

# Small States and Development: The Small States Manual

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# Africa

## Botswana

Population	2.4 million
Land Area	566,730sqkm <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Middle Income
Freedom House Score	72/100 - Free

## History

The Republic of Botswana shares a common border with South Africa in the South, Namibia along the west and north, Zimbabwe in the east, and Zambia in the north (South Africa History Online, [2021](#)). The country is inhabited by people of largely Tswana origin, collectively called the ‘Batswana,’ whose recorded history traces back to the 14th century (South Africa History Online, [2021](#)). Early inhabitants of Botswana were the San and Kho societies, which were later joined by the Batswana societies who migrated to the area about a thousand years ago (South Africa History Online, [2021](#)). Nearing the 18th century, Batswana society was divided into 8 principal chieftaincies that currently form part of the modern Republic of Botswana (South Africa History Online, [2021](#)).

Known as Bechuanaland during colonial times, Botswana was one of three High Commission territories alongside Swaziland and Lesotho, having become a British Protectorate in 1885 through formal petition to London (Farley, [2008](#)). The petition was motivated by the anxiety of Bechuanaland’s native chief to avert the risk of Boer domination in the republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State (Farley, [2008](#)). The ‘Scramble for Africa’ in the 1880s had led to the German colonisation of Southwest Africa; the new German colony threatened to join across the Kalahari with the independent Boer Republic of the Transvaal (Parsons, [2021](#)). The British in the Cape Colony responded by leveraging their missionary and trade connections with the Tswana states to keep roads in Botswana open for British expansion to Zimbabwe and Zambezi (Parsons, [2021](#)). The British thus acceded to the petition to form the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland over their Tswana allies and the Kalahari as far north as the Ngwato, to protect their economic interests, before it was extended further to the Tawana and the Chobe River in 1890 (Parsons, [2021](#)). British colonial expansion in the region was privatised in the form of the British South Africa Company, which used the road through the Bechuanaland Protectorate to colonise Rhodesia—present day Zimbabwe—in 1890 (Parsons, [2021](#)). Until the 1950s, the British government intended for the protectorate to be handed over to Rhodesia, or to the new Union of South Africa after 1910 (Parsons, [2021](#)). During this time, the territory remained divided into eight largely self-administering chieftaincies, five white settler farm blocks, and crown lands (Parsons, [2021](#)).

In the early 1950s to mid-1960s, South Africans seeking refuge from the Apartheid Government in Bechuanaland encouraged the growth of Tswana nationalism and demands for independence, setting the country on its journey towards independence (South Africa History Online, [2021](#)). A legislative council was set up in 1961, following limited national elections (Parsons, [2021](#)). Two notable political parties emerged during this period: the Bechuanaland People’s Party founded in 1960 and the Bechuanaland Democratic

Party (BDP; later renamed the Botswana Democratic Party). As the British government became more amenable to political change, a new administrative capital was built at Gaborone and Bechuanaland attained self-rule in 1965, under an elected BDP government and Seretse Khama as prime minister (Parsons, 2021). Bechuanaland would go on to achieve independence as the Republic of Botswana with Seretse Khama as its first president in 1966 (Parsons, 2021).

From 1969 onwards, Botswana took on a more significant role in international politics, positioning itself as a nonracial, liberal, democratic alternative to South African Apartheid. In 1974, it was one of five “Frontline States” along with Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Angola, that sought to bring majority rule to Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa (Parsons, 2021). The Frontline States would eventually lead to the formation of the South African Development Community (SADC) in 1980 (Parsons, 2021). Structured by Botswana’s Seretse Khama, the SADC aimed to build a better future for the region by coordinating its member economies and promoting their development (Parsons, 2021).

Botswana enjoyed a rapidly expanding economy in the 70s and 80s, before suffering from internal issues such as high unemployment rate and an increasing urban rich and rural poor divide after Quett Masire of the BDP succeeded Seretse Khama following his death in 1980 (Parsons, 2021). Masire also had to foreign policy crises in the form of South African aggression towards the Frontline States between 1984 and 1990; two South African Army raids on Gaborone in 1985 and 1986 killed 15 civilians (Parsons, 2021). Botswana’s South African relations stabilised after Namibia’s independence in 1990 and internal political changes in South Africa resulted in the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1994 (Parsons, 2021).

Botswana’s economic expansion slowed and reversed in the 1990s but recovered within a few years. The country, however, continued to face social unrest attributed to frustration with social conditions and high rate of unemployment (Parsons, 2021). The country also experienced a huge AIDS epidemic during the 1990s, with one of the highest rates of infection in the world (Parsons, 2021). The government aggressively tackled the public health crisis through increasing HIV and AIDS awareness and coordinated efforts to restrain the epidemic—Botswana eventually became the first African country to provide free HIV antiretroviral medication for all citizens (Parsons, 2021).

Botswana’s dominant ethnic identity is Tswana, which comprises around two-thirds of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The country’s entire population is recognised as Batswana in the plural and Motswana in the singular, regardless of ethnic origin (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Botswana’s current ethnic composition stands at 79 % Tsawana, 11 % Kalanga, 3 % Basarwa, and 7 % others (including Kgalagadi and people of European descent) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Economy

Botswana has a free market economy, with a strong tradition of central government planning that provides infrastructure for private investment (Parsons, 2021). Before the 2008 global recession, Botswana maintained one of the world’s highest economic growth rates since independence in 1966 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The country recovered from the global recession in 2010, but experienced modest growth till 2017 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Sound governance and economic management has allowed Botswana to transform from one of the poorest countries in the world into a

middle-income country with a per capita GPD of approximately \$ 18100 in 2017(Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The country also ranks as one of the least corrupt and best business environments in Sub-Saharan Africa (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Botswana's main industries include: diamonds, copper, nickel, salt, soda ash, potash, coal, iron ore, silver; beef processing, and textiles (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Botswana's main agricultural products include: milk, roots/tubers, vegetables, sorghum, beef, game meat, watermelons, cabbages, goat milk, onions. Diamond mining was responsible for much of the country's past economic expansion and currently accounts for a quarter of GDP, 85% of export earnings, and about a third of government revenue (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Tourism is the second most significant economic sector and many Batswana participate in tourism-related services, subsistence farming, and cattle rearing(Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Politics

Botswana is a parliamentary republic. Administratively, it is split into 10 districts and 6 town councils. The president is indirectly elected by the National Assembly to act as both chief of state and head of government for a 5-year term and is eligible for a second term. The vice president is appointed by the president. The president also appoints the cabinet. The unicameral 63-seat National Assembly serves as the legislative branch. 57 members are directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote, 4 members are nominated by the president and indirectly elected by simple majority vote by the rest of the National Assembly, with the remaining 2 members being ex-officio members; the president and attorney general who serve 5-year terms. All citizens above 18 can vote in elections for the National Assembly. Botswana has a mixed legal system of civil law influenced by the Roman-Dutch model, customary, and common law (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Djibouti

Population	938 413
Land Area	23,200km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	24/100 - Not Free

### History

In 1862, France purchased land at Obock as larger neighboring states like Egypt claimed no possession over the area (Imbert-Vier, 2008). After the Suez Canal opened in 1869, European powers competed for territory along the coast Red Sea on the Horn of Africa. In 1884, France established a colonial administration at Obock and developed coaling facilities so that French steamships did not need to depend on the British coaling stations at Aden (Imbert-Vier, 2008). From 1884 to 1887, France signed treaties with Afar and Issa tribes and made the area surrounding the Gulf of Tadjoura a protectorate called French Somaliland (Imbert-Vier, 2008). In 1888, it established a settlement at Djibouti City due to its natural harbor and the possibility of connecting to the Ethiopian highlands for trade (Wan, Zhang, Xue, & Xiao, 2020). France moved the colonial administration to Djibouti in 1894. With Ethiopian approval, France started construction on a port at Djibouti city and a railway project between Addis Ababa and the port in 1897. France completed the railway in 1917 (Wan et al., 2020).

Djibouti became a diverse city comprising indigenous Somalis, Afars, Issas, Arabians and others alongside foreigners including French, Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians. The different ethnic groups tended to reside spatially segregated from each other (Wan et al., 2020). France signed a second treaty with the Issa Somalis in 1917 which transferred the Issa tribal land surrounding Djibouti city to the French Government. In 1925, the French government implemented legislation to prevent the construction of permanent dwellings. This led to the creation of slums enabled the spatial segregation by ethnic group to continue, creating the conditions for future ethnic tensions (Wan et al., 2020).

Vichy France briefly administered French Somaliland during World War II before British forces occupied the Djibouti. After the war, French Somaliland returned to France. In 1952, Djibouti's trade with Ethiopia started to decline after Eritrea federated with Ethiopia and granted the latter access to the coast (Shilling, 1973). In 1954, French held most public sector jobs and foreigners made up 80% of private sector employees and 50% of railway employees (Wan et al., 2020). Arab businessmen owned 80% of buildings and ran 90% of retail trade during the 1960s. Indigenous quarters of the city remained poor and lacked good infrastructure (Wan et al., 2020).

In 1958, French authorities held a referendum where 75% of voters favored continued association with France (Shilling, 1973). In the 1960s, Issa Somalis dominated the local territorial council and Somali nationalism threatened French rule. The Afars generally favored continued French rule as they feared the Somali majority would push for unification with Somalia and impact their way of life (Shilling, 1973). In 1963, French authorities adjusted local constituencies so that the Afar would win more seats (Lewis, 1967). Growing Somali frustration with French rule led to demonstrations during de Gualle's visit in 1966 and led to the announcement for a second referendum in 1967. Before the 1967

referendum on independence, French authorities deported many Somalis from the colony and limited the number of Somalis in the electorate (Lewis, 1967; Shilling, 1973). The referendum results supported French rule and led to the Somali population putting up violent resistance and refusing to participate in politics and the administration (Shilling, 1973). The French Somaliland was renamed the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas.

