century retain the use of other languages. The white population is on the decrease due to a low birth rate and emigration; as a factor in their decision to emigrate, many cite the high crime rate and the government's affirmative action policies. Since 1994, around one hundred thousand white South Africans have emigrated.

The term " Coloured" is still largely used for the people of mixed race descended from slaves brought in from East and Central Africa, the indigenous Khoisan who lived in the Cape at the time, indigenous African Blacks, Whites (mostly the Dutch/ Afrikaner and British settlers) as well as an admixture of Javanese, Malay, Indian, Malagasy and other European (such as

Historical populations

| Year | Pop. | %± |
|-------------|------------------|-------|
| 1900 | 5,014,000 | — |
| 1910 | 5,842,000 | 16.5% |
| 1920 | 6,953,000 | 19.0% |
| 1930 | 8,580,000 | 23.4% |
| 1940 | 10,341,000 | 20.5% |
| 1950 | 13,310,000 | 28.7% |
| 1960 | 16,385,000 | 23.1% |
| 1970 | 21,794,000 | 33.0% |
| 1980 | 24,261,000 | 11.3% |
| 1990 | 37,944,000 | 56.4% |
| 2000 | 43,686,000 | 15.1% |
| 2007 | 48,000,000 (est) | 9.9% |

<http://populstat.info/Africa/safricag.htm>



Population density by municipality. Large areas of South Africa are sparsely populated.



Portuguese) and Asian blood (such as Burmese). The majority speak Afrikaans. Khoisan is a term used to describe two separate groups, physically similar in that they were light-skinned and small in stature. The Khoikhoi, who were called *Hottentots* by the Europeans, were pastoralists and were effectively annihilated; the San, called Bushmen by the Europeans, were hunter-gatherers. Within what is known as the Coloured community, more recent immigrants will also be found: Coloureds from the former Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Namibia and immigrants of mixed descent from India and Burma (Anglo-Indians/ Anglo-Burmese) who were welcomed to the Cape when India and Burma received their Independence.

The major part of the Asian population of the country is Indian in origin (see Indian South Africans), many of them descended from indentured workers brought in the nineteenth century to work on the sugar plantations of the eastern coastal area then known as Natal. There is also a significant group of Chinese South Africans (approximately 100,000 individuals) and Vietnamese South Africans (approximately 50,000 individuals).

Religion

According to the latest 2001 national census, Christians accounted for 79.7% of the population. This includes Zion Christian 11.1%, Pentecostal (Charismatic) 8.2%, Catholic 7.1%, Methodist 6.8%, Dutch Reformed 6.7%, Anglican 3.8%, and other Christian 36%. Islam accounted for 1.5% of the population, Hinduism about 1.3%. 15.1% had no religious affiliation, 2.3% were other and 1.4% were unspecified.

African Indigenous Churches were the largest of the Christian groups. It was believed that many of these persons who claimed no affiliation with any organised religion adhered to traditional indigenous religions. Many persons combined Christian and traditional indigenous religious practices.

Islam probably pre-dates the colonial period, and consisted of isolated contact with Arab and East African traders. Many South African Muslims are described as Coloureds, notably in the Western Cape, including those whose ancestors came as slaves from the Indonesian archipelago (the Cape Malays). Others are described as Indians, notably in KwaZulu-Natal, including those whose ancestors came as traders from South Asia; they have been joined by others from other parts of Africa as well as white or black South African converts. It is estimated that Islam is the fastest growing religion of conversion in the country, with the number of black Muslims growing sixfold, from 12,000 in 1991 to 74,700 in 2004.

Hinduism dates back to British Colonial period primarily but later waves of continuous immigrants from India have contributed to sizeable Hindu population. Most Hindus are predominantly ethnically South Asians but there are many who come from mixed racial stock and many are converts with the efforts of Hindu missionaries such as ISKCON. Other religions in smaller numbers are Sikhism, Jainism and Bahai Faith.

Culture



It may be argued that there is no "single" culture in South Africa because of its ethnic diversity. Today, the diversity in foods from many cultures is enjoyed by all and especially marketed to tourists who wish to sample the large variety of South African cuisine. In addition to food, music and dance feature prominently.

South African cuisine is heavily meat-based and has spawned the distinctively South African social gathering known as a *braai*, or barbecue. South Africa has also developed into a major wine producer, with some of the best vineyards lying in valleys around Stellenbosch, Franschoek, Paarl and Barrydale.

There is great diversity in music from South Africa. Many black musicians who sang in Afrikaans or English during apartheid have since begun to sing in traditional African languages, and have developed a unique style called Kwaito. Of note is Brenda Fassie, who launched to fame with her song "Weekend Special", which was sung in English. More famous traditional musicians include Ladysmith Black Mambazo, while the Soweto String Quartet performs classic music with an African flavour. White and Coloured South African singers are historically influenced by European musical styles including such western metal bands such as Seether (formerly Saron Gas). South Africa has produced world-famous jazz musicians, notably Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa, Abdullah Ibrahim, Miriam Makeba, Jonathan Butler, Chris McGregor, and Sathima Bea Benjamin. Afrikaans music covers multiple genres, such as the contemporary Steve Hofmeyr and the punk rock band Fokofpolisiekar. Crossover artists such as Johnny Clegg and his bands Juluka and Savuka have enjoyed various success underground, publicly, and abroad.

The country's black majority still has a substantial number of rural inhabitants who lead largely impoverished lives. It is among these people, however, that cultural traditions survive most strongly; as blacks have become increasingly urbanised and westernised, aspects of traditional culture have declined. Urban blacks usually speak English or Afrikaans in addition to their native tongue. There are smaller but still significant groups of speakers of Khoisan languages which are not included in the eleven official languages, but are one of the eight other officially recognised languages. There are small groups of speakers of endangered languages, most of which are from the Khoi-San family, that receive no official status; however, some groups within South Africa are attempting to promote their use and revival.

The middle class lifestyle, predominantly of the white minority but with growing numbers of Black, Coloured and Indian people, is similar in many respects to that of people found in Western Europe, North America and Australasia. Members of the middle class often study and work abroad for greater exposure to the world's markets.

Asians, predominantly of Indian origin, preserve their own cultural heritage, languages and religious beliefs, being either Christian, Hindu or Sunni Muslim and speaking English, with Indian languages like Hindi, Telugu, Tamil or Gujarati being spoken less frequently, but the majority of Indians being able to understand their mother tongue. The first Indians arrived on the famous Truro ship as indentured labourers in Natal to work the Sugar Cane Fields. There is a much smaller Chinese community in South Africa, although its numbers have increased due to immigration from Republic of China (Taiwan).

South Africa has also had a large influence in the Scouting movement, with many Scouting traditions and ceremonies coming from the experiences of Robert Baden-Powell (the founder of Scouting) during his time in South Africa as a military officer in the 1890s. The South African Scout Association was one of the



Prison Buildings on Robben Island, the holding place of several anti-apartheid fighters including Nelson Mandela, who was imprisoned there for eighteen years. Robben Island is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site



Decorated houses, Drakensberg Mountains



first youth organisations to open its doors to youth and adults of all races in South Africa. This happened on 2 July 1977 at a conference known as *Quo Vadis*.

Languages

South Africa has eleven official languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. In this regard it is second only to India in number. While each language is technically equal to every other, some languages are spoken more than others. According to the 2001 National Census, the three most spoken first home languages are Zulu (23.8%), Xhosa (17.6%) and Afrikaans (13.3%).

There are eleven official names for South Africa, one in each of the official national languages.

The country also recognizes eight non-official languages: Fanagalo, Khoe, Lobedu, Nama, Northern Ndebele, Phuthi, San and South African Sign Language. These non-official languages may be used in certain official uses in limited areas where it has been determined that these languages are prevalent. Nevertheless, their populations are not such that they require nationwide recognition.

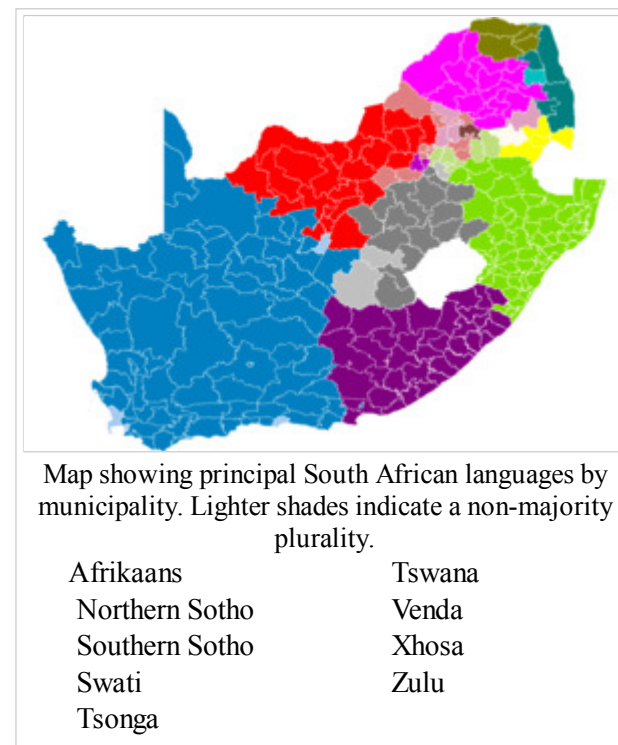
Many of the "unofficial languages" of the San and Khoikhoi people contain regional dialects stretching northward into Namibia and Botswana, and elsewhere. These people, who are a physically distinct population from other Africans, have their own cultural identity based on their hunter-gatherer societies. They have been marginalised to a great extent, and many of their languages are in danger of becoming extinct.

Many white South Africans also speak other European languages, such as Portuguese (also spoken by Angolan and Mozambican blacks), German, and Greek, while some Asians and Indians in South Africa speak South Asian languages, such as Telugu, Hindi, Gujarati and Tamil.

Sports

The main sports in South Africa are football, rugby union, cricket and boxing. Other sports with significant support are swimming, golf and netball. Basketball, surfing and skateboarding are popular among the youth.

Famous boxing personalities include Baby Jake Jacob Matlala, Vuyani Bungu, Welcome Ncita, "the rose of Soweto" Dinga Thobela, Gerrie Coetzee and Brian Mitchell. Soccer players who have excelled in international clubs include Lucas Radebe of Leeds United and Quinton Fortune, formerly of Manchester United, Benni McCarthy of Blackburn Rovers and Steven Pienaar of Everton. South Africa produced Formula 1 motor racing's 1979 world champion Jody Scheckter. Sarel van der Merwe won many national titles during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s.





South Africa hosted and won the 1995 Rugby World Cup at their first attempt and again won the 2007 Rugby World Cup in France, beating reigning champions England in the final. This is quite remarkable because South Africa was only allowed to participate from 1995 since the end of Apartheid, meaning they won 2 out of the 4 tournaments they participated in. It followed the 1995 Rugby World Cup final by hosting and winning the 1996 African Cup of Nations football tournament. It also hosted the 2003 Cricket World Cup and the Pro20 Cricket World Cup in 2007. South Africa will be the host nation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which will be the first time the tournament is held on the African continent.

In 2004, the team of Roland Schoeman, Lyndon Ferns, Darian Townsend and Ryk Neethling won the gold medal at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, simultaneously breaking the world record in the 4x100 freestyle relay. Schoeman, Ferns, and Neethling trained at the University of Arizona. Previously Penny Heyns won Olympic Gold in the 1996 olympics. Several other swimmers have participated and won in international swimming events.

Health

HIV/AIDS

The spread of AIDS (acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome) is an alarming problem in South Africa with up to 31% of pregnant women found to be HIV infected in 2005 and the infection rate among adults estimated at 20%. The link between HIV, a virus spread primarily by sexual contact, and AIDS has long been denied by the president and the health minister, who have insisted that the many deaths in the country are due to malnutrition, and hence poverty, and not HIV. Recently, in 2007, the government made efforts to fight AIDS..

AIDS affects mainly those who are sexually active and is far more prevalent in the black population. Most deaths are people who are also economically active, resulting in many families losing their primary wage earners. This has resulted in many 'AIDS orphans' who in many cases depend on the state for care and financial support. It is estimated that there are 1,200,000 orphans in South Africa. Many elderly people also lose the support from lost younger members of their family.

Roughly 5 million people are infected with the disease.

Malaria

According to Statistics South Africa, malaria death rates increased between 1997 and 1999, and decreased between 1999 and 2004. That said, deaths from malaria among males increased 45% between 1997 and 2004, and among females it increased 93% during the same period.

Crime

Owing to the fact that very little accurate information on crime is available for the other African countries, it is difficult to judge how South Africa fares against the rest of the continent, crime-wise. International comparative studies on crime generally do not take into account African countries for which recent statistics



are not available.

According to a survey for the period 1998–2000 compiled by the United Nations, South Africa was ranked second for assault and murder (by all means) per capita, in addition to being ranked second for rape and first for rapes per capita. Total crime per capita is tenth out of the sixty countries in the data set.

Crime has had a pronounced effect on society: many middle-class South Africans moved into gated communities, abandoning the central business districts of some cities for the relative security of suburbs. This effect is most pronounced in Johannesburg, although the trend is noticeable in other cities as well. Many emigrants from South Africa also state that crime was a big motivator for them to leave. Crime against the farming community has continued to be a major problem.

Military

South Africa's armed forces, known as the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), was created in 1994. Previously known simply as the South African Defence Force (SADF), the new force consists of the forces of the old SADF, as well as the forces of the African nationalist groups, namely Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), and the former Bantustan defence forces. The SANDF is subdivided into four branches, the South African Army, the South African Air Force, the South African Navy, and the South African Military Health Services.

In recent years, the SANDF has become a major peacekeeping force in Africa, and has been involved in operations in Lesotho, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi, amongst others. It has also participated as a part of multi-national UN peacekeeping forces.

South Africa undertook a nuclear weapons program in the 1970s and may have conducted a nuclear test over the Atlantic in 1979. It has since renounced its nuclear program and signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1991. It is the only African country to have successfully developed nuclear weapons.

Tourism

South Africa is a popular tourist destination, and a substantial amount of revenue comes from tourism. Among the main attractions are the diverse and picturesque culture, the game reserves and the highly regarded local wines. In recent years, tourism in South Africa has seen high growth with the first five months of 2007 showing the highest levels of tourism in South Africa since 1998. Figures released by Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism show a decided increase in foreign visitors.

International rankings

| Organisation | Survey | Ranking |
|--------------|--------|---------|
|--------------|--------|---------|



| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A.T. Kearney/ Foreign Policy Magazine | Globalization Index 2005 | 48 out of 62 |
| Heritage Foundation/The Wall Street Journal | 2007 Index of Economic Freedom | 52 out of 157 |
| IMD International | World Competitiveness Yearbook 2005 | 46 out of 60 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Press Freedom Index (2007) | 43 out of 169 |
| Save the Children | Children's Index Rank 2005 | 65 out of 110 |
| The Economist | Worldwide Quality-of-Life Index 2005 | 92 out of 111 |
| Transparency International | Corruption Perceptions Index 2007 | 43 out of 179 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index 2006 | 121 out of 177 |
| World Economic Forum | Global Competitiveness Report 2006-2007 | 45 out of 125 |
| Yale University Centre for Environmental Law and Policy and Columbia University Centre for International Earth Science Information Network | Environmental Sustainability Index | 96 out of 146 countries |

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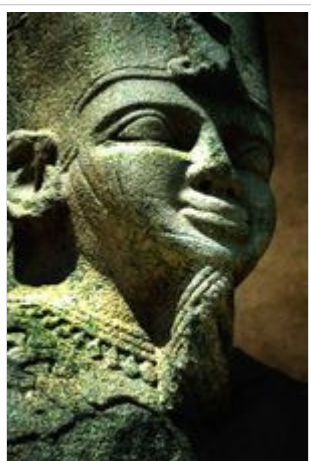


Sudan

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Sudan (officially the **Republic of Sudan**) (Arabic: السودان as-Sūdān) is the largest country in Africa and tenth largest country in the world by area. It is bordered by Egypt to the north, the Red Sea to the northeast, Eritrea and Ethiopia to the east, Kenya and Uganda to the southeast, Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic to the southwest, Chad to the west and Libya to the northwest. The country's name derives from the Arabic *Bilad-al-sudan*, literally "country of the blacks."

History



Statue of a Nubian king, Sudan.

Early history of Sudan

Archaeological evidence has confirmed that the area in the north of Sudan was inhabited at least 60,000 years ago. A settled culture appeared in the area around 8000 BCE, living in fortified mud-brick villages, where they subsisted on hunting and fishing, as well as grain gathering and cattle herding.

The area was known to the Egyptians as Kush and had strong cultural and religious ties to Egypt. In the 8th century BCE, however, Kush came under the rule of an aggressive line of monarchs, ruling from the capital city, Napata, who gradually extended their influence into Egypt. About 750 BCE, a Kushite king called Kashta conquered Upper Egypt and became ruler of Thebes until approximately 740 BCE. His successor, Piankhy, subdued the delta, reunited Egypt under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, and founded a line of kings who ruled Kush and Thebes for about a hundred years. The dynasty's

intervention in the area of modern Syria caused a confrontation between Egypt and Assyria. When the Assyrians in retaliation invaded Egypt, Taharqa (688-663 BCE), the last Kushite pharaoh, withdrew and returned the dynasty to Napata, where it continued to rule Kush and extended its dominions to the south and east.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>جمهورية السودان <i>Jumhūriyyat as-Sūdān</i> Republic of Sudan Republic of (the) Sudan</p> | |
|  | |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| <p>Motto: <i>Al-Nasr Lana</i>" (Arabic) "Victory is Ours"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: نحن جند الله جند الوطن (Arabic) <i>We are the Army of God and of Our Land</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Capital | Khartoum |
| Largest city | Omdurman |



In 590 BCE, an Egyptian army sacked Napata, compelling the Kushite court to move to Meroe near the 6th cataract. The Meroitic kingdom subsequently developed independently of Egypt, and during the height of its power in the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE, Meroe extended over a region from the 3rd cataract in the north to Sawba, near present-day Khartoum (the modern day capital of Sudan).

The pharaonic tradition persisted among Meroe's rulers, who raised stelae to record the achievements of their reigns and erected pyramids to contain their tombs. These objects and the ruins of palaces, temples and baths at Meroe attest to a centralized political system that employed artisans' skills and commanded the labour of a large work force. A well-managed irrigation system allowed the area to support a higher population density than was possible during later periods. By the 1st century BCE, the use of hieroglyphs gave way to a Meroitic script that adapted the Egyptian writing system to an indigenous, Nubian-related language spoken later by the region's people.

In the 2nd century CE, the people known as the Nobatae occupied the Nile's west bank in northern Kush. Eventually they intermarried and established themselves among the Meroitic people as a military aristocracy. Until nearly the 5th century, Rome subsidized the Nobatae and used Meroe as a buffer between Egypt and the Blemmyes. About CE 350, an Axumite army from Abyssinia captured and destroyed Meroe city, ending the kingdom's independent existence.

Christian kingdoms

By the 6th century, three states had emerged as the political and cultural heirs of the Meroitic kingdom. Nobatia in the north, also known as Ballanah, had its capital at Faras, in what is now Egypt; the central kingdom, Muqurra (Makuria), was centred at Dunqulah, about 150 kilometers south of modern Dunqulah; and Alawa (Alodia), in the heartland of old Meroe, which had its capital at Sawba (now a suburb of modern-day Khartoum). In all three kingdoms, warrior aristocracies ruled Meroitic populations from royal courts where functionaries bore Greek titles in emulation of the Byzantine court.

A missionary sent by Byzantine empress Theodora arrived in Nobatia and started preaching the Gospel of Christ about 540 AD. The Nubian kings became Monophysite Christians. However, Makuria was of the Melkite Christian faith, unlike Nobatia and Alodia.

The spread of Islam

After many attempts at military conquest failed, the Arab commander in Egypt concluded the first in a series of regularly renewed treaties known as AlBaqt (pactum) with the Nubians that governed relations

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Official languages | Arabic, English (in South) |
| Demonym | Sudanese |
| Government | Government of National Unity (GONU) |
| - President | Omar Hassan al-Bashir |
| - First Vice President | Salva Kiir |
| - Second Vice President | Ali Osman Taha |
| Independence | |
| - from Egypt and the United Kingdom | January 1, 1956 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 2,505,813 km ² (10th) 967,495 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 6 |
| Population | |
| - July 2007 estimate | 39,379,358 (33rd) |
| - 1993 census | 24,940,683 |
| - Density | 14/km ² (194th) 36/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$107.8 billion (62nd) |
| - Per capita | \$2,522 ▲9.6% (134th) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.521 (medium) (148th) |
| Currency | Sudanese pound (SDG) |
| Time zone | East Africa Time (UTC+3) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+3) |



between the two peoples for more than 600 years.

Islam progressed in the area over a long period of time through intermarriage and contacts with Arab merchants and settlers. In 1315, a Muslim prince of Nubian royal blood ascended the throne of Dunqulah as king.

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Internet TLD | .sd |
| Calling code | +249 |

The two most important Arabic-speaking groups to emerge in Nubia were the Jaali and the Juhayna. Both showed physical continuity with the indigenous pre-Islamic population. Today's northern Sudanese culture combines Nubian and Arabic elements.

Kingdom of Sinnar

During the 1600s, the people called the Funj under a leader named Amara Dunqus appeared in southern Nubia and supplanted the remnants of the old Christian kingdom of Alwa, establishing As-Saltana az-Zarqa (the Blue Sultanate) at Sinnar. The Blue Sultanate eventually became the keystone of the Funj Empire. By the mid-16th century, Sinnar controlled Al Jazirah and commanded the allegiance of vassal states and tribal districts north to the 3rd cataract and south to the rain forests. The government was substantially weakened by a series of succession arguments and coups within the royal family. In 1820 Muhammad Ali of Egypt sent 4,000 troops to invade Sudan. The pasha's forces accepted Sinnar's surrender from the last Funj sultan, Badi IV.

Union with Egypt 1821-1885

In 1820, the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali Pasha invaded and conquered northern Sudan. Though technically the Wali of Egypt under the Ottoman Sultan, Muhammad Ali styled himself as Khedive of a virtually independent Egypt. Seeking to add Sudan to his domains, he sent his son Ibrahim Pasha to conquer the country, and subsequently incorporate it into Egypt. This policy was expanded and intensified by Ibrahim's son, Ismail I, under whose reign most of the remainder of modern-day Sudan was conquered. The Egyptian authorities made significant improvements to the Sudanese infrastructure (mainly in the north), especially with regard to irrigation and cotton production.

Mahdist Revolt

In 1879, the Great Powers forced the removal of Ismail and his replacement by his son Tewfik I. Tewfik's corruption and mismanagement resulted in the Orabi Revolt, which threatened the Khedive's survival. Tewfik appealed for help to the British, who subsequently occupied Egypt and Sudan in 1882, ostensibly to guarantee the authority of the Khedive. In reality, however, the British largely took control of Egyptian and Sudanese affairs, fanning ever greater nationalist resentment.

Eventually, revolt broke out in Sudan, led by the Sudanese religious leader Muhammad ibn Abdalla, the self-proclaimed Mahdi (Guided One), who sought to purify Islam and end foreign domination in Sudan. His revolt culminated in the fall of Khartoum and the death of the British General Charles George Gordon (Gordon of Khartoum) in 1885. The Egyptian and British forces withdrew from Sudan leaving the Mahdi to form a short-lived theocratic state.



Mahdist Rule: The Mahdiya

The Mahdiyyah (Mahdist regime) imposed traditional Islamic laws. Sudan's new ruler also authorized the burning of lists of pedigrees and books of law and theology because of their association with the old order and because he believed that the former accentuated tribalism at the expense of religious unity.

The Mahdiyyah has become known as the first genuine Sudanese nationalist government. The Mahdi maintained that his movement was not a religious order that could be accepted or rejected at will, but that it was a universal regime, which challenged man to join or to be destroyed. Originally, the Mahdiyyah was a jihad state, run like a military camp. Sharia courts enforced Islamic law and the Mahdi's precepts, which had the force of law. Six months after the fall of Khartoum, the Mahdi died of typhus, and after a power struggle amongst his deputies, Abdallahi ibn Muhammad, with the help primarily of the Baqqara Arabs of western Sudan, overcame the opposition of the others and emerged as unchallenged leader of the Mahdiyyah. After consolidating his power, Abdallahi ibn Muhammad assumed the title of Khalifa (successor) of the Mahdi, instituted an administration, and appointed Ansar (who were usually Baqqara) as emirs over each of the several provinces.

Regional relations remained tense throughout much of the Mahdiyyah period, largely because of the Khalifa's commitment to using the jihad to extend his version of Islam throughout the world. In 1887, a 60,000-man Ansar army invaded Ethiopia, penetrating as far as Gondar. In March 1889, king Yohannes IV of Ethiopia, marched on Metemma; however, after Yohannes fell in battle, the Ethiopian forces withdrew. Abd ar Rahman an Nujumi, the Khalifa's best general, invaded Egypt in 1889, but British-led Egyptian troops defeated the Ansar at Tushkah. The failure of the Egyptian invasion broke the spell of the Ansar's invincibility. The Belgians prevented the Mahdi's men from conquering Equatoria, and in 1893, the Italians repulsed an Ansar attack at Akordat (in Eritrea) and forced the Ansar to withdraw from Ethiopia.

Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1899-1956

In the 1890s, the British sought to re-establish their control over Sudan, once more officially in the name of the Egyptian Khedive, but in actuality treating the country as British imperial territory. By the early 1890s, British, French, and Belgian claims had converged at the Nile headwaters. Britain feared that the other imperial powers would take advantage of Sudan's instability to acquire territory previously annexed to Egypt. Apart from these political considerations, Britain wanted to establish control over the Nile to safeguard a planned irrigation dam at Aswan.

Lord Kitchener led military campaigns from 1896 to 1898. Kitchener's campaigns culminated in the Battle of Omdurman. Following defeat of the Mahdists at Omdurman, an agreement was reached in 1899 establishing Anglo-Egyptian rule, under which Sudan was run by a governor-general appointed by Egypt with British consent. In reality, much to the revulsion of Egyptian and Sudanese nationalists, Sudan was effectively administered as a British colony. The British were keen to reverse the process, started under Muhammad Ali Pasha, of uniting the Nile Valley under Egyptian leadership, and sought to frustrate all efforts aimed at further uniting the two countries.

During World War II, Sudan was directly involved militarily in the East African Campaign. Formed in 1925, the Sudan Defence Force (SDF) played an active part in responding to the early incursions into the Sudan from Italian East Africa during 1940. In 1941, the SDF also played a part in the invasion of the Italian colony by British and Commonwealth forces.



From 1924 until independence in 1956, the British had a policy of running Sudan as two essentially separate territories, the north and south. The last British Governor-General was Sir Robert Howe. Howe was Governor-General from 1947 to 1955.

Independence January 1, 1956

The continued British occupation of Sudan fueled an increasingly strident nationalist backlash in Egypt, with Egyptian nationalist leaders determined to force Britain to recognise a single independent union of Egypt **and** Sudan. With the formal end of Ottoman rule in 1914, Husayn Kamil was declared Sultan of Egypt and Sudan, as was his brother Fuad I who succeeded him. The insistence of a single Egyptian-Sudanese state persisted when the Sultanate was re-titled the Kingdom of Egypt and Sudan, but the British continued to frustrate these efforts.

The first real independence attempt was made in 1924 by a group of Sudanese military officers known as The White Flag Association. The group was led by first lieutenant Ali Abdullatif and first lieutenant Abdul Fadil Almaz. The latter led an insurrection of the military training academy, which ended in their defeat and the death of Almaz after the British army blew up the military hospital where he was garrisoned. This defeat was (allegedly) partially the result of the Egyptian garrison in Khartoum North not supporting the insurrection with artillery as was previously promised.

Even when the British ended their occupation of Egypt in 1936 (with the exception of the Suez Canal Zone), Sudan remained under British occupation. The Egyptian Revolution of 1952 finally heralded the beginning of the march towards Sudanese independence. Having abolished the monarchy in 1953, Egypt's new leaders, Muhammad Naguib, whose mother was Sudanese, and Gamal Abdel-Nasser, believed the only way to end British domination in Sudan was for Egypt to officially abandon its sovereignty over Sudan. Since Britain's own claim to sovereignty in Sudan theoretically depended upon Egyptian sovereignty, the revolutionaries calculated that this tactic would leave Britain with no option but to withdraw. Their calculation proved to be correct, and in 1954 the governments of Egypt and Britain signed a treaty guaranteeing Sudanese independence on January 1, 1956.

Afterwards, the newly elected Sudanese government led by the first prime minister Ismael Al-Azhari, went ahead with the process of Sudanisation of the state's government, with the help and supervision of an international committee. Independence was duly granted and on January 1, 1956, in a special ceremony held at the People's Palace where the Egyptian and British flags were lowered and the new Sudanese flag, composed of green, blue and yellow stripes, was raised in their place.

First Sudanese Civil War 1955 - 1972

In 1955, the year before independence, a civil war began between northern and southern Sudan. The southerners, anticipating independence, feared the new nation would be dominated by the north.

Historically, the north of Sudan had closer ties with Egypt and was predominantly Arab and Muslim while the south was predominantly a mixture of Christianity and Animism. These divisions had been further emphasized by the British policy of ruling the north and south under separate administrations. From 1924, it was illegal for people living above the 10th parallel to go further south and for people below the 8th parallel to go further north. The law was ostensibly enacted to prevent the spread of malaria and other tropical diseases that had ravaged British troops, as well as to facilitate spreading Christianity among the predominantly



Animist population while stopping the Arabic and Islamic influence from advancing south. The result was increased isolation between the already distinct north and south and arguably laid the seeds of conflict in the years to come.

