

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Yemen

CAPITAL: San'a

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Multiparty Republic

AREA: 482,682 Sq Km (186,365 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 15,081,300



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Yemen is located on the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bound by the Red Sea to the west, the Gulf of Aden to the south, Oman to the east and Saudi Arabia to the north. The territory also includes the islands of Socotra, Perim and Kamaran while the country can be divided into four topographical regions. (1.) The Tilhama which is a sandy strip of land along the western Red Sea coast. (2.) A southern flat and narrow coastal plain. (3.) A mountainous interior which rises steeply from the coastal plain and has high plateaux to the north which fade into (4.) the Rub al-Khali further north which is the largest sand desert in the world. The country has many wadis or seasonal rivers which descend from the mountains to the coastal plains. Major Cities (pop. est.); San'a 427,150, Aden 320,000, Ta'izz 178,000, al-Hudaydah 155,100, al-Mukalla 59,300 (1986). Land Use; forested 4%, pastures 30%, agricultural-cultivated 3%, desert and other 63% (1993).

CLIMATE: Yemen has a hot and dry climate characterized by high humidity along the coastal regions. The mountain regions of the interior have a temperate wet summer and a cool dry winter with the greatest amount of rainfall occurring at high altitudes. Average annual precipitation varies from 910 mm (36 inches) to 500 mm (20 inches) depending on the region, however, rainfall is unpredictable with both drought and floods common. Average temperature ranges in Aden are from 22 to 28 degrees Celsius (72 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 29 to 37 degrees Celsius (84 to 99 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

PEOPLE: Almost the entire population is Arab with a distinction between the Qahtani or southern Arabs and the Adnani or northern Arabs. Over 1,300 tribes inhabit the country with the people of the islands believed to be a mixture of Greek, Portuguese, African and Arab stocks. Other ethnic minorities include Indians, Pakistanis, Somalis and Europeans.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 22. persons per sq km (58 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 21.4% urban, 78.6% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 49.3% male, 50.7% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 49.0 years male, 51.0 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 52% under 15, 22% 15 to 29, 13% 30 to 44, 8% 45 to 59, 4% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 51.2 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 21.2 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 30.0 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 132.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: The official religion is Islam with both Shiite and Sunni Muslims coexisting without friction. The Sunni Muslims account for 53% of the population and the Shiite Muslims for around 47%. Other religious minorities include small, although dwindling numbers of Jews.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Arabic, although English is also widely understood.

EDUCATION (North Yemen): Aged 10 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 82.6%, literacy skills 15.9%, primary 0.8%, secondary 0.2%, higher 0.1%, unspecified 0.4% (1975). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 38.5% (Unified Yemen-1990).

MODERN HISTORY WWII TO 1993: North Yemen; On Sept. 26, 1962 a group of military officers led by Col. Adbullah al-Sallal and supported by Egypt overthrew the Imam and established a republic. The Imam's forces called Royalists, supported by Britain and Saudi Arabia, attempted to regain control of the government and a full scale civil war ensued. In 1970 the Royalists were defeated and in Dec. 1970 a new constitution was inaugurated. In Sept. 1972 fighting broke out with South Yemen and in 1974 a coup led by Lt.-Col. Ibrahim Hamadi ousted the civilian government and civilian administrators were appointed. In Oct. 1977 Lt.Col. Hamadi was assassinated and was succeeded by Lt.-Col. Ahmad al-Gashimi who was in turn assassinated in June 1978. After Pres. al-Gashimi's assassination Lt.Col. Ali Abdullah Saleh was elected President. In Feb. 1979 further fighting broke out with South Yemen and in March a ceasefire was negotiated with another agreement for unification. During the late 1980's Pres. Saleh gradually introduced a democratic system of government.