The rising costs of maintaining the colony and international pressure eventually led France to grant independence in June 1977. The newly-independent nation took the name Djibouti and became a member of the UN and the African Union that same year. Ethnic tensions between the Afars and Issa Somalis remained throughout the 1980s and culminated in a civil war from 1991 to 1994 (Cutbill & Schraeder, 2021). The final peace agreement was signed in 2001 (Cutbill & Schraeder, 2021).

Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia improved economic prospects as Djibouti became Ethiopia's primary port. In the 2000s, Djibouti became an important location for US counter-terrorism operations in the Middle East (Brass, 2008; Cutbill & Schraeder, 2021). In 2017, it agreed to host China's first overseas military base.

## Economy

Ethiopia is landlocked so Djibouti serves as its main seaport. Its strategic location at the mouth of the Red Sea has attracted eight countries to set up naval facilities there. Brass argues that Djibouti's good location has led to an "unusual resource curse" where the government can choose to eschew good governance by collecting revenue from maintaining the port and the presence of foreign military bases (Brass, 2008). The Djibouti government's primary sources of income are proceeds from the International Port of Djibouti, rent from the Djibouti-Ethiopian railway, and payments from foreign countries like France and the US to host foreign military bases. More than 80% of merchandise moving through the port originates from or is destined for Ethiopia (Brass, 2008; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Services, most linked to port activity in Djibouti city, contribute 80.2% of GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). This includes financial and insurance services, communications, and logistics. Agriculture contributed 2.4% of GDP. The secondary sector contributed 17.3% of GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Some people still live nomadic, pastoral lives. They produce milk, beef, camel milk, goat meat, and mutton. A limited amount of vegetables are grown due to Djibouti's arid climate (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Cutbill & Schraeder, 2021). The secondary sector contributes 17.3% with most coming from construction (Cutbill & Schraeder, 2021). High unemployment and poverty remain a problem in Djibouti (Brass, 2008; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).



## Politics

Djibouti has a presidential republic. A directly elected president serves as chief-of-state and appoints a prime minister to serve as head-of-government. The prime minister appoints a Council of Ministers to serve as cabinet. The unicameral 65-seat National Assembly serves as the legislative branch. All citizens above 18 can vote in elections for the president and National Assembly members. The legal system is based on the French civil code, Sharia law and customary law (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Around 60% of the population are Issa Somalis and 35% are Afar. Most Issa Somalis live in the capital. The Afar are distributed across the north and west of the country and most continue nomadic pastoral lifestyles.

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## Eswatini

Population	1.11 million
Land Area	17364km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	19/100 - Not Free

### History

Conflict between major clan groupings in southeastern Africa in the late-18th and early-19th century led the Dlamini clan to move into the central parts of modern-day Eswatini. The Dlamini monarchy consolidated power in the region by adopting a system of military organization similar to the Zulus further south. Under Mswati II, the monarch that Eswatini derives its name from, the clan conquered land beyond the borders of modern-day Eswatini (Bonner, 1983; Masson, 2021). Mswati used the bounty earned from conquests to gain the loyalty of his military personnel and reduce the influence of their traditional elders and local chiefs (Bonner, 1983). After Mswati's death in 1865, less conquests occurred due to the military strength of neighbors. This meant less bounty for keeping military personnel loyal and allowed traditional leaders to gain more power and influence. In the 1880s, Mbandzeni tried to counter local leaders by granting grazing and mining concessions to European settlers. Rival concessionaires made ties with rival factions in the Swazi aristocracy, leading to growing tensions between factions and political turmoil. By 1890, most land in Swaziland had been granted to settlers in concessions (Bonner, 1983; Masson, 2021). The Boers, whom Britain had pushed out from regions further south to take control of diamond and gold resources, received many of these concessions (Bonner, 1983).

The Boer South African Republic (SAR) used the conflict in Swaziland to justify intervening and staking out their claims in the region. Britain moved in to monitor Boer actions as it sought to limit Boer influence in southern Africa (Bonner, 1983). Britain eventually agreed to allow the SAR to have the power to adjudicate, legislate, and administer Swaziland in the mid-1890s. After Britain won the South African War (also known as the Second Boer War) in 1902, Britain made Swaziland a protectorate in 1903 under the jurisdiction of Transvaal (Farley, 2008; Masson, 2021). Britain transferred jurisdiction of Swaziland to a separate High Commission with Bechuanaland (Botswana), and Basutoland (Lesotho), in 1906. The king of Swaziland accepted protection to avoid incorporation into a White-dominated South Africa (Farley, 2008). Britain made the king a paramount chief (Farley, 2008). The South Africa Act of 1909 had a provision allowing Swaziland to merge with South Africa if the former consented. Although South Africa petitioned Britain to transfer the High Commission territories to them on multiple occasions, Britain refused especially as apartheid legislation's negative impact on non-white populations increased (Farley, 2008; Masson, 2021; Spence, 1964).

Prior to the 1930s, Britain did little to economically or socially develop Swaziland due to a lack of funding. While Britain made Swaziland part of the South Africa Customs Union (SACU) in 1910, South Africa used the union to control the economic development of other territories in the union. This often occurred to the disadvantage of Eswatini (Harris, 1992; Spence, 1964). The colonial administration of Swaziland brought order to

the system of land concessions by 1907 although the way they divided land caused local resentment (Spence, 1964). Apart from that, the colonial administration left most matters to indigenous institutions. Nearly half of Swazi men worked in South African goldfields for income. In the 1930s, Swaziland received loans and grants from the Colonial Development Fund. Most funding went to improving road and communications infrastructure which facilitated Swaziland's exports by foreign companies (Spence, 1964). After World War II, Swaziland received more grants and loans from Britain for development of infrastructure, agriculture, education, and to buy back land from concessionaires. The private sector, dominated by settlers, invested in plantations, mining operations, the timber and textile industries (Harris, 1992; Spence, 1964). By the 1960s, only 15% of Swazi men worked in South Africa (Spence, 1964).

Britain introduced Swaziland's first constitution in 1963-1964 provided for limited self-governance and granted King Sobhuza II full executive power. Britain introduced a second constitution in 1967-1968 that provided for a parliament and a "first-past-the-post" electoral system (Farley, 2008; Masson, 2021). Swaziland became independent in September 1968 and became a member of the UN, Commonwealth, and the African Union that same year. Sobhuza II had been in power since 1921 and wished to preserve the traditional system of governance (Masson, 2021). In 1973, in response to the opposition party winning seats in parliament, the king repealed the constitution and abolished all political parties. Parliament retained only an advisory role and became indirectly elected by 40 traditional councils (Farley, 2008). The king allowed for a Cabinet with all members appointed by the former. During his reign, he focused on health, education, and human development (Masson, 2021).

Mswati III succeeded Sobhuza II after a period of political turmoil in 1986. His regime's corruption has led to demonstrations demanding for greater democratic political reform in the 1990s and 2000s (Masson, 2021). The US threatened sanctions when the monarch attempted to grant himself more unsupervised power in 2001. This led the monarch to rescind his decision (Farley, 2008). A new constitution in 2006 brought in some democratic reforms. In 2018, the king changed the official name of the country from the Kingdom of Swaziland to the Kingdom of Eswatini (Masson, 2021).

## **Economy**

Agriculture and forestry contribute 8.5% of GDP (Eswatini Central Statistics Office, 2019). 68.3% of land is used for agriculture with nearly 85% of that used as pastureland (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Key crops include sugar cane, maize, citrus, cotton, tobacco, roots and tubers. Cattle and goats remain a traditional source of wealth (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Masson, 2021). Timber plantations, consisting of pine and eucalyptus, occupy 6% of land (Masson, 2021).

Manufacturing is the largest sector in the economy, contributing nearly 30% of GDP in 2019. Most manufacturing processes raw material from the agricultural and forestry sectors. This includes soft drink concentrates, beverages, and furniture. Eswatini also manufactures textiles and some agro-chemicals (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Masson, 2021).

In the services sector, the retail and wholesale trade contributed around 14% of GDP in 2019 (Eswatini Central Statistics Office, 2019). Financial services, real-estate linked activities, and professional and technical services contributed around 5.8%, 5.6%, and

3.6% of GDP in 2019, respectively (Eswatini Central Statistics Office, 2019). Public administration, defense, education, health and social services contributed around 16.8% GDP (Eswatini Central Statistics Office, 2019).

## Politics

Eswatini has an absolute monarchy. The monarch serves as head-of-state and appoints a prime minister from the House of Assembly to serve as head-of-government. The monarch appoints Cabinet based on recommendations from the prime minister. At least half the Cabinet members must be elected members in the House of Assembly (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The bicameral parliament consists of the 30-seat Senate and 73-seat House of Assembly. The monarch appoints 20 members of the Senate and 10 members of the House of Assembly. Citizens above 18 vote in elections for 59 members in the House of Assembly. An additional 4 women are elected by the House of Assembly if the number of elected women make up less than 30% of members (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The legal system has separate courts adjudicating on constitutional law and traditional law. The monarch appoints top judges based on the advice of a Judicial Service Commission appointed by the monarch (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

More than 80% of the population is Swazi and nearly 10% is Zulu. About 3% of the population has European ancestry while the remaining population has African ancestry from the surrounding regions (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Masson, 2021). Dlamini states that a privileged minority with European ancestry still plays a major role in most sectors of the economy, especially in the sugar sector. The white business community likely still retain strong ties with the monarchy (Dlamini, 2020).