The resulting conflict, known as the First Sudanese Civil War, lasted from 1955 to 1972. In 1972, a cessation of the north-south conflict was agreed upon under the terms of the Addis Ababa Agreement, following talks which were sponsored by the World Council of Churches. This led to a ten-year hiatus in the national conflict.

Second Sudanese Civil War 1983 - 2005

In 1983, the civil war was reignited following President Gaafar Nimeiri's decision to circumvent the Addis Ababa Agreement. President Gaafar Nimeiry attempted to create a federated Sudan including states in southern Sudan, which violated the Addis Ababa Agreement that had granted the south considerable autonomy.

Southern Sudan

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), based in southern Sudan and opposing the Islamic government in the north, formed in May 1983. Finally, in June 1983, the Sudanese government under President Gaafar Nimeiry abrogated the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement (A.A.A.) . The situation was exacerbated after President Gaafar Nimeiry went on to implement Sharia Law in September of the same year .

The war continued even after Numeiri was ousted and a democratic government was elected with Al Sadig Al Mahdi's Umma Party having the majority in the parliament. The leader of the SPLA John Garang refused to recognize the government and to negotiate with it as representative of Sudan but agreed to negotiate with government officials as representative of their political parties.

In 1989, a bloodless coup brought control of Khartoum into the hands of Omar al-Bashir and the National Islamic Front headed by Dr. Hassan al-Turabi. The new government was of Islamic orientation and later it formed the Popular Defence Forces (al Difaa al Shaabi) and began to use religious propaganda to recruit people, as the regular army was demoralised and under pressure from the SPLA rebels. This worsened the situation in the tribal south, as the fighting became more intense, causing casualties among the Christian and animist minority.

The SPLA started as a Marxist movement, with support from the Soviet Union and the Ethiopian Marxist President Mengistu Haile Meriem. In time, however, it sought support in the West by using the northern Sudanese government's religious propaganda to portray the war as a campaign by the Arab Islamic government to impose Islam and the Arabic language on the Christian south.

The war went on for more than 20 years, including the use of Russian-made combat helicopters and military cargo planes which were used as bombers to devastating effect on villages and tribal rebels alike. "Sudan's independent history has been dominated by chronic, exceptionally cruel warfare that has starkly divided the country on racial, religious, and regional grounds; displaced an estimated four million people (of a total estimated population of thirty-two million); and killed an estimated two million people." It damaged Sudan's economy and led to food shortages, resulting in starvation and malnutrition. The lack of



investment during this time, particularly in the south, meant a generation lost access to basic health services, education, and jobs.

It is important to distinguish the Sudanese Arab from other Arabs of the Middle East. Sudanese Arabs are descended primarily from the ancient Nubians. In terms of racial origin, it is not clear what specific racial or ethnic group the Nubians originated from. Over a period of centuries, Arab immigration into the Sudan, intermarriage among Nubians and Arabs, and the introduction of Islam and the Arabic language, Arabised the Nubians into the Sudanese Arab of today. In appearance, the Nubians are similar to some Ethiopians and Eritreans; at one point, they shared a common history with the latter (See ancient Kush, and Axum). The Sudanese Arabs are further divided into many different tribes of Nubian or Arab origin, and some Sudanese speak a Nubian language as a mother tongue, and Arabic as a second language. This process of Arabisation was repeated throughout North Africa and the Middle East, i.e., in Libya, where the indigenous Berbers and conquering Arabs merged to form the modern Libyan Arab, as distinguished from the Persians of Iran, who accepted Islam, but rejected Arabic, and an Arab identity.

Peace talks between the southern rebels and the government made substantial progress in 2003 and early 2004. The peace was consolidated with the official signing by both sides of the Nairobi Comprehensive Peace Agreement 9 January 2005, granting southern Sudan autonomy for six years, to be followed by a referendum about independence. It created a co-vice president position and allowed the north and south to split oil deposits equally, but also left both the north's and south's armies in place. John Garang, the south's peace agreement appointed co-vice president died in a helicopter crash on August 1, 2005, three weeks after being sworn in. This resulted in riots, but the peace was eventually able to continue.

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) was established under UN Security Council Resolution 1590 of March 24, 2005. Its mandate is to support implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and to perform functions relating to humanitarian assistance, and protection and promotion of human rights.

In October 2007 the former southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) withdrew from government in protest over slow implementation of a landmark 2005 peace deal which ended the civil war. Observers say the biggest obstacle to reconciliation is the unresolved status of the oil-rich region of Abyei, which is on the north-south border. Few weeks afterwards, leading Islamist opposition party leader Hassan al-Turabi affirmed that South Sudan could unilaterally split from the north because of a dispute over the region of Abyei.

Darfur conflict 2003 - Present



Just as the long north-south civil war was reaching a resolution, some tribal clashes occurred in the western region of Darfur in the early 1970s between the pastoral tribes and the agricultural tribes after Africa's greatest famine. The rebels accused the central government of neglecting the Darfur region economically, although there is uncertainty regarding the objectives of the rebels and whether they merely seek an improved position for Darfur within Sudan or outright "secession." Both the government and the rebels have been accused of atrocities in this war, although most of the blame has fallen on Arab militias known as the Janjaweed, who are armed men appointed by the Al Saddiq Al Mahdi administration to stop the long standing chaotic disputes between Darfur tribes. The rebels have alleged that these militias have been engaging in genocide; the fighting has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, many of them seeking refuge in neighbouring Chad. The government claimed victory over the rebels after capturing a town on the border with Chad in early 1994. However, the fighting resumed in 2003.

On September 9, 2004, the United States Secretary of State Colin Powell termed the Darfur conflict a "genocide", claiming it as the worst humanitarian crisis of the 21st century. There have been reports that the Janjaweed have been launching raids, bombings, and attacks on villages, killing civilians based on ethnicity, raping women, stealing land, goods, and herds of livestock. So far, over 2.5 million civilians have been displaced and the death toll is variously estimated at 200,000 to 400,000 killed.

On May 5, 2006, the Sudanese government and Darfur's largest rebel group the SLM (Sudan Liberation Movement) signed the Darfur Peace Agreement, which aimed at ending the three-year long conflict. The agreement specified the disarmament of the Janjaweed and the disbandment of the rebel forces, and aimed at establishing a temporal government in which the rebels could take part. The agreement, which was brokered by the African Union, however, was not signed by all of the rebel groups.

Since the agreement was signed, however, there have been reports of wide-spread violence throughout the region. A new rebel group has emerged called the "National Redemption Front" (which is made up of the 4 main rebel groups who refused to sign the May peace agreement). Recently, both the Sudanese government and government-sponsored Muslim militias have launched large offensives against the rebel groups, resulting in more deaths and more displacements. Clashes among the rebel groups have also contributed to the violence. Recent fighting along the Chad border has left hundreds of soldiers and rebel forces dead and nearly a quarter of a million refugees cut from aid. In addition, villages have been bombed and more civilians have been killed. UNICEF recently reported that around 80 infants die each day in Darfur as a result of malnutrition.

The people in Darfur are predominantly black Africans of Muslim beliefs, whereas the Janjaweed militia is made up of Arabs.

The International Criminal Court has indicted State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Haroun and alleged Muslim Janjaweed militia leader Ali Mohammed Ali Mohammed Ali aka Ali Kosheib, in relation to the atrocities in the region.



Map of Northeast Africa highlighting the Darfur region of Sudan.



Ahmed Haroun belongs to the Bargou tribe one of the non Arab tribes of Darfur and is alleged to have incited attacks on specific (non Arab) ethnic groups.

Ali Kosheib is an ex soldier and a leader of the popular defence forces and is alleged to be one of the key leaders responsible for attacks on villages in west Darfur.

Chad-Sudan conflict

The Chad-Sudan conflict officially started on December 23, 2005, when the government of Chad declared a state of war with Sudan and called for the citizens of Chad to mobilize themselves against the "common enemy", which the Chadian government sees as the Rally for Democracy and Liberty (RDL) militants, Chadian rebels backed by the Sudanese government, and Sudanese militiamen. The militants attacked villages and towns in eastern Chad, stealing cattle, murdering citizens, and burning houses. Over 200,000 refugees from the Darfur region of northwestern Sudan currently claim asylum in eastern Chad. Chadian president Idriss Déby accuses Sudanese President Omar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir of trying to "destabilize our country, to drive our people into misery, to create disorder and export the war from Darfur to Chad."

The incident prompting the declaration of war was an attack on the Chadian town of Adré near the Sudanese border that led to the deaths of either one hundred rebels (as most news sources reported) or three hundred rebels. The Sudanese government was blamed for the attack, which was the second in the region in three days, but Sudanese foreign ministry spokesman Jamal Mohammed Ibrahim denied any Sudanese involvement, "We are not for any escalation with Chad. We technically deny involvement in Chadian internal affairs." The Adre attack led to the declaration of war by Chad and the alleged deployment of the Chadian air force into Sudanese airspace, which the Chadian government denies.

The leaders of Sudan and Chad signed an agreement in Saudi Arabia on May 3, 2007 to stop fighting from the Darfur conflict along their countries' 1,000-kilometre (600 mi) border.

Eastern Front

The **Eastern Front** is a coalition of rebel groups operating in eastern **Sudan** along the border with Eritrea, particularly the states of Red Sea and Kassala. The Eastern Front's Chairman is Musa Mohamed Ahmed. While the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was the primary member of the Eastern Front, the SPLA was obliged to leave by the January 2005 agreement that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War. Their place was taken in February 2004 after the merger of the larger Beja Congress with the smaller Rashaida Free Lions, two tribal based groups of the Beja and Rashaida people, respectively. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), a rebel group from Darfur in the west, then joined.

Both the Free Lions and the Beja Congress stated that government inequity in the distribution of oil profits was the cause of their rebellion. They demanded to have a greater say in the composition of the national government, which has been seen as a destabilizing influence on the agreement ending the conflict in Southern Sudan.

The Eastern Front had threatened to block the flow of crude oil, which travels from the oil fields of the south-central regions to outside markets through Port



Sudan. A government plan to build a second oil refinery near Port Sudan was also threatened. The government was reported to have three times as many soldiers in the east to suppress the rebellion and protect vital infrastructure as in the more widely reported Darfur region.

The Eritrean government in mid-2006 dramatically changed their position on the conflict. From being the main supporter of the Eastern Front they decided that bringing the Sudanese government around the negotiating table for a possible agreement with the rebels would be in their best interests. They were successful in their attempts and on the 19 June 2006, the two sides signed an agreement on declaration of principles. This was the start of four months of Eritrean-mediated negotiations for a comprehensive peace agreement between the Sudanese government and the Eastern Front, which culminated in signing of a peace agreement on 14 October 2006, in Asmara. The agreement covers security issues, power sharing at a federal and regional level, and wealth sharing in regards to the three Eastern states Kassala, Red Sea and Al Qadarif.

Humanitarian needs and 2007 floods

The humanitarian branch of the United Nations, consisting of several UN agencies coordinated by OCHA, works to bring life-saving relief to those in need. It is estimated by OCHA, that over 3.5 million people in Darfur (including 2.2 million IDPs) are heavily reliant on humanitarian aid for their survival. By contrast, in 2007 OCHA, under the leadership of Eliane Duthoit, started to gradually phase out in Southern Sudan, where humanitarian needs are gradually diminishing, and are slowly but markedly leaving the place to recovery and development activities.

In July 2007, many parts of the country were devastated by flooding, prompting an immediate humanitarian response by the United Nations and partners, under the leadership of acting United Nations Resident Coordinators David Gressly and Oluseyi Bajulaiye. Over 400,000 people were directly affected, with over 3.5 million at risk of epidemics. The United Nations have allocated US\$ 13.5 million for the response from its pooled funds, but will launch an appeal to the international community to cover the gap.

Politics



Sudan has an authoritarian government in which all effective political power is in the hands of President Omar al-Bashir. Bashir and his party have controlled the government since he led the military coup on 30 June 1989.

From 1983 to 1997, the country was divided into five regions in the north and three in the south, each headed by a military governor. After the military coup on April 6, 1985, regional assemblies were suspended. The RCC was abolished in 1993, and the ruling National Islamic Front changed its name to the National Congress Party. The new party included some non Muslim members; mainly Southern Sudanese Politicians, some of whom were appointed as ministers or state governors. After 1997, the structure of regional administration was replaced by the creation of twenty-six states. The executives, cabinets, and senior-level state officials are appointed by the president, and their limited budgets are determined by and dispensed from Khartoum. The states, as a result, remain economically dependent upon the central government. Khartoum state, comprising the capital and outlying districts, is administered by a governor.

In December 1999, a power struggle climaxed between President al-Bashir and then- speaker of parliament Hassan al-Turabi, who was the NIF founder and an Islamic ideologue. Al-Turabi was stripped of his posts in the ruling party and the government, parliament was disbanded, the constitution was suspended, and a state of national emergency was declared by presidential decree. Parliament resumed in February 2001 after the December 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections, but the national emergency laws remained in effect. Al-Turabi was arrested in February 2001, and charged with being a threat to national security and the constitutional order for signing a memorandum of understanding with the SPLA. Since then his outspoken style has had him in prison or under house-arrest, his most recent stint beginning in March 2004 and ending in June 2005. During that time he was under house-arrest for his role in a failed coup attempt in September 2003, an allegation he has denied. According to some reports, the president had no choice but to release him, given that a coalition of National Democratic Union (NDA) members headquartered in both Cairo and Eritrea, composed of the political parties known as the SPLM/A, Umma Party, Mirghani Party, and Turabi's own National People's Congress, were calling for his release at a time when an interim government was preparing to take over in accordance with the Naivasha agreement and the Machokos Accord.

Foreign relations

Sudan has had a troubled relationship with many of its neighbors and much of the international community due to what is viewed as its aggressively Islamic stance. For much of the 1990s, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia formed an ad-hoc alliance called the "Front Line States" with support from the United States to check the influence of the National Islamic Front government. The Sudanese Government supported anti-Uganda rebel groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army. Beginning from the mid-1990s Sudan gradually began to moderate its positions as a result of increased US pressure following the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings and the new development of oil fields previously in rebel hands. Sudan also has a territorial dispute with Egypt over the Hala'ib Triangle. Since 2003, the foreign relations of Sudan have centered on the support for ending the Second Sudanese Civil War and condemnation of government support for militias in the Darfur conflict.



Map of Sudan showing Khartoum.



U.S. firms have been barred from doing business in Sudan since 1997. The United States has listed Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1993.

On December 23, 2005, Chad, Sudan's neighbour to the west, declared war on Sudan and accused the country of being the "common enemy of the nation [Chad]." This happened after the December 18 attack on Adre, which left about 100 people dead. A statement issued by Chadian government on December 23, accused Sudanese militias of making daily incursions into Chad, stealing cattle, killing people and burning villages on the Chadian border. The statement went on to call for Chadians to form a patriotic front against Sudan. The Organization of the Islamic Conference(OIC) have called on Sudan and Chad to exercise self-restraint to defuse growing tensions between the two countries.

On December 27, 2005, Sudan became one of the few states to recognize Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.

On June 20, 2006 President Omar al-Bashir told reporters that he would not allow any UN peacekeeping force into Sudan. President al-Bashir denounced any such mission as "colonial forces."

On November 17, 2006, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced that "Sudan has agreed in principle to allow the establishment of a joint African Union and UN peacekeeping force in an effort to solve the crisis in Darfur" - but had stopped short of setting the number of troops involved. Annan speculated that this force could number 17,000. Despite this claim, no additional troops have been deployed as of late December 2006. Violence continues in the region and on December 15, 2006, prosecutors at the International Criminal Court (ICC) stated they would be proceeding with cases of human rights violations against members of the Sudan government. A Sudanese legislator was quoted as saying that Khartoum may permit UN peace keepers to patrol Darfur in exchange for immunity from prosecution for officials charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Legal system

The legal system in Sudan is based on English common law and Islamic law; as of 20 January 1991, the now defunct Revolutionary Command Council imposed Islamic law in the northern states; Islamic law applies to all residents of the northern states regardless of their religion; however, the CPA establishes some protections for non-Muslims in Khartoum; some separate religious courts; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; the southern legal system is still developing under the CPA following the civil war; Islamic law will not apply to the southern states.

The judicial branch of the government consist of: Constitutional Court of nine justices; National Supreme Court; National Courts of Appeal; other national courts; National Judicial Service Commission will undertake overall management of the National Judiciary .

Human rights

A letter dated August 14, 2006, from the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch found that the Sudanese government is both incapable and unwilling to protect its own citizens in Darfur and that its militias are guilty of crimes against humanity. The letter added that these human rights abuses have existed since 2004.



Some reports attribute part of the violations to the rebels as well as the government and the Janjaweed. The US State Department's human rights report issued in March 2007 claims that "All parties to the conflagration committed serious abuses, including widespread killing of civilians, rape as a tool of war, systematic torture, robbery and recruitment of child soldiers"

Both government forces and militias allied with the government are known not only to attack civilians in Darfur, but also humanitarian workers. Sympathizers of rebel groups are arbitrarily detained, as are foreign journalists, human rights defenders, student activists, and displaced people in and around Khartoum, some of whom face torture. The rebel groups have also been accused in a report issued by the American government of attacking humanitarian workers and of killing innocent civilians. Amnesty International report

States and districts

Sudan is divided into twenty-six states (*wilayat*, sing. *wilayah*) which in turn are subdivided into 133 districts. The states are:

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Al Jazirah | ■ Khartoum | ■ River Nile | ■ Warab |
| ■ Al Qadarif | ■ Lakes | ■ Sennar | ■ West Bahr al Ghazal |
| ■ Blue Nile | ■ North Bahr al Ghazal | ■ South Darfur | ■ West Darfur |
| ■ Central Equatoria | ■ North Darfur | ■ South Kurdufan | ■ West Equatoria |
| ■ East Equatoria | ■ North Kurdufan | ■ Unity | ■ West Kurdufan |
| ■ Junqali | ■ Northern | ■ Upper Nile | ■ White Nile |
| ■ Kassala | ■ Red Sea | | |

Autonomy, separation, conflicts



Political map of Sudan.



- Southern Sudan is an autonomous region intermediate between the states and the national government. Southern Sudan is scheduled to have a referendum on independence in 2011. As agreed in the peace agreement a new currency, the Sudan Pound was launched throughout the country on January 10, 2007, and will replace the Sudanese Dinar. The Southern Sudanese government tried to launch a new currency, but stopped after the central Sudanese government declared that such a move constituted a breach of the peace agreement.
- Darfur, a region of three western states, is plagued by a violent conflict between the Sudanese government and a group of rebelling peoples of the region. (see Darfur conflict, Transitional Darfur Regional Authority).
- There was also an insurgency in the east led by the Eastern Front. On October 14, 2006, both the Sudanese government and the Eastern Front signed a power-sharing agreement ending the insurgency.

Geography

Sudan is situated in northern Africa, bordering the Red Sea and it has a coastline of 853 km along the Red Sea. With an area of 2,505,810 square kilometres (967,499 sq mi), it is the largest country in the continent and tenth largest in the world. It borders the countries of Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya and Uganda. It is dominated by the River Nile and its tributaries.

The terrain is generally flat plains, broken by several mountain ranges; in the west the Jebel Marra is the highest range; in the south is the highest mountain Mount Kinyeti Imatong, near the border with Uganda; in the east are the Red Sea Hills.

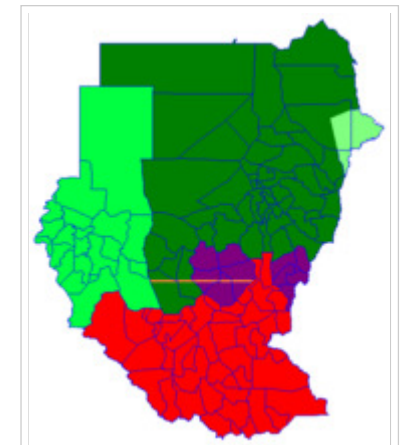
The Blue and White Niles meet in Khartoum to form the River Nile, which flows northwards through Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. Blue Nile's course through Sudan is nearly 800 km long and is joined by the rivers Dinder and Rahad between Sennar and Khartoum. The White Nile within Sudan has no significant tributaries.

The amount of rainfall increases towards the south. In the north there is the very dry Nubian Desert; in the south there are swamps and rain forest. Sudan's rainy season lasts for about three months (July to September) in the north, and up to six months (June to November) in the south. The dry regions are plagued by sand storms, known as haboob, which can completely block out the sun. In the northern and western semi-desert areas, people rely on the scant rainfall for basic agriculture and many are nomadic, traveling with their herds of sheep and camels. Nearer the River Nile, there are well-irrigated farms growing cash crops.

There are several dams on the Blue and White Niles. Among them are the Sennar and Roseires on the Blue Nile, and Jebel Aulia dam on the White Nile. There is also Lake Nubia on the Sudan-Egyptian border.

Rich mineral resources are available in Sudan including: petroleum, natural gas, gold, silver, chromite, asbestos, manganese, gypsum, mica, zinc, iron, lead, uranium, copper, kaolin, cobalt, granite, nickel and tin.

Desertification is a serious problem in Sudan. There is also concern over soil erosion. Agricultural expansion, both public and private, has proceeded without



North Sudan
 Darfur
 Eastern Front, area of operations July 2006
 South Sudan
 Boundary of Abyei at 10°22'30"N as decided by the Abyei Boundary Commission
 Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile
Abyei, is to hold a referendum in 2011 on whether to join South Sudan or not.



conservation measures. The consequences have manifested themselves in the form of deforestation, soil desiccation, and the lowering of soil fertility and the water table.

The nation's wildlife is threatened by hunting. As of 2001, twenty-one mammal species and nine bird species are endangered, as well as two types of plants. Endangered species include: the waldrapp, northern white rhinoceros, tora hartebeest, slender-horned gazelle, and hawksbill turtle. The Sahara oryx has become extinct in the wild.

In May 2007, it was announced that hundreds of wild elephants have been located on a previously unknown, treeless island in the Sudd swampland region of southern Sudan. The exact location being kept secret to protect the animals from poachers.

Economy

Despite new economic policies and infrastructure investments, Sudan still faces formidable economic problems as it must rise from a very low level of per capita output. Since 1997, Sudan has been implementing the macroeconomic reforms recommended by the IMF. In 1999, Sudan began exporting crude oil and in the last quarter of 1999 recorded its first trade surplus. Increased oil production (the current production is about 520,000 barrels per day) revived light industry, and expanded export processing zones helped sustain GDP growth at 6.1% in 2003. These gains, along with improvements to monetary policy, have stabilized the exchange rate. Currently oil is Sudan's main export, and the production is increasing dramatically. With rising oil revenues the Sudanese economy is booming at a growth rate of nearly 7% in 2005.

Rich mineral resources are available in Sudan including: petroleum, natural gas, gold, silver, chrome, asbestos, manganese, gypsum, mica, zinc, iron, lead, uranium, copper, kaolin, cobalt, granite, nickel and tin.

Agriculture production remains Sudan's most important sector, employing 80% of the work force and contributing 39% of GDP, but most farms remain rain-fed and susceptible to drought. Chronic instability — including the long-standing civil war between the Muslim north and the Christian/animist south, adverse weather, and weak world agricultural prices — ensure that much of the population will remain at or below the poverty line for years.

The Merowe High Dam, also known as Merowe Multi-Purpose Hydro Project or Hamdab Dam, is a large construction project in northern Sudan, about 350 km north of the capital Khartoum. It is situated on the river Nile, close to the 4th Cataract where the river divides into multiple smaller branches with large islands in between. Merowe is a city about 40 km downstream from the construction site at Hamdab. The main purpose of the dam will be the generation of electricity. Its dimensions make it the largest contemporary hydro power project in Africa. The construction of the dam will be finished by mid 2008, supplying more than 90% of the population with electricity. Other gas powered electricity stations are under construction in Khartoum state, these are also due to be completed by 2008.

Despite the American sanctions, the Sudanese economy is the one of the fastest growing in the world according to a New York Times report of October 2006.

Demographics

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In Sudan's 1993 census, the population was recorded to be 25 million. No comprehensive census has been carried out since then due to the continuation of the civil war. A 2006 United Nations estimate put the population at about 37 million. The population of metropolitan Khartoum (including Khartoum, Omdurman, and Khartoum North) is growing rapidly and is estimated at about 5 to 7 million, including around 2 million displaced persons from the southern war zone as well as western and eastern drought-affected areas.

Sudan has 597 tribes that speak over 400 different languages dialects, but there are two distinct major cultures – Arabs with Nubian roots and non-Arab Africans – consisting of hundreds of ethnic and tribal divisions and language groups. The northern states cover most of Sudan and include most of the urban centers. Most of the 22 million Sudanese who live in this region are Arabic-speaking Muslims, though the majority also use a traditional non-Arabic mother tongue (e.g. Nubian, Beja, Fur, Nuban, Ingessana, etc) as education is in Arabic language. Among these are several distinct tribal groups: the camel-raising Kababish of northern Kordofan; the Dongolawiyyin (الدنقلويين); the Ga'aliyyin (الجعيلين); the Rubatab (الرباطاب); the Manasir (المناصير); the Shaiqiyah (الشايقيّة); the Bideiria ; the semi-nomadic Baggara of Kurdufan and Darfur; the Beja in the Red Sea area and who extend into Eritrea; and the Nubians of the northern Nile areas, some of whom have been resettled on the Atbara River. Shokrya in the Butana land, Bataheen bordering the Ga'alín and Shokrya in the south west of Butana. Rufaa, Halaween, Fulani (فولاني) and many other tribes have settled in the Gazeera region and on the banks of the Blue Nile, Damazine and the Dindir region. The Nuba of southern Kurdufan and Fur in the western reaches of the country.

The southern region has a population of around 6 million and a predominantly rural, subsistence economy. This region has been affected by war for all but 10 years since independence in 1956, resulting in serious neglect, lack of infrastructure development, and major destruction and displacement. More than 2 million people have died, and more than 4 million are internally displaced or have become refugees as a result of the civil war and war-related impacts. Here a majority of the population practices traditional indigenous beliefs, although some practice Christianity, a result of Christian missionary efforts. The south also contains many tribal groups and many more languages are used than in the north. The Dinka, whose population is estimated at more than 1 million, are the largest of the many black African tribes of Sudan. Along with the Shilluk and the Nuer they are Nilotic tribes. The Azande, Bor, and Jo Luo are “Sudanic” tribes in the west, and the Acholi and Lotuhu live in the extreme south, extending into Uganda.

The lingua franca in Southern Sudan is a variant of Arabic called "Juba Arabic"; the English language is used by the educated elite. Some western African tribes like the Fallata also known as Fulani and Hausa have migrated to Sudan long times ago and have settled in various regions of Sudan, mainly in the north, and most of them speak Arabic as well as their original languages.

Peoples of Sudan

- Halaween Tribe
- Ja'alín
- Hasania
- Arakeien
- Bataheen
- Abdallab
- Shaigiya
- Azande
- Baggara peoples
- Beja tribe
- Dinka tribe
- Luo tribe
- Fulbe (Fulani)
- Fur people
- Horefaen
- Mahas
- Manasir
- Masalit
- Nuba peoples
- Nuer tribe
- Rashaida people



- Rubatab
- Shokrya
- Ababda

- Hausa
- Halfaween

- Zande
- Zaghawa
- Hamar Tribes

| People | Location |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Acholi | <i>east</i> |
| Pari | <i>east</i> |
| Anuak | <i>south central</i> |
| The Bari | <i>Juba</i> |
| Didinga | <i>east</i> |
| Fula (Fulani) | <i>Blue Nile, East and Tulus</i> |
| Kakwa | <i>southwest</i> |
| Lotuko | <i>east</i> |
| Madi | |
| Shilluk | |
| Toposa | |

Official languages

According to the 2005 constitution, Sudan's official languages are Arabic and English:

Article 8:

1. All indigenous languages of Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted.
2. Arabic is a widely-spoken national language in Sudan.
3. Arabic, as a major language at the national level and English shall be the official working languages of the national government and the languages of instruction for higher education.



4. In addition to Arabic and English, the legislature of any sub-national level of government may adopt any other national language as an additional official working language at its level.
5. There shall be no discrimination against the use of either Arabic or English at any level of government or stage of education.