South Yemen; In 1963 Aden was amalgamated with the British protectorate to form the Federation of South Arabia which resulted in rioting. In June 1964 it was agreed that the Federation would gain independence from Britain in 1968. In Nov. 1967 British troops withdrew and the People's Republic of Yemen was declared with Qahtan ash-Sha'abi as the country's first President. In June 1969 Pres. ash-Sha'abi resigned and was replaced by Rubayi Ali. In Nov. 1969 the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was declared with a socialist government. In Sept. 1972 fighting broke out with North Yemen. In 1978 Pres. Ali was deposed by Abdalfattah Ismail. In Feb. 1979 further fighting broke out with North Yemen and in March 1979 a ceasefire was negotiated with another agreement for unification. In Apr. 1980 Pres. Ismail was replaced by Ali Nasser Mohammed. In Jan. 1986 Pres. Mohammed attempted to purge the Politburo and heavy fighting broke out between two rival factions until Pres. Mohammed was forced into exile. In Feb. 1989 former Prime Minister Haider Abu Bakr al-Attas was inaugurated as President.

Unified Yemen; In late 1989 a draft for a new constitution was announced and approved by

both North and South Yemen. On May 22, 1990 the countries were unified with Ali Abdullah Saleh as President and Haider Abu Bakr al-Attas as Prime Minister. In Sept. 1990 up to 1 million Yemenis were forced to return to their country from Saudi Arabia after their government supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the Saudi government revoked their special status. In Jan. 1991 pro-Saddam demonstrations took place in the country's capital. In May 1991 a referendum on a proposed constitution was overwhelmingly approved and led to ten opposition parties alleging the ballots were rigged. On Sept. 11, 1991 a civil servant, Hussan Huraibi, was murdered in an ambush although the real target, Omar al-Jawi, a passenger traveling with Huraibi and the leader pro-Kuwaiti Yemeni Unionist Alliance survived. On Sept. 26, 1991 Pres. Saleh announced that further oil reserves had been found at Masilah. In 1992 political violence escalated with bombings and assassination attempts, including Justice Minister Adb al-Wasei Salam on April 26 and Anis Hassan Yahya on July 17 both of which were members of the ruling Presidential Council. As a result of the escalating violence the government postponed scheduled elections until April 27, 1993. In Oct. 1992 Yemen and Oman ratified a 25 year old border dispute agreement. In Dec. 1992 economic protests over rising prices led to riots over three days in San'a which left 13 people dead. Also in 1992 tensions between Yemen and Saudi Arabia rose over oil exploration rights near their common disputed borders with several oil exploration companies warned by Saudi Arabia that they were violating their territory. On April 27, 1993 general elections were held and resulted in Pres. Saleh's General People's Congress winning 122 seats of the 301-seat House of Representatives. On May 30, 1993 Pres. Saleh formed a 31 member coalition government from all the major political parties. In Aug. 1993 a political crisis escalated following an alleged assassination plot on Vice Pres. Ali Salim al-Beidh when he planned to visit San'a for official meetings. Beidh declared he would boycott the meetings and remain in Aden, following which he called for political and economic reforms as well as improved security citing that some 150 members of his Yemeni Socialist Party had been murdered in the continuing violence. In Nov. 1993 a US diplomat was kidnapped by local tribesmen but was released a few days later.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Riyal (YRIs) divided into 100 Fils.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$6,864,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$8,198,000 (1991). Imports; YRIs 15,667,000,000 (1991). Exports; YRIs 7,084,700,000 (1991). Tourism Receipts; USD \$45,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; YRIs -29,389,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 2,043,237 or 19.6% of total population (1986). Unemployed; c. 40% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Japan, Saudi Arabia, China, Italy, the UK, Iran, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Thailand, Australia and the former USSR.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Coffee, Cotton, Crude Oil, Fish, Fruit, Millet, Sesame, Sorghum,

Sugar, Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cotton, Fishing, Fish Processing, Handicrafts, Leather Goods, Oil Refining, Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Coffee, Cotton, Processed Fish, Refined Oil, Sugar.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; nil. Roads; length 39,152 km (24,328 mi) (1986). Vehicles; cars 147,515 (1986), trucks and buses 219,703 (1986). Merchant Marine; vessels 39 (1990), deadweight tonnage 13,653 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,032,248,000 (641,409,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 11,661,000 (7,987,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 4 with a total circulation of 236,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 325,000 (1993). Television; receivers 350,000 (1992). Telephones; lines 162,100 (1993).

MILITARY: 39,500 (1995) total active duty personnel with 93.7% army, 3.8% navy and 2.5% air force while military expenditure accounts for 15.7% (1991) of the Gross National Product (GNP).