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## Equatorial Guinea

Population	1.51 million
Land Area	28050km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper Middle Income
Freedom House Score	6/100 - Not Free

### History

Equatorial Guinea consists of a continental portion, Río Muni, and five islands, Bioko (the main island), Corisco, Great Elobey, Little Elobey, and Annobón (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). It is the only Spanish-speaking state in sub-Saharan Africa.

The first inhabitants of the region that is now Equatorial Guinea are believed to have been Pygmies, 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 generated the Bubi, who emigrated to Bioko from Cameroon and Río Muni in several waves and succeeded former neolithic populations. The Annobon population, native to Angola, was introduced by the Portuguese via São Tomé.

Pygmies are believed to be the first inhabitants of the region, but only isolated groups of them remain in northern Río Muni today (U.S. Department of State, 2012). The island of Bioko was believed to have been colonised by the Bubi, a Bantu people, about 2000 years ago (gelabert2019eqguinea). Other coastal tribes and the Fang likely migrated to the region between the 17th to 19th centuries (U.S. Department of State, 2012). The island of Bioko was first sighted by Portuguese explorer Fernão do Pó in 1472 and referred to as Fernando Po, after him. Annobón was sighted by another Portuguese explorer Ruy de Sequeira, likely in 1474 (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). In June 1474, the Portuguese gained exclusive trade rights in Africa via the Treaty of Tordesillas. In 1778, the Portuguese ceded Bioko, adjacent islets, and the Bight of Biafra (the easternmost part of the Gulf of Guinea) to the Spanish in exchange for areas of modern-day South Brazil (Fegley, 1989). This agreement was meant to allow Spain access to the slave trade. However, Spanish settlers were heavily afflicted by sicknesses, particularly yellow fever, and withdrew from Bioko in 1781 (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021); (Dekar, 2001).

After 1807, when the British had abolished the slave trade, the unoccupied Bioko island was a strategic position from which to patrol the western African coast for slavers. Hence, in 1827 the Spanish leased bases on Bioko to the British Royal Navy (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). The British administered the island in Spain's absence and resettled freed slaves there. The British made several unsuccessful offers to Spain to purchase Bioko, following which in 1843 they concentrated the Royal Navy's antislavery patrol in Sierra Leone instead. Existing buildings on Bioko were sold to a Jamaican and British Baptists (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021).

In 1844, the Spanish made their second attempt to occupy Bioko. They also explored the mainland of Spanish Guinea for the first time, with their expedition ending in 1877 (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). By 1879, the Spanish started using Bioko as a penal settlement for Cuban prisoners. Economic development only started in earnest after the Spanish-American War in 1898, and even then was concentrated in the relatively richer



Bioko. Only after the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 did Spain focus significantly on the mainland (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021).

In 1959 the Spanish government reorganized Spanish Guinea into two overseas Spain provinces. All citizens, including Africans, were given the same rights as Spanish citizens (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). From 1963, the provinces were renamed equatorial Guinea (Baynham, 1980). Some economic and administrative autonomy was provided following a plebiscite (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). Equatorial Guinea's independence movement began to gain momentum at the end of 1967. In early 1968, the Spanish government discontinued its autonomous political control. With the Organization of African Unity's support, the Spanish government conducted a national referendum to gauge support for a new constitution. The constitution was approved on Aug 11 1968. After parliamentary elections in September, the country proclaimed independence on 12 Oct, 1968 (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021).

Equatorial Guinea's first president, the Spanish-backed Francisco Macías Nguema, was elected by popular vote in 1968 (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021); (Justice, 2019). Macías, from Rio Muni and of the majority Fang ethnic group, was a court interpreter for the Spanish colonial administration. He was rapidly promoted in the 1950s and 1960s, rising from assistant interpreter to mayor of Mongomo, to minister of public works, to deputy president of the Governing Council (Campos, 2003; Kenyon, 2018). Macías' tyrannical eleven-year rule saw up to half the population murdered or exiled (Sundiata, 1988). After his election, he pushed through totalitarian measures, such as executing 150 alleged coup-plotters (all of whom were his political opponents) in 1969, banning opposition political parties in 1970, and naming himself president for life in 1972. During Macías' rule, an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 of the country's 300,000 people were killed (Justice, 2019). He also instated policies favouring the Fang ethnic majority group, who comprised 70% of the population (Baynham, 1980), for instance instigating state violence against Nigerian plantation workers and the native ethnic group of Bioko, the Bubi (Baynham, 1980).

In 1979, Macías' nephew and key regime official Teodoro Obiang Nguema led a military coup that overthrew and executed Macías (Justice, 2019). Obiang instated a new constitution in 1982, and another in 1991 that allowed for a multiparty state. This paved the way for multiparty elections in 1993. Yet, Obiang has remained president to the present. International observers accused elections in the 1990s of being fraudulent (Freedom House, 2021). Obiang's regime has been criticised internationally for being repressive (Justice, 2019). For instance, the regime has imprisoned opposition politicians and intimidating opposition supporters (Freedom House, 2021). Obiang and his allies have also been accused of pocketing much of Equatorial Guinea's oil revenue since the discovery and subsequent intensive trade in oil in the late 1990s (Freedom House, 2021; Justice, 2019).

In 2011, another new constitution was adopted, introducing changes such as transiting from a unicameral to a bicameral legislature, imposing a two-term presidential term limit, removing the age limit for presidential candidates, and creating a new position of the vice-president, which was to be appointed by the president (Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). Obiang then appointed one of his sons, Teodoro ("Teodorin") Nguema Obiang Mangué, to be second vice president, though the constitution had not described this role (Freedom House, 2021). Obiang also asserted that the two-term presidential limit would be applicable only from 2016, allowing him to continue unchallenged as President

(Pélissier & Harrison-Church, 2021). Obiang won the 2016 Presidential election with 93.5% of the vote (Freedom House, 2021).

## Economy

Industry represented 54.6% of Gabon's GDP, services 42.9%, and agriculture 2.5% in 2017 (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017). Key industries include petroleum, natural gas, and sawmilling (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017).

Equatorial Guinea is highly dependent on its oil and natural gas industry, which in 2015 made up over 60% of its GDP, 80% of its fiscal revenue, and 86% of its exports (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Large offshore oil reserves were discovered in Equatorial Guinea in 1996. Oil production reached its highest in 2004 and has gradually declined. The drop in global oil prices in 2014 has pushed the country into recession (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017), since its emphasis on the oil and natural gas sector has led to a lack of development in non-hydrocarbon industries (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The country hence seeks to diversify and increase foreign investment (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017).

Equatorial Guinea suffers from high income inequality. Though the per capita income in 2020 was USD7,143, 44% of the population lives below the poverty line (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017). This can be attributed to high levels of government corruption — for instance, one of the president's sons is the minister of mines and hydrocarbons, giving him control over the country's natural resources. Another son, Teodorín (the vice president) has been subject to international money-laundering investigations for years (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017).

## Politics

Equatorial Guinea is structurally a unitary multiparty republic. The chief of state is the president, who is directly elected for a 7-year term by popular vote. There is a two-term limit for the presidency. Parliament is bicameral, with a 70-seat Senate and a 100-seat Chamber of Deputies. Members of both chambers serve five-year terms. Fifteen senators are appointed by the president, 55 are elected, and several ex-officio members can be appointed as well. The Chamber of Deputies is elected directly (Freedom House, 2021).

However, voting is not free and fair. The judiciary is controlled by the president, and security forces have tortured, imprisoned, and intimidated opposition members and civil society leaders (Freedom House, 2021). The National Election Commission's head is the country's interior minister, and a member of the incumbent Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE). The main opposition, Citizens for Innovation (CI), was banned and many of its members sentenced to prison in 2018 (Freedom House, 2021).

Main ethnic groups include the Fang (86%), Bubi (the original ethnic group of Bioko; 6.5%), Mdowne (3.6%), and Annobon (1.6%) (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017).

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## Gabon

Population	2.23 million
Land Area	267667km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper Middle Income
Freedom House Score	22/100 - Not Free

### History

The peoples inhabiting Gabon were culturally diverse and did not adopt a common language until the colonial era (Yates, 2020). As reported in the late 15th century by the Portuguese, portions of southern Gabon were linked to Loango, a former state within the Kongo kingdom which overlaps with present-day southwestern Congo. From the late 16th century, the Dutch, English, French, and Spanish exchanged goods such as cloth, iron goods, alcoholic beverages, and firearms for hardwoods, ivory, and a small number of slaves (Gardinier, 2021).

From the 1760s to the 1840s, the slave trade developed extensively due to increased demand from Brazil and Cuba. Ethnic groups from the interior, such as the Orungu and Mpongwe clans, sent war captives and undesirables from their own societies to the coast to be sold as slaves to European traders (Gardinier, 2021). This contributed to the dispersion and destruction of many interior peoples, especially in the 1800s (Gardinier, 2021).

It was only in the 19th and 20th centuries, amidst colonialism, that Gabonese national identity emerged (Yates, 2020). In 1839 and 1841 respectively, the heads of two Mpongwe clans signed treaties with the French, agreeing to discontinue the slave trade and accept French sovereignty over their territories (Gardinier, 2021). In 1849, a settlement called Libreville, or “Free Town”, was established, forming the core of the capital (Gardinier, 2021); (Keltie & Epstein, 1921). The French continued extending their colonial control, establishing Franceville on the upper Ogooué in 1880 (Gardinier, 2021). In 1886, Gabon was added to the French Congo under governor Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza. In 1910, Gabon became one of four colonies in the federation of French Equatorial Africa (Gardinier, 2021).

From the late 19th century, anti-French resistance grew among Gabonese due to French interference in trade, imposition of high taxes and forced labour, and creation of monopolistic companies that compromised local agriculture and trade (Gardinier, 2021).