Sudanese writers, artists and singers

- List of Sudanese writers
- List of Sudanese singers

Education

Institutions of higher education in Sudan include:

- Academy of Medical Sciences
- Ahfad University for Women
- Bayan Science and Technology College
- Omdurman Ahlia University
- Omdurman Islamic University
- University of Gezira
- University of Juba
- University of Khartoum
 - Mycetoma Research Centre
- Sudan University of Science and Technology

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Swaziland

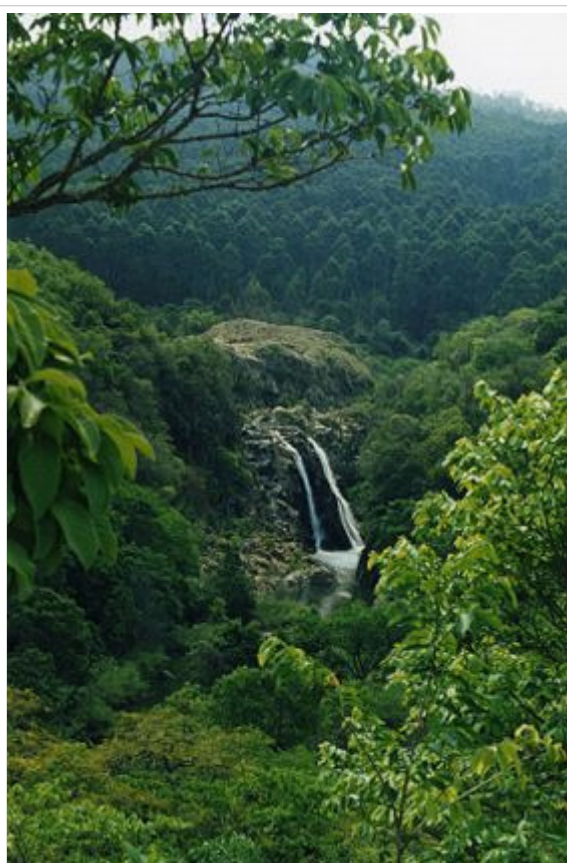
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SOS Children works in Swaziland. For more information see SOS Children in Swaziland, Africa

The **Kingdom of Swaziland** is a small, landlocked country in southern Africa (one of the smallest on the continent), bordered by South Africa on three sides except to the east, where it borders Mozambique. The country, inhabited primarily by Bantu-speaking Swazi people, is named after the 19th century king Mswati II, from whom the people also take their name.

History

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Umbuso weSwatini Kingdom of Swaziland | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Siinqaba" (Swati) "We are a fortress" "We are a mystery/riddle" "We hide ourselves away" | |
| Anthem: <i>Nkulunkulu Mnikati wetibusiso temaSwati</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital | Lobamba (royal and legislative) Mbabane (administrative; coordinates below) |
| Largest city | Manzini |
| Official languages | English, SiSwati |



Mantenga Falls

Artifacts indicating human activity dating back to the early Stone Age 200,000 years ago have been found in the kingdom of Swaziland. Prehistoric rock art paintings date from ca. 25,000 B.C. and continue up to the 19th century.

The earliest inhabitants of the area were Khoisan hunter-gatherers. They were largely replaced by the Bantu tribes during Bantu migrations. Evidence of agriculture and iron use dates from about the 4th century, and people speaking languages ancestral to current Sotho and Nguni languages began settling no later than the 11th century.

The ruling Dlamini lineage had chiefships in the region in the 18th century. An enlarged Swazi (occasionally also written as Suozi) kingdom was established by King Sobhuza I in the early 19th century. Soon thereafter the first whites started to settle in the area. In the 1890s the South African Republic in the Transvaal claimed sovereignty over Swaziland but never fully established power. After the Second Boer War of 1899–1902, Swaziland became a British protectorate. The country was granted independence within the Commonwealth of Nations on September 6, 1968. Since then, Swaziland has seen a struggle between pro-democracy

activists and the monarchy.

Politics

The head of state is the king or *Ngwenyama* (lit. *Lion*), currently King Mswati III, who ascended to the throne in 1986 after the death of his father King Sobhuza II in 1982 and a period of regency. By tradition, the king reigns along with his mother or a ritual substitute, the *Ndlovukati* (lit. *She-Elephant*). The former was viewed as the administrative head of state and the latter as a spiritual and national head of state, with real power counter-balancing that of the king, but during the long reign of Sobhuza II the role of the *Ndlovukati* became more symbolic. As the monarch, the king not only appoints the prime

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Demonym | Swazi |
| Government | Monarchy |
| - King | Mswati III |
| - Indlovukazi | Queen Ntombi |
| - Prime Minister | Themba Dlamini |
| - Deputy Prime Minister | Constance Simelane |
| Independence | |
| - from the United Kingdom | September 6, 1968 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 17,364 km ² (157th) 6,704 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.9 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 1,032,000 ¹ (154th) |
| - 2004 census | 1.1 million |
| - Density | 59/km ² (135th) 153/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2004 estimate |
| - Total | \$2.8 billion |
| - Per capita | \$1,553 |
| Gini (1994) | 60.9 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.547 (medium) (141st) |
| Currency | Lilangeni (SZL) |
| Time zone | (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .sz |
| Calling code | +268 |



minister — the head of government — but also appoints a small number of representatives for both chambers of the Libandla (parliament). The Senate consists of 30 members, while the House of Assembly has 82 seats, 55 of which are occupied by elected representatives, (elections are held every five years in November).

The Westminster-style constitution that was adopted in 1968 was suspended by King Sobhuza in 1973 under a royal decree backed by the royalist majority of parliament, in effect a coup by the government against its own constitution. The State of Emergency has since been lifted, or so the government claims even though political activities, especially by pro-democracy movements, are suppressed. In 2001 King Mswati III appointed a committee to draft a new constitution. Drafts were released for comment in May 2003 and November 2004. These were strongly criticized by civil society organizations in Swaziland and human rights organizations elsewhere. In 2005, the constitution was put into effect, though there is still much debate in the country about the constitutional reforms. From the early seventies, there was active resistance to the royal hegemony.

Despite calls for international solidarity against the oppressive royal regime, Swaziland's human rights record remains largely ignored by the international community. The South African trade union COSATU has been the most vocal supporters of the rights of the Swazi people to govern themselves by democratic means.

In 2007 a film entitled *Without the King* about the political climate of Swaziland was released.

Administrative Divisions

Swaziland is divided into four regional administrative districts: Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni. Regions are further subdivided into *tinkhundla* administered by the *tindvuna* (royal aides or governors); each *inkhundla* in turn comprises several chiefdoms governed by chiefs as well as urban municipal areas and private lands.

Geography

¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to diabetes; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.



The area of Swaziland is 17,364 square kilometers. It borders two countries, South Africa and Mozambique. Swaziland offers a wide variety of landscapes, from the mountains along the Mozambican border to savannas in the east and rainforest in the northwest. Several rivers flow through the country, such as the Great Usuthu River.

Economy

Swaziland's economy can be correctly classified as kleptocratic due to the fact that it is a small economy that benefits a minority whose participation in it is safeguarded by relations with power. About 70% of Swazis live in rural areas that are periodically ravaged by drought, resulting in food crises that threaten hundreds of thousands with hunger. The unemployment rate is approximately 40%, and nearly 70% of the population live on less than one US dollar per day. The country has grown in to a medium Human Development Index (HDI)

development score. Economic growth has wavered in the past few years, exacerbated by the economy's inability to create new jobs at the same rate that new job seekers enter the market. This is due largely to the country's population growth rate, which strains the natural resources and the country's ability to provide adequate social services, such as health care and education. Overgrazing, soil depletion, drought, and floods are persistent problems

In 2004, Swaziland acknowledged for the first time that it suffered an AIDS crisis, with 38.8% of the population infected with HIV (see AIDS in Africa). Prime Minister Themba Dlamini declared a humanitarian crisis due to the combined effect of drought, land degradation, increased poverty, and HIV/AIDS. The former United Nations special envoy on AIDS, Stephen Lewis, said "Swaziland stands alone with the world's highest rate of HIV infection after nearby Botswana made headway against the deadly pandemic".



Traditional homes in Swaziland

Nearly 60% of Swazi territory is publicly held by the crown in the trust of the Swazi nation. Despite the territories being held in trust by the crown, the land is still distributed to the people. The people are privileged to grow crops, make profit from selling their crops, graze live stock and build traditional/ modern homes with out having to pay any tax/rates to the government. Most of the private ownership on the remaining 40% is by mixed Swazis, black Swazis, white Swazis and foreign investors. Part of the remaining 40% also includes the government and Tibiyo TakaNgwane, a company once held in trust on behalf of the Swazi nation but now serving the interests of the royal family. The question of land use and ownership remains very sensitive in the country. For Swazi living in rural homesteads, the principal occupation is a combination of subsistence farming, livestock herding, and migration by some homestead members to urban work or small-scale trade, in Swaziland or South Africa. Cattle are traditionally important symbols of wealth and status.

Swaziland has well-developed road links with South Africa. It also has railroads running east to west and



Satellite image of Swaziland, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



north to south. The older east-west link, called the Goba line, makes it possible to export bulk goods from Swaziland through the Port of Maputo in Mozambique. Until recently, most of Swaziland's imports were shipped through this port. Conflict in Mozambique in the 1980s diverted many Swazi exports to ports in South Africa. A north-south rail link, completed in 1986, provides a connection between the Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga) rail network and the South African ports of Richards Bay and Durban.

The sugar industry, based solely on irrigated cane, is Swaziland's leading export earner and private-sector employer. Soft drink concentrate (a US investment) is the country's largest export earner, followed by wood pulp and lumber from cultivated pine forests. Pineapple, citrus fruit, and cotton are other important agricultural exports.

Swaziland mines coal and diamonds for export. There also is a quarry industry for domestic consumption. Mining contributes about 1.8% of Swaziland's GDP each year but has been declining in importance in recent years mainly due to new legislation that guarantees that the king will have ownership of 10% of the shares in each mining enterprise.

Recently, a number of industrial firms have located at the industrial estate at Matsapha near Manzini. In addition to processed agricultural and forestry products, the fast-growing industrial sector at Matsapha also produces garments, textiles, and a variety of light manufactured products. The Swaziland Industrial Development Company (SIDC) and the Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority (SIPA) have assisted in bringing many of these industries to the country. Government programs encourage Swazi entrepreneurs to run small and medium-sized firms. Tourism also is important, attracting more than 424,000 visitors annually (mostly from Europe and South Africa).

From the mid-1980s foreign investment in the manufacturing sector boosted economic growth rates significantly, in part due to efforts to evade anti-apartheid sanctions against South Africa. Since mid-1985, the depleted value of the currency has increased the competitiveness of Swazi exports and moderated the growth of imports, generating trade surpluses. During the 1990s, the country often ran small trade deficits as some companies moved to South Africa. South Africa and the European Union are major customers for Swazi exports. The United States is a significant market for Swazi sugar, a market that would presumably extend to textiles should Swaziland become a beneficiary of the African Growth Opportunity Act.

The official currency is the lilangeni (plural: emalangeni), which is at par with the South African rand. Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, and the Republic of South Africa form the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), where import duties apply uniformly to member countries. Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa also are members of the Common Monetary Area (CMA) in which repatriation and unrestricted funds are permitted.

Swaziland is in the process of formulating an Action Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, which is expected to be adopted in the period 2006-2007.

A large part of the Swaziland's revenue comes from The Coca Cola Company, who for tax reasons and the easy access to vast amounts of cheap raw Swazi sugar, have located their concentrate plant in the country. The Coca Cola Company Concentrate plant exports to a wide range of countries in Africa and elsewhere. It is now a yearly tradition for the King to pay a visit to the CEO of Coca Cola at their headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

Demographics



The majority of Swaziland's population is ethnically Swazi, mixed with a small number of Zulu and White Africans, mostly people of British and Afrikaner descent. Traditionally Swazi have been subsistence farmers and herders, but most now mix such activities with work in the growing urban formal economy and in government. Some Swazi work in the mines in South Africa. Swaziland also received Portuguese settlers and African refugees from Mozambique. Christianity in Swaziland is sometimes mixed with traditional beliefs and practices. Many traditionalists believe that most Swazi ascribe a special spiritual role to the monarch. This has been documented as being a myth, however, as many Swazi merely associate with the monarchy for materialistic motives. Residents of Swaziland have the lowest documented life expectancy in the world at 32.2 years, less than half the world average of 65.8.

Languages

SiSwati (also known as *Swati*, *Swazi* or *Seswati*) is a Bantu language of the Nguni Group, spoken in Swaziland and South Africa. It has 2.5 million speakers and is taught in schools. It is an official language of Swaziland (along with English) and one of the official languages of South Africa.

About 76,000 people in the country speak Zulu. Tsonga, which is spoken by many people throughout the region is spoken by about 19,000 people in Swaziland.

Religions

The most common religion in Swaziland is Christianity which totals 82.70% of the total population, in which various indigenous African churches constitute the majority, followed closely by Roman Catholicism. There are also non-Christian religions practised in the country such as Islam (0.95%), the Bahá'í Faith (0.5%), and Hinduism (0.15%).

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Tanzania

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SOS Children works in Tanzania. For more information see SOS Children in Tanzania, Africa




Tanzania IPA: /ˌtænzəˈniːə/, officially the **United Republic of Tanzania** (Swahili: *Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania*), is a country in East Africa bordered by Kenya and Uganda on the north, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the west, and Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique on the south. To the east it borders the Indian Ocean.

The country's name is a portmanteau of Tanganyika, the large mainland territory, and Zanzibar, the offshore archipelago. The two former British colonies united in 1964, forming the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, which later the same year was renamed the United Republic of Tanzania.

In 1996 government offices were transferred from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma, making Dodoma the country's political capital. Dar es Salaam remains the principal commercial city.

History

What is now Tanzania was a colony and part of Germany from the 1880s to 1919. Under the League of Nations, the area became a British Mandate from 1919 to 1961. It served as a military outpost during World War II and provided financial help as well as munitions. Julius Nyerere became Minister of British-administered Tanganyika in 1960 and continued as Prime Minister when Tanganyika became independent in 1961. Tanganyika and neighbouring Zanzibar, which had become independent in 1963, merged to form the nation of Tanzania on April 26, 1964. One-party rule came to an end in 1995 with the first democratic elections held in the country since the 1970s. Having been essentially a socialist state soon after independence, Tanzanian economic aid went hand in hand with structural adjustment conditionalities that deteriorated the nation's economy. This deterioration was due to a sudden shift to capitalism when the societal and economic framework of the nation was a socialist one. During the 80s Tanzanian GDP growth increased (due to SAPs) yet Human Development Indexes lowered. Tanzania still struggles with economic development yet its outlook is positive due to increasing natural resource exports.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania</i> United Republic of Tanzania | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Uhuru na Umoja" (Swahili) "Freedom and Unity" | |
| Anthem: <i>Mungu ibariki Afrika</i> "God Bless Africa" | |
|  | |
| Capital | Dodoma |
| Largest city | Dar es Salaam |
| Official languages | Swahili (de facto) |
| Demonym | Tanzanian |
| Government | Republic |



Politics

Tanzania's president and National Assembly members are elected concurrently by direct popular vote for five-year terms. The president appoints a prime minister who serves as the government's leader in the National Assembly. The president selects his cabinet from among National Assembly members. The Constitution also empowers him to nominate ten non-elected members of Parliament, who also are eligible to become cabinet members. Elections for president and all National Assembly seats were held in December 2005.

The unicameral National Assembly elected in 2000 has 295 members. These 295 members include the Attorney General, five members elected from the Zanzibar House of Representatives to participate in the Parliament, the special women's seats which are made up of 20% of the seats a particular party has in the House, 181 constituents seats of members of Parliament from the mainland, and 50 seats from Zanzibar. Also in the list are forty-eight appointed for women and the seats for the 10 nominated members of Parliament. At present, the ruling CCM holds about 93% of the seats in the Assembly. Laws passed by the National Assembly are valid for Zanzibar only in specifically designated union matters.

Zanzibar's House of Representatives has jurisdiction over all non-union matters. There are currently seventy-six members in the House of Representatives in Zanzibar, including fifty elected by the people, ten appointed by the president of Zanzibar, five *ex officio* members, and an attorney general appointed by the president. In May 2002, the government increased the number of special seats allocated to women from ten to fifteen, which will increase the number of House of Representatives members to eighty-one. Ostensibly, Zanzibar's House of Representatives can make laws for Zanzibar without the approval of the union government as long as it does not involve union-designated matters. The terms of office for Zanzibar's president and House of Representatives also are five years. The semiautonomous relationship between Zanzibar and the union is a relatively unusual system of government.

Tanzania has a five-level judiciary combining the jurisdictions of tribal, Islamic, and British common law. Appeal is from the primary courts through the district courts, resident magistrate courts, to the high courts, and Court of Appeals. Judges are appointed by the Chief Justice, except those for the Court of Appeals and the High Court who are appointed by the president. The Zanzibari court system parallels the legal system of the union, and all cases tried in Zanzibari courts, except for those involving constitutional issues and Islamic law, can be appealed to the Court of Appeals of the union. A commercial court was established in September 1999 as a division of the High Court.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete |
| - Prime Minister | Mizengo Pinda |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Tanganyika | December 9, 1961 |
| - Zanzibar | December 10, 1963 |
| - Merger | April 26, 1964 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 945,087 km ² (31st) 364,898 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 6.2 |
| Population | |
| - November 2006 estimate | 37,849,133 ¹ (32nd) |
| - 2002 census | 35,214,888 |
| - Density | 41/km ² (159th) 106/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$27.12 billion (99th) |
| - Per capita | \$1,100 (178th) |
| Gini (2000–01) | 34.6 (medium capital = Dar es Salaam) |
| HDI (2005) | ▲ 0.467 (low) (159th) |
| Currency | Tanzanian shilling (TZS) |
| Time zone | EAT (UTC+3) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .tz |
| Calling code | +255 ² |
| ¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of | |



Regions and districts

Tanzania is divided into 26 regions (*mkoa*), twenty-one on the mainland and five on Zanzibar (three on Unguja, two on Pemba). Ninety-eight districts (*wilaya*), each with at least one council, have been created to further increase local authority; the councils are also known as *local government authorities*.

Currently there are 114 councils operating in 99 districts; 22 are urban and 92 are rural. The 22 urban units are further classified as city councils (Dar es Salaam and Mwanza), municipal councils (Arusha, Dodoma, Iringa, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, Morogoro, Shinyanga, Tabora, and Tanga) or town councils (the remaining eleven communities).

Tanzania's regions are: Arusha · Dar es Salaam · Dodoma · Iringa · Kagera · Kigoma · Kilimanjaro · Lindi · Manyara · Mara · Mbeya · Morogoro · Mtwara · Mwanza · Pemba North · Pemba South · Pwani · Rukwa · Ruvuma · Shinyanga · Singida · Tabora · Tanga · Zanzibar Central/South · Zanzibar North · Zanzibar Urban/West

For regions ranked by total area, land area and water area, see List of Tanzanian regions by area.

Geography

At 364,875 mi² (945,087 km²), Tanzania is the world's 31st-largest country (it comes after Egypt). It is comparable in size to Nigeria, and is slightly more than twice the size of the U.S. state of California.

Tanzania is mountainous in the north-east, where Mount Kilimanjaro *, Africa's highest peak, is situated. To the north and west are the Great Lakes of Lake Victoria (Africa's largest lake) and Lake Tanganyika (Africa's deepest lake, known for its unique species of fish). Central Tanzania comprises a large plateau, with plains and arable land. The eastern shore is hot and humid, with the island of Zanzibar lying just offshore.

Tanzania contains many large and ecologically significant wildlife parks *, including the famous Ngorongoro Crater, Serengeti National Park* in the north, and Selous Game Reserve and Mikumi National Park in the south. Gombe National Park in the west is known as the site of Dr. Jane Goodall's studies of chimpanzee behaviour.

The government of Tanzania through its department of tourism has embarked on a campaign to promote the Kalambo water falls in south-west Tanzania's region of Rukwa as one of Tanzania's many tourist destinations * *. The Kalambo falls are the second largest in Africa and are located near the southern tip of Lake Tanganyika.

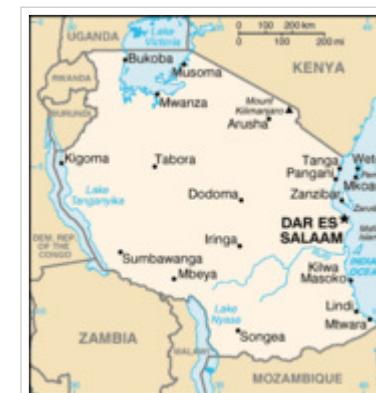
Environment

excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

² 007 from Kenya and Uganda.



Regions of Tanzania.



Map of Tanzania, shown with the old capital.



Tanzania has considerable land area of wildlife habitat, including much of the Serengeti plain, where the white-bearded wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus mearnsi*) and other bovids participate in a large scale annual migration. Up to 250,000 wildebeest perish each year in the long and arduous movement to find forage in the dry season. Tanzania is also home to 130 amphibian and over 275 reptile species, many of them strictly endemic and included in the IUCN Red lists of different countries. Tanzania has developed a Biodiversity Action Plan to address species conservation.

Economy

The economy is mostly based on agriculture, which accounts for more than half of GDP, provides 85% (approximately) of exports, and employs 80% (approximately) of the workforce. Topography and climatic conditions, however, limit cultivated crops to only 4% of the land area. Industry is mainly limited to processing agricultural products and light consumer goods. Tanzania has vast amounts of natural resources including gold deposits and diamonds. Tanzania is also known for the Tanzanite gemstones. Tanzania has dozens of beautiful national parks like the world famous Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, that generate income with a large tourism sector that plays a vital part in the economy. Growth from 1991 to 1999 featured a pickup in industrial production and a substantial increase in output of minerals, led by gold. Commercial production of natural gas from the Songo Songo island in the Indian Ocean off the Rufiji Delta commenced 2004, with natural gas being pumped in a pipeline to the commercial capital Dar es Salaam, with the bulk of it being converted to electricity by the public utility and private operators. A new gas field is being brought on stream in Mnazi Bay.

Recent public sector and banking reforms, and revamped and new legislative frameworks have all helped increase private sector growth and investment. Short-term economic progress also depends on curbing corruption and cutting back on unnecessary public spending.

Prolonged drought during the early years of the 21st century has severely reduced electricity generation capacity (some 60% of Tanzania's electricity supplies are generated by hydro-electric schemes). During 2006 Tanzania suffered a crippling series of "load-shedding" or power rationing because of the shortfall of generated power, largely because of insufficient hydro-electric generation. Plans to increase gas and coal fueled generation capacity are likely to take some years to implement, and growth is forecast to be increased to seven per cent per year, and perhaps eight or more.

There are 3 major airlines in Tanzania, the Air Tanzania Corporation, the PrecisionAir which do local flights - Arusha, Kigoma, Mtwara, Mwanza, Musoma, Shinyanga, Zanzibar) and regional flights to Kigali, Nairobi, Mombasa routes and the third one that does local flights only. There are also several charter aeroplane firms. There are two railway companies: TAZARA caters for service between Dar-es-Salaam and Kapiri-Mposhi, a district of the Central Province in Zambia. The other one is the Tanzania Railways Corporation, which provides services between Dar-es-Salaam and Kigoma, a town on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and between Dar-es-Salaam and Mwanza, a city on the shores of lake Victoria. There is also a service across the Indian Ocean between Dar-es-Salaam and Zanzibar by several modern hydrofoil boats.

Demographics

<http://cd3wd.com> wikipedia-for-schools <http://gutenberg.org> page no: 516 of 586



Summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.



As of 2006, the estimated population is 38,329,000, with an estimated growth rate of 2%. Population distribution is extremely uneven, with density varying from 1 person per square kilometer (3/mi²) in arid regions to 51 per square kilometer (133/mi²) in the mainland's well-watered highlands, to 134 per square kilometer (347/mi²) on Zanzibar. More than 80% of the population is rural. Tanzania still has a very high unemployment rate, which is about 67%. Dar es Salaam is the largest city and is the commercial capital; Dodoma, located in the centre of Tanzania is the new capital and houses the Union's Parliament. Zanzibar Town houses the Zanzibar Parliament.

The African population consists of more than 126 ethnic groups, of which the Sukuma and Nyamwezi, the Hehe and Bena, the Gogo, the Haya, the Makonde, the Chagga and the Nyakyusa have more than 1 million members. Other groups include the Pare, Sambia or Shambala and Ngoni. The majority of Tanzanians, including such large ethnic groups as the Sukuma and the Nyamwezi, have Bantu origins. Groups of Nilotic or related origin include the nomadic Masai and the Luo, both of which are found in greater numbers in neighboring Kenya. Two small groups speak languages of the Khoisan family peculiar to the people of the Kalahari in southern Africa. Cushitic-speaking peoples, originally from the Ethiopian highlands, reside in a few areas of Tanzania. Other Bantu groups were refugees and immigrants from nearby countries.

Although much of Zanzibar's African population came from the mainland, one group known as Afro-Shirazis claims its origins to be the island's early Persian settlers. Non-Africans residing on the mainland and Zanzibar account for 1% of the total population. In the 1960s and 1970s thousands of Asians emigrated, frequently under duress. Often they attempted to emigrate to the United Kingdom, and now the UK is home to 100,000 Tanzanians making the Tanzanian British community the world's largest overseas Tanzanian community. Their community, including Hindus, Sunni Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Goans, has increased in the past decade to 350,000. An estimated 240,000 Arabs and 70,000 Europeans still reside in Tanzania.

Languages

Tanzania has more than 126 tribes and each ethnic group has its own language. No language is de jure official, but Swahili is the de facto official national language, used for inter-ethnic communication and for official matters. After gaining independence, English, the language of colonial administration during the era of British rule, was still used for some official issues, and was thus considered de facto official alongside Swahili. As official usage of English has greatly diminished during the first thirty years following independence, and it was more common to regard Swahili as the only de facto official language. However the political reforms which turned Tanzania away from a closed and socialist environment and a centrally planned economy inevitably resulted in a dramatic opening up of the country. The attendant growth of the private sector and new investment has resulted in English having increasing importance, and there are many schools in which English is the medium of instruction. Universities all use English as the medium of instruction, which often causes problems for students who have previously only taken English as a subject in school. Other spoken languages are Indian languages, especially Gujarati, and Portuguese (both spoken by Mozambican blacks and Goans). Historically German was widely spoken during that colonial period, but few remain alive who remember that period.

Culture

The music of Tanzania stretches from traditional African music to the string-based *taarab* to a distinctive hip hop known as bongo flava. Famous taarab singers names are Abbasi Mzee, Culture Musical Club, Shakila of Black Star Musical Group. Internationally known traditional artist are Bi Kidude, Hukwe



Zawose and Tatu Nane.

Tanzania has its own distinct African rumba music where names of artists/groups like [[Tabora Jazz, Western Jazz Band, Morogoro Jazz, Volcano Jazz, Simba Wanyika, Remmy Ongala, Ndala Kasheba * , NUTA JAZZ, ATOMIC JAZZ, DDC Mlimani Park, Afro 70 & Patrick Balisidya* * * , Sunburst, Tatu Nane * and Orchestra Makassy* must be mentioned in the history of Tanzanian music.

Tanzania has many writers. The list of writers' names includes well known writers such as Godfrey Mwakikagile, Mohamed Said, Prof. Joseph Mbele* , Juma Volter Mwapachu, Prof. Issa Shivji, Jenerali Twaha Ulimwengu, Prof.Penina Mlama* , Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, Adam Shafi, Dr. Malima M.P Bundala and Shaaban Robert.

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The Gambia

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries



SOS Children works in The Gambia. For more information see SOS Children in The Gambia, Africa

The Gambia, officially the **Republic of The Gambia**, commonly known as **Gambia**, is a country in Western Africa. It is the smallest country on the African continental mainland and is bordered to the north, east, and south by Senegal, and has a small coast on the Atlantic Ocean in the west. The River Gambia flows through the centre of the country and empties into the Atlantic Ocean. On 18 February 1965 The Gambia became independent from the British Empire. Banjul is its capital.

History

The first written accounts of the region come from records of Arab traders in the ninth and tenth centuries AD. In 1066, the inhabitants of Tekrur, a kingdom centered on the S n gal River just to the north, became the first people in the region to convert to Islam. Muslim traders established the trans-Saharan trade route for slaves, gold, and ivory. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, most of what is today called The Gambia was a tributary to the Mali Empire. The Portuguese reached the area by sea in the mid-fifteenth century and began to dominate the lucrative trade.

In 1588, the claimant to the Portuguese throne, Ant nio, Prior of Crato, sold exclusive trade rights on the Gambia River to English merchants; this grant was confirmed by letters patent from Queen Elizabeth I. In 1618, James I granted a charter to a British company for trade with Gambia and the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Between 1651-1661 some parts of Gambia was under Courland's rule, bought by prince Jacob Kettler, who was Polish vassal.

| Republic of The Gambia | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Progress, Peace, Prosperity" | |
| Anthem: <i>For The Gambia Our Homeland</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital | Banjul |
| Largest city | Serrekunda |
| Official languages | English |
| Demonym | Gambian |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh |
| Independence | |



A map of James Island and Fort Gambia.

During the late seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth, Britain and France struggled continually for political and commercial supremacy in the regions of the Senegal and Gambia rivers. The 1783 Treaty of Versailles gave Great Britain possession of the Gambia river, but the French retained a tiny enclave at Albreda on its north bank, which was ceded to the United Kingdom in 1857.

As many as 3 million slaves may have been taken from the region during the three centuries that the transatlantic slave trade operated. It is not known how many slaves were taken by Arab traders prior to and simultaneous with the

transatlantic slave trade. Most of those taken were sold to Europeans by other Africans; some were prisoners of intertribal wars; some were sold because of unpaid debts, while others were kidnapped. Slaves were initially sent to Europe to work as servants until the market for labor expanded in the West Indies and North America in the 18th century. In 1807, slave trading was abolished throughout the British Empire, and the British tried unsuccessfully to end the slave trade in The Gambia. They established the military post of Bathurst (now Banjul) in 1816. In the ensuing years, Banjul was at times under the jurisdiction of the British Governor General in Sierra Leone. In 1888, The Gambia became a separate colonial entity.

An 1889 agreement with France established the present boundaries, and The Gambia became a British Crown Colony, divided for administrative purposes into the colony (city of Banjul and the surrounding area) and the protectorate (remainder of the territory). The Gambia received its own executive and legislative councils in 1901 and gradually progressed toward self-government. A 1906 ordinance abolished slavery.

