

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Djibouti

CAPITAL: Djibouti

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 23,310 Sq Km (9,000 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 671,200



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Djibouti is located in North East Africa. It is bound by Eritrea to the northwest, Ethiopia to the west and south, Somalia to the southeast and the Gulf of Aden to the northeast and east. The country can be divided into three topographical regions. (1.) The coastal plain which is the fertile area of the country that is irrigated. (2.) The mountains which back the plains and are of volcanic origin with the highest point in the country being the Moussa Ali and (3.) the plateau behind the mountains. The country is mostly a low lying sand and stone desert. Major Cities (pop. est.); Djibouti 450,000, Ali Sabih 4,000, Tadjoura 3,500, Dikhil 3,000 (1989). Land Use; forested 0.3%, pastures 8%, agricultural-cultivated and other 91% (1993).

CLIMATE: Djibouti has a semiarid climate that is very hot and dry. There are two seasons, a dry season from May to October and a relatively cool season from November to April. The rainfall on the coast usually occurs between November to March, whereas in the interior it falls between April to October. Average annual precipitation for Djibouti City is 130 mm (5 inches) and average temperature ranges are from 23 to 29 degrees Celsius (73 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 31 to 41 degrees Celsius (88 to 106 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

PEOPLE: Djibouti has an indigenous population of two Hamitic groups. (1.) The Somalis or Issas who live in the south and represent 62% of the population and (2.) the Afars who account for 20% of the population and live in the northern and western areas of the country. Other ethnic minorities include French, Arabs, Ethiopians, Italians, Greeks, Indians and Sudanese.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 23 persons per sq km (60 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 80.8% urban, 19.2% rural (1988). Sex Distribution; 51.8% male, 48.2% female (1983). Life Expectancy at Birth; 45.4 years male, 48.7 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 38% under 15, 34% 15 to 29, 17% 30 to 44, 3% 45 to 49, 8% 50 and over (1983). Birth Rate; 46.5 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 17.8 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 28.7 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 122.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Around 94% of the population are Sunni Muslims with the remainder being Roman Catholics, Protestants or Greek Orthodox Christians.

LANGUAGES: The official languages are French and Arabic, although the national languages are Somali and Afar with Arabic also widely used on the coast.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: N/A. Literacy; literate population aged 20 or over 33.7% (1987).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1946 Djibouti became a French overseas territory. In 1958 the territory voted to join the French Community which is an economic and cultural organization with links to France and its territories. In response to calls for independence, mainly from the majority Somali population, a referendum was held in March 1967 and although the territory voted to retain its association to France, the Somalis contested the validity of the result. After nearly a decade of Somali pressure the territory gained its independence in June 1977. As a result Hassan Gouled, a Somali, was elected as President while Ahmed Dini, an Afar, was appointed Prime Minister. In Dec. 1977 Prime Minister Dini and four other Afar ministers resigned alleging discrimination against Afars. In 1981 Djibouti became a single party state and Pres. Gouled was reelected without opposition in 1982 and 1987. In Mar. 1989 ethnic tensions between the two principal groups led to violence while in April the security forces moved to suppress unrest among the Afars. In 1990 the unsettled state of affairs in neighboring Somali caused tensions in Djibouti and during most of the year there were border disputes with Somali troops re-taking a border area it had lost in 1989. Further fears have been raised over the influx of large numbers of refugees from Somalia. In Jan. 1991 there was an unsuccessful coup attempt led by an Afar, Ali Aref Bourhan that resulted in a number of arrests. In Feb. 1991 Djibouti and France signed agreements, in which France became responsible for the country's air and maritime surveillance. On April 8, 1991 an opposition movement leader, Mohammed Moussa Ali Tourtour, was arrested and in May went on a hunger strike in protest. In Nov. 1991 fighting between Issa-dominated government forces and the Afar Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) broke out. In Dec. 1991 army forces searching for Afar guerrillas shot into a crowd killing some eight or more people further inciting Afar-Issa violence. In Dec. 1991 Pres. Gouled declared that democratic and multiparty political reforms would have to be approved by a referendum but only after the FRUD rebels had been forced off the national territory. In Jan. 1992 fighting between government and FRUD forces continued while on Feb 25, 1992 French troops were deployed as peace-keepers. On Feb. 28, 1992 the FRUD rebels declared a unilateral cease-fire which resulted in the government releasing their leader, Abbate Edo Adou, who had been detained since Dec. 1991. In 1992 a new constitution that allowed multiparty politics was approved through a referendum while general elections held on Dec. 18, 1992 resulted in the Popular Rally for Progress retaining all 65 legislative seats. In Dec. 1992 fighting broke out in the northeastern town of Tadjoura between the government and

FRUD forces which continued in Jan. 1993 and resulted in dozens of deaths. On Feb. 4, 1993 Pres. Gouled reshuffled the government that resulted in a careful ethnic balance within the Cabinet while in the same month government forces regained control of FRUD strongholds in the south of the country. On May 7, 1993 Pres. Gouled was reelected as President following elections.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Franc (DF) divided into 100 Centimes.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$448,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$192,600,000 (1993). Imports; DF 38,103,000,000 (1991). Exports; DF 3,083,000,000 (1991). Tourism Receipts; USD \$13,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; DF -30,669,000,000 (1993). Economically Active Population; 282,000 or 54.2% of total population (1991). Unemployed; 45% (1987).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are France, Ethiopia, Belgium, Luxembourg, the UK, Italy and Germany.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Cattle, Dates, Fish, Fruit and Vegetables, Goats, Salt, Sheep.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Banking, Construction, Fishing, Mineral Water Bottling, Public Administration, Processing of Hides and Skins, Stock Rearing.

MAIN EXPORTS: Hides, Livestock, Skins.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 106 km (66 mi) (1989), passenger-km 293,000,000 (182,062,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 119,300,000 (81,709,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 3,067 km (1,906 mi) (1989). Vehicles; cars 13,000 (1989), trucks and buses 2,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 7 (1990), deadweight tonnage 350 (1990). Air Transport; N/A.

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 1 with a circulation of 4,000 (1990). Radio; receivers 35,000 (1994). Television; receivers 17,000 (1994). Telephones; units 7,350 (1993).

MILITARY: 8,400 (1995) total active duty personnel with 95.2% army, 2.4% navy and 2.4% air force while military expenditure accounts for 6.0% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).