From 1946, Gabon became an overseas territory with its own assembly and French Parliament representation. France also greatly increased healthcare, education, and public spending in Gabon (Gardinier, 2021). Gabonese politics were dominated by a pro-French, anti-colonialist elite. In 1958, Gabon became an autonomous republic in the French Community. Gabon attained independence on 16th August, 1960 (Gardinier, 2021).

Independent Gabon retained a close relationship with France, adopting French as the national language. However, it stayed distant from other sub-Saharan African states.

In 1964, 150 Gabonese military officers staged a coup d’état against President Léon M’ba, in response to his attempts to institute a single-party regime. Prior to this, Gabon had been seen as one of the most politically stable countries in Africa (New York Times,

1965); (anyangwe2012). With French backing, President M'ba suppressed the rebellion and imprisoned the coup plotters. In 1967, M'ba died and was succeeded by President Omar Bongo, who established a single-party regime with the Gabonese Democratic Party (Parti Démocratique Gabonais; PDG) as the only party (Gardinier, 2021). Bongo was elected as president in 1973 (Gardinier, 2021). Anti-government unrest in 1990 led to the re-establishment of a multiparty system. Bongo continued to stay in power until his death in 2009 despite allegations of electoral fraud in the 1993, 1998, and 2005 elections (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). He was succeeded by his son, then-Defence Minister Ali Ben Bongo, who has been declared winner by popular vote despite allegations of electoral irregularities in both his 2009 and 2016 presidential elections (Gardinier, 2021); (BBC, 2016). In 2019, a military coup was attempted but suppressed on the same day (Gardinier, 2021); (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Economy

Industry represented 44.7% of Gabon's GDP, services 50.4%, and agriculture 5% in 2017 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Key industries include petroleum extraction and refining, manganese and gold production, chemicals, ship repair, food and beverages, textiles, lumbering and plywood, and cement (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Gabon is the fifth largest oil producer in Africa (Bank, 2021). Over the past five years, the oil sector has made up 80% of exports, 45% of GDP, and 60% of fiscal revenue on average. However, following a decline in its oil reserves, the Gabonese government is seeking to diversify (Bank, 2021).

Gabon's per capita income is four times higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa average (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021), but high income inequality means that one third of the population is below the poverty line (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Politics

Gabon is a unitary multiparty republic. The chief of state is the president, who is directly elected for a 7-year term by a simple majority popular vote. There are no term limits. The prime minister is appointed by the president, and the cabinet is appointed by the prime minister in consultation with the president. Parliament is bicameral, with 102 seats in the senate and 143 seats in the National Assembly (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

However, the incumbent PDG dominates the multiparty system. Opposition parties are fragmented and the government curtails their activities with actions such as incarcerating opposition leaders, arresting participants in largely peaceful protests, and denying permits for public gatherings. The PDG also has a monopoly over the executive branch since the 1960s, leaving little realistic opportunity for opposition parties to gain power through elections (Freedom House, 2021). Voting is compulsory in Gabon, but this is not enforced (BBC, 2016).

80.1% of the population is Gabonese-born. Main ethnic groups include the Fang (23%), Shira-Punu or Vili (19%), Nzabi-Duma (11%), Mbede-Teke (7%), Myene (5%), and Kota-Kele (5%). Other ethnic groups generally migrated from other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## The Gambia

Population	2.2 million
Land Area	11,300km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	47/100 - Partly Free

### History

Before colonialism, Gambian history was closely related to the neighboring nation Senegal, often unitedly referred to as Senegambia till late 19th century. This included the Malinke and Wolof kingdoms of the old Mali and Songhai empires. (2022)

Between the 15th and 17th centuries, European colonial powers such as Portugal and France began trading with The Gambia. (2018)

In 1664, the United Kingdom established a colony in the Gambia focused on exporting enslaved people across the Atlantic. (2022) Many other European trading companies sought to profit from this trade. Throughout the 18th century, France and England fought over dominance in the Gambian region. (2019) From 1894 to 1970, the Gambia under British rule transitioned, mostly peacefully, from being its protectorate to an independent Republic; (Sallah, 1990) the first president being D.K Jawara, elected to power as the head of the People's Progressive Party (PPP). (2019)

In 1981, the young radical Sanyang led an attempt to overthrow the government with the aid of Senegalese troops who intervened due to "shared security interests" as a part of the Gambia-Senegal defense pact. (Sallah, 1990) Between 1982 and 1989, leaders of both countries formed the short-lived confederation of Senegambia to integrate military and economic resources. The confederation dissolved due to political and financial disagreement, as well as ethnic tensions. (Sallah, 1990)

In 1994, Yahya Jammeh led a military coup overthrowing the president and banning political activity, elevating his political party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), in the National Assembly. (2019) His rule becoming gradually authoritative and conservative and condemned by the international community, Jammeh lost to Adama Barrow in 2016, who headed an opposition coalition during free and fair elections. Restoring political stability and creating the National People's Party, Barrow won re-election in December 2021 and 2022. (2022)

### Economy

In the 1940s, Colonial Development and Welfare funds improved basic infrastructure such as water supply, streets, harbor facilities, drainage systems) in the capital city Banjul. (Sallah, 1990) However, the drought years of the 1970s and '80s seriously damaged agricultural production and the Gambia faced food and fuel shortages and suspended foreign assistance due to its economic outlook. (2022)

One-third of the Gambia's GDP is invested in the agricultural sector. Ground peanuts are the Gambia's most valuable agricultural commodity, making peanut processing its largest industry aside from tourism-related smaller industries. (2022) Remittance of exports in

the Gambia amount to about one-fifth of the country's GDP and 80% of goods exports due to its sparse natural resource deposits. (2022) Most manufactured items and petroleum products are imported with Côte d'Ivoire and in more recent times, China, as one of its largest trading partners.

The Gambia is faced with burdensome obligations as regards its external debt and relies heavily on foreign aid. (Sallah, 1990) The Gambian government faces poor agricultural outputs and large fiscal deficits are some challenges the Gambia government faces.(2022)

## Politics

After staging a military coup in 1994, Jammeh and his political party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), ruled and was elected again in 1996. However, as his administration failed to eliminate corruption and were cited were human right violations, it became the subject of dissent and coup attempts leading up to the 2016 election, where, after long period of tension and intervention from The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Jammeh conceded power to the elected Barrow. (2022)

Since then, the multiparty republic revised its Constitution in terms of term length: the Gambia elects its President, head of state and government, through universal suffrage to a five-year term. The president appoints the VP and cabinet. (2022)

As the main legislative body, The National Assembly is comprised of 53 members with five-year terms, with 5 of them appointed by the President. (2022)

Aside from various judiciary courts led by the Supreme Court, the Gambia also provides the Cadi Court for the Muslim community to resolve civil matters according to Shari'ah, resulting in a mixture of English common law and Islamic law. (2019)

The Gambia is involved internationally and maintains a relative democratic environment due to its current leadership. (Sallah, 1990)

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## Lesotho

Population	2,193,970
Land Area	30,355km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower middle income
Freedom House Score	63

### History

Lesotho emerged as a political entity in the early 19th century under the leadership of King Moshoeshoe I. King Moshoeshoe rose to power during the 'Lifaqane' (a period of intense and violent clashes in Southern Africa which reorganized and led to the emergence of new political identities). Moshoeshoe was successful in creating a Sotho identity and expanding his influence by incorporating nearby chiefdoms. He also welcomed farmers, adventurers, and missionaries who traveled through Lesotho (or 'Basutoland' as it was called then) which helped in increasing skill-development and commodity production (Quinlan, 1996).

From 1834 onwards, there were instances of territorial clashes between Boers and Sothos. Gradually, the Sotho lost much of their territories to the Boers and King Moshoeshoe appealed to the British for their protection. The British annexed Lesotho in 1868 and made it a protectorate until 1870 when it was annexed to the Cape Colony. After Moshoeshoe's death local chieftains began to fight amongst themselves. In 1880 the Cape Colony administration tried to disarm the fighting groups which led to a revolt against the British known as the 'Gun War'. The British crown again took direct control of Lesotho ("Lesotho - Manufacturing | Britannica", n.d.).

The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 but Lesotho managed to remain a separate entity since most of its residents were wary of the union and concerned that they might lose their culture and identity as Sothos if they joined the Union. During the following decades, Lesotho was extremely dependent on South Africa. Much of its trade took place with South Africa. In 1930, during the Great Depression, there was a massive drought which further pushed many people from Lesotho to work in South Africa. After World War II, anti-colonial sentiment grew in Lesotho. The Basutoland Council, which had been active since 1903 was successful in gaining limited self-governance in 1955. In 1966 Basutoland gained complete independence from the United Kingdom and was officially renamed 'The kingdom of Lesotho' ("Lesotho - Manufacturing | Britannica", n.d.).

Chief Jonathan of the Basutoland National Party became the first Prime Minister. However, when preliminary election results in 1970 indicated that the opposition Basotho Congress Party (BCP) might win the elections, Chief Jonathan cracked down on the opposition and suspended the constitution. Protests against the Jonathan regime were violently curbed. The BCP staged a coup in 1974 which was unsuccessful. During the 1970s, Lesotho continued to criticize the apartheid regime in South Africa. This led to sour relations between Lesotho and South Africa. South Africa began supplying arms to opposition forces in Lesotho and blocked all movement of goods and people across the border (Holm, 1972).

In 1986, a pro-South Africa faction led by Major General Justin Lekhanya staged a successful coup and ousted King Jonathan. South Africa eased its restrictions. Lekhanya banned all political activity. In 1991 Lekhanya was ousted by another coup which was followed by a general election in 1993 under which the BCP came to power. However, political and economic instability continued. Reduced demand for labor in South Africa led to high unemployment. There were instances of rioting and asian-owned businesses were targeted which reduced foreign investment.