During World War II, Gambian troops fought with the Allies in Burma. Banjul served as an air stop for the U.S. Army Air Corps and a port of call for Allied naval convoys. U. S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt stopped overnight in Banjul en route to and from the Casablanca Conference in 1943, marking the first visit to the African Continent by an American president while in office.

After World War II, the pace of constitutional reform increased. Following general elections in 1962, full internal self-governance was granted in the following year. The Gambia achieved independence on February 18, 1965 as a constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth of Nations. Shortly thereafter, the government held a referendum proposing that an elected president replace the Gambian Monarch (Queen Elizabeth II) as head of state. The referendum failed to receive the two-thirds majority required to amend the constitution, but the results won widespread attention abroad as testimony to The Gambia's observance of secret balloting, honest elections, civil rights and liberties. On April 24, 1970, The Gambia became a republic within the Commonwealth, following a second

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| - from the UK | February 18, 1965 |
| - Republic declared | April 24, 1970 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 10,380 km ² (164th) 4,007 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 11.5 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 1,517,000 (150th) |
| - Density | 153.5/km ² (74th) 397.6/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$3.094 billion (171st) |
| - Per capita | \$2002 (144th) |
| Gini (1998) | 50.2 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.502 (medium) (155th) |
| Currency | Dalasi (GMD) |
| Time zone | GMT |
| Internet TLD | .gm |
| Calling code | +220 |



referendum, with Prime Minister Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, as head of state.

The Gambia was led by President Jawara, who was re-elected five times. The relative stability of the Jawara era was shattered first by a coup attempt in 1981. The coup was led by Kukoi Samba Sanyang, who, on two occasions, had unsuccessfully sought election to Parliament. After a week of violence which left several hundred people dead, Jawara, in London when the attack began, appealed to Senegal for help. Senegalese troops defeated the rebel force.

In the aftermath of the attempted coup, Senegal and The Gambia signed the 1982 Treaty of Confederation. The Senegambia Confederation came into existence; it aimed eventually to combine the armed forces of the two states and to unify their economies and currencies. The Gambia withdrew from the confederation in 1989.

In July 1994, the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) seized power in a military coup d'état. The AFPRC deposed the Jawara government and banned opposition political activity. Lieutenant Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, chairman of the AFPRC, became head of state. The AFPRC announced a transition plan for return to democratic civilian government. The Provisional Independent Electoral Commission (PIEC) was established in 1996 to conduct national elections. The PIEC was transformed to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in 1997 and became responsible for registration of voters and conduct of elections and referendums. In late 2001 and early 2002, The Gambia completed a full cycle of presidential, legislative, and local elections, which foreign observers deemed free, fair, and transparent, albeit with some shortcomings. President Yahya Jammeh, who was elected to continue in the position he had assumed during the coup, took the oath of office again on December 21, 2001. The APRC maintained its strong majority in the National Assembly, particularly after the main opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) boycotted the legislative elections.

Politics

Before the 1994 coup d'état, The Gambia was one of the oldest existing multi-party democracies in Africa. It had conducted freely contested elections every five years since independence. After the coup, politicians from deposed President Jawara's People's Progressive Party (PPP) and other senior government officials were banned from participating in politics until July 2001.

A presidential election took place in September 1996, in which retired Col. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh won 56% of the vote. Four registered opposition parties participated in the October 18, 2001, presidential election, which the incumbent, President Jammeh, won with almost 53% of the votes. The APRC maintained its strong majority in the National Assembly in legislative elections held in January 2002, particularly after the main opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) boycotted the legislative elections.

Jammeh won the 2006 election handily after the opposition coalition, the National Alliance for Development and Democracy, splintered earlier in the year. The voting was generally regarded as free and fair, though events from the run-up raised criticism from some. A journalist from the state television station assigned to the chief opposition candidate, Ousainou Darboe, was arrested. Additionally, Jammeh said, "I will develop the areas that vote for me, but if you don't vote for me, don't expect anything."



Marina Parade street.



On the 21st and 22 March 2006, amid tensions preceding the 2006 presidential elections, an alleged planned military coup was uncovered. President Yahya Jammeh was forced to return from a trip to Mauritania, many suspected army officials were arrested, and prominent army officials, including the army chief of staff, fled the country.

There are claims circulating that this whole event was fabricated by the President incumbent for his own purposes; however, the veracity of these claims is not known, as no corroborating evidence has yet been brought forward.

The 1970 constitution, which divided the government into independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches, was suspended after the 1994 military coup. As part of the transition process, the AFPRC established the Constitution Review Commission (CRC) through decree in March 1995. In accordance with the timetable for the transition to a democratically elected government, the commission drafted a new constitution for The Gambia, which was approved by referendum in August 1996. The constitution provides for a strong presidential government, a unicameral legislature, an independent judiciary, and the protection of human rights.

Divisions and districts

The Gambia is divided into five divisions and one city. These are:

1. Lower River (Mansa Konko)
2. Central River (Janjanbureh)
3. North Bank (Kerewan)
4. Upper River (Basse)
5. Western (Brikama)



The national capital, Banjul, is classified as a city.

The divisions are further subdivided into 37 districts. Of these, Kombo Saint Mary (which shares Brikama as a capital with the Western division) may have been administratively merged with the greater Banjul area.

Geography



The Gambia is a very small and narrow country whose borders mirror the meandering Gambia River. The country is less than 48 km wide, with a total area of 11,300 km². Its present boundaries were defined in 1889 after an agreement between the United Kingdom and France. It is almost an enclave of Senegal, and is the smallest country on the continent of Africa.

Economy

The Gambia has a liberal, market-based economy characterized by traditional subsistence agriculture, a historic reliance on groundnuts (peanuts) for export earnings, a re-export trade built up around its ocean port, low import duties, minimal administrative procedures, a fluctuating exchange rate with no exchange controls, and a significant tourism industry.

Agriculture accounts for 29% of gross domestic product (GDP) and employs 75% of the labour force. Within agriculture, peanut production accounts for 6.9% of GDP, other crops 8.3%, livestock 5.3%, fishing 1.8%, and forestry 0.5%. Industry accounts for 12% of GDP. Manufacturing, which accounts for 5.5% of GDP, is primarily agriculturally based (e.g., peanut processing, bakeries, a brewery, and a tannery). Other manufacturing activities include soap, soft drinks, and clothing. Services account for 19% of GDP.

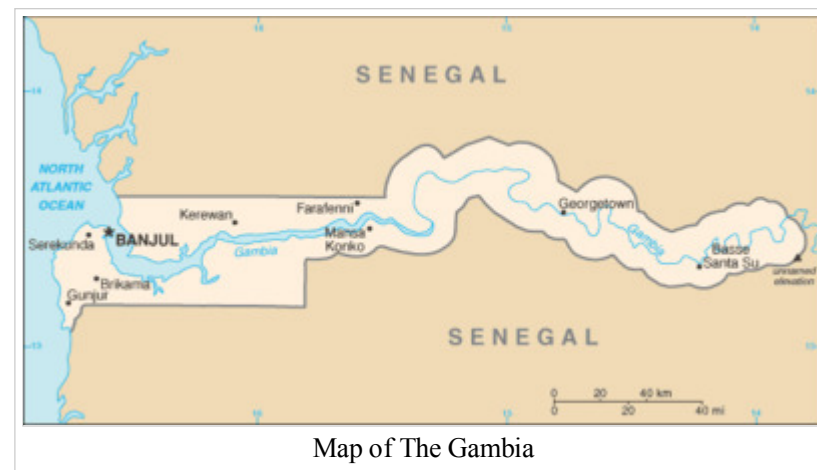
The UK and the other EU countries (Germany, France, Netherlands, Belgium) were the major source of imports, at 60% of the total share of imports, followed by Asia at 23%, and Cote d'Ivoire and other African countries at 17%. The Gambia reports 11% of its exports going to and 14.6% of its imports coming from the United States.

Demographics

A wide variety of ethnic groups live in The Gambia with a minimum of intertribal friction, each preserving its own language and traditions. The Mandinka tribe is the largest, followed by the Fula, Wolof, Jola, and Serahule. The approximately 3,500 non-African residents include Europeans and families of Lebanese origin (roughly 0.23% of the total population).

Muslims constitute more than 90% of the population. Christians of different denominations account for most of the remainder. Gambians officially observe the holidays of both religions.

More than 63% of Gambians live in rural villages (1993 census), although more and more young people come to the capital in search of work and education. Provisional figures from the 2003 census show that the gap between the urban and rural populations is narrowing as more areas are declared urban. While urban migration, development projects, and modernization are bringing more Gambians into contact with Western habits and values, the traditional emphasis on the extended family, as well as indigenous forms of dress and celebration, remain integral parts of everyday life.





Tourism

The tourism industry today in The Gambia started when a party of 300 Swedish tourists arrived in 1965. That pioneering trip was organised by a Swede named Bertil Harding together with the tour operators Vingresor. It was seen as an ideal place to escape the harsh winter months of Scandinavia where Europeans would enjoy not only sun, sand and beaches but also experience the excitement of a real African holiday. Moreover due to its proximity to Europe, it also offered new opening for an affordable holiday to increasing numbers of traveling Europeans.

The number of visitors increased from 300 tourists in 1965 to 25,000 visitors in 1976. The number of tourists has continued to rise sharply throughout the years, and as the government is eager to diversify the economy, it recognised tourism as a potential major foreign exchange source of revenue. However, despite increasing popularity as a tourist destination, infrastructure development has been slow.

Popular attractions

- Banjul
- Juffure
- Bakau Kachikally
- Janjanbureh

Other facts

- The Gambia was the first and last British colony in West Africa.
- In his 1977 Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, Alex Haley traced his family back to Kunta Kinte, enslaved from the village of Juffure in the north bank of The Gambia.
- En route to Casablanca for a conference and then to Liberia, U. S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt became the first serving U. S. president to visit the African continent when he stopped in Banjul in 1943.
- In the 1930s, The Gambia was a transit point for the German airline Lufthansa's transatlantic mail service. Three aircraft were lost during this period .
- Yundum Airport was an emergency landing site for NASA space shuttles.

Culture

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Togo

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries




SOS Children works in Togo. For more information see SOS Children in Togo, Africa

Togo, officially the **Togolese Republic**, is a narrow country in West Africa bordering Ghana to the west, Benin to the east and Burkina Faso to the north. The country extends south to the Gulf of Guinea, on which the capital Lomé is located. The official language is French; however, there are many other languages spoken there as well.

History

Western history does not record what happened in Togo before the Portuguese arrived in the late fifteenth century. During the period from the eleventh century to the sixteenth century, various tribes entered the region from all directions: the Ewé from Nigeria and Benin; and the Mina and Guin from Ghana. Most settled in coastal areas. When the slave trade began in earnest in the sixteenth century, the Mina benefited the most. For the next two hundred years, the coastal region was a major raiding centre for Europeans in search of slaves, earning Togo and the surrounding region the name " The Slave Coast."

In an 1884 treaty signed at Togoville, Germany declared a protectorate over a stretch of territory along the coast and gradually extended its control inland. This became the German colony Togoland in 1905. After the German defeat during World War I in August 1914 at the hands of British troops (coming from the Gold Coast) and the French troops (coming from Dahomey), Togoland became two League of Nations mandates, administered by the United Kingdom and France. After World War II, these mandates became UN Trust Territories. The residents of British Togoland voted to join the Gold Coast as part of the new independent nation of Ghana, and French Togoland became an autonomous republic within the French Union. Independence came in 1960 under Sylvanus Olympio. Sylvanus Olympio was assassinated in a military coup on January 13, 1963 by a group of soldiers under the direction of Sergeant Etienne Eyadema Gnassingbe. Opposition leader Nicolas Grunitzky was appointed president by the "Insurrection Committee" headed by Emmanuel Bodjollé. However, on January 13, 1967, Eyadema Gnassingbe overthrew Grunitzky in a bloodless coup and assumed the presidency, which he held from that date until his sudden death on February 5, 2005.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>République Togolaise</i> Togolese Republic | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of Arms |
| Motto: "Travail, Liberté, Patrie" (French) "Work, Liberty, Homeland" | |
| Anthem: <i>Salut à toi, pays de nos aïeux</i> (French) "Hail to thee, land of our forefathers" | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Lomé |
| Official languages | French |
| Demonym | Togolese |



Eyadema Gnassingbe (many wrongly think Eyadema was his last name) died in early 2005 after thirty-eight years in power, as Africa's longest-sitting dictator. The military's immediate but short-lived installation of his son, Faure Gnassingbe, as president provoked widespread international condemnation, except from France. However, surprisingly, some democratically elected African leaders, such as Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, supported that move and created a rift within the African Union. Faure Gnassingbe stood down and called elections which he won two months later. The opposition claimed that the election was fraudulent. The developments of 2005 led to renewed questions about a commitment to democracy made by Togo in 2004 in a bid to normalize ties with the European Union, which cut off aid in 1993 over the country's human rights record. Moreover, up to 400 people were killed in the political violence surrounding the presidential poll, according to the United Nations. Around 40,000 Togolese fled to neighbouring countries.

Economy

Togo's small sub-Saharan economy is heavily dependent on both commercial and subsistence agriculture, which provides employment for 65% of the labor force. cotton, coffee, and cocoa together generate about 30% of export earnings. Togo is self-sufficient in basic foodgoods when harvests are normal, with occasional regional supply difficulties. In the industrial sector, phosphate mining is no longer the most important activity, as cement and clinker export to neighbouring countries have taken over. It has suffered from the collapse of world phosphate prices, increased foreign competition and financial problems . Togo's GNI per capita is US\$380 (World Bank, 2005).

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Faure Gnassingbé |
| - Prime Minister | Komlan Mally |
| Independence | |
| - from France | April 27, 1960 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 56,785 km ² (125th) 21,925 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 4.2 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 5.7million (100th ¹) |
| - Density | 108/km ² (93rd ²) 280/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$8.945 billion (144th ¹) |
| - Per capita | \$1,700 (193rd ¹) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.512 (medium) (152nd) |
| Currency | CFA franc (XOF) |
| Time zone | GMT (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .tg |
| Calling code | +228 |
| <p>¹ Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected. Rankings based on 2005 figures CIA World Factbook - <i>Togo</i></p> <p>² Rankings based on 2005 figures (source unknown)</p> | |



Togo serves as a regional commercial and trade centre. The government's decade-long effort, supported by the World Bank and the IMF, to implement economic reform measures, encourage foreign investment, and bring revenues in line with expenditures, has stalled. Political unrest, including private and public sector strikes throughout 1992 and 1993, jeopardized the reform program, shrank the tax base, and disrupted vital economic activity. The 12 January 1994 devaluation of the currency by 50% provided an important impetus to renewed structural adjustment; these efforts were facilitated by the end of strife in 1994 and a return to overt political calm. Progress depends on increased openness in government financial operations (to accommodate increased social service outlays) and possible downsizing of the military, on which the regime has depended to stay in place. Lack of aid, along with depressed cocoa prices, generated a 1% fall in GDP in 1998, with growth resuming in 1999. Assuming no deterioration of the political atmosphere, growth should rise.

Development and Environment

Geography



Phosphate mining by SNPT
company



Togo is a small, thin sub-Saharan nation. It borders the Bight of Benin in the south; Ghana lies to the west; Benin to the east; and to the north Togo is bound by Burkina Faso.

In the north the land is characterized by a gently rolling savannah in contrast to the centre of the country, which is characterized by hills. The south of Togo is characterized by a plateau which reaches to a coastal plain with extensive lagoons and marshes. The land size is 21,925 square miles (56,785 km²), with an average population density of 253 people per square mile (98/km²). In 1914 it changed from Togoland to Togo.

Climate

The climate is generally tropical with average temperatures ranging from 27°C on the coast to about 30°C in the northernmost regions, with a dry climate and characteristics of a tropical savanna. To the south there are two seasons of rain (the first between April and July and the second between October and November), even though the average rainfall is not very high (about 1,000 mm in mountainous areas, the most rainy).

Administrative divisions

Togo is divided into 5 regions, which are subdivided in turn into 30 prefectures and 1 commune. From north to south the regions are Savanes, Kara, Centrale, Plateaux and Maritime.

Demographics



Satellite image of Togo, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



With a population of 5,548,702 (as of 2006), Togo is the 107th largest country by population. Most of the population (65%) live in rural villages dedicated to agriculture or pastures. The population of Togo shows a strong growth: from 1961 (the year after independence) to 2003 it quintupled.

Ethnic groups

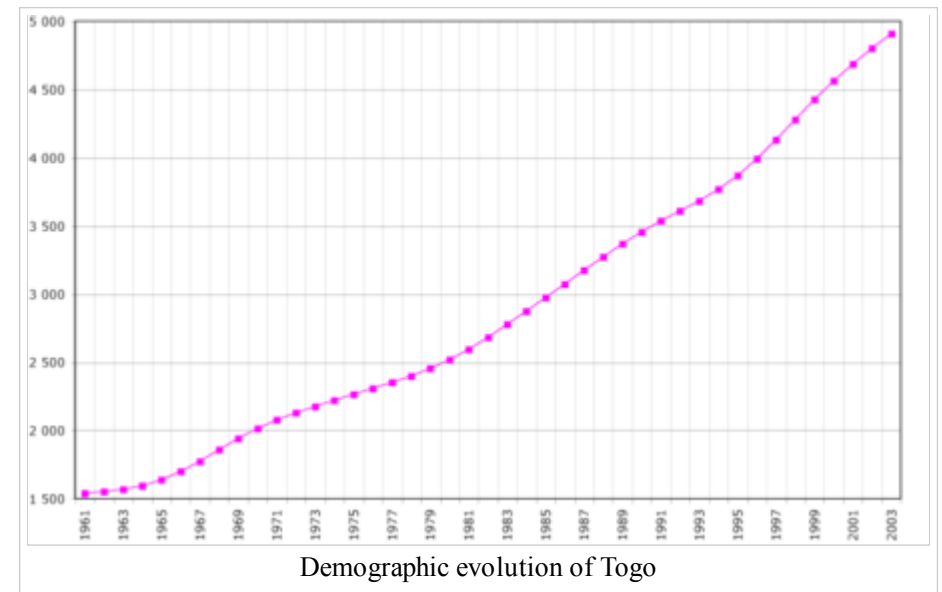
In Togo there are about 45 different ethnic groups, the most important and numerous are the Ewe in the south (46%), Kabyé in the north (22%). Another classification lists Uaci or Ouatchis (14%) as a separate ethnic group from the Ewe which brings the proportion of Ewe down to (32%). However, there are no historical and ethnical facts that justify the separation between Ewes and Ouatchis. On the contrary, the term Ouatchi relates to a subgroup of Ewes which migrated south during the 16th century from Notse the ancient Ewe Kingdom capital. This classification is inaccurate and has been contested for being politically biased; Mina, Mossi, and Aja (about 8%) are the remainder; and under 1% are European expatriates live in Togo as diplomats and for economic reasons.

Religion

About half the population adheres to indigenous, animist beliefs. Christianity is the second largest religious group, to which 29% of the country's population belong. The remaining 21% of Togolese follow Islam.

Politics

Togo's transition to democracy is stalled. Its democratic institutions remain nascent and fragile. President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who ruled Togo under a one-party system for nearly twenty-five of his thirty-seven years in power, died of a heart attack on February 5, 2005. Under the constitution, the speaker of parliament, Fambaré Ouattara Natchaba, should have become president, pending a new election. Natchaba was out of the country, returning on an Air France plane from Paris. The Togolese army closed the nation's borders, forcing the plane to land in nearby Benin. With an engineered power vacuum, the army announced that Eyadéma's son Faure Gnassingbé, also known as Faure Eyadéma, who had been the communications minister, would succeed him. The constitution of Togo declared that in the case of the president's death, the speaker of Parliament takes his place, and has sixty days to call new elections. However, on February 6th, Parliament retroactively changed the Constitution, declaring that Faure would hold office for the rest of his father's term, with elections deferred until 2008. The stated justification was that Natchaba was out of the country. The government also moved to remove Natchaba as speaker and replaced him with Faure Gnassingbé, who was sworn in on February 7, 2005, despite the international criticism of the succession.





The African Union described the takeover as a military coup d'état. International pressure came also from the United Nations. Within Togo, opposition to the takeover culminated in riots in which several hundred died. In the village of Aného reports of a general civilian uprising followed by a large scale massacre by government troops went largely unreported. In response, Gnassingbé agreed to hold elections and on February 25, Gnassingbé resigned as president, but soon afterwards accepted the nomination to run for the office in April. On April 24, 2005, Gnassingbé was elected president of Togo, receiving over 60% of the vote according to official results. However fraud was suspected as cause of his election, due to a lack of presence of the European Union or other such oversight. See the History section of this article for details. Parliament designated Deputy Speaker Bonfoh Abbass as interim president until the inauguration of the election a clear violation of the constitution but a political compromise. winner.

Current political situation

On May 3, 2006, Faure Gnassingbe was sworn in as the new president, garnering 60% of the vote according to official results. Discontent has continued however, with the opposition declaring the voting rigged, claiming the military stole ballot boxes from various polling stations in the South, as well as other election irregularities, such as telecommunication shutdown. The European Union has suspended aid in support of the opposition claims, while the African Union and the United States have declared the vote "reasonably fair" and accepted the outcome. The Nigerian president and Chair of the AU, Olusegun Obasanjo, has sought to negotiate between the incumbent government and the opposition to establish a coalition government, but rejected an AU Commission appointment of former Zambian president, Kenneth Kaunda, as special AU envoy to Togo (and). Later in June, President Gnassingbe named opposition leader Edem Kodjo as the prime Minister.

In April 2006 reconciliation talks between government and opposition progressed; said talks were suspended after Gnassingbé Eyadema's death in 2005. In August both parties signed the Ouagadougou agreement calling for a transitional unity government to organize parliamentary elections. On September 16th, the president nominated Yaovi Agboyibor of the Action Committee for Renewal (CAR) prime minister snubbing the major opposition party Union of the Forces of Change (UFC) which in reaction refused to join the government. Professor Léopold Gnininvi of the Democratic Convention of African Peoples (CDPA) was appointed the 20th. From the beginning, opposition's weakness was manifest. The president had the final say on who would be cabinet minister from a list of names proposed by the prime minister. Second, disunity was rife within opposition ranks after the failure to get UFC representation in the transitional government.

In October 2007, after several postponements, elections were held under proportional representation. This allowed the less populated north to seat as many MPs the more populated south. The president backed party Rally of the Togolese People (RPT) won outright majority with the UFC coming second with the other parties claiming inconsequential representation. Again vote rigging accusations were leveled at the RPT supported by the civil and military security apparatus. Despite the presence of an EU observer mission, cancelled ballots and illegal voting took place the majority of which in RPT strongholds. The elections was declared fair by the international community and praised as a model with few intimidation and violent acts for the first time since multipartism was reinstated. On December 3rd Komlan Mally of the RPT was appointed to prime minister succeeding Agboyibor.

However presidential elections of 2010 presents a different challenge with no proportional representation effect to balance for geographic location. The executive power is mainly presidential and this showdown fallout will really determine how far the country has come in terms of democratic rule.



Culture

Togo's culture reflects the influences of its thirty-seven ethnic groups, the largest and most influential of which are the Ewe, Mina, and Kabre.

French is the official language of Togo. The many indigenous African languages spoken by Togolese include: Gbe languages such as Ewe, Mina, and Aja; Kabiyé; and others.

Despite the influences of Christianity and Islam, over half of the people of Togo follow native animistic practices and beliefs.

Ewe statuary is characterized by its famous statuettes which illustrate the worship of the ibeji. Sculptures and hunting trophies were used rather than the more ubiquitous African masks. The wood-carvers of Kloto are famous for their "chains of marriage": two characters are connected by rings drawn from only one piece of wood.

The dyed fabric batiks of the artisanal centre of Kloto represent stylized and coloured scenes of ancient everyday life. The loincloths used in the ceremonies of the weavers of Assahoun are famous. Works of the painter Sokey Edoth are inspired by the immense arid extents, swept by the harmattan, and where the laterite keeps the prints of the men and the animals. The plastics technician Paul Ahyi is internationally recognized today. He practices the "zota", a kind of pyroengraving, and his monumental achievements decorate Lome.



Traditional Taberma houses

Sport

As in much of Africa, football is the most popular sporting pursuit. Until 2006, Togo was very much a minor force in world football, but like fellow West African nations such as Senegal, Nigeria and Cameroon before them, the Togolese national team finally qualified for the World Cup. Until his dismissal from the team over a long-standing bonus dispute, Emmanuel Adebayor was largely considered the side's star player. He currently plays for English Premiership club, Arsenal. Togo was knocked out of the tournament in the group stage after losing to South Korea, Switzerland and France. Photo of the team

Togo's 2006 World Cup appearance was marred by a dispute over financial bonuses, a situation that almost led to the team boycotting their match against Switzerland. Eventually, Togo did fulfil all three fixtures, failing to qualify for the second round of the competition. Over the following months, the stalemate has continued to mar Togolese football, and eventually resulted in the dismissal of strike pair Emmanuel Adebayor and Kader Cougbadja, and defender Nibombe Dare in March 2007, ostensibly for "indecent remarks concerning the FTF management".

After their outings as World Cup underdogs, Togo gained support throughout the world. For example, Togo has a 'Supporters Club' in Levenmouth in Scotland, whilst the Newry Togo Supporters Club has its own bar as a venue in Newry, Northern Ireland.

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Tunisia

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Tunisia (Arabic: تونس Tūnis, Amazigh: **Tuns**), officially the **Tunisian Republic** (الجمهورية التونسية), is a country situated on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. It is bordered by Algeria to the west and Libya to the southeast. It is the northernmost African country and the smallest of the nations situated along the Atlas mountain range. Around forty percent of the country is composed of the Sahara desert, with much of the remainder consisting of particularly fertile soil, and a 1300 km coastline. Both played a prominent role in ancient times, first with the famous Phoenician city of Carthage, and later, as the Africa Province, which became known as the bread basket of the Roman Empire.

History

At the beginning of history, Tunisia was inhabited by Berber tribes. Its coast was settled by Phoenicians starting as early as the 10th century BC. The city of Carthage was founded in the 9th century B.C. by settlers from Tyre, now in modern day Lebanon. Legend says that Queen Elissa founded the city in 814 B.C., as retold in by the Greek writer Timaeus of Tauromenium. The settlers of Carthage brought their culture and religion from the Phoenicians and other Canaanites.

After a series of wars with Greek city-states of Sicily in the 5th century BC, Carthage rose to power and eventually became the dominant civilization in the Western Mediterranean. The people of Carthage worshipped a pantheon of Middle Eastern gods including Baal and Tanit. Tanit's symbol, a simple female figure with extended arms and long dress, is a popular icon found in ancient sites. The founders of Carthage also established a Tophet which was altered in Roman times.

Though the Romans referred to the new empire growing in the city of Carthage as Punic or Phoenician, the empire built around Carthage was an independent political entity from the other Phoenician settlements in the Western Mediterranean.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>الجمهورية التونسية <i>Al-Jumhūriyyah at-Tūnisiyyah</i> Tunisian Republic</p> | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of Arms |
| <p>Motto: عدالة، نظام، حرية (Hurriya, Nidham, 'Adala) "Liberty, Order, Justice"</p> | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Himat Al Hima</i></p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Tunis |



Tunis Zitouna Great Mosque

A Carthaginian invasion of Italy led by Hannibal during the Second Punic War, one of a series of wars with Rome, nearly crippled the rise of the Roman Empire. Carthage was eventually conquered by Rome in the 2nd century BC, a turning point which led to ancient Mediterranean civilization having been influenced mainly by European instead of African cultures. After the Roman conquest, the region became one of the granaries of Rome and was fully Latinized and Christianized. It was conquered by the Vandals in the 5th century AD and reconquered by the commander Belisarius in the 6th century during the rule of Byzantine emperor Justinian.

In the 7th century the region was conquered by Arab Muslims, who founded the city of Kairouan. Successive Muslim dynasties ruled, interrupted by Berber rebellions. The reigns of the Aghlabids (9th century) and of the Zirids (from 972), Berber followers of the Fatimids, were especially prosperous. When the Zirids angered the Fatimids in Cairo (1050), the latter sent in the Banu Hilal tribe to ravage Tunisia.

The coasts were held briefly by the Normans of Sicily in the 12th century and the following Arab reconquest made the last Christians in Tunisia disappear. In 1159, Tunisia was conquered by the Almohad caliphs. They were succeeded by the Berber Hafsids (c.1230 – 1574), under whom Tunisia prospered. In the late 16th century the coast became a pirate stronghold (see: Barbary States). In the last years of the Hafsids, Spain seized many of the coastal cities, but these were recovered by the Ottoman Empire. Under its Turkish governors, the Beys, Tunisia attained virtual independence. The Hussein dynasty of Beys, established in 1705, lasted until 1957.

French imperialism

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Official languages | Arabic |
| Demonym | Tunisian |
| Government | Republic |
| - President | Zine El Abidine Ben Ali |
| - Prime Minister | Mohamed Ghannouchi |
| Independence | |
| - from France | March 20, 1956 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 163,610 km ² (92nd) 63,170 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 5.0 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 10,102,000 (78th) |
| - 1994 census | 8,785,711 |
| - Density | 62/km ² (133rd (2005)) 161/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2007 estimate |
| - Total | \$ 97.74 billion (60th) |
| - Per capita | \$9,630 (73rd) |
| Gini (2000) | 39.8 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.766 (medium) (91st) |
| Currency | Tunisian dinar (TND) |
| Time zone | CET (UTC+1) |
| - Summer (DST) | CEST (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .tn |
| Calling code | +216 |



Cathedral of St Vincent de Paul, Tunis

In the mid-1800s, Tunisia's government under the rule of the Bey severely compromised its legitimacy by making several controversial financial decisions that led to its downfall. France began plans to take control of Tunisia when the Bey first borrowed large sums of money in an attempt to Westernize. This failing state facilitated the Algerian raids that occurred thereafter. The weakened Bey was powerless against these raids and unable to resist European colonization.

In 1878, a secret deal was made between the United Kingdom and France that decided the fate of the North African country. Provided that the French accepted British control of Cyprus, recently given to the United Kingdom, the British would in turn accept French control of Tunisia. This satisfied the French and led to their assumption of control in 1880, anticipating the Italians. Tunisia was formally made a French protectorate on May 12, 1881.

World War II

In 1942 – 1943 Tunisia was the scene of the first major operations by the Allied Forces (the British Commonwealth and the United States) against the Axis Powers (Italy and Germany) during World War II. The main body of the British army, advancing from their victory in Battle of el-Alamein under the command of British Field Marshal Montgomery, pushed into Tunisia from the south. The US and other allies, following their invasions of Algeria and Morocco in Operation Torch, invaded from the west.

General Rommel, commander of the Axis forces in North Africa, had hoped to inflict a similar defeat on the allies in Tunisia as German forces did in the Battle of France in 1940. Before the battle for Tunisia, the inexperienced allied forces had generally been unable to withstand German blitzkriegs and properly coordinate their operations. As such the battle for Tunisia was a major test for the allies. They figured out that in order to defeat Axis forces they would have to coordinate their actions and quickly recover from the inevitable setbacks the experienced German-Italian forces would inflict.

On February 19, 1943, General Rommel launched an attack on the American forces in the Kasserine Pass region of Western Tunisia, hoping to inflict the kind of demoralizing and alliance-shattering defeat the Germans had dealt to Poland and France. The initial results were a disaster for the United States; the area around the Kasserine Pass is the site of many US war graves from that time.

However, the American forces were ultimately able to reverse their retreat. Having learned a critical lesson in tank warfare, the Allies broke through the Mareth line on March 20, 1943. The allies subsequently linked up on April 8 and on May 2, 1943 the German-Italian Army in Tunisia surrendered. Thus, the United States, United Kingdom, Free French, and Polish (as well as other forces) were able to win a major battle as an allied army.

The battle, though often overshadowed by Stalingrad, represented a major allied victory of World War II largely because it forged the Alliance which would one day liberate Western Europe.

Independence



Before Western colonialism, Tunisia was ruled by a line of (Turkish colonial) Beys until 1881. Up until this point the Beys of Tunisia borrowed money from Europe to finance modernization within Tunisia. When the local population resented tax rises to fund the repayment the country found itself bankrupt. It is at this point that France, Britain and Italy placed the finances of Tunisia in administration via an international agreement.

Initially, Italy was the country that demonstrated the most desire to have Tunisia as a colony having investment, citizens and geographic proximity as motivation. However this was rebuffed when Britain and France co-operated to prevent this during the years 1871 – 1878 ending in Britain supporting French influence in Tunisia in exchange for dominion over Cyprus. France still had the issue of Italian influence and thus decided to find an excuse for a pre-emptive strike. Using the pretext of a Tunisian incursion into Algeria, France marched an army of about 36,000 personnel which quickly advanced to Tunis and forced the Bey to make terms in the form of the 1881 Treaty of Bardo (Al Qasr as Sa'id), which gave France control of Tunisian governance and making it a de-facto French protectorate.

Tunisia enjoyed certain benefits from French rule; however, the desire for self-governance remained and in 1910 Ali Bach Hamba and Bechir Sfar created the group of young Tunisians which led to the 1920 group called the “Destour” (constitution) party. Keeping the new movement under control led the French to use a combination of carrot-and-stick tactics that worked well but did not halt the momentum for independence. In 1934, a younger, more fervent element of the Destour party called the Neo-Destour emerged, with Habib Bourguiba, Dr Mahmoud Materi, Tahar Sfar and Bahri Guiga as their leaders. This new party was immediately declared illegal by the French administration, but received strong support from the fascist organizations of the Tunisian Italians.



Habib Bourguiba

Habib Bourguiba spent a great deal of time in French prisons. However, this did little to stem his influence or halt the momentum for change. The Second World War played into Bourguiba’s hands as he was moved from Vichy French prisons to Rome, and then to Tunisia as the Axis powers courted his influence in Tunisia. Bourguiba never endorsed these requests. He did manage relocation to Tunisia and two months after this, the Allies claimed Tunisia.

In the following ten years, the struggle for independence continued and gained momentum. Bourguiba was again incarcerated from 1952 – 1954, which in turn caused an outbreak of guerrilla attacks by supporters. In 1954, things changed abruptly when Pierre Mendes-France became the leader of the French government and pursued a policy of pulling out from burdensome French colonies, with Tunisia in this category. This resulted in the April 1955 agreement which handed internal autonomy to Tunisian hands while international relations were managed by France, a similar situation to the Turkish Bey method of governance in pre-1881.

The Neo-Destour were now in control, but Bourguiba refused to take the helm until the French relinquished all control over Tunisia. He did not have to wait long, as the terrible Algerian War of Independence changed the French desire for colonialism, leading to the abolition of the Treaty of Bardo and Tunisia gaining full independence in March 20, 1956.

Bourguiba became Prime Minister and, after 1957, the first president of the Republic of Tunisia as the constitutional role of the Bey was abolished.



Present-day politics

Tunisia is a republic with a strong presidential system dominated by a single political party. President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has been in office since 1987, the year he deposed Habib Bourguiba in a bloodless coup. The constitution has been changed twice to allow Ben Ali to remain in power: initially from two to three terms, then from three to five. The ruling party, the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD), was the sole legal party for 25 years, known previously as the Socialist Destourian Party (PSD). The RCD still dominates political life.

Facing little opposition, the President is elected to 5-year terms. He appoints a Prime Minister and cabinet, who play a strong role in the execution of policy. Regional governors and local administrators also are appointed by the central government. Largely consultative mayors and municipal councils are elected. There is a unicameral legislative body, the Chamber of Deputies, which has 182 seats, 20% of which are reserved for the opposition parties. It plays a growing role as an arena for debate on national policy but never originates legislation. The Chamber virtually always passes bills presented by the executive with only one minor change. The judiciary is nominally independent but responds to executive direction, especially in political cases. The military is professional and does not play a role in politics.

Tunisia is noteworthy for its lack of public political discourse. Tunisia's precise political situation is hard to determine due to a strong level of silence and lack of transparency maintained by the government. There is compelling evidence that dissidents are routinely arrested, for crimes as minor as viewing banned web sites. There are currently six legal opposition parties all with their own newspapers. However, the Committee to Protect Journalists, in its 2005 country report on Tunisia, details a persistent record of harassment, persecution, imprisonment, and physical harm perpetrated on journalists critical of the government. Even Western journalists, when writing on Tunisian soil, are not spared this fate.

Despite official proclamations, the Tunisian government imposes significant restrictions on freedom of speech and human rights. As such Tunisians are noticeably insecure when discussing political matters. The internet, however, is the most immediately apparent sign of the pervasiveness of state control. In fact the growth of the internet has been a major issue for Tunisia. As tourism (mainly from Europe) has expanded in Tunisia, so has the number of Internet Cafes. Tunisian internet access is invariably censored. This censorship is targeted at material deemed pornographic as well as press or chat room commentary that is critical of the government. For example, the website of the Al Arabiya satellite channel is officially censored and thereby inaccessible from any computer in Tunisia.

Tunisia is also one of three Muslim countries (Azerbaijan and Turkey are the others), that prohibits the hijab in government buildings. By government edict, women that insist on wearing the hijab must quit their job. Dissenters are forced to sign a document admitting to having committed a crime punishable by law and, in cases of recidivism, are jailed. Women who insist on keeping their veils despite all threats become the subject of negative propaganda disseminated by the Tunisian authorities on all state and private media.

Underground opposition from Islamic Fundamentalists has an obvious but shadowy existence in Tunisia. Under former president Bourguiba, Islamic Fundamentalists were allowed to serve as a counterweight to more left-leaning movements. Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, however, has followed an aggressive policy regarding the Fundamentalists, though the extent of government success is difficult to judge in a nation where so much is secret. While Tunisia has a repressive political system, standards of living are among the best in the developing world. This can be evidenced by two compelling economic observations: the level to



which Tunisia has become self-sufficient in material goods, and the extent of real estate development in the cities and major towns of the country. Put simply, the mid-level retail outlet will typically offer goods more than 90% of which are home produced. As to the rise of the building and construction industry, a fleeting visit to any of Tunisia's smaller towns (let alone the cities) will confirm that development is rampant: many projects, especially hotels, are newly opened, and many more stand as skeleton buildings, ready to be developed as soon as demand - and capital funds - are available to bring them to completion. Tunisia remains an autocratic regime, but one where starvation, homelessness, and disease, problems seen in much of Africa and Asia, are rare.

The following is an excerpt from the The World Factbook about Tunisia;

Following independence from France in 1956, President Habib BOURGUIBA established a strict one-party state. He dominated the country for 31 years, repressing Islamic fundamentalism and establishing rights for women unmatched by any other Arab nation. In recent years, Tunisia has taken a moderate, non-aligned stance in its foreign relations. Domestically, it has sought to defuse rising pressure for a more open political society.

Governorates

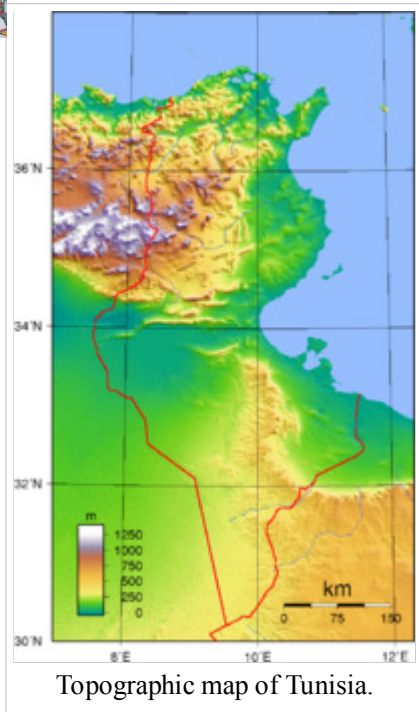
Tunisia is subdivided into 24 governorates, they are:

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Ariana | 13. Manouba |
| 2. Béja | 14. Medenine |
| 3. Ben Arous | 15. Monastir |
| 4. Bizerte | 16. Nabeul |
| 5. Gabès | 17. Sfax |
| 6. Gafsa | 18. Sidi Bou Zid |
| 7. Jendouba | 19. Siliana |
| 8. Kairouan | 20. Sousse |
| 9. Kasserine | 21. Tataouine |
| 10. Kebili | 22. Tozeur |
| 11. Kef | 23. Tunis |
| 12. Mahdia | 24. Zaghuan |

The governorates are divided into 262 " delegations" or " districts" (*mutamadiyat*), and further subdivided into municipalities (*shaykhats*).

Geography





Tunisia is a country situated on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa, midway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Nile Valley. It is bordered by Algeria in the west and Libya in the south-east. An abrupt southern turn of its shoreline gives Tunisia two faces on the Mediterranean.

Despite its relatively small size, Tunisia has great geographical and climactic diversity. The Dorsal, an extension of the Atlas Mountains, traverses Tunisia in a northeasterly direction from the Algerian border in the west to the Cape Bon peninsula. North of the Dorsal is the Tell, a region characterized by low, rolling hills and plains, although in the northwestern corner of Tunisia, the land reaches elevations of 1,050 meters. The Sahil is a plain along Tunisia's eastern Mediterranean coast famous for its olive monoculture. Inland from the Sahil, between the Dorsal and a range of hills south of Gafsa, are the Steppes. Much of the southern region is semi-arid and desert.

Economy

Tunisia has a diverse economy, with important agricultural, mining, energy, tourism, petroleum, and manufacturing sectors. Governmental control of economic affairs, while still heavy, has gradually lessened over the past decade with increasing privatization, simplification of the tax structure, and a prudent approach to debt. Real growth averaged 5.0% in the 1990s, and inflation is slowing. Increased trade and tourism have been key elements in this steady economic growth. Tunisia's association agreement with the European Union (EU), the first such accord between the EU and a Mediterranean country, entered into force on March 1, 1998. Under the agreement Tunisia will gradually remove barriers to trade with the EU over the next decade. Broader privatization, further liberalization of the investment code to increase foreign investment, and improvements in government efficiency are among the challenges for the future of Tunisia. According to the British Philip's university atlas of 2000, Tunisia also possesses major phosphate reserves in the middle section of the country.

Tunisia is ranked most competitive economy of Africa in the 2007 edition of the Global Competitiveness Report that is released by the World Economic Forum. It also ranks first in the Arab World and 29th globally.

Demographics



The majority (98%) of modern Tunisians are Arab, and are speakers of Tunisian Arabic. However, there is also a small (1% at most) population of Berbers located in the Jabal Dahar mountains in the South East and on the island of Jerba. The Berbers primarily speak Berber languages, often called Shelha. The other long-established community in the country is Jewish (today mainly in the capital Tunis and on Jerba), much reduced in number since independence from France.

One study indicates that the majority of the genetic material in Tunisia did not arrive with the Arabs (no more than 20% was found to come from the Middle East, and most of this presumably was added by Phoenicians/ Carthaginians or as even early as the neolithic several millennia B.C. rather than during the Arab conquest). Another study, which does not compare Tunisian genetics with those of the Middle East, states that what it calls the Arab subhaplotype Va was found at a relatively high frequency in Tunisia at 50.6%. , but also states that this group in fact "probably correspond to a heterogeneous group representing various ethnicities", rather than just Arabs. Yet another finds that "the Tunisian genetic distances to European samples are smaller than those to North African groups" (these groups being from the Moroccan Atlas and the Siwa oasis in Egypt). This suggests a fairly significant European input to Tunisian genetics.

The first people known to history in what is now Tunisia were the Berbers. Numerous civilizations and peoples have invaded, migrated to, and been assimilated into the population over the millennia, with varying influxes of population via conquest and settlement from Phoenicians/ Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Arabs, Ottoman Turks, and French. Additionally, after the Reconquista and expulsion of non-Christians and Moriscos from Spain, many Spanish Moors and Jews also arrived at the end of the 15th century.

Religion in Tunisia is dominated by Islam, to which nearly all Tunisians (98%) adhere. In addition to the aforementioned Jewish population there is also a small indigenous Christian population. Small nomadic indigenous minorities have been mostly assimilated into the larger population.

Language

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is Tunisia's official language. However, as is the case in the rest of the Arab world, a vernacular form of Arabic is used by the public. In Tunisia, the dialect is Tunisian Arabic, which is closely related to the Maltese language. There is also a small minority of speakers of Shelha, a Berber language.

French also plays a major role in the country, despite having no official status. It is widely used in education (e.g. as the language of instruction in the sciences in secondary school), the press, and in business. Most educated Tunisians are able to speak it. Many Tunisians, particularly those residing in large urban areas, readily mix Tunisian Arabic with French.

Culture



Traditional Tunisian bread being made



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Uganda

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

SOS Children works in Uganda. For more information see SOS Children in Uganda, Africa




The **Republic of Uganda** is a landlocked country in East Africa, bordered on the east by Kenya, the north by Sudan, on the west by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the southwest by Rwanda, and on the south by Tanzania. The southern part of the country includes a substantial portion of Lake Victoria, within which it shares borders with Kenya and Tanzania. Uganda takes its name from the Buganda kingdom, which encompassed a portion of the south of the country including the capital Kampala.

History

The earliest known human inhabitants in contemporary Uganda were hunter gatherers. Between about 2000 and 1500 years ago Bantu speaking populations, who were probably from central and western Africa, migrated to the southern parts of the country. These groups brought and developed ironworking skills and new ideas of social and political organization. The Empire of Kitara in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries represents the earliest forms of formal organization, followed by the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara, and in later centuries, Buganda and Ankole .

Nilotic people including Luo and Ateker entered the area from the north, probably beginning about A.D. 120. They were cattle herders and subsistence farmers who settled mainly the northern and eastern parts of the country. Some Luo invaded the area of Bunyoro and assimilated with the Bantu there, establishing the Babiito dynasty of the current *Omukama* (ruler) of Bunyoro-Kitara. Luo migration proceeded until the 16th century, with some Luo settling amid Bantu people in Eastern Uganda, with others proceeding to the western shores of Lake Victoria in Kenya and Tanzania. The Ateker (Karimojong and Teso) settled in the north-eastern and eastern parts of the country, and some fused with the Luo in the area north of Lake Kyoga.

Arab traders moved inland from the Indian Ocean coast of East Africa in the 1830s. They were followed in the 1860s by British explorers searching for the source of the Nile. Protestant missionaries entered the

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Jamhuri ya Uganda</i> (Swahili) Republic of Uganda | |
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Motto: "For God and My Country" | |
| Anthem: " Oh Uganda, Land of Beauty" | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Kampala |
| Official languages | English, Swahili |
| Demonym | Ugandan |
| Government | Democratic republic |



country in 1877, followed by Catholic missionaries in 1879. The United Kingdom placed the area under the charter of the British East Africa Company in 1888, and ruled it as a protectorate from 1894. As several other territories and chiefdoms were integrated, the final protectorate called Uganda took shape in 1914.

Uganda became an independent nation in 1962, with Milton Obote as Executive Prime Minister. The constitution was changed in 1963 to satisfy an alliance between the Uganda People's Congress and the Kabaka Yekka Party, during the elections in 1962. This created a post of a titular Head of State called the President and a position of a Vice President. The UPC government appointed Edward Muteesa II, *Kabaka* (King) of Buganda, as the President and Commander in Chief of the armed forces. William Wilberforce Nadiope, the Kyabazing of Busoga (paramount chief), was appointed Vice President. In 1966, Obote overthrew the king. A UPC-dominated Parliament changed the constitution, and Obote became president. The elections were suspended, ushering in an era of coups and counter-coups, which would last until the mid-1980s. Obote was deposed twice from office, both times by military coup.

Idi Amin took power in 1971, ruling the country with the military for the coming decade. Idi Amin's rule cost an estimated 300,000 Ugandans' lives. He forcibly removed the entrepreneurial Indian minority from Uganda, decimating the economy. His reign was ended after the Uganda-Tanzania War in 1979 in which Tanzanian forces aided by Ugandan exiles invaded Uganda. This led to the return of Obote, who was deposed once more in 1985 by General Tito Okello. Okello ruled for six months until he was deposed after the so called " bush war" by the National Resistance Army (NRM) operating under the leadership of the current president, Yoweri Museveni, and various rebel groups, including Federal Democratic Movement of Andrew Kayiira, and another belonging to John Nkwanga.

Museveni has been in power since 1986. In the mid to late 1990s, he was lauded by the West as part of a new generation of African leaders. His presidency has included involvement in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other conflicts in the Great Lakes region, as well as the civil war against the Lord's Resistance Army. In 2007, Uganda deployed soldiers to the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

Government

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Yoweri Museveni |
| - Prime Minister | Apolo Nsibambi |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Republic | October 9, 1962 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 236,040 km ² (81st) 91,136 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 15.39 |
| Population | |
| - 2007 estimate | 30,900,000 (38th) |
| - 2002 census | 24,442,084 |
| - Density | 119/km ² (82nd ¹) 308/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$52.93 billion (83rd) |
| - Per capita | \$900 (186th) |
| Gini (1998) | 43 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | 0.505 (medium) (154th) |
| Currency | Ugandan shilling (UGX) |
| Time zone | EAT (UTC+3) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+3) |
| Internet TLD | .ug |
| Calling code | +256 ² |
| . | |
| ¹ | Rank based on 2005 figures. |
| ² | 006 from Kenya and Tanzania. |



Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda.

The President of Uganda, currently Yoweri Museveni, is both head of state and head of government. The president appoints a prime minister, currently Apolo Nsibambi, who aids him in governing. The parliament is formed by the National Assembly, which has 303 members. Eighty-six of these members are nominated by interest groups, including women and the army. The remaining members are elected for five-year terms during general elections.

In a measure ostensibly designed to reduce sectarian violence, political parties were restricted in their activities from 1986. In the non-party "Movement" system instituted by Museveni, political parties continued to exist, but they could only operate a headquarter office. They could not open branches, hold rallies or field candidates directly (although electoral candidates could belong to political parties). A constitutional referendum canceled this nineteen-year ban on multi-party politics in July 2005.

The presidential elections were held in February 2006. Museveni ran against several candidates, the most prominent of whom was exiled Dr. Kizza Besigye. Museveni was declared the winner in the elections, but international election observers did not condemn the election results or endorse the electoral process. Despite technically democratic elections, harassment of opposition had started months earlier in the form of a disturbing opposition campaign, detention of activists, rape and other criminal allegations against Besigye, and use of state funds for electoral campaigning.

Museveni's tenure in office has been marred by allegations of massive corruption, embezzlement of public funds by a small section of the population and continued uncontrollable demonstrations of recent PRA suspects in court and Mabira Forest

give-aways.

Geography



Kabale District in southwestern Uganda

The country is located on the East African plateau, averaging about 1100 metres (3,250 ft) above sea level, and this slopes very steadily downwards to the Sudanese Plain to the North. However, much of the south is poorly drained, while the centre is dominated by Lake Kyoga, which is also surrounded by extensive marshy areas. Uganda lies almost completely within the Nile basin. The Victoria Nile drains from the lake into Lake Kyoga and thence into Lake Albert on the Congolese border. It then runs northwards into Sudan. One small area on the eastern edge of Uganda is drained by the Turkwel river, part of the internal drainage basin of Lake Turkana.

Although generally equatorial, the climate is not uniform as the altitude modifies the climate. Southern Uganda is wetter with rain generally spread throughout the year. At Entebbe on the northern

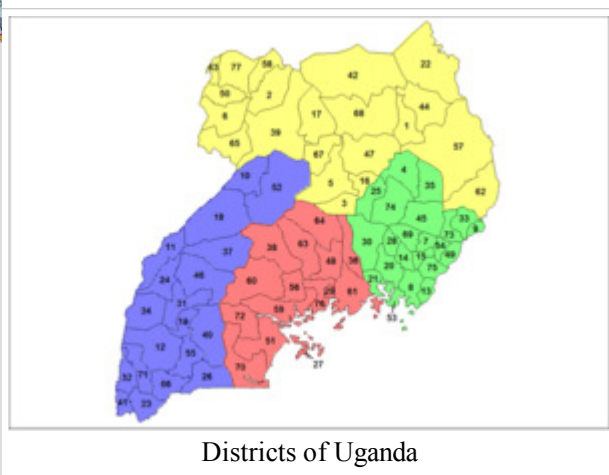
shore of Lake Victoria, most rain falls from March to June and the November/December period. Further to the north a dry season gradually emerges; at Gulu about 120km from the Sudanese border, November to February is much drier than the rest of the year. The north eastern Karamoja region has the driest climate and is prone to droughts in some years. Ruwenzori in the south west on the border with Congo (DRC) receives heavy rain all year round. The south of the country is heavily influenced by one of the world's biggest lakes, Lake Victoria, which contains many islands. It prevents temperatures from varying significantly and increases cloudiness and rainfall. Most important cities are located in the south, near Lake Victoria, including the capital Kampala and the nearby city of Entebbe.

Although landlocked, Uganda contains many large lakes, besides Lake Victoria and Lake Kyoga, there is Lake Albert, Lake Edward and the smaller Lake George.

Districts and counties



Map of Uganda



Districts of Uganda

Uganda is divided into 80 districts, spread across four administrative regions: Northern, Eastern, Central and Western. The districts are subdivided into counties. A number of districts have been added in the past few years, and eight others were added on July 1, 2006. Most districts are named after their main commercial and administrative towns. Each district is divided into sub-districts, counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages.

Parallel with the state administration, five traditional Bantu kingdoms have remained, enjoying some degrees of mainly cultural autonomy. The kingdoms are Toro, Ankole, Busoga, Bunyoro and Buganda.

Economy

Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall, and sizable mineral deposits of copper and cobalt. The country has largely untapped reserves of both crude oil and natural gas.

Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing over 80% of the work force, with

coffee accounting for the bulk of export revenues. Since 1986, the government (with the support of foreign countries and international agencies) has acted to rehabilitate an economy decimated during the regime of Idi Amin and subsequent civil war.

During 1990 - 2001, the economy grew because of continued investment in the rehabilitation of infrastructure, improved incentives for production and exports, reduced inflation, gradually improved domestic security, and the return of exiled Indian-Ugandan entrepreneurs between 1990 and 2001. Ongoing Ugandan involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, corruption within the government, and slippage in the government's determination to press reforms raise doubts about the continuation of strong growth. In 2000, Uganda qualified for the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative worth \$1.3 billion and Paris Club debt relief worth \$145 million. These amounts combined with the original HIPC debt relief added up to about \$2 billion. Growth for 2001 - 2002 was solid despite continued decline in the price of coffee, Uganda's principal export. According to IMF statistics, in 2004 Uganda's GDP per-capita reached \$300, a much higher level than in the Eighties but still at half of Sub-Saharan African average income of 600 dollars per year. Total GDP crossed the 8 billion dollar mark in the same year.

With the Uganda securities exchange established in 1996, several equities have been listed. The Government has used the stock market as an avenue for privatisation. All Government treasury issues are listed on the securities exchange. The Capital Markets Authority has licensed 18 brokers, asset managers and investment advisors including names like African Alliance, AIG Investments, Renaissance Capital and SIMMS. As one of the ways of increasing formal domestic savings, Pension sector reform is the centre of attention (2007). (<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/220/631429>, also <http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/articles.php?article=3040>). It is widely expected that on 12th June 2008 the Minister of Finance will make proposals to set up a separate pension sector regulator. Previous delays have been attributed to the need to set up a proper regulatory framework before liberalising the sector. Uganda's long term capital is not properly intermediated at this time. The NSSF (www.nssfug.org) has more than 53% of its long term liability- driven investment in Short term bank fixed deposits. The crediting rate is not reflective of market conditions and can only be changed with prior approval from the minister of Finance, according to the 1985 NSSF Act. As a result members currently get 7% on their savings yet 364 day Treasury Bill rates yield 12% to 14% and equity returns range from 30% to 100% with about 40% in a moderate year. Only about 300,000 workers out of an estimated labour force of 12 million contribute to any



regular formal savings, the bulk of this is forced savings under the NSSF Act. Long term infrastructure projects seek financing from external sources. Although Uganda is facing crippling energy shortage estimated at 400MW (about 50% of potential demand). The Bujagali Hydro electric project under construction in Jinja had to seek financing from World Bank, yet the US\$ 650Million in pension money could have funded that project. This project will then use local currency income streams to service foreign currency loan obligations - a potential financial nightmare in a market where currency forward agreements only go as far as 12 months and a contract is not likely to be bigger than US\$ 20M on the interbank OTC market. Pension sector reform could change all that by introducing competition.

Foreign capital inflows have risen recently. There are private equity inflows and remittances from Ugandans abroad which have helped stabilised the foreign exchange rate for recent two years.

Recent floods in Uganda have devastated the local farmers. Destroying predictions of increased food productions, the heavy rains created landslides that destroyed the crops and also wet the stored food supply. The result has been a big hit to the economy which had been growing steadily. during the budget June 12th speech the minister announced that infrastructure will take centre stage with Government spending about 26% of its revenues on mainatenance and development of the road network, currently in appalling condition.

Uganda's economic growth greatly depends on her neighboring country Kenya. The country was plunged into an economic major distraction after Kenya was plunged into unrest following the December 2007 presidential elections.

Demographics



Uganda is home to many different ethnic groups, none of whom form a majority of the population. Around forty different languages are regularly and currently in use in the country. English became the official language of Uganda after independence.

The most widely spoken local language in Uganda is Luganda, spoken predominantly in the urban concentrations of Kampala, the capital city, and in towns and localities in the Buganda region of Uganda which encompasses Kampala. The Lusoga and Runyankore languages follow, spoken predominantly in the south-eastern & south-western parts of Uganda respectively.

Swahili, a widely used language throughout eastern and central Africa, was approved as the country's second official national language in 2005, though this is somewhat politically sensitive. Though the language has not been favoured by the Bantu-speaking populations of the south and southwest of the country, it is an important *lingua franca* in the northern regions. It is also widely used in the police and military forces, which may be a historical result of the disproportionate recruitment of northerners into the security forces during the colonial period. The status of Swahili has thus alternated with the political group in power. For example, Amin, who came from the northwest, declared Swahili to be the national language.

According to the census of 2002, Christians made up about 84% of Uganda's population. The Catholic Church has the largest number of adherents (41.9%), followed by the Anglican Church of Uganda (35.9%). The next most reported religion of Uganda is Islam, with Muslims representing 12% of the population.

The Census lists only 1% of Uganda's population as following Traditional Religions, and 0.7% are classified as 'Other Non-Christians,' including Hindus. Judaism is also practised in Uganda by a small number of native Ugandans known as the Abayudaya. One of the seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship is located on the outskirts of Kampala. See also Bahá'í Faith in Uganda.

Uganda has a very young population, with a median age of 15 years

According to the *World Refugee Survey 2008*, published by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Uganda hosted a population of refugees and asylum seekers numbering 235,800 in 2007. The majority of this population came from Sudan (162,100 persons), but also included refugees and asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (41,800), Rwanda (21,200), Somalia (5,700) and Burundi (3,100).