The BCP split in 1997 and a new party, Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) was formed which won the elections in 1998. However, protests by the opposition party and unemployed youth continued. Rioting and violence ensued and the Lesotho government requested troops from the South African Development Community. The SADC were able to restore order and withdrew in 1999. The SADC mandated the formation of Interim Political Authority which had representatives from all major political parties, The IPA were tasked with preparing for the 2000 elections (“Lesotho - Manufacturing | Britannica”, [n.d.](#)).

## Economics

Lesotho is completely landlocked and is surrounded by South Africa. Its economy is highly dependent on South Africa. It imports 85% of the goods it consumes from South Africa. Lesotho’s economy mostly relies on the textile industry, remittances and customs revenue. About 7 percent of Lesotho’s population lives in rural areas and is engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry (“Lesotho National Human Development Report”, [n.d.](#)). Agriculture is mostly practiced for subsistence. However, agricultural yields have been declining since the 1960s due to frequent droughts. Remittances from people working in mines, agriculture and as domestic help in South Africa is another major revenue source for Lesotho households (“Lesotho”, [2022](#)).

Since Lesotho is a member of South African Customs Union, it receives custom duties from SACU which account for about 26% of its total GDP. However, this is volatile and is projected to decline in the future. Lesotho gets revenue from the South African government for water transferred from a dam in Lesotho. The government still is the largest employer in Lesotho followed by the textile industry which is the largest private employer and mostly employs women (“Lesotho”, [2022](#)).

The World Bank categorizes Lesotho as a ‘Lower Middle Income’ country. While Lesotho has made progress in poverty alleviation, still 49 percent of its population falls under the nationally defined poverty line (World Bank, [2021](#)). Lesotho’s healthcare infrastructure is also overwhelmed and underfunded and ill-equipped to deal with the high instances of HIV cases (“Lesotho - Manufacturing | Britannica”, [n.d.](#)).

## Politics

Lesotho is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. The king is the head of the state while the prime minister is the head of the armed forces and the government. Executive power lies with the prime minister and the cabinet. There is a bicameral parliament. The national Assembly has 120 representatives which are elected for a term of five years. The senate has 22 traditional chiefs and 11 members which are appointed by the King (“Lesotho”, [2022](#)).



Lesotho has a multi-party system. The current Prime Minister is Moeketsi Majoro of the centrist All Basotho Convention (ABC). The current monarch is Letsie III (“Lesotho”, 2022).

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# Asia

## Bhutan

Population	857,423
Land Area	38,394km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	61/100 - Partly Free

## History

Bhutan first became a distinct political entity about 400 to 500 years ago. The second monarch, Doopgein Shepton, appointed governors called *penlops* to run Bhutan's administrative regions (Karan & Norbu, 2021). Bhutan generally isolated itself from the world.

Britain's first interaction with Bhutan occurred in 1772 when the Indian state of Cooch Behar requested for military assistance from the East India Company in a war against Bhutan. This led to the first Anglo-Bhutanese War from 1772-1774. Bhutan requested assistance from Tibet against the British which eventually helped Britain to establish contact with Tibet (Marshall, 2004).

In the 19th-century, Britain occupied Bengal and Assam. Regular border disputes and conflicts occurred at their borders with Bhutan. This led Britain to send diplomatic missions to Bhutan. Britain sent Ashley Eden to Bhutan in 1863-1864 (Marshall, 2004). Bhutan's poor treatment of Eden's mission in 1864 sparked the second Anglo-Bhutanese War from 1864 to 1865. The peace treaty led Bhutan to cede the mountain passes in its southern territory (*duars*) to Britain and allowed Britain to arbitrate in Bhutan's conflicts with neighboring South Asian states. In exchange, Britain agreed to pay a subsidy to Bhutan (Karan & Norbu, 2021; Marshall, 2004).

While Bhutan's relations with Britain improved in the late 19th-century, the Tongsa Penlop and Paro Penlop in Bhutan continued to engage in civil war with each other to gain power. Ugyen Wangchuk, the *penlop* of Tongsa allied with Britain in 1903/1904 (Marshall, 2004). In 1907, Britain recognized Ugyen Wangchuk as Bhutan's first hereditary monarch. In 1910, Bhutan and Britain signed a further treaty where Britain promised to not intervene in Bhutanese local affairs and granted a larger annual subsidy in exchange for control of Bhutan's foreign affairs (Dhakal, Pradhan, & Upadhyaya, 2009; Karan & Norbu, 2021).

After India gained independence in 1947, the Indian government assumed Britain's former role towards Bhutan. In 1949, Bhutan and India signed the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of Friendship that formalized the annual subsidy India would give Bhutan, returned the land that Britain had taken from Bhutan, and defined India's role in Bhutan's defense and foreign affairs (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Dhakal et al., 2009; Karan & Norbu, 2021). In response to China's annexation of Tibet in 1951, Bhutan closed its border with China and strengthened its ties with India (Dhakal et al., 2009; Karan & Norbu, 2021).

In 1953, the third monarch, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, established an independent National Assembly consisting of members of the government and the public (Corbett,

Veenendaal, & Ugyel, 2017; Dhakal et al., 2009). In the 1960s and 1970s, Bhutan's monarchs channelled funding to Bhutan's transportation network, hydropower projects, education and health services. India provided technical and financial assistance for these programs, improving transport links with India for trade and providing a market for Bhutan's hydropower (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Dhakal et al., 2009; Karan & Norbu, 2021). Bhutan began permitting limited tourism in 1970 and became a UN member in 1971 (Karan & Norbu, 2021).

The fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, became monarch in 1972 and continued his father's policies while attempting to preserve Bhutan's culture and natural environment (Dhakal et al., 2009; Karan & Norbu, 2021). Political reform established Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdus (DYT) or the District Development Committee in 1981 and Gewog Yargye Tshogchung (GYT) or the Block Development Committee in every gewog (sub-administrative unit) in 1991 to include the Bhutanese in local decision-making (Corbett et al., 2017).

In the 1980s, the Bhutanese government adopted discriminatory policies against Bhutan's Nepali population. The government had observed how Nepali immigration to the neighbouring independent state of Sikkim led Sikkim to become a state of India in 1975 and feared the same may happen to regions of Bhutan. Nepalis made up around 30% of Bhutan's population in the early 1980s (Minorities at Risk, 2006). In 1985, Bhutan passed the Citizenship Act which labelled any Nepali individual without proof of citizenship an illegal immigrant. This led to rising tensions between ethnic Nepalis and the government, culminating in protests, demonstrations, and violence by the government on ethnic Nepalis. Many ethnic Nepalis signed forced migration forms, leading to 100,000 refugees (Dhakal et al., 2009; Karan & Norbu, 2021).

In 1998, the king devolved some of his executive powers to a council of ministers elected Bhutan's parliament. He continued to oversee democratic reform in the 21st-century with the drafting of Bhutan's constitution in 2001 and Bhutan's first parliamentary elections in 2008 (Corbett et al., 2017; Karan & Norbu, 2021).

## **Economy**

The agricultural sector employs over half of Bhutan's labour force and contributes about 16%-17% of GDP (Bhutan National Statistics Bureau, 2020; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The secondary sector employs around 13% of the population. Excluding utilities, manufacturing and construction contribute over 20% of GDP (Bhutan National Statistics Bureau, 2020; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Most manufacturing facilities operate on the border with India. Bhutan's manufactured products include timber, cement, and processed food (Karan & Norbu, 2021).

Public administration, education, and health services employ around 13.5% of the labour force and contribute around 10% of GDP (Bhutan National Statistics Bureau, 2020). The tertiary sector employs the remaining population. Important sources of employment in the tertiary sector include wholesaling and retailing, transportation and storage, food services and accommodation (Bhutan National Statistics Bureau, 2020). Bhutan also depends on the export of hydropower to India. Hydropower makes up 40% of exports by value and 25% of the Bhutanese government's revenue (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Dhakal et al., 2009; Karan & Norbu, 2021).

## Politics

Bhutan has a constitutional monarchy. The King serves as chief-of-state. A prime minister serves as head-of-government. The king nominates the Council of Ministers in consultation with the prime minister and parliament approves it (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Bhutan has a bicameral parliament that consists of the non-partisan 25-seat National Council (20 directly elected seats; 5 appointed by king) and the directly elected 47-seat National Assembly. All Bhutanese citizens can vote when they turn 18. Bhutan's legal system is based on Buddhist religious law (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The Dzongka-speaking Bhutia/Ngalop, the descendants of migrants from Tibet, make up 50% of Bhutan's population, reside in the northern, western, and central regions of Bhutan, and dominate politics. Nepalese make up 35% of the population and reside in the southern regions of Bhutan. Tensions exist between the two major ethnic groups, due to differences in culture, and remains a political problem. The remaining 15% descend from indigenous tribes in eastern Bhutan (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Karan & Norbu, 2021; Minorities at Risk, 2006).

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## Brunei

Population	471 103
Land Area	5765km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	28/100 - Not Free

## History

In the 16th century, the Brunei sultanate became a major regional power in Borneo and Bandar Seri Begawan prospered as an entrepot port (Mukoyama, 2020). The sultanate's power gradually declined in the 18th century. In the 19th century, Brunei's Sultan granted British national James Brooke territory and the title "Raja of Sarawak" for helping to suppress a revolt (Mukoyama, 2020). The Sultanate also granted territory in North Borneo to the North Borneo Chartered Company (Kershaw, 2018; Mukoyama, 2020). Brooke and the Company gradually forced the sultanate to cede more and more territory to them from 1841 to 1906 (Mukoyama, 2020). Britain made Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei separate protectorates in 1888. Britain did not stop the former two from taking more land from the Brunei sultanate (Mukoyama, 2020).

Oil was discovered in 1903. This led Britain to intervene more heavily in Bruneian affairs (Mukoyama, 2020). Britain signed a new treaty with Brunei in 1906. Britain took control of administration by sending a British Resident who implements policies through the Sultan (Mukoyama, 2020; Thambipillai, Bee, & Damit, 2021). Britain removed the local aristocracy's territorial and tax collection powers (Kershaw, 2018). Kershaw argues that the Bruneian monarch and aristocracy likely continued to exercise more power than colonial records suggest (Kershaw, 2018). In return, Britain secured Brunei's borders and helped solidify the Sultan's authority (Mukoyama, 2020). The Seria field and its large oil reserve was discovered in 1929 (Mukoyama, 2020). Oil extraction began and oil companies built the required infrastructure.

Japan occupied Brunei during World War II. Britain returned after the war and gradually granted Brunei more autonomy. In 1959, Brunei adopted its first constitution; Britain gave Brunei control over all affairs except defense and foreign policy. The constitution granted the monarchy full financial power (Kershaw, 2018). In 1961, the Sultan entered negotiations with the Federation of Malaya to discuss possible merger after independence from Britain (Mukoyama, 2020). The sultan disagreed on how to share oil revenues (Mukoyama, 2020). In December 1962, the Brunei People's Party (*Parti Rakyat Brunei*), a populist nationalist movement, staged a revolt because they thought Britain wished to force Brunei into the future Federation of Malaysia (Kershaw, 2018). This led Britain to deploy troops in Brunei to suppress the revolt and protect its oil fields. This convinced the sultan that he could rely on British protection for a few more years even if Brunei chose not to join Malaysia (Kershaw, 2018; Mukoyama, 2020). The PRB was outlawed after the revolt. This removed the most powerful pro-democracy organization in Brunei that could have threatened the monarchy (Mukoyama, 2020). Brunei's government tightened security and control over society, and used oil revenue to fund welfare programs to obtain public support (Mukoyama, 2020).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Britain placed pressured the sultan to carry out democratic re-

form. Britain also sought to withdraw its military forces as soon as possible. Brunei's sultans managed to avoid democratic reform and keep British troops stationed longer because of the importance of Brunei's oil revenues in the British economy (Mukoyama, 2020). Britain also could not forcefully introduce democracy either as Brunei was only a protectorate and had sovereignty. Infringing on that sovereignty would negatively impact Britain's international image (Mukoyama, 2020). Eventually, as regional stability increased and the sultan was more confident of Brunei's security, Brunei and Britain signed a treaty in 1979 that paved the way for Brunei's independence in 1984 (Thambipillai et al., 2021). It became a member of the UN, the Commonwealth and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the year it proclaimed independence.

## **Economy**

The oil and gas sector is the most important one in Brunei's economy. Crude oil and natural gas production account for around 65% of GDP and 95% of exports (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The government places some of the revenue into long-term investments. It also uses the revenue to provide welfare benefits to its citizens (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Agriculture, fishing and forestry contribute about 1% of GDP (Brunei Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 2020). In the services sector, financial services, the wholesale and retail trade, and real-estate activities contribute most to GDP. They contributed around 5.3%, 5%, and 3.4% to GDP in 2019, respectively (Brunei Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 2020). Government services contributed 11.8% to GDP and employs 25% of Bruneian citizens (Brunei Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 2020; Mukoyama, 2020).

## **Politics**

Brunei has an absolute monarchy. The sultan, who also holds the title of prime minister, serves as both chief-of-state and head-of-government. He appoints the Council of Ministers and holds the key ministerial portfolios of finance, defense, foreign affairs and trade (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The sultan also appoints the 36-seat unicameral Legislative Council and important judges in the judiciary (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Brunei has separate courts for secular law, based on English common law, and Sharia law (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Citizens above 18 can vote in village elections (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

65.7% of Brunei's population is defined as Malay. This percentage includes seven of Brunei's indigenous groups. 10.3% of the population are Chinese and the remaining 24% include other indigenous groups and migrants from Southeast and South Asia (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Freedom House reports that ethnic and religious minorities lack opportunities for political participation. The CIA notes that the government denies minority groups citizenship rights such as land ownership, subsidized healthcare, and free secondary and university education (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Hong Kong

Population	7.26 million
Land Area	1108km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Chinese Special Administrative Region
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	52/100 - Partly Free

### History

The Qing Dynasty ceded Hong Kong Island to Britain after the First Opium War (1839-1842) in the Treaty of Nanking. Its good natural harbor and availability of freshwater made it a suitable base for Britain's ships and merchants (Tsang, 2003). Hong Kong became a free port, a British Crown Colony, and a naval station for the Royal Navy (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2019; Tsang, 2003). Britain decided to apply English common law to the colony with some adjustments based on local circumstances (Tsang, 2003). It appointed a governor that presided over and nominated the members for an Executive Council and a Legislative Council (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2019; Leung, 2021; Tsang, 2003).

As a Crown Colony, the Treasury required the British government to minimise the costs of maintaining Hong Kong so it maintained a small administration in Hong Kong and generally allowed society and economy to develop freely. European trading companies began to move their operations from Macau to Hong Kong to take advantage of its free port status and British jurisdiction (Tsang, 2003). Chinese trading companies involved in trade between Southeast Asia, China and North America, also began to establish in Hong Kong. This helped Hong Kong grow into an entrepot hub. The opium trade remained important and contributed significantly to government revenue until WWII. Hong Kong also became a hub for the trade of Chinese coolies in the 19th-century (Tsang, 2003).

The Qing Dynasty ceded the Kowloon peninsula to Britain after the Second Opium War (1856-1860) in the Convention of Peking (Leung, 2021; Tsang, 2003). The growth of trade in the 1850s and 1860s led to the growth of support industries such as commercial shipyards and financing. The establishment of banks and growth of financial services resulted in Hong Kong becoming the financial center for trade in East Asia. Expatriate investors founded major industrial enterprises such as sugar refineries, steelworks and cement works from the 1870s to 1890s. Local Chinese also set up factories and workshops processing and producing a variety of goods (Tsang, 2003). Trade remained the key economic activity in the 19th-century and first half of the 20th-century. In 1898, Britain secured a 100-year lease of the New Territories from China (Hayes, 2012; Tsang, 2003).

The Japanese occupied Hong Kong during World War II. After the war, Hong Kong returned to British rule. The war, and the subsequent civil war in China, led many refugees to move to Hong Kong. The colonial government expanded its administration to provide housing, education, and health services for the influx of immigrants (Tsang, 2003). The colonial government started expanding infrastructure, building new towns, and resettling people in the New Territories, causing traditional agriculture in the area to decline (Hayes, 2012; Tsang, 2003).

Hong Kong became an export-oriented industrial colony from the 1950s to 1980s (Hayes, 2012; Tsang, 2003). While Hong Kong sought to regain its position East Asia's principal entrepot port, UN embargoes on China and North Korea during the Korean War limited the growth of entrepot trade in the 1950s (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2019; Leung, 2021). After WWII, the Chinese civil war led to industrialists from Guangdong and Shanghai to set up facilities in Hong Kong (Tsang, 2003). By 1966, 20% of the labor force engaged in manufacturing and the sector produced 80% of exports (Tsang, 2003). Employment in manufacturing peaked at 40% of the labor force in 1980 (Tsang, 2003). Manufacturing declined in importance towards the end of the 20th-century as China opened its economy to foreign investment. Hong Kong continued to grow as a regional services and banking sector in the 1970s. The sector enabled Hong Kong entrepreneurs to contribute skill and capital to China's economy as it opened (Hayes, 2012).

In the late-1970s, Britain grew concerned about Hong Kong's future as the New Territories lease expired in 1997 (Leung, 2021). Formal negotiations began in the 1980s between Britain and China and Britain agreed to return Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories to China in 1997. China's National People's Congress ratified Hong Kong's Basic Law in 1990 (Leung, 2021). Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule on 30 June 1997 as a Special Autonomous Region (SAR)

Hong Kong has experienced periodical political and social unrest in the late 2010s whenever its citizens sought democratic reform or felt that the Chinese central government threatened Hong Kong's local autonomy (Leung, 2021). Hong Kong implemented a security law in June 2020 allowing mainland security agencies to operate in Hong Kong. The law met with international criticism that it effectively ended the "one country, two systems" guiding principle in Hong Kong's Basic Law (Leung, 2021).

## **Economy**

In 2017, the services sector made up 92% of GDP in 2017 and employed 88% of the labor force in 2018. Financial services, real-estate linked activities, professional and business services made up nearly 30% of GDP and employed over 20% of the labor force. The wholesale and retail trade, food and accommodation services contributed around 25% of GDP and employed nearly 30% of the labor force. Transport and communication services contributed around 9% of GDP and employed around 11% of the labor force (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2019).

Public administration and social services contributed around 18% of GDP and employed around 27% of the labor force. Nearly three-quarters of government revenue comes from government land transactions, corporate taxes, stamp duties and incomes taxes. They contributed around 27%, 22%, 15% and 10% to government revenues in FY2017-2018, respectively (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2019).

In secondary sectors, construction contributed 5% of GDP and employed 9% of the labor force. Manufacturing contributed around 1% of GDP and employed around 2.4% of the labor force. Within those employed in manufacturing, over a third produce food and beverage products, around 14% are engaged with printing, and nearly 6% with chemical products with rest producing a variety of other items (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2019).



Hong Kong is a net services exporter. Service exports contributed 31.4% of GDP in 2018. Electronics, telecommunications equipment, and office equipment are both the main imports and exports, suggesting Hong Kong is a key re-export hub for goods made in China, Taiwan and the region (HKSAR Information Services Department, 2019).

## Politics

Hong Kong is a Special Autonomous Region of China. China's president serves as chief-of-state. A Chief Executive serves as head-of-government. A 1200-member elections committee that draws members from broad sectors of the economy and society, central government bodies, municipal organizations and locally elected officials elects the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive appoints an Executive Council that serves as the Hong Kong government's executive branch (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The 70-seat unicameral Legislative Council (LegCo) serves as the legislative branch. Hong Kongers above the age of 18 can vote in elections that directly elect 35 LegCo members and all seats in district councils. The other 35 members are indirectly elected based on a variety of methods (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The legal system is based on English common law for most things and Chinese customary law in family and land tenure matters. The Chief Executive appoints the most important judges in the judiciary upon recommendation from the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Macau

Population	630 396
Land Area	32.9km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Chinese Special Autonomous Region
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	Not Assessed

## History

Portuguese sailors began visiting the Pearl River Delta regularly during the early 16th-century (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). Portuguese merchants and traders started settling in Macau from 1553. The Ming dynasty, and then the Qing, tolerated Portuguese presence in Macau as the Portuguese helped combat regional piracy and their trade provided a source of revenue (Z. Hao, 2011). Macau rose to become the principal entrepot port for international trade with China and Japan (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). The viceroy of Goa appointed a governor for Macau from 1557 to take charge of Macau's defenses (Z. Hao, 2011). Macau established a six-seat Senate in 1583 that took charge of administrative matters. An electoral college elected the members (Z. Hao, 2011). The Chinese government put in place weakly-enforced rules on Portuguese and held jurisdiction over Chinese in Macau (Z. Hao, 2011).

In the 16th and 17th centuries, it served as a base for Portuguese trade routes in East Asia and the Pacific. Macau's traders exported silk, jewelry, porcelains, and other textile products from China. They imported pepper, ivory, sandalwood and silver (Z. Hao, 2011). Macau had an operational cannon foundry from the late-16th century to 1672 that exported guns to customers in Asia (Z. Hao, 2011). International trade passing through Macau started a gradual decline as the Qing Dynasty opened up more Chinese ports to foreign trade (Z. Hao, 2011). Trade declined further after the Qing Dynasty ceded Hong Kong Island to Britain in 1842. The trade of Chinese coolies from Macau increased in the 18th century while opium became Macau's key revenue in the 19th century. Both trades declined towards the end of the 19th-century (Z. Hao, 2011).

Chinese industry began to develop in Macau in the late-19th and early-20th century. By 1896, Macau had more than a thousand Chinese-owned commercial and industrial enterprises (Z. Hao, 2011). By 1920, manufacturing employed around 26000 workers and commerce employed more than 7000 (Z. Hao, 2011). In 1930, firecrackers and incense products made up 15.9% and 6% of exports, respectively (Z. Hao, 2011).

Mainland China and Hong Kong banned gambling in 1872. Gambling remained legal in Macau and the local government encouraged its the gambling industry's development to increase revenue(Z. Hao, 2011). Macau granted exclusive rights to the Taxing Company to operate casinos in 1934. When the contract expired in 1962, it granted the rights to Sociedade de Turismo e Divrsões de Macau (STDM) (Z. Hao, 2011).

Portugal made Macau an official overseas province in 1951 (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). The former granted more autonomy and economic independence to the latter in 1974 and established Macau's Legislative Assembly in 1976 (Z. Hao, 2011; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). Portugal granted voting rights to Chinese in Macau in the mid-1980s. Portugal agreed with China in 1987 to return Macau to China

in 1999 (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

In the 1980s, craft industries declined while textile, toy, and electronic manufacturing grew. Textile manufacturing employed 64% of the labor force and produced 73% of Macau's exports (Z. Hao, 2011). The opening of China's economy to foreign investment and trade eventually caused Macau's manufacturing industry to decline towards the end of the 20th-century (Z. Hao, 2011).

Macau ceased being part of Portugal and became a Special Autonomous Region (SAR) of China in December 1999 (Y. Hao, Sheng, & Pan, 2017; Z. Hao, 2011). Portugal and China agreed upon a Basic Law which sets up the division of power between the legislature, Chief Executive and judiciary (Z. Hao, 2011). It also ensures Macau's autonomy for 50 years (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

From 2002, the Macau SAR (MSAR) government decided to end STDM's monopoly on gaming and liberalized the industry (Y. Hao et al., 2017; Z. Hao, 2011). While the gambling industry has led to an increase in GDP and employment, its dominance has led to increased socio-economic inequality, crowding, and discontent with the MSAR government in the mid-2000s and 2010s (Y. Hao et al., 2017).

## **Economy**

Gambling and junket activities remain the key sector in Macau's economy. In 2019, the sector employed around 22% of the labor force, contributed 50.5% of GDP, and taxes from it made up just over 80% of government revenue (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Macau Documentation and Information Center of the Statistics and Census Service, 2020). Macau earns four times the gaming revenue of Las Vegas (Y. Hao et al., 2017). Macau attracted more than 39 million visitor arrivals in 2019. Nearly 71% originate from mainland China, and nearly 19% came from Hong Kong (Macau Documentation and Information Center of the Statistics and Census Service, 2020).

In the service sector, hotel and restaurant activities employed about 14.5% of the labor force and contributed 6.2% of GDP; The wholesale and retail trade employed about 10.7% of the labor force and contributed 5.8% of GDP; Financial services employed 3.1% of the labor force and contributed 6.6% of GDP; Real-estate linked activities and business services employed nearly 9% of the labor force and contributed 14.3% of GDP; Transportation and communications employed around 5.1% of the labor force and contributed 2.6% of GDP (Macau Documentation and Information Center of the Statistics and Census Service, 2020).

In the secondary sector, manufacturing employed around 1.6% of Macau's labor force and contributed 0.5% of GDP; Construction employed about 7.9% of Macau's labor force and contributed 3% of GDP (Macau Documentation and Information Center of the Statistics and Census Service, 2020).

The public administration, education, and health services employed 6.4% of the labor force and contributed 7.3% of GDP (Macau Documentation and Information Center of the Statistics and Census Service, 2020). Outside of gaming revenues, corporate tax, stamp duty, income tax and property tax are key contributors to revenue (Macau Documentation and Information Center of the Statistics and Census Service, 2020).

## Politics

Macau is a Special Autonomous Region (SAR) of China. China has control of defense and foreign relations. The Chinese president serves as Macau's chief-of-state. A 400-member elections committee elects a Chief Executive to serve as head-of-government. The elections committee members are drawn from , central government bodies, and Macau's elected officials (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Macau has a unicameral 33-seat Legislative Assembly. Macanese directly elect 14 members. An electoral college consisting of representatives from professional and commercial groups elects another 12 seats. The Chief Executive appoints the remaining 7 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Bills regarding government policy require the consent of the Cheif Exective so Hao argues that the Legislature is "almost crippled" (Z. Hao, 2011).

Macau's has a legal system based on Portuguese civil law. The Chief Executive appoints the justices of Macau's highest court, the Court of Final Appeal of Macau Special Administrative Region, based on recommendations by an independent commission of judges and lawyers (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Maldives

Population	390 669
Land Area	298km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper Middle Income
Freedom House Score	40/100 - Not Free

### History

Portugal used force to establish its presence at Male in the Maldives in 1553 to 1573 (Faizal & Laking, 2013; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). The Dutch East India company established a presence in the Maldives in the mid-17th century, protected the islands but did not interfere in local affairs (Szczepanski, 2018; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). After Britain took Ceylon from the Dutch in 1796, the Maldives became a British protectorate. Britain and the Maldives formalized its protectorate status in a treaty signed in 1887. This granted Britain control of the Maldives defense and foreign affairs. Britain generally stayed out of the Maldives' internal affairs and had minimal impact on its economy, politics, and society (Faizal & Laking, 2013; Phadnis & Luithui, 1981).

In the 20th century, the sultan gradually became more of a figure head while the prime minister gained growing administrative power (Faizal & Laking, 2013). In 1932, the Maldives remained a sultanate whilst adopting its first democratic constitution (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). During World War II, Britain built a refuelling station and airstrip on Gan Island in the south of the archipelago without consulting the government in Male. The Maldives temporarily became a republic in 1953 and Britain formalized the presence of the facility (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). The facility gained importance when Sri Lanka refused to allow Britain to continue its military presence in its territory in 1956. In 1960, Britain agreed to pay the government in Male an immediate payment, additional money into development works, and employed around 900 islanders at the base (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981). Maldives gained independence in 1965 and became a member of the UN. It became a member of the Commonwealth in 1982.

In 1968, the Maldives abolished the sultanate and proclaimed a new republic. Starting from the late 1960s, various countries provided the Maldives with soft loans, technical assistance, and training programs for Maldivians in medicine, engineering, nursing, fisheries, tourism, and communications (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981). India also helped to build schools on each atoll, modernize the runway, and construct a cannery, and other infrastructure (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981). The Maldives' tourism industry began growth in the early 1970s when it constructed its first resorts (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981). Foreign vessels also began exporting fish from the Maldives leading to the mechanization of around 30% of fishing vessels in the country by 1979 (Phadnis & Luithui, 1981). Britain withdrew from the facilities on Gan Island in 1976 (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

In the early-2000s, the government sought to pursue long-term plans to modernize and democratize the Maldives. In 2003, the government instituted reforms to improve human rights and governance (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). In 2008, the

Maldives adopted a new constitution that strengthened the powers of the legislature and judiciary (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). It led to the Maldives first multi-candidate presidential election in the same year (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). The government reversed the reforms of 2008 in 2012 which partially led to political unrest. Freedom House reports that the opposition victory in 2018 has led to efforts to revise antidemocratic laws, strengthen the judiciary, and reduce corruption (Freedom House, 2021). The Maldives is low-lying and highly vulnerable to rising sea levels. It lobbies heavily for action against climate change at international forums.

## Economy

Tourism is the Maldives' key industry. The political elite in Male with close ties to the president dominate the industry, win most of the contracts, and earn most of the profits (Misra, 2004). It received 1.48 million visitors in 2018 from diverse sources. Accommodation and restaurant services contributes 24.5% of GDP with most coming from resorts. On other key service sector activities include transport and communication services, the wholesale and retail trade, real-estate linked activities, and financial services. They contributed 12.3%, 8.4%, 6.6%, and 4.4% of GDP in 2018, respectively (Maldives National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

Fisheries remain the main source of exports (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). Fisheries contributed around 3.7% of GDP. Frozen fish, canned fish, and fresh/chilled tuna make up 43%, 23% and 27% of marine exports, respectively. About 7% of the labor force work as fishermen (Maldives National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

In the secondary sector, construction, manufacturing, and utilities contributed 6.8%, 2.2% and 1.8% of GDP, respectively (Maldives National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Most manufacturing activity involves processing fish, boat building, and making handicrafts (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

The public administration, education, and health services, contributed around 13.2% of GDP in 2018 and employed around 10% of the labor force (Maldives National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Nearly half of revenues come from goods and services tax, around 17% comes from corporate tax, nearly 10% from renting land for tourist activities and around 8% from airport service and development fees (Maldives National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

## Politics

The Maldives has a presidential republic. All Maldives citizens above 18 can participate in elections for the president. The president serves as both chief-of-state and head-of-government. The president also appoints the Cabinet of Ministers with approval from Parliament. The 87-seat unicameral parliament is directly elected by Maldivian citizens and serves as the legislative branch. The legal system applies Sharia law in most matters and law influenced by English common law in commercial matters. The president appoints the top judges based on consultation with the Judicial Service Commission (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Singapore

Population	5.87 million
Land Area	720km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	48/100 - Not Free

### History

Stamford Raffles leased land in Singapore from the Sultan of Johor on behalf of the British East India Company (EIC) in 1819 to establish a settlement at the mouth of the Singapore River. He wished to establish a free port based on principles of free trade (Lee, 2016; Wong, 1978). This initially soured relations between the British and Dutch as the latter considered Singapore a part of their sphere of influence. The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 resolved their territorial disputes in the Malay Archipelago and granted Britain control of Malacca and Singapore (Sugimoto, 2011; Wong, 1978). Britain merged the two ports and Penang into the Straits Settlements under the control of the EIC. Singapore served as a base for British trading interests in Southeast Asia and, to a lesser extent, China. Its free port status and strategic location attracted Bugis and Chinese traders that led to its growth as a regional entrepot port (Lee, 2016; Wong, 1978). The lack of port taxes meant revenue remained low so the EIC brought in Indian convict labor to build infrastructure (Lee, 2016).

The Indian sepoy uprising in 1857 led to Britain abolishing the EIC in 1858 and placing the Straits Settlement under the India Office of the British Raj. The India Office was located too far and could not look after the interests of traders in the Straits Settlements so the latter petitioned the British government to place the Straits Settlements under the control of the Colonial Office (Lee, 2016). Britain made the Straits Settlements a Crown Colony in 1867 (Ho, Kennard, Leinbach, & Winstedt, 2021; Lee, 2016). The British colonial authority generally tried to limit government spending and produce budget surpluses so that the colonies would remain self-sufficient and not require additional funds from Britain (Sugimoto, 2011). It still invested into sanitation and healthcare projects in the late-19th century, English-medium education and higher education to train local officials to work alongside British officials, and other public works (Goh, 2013; Lee, 2016).

Singapore started losing its importance after the establishment of Hong Kong in 1842 and the development of ports in French Indochina. The rise of steamships and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 granted Singapore newfound importance as it became an important coaling station for British shipping (Goh, 2013; Ho et al., 2021). Shipping companies began building support facilities for larger steamships at the New Harbor (now Keppel Harbor) in the 1850s as the existing port in the Singapore river was too small. The Tanjong Pagar Dock Company, established in 1864, eventually carried out the construction and expansion of most port facilities in Singapore during the colonial period (Goh, 2013). The port became an important repair and supply stop for British shipping and most of the major shipping lines passed through Singapore. This led to many regional goods transiting in Singapore to take advantage of the scheduled shipping and other services that supported trading (Goh, 2013; Wong, 1978). A financial services industry consisting of Tamil chettiers, British-owned banks, and Chinese-owned banks



grew to provide services to traders and immigrant laborers (Goh, 2013; Lee, 2016). The introduction of the Straits dollar backed by Britain in its Southeast Asian colonies in the late-19th and early-20th century helped strengthen the financial sector (Lee, 2016).

From 1874 and into the 20th century, the export of resources like tin, petroleum, and rubber from the Malayan states and British Borneo gained economic importance (Lee, 2016; Wong, 1978). Some industry sprung up in Singapore that produced perishable goods and/or processed the rubber, tin, and petroleum. However, the financial sector's focus on services supporting trade and short-term loans limited industrialization whilst Singapore remained a British colony (Goh, 2013). In 1921, the British built a causeway linking Singapore to Malaya. In the 1930s, in response to a militarizing Japan, Britain began fortifying the island and carrying out defense works including the construction of one of the world's largest naval bases at the time (Goh, 2013; Lee, 2016).

Japan occupied Singapore during World War II. Britain returned after the war and made it a separate Crown Colony from the rest of Malaya (Lee, 2016). Singapore experienced a short economic boom in the 1950s as the Korean War led to higher demand for tin, rubber, and petroleum (Lee, 2016). It also hosted many of Britain's military facilities east of the Suez (Heng & Aljunied, 2011). Britain granted Singapore limited self-governance in 1955. In 1959, Britain retained control over only defense and foreign policy, made the governor a nominal head-of-state, and made the prime minister directly answerable to a fully elect legislature (Ho et al., 2021; Lee, 2016). The newly elected government worked to improve infrastructure and services (Lee, 2016). In 1963, Singapore merged with the newly-formed Federation of Malaysia with the hopes of increasing economic ties to sustain its economy. Disagreements over the sharing of Singapore's tax revenue between the federal and state governments, the reluctance of the federal government to establish a Common Market for trade, and political competition between Singapore's People's Action Party and Malaysia's Alliance Party led to Singapore seceding from Malaysia in 1965 (Ho et al., 2021). Malaysia supported Singapore's application for UN membership in September 1965. It became a Commonwealth member in 1966 and a founding member of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967.

Britain completed withdrawal of its forces from Singapore in 1971. British bases made up a fifth of GDP and employed a sixth of labor force before withdrawal (Heng & Aljunied, 2011). To make up for the loss of employment from British bases, the government pursued state-led economic development. It provided industrial loans, land, workforce training and education, and other incentives to attract multinational companies to locate their manufacturing facilities in Singapore and provide employment. As the cost a labor rose and the labor force became more educated, the government implemented policies to shift Singapore away from labor-intensive towards capital-intensive industries such as petroleum refining and wafer fabrication (Heng & Aljunied, 2011; Ho et al., 2021). At present, Singapore continues to remain a regional center for finance, business, and maritime activity. It still maintains a large manufacturing sector (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2019; Ho et al., 2021).

## Economy

In the secondary sector, manufacturing contributed nearly 21% of GDP in 2018, produced SGD3.42 trillion in output, contributed 50.6% of merchandise exports, and employed nearly 10.4% of the labor force. Computer, electronic, and optical equipment made up around 40% of manufacturing output in 2018 while machinery and equipment made up around 8.5%. Chemical products, refined petroleum products, and pharmaceutical and biological products made up around 15%, 13% and 5.5%, respectively. Construction contributed nearly 3.2% of GDP and employed around 4.7% of the labor force (Department of Statistics Singapore, [2019](#)).

In the services sector, the wholesale and retail trade contributed around 16.6% of GDP in 2018, business services (includes real-estate, professional, technical and administrative services) contributed around 14%, financial services contributed around 12.2%, transportation and storage services contributed around 6.4%, and information and communications services contributed around 3.8%. These sectors each employed around 16%, 15.8%, 8.9%, 9%, and 4%, respectively. Singapore exported SGD2.46 trillion in services in 2018. Transport services, business services, and financial services made up around 28.4% (Singapore remains the world's busiest transshipment port by container traffic), 26% and 14.8% of service exports, respectively. Tourism attracted 18.5 million international arrivals by air and sea in 2018 and generated nearly SGD27 billion in receipts which is worth nearly 5.5% of Singapore's GDP that year (Department of Statistics Singapore, [2019](#)).

The government expenditure accounts for around 10.5% of GDP and the public service employs around 6.6% of the labor force. Key sources of government revenue include contributions from Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, corporate and personal income taxes, and goods and services tax (Department of Statistics Singapore, [2019](#)).

## Politics

Singapore has a parliamentary republic based on the Westminster system. Its 104-seat unicameral Parliament serves as the legislative branch. All citizens above 21 must vote. They directly elect 93 members and the president, who serves as chief-of-state. A parliamentary committee nominates 9 other members and another 2 seats were granted to opposition party members (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)). The leader of the party with the majority of seats forms government and serves as prime minister. The president appoints the Cabinet on advice of the prime minister (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)). The legal system is based on English common law. The president appoints the top judges from candidates recommended by the