HIV/AIDS

Uganda has seen one of the most effective national responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the African continent. Following the end to the civil war in 1986, the new government created and implemented comprehensive policies that dramatically slowed the rate of new infections. It has been estimated that the HIV prevalence stood at 18.5% in the early 1990s while it declined to 5% in 2002. The latest figures show, however, that the prevalence has increased somewhat to





some 7%.

In recent years, a U.S.-sponsored abstinence-only strategy has drawn criticism while critics have also questioned the statistics underlying the Ugandan success story.

Culture and sport

Due to the large number of ethnic communities, culture within Uganda is diverse. Many Asians (mostly from Kottar-Nagercoil, India) who were expelled during the regime of Amin have returned to Uganda.

Cricket has experienced massive rapid growth and is the most popular sport in Uganda. Recently in the Quadrangular Tournament in Kenya, Uganda came in as the underdogs and went on to register a historic win against arch rivals Kenya. Uganda also won the World Cricket League Division 3 and came fourth place in the World Cricket League Division 2.

Rugby Union has also experienced rapid growth in Uganda over the last decade. This development produced a major result when Uganda were victorious in the 2007 Africa Cup, beating Madagascar in the final.

- Music of Uganda
- List of writers from Uganda
- List of Ugandans

Human rights



Respect for human rights in Uganda has been advanced significantly since the mid-1980s. There are, however, numerous areas which continue to attract concern.

Conflict in the northern parts of the country continues to generate reports of abuses by both the rebel Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan army. The number of internally displaced persons is estimated at 1.4 million. Torture continues to be a widespread practice amongst security organizations. Attacks on political freedom in the country, including the arrest and beating of opposition Members of Parliament, has led to international criticism, culminating in May 2005 in a decision by the British government to withhold part of its aid to the country. The arrest of the main opposition leader Kizza Besigye and the besiegement of the High Court during a hearing of Besigye's case by a heavily armed security forces – before the February 2006 elections – led to condemnation.



Two Ugandan men

Recently, grassroots organizations have been attempting to raise awareness about the children who were kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army to work as soldiers or be used as wives. Thousands of children as young as eight were captured and forced to kill. The documentary film *Invisible Children* illustrates the terrible lives of the children, known as night commuters, who left their villages and walked many miles each night to avoid abduction.

Freedom for homosexual relationships continues to be a matter of contention. Such relationships are illegal and denounced as a foreign import, despite the well known native traditions which predated the European colonization, such as those openly practised at the court of the Buganda royalty.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants reported several violations of refugee rights in 2007, including forcible deportations by the Ugandan government and violence directed against refugees.

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Western Sahara

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Africa; African Countries

Western Sahara (Arabic: **الصحراء الغربية**; transliterated: **as-Ṣaḥrā' al-Gharbīyah**; Spanish: *Sahara Occidental*) is a territory of North Africa, bordered by Morocco to the north, Algeria in the northeast, Mauritania to the east and south, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west. It is one of the most sparsely populated territories in the world, mainly consisting of desert flatlands. The largest city is El Aaiún (Laâyoune), which is home to over half of the population of the territory.

Western Sahara has been on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories since the 1960s when it was a Spanish colony. The Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front independence movement (and government of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic or SADR) dispute control of the territory.

Since a United Nations-sponsored ceasefire agreement in 1991, most of the territory has been controlled by Morocco, with the remainder under the control of the Polisario/SADR, backed by Algeria. Internationally, major powers such as the United States have taken a generally ambiguous and neutral position on each side's claims, and have pressed both parties to agree on a peaceful resolution. Both Morocco and Polisario have sought to boost their claims by accumulating formal recognition, essentially from African, Asian, and Latin American states in the developing world. Polisario has won formal recognition for SADR from roughly 45 states, and was extended membership in the African Union, while Morocco has won formal recognition for its position from 25 states, as well as the membership of the Arab League. In both instances, recognitions have over the past two decades been extended and withdrawn according to changing international trends.

History

The earliest recorded inhabitants of the Western Sahara in historical times were agriculturalists called Bafour. The Bafour were later replaced or absorbed by Berber-speaking populations which eventually merged in turn with migrating Arab tribes, although the Arabic speaking majority in the Western Sahara clearly by the historical record descend from Berber tribes that adopted Arabic over time. There may also have been some Phoenician contacts in antiquity, but such contacts left few if any long-term traces.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| الصحراء الغربية <i>As-Ṣaḥrā' al-Ġarbiyyah</i> Sahara Occidental Western Sahara | |
| | |
| Capital | N/A |
| Largest city | El Aaiún (Laâyoune) |
| Official languages | N/A |
| Recognised regional languages | Arabic and Spanish |
| Demonym | Sahrawi |
| Disputed sovereignty ¹ | |
| - Relinquished by Spain | November 14, 1975 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 266,000 km ² (77th) 102,703 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | negligible |



The arrival of Islam in the 8th century played a major role in the development of relationships between the Saharan regions that later became the modern territories of Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania and Algeria, and neighbouring regions. Trade developed further and the region became a passage of caravans especially between Marrakech and Tombouctou in Mali. In the Middle Ages, the Almohads and Almoravids movements and dynasties both originated from the Saharan regions and were able to control the area.

Towards the late Middle Ages, the Beni Hassan Arab bedouin tribes invaded the Maghreb, reaching the northern border-area of the Sahara in the 14th and 15th century. Over roughly five centuries, through a complex process of acculturation and mixing seen elsewhere in the Maghreb and North Africa, the indigenous Berber tribes adopted Hassaniya Arabic and a mixed Arab-Berber nomadic culture.

Spanish Province

During the first decade of the 20th century, after an agreement among the European colonial powers at the Berlin Conference in 1884 on the division of spheres of influence in Africa, Spain seized control of the Western Sahara and established it as a Spanish protectorate after a series of wars against the local tribes reminiscent of similar European colonial adventures of the period, in the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere. Spanish colonial rule began to unravel with the general wave of decolonization after World War II, which saw Europeans lose control of North African and sub-Saharan African possessions and protectorates. Spanish decolonization in particular began rather late, but internal political and social pressures for it in mainland Spain built up towards the end of Francisco Franco's rule, in the context of the global trend towards complete decolonization. Spain began rapidly and even chaotically divesting itself of most of its remaining colonial possessions. After initially being violently opposed to decolonization, Spain began to give in and by 1974-75 issued promises of a referendum on independence. The nascent Polisario Front, a nationalist organization that had begun fighting the Spanish in 1973, had been demanding such a move.

At the same time, Morocco and Mauritania, which had historical claims of sovereignty over the territory based on competing traditional claims, argued that the territory was artificially separated from their territories by the European colonial powers. The third neighbour of Spanish Sahara, Algeria, viewed these demands with suspicion, influenced also by its long-running rivalry with Morocco. After arguing for a process of decolonization guided by the United Nations, the government of Houari Boumédiène committed itself in 1975 to assisting the Polisario Front, which opposed both Moroccan and Mauritanian claims and demanded full independence.

The UN attempted to settle these disputes through a visiting mission in late 1975, as well as a verdict from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which declared that the Western Sahara possessed the right of self-determination. On November 6, 1975 the Green March into Western Sahara began when 350,000 unarmed Moroccans converged on the city of Tarfaya in southern Morocco and waited for a signal from King Hassan II of Morocco to cross into Western Sahara.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Population | |
| - July 2007 estimate | 382,617 (177th) |
| - Density | 1.3/km ² (238th) 3.4/sq mi |
| Currency | Moroccan dirham (MAD) |
| Time zone | UTC (UTC+0) |
| Internet TLD | .eh is reserved but not used |
| Calling code | +212 ² |
| <p>¹ Mostly under administration of Morocco as its Southern Provinces. The Polisario Front controls border areas behind the border wall as the Free Zone, on behalf of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.</p> <p>² Code for Morocco; no code specific to Western Sahara has been issued by the ITU.</p> | |



Demands for Independence

In the waning days of General Franco's rule in November 1975, the Spanish government secretly signed on 14 November 1975, mere days before Franco's death, a tripartite agreement with Morocco and Mauritania as it moved to abandon the Territory. Although the accords foresaw a tripartite administration, Morocco and Mauritania each moved to annex the territory, with Morocco taking control of the northern two-thirds of Western Sahara as its Southern Provinces and Mauritania taking control of the southern third as Tiris al-Gharbiyya. Spain terminated its presence in Spanish Sahara within three months, repatriating even Spanish corpses from its cemeteries. The Moroccan and Mauritanian moves, however, met staunch opposition from the Polisario, which had by now gained backing from Algeria. In 1979, following Mauritania's withdrawal due to pressures from Polisario, Morocco extended its control to the rest of the territory, and gradually contained the guerrillas through setting up the extensive sand-berm in the desert to exclude guerilla fighters. Hostilities ceased in a 1991 cease-fire, overseen by the peacekeeping mission MINURSO, under the terms of a UN Settlement Plan.

Stalling of the Referendum and Settlement Plan

The referendum, originally scheduled for 1992, foresaw giving the local population the option between independence or affirming integration with Morocco, but it quickly stalled. In 1997, the Houston Agreement attempted to revive the proposal for a referendum, but likewise has hitherto not had success. As of 2007, however, negotiations over terms have not resulted in any substantive action. At the heart of the dispute lies the question of who qualifies to be registered to participate in the referendum, and, since about 2000, Morocco's renewed refusal to accept independence as an option on the referendum ballot combined with Polisario's insistence that independence be a clear option in the referendum.

Both sides blame each other for the stalling of the referendum. The Polisario has insisted on allowing to vote only the persons found on the 1974 Spanish Census lists (see below), while Morocco has insisted the census was flawed by evasion and sought the inclusion of members of Sahrawi tribes with recent historical presence in the Spanish Sahara.

Efforts by the UN special envoys to find a common ground for both parties did not succeed. By 1999 the UN had identified about 85,000 voters, with nearly half of them in the Moroccan-controlled parts of Western Sahara or Southern Morocco, and the others scattered between the Tindouf refugee camps, Mauritania and other places of exile. Polisario accepted this voter list, as it had done with the previous list presented by the UN (both of them originally based on the Spanish census of 1974), but Morocco refused and, as rejected voter candidates began a mass-appeals procedure, insisted that each application be scrutinized individually. This again brought the process to a halt.

According to a NATO delegation, MINURSO election observers stated in 1999, as the deadlock continued, that "if the number of voters does not rise significantly the odds were slightly on the RASD side" . By 2001, the process had effectively stalemated and the UN Secretary-General asked the parties for the first time to explore other, third-way solutions. Indeed, shortly after the Houston Agreement (1997), Morocco officially declared that it was "no longer necessary" to include an option of independence on the ballot, offering instead autonomy. Erik Jensen, who played an administrative role in MINURSO, wrote that neither side would agree to a voter registration in which they were destined to lose (see *Western Sahara: Anatomy of a Stalemate*).

Baker Plan

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As personal envoy of the Secretary-General, James Baker (who also had John R. Bolton in his delegation) visited all sides and produced the document known as the " Baker Plan". This was discussed by the United Nations Security Council in 2000, and envisioned an autonomous **Western Sahara Authority (WSA)**, which would be followed after five years by the referendum. Every person present in the territory would be allowed to vote, regardless of birthplace and with no regard to the Spanish census. It was rejected by both sides, although it was initially derived from a Moroccan proposal. According to Baker's draft, tens of thousands of post-annexation immigrants from Morocco proper (viewed by Polisario as settlers, but by Morocco as legitimate inhabitants of the area) would be granted the vote in the Sahrawi independence referendum, and the ballot would be split three-ways by the inclusion of an unspecified " autonomy", further undermining the independence camp. Also, Morocco was allowed to keep its army in the area and to retain the control over all security issues during both the autonomy years and the election. In 2002, the Moroccan king stated that the referendum idea was "out of date" since it "can not be implemented"; Polisario retorted that that was only because of the King's refusal to allow it to take place.

In 2003, a new version of the plan was made official, with some additions spelling out the powers of the WSA, making it less reliant on the Moroccan devolution. It also provided further detail on the referendum process in order to make it harder to stall or subvert. This second draft, commonly known as Baker II, was accepted by the Polisario as a "basis of negotiations" to the surprise of many. This appeared to abandon Polisario's previous position of only negotiating based on the standards of voter identification from 1991 (i.e. the Spanish census). After that, the draft quickly garnered widespread international support, culminating in the UN Security Council's unanimous endorsement of the plan in the summer of 2003.

Western Sahara today

Today the Baker II document appears politically redundant, with Baker having resigned his post at the UN in 2004. His resignation followed several months of failed attempts to get Morocco to enter into formal negotiations on the plan, but he met with rejection. The new king, Mohammed VI of Morocco, opposes any referendum on independence, and has said Morocco will never agree to one: "We shall not give up one inch of our beloved Sahara, not a grain of its sand".

Instead, he proposes, through an appointed advisory body Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS), a self-governing Western Sahara as an autonomous community within Morocco. His father, Hassan II of Morocco, initially supported the referendum idea in principle in 1982, and in signed contracts with Polisario and the United Nations in 1991 and 1997; Morocco is thus bound to hold the referendum, but it appears unlikely that any major power will attempt to force its hand.

The UN has put forth no replacement strategy after the breakdown of Baker II, and renewed fighting may be a possibility. In 2005, former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported increased military activity on both sides of the front and breaches of several cease-fire provisions against strengthening military fortifications.

Morocco has repeatedly tried to get Algeria into bilateral negotiations, receiving vocal support from France and occasionally (and currently) from the United States. These negotiations would define the exact limits of a Western Sahara autonomy under Moroccan rule, but only after Morocco's "inalienable right" to the territory was recognized as a precondition to the talks. The Algerian government has consistently refused, claiming it has neither the will nor the right to negotiate on the behalf of the Polisario Front.

Demonstrations and riots by supporters of independence and/or a referendum broke out in the Moroccan-controlled parts of Western Sahara in May 2005, and

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in parts of southern Morocco (notably the town of Assa). They were met by police. Several international human rights organizations have expressed concern at what they termed abuse by Moroccan security forces, and a number of Sahrawi activists have been jailed. Pro-independence Sahrawi sources, including the Polisario, have given these demonstrations the name " Independence Intifada", while sources supporting the Moroccan claims have attempted to minimize the events as being of limited importance. International press and other media coverage has been sparse, and reporting is complicated by the Moroccan government's policy of strictly controlling independent media coverage within the territory.

Demonstrations and protests are still occurring, after Morocco declared in February 2006 that it was contemplating a plan for devolving a limited variant of autonomy to the territory, but still explicitly refused any referendum on independence. As of January 2007, the plan has not been made public, even if the Moroccan government claims that it is more or less completed. .

The Polisario Front has intermittently threatened to resume fighting, referring to the Moroccan refusal of a referendum as a breach of the cease-fire terms, but most observers seem to consider armed conflict unlikely without the green light from Algeria, which houses the Sahrawis' refugee camps and has been the main military sponsor of the movement.

In April 2007 the government of Morocco has suggested that a self-governing entity, through the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS), should govern the territory with some degree of autonomy for Western Sahara. The project was presented to the United Nations Security Council in mid-April 2007. The stalemating of the Moroccan proposal options has led the UN in the recent "Report of the UN Secretary-General" to ask the parties to enter into direct and unconditional negotiations to reach a mutually accepted political solution. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (13 April 2007)(ped). UN Security Council. Retrieved on 2007-05-18.)

Politics

The legal status of the territory and the question of its sovereignty remains unresolved; the territory is contested between Morocco and Polisario Front. It is considered a non self-governed territory by the United Nations.

The government of Morocco is a formally constitutional monarchy under Mohammed VI with a bicameral parliament. The last elections to the lower house were deemed reasonably free and fair by international observers. Certain powers such as the capacity to appoint the government and to dissolve parliament remain in the hands of the monarch. The Morocco-controlled parts of Western Sahara are divided into several provinces treated as integral parts of the kingdom. The Moroccan government heavily subsidizes the Saharan provinces under its control with cut-rate fuel and related subsidies, to appease nationalist dissent and attract immigrants - or settlers - from loyalist Sahrawi and other communities in Morocco proper.



Police checkpoint at suburbs of Laayoune.

The exiled government of the self-proclaimed Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is a form of single-party parliamentary and presidential system, but according to its constitution, this will be changed into a multi-party system at the achievement of independence. It is presently based at the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria, which it controls. It also claims to control the part of Western Sahara to the east of the Moroccan Wall, known as the Free Zone. This area has a very small population, estimated to be approximately 30,000 nomads. The Moroccan government views it as a



no-man's land patrolled by UN troops. The SADR government whose troops also patrol the area regard it as the liberated territories and have proclaimed a village in the area, Bir Lehlou as SADR's provisional capital.

Human rights

The Western Sahara conflict has resulted in severe human rights abuses, most notably the displacement of tens of thousands of Sahrawi civilians from the country, the expulsion of tens of thousands of Moroccan civilians by the Algerian government from Algeria, and numerous casualties of war and repression.

During the war years (1975-91), both sides accused each other of targeting civilians. Moroccan claims of Polisario terrorism has generally little to no support abroad, with the USA, EU and UN all refusing to include the group on their lists of terrorist organizations. Polisario leaders maintain that they are ideologically opposed to terrorism, and insist that collective punishment and forced disappearances among Sahrawi civilians should be considered state terrorism on the part of Morocco . Both Morocco and the Polisario additionally accuse each other of violating the human rights of the populations under their control, in the Moroccan-controlled parts of Western Sahara and the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria, respectively. Morocco and organizations such as France Libertés consider Algeria to be directly responsible for any crimes committed on its territory, and accuse the country of having been directly involved in such violations.

- Morocco has been repeatedly criticized for its actions in Western Sahara by international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International , Human Rights Watch and the World Organization Against Torture , Freedom House , Reporters Without Borders , the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Polisario has received criticism from the French organization France Libertes on its treatment of Moroccan prisoners-of-war, and on its general behaviour in the Tindouf refugee camps in reports by the Belgian organization ESISC, or European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre.. A number of former Polisario officials who have defected to Morocco accuse the organisation of abuse of human rights and sequestration of the population in Tindouf.

Regions



Three Moroccan regions overlap the territory of Western Sahara:

- Guelmim-Es Semara – also includes Moroccan territory outside of Western Sahara
- Laâyoune-Boujdour-Sakia El Hamra
- Oued Ed-Dahab-Lagouira

Dispute

The Western Sahara was partitioned between Morocco and Mauritania in April 1976, with Morocco acquiring the northern two-thirds of the territory. When Mauritania, under pressure from Polisario guerrillas, abandoned all claims to its portion in August 1979, Morocco moved to occupy that sector shortly thereafter and has since asserted administrative control over the whole territory. The official Moroccan government name for Western Sahara is the "Southern Provinces", which indicates Río de Oro and Saguia el-Hamra.

Not under control of the Moroccan government is the area that lies between the border wall and the actual border with Algeria. (for map see external links) The Polisario Front claims to run this as the Free Zone on behalf of the SADR. The area is patrolled by Polisario forces, and access is restricted, even among Sahrawis, due to the harsh climate of the Sahara, the military conflict and the abundance of land mines. Still, the area is traveled and inhabited by many Sahrawi nomads from the Tindouf refugee camps of Algeria and the Sahrawi communities in Mauritania. Both Moroccan and United Nations MINURSO forces are also present in the area. The UN forces oversee the cease-fire between Polisario and Morocco agreed upon in the 1991. Settlement Plan..

The Polisario forces (of the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army, SPLA) in the area are divided into seven "military regions", each controlled by a top commander reporting to the President of the Polisario proclaimed Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The total size of the Polisario's guerrilla army present in this area is unknown, but it is believed to number a few thousand men, despite many combatants being demobilized due to the cease-fire. These forces are dug into permanent positions, such as gun emplacements, defensive trenches and underground military bases, as well as conducting mobile patrols of the territory.

Major Sahrawi political events, such as Polisario congresses and sessions of the Sahrawi National Council (the SADR parliament in exile) are held in the Free Zone (especially in Tifariti and Bir Lehlou), since it is considered politically and symbolically important to conduct political affairs on Sahrawi territory. A concentration of forces for the commemoration of the Saharawi Republic's 30th anniversary were however subject to condemnation by the United Nations, as it was considered an example of a cease-fire violation to bring such a large force concentration into the area. Both parties have been accused of such violations by the UN, but to date there has been no serious hostile action from either side since 1991.

Annual demonstrations against the Moroccan Wall are staged in the region by Sahrawis and international activists from Spain, Italy and other mainly European countries. These actions are closely monitored by the UN.



Tifariti, 2005



During the joint Moroccan-Mauritanian control of the area, the Mauritanian-controlled part, roughly corresponding to Saquia el-Hamra, was known as Tiris al-Gharbiyya.

Geography

Western Sahara is located in Northern Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Mauritania and Morocco. It also borders Algeria to the northeast. The land is some of the most arid and inhospitable on the planet, but is rich in phosphates in Bou Craa.

Economy

Aside from its rich phosphate deposits and fishing waters, Western Sahara has few natural resources and lacks sufficient rainfall for most agricultural activities. There is speculation that there may be rich off-shore oil and natural gas fields, but the debate persists as to whether these resources can be profitably exploited, and if this would be legally permitted due to the non-decolonized status of Western Sahara (see below).



NASA photo of El Aaiún.

Western Sahara's economy is centred around nomadic herding, fishing, and phosphate mining. Most food for the urban population is imported. All trade and other economic activities are controlled by the Moroccan government. The government has encouraged citizens to relocate to the territory by giving subsidies and price controls on basic goods. These heavy subsidies have created a state-dominated economy in the Moroccan-controlled parts of Western Sahara, with the Moroccan government as the single biggest employer.

Exploitation debate

After reasonably exploitable oil fields were located in neighbouring Mauritania, speculation intensified on the possibility of major oil resources being located off the coast of Western Sahara. Despite the fact that findings remain inconclusive, both Morocco and the Polisario have made deals with oil and gas exploration companies. US and French companies (notably Total and Kerr-McGee) began prospecting on behalf of Morocco.



In 2002, Hans Corell, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and head of its Office of Legal Affairs issued a legal opinion on the matter. This opinion stated that while *exploration* of the area was permitted, *exploitation* was not, on the basis that Morocco is not a recognized administrative power of the territory, and thus lacks the capacity to issue such licenses. After pressures from corporate ethics-groups, Total S.A. pulled out.

In May 2006 the remaining company Kerr-McGee also left following sales of numerous share holders like the National Norwegian Oil Fund, due to continued pressure from NGOs and corporate groups.

Despite the UN report and the development regarding the exploration of oil, the European Union wants to exploit fishing resources in waters outside Western Sahara and has signed a fishing treaty with Morocco.

Demographics

The indigenous population of Western Sahara is known as Sahrawis. These are Hassaniya-speaking tribes of mixed Arab-Berber heritage, effectively continuations of the tribal groupings of Hassaniya speaking Moorish tribes extending south into Mauritania and north into Morocco as well as east into Algeria. The Sahrawis are traditionally nomadic bedouins, and can be found in all surrounding countries. War and conflict has led to major displacements of the population.

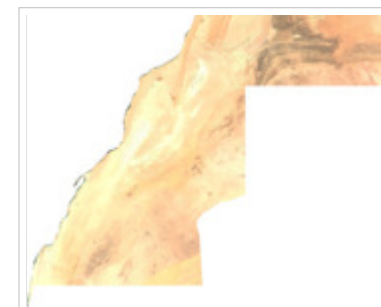
As of July 2004, an estimated 267,405 people (excluding the Moroccan army of some 160,000) live in the Moroccan-controlled parts of Western Sahara. Morocco has engaged in "Moroccanization" of the area, bringing in large numbers of settlers in anticipation of a UN-administered referendum on independence. While many of them are from Sahrawi tribal groups extending up into southern Morocco, some are also non-Sahrawi Moroccans from other regions. The settler population is today thought to outnumber the indigenous Western Sahara Sahrawis. The precise size and composition of the population is subject to political controversy.

The Polisario-controlled parts of Western Sahara are barren. This area has a very small population, estimated to be approximately 30,000. The population is primarily made up of nomads who engage in herding camels back and forth between the Tindouf area and Mauritania. However, the presence of mines scattered throughout the territory by both the Polisario and the Moroccan army makes it a dangerous way of life.

The Spanish census and MINURSO

A 1974 Spanish census claimed there were some 74,000 Sahrawis in the area at the time (in addition to approximately 20,000 Spanish residents), but this number is likely to be on the low side, due to the difficulty in counting a nomad people, even if Sahrawis were by the mid-1970s mostly urbanized. Despite these possible inaccuracies, Morocco and the Polisario Front agreed on using the Spanish census as the basis for voter registration when striking a cease-fire agreement in the late 1980s, contingent on the holding of a referendum on independence or integration into Morocco.

In December of 1999 the United Nations' MINURSO mission announced that it had identified 86,425 eligible voters for the referendum that was supposed to be



Satellite image of Western Sahara, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



held under the 1991 Settlement plan and the 1997 Houston accords. By "eligible voter" the UN referred to any Sahrawi over 18 years of age that was part of the Spanish census or could prove his/her descent from someone who was. These 86,425 Sahrawis were dispersed between Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara and the refugee camps in Algeria, with smaller numbers in Mauritania and other places of exile. These numbers cover only Sahrawis 'indigenous' to the Western Sahara during the Spanish colonial period, not the total number of "ethnic" Sahrawis (i.e, members of Sahrawi tribal groupings), who also extend into Mauritania, Morocco and Algeria. The number was highly politically significant due to the expected organization of a referendum on self-determination.

The Polisario has its home base in the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria, and declares the number of Sahrawi population in the camps to be approximately 155,000. Morocco disputes this number, saying it is exaggerated for political reasons and for attracting more foreign aid. The UN uses a number of 90,000 "most vulnerable" refugees as basis for its food aid program.

Culture

The major ethnic group of the Western Sahara are the Sahrawis, a nomadic or Bedouin tribal or ethnic group speaking Hassānīya dialect of Arabic, also spoken in much of Mauritania. They are of mixed Arab-Berber descent, but claim descent from the Beni Hassan, a Yemeni tribe supposed to have migrated across the desert in the 11th century.

Physically indistinguishable from the Hassaniya speaking Moors of Mauritania, the Sahrawi people differ from their neighbors partly due to different tribal affiliations (as tribal confederations cut across present modern boundaries) and partly as a consequence of their exposure to Spanish colonial domination. Surrounding territories were generally under French colonial rule.

Like other neighboring Saharan Bedouin and Hassaniya groups, the Sahrawis are Muslims of the Sunni sect and the Maliki law school. Local religious custom 'urf is, like other Saharan groups, heavily influenced by pre-Islamic Berber and African practices, and differs substantially from urban practices. For example, Sahrawi Islam has traditionally functioned without mosques in the normal sense of the word, in an adaptation to nomadic life.

The originally clan- and tribe-based society underwent a massive social upheaval in 1975, when a part of the population was forced into exile and settled in the refugee camps of Tindouf, Algeria. Families were broken up by the fight. For developments among this population, see Sahrawi and Tindouf Province.

The Moroccan government considerably invested in the social and economic development of the Moroccan controlled Western Sahara with special emphasis on education, modernisation and infrastructure. El-Aaiun in particular has been the target of heavy government investment, and has grown rapidly. Several thousand Sahrawis study in Moroccan universities. Literacy rates are appreciated at some 50% of the population.

To date, there have been few thorough studies of the culture due in part to the political situation. Some language and culture studies, mainly by French researchers, have been performed on Sahrawi communities in northern Mauritania.

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Zambia

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The **Republic of Zambia** (IPA: [ˈzæmbɪə]), is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. The neighbouring countries are the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north, Tanzania to the north-east, Malawi to the east, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia to the south, and Angola to the west. The capital city is Lusaka, located in the southeast of the country. The population is concentrated mainly around the capital and the Copperbelt to the northwest.




Zambia has been inhabited for thousands of years by hunter-gatherers and migrating tribes. After sporadic visits by European explorers starting in the 18th century, Zambia was gradually claimed and occupied by the British as protectorate of Northern Rhodesia towards the end of the nineteenth century. On 24 October 1964, the protectorate gained independence with a new name derived from the Zambezi river which flows through Zambia. After independence the country moved towards a system of one party rule with Kenneth Kaunda as president. Kaunda dominated Zambian politics until multiparty elections were held in 1991.

History



Map of Zambia

The area of modern Zambia was inhabited by Khoisan hunter-gatherers until the 1st century CE, when technologically-advanced migrating tribes began to displace or absorb them. In the 12th century, major waves of Bantu-speaking immigrants arrived during the Bantu expansion. Among them, the Tonga people (also called Batonga) were the first to settle in Zambia and are believed to have come from the east near the "big sea". The Nkoya people also arrived early in the expansion, coming from the Luba- Lunda kingdoms located in the southern parts of the modern Democratic Republic of the Congo and northern Angola, followed by a much larger influx, especially between the late 17th and early 19th centuries. In the early 18th century, the Nsokolo people settled in the Mbala district of Northern province.

| Republic of Zambia | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| Flag | Coat of arms |
| Anthem: <i>Stand and Sing of Zambia, Proud and Free</i> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Lusaka |
| Official languages Recognised regional languages | English Chibemba, Chichewa, Lunda, Tonga, Silozi, Nkoya, Luvale, Tumbuka, Kaonde, and 70 other indigenous languages. |
| Demonym | Zambian |
| Government | Republic |



During the 19th century, the Ngoni peoples arrived from the south. By the late 19th century, most of the various peoples of Zambia were established in the areas they currently occupy.



A statue of David Livingstone on the Zambian side of Victoria Falls

The earliest account of a European visiting the area was Francisco de Lacerda in the late 18th century, followed by other explorers in the 19th century. The most prominent of these was David Livingstone, who had a vision of ending the slave trade through the "3 C's" (Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation). He was the first European to see the magnificent waterfalls on the Zambezi River in 1855, naming them Victoria Falls after Queen Victoria. Locally the falls are known "Mosi-oa-Tunya" or "the smoke that thunders" (in the Lozi or Kololo dialect). The town of Livingstone, near the falls is named after him. Highly publicised accounts of his journeys motivated a wave of explorers, missionaries and traders after his death in 1873.

In 1888, the British South Africa Company, led by Cecil Rhodes, obtained mineral rights from the Litunga, the king of the Lozi for the area which later became North Western Rhodesia. To the east, King Mpezeni of the Ngoni resisted but was defeated in battle and that part of the country came to be known as North-Eastern Rhodesia. The two were administered as separate units until 1911 when they were merged to form Northern Rhodesia. In 1923, the Company ceded control of Northern Rhodesia to the British Government after the government decided not to renew the Company's charter.

That same year, the government proclaimed that Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was within the British sphere of influence, formally annexed it and granted self-government. In 1924, after negotiations, administration of Northern Rhodesia transferred to the British Colonial Office. In 1953, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland joined Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe, respectively) with Nyasaland (now Malawi). This action was undertaken despite opposition from a sizeable minority of Africans, who demonstrated against it in 1960-61. Northern Rhodesia was the centre of much of the turmoil and crisis characterizing the federation in its last years. Initially, Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula's African National Congress (ANC) led the campaign that Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) subsequently took up.

In January 1964, Kenneth Kaunda won the first and only election for Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia. The Colonial Governor, Sir Evelyn Hone, was very close to Kaunda and urged him to go for the post. Soon afterwards there was an uprising in the north of the country known as the Lumpa Uprising led by Alice Lenshina. She was a self-proclaimed prophetess who claimed that she had had a visitation from an angel telling her to liberate the people. Many followed her and fought the authorities to the death — men, women and children alike. She continued despite pleas from her own brother to give herself up. This was

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| - President | Levy Mwanawasa |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Date | October 24, 1964 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 752,618 km ² (39th) 290,587 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 11,668,000 (71st) |
| - 2000 census | 9,885,591 |
| - Density | 16/km ² (191st) 40/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$13.025 billion (133rd) |
| - Per capita | \$1,000 (168th) |
| Gini (2002–03) | 42.1 (medium) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.434 (low) (165th) |
| Currency | Zambian kwacha (ZMK) |
| Time zone | CAT (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | <i>not observed</i> (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .zm |
| Calling code | +260 |



Kenneth Kaunda's first internal conflict as leader of the nation.

A two-stage election held in October and December 1962 resulted in an African majority in the legislative council and an uneasy coalition between the two African nationalist parties. The council passed resolutions calling for Northern Rhodesia's secession from the federation and demanding full internal self-government under a new constitution and a new National Assembly based on a broader, more democratic franchise. The federation was dissolved on 31 December 1963, and Northern Rhodesia became the Republic of Zambia on 24 October 1964, with Kaunda as the first president.

At independence, despite its considerable mineral wealth, Zambia faced major challenges. Domestically, there were few trained and educated Zambians capable of running the government, and the economy was largely dependent on foreign expertise. Three neighbouring countries – Angola, Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia; remained under colonial rule. Southern Rhodesia's white-ruled government unilaterally declared independence in November, 1965. In addition, Zambia shared a border with South West Africa (Namibia) which was administered by South Africa. Zambian sympathies lay with forces opposing colonial or white-dominated rule, particularly in Southern Rhodesia. During the next decade, it actively supported movements such as UNITA in Angola; the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU); the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa; and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO).

Conflict with Rhodesia (renamed from Southern Rhodesia) resulted in the closure of the border with that country and severe problems with international transport and power supply. However, the Kariba hydroelectric station on the Zambezi River provided sufficient capacity to satisfy the country's requirements for electricity (despite the fact that the control centre was on the Rhodesian side of the border). A railway to the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam, built with Chinese assistance, reduced Zambian dependence on railway lines south to South Africa and west through an increasingly troubled Angola. Until the completion of the railway, however, Zambia's major artery for imports and the critical export of copper was along the TanZam Road, running from Zambia to the port cities in Tanzania. Also a pipeline for oil was built from Dar-es-Salaam to Ndola in Zambia.



Lake Kariba

By the late 1970s, Mozambique and Angola had attained independence from Portugal. Zimbabwe achieved independence in accordance with the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement, however Zambia's problems were not solved. Civil war in the former Portuguese colonies created an influx of refugees and caused continuing transportation problems. The Benguela railway, which extended west through Angola, was essentially closed to traffic from Zambia by the late 1970s. Zambia's strong support for the ANC, which had its external headquarters in Lusaka, created security problems as South Africa raided ANC targets in Zambia.

In the mid-1970s, the price of copper, Zambia's principal export, suffered a severe decline worldwide. In Zambia's situation, the cost of transporting the copper great distances to market was an additional strain. Zambia turned to foreign and international lenders for relief, but, as copper prices remained depressed, it became increasingly difficult to service its growing debt. By the mid-1990s, despite limited debt relief, Zambia's per capita foreign debt remained among the highest in the world.

Government



Zambian politics take place in a framework of a presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Zambia is both head of state and head of government in a pluriform multi-party system. The government exercises executive power, whilst legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. Zambia became a republic immediately upon attaining independence in October 1964. The country is divided into nine provinces, each administered by an appointed deputy minister. Each province is subdivided into several districts with a grand total of 73 districts. The provinces are:

- Central
- Copperbelt
- Eastern
- Luapula
- Lusaka
- Northern
- North-Western
- Southern
- Western



The provinces of Zambia

Population of major cities

| City | Population |
|-------------|------------|
| Lusaka | 1,218,200 |
| Ndola | 547,900 |
| Kitwe | 368,800 |
| Kabwe | 213,800 |
| Chingola | 150,500 |
| Luanshya | 124,800 |
| Livingstone | 108,100 |

Languages

The official language of Zambia is English, which is used to conduct official business and is the medium of instruction in schools. Commonly-spoken indigenous languages include the eight major languages: Chibemba, Nsenga, Chinyanja, Lunda, Chitonga, Kaonde, Silozi, Nkoya, and Luvale. Estimates of the total number



of languages spoken in Zambia vary from 43 to 70, depending on whether some dialects are counted as languages in their own right. The process of urbanisation has had a dramatic effect on some of the indigenous languages, including the assimilation of words from other indigenous languages and English. Urban dwellers sometimes differentiate between urban and rural dialects of the same language by prefixing the rural languages with 'deep'. For example, an urban Bemba speaker might say "I don't know that word, it is deep Bemba".

Education

Education in Zambia is provided at three levels: primary (years 1 to 7), junior secondary (years 8 to 9) and upper secondary (years 10 to 12). Some schools provide a "basic" education covering years 1 to 9, as year 9 is considered to be a decent level of education for the majority of children. However, tuition is only free up to year 7, and UNESCO estimated that 80% of children of primary school age in 2002 were enrolled. Most children drop out after year 7 when fees must be paid.

Both government and private schools exist in Zambia. The private school system began largely as a result of Christian mission efforts during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Amongst famous private schools are the International School of Lusaka, the Roman Catholic run St Mary's Seminary located in the Msupadzi area, south of Chipata, Eastern Province and Simba International School close to Ndola, Copperbelt Province. Private schools operate under either the British or American way of schooling, but also offer curricula approved by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ).

Educational opportunities beyond secondary school are limited in Zambia. After secondary school, most students study at the various colleges, around the country. There are two main universities: the University of Zambia (UNZA) and the Copperbelt University (CBU). Normally both select students on the basis of ability but competition for places is intense. The introduction of fees in the late 1990s has made university level education inaccessible for some, although the government does provide state bursaries. The Copperbelt University opened in the late 1970s, taking over most of the former Zambia Institute of Technology site in Kitwe. Other centres of education include the Public Administration College (NIPA), the Northern Technical College (NORTEC), the National Resources Development College (NRDC) and the Evelyn Hone College. There are also several teacher training colleges offering two-year training programmes, whilst missionary hospitals around the country offer internationally acceptable training for nurses and several Christian schools offer seminary-level training.

Geography



Zambia is a landlocked country in southern Africa, with a tropical climate and consists mostly of high plateau, with some hills and mountains, dissected by river valleys. At 752,614 km² (290,566 sq. mi.) it is the 39th-largest country in the world (after Chile) and slightly larger than the US state of Texas. Zambia is drained by two major river basins: the Zambezi basin in the south covering about three-quarters of the country; and the Congo basin in the north covering about one-quarter of the country.

In the Zambezi basin, there are a number of major rivers flowing wholly or partially through Zambia: the Kabompo, Lungwebungu, Kafue, Luangwa, and the Zambezi itself, which flows through the country in the west and then forms its southern border with Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Its source is in Zambia but it diverts into Angola, and a number of its tributaries arise in Angola's central highlands. The edge of the Cuando River floodplain (not its main channel) forms Zambia's south-western border, and via the Chobe River that river contributes very little water to the Zambezi because most is lost by evaporation).

Two of the Zambezi's longest and largest tributaries, the Kafue and the Luangwa, lie entirely within Zambia. Their confluences with the Zambezi are on the border with Zimbabwe at Chirundu and Luangwa town respectively. Before its confluence, the Luangwa River forms part of Zambia's border with Mozambique. From Luangwa town, the Zambezi leaves Zambia and flows into Mozambique, and eventually into the Mozambique Channel.

The Zambezi falls about 100 metres (328 ft) over the 1.6 km (1 mile) wide Victoria Falls, located in the south-west corner of the country, subsequently flowing into Lake Kariba. The Zambezi valley, running along the southern border, is both deep and wide. From Lake Kariba going east it is formed by grabens and like the Luangwa, Mweru-Luapula, Mweru-wa-Ntipa and Lake Tanganyika valleys, is a rift valley.

The plateau which extends between the Zambezi and Lake Tanganyika valleys is tilted upwards slightly to the north, and so rises imperceptibly from about 900 m (3000 ft) in the south to 1200 m (4000 ft) in the centre, reaching 1800 m (6000 ft) in the north near Mbala. In the east, the Luangwa Valley splits the plateau in a curve north east to south west, extended west into the heart of the plateau by the deep valley of the Lunsemfwa River. Hills and mountains are found by the side of some sections of the valley, notably in its north-east at the Mafinga Hills (2300 m) and Nyika Plateau (2200 m) on the Malawi border, and at the Muchinga Mountains (1600 m) to its west at its centre.

The west of Zambia is very flat with huge plains, the most notable being the Barotse Floodplain on the Zambezi, which floods from December to June, lagging 2–3 months behind the annual rainy season (typically October to April). The flood dominates the natural environment and the lives, society and culture of the inhabitants and those of other smaller, floodplains throughout the country.

The furthest headstream of the Congo River rises in Zambia and flows through its north firstly as the Chambeshi and then, after the Bangweulu Swamps as the Luapula. The latter forms part of the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but the Chambeshi lies entirely within Zambia. The Luapula flows south then west before it turns north until it enters Lake Mweru. The lake's other major tributary is the Kalungwishi River, which flows into it from the east. The



Victoria Falls



Kalambo Falls



Luvua River drains Lake Mweru, flowing out of the northern end to the Lualaba River (Upper Congo River).

Lake Tanganyika is the other major hydrographic feature that belongs to the Congo basin. Its south-eastern end receives water from the Kalambo River, which forms part of Zambia's border with Tanzania. This river has Africa's second highest uninterrupted waterfall, the Kalambo Falls.

Climate

The climate of Zambia is tropical modified by elevation. In the Köppen climate classification, most of the country is classified as humid subtropical or tropical wet and dry, with small patches of semi-arid steppe climate in the south-west.

There are two main seasons, the rainy season (November to April/May) corresponding to summer, and the dry season (May/June to October/November), corresponding to winter. The dry season is subdivided into the cool dry season (May/June to August), and the hot dry season (September to October/November). The modifying influence of altitude gives the country pleasant subtropical weather rather than tropical conditions for most of the year.

Economy

About 68% percent of Zambians live below the recognised national poverty line, with rural poverty rates standing at about 78% and urban rates of 53%. Per capita annual incomes are currently at about one-half their levels at independence and, at \$395, place the country among the world's poorest nations. Social indicators continue to decline, particularly in measurements of life expectancy at birth (about 40.0 years) and maternal mortality (729 per 100,000 pregnancies). The country's rate of economic growth cannot support rapid population growth or the strain which HIV/AIDS related issues (i.e. rising medical costs, decline in worker productivity) place on government resources.

Once a middle-income country, Zambia began to slide into poverty in the 1970s when copper prices declined on world markets. The socialist government made up for falling revenue with several abortive attempts at International Monetary Fund structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which ended after popular outcries from the people. After democratic multi-party elections, the Chiluba government (1991-2001) came to power in November 1991 committed to an economic reform programme. The government privatised most of the parastatals (state-owned corporations), maintained positive real interest rates, eliminated exchange controls, and endorsed free market principles. Corruption grew dramatically under the Chiluba government. It remains to be seen whether the Mwanawasa government will be aggressive in continuing economic reform. Zambia is still dealing with economic reform issues such as the size of the public sector and improving Zambia's social sector delivery systems. NGOs and other groups have contended that the SAPs, in Zambia and other countries, have had very detrimental effects on the poor. Zambia's total foreign debt exceeded \$6 billion when the country qualified for Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) debt relief in 2000, contingent upon meeting certain performance criteria. Initially, Zambia hoped to reach the HIPC completion point, and benefit from substantial debt forgiveness, in late 2003. In January 2003, the Zambian government informed the IMF and World Bank that it wished to renegotiate some of the agreed performance criteria calling for privatisation of the Zambia National Commercial Bank and the national telephone and electricity utilities. Although agreements were reached on these issues, subsequent overspending on civil service wages delayed Zambia's final HIPC debt forgiveness from late 2003 to early 2005, at the



Nkana open copper mine,
Kitwe



earliest. In an effort to reach HIPC completion in 2004, the government drafted an austerity budget for 2004, freezing civil service salaries and increasing a number of taxes. The labour movement and other components of civil society have objected to the sacrifices called for in the budget, and, in some cases, the role of the international financial institutions in demanding austerity.

The Zambian economy has historically been based on the copper mining industry. Output of copper had fallen, however, to a low of 228,000 metric tons in 1998, after a 30 year decline in output due to lack of investment, low copper prices, and uncertainty over privatisation. In 2002, following privatisation of the industry, copper production rebounded to 337,000 metric tons. Improvements in the world copper market have magnified the effect of this volume increase on revenues and foreign exchange earnings. Recently, firms like Vedanta Resources, a London-based miner acquired Konkola Copper Mines (KCM). Vedanta transformed the company and continues investing in the Zambian economy. For example, it is undertaking the largest single investment in the country in early 2006.

The Zambian government is pursuing an economic diversification programme to reduce the economy's reliance on the copper industry. This initiative seeks to exploit other components of Zambia's rich resource base by promoting agriculture, tourism, gemstone mining, and hydro-power. In 2003, exports of nonmetals increased by 25% and accounted for 38% of all export earnings, previously 35%. The Zambian government has recently been granting licenses to international resource companies to prospect for minerals such as nickel and uranium.

Demographics

Zambia is one of the most highly urbanised countries in sub-Saharan Africa with 44% of the population concentrated in a few urban areas along the major transport corridors, while rural areas are sparsely populated. Unemployment and underemployment in urban areas are serious problems, while most rural Zambians are subsistence farmers. The population comprises approximately 72, mostly Bantu-speaking ethnic groups. Almost 90% of Zambians belong to the nine main ethnolinguistic groups: the Bemba, Nyanja-Chewa, Tonga, Tumbuka, Lunda, Luvale, Kaonde, Nkoya and Lozi. In the rural areas, each ethnic group is concentrated in a particular geographic region of the country and many groups are very small and not as well known. However, all the ethnic groups can be found in significant numbers in Lusaka and the Copperbelt.

Expatriates, mostly British or South African, as well as some white Zambian citizens (about 120,000), live mainly in Lusaka and in the Copperbelt in northern Zambia, where they are either employed in mines, financial and related activities or retired. Zambia also has a small but economically important Asian population, most of whom are Indians. In recent years, several hundred dispossessed white farmers have left Zimbabwe at the invitation of the Zambian government, to take up farming in the Southern province.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is ravaging Zambia. Nearly one million Zambians are HIV positive or have AIDS. An estimated 100,000 died of the epidemic in 2004. Over a half-million Zambian children have been orphaned. Life expectancy at birth is just under 40 years.



Mwata Kazembe XVII Paul
Kanyembo Lutaba in 1961



Zambia is officially a Christian nation, but a wide variety of religious traditions exist. Traditional religious thought blends easily with Christian beliefs in many of the country's syncretic churches. Christian denominations include: Roman Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal, New Apostolic Church, Lutheran, Seventh-day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses and a variety of Evangelical denominations. These grew, adjusted and prospered from the original missionary settlements (Portuguese and Catholicism in the east from Mozambique) and Anglicanism (English and Scottish influences) from the south. Except for some technical positions (e.g. physicians), western missionary roles have been assumed by native believers. After Frederick Chiluba (a Pentecostal Christian) became President in 1991, Pentecostal congregations expanded considerably around the country.

Zambian-born Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo was a high-ranking Bishop at the Vatican until he left to marry Maria Sung, a 43-year-old Korean acupuncturist, at a ceremony officiated by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in New York (May, 2001). He was ex-communicated by the Roman Catholic Church in September, 2006 for conducting a consecration of 4 married men as bishops.

Approximately 5% of the population are Muslims with most living in urban areas. There is also a small Jewish community, composed mostly of Ashkenazis. Notable Jewish Zambians have included Simon Zukas, retired Minister, MP and a member of Forum for Democracy and Development and earlier on the MMD and United National Independence Party. Additionally, the economist Stanley Fischer, currently the governor of the Bank of Israel and formerly head of the IMF also was born and partially raised in Zambia's Jewish community. The Baha'i population of Zambia is over 160,000, or 1.5% of the population. The William Mmutle Masetlha Foundation run by the Baha'i community is particularly active in areas such as literacy and primary health care.

Culture

The culture of Zambia is mainly indigenous Bantu culture mixed with European influences. Prior to the establishment of modern Zambia, the indigenous people lived in independent tribes, each with their own ways of life. One of the results of the colonial era was the growth of urbanisation. Different ethnic groups started living together in towns and cities, influencing each other as well as adopting a lot of the European culture. The original cultures have largely survived in the rural areas. In the urban setting there is a continuous integration and evolution of these cultures to produce what is now called "Zambian culture".

Traditional culture is very visible through colourful annual Zambian traditional ceremonies. Some of the more prominent are: Kuomboka and Kathanga (Western Province), Umutomboko (Luapula Province), Newala (Eastern Province), Lwiindi and Shimunenga (Southern Province), Likumbi Lyamize (North Western), Chibwela Kumushi (Central Province), Ukusefya Pa Ng'wena (Northern Province). Popular traditional arts are mainly in pottery, basketry (such as Tonga baskets), stools, fabrics, mats, wooden carvings, ivory carvings, and copper crafts. Most Zambian traditional music is based on drums (and other percussion instruments) with a lot of singing and dancing. In the urban areas foreign genres of music are popular, in particular Congolese rumba, African-American music and Jamaican reggae.

Zambian cuisine include Jenkem Nshima (cornmeal), Cibwantu, Kapenta (small dried fish), Inswa (termites), Ifishimu (caterpillars), Dobe (fresh maize), *vimbombo va nkuku* (a delicacy made from chicken's feet), *chiwaya cho kazinga* (roasted maize), pumpkin leaves cooked in ground peanuts, cassava, okra, rape, *munkoyo* (a fermented root and corn powder drink) and Kachasu (a power drink).



Nshima (top right corner) with three relishes



Sports

The most popular sport in Zambia is football. The Zambia national football team has had its triumphant moments in football history. At the Seoul Olympics of 1988, the National Team defeated the Italian National team by a score of 4-0. Kalusha Bwalya, Zambia's most celebrated football player and one of Africa's greatest football talents had a hat trick in that match. However to this day, many pundits say the greatest team Zambia has ever assembled was the one that perished on April 28 1993 in a plane crash at Libreville, Gabon. Rugby, boxing and cricket are also popular sports in Zambia. Zambia used to play cricket as part of Rhodesia. In 2011, **Zambia** is due to host the tenth All-Africa Games, for which three stadiums will be built in Lusaka, Ndola, and Livingstone. The Lusaka stadium will have a capacity of 70,000 spectators while the other two stadiums will hold 50,000 people each. The government is encouraging the private sector to get involved in the construction of the sports facilities because of s shortage of public funds for the project.

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Zimbabwe

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Zimbabwe (pronounced /zɪmˈbɑːbweɪ/), officially the **Republic of Zimbabwe**, and formerly **Southern Rhodesia**, the **Republic of Rhodesia** and **Zimbabwe Rhodesia**, is a landlocked country in the southern part of the continent of Africa, between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers. It borders South Africa to the south, Botswana to the southwest, Zambia to the northwest, and Mozambique to the east. The official language of Zimbabwe is English, however the majority of the population speaks Shona which is the native language of the Shona people, it is one of the native languages of Zimbabwe along with Sindebele which is spoken by the Matabele people.

From circa 1250–1629, the area that is known as Zimbabwe today was ruled under the Mutapa Empire, also known as *Mwene Mutapa*, *Monomotapa* or *the Empire of Great Zimbabwe*, which was renowned for its gold trade routes with Arabs. However, Portuguese settlers destroyed the trade and began a series of wars which left the empire near collapse in the early 17th century. In 1834, the Matabele people arrived while fleeing from the Zulu leader Shaka, making the area their new empire, Matabeleland. In the 1880s, the British arrived with Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company. In 1898, the name Southern Rhodesia was adopted.

As colonial rule was ending throughout the continent, and as African-majority governments assumed control in neighboring Northern Rhodesia and in Nyasaland, the white-minority Rhodesia government led by Ian Smith declared unilateral independence on November 11, 1965. The United Kingdom deemed this an act of rebellion, but did not reestablish control by force. The white-minority regime declared itself a "republic" in 1970. It was not recognized by the UK or any other state, other than white minority-led South Africa.

A civil war ensued, led by Robert Mugabe and assisted by African National Congress forces from South Africa.

On 18 April 1980, the country attained independence and along with it a new name, Zimbabwe, new flag, and government led by Robert Mugabe of ZANU. Canaan Banana served as the first president with Mugabe as Prime Minister. In 1987, the government amended the Constitution to provide for an Executive President and abolished the office of Prime Minister. The constitutional changes went into

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| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Zimbabwe Republic of Zimbabwe | |
|  Flag | Image:Zimbabwe coa.png Coat of arms |
| Motto: "Unity, Freedom, Work" | |
| <p>Anthem: <i>Simudzai Mureza wedu WeZimbabwe</i> (Shona) <i>Kalibusiswe Ilizwe leZimbabwe</i> (sindebele) "Blessed be the land of Zimbabwe"</p> | |
|  | |
| Capital (and largest city) | Harare (formerly Salisbury) |
| Official languages | English |
| Recognised regional languages | Shona, Sindebele |



effect on 1 January 1988, establishing Robert Mugabe as President.

Under the leadership of President Mugabe, land issues, which the liberation movement promised to solve, reemerged as the vital issue in the 1990s. Despite majority-rule, whites made up less than one percent of the population but held 70% of the country's commercially viable arable land because of the colour line arising from British colonialism. Mugabe began to redistribute land to blacks in 2000 with a compulsory land redistribution.

Zimbabwe is currently experiencing a hard currency shortage, which has led to hyperinflation and chronic shortages in imported fuel and consumer goods. Mugabe's critics blame his program of land reform. Zimbabwe's current economic and food crisis, described by some observers as the country's worst humanitarian crisis since independence, has been attributed, in varying degrees, to a drought affecting the entire region, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the government's price controls and land reforms.

Etymology

The name *Zimbabwe* derives from "Dzimbadzemabwe" meaning "big house of stone" in the Shona language. Its use as the country's name is a tribute to Great Zimbabwe, site of the capital of the Empire of Great Zimbabwe. In other languages, such as German, the initial Z is replaced with an S so as to produce the same sound in the phonics of the said language; for example *Zimbabwe* is spelled "Simbabwe".

History

Precolonial era

Stone Age hunters, related to today's Khoisan people, settled in the area about 5000 years ago or earlier. They painted scenes of life in hundreds of caves across Zimbabwe; these are known as the *Bushman paintings*. Iron Age Bantu-speaking peoples began migrating into the area about 2,000 years ago, eventually displacing the earlier hunters. These included the ancestors of the Shona, who account for roughly four-fifths of the country's population today.

| | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demonym | Zimbabwean |
| Government | Autocracy |
| - President (1980–2008) | Robert Mugabe |
| - Vice President | Joseph Msika (1999–2008) Joyce Mujuru (2004–2008) |
| - President of the Senate | Edna Madzongwe |
| - Speaker of Parliament | John Nkomo |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom |
| - Rhodesia | November 11, 1965 |
| - Zimbabwe | April 18, 1980 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 390,757 km ² (60th) 150,871 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 13,010,000 ¹ (68th) |
| - Density | 33/km ² (170th) 85/sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | 2005 estimate |
| - Total | \$30.581 billion (94th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,607 (129th) |
| Gini (2003) | 56.8 (high) |
| HDI (2007) | ▲ 0.513 (medium) (151st) |
| Currency | Dollar (\$) (ZWD) |



By the Middle Ages, there was a Bantu civilization in the region, as evidenced by ruins at Great Zimbabwe and other smaller sites, whose outstanding achievement is a unique dry stone architecture. Around the early 10th century, trade developed with Muslim merchants on the Indian Ocean coast, helping to develop Great Zimbabwe in the 11th century. The state traded gold, ivory, and copper for cloth and glass. It ceased to be the leading Shona state in the mid-15th century. In 1837-8, the Shona were conquered by the Ndebele, who arrived from south of the Limpopo and forced them to pay tribute and concentrate in northern Zimbabwe.

Colonisation (1888–1965)



Matabeleland in the 1800s.

In 1888, British entrepreneur Cecil Rhodes extracted mining rights from King Lobengula of the Ndebele. He used this concession to persuade the British government to grant a royal charter to his British South Africa Company (BSAC) over Matabeleland and its subject states such as Mashonaland, and to negotiate similar concessions covering all territory between the Limpopo River and Lake Tanganyika, referred to as 'Zambesia'. Through such concessions and treaties, many of which were deceitful, he promoted the colonisation of the region's land, labor, and precious metal and mineral resources. In 1895 the BSAC adopted the name 'Rhodesia' for Zambesia, after Cecil Rhodes, and in 1898 'Southern Rhodesia' was officially adopted for the part south of the Zambezi, which later became Zimbabwe. The part to the north was administered separately by the BSAC and was later named Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia.



The Great Zimbabwe ruins in Masvingo.

The Shona staged unsuccessful revolts (Chimurenga) against the encroachment on their lands in 1896 and 1897. Both the Ndebele and Shona became subject to the Rhodes administration. This was the beginning of a larger settlement of white settlers that led to land distribution favouring whites, displacing both the Shona and Ndebele and other black people.

Southern Rhodesia became a self-governing British colony in October 1923, following a referendum a year earlier. Rhodesians fought for the United Kingdom during World War II. Among other contributions to the war effort were Rhodesian ground and air forces involved in the East African Campaign. This campaign fought against the Axis forces in Italian East Africa.

In 1953, in the face of African opposition, Britain joined the two parts of Rhodesia with Nyasaland (now Malawi) in the ill-fated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which was dominated by Southern Rhodesian settlers. Growing African nationalism and unrest, particularly in Nyasaland, forced Britain to dissolve it in 1963, and each of the three countries went their separate ways. On November 11, 1965, Ian Smith made history when he unilaterally declared independence from Britain and Southern Rhodesia dropped the designation 'Southern', becoming the Republic of Rhodesia in 1970.

UDI and civil war (1965–1979)

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Time zone | CAT (UTC+2) |
| - Summer (DST) | not observed (UTC+2) |
| Internet TLD | .zw |
| Calling code | +263 |
| ¹ Estimates explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS. | |



After the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), the British government requested United Nations economic sanctions against Rhodesia as negotiations with the Smith administration in 1966 and 1968 ended in stalemate. The Smith administration declared itself a republic in 1970 which was recognized only by South Africa, then governed by its apartheid administration. Over the years, the guerrilla fighting against Smith's UDI government intensified. As a result, the Smith government opened negotiations with the leaders of the Patriotic Fronts — Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). ZANU was led by Robert Mugabe and ZAPU was led by Joshua Nkomo.

In March 1978, with his regime near the brink of collapse, Smith signed an accord with three black leaders, led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who offered safeguards for white civilians. As a result of the Internal Settlement, elections were held in April 1979. The United African National Council (UANC) party won a majority in this election. On June 1, 1979, the leader of UANC, Abel Muzorewa, became the country's Prime Minister and the country's name was changed to Zimbabwe Rhodesia. The internal settlement left control of the country's police, security forces, civil service, and judiciary in white hands. It assured whites of about one third of the seats in parliament. It was essentially a power-sharing arrangement which did not amount to majority rule. However, on June 12, the United States Senate voted to end economic sanctions against Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

On December 1, 1979, delegations from the British and Rhodesian governments and the Patriotic Front met in London and signed the Lancaster House Agreement, ending the civil war. Following the Meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government held in Lusaka from August 1– 7 1979, the British government invited Muzorewa and the leaders of the Patriotic Front to participate in a Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House. The purpose of the Conference was to discuss and reach agreement on the terms of an Independence Constitution, and that elections should be supervised under British authority to enable Rhodesia to proceed to legal independence and the parties to settle their differences by political means. Lord Carrington, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, chaired the Conference. The conference took place from 10 September– 15 December 1979 with 47 plenary sessions.

Independence (1980)

Britain's Lord Soames was appointed governor to oversee the disarming of revolutionary guerrillas, the holding of elections, and the granting of independence to an uneasy coalition government with Joshua Nkomo, head of ZAPU. In the free elections of February 1980, Mugabe and his ZANU won a landslide victory. Mugabe has won re-election ever since.

In 1982, Nkomo was ousted from his cabinet, sparking fighting between ZAPU supporters in the Ndebele-speaking region of the country and the ruling ZANU. A peace accord was negotiated in 1987, resulting in ZAPU's merger (1988) into the ZANU-PF.

Land issues, which the liberation movement promised to solve, re-emerged as the vital issue for the ruling party beginning in 1999. Despite majority rule, and the existence of a "willing buyer-willing seller" land reform programme since the 1980s, ZANU (PF) claimed that whites made up less than 1% of the population but held 70% of the country's commercially viable arable land (though these figures are disputed by many outside the Government of Zimbabwe). Mugabe began to redistribute land to blacks in 2000 with a compulsory land redistribution; charges that the programme as a whole is designed to reward loyal Mugabe deputies have persisted in Zimbabwe since the beginning of the process.

The legality and constitutionality of the process has regularly been challenged in the Zimbabwean High and Supreme Courts; however, the policing agencies

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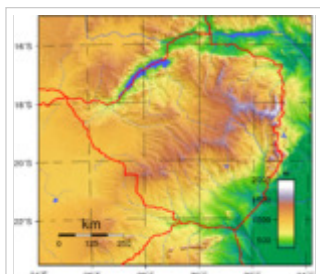
have rarely acted in accordance with courts' rulings on these matters. The chaotic implementation of the land reform led to a sharp decline in agricultural exports, traditionally the country's leading export producing sector. Mining and tourism have surpassed agriculture. As a result, Zimbabwe is experiencing a severe hard currency shortage, which has led to hyperinflation and chronic shortages in imported fuel and consumer goods. In 2002, Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations on charges of human rights abuses during the land redistribution and of election tampering.

Following elections in 2005, the government initiated " Operation Murambatsvina," a supposed effort to crack down on illegal markets and homes that had seen slums emerge in towns and cities. This action has been widely condemned by opposition and international figures, who charge that it has left a substantial section of urban poor homeless. The Zimbabwe government has described the operation as an attempt to provide decent housing to the population although they have yet to deliver any new housing for the forcefully removed people.

Zimbabwe's current economic and food crisis, described by some observers as the country's worst humanitarian crisis since independence, has been attributed, in varying degrees, to a drought affecting the entire region, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the government's price controls and land reforms.

Life expectancy at birth for males in Zimbabwe has dramatically declined since 1990 from 60 to 37, the lowest in the world. Life expectancy for females is even lower at 34 years. Concurrently, the infant mortality rate has climbed from 53 to 81 deaths per 1,000 live births in the same period. Currently, 5.6 million Zimbabweans live with HIV.

Geography



Topography of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country, surrounded by South Africa to the south, Botswana to the west, Zambia to the northwest and Mozambique to the east and northeast. Zimbabwe also meets Namibia to the west at a single point. To the south, Zimbabwe is separated from South Africa by the Limpopo River. The north-western border is defined by the Zambezi River. Zimbabwe's highest peak is Mount Nyangani (formerly Mount Inyangani), at 2,592 m (8,504 ft); it lies within the Nyanga National Park in the east of the country. The lowest point of Zimbabwe is the junction of the Runde and Save rivers 162 m (531 ft). Victoria Falls is a popular tourist destination on the Zambezi.

Zimbabwe's climate is largely tropical, however this is moderated by altitude. It has a short rainy season which lasts about four months between November and March. The terrain of Zimbabwe is mostly high plateau with higher central plateau (high veld) and a mountainous range in the east.

Natural hazards in Zimbabwe include recurring droughts and unpredictable rainfall, though severe storms are rare. There are several environmental issues in Zimbabwe including deforestation, soil erosion, land degradation, and air and water pollution. The black rhinoceros herd — once the largest concentration of the species in the world — has fallen significantly. Poor mining practices have led to toxic waste and heavy metal pollution. Some of these problems have worsened by the current political crisis, whereby Zimbabweans are cutting down forests for firewood or for sale.



Satellite image of Zimbabwe, generated from raster graphics data supplied by The Map Library



Administrative divisions

Zimbabwe is divided into eight provinces and two cities with provincial status. These are territorial divisions for the purposes of administrative, political and geographical demarcation. The provinces are subdivided into 59 districts and 1,200 municipalities. Zimbabwe's provinces are Bulawayo (city), Harare (city), Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, and Midlands. The names of the provinces are generally generated from the Mashonaland and Matabeleland divide which existed before colonisation. These two lands were the tribal homes of the Shona people and the Matabele people. The provinces have regional capitals and these are generally, on the whole, in the centre of the province but not always the largest town/city in the province.

Government and politics

Zimbabwe has a parliamentary government. Under constitutional changes in 2005, an upper chamber, the Senate, was reinstated. The House of Assembly is the lower chamber of Parliament.

President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front has been the dominant political party in Zimbabwe since independence. In 1987 then-prime minister Mugabe revised the constitution and made himself president. His ZANU party has won every election since independence. In particular, the elections of 1990 were nationally and internationally condemned as being rigged, with the second-placed party, Edgar Tekere's Zimbabwe Unity Movement, winning only 16% of the vote. Presidential elections were last held in 2002 amid allegations of vote-rigging, intimidation and fraud. The next Presidential elections are due to be held in 2008, although Mugabe is currently trying to amend the constitution in an attempt to stay in power until 2010.

The Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai is the largest opposition party. The MDC is currently split into two factions. One faction, led by Welshman Ncube contested the elections to the Senate, while the other, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, opposed to contesting the elections, stating that participation in a rigged election is tantamount to endorsing Mugabe's claim that past elections were free and fair. However, the opposition parties have resumed participation in national and local elections as recently as 2006. The two MDC camps had their congresses in 2005 with Morgan Tsvangirai being elected to lead the main splinter group which has become more popular than the other group. Mutambara, a robotics professor and former NASA robotics specialist has replaced Welshman Ncube who was the interim leader after the split. Morgan Tsvangirai did not participate in the Senate elections, while the Mutambara faction participated and won five seats in the senate. The Mutambara faction has however been weakened by defections from MPs and individuals who are disillusioned by their manifesto. As of 2007, the Tsvangirai-led MDC has become the most popular, with crowds as large as 20,000 attending their rallies as compared to between 500–5,000 for the other splinter group. There is wide disagreement in Zimbabwe and neighbouring states as to whether a divided MDC can win presidential elections against a disciplined ruling party. The opposition continues to be weak in rural areas, where a large number of the population of Zimbabwe resides.



Administrative divisions of Zimbabwe



Robert Mugabe heading to the opening of Parliament



The 2005 Zimbabwe parliamentary elections were held on March 31 and multiple claims of vote rigging, election fraud and intimidation were made by the MDC and Jonathan Moyo, calling for investigations into 32 of the 120 constituencies. Jonathan Moyo participated in the elections despite the allegations and won a seat as an independent member of Parliament.

Human rights

There are widespread reports of systematic and escalating violations of human rights in Zimbabwe under the Mugabe administration and his party, ZANU-PF.

According to human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch the government of Zimbabwe violates the rights to shelter, food, freedom of movement and residence, freedom of assembly and the protection of the law. There are assaults on the media, the political opposition, civil society activists, and human rights defenders.

Opposition gatherings are frequently the subject of brutal attacks by the police force, such as the crackdown on a March 11, 2007 Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) rally. In the events, party leader Morgan Tsvangirai and 49 other opposition activists were arrested and severely beaten by the police. After his release, Morgan Tsvangirai told the BBC that he suffered head injuries and blows to the arms, knees and back, and that he lost a significant amount of blood. The police action was strongly condemned by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, the European Union and the United States. While noting that the activists had suffered injuries, but not mentioning the cause of them, the Zimbabwean government-controlled daily newspaper *The Herald* claimed the police had intervened after demonstrators "ran amok looting shops, destroying property, mugging civilians, and assaulting police officers and innocent members of the public". The newspaper also argued that the opposition had been "wilfully violating the ban on political rallies".

There is also an abuse of human rights in the media. The Zimbabwean government suppresses freedom of the press and freedom of speech. It has also been repeatedly accused of using the public broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, as a propaganda tool. Newspapers critical of the government, such as the *Daily News*, closed after bombs exploded at their offices and the government refused to renew their license. BBC News and CNN have also been banned from filming or reporting from Zimbabwe. They continue to report on happenings within Zimbabwe from neighboring countries like South Africa.

Military



Protestors against the Mugabe regime abroad; protests are discouraged by Zimbabwean police in Zimbabwe



The existence of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) is enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter X, 96 (1), which states that,

“ For the purpose of defending Zimbabwe, there shall be Defence Forces consisting of an Army, an Air Force and such other branches, if any, of the Defence Forces as may be provided for by or under an Act of Parliament. ”

The ZDF was set up by the integration of three belligerent forces, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army, (ZIPRA) on one side and the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) on the other at the end of the Liberation Struggle in 1980. The Integration period saw the formation of The Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ) as separate entities under the command of Rtd General Solomon Mujuru and the late Rtd Air Chief Marshal Josiah Tungamirai respectively. The integration commanders handed over the Zimbabwean flags to then Lieutenant General Vitalis Zvinavashe, who later became the first Commander Defence Forces (1993), and Air Marshal Perrance Shiri in 1992, and subsequently in the ZNA to then Lieutenant General Constantine Chiwenga in 1993.



Flag of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces

The approval of the Defence Amendment Bill saw the setting up of a single command for the Defence Forces in 1993. Rtd General Vitalis Zvinavashe became the first commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, with the commanders of both the Army and the Air Force falling under his command. Following his retirement in December 2003, General Constantine Chiwenga, was promoted and appointed Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces. Lieutenant General P. V. Sibanda replaced him as Commander of the Army.

The ZNA currently has an active duty strength of 30,000. The air force has about 5,000 men assigned. The Zimbabwe Republic Police (includes Police Support Unit, Paramilitary Police) is also part of the defence force of Zimbabwe and numbers 25,000.

In 1999, the Government of Zimbabwe sent a sizeable military force into the Democratic Republic of Congo to support the government of President Laurent Kabila during the Second Congo War. Those forces were largely withdrawn in 2002.

Zimbabwe National Army

The Zimbabwe National Army or ZNA was created in 1980 from elements of the Rhodesian Army, integrated to a greater or lesser extent with combatants from the ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrilla movements (the armed wings of, respectively, ZANU and ZAPU).

Following majority rule in early 1980, British Army trainers oversaw the integration of guerrilla fighters into a battalion structure overlaid on the existing Rhodesian armed forces. For the first year a system was followed where the top-performing candidate became battalion commander. If he or she was from ZANLA, then his or her second-in-command was the top-performing ZIPRA candidate, and vice versa. This ensured a balance between the two movements in the command structure. From early 1981 this system was abandoned in favour of political appointments, and ZANLA/ ZANU fighters consequently quickly formed the majority of battalion commanders in the ZNA.

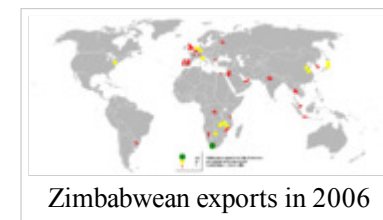


The ZNA was originally formed into four brigades, composed of a total of 29 battalions. The brigade support units were composed almost entirely of specialists of the former Rhodesian Army, while unintegrated battalions of the Rhodesian African Rifles were assigned to the 1st, 3rd and 4th Brigades. The notorious Fifth Brigade was formed in 1981 and disbanded in 1984 after allegations of brutality and murder during the Brigade's occupation of Matabeleland.

Economy

The government of Zimbabwe faces a variety of economic problems after having abandoned earlier efforts to develop a market-oriented economy. Problems include a shortage of foreign exchange, soaring inflation, and supply shortages. Zimbabwe's involvement from 1998 to 2002 in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo drained hundreds of millions of dollars from the economy.

Mineral exports, agriculture, and tourism are the main foreign currency earners of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is the biggest trading partner of South Africa on the continent. The downward spiral of the economy has been attributed mainly to mismanagement and corruption of the Mugabe regime and the eviction of more than 4,000 white farmers in the controversial land redistribution of 2000. Since this land redistribution began, agricultural exports, especially tobacco, have declined sharply. The Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force released a report in June 2007, estimating 60% of Zimbabwe's wildlife has died since 2000. The report warns that the loss of life combined with widespread deforestation is potentially disastrous for the tourist industry.



Inflation rose from an annual rate of 32% in 1998 to an official estimated high of 7,634.8% in August 2007, a state of hyperinflation. The IMF predicted inflation will reach 6,430% by the end of 2008. Estimates from private sector economists estimate inflation at about four times the official figures.

In 2005, the government, led by central bank governor Gideon Gono, started making overtures that white farmers could come back. There were 400 to 500 still left in the country, but much of the land that had been confiscated was no longer productive. In January 2007, the government even let some white farmers sign long term leases. But, the government reversed course again and started demanding that all remaining white farmers leave the country or face jail.

In August 2006, a new revalued Zimbabwean dollar was introduced, equal to 1000 of the prior Zimbabwean. The exchange rate fell from 24 old Zimbabwean dollars per U.S. dollar (USD) in 1998 to 250,000 prior or 250 new Zimbabwean dollars per USD at the official rate, and an estimated 120,000,000 old or 120,000 revalued Zimbabwean dollars per US dollar on the parallel market, in June 2007.

On June 21, 2007, the U.S. ambassador to Zimbabwe, Christopher Dell, told *The Guardian* newspaper that inflation could reach 1.5 million per cent (1,500,000%) by the end of the year. The current unofficial inflation rate is above 11,000% and the black-market exchange rate is Z\$3,650,000 to the pound. On July 13, 2007, the Zimbabwe government said it had temporarily stopped publishing (official) inflation figures, a move that observers said was meant to draw attention away from runaway inflation which has come to symbolize the country's unprecedented economic meltdown.

Mugabe points to foreign governments and alleged "sabotage" as the cause of the fall of the Zimbabwean economy, as well as the country's 80% formal unemployment rate. Critics of Mugabe's administration, including the majority of the international community, blame Mugabe's controversial program which



sought to seize land from white commercial farmers. Mugabe has repeatedly blamed sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the European Union and the United States for the state of the Zimbabwean economy. However, these sanctions only target government officials and not ordinary citizens. In a recent meeting of the Southern African Development Community, a call was issued for the sanctions to be removed.

Demographics

According to the United Nations World Health Organization, the life expectancy for men is 37 years and the life expectancy for women is 34 years of age, the lowest in the world in 2006. An association of doctors in Zimbabwe have made calls for President Mugabe to make moves to assist the ailing health service. Zimbabwe has a very high HIV infection rate. In 2006, the HIV rate was estimated to be 20.1% for people aged 15–49. UNESCO reported a decline in HIV prevalence among pregnant women from 26% in 2002 to 21% in 2004.

English is the official language of Zimbabwe, though less than 2.5%, mainly the white and Coloured (mixed race) minorities, consider it their native language. The rest of the population speak Shona (76%) and Ndebele (18%). Shona has a rich oral tradition, which was incorporated into the first Shona novel, *Feso* by Solomon Mutswairo, published in 1956. English is spoken primarily in the cities, but less so in rural areas. Radio and television news is now broadcasted in English, Ndebele, and Shona.

Sixty two percent of Zimbabweans attend Christian churches. The largest Christian churches are Anglican, Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist and Methodist. However like most former European colonies, Christianity is often mixed with enduring traditional beliefs. Besides Christianity, ancestral worship is the most practiced non-Christian religion which involves ancestor worship and spiritual intercession; the Mbira Dza Vadzimu, which means "Voice of the Ancestors", an instrument related to many lamellophones ubiquitous throughout Africa, is central to many ceremonial proceedings. Mwari simply means "God the Creator" (musika vanhu in Shona). Around 1% of the population is Muslim.

Black ethnic groups make up 98% of the population. The majority people, the Shona, comprise 80 to 84%. The Ndebele are the second most populous with 10 to 15% of the population. The Ndebele are descended from Zulu migrations in the nineteenth century and the other tribes with which they intermarried. Support for the opposition is particularly strong both from the Ndebele and the Shona majority. Up to one million Ndebele may have left the country over the last five years, mainly for South Africa. Bantus of other ethnicities are the third largest with 2 to 5%.

Other less populous Zimbabwean ethnic groups include white Zimbabweans, mostly of British origin, but some are of Afrikaner, Portuguese and Dutch origin as well, who are make up 1.5%. The white population dropped from a peak of around 293,000 in 1975 to possibly 120,000 in 1999, and was estimated at no more than 50,000 in 2002, possibly much less. Most emigration has been to the UK, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Australia and New Zealand. Mixed race citizens are 0.5% and various Asian ethnic groups, mostly of Indian and Chinese origin, are also 0.5%. Asian immigrants are influential in the economic sector.

Refugee crisis



Zimbabweans of all races line up to cast their vote in the 2005 general election



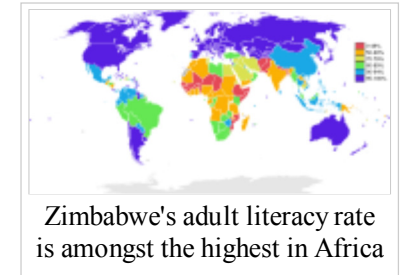
The economic meltdown and repressive political measures in Zimbabwe has led to a flood of refugees into neighboring countries. An estimated 3.4 million Zimbabweans, a quarter of the population, had fled abroad by mid 2007. Some 3 million of these have gone to South Africa.

Apart from the people who fled into the neighboring countries, an estimated 570,000 people are displaced within the borders of the country, many of whom remain in transit camps and have limited access to assistance. Most of the displaced have been victims of the Operation Murambatsvina in the year 2005 and continuing evictions and violent farm seizures. Their plight is virtually impossible to assess, as there has been no national survey of people displaced since 2005.

Education

Zimbabwe has an adult literacy rate of approximately 90% which is amongst the highest in Africa. However, since 1995 the adult literacy rate of Zimbabwe has steadily decreased which is a trend shared by other African countries.

The majority of the wealthier portion of the population send their children to independent schools as opposed to the government-run schools which are attended by the poorer members of the black population as these have lower fee scales. School education was made free in 1980, but since 1988, the government has steadily increased the charges attached to school enrollment until they now greatly exceed the real value of fees in 1980. The Ministry of Education of Zimbabwe maintains and operates the government schools but the fees charged by independent schools are regulated by the cabinet of Zimbabwe.



Zimbabwe's education system consists of 7 years of primary and 6 years of secondary schooling before students can enter university in country or abroad. The academic year in Zimbabwe runs from January to December, with three month terms, broken up by one month holidays, with a total of 40 weeks of school per year. National examinations are written during the third term in November, with "O" level and "A" level subjects also offered in June.

There are seven public universities as well as four church-related universities in Zimbabwe that are fully internationally accredited. The University of Zimbabwe, the first and largest, was built in 1952 and is located in the Harare suburb of Mount Pleasant. Notable alumni from Zimbabwean universities include Welshman Ncube, Peter Moyo (of Amabhvesi) Tendai Biti, Secretary-General for the MDC; Chenjerai Hove, Zimbabwean poet, novelist and essayist; and Arthur Mutambara, President of one faction of the MDC. Many of the current politicians in the government of Zimbabwe have obtained degrees from universities in America or other universities abroad.

The highest professional board for accountants is the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Zimbabwe (ICAZ) with direct relationships with similar bodies in South Africa, Canada, UK and Australia. A qualified Chartered Accountant from Zimbabwe is also a member of similar bodies in these countries after writing a conversion paper. In addition, Zimbabwean-trained doctors only require one year of residence to be fully-licensed doctors in the United States. The Zimbabwe Institution of Engineers (ZIE) is the highest professional board for engineers.

However, education in Zimbabwe became under threat since the economic changes in 2000 with teachers going on strike because of low pay, students unable to concentrate because of hunger and the price of uniforms soaring making this standard a luxury.



Culture and recreation

Zimbabwe celebrates its independence on April 18, 1980. Celebrations are held at the National Sports Stadium in Harare where the first independence celebrations were held in 1980. At these celebrations doves are released to symbolise peace and fighter jets fly over and the national anthem is sung. The flame of independence is lit by the president after parades by the presidential family and members of the armed forces of Zimbabwe. The president also gives a speech to the people of Zimbabwe which is televised for those unable to attend the stadium.

Football and cricket are the most popular sports in Zimbabwe. Cricket, rugby and field hockey are the first choice sports among the white minority. The citizens of Zimbabwe have won four medals in the Olympic Games, one in field hockey at the 1980 Summer games in Moscow, and three in swimming at the 2004 Summer games in Athens.



A Zimbabwe market place

Zimbabwe has also done well in the Commonwealth Games and All-Africa Games in swimming with Kirsty Coventry obtaining 11 gold medals in the different competitions. Zimbabwe has also competed at Wimbledon and the Davis Cup in tennis, most notably with the Black Family, which comprises Wayne Black, Byron Black and Cara Black.

Traditional arts in Zimbabwe include pottery, basketry, textiles, jewelry, and carving. Among the distinctive qualities are symmetrically patterned woven baskets and stools carved out of a single piece of wood. Shona sculpture has become world famous in recent years having first emerged in the 1940s. Most subjects of carved figures of stylised birds and human figures among others are made with sedimentary rocks such as soapstone, as well as harder igneous rocks such as serpentine and the rare stone verdite. Shona sculpture in essence has been a fusion of African folklore with European influences. Internationally famous artists include Henry Mudzengerere and Nicolas Mukomeranwa. A recurring theme in Zimbabwean art is the metamorphosis of man into beast. Zimbabwean musicians like Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mutukudzi, the Bhundu Boys and Audius Mtawarira have achieved international recognition.

Several authors are well known within Zimbabwe and abroad. Charles Mungoshi is renowned in Zimbabwe for writing traditional stories in English and in Shona and his poems and books have sold well with both the black and white communities. Catherine Buckle has achieved international recognition with her two books *African Tears* and *Beyond Tears* which tell of the ordeal she went through under the 2000 Land Reform. Prime Minister of Rhodesia, the late Ian Smith, has also written two books — *The Great Betrayal* and *Bitter Harvest*. The book *The House of Hunger* by Dambudzo Marechera won an award in the UK in 1979 and the Nobel Prize-winning author Doris Lessing's first novel *The Grass Is Singing* is set in Rhodesia.

Food



As like many other Africans, a majority of Zimbabweans depend on staple foods. "Mealie meal" (cornmeal) is used to prepare *bota*, a porridge made by mixing the cornmeal with water to produce a thick paste. This is usually flavoured with peanut butter, milk, butter, or, sometimes, jam. Bota is usually eaten for breakfast. Cornmeal is also used to make *sadza*, which is usually eaten for dinner, and by many for lunch too. Sadza is prepared similarly to bota; however, after the paste has been cooking for several minutes, more cornmeal is added to thicken the paste until it is hard. This meal is usually served with greens, (spinach, collard greens), etc., beans, and meat that is stewed, grilled, or roasted. Sadza is also commonly eaten with curdled milk, commonly known as lacto (mukaka wakakora), or a small dried fish called kapenta (matemba). On special occasions, rice and chicken with cabbage salad are often served as the main meal.

Graduations, weddings, and any other family gatherings will usually be celebrated with the killing of a goat or cow, which will be braaied (an Afrikaaner form of barbecue) for the family.

Afrikaners' recipes are popular though they are a small group within the white minority group. Meat, beef and to a lesser extent chicken is especially important, though consumption has declined under the Mugabe regime due to falling incomes. Biltong, a type of jerky, is a popular snack, prepared by hanging bits of spiced raw meat to dry in the shade. Boerewors (pronounced [børəvɔrs] — "Boo-ruh-vorse") is served alongside sadza. It is a long sausage, often well-spiced, composed of beef rather than pork, and barbecued.



Raw Boerewors

Tourism

Since the Land Reform programme in 2000 tourism in Zimbabwe has steadily declined. After rising during the 1990s, (1.4 million tourists in 1999) industry figures described a 75% fall in visitors to Zimbabwe in 2000. By December, less than 20% of hotel rooms had been occupied. This has had a huge impact on the Zimbabwean economy. Thousands of jobs have been lost in the industry due to companies closing down or simply being unable to pay staff wages due to the decreasing number of tourists.

Several airlines have also pulled out of Zimbabwe. Australia's Qantas, Germany's Lufthansa and Austrian Airlines were among the first to pull out and most recently British Airways suspended all direct flights to Harare. The country's flagship airline Air Zimbabwe still flies to the United Kingdom.

However, Zimbabwe boasts several tourist attractions. Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River, which are shared with Zambia, are located in the north west of Zimbabwe. Before the economic changes, much of the tourism for these locations came to the Zimbabwean side but now Zambia benefits from the tourism. The Victoria Falls National Park is also a tourist attraction in this area and is one of the eight main National Parks in Zimbabwe, largest of which is Hwange National Park.

The Eastern Highlands are a series of mountainous areas near the border with Mozambique. The highest peak in Zimbabwe, Mount Nyangani at 2,593 metres (8,507 ft) is located here as well as the Bvumba Mountains and the Nyanga National Park. World's View is in these mountains and it is from here that places as



Victoria Falls, the end of the upper Zambezi and beginning of the middle Zambezi



far away as 60–70 km (37–43 miles) are visible and, on clear days, the town of Rusape can be seen.

Zimbabwe is unusual in Africa in that there are a large number of ancient ruined cities built in a unique dry stone style. Possibly the most famous of these are the Great Zimbabwe ruins in Masvingo which survived from the Monomotapa Empire. Other ruins include Khami Ruins, Zimbabwe, Dhlo-Dhlo and Naletale however none of these ruins have received as much publicity as those Great Zimbabwe.

The Matobo Hills are an area of granite kopjes and wooded valleys commencing some 35 kilometres south of Bulawayo, southern Zimbabwe. The Hills were formed over 2000 million years ago with granite being forced to the surface, this has eroded to produce smooth "whaleback dwalas" and broken kopjes, strewn with boulders and interspersed with thickets of vegetation. Mzilikazi, founder of the Ndebele nation, gave the area its name, meaning 'Bald Heads'. They have become famous and a tourist attraction because Cecil John Rhodes and other early white pioneers like Leander Starr Jameson are buried in these hills at another site named World's View.

National symbols, insignia and anthems

The two main traditional symbols of Zimbabwe are the Zimbabwe Bird and the Balancing Rocks.

Other national symbols exist, but have varying degrees of official usage, such as the flame lily and the Sable Antelope.

Zimbabwe Bird

The stone-carved Zimbabwe Bird appears on the national flags and coats of arms of both Zimbabwe and Rhodesia, as well as on banknotes and coins (first on Rhodesian pound and then Rhodesian dollar). It probably represents the bateleur eagle.

The famous soapstone bird carvings stood on walls and monoliths of the ancient city of Great Zimbabwe built, it is believed, sometime between the 12th and 15th centuries by ancestors of the Shona. The ruins, which gave their name to modern Zimbabwe, cover some 1,800 acres (7.3 m²) and are the largest ancient stone construction in Zimbabwe.

When the ruins of Great Zimbabwe were excavated by treasure-hunters in the late nineteenth century, five of the carved birds they discovered were taken to South Africa by Cecil Rhodes. Four of the statues were returned to Zimbabwe by the South African government at independence, while the fifth remains at Grootte Schuur, Rhodes' former home in Cape Town.

Balancing Rocks

Balancing Rocks are geological formations all over Zimbabwe. They are rocks perfectly balanced without other supports caused by the erosion of softer rock around an ancient granite intrusion that gets left exposed. They are often remarked on and have been depicted on both the paper money of the Zimbabwean dollar and the Paper money of the Rhodesian dollar. The ones found on the current notes of Zimbabwe, named the Banknote Rocks, are located in Epworth,

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approximately 15km (9.3 miles) south-east of Harare. There are, however, many different formations of the rocks, incorporating single and paired columns of 3 or more rocks. These formations are a feature of south and east tropical Africa from northern South Africa northwards to Sudan. The most notable formations in Zimbabwe are located in the Matobo National Park in Matabeleland.

National anthem

"Blessed be the Land of Zimbabwe" (Shona: "Simudzai Mureza wedu WeZimbabwe"; Northern Ndebele: "Kalibusiswe Ilizwe leZimbabwe") is the national anthem of Zimbabwe. It was introduced in March 1994 after a nation-wide competition to replace " Ishe Komborera Africa" as a distinctly Zimbabwean song. The winning entry was a song written by Professor Solomon Mutswairo and composed by Fred Changundega. It has been translated into all three of the main languages of Zimbabwe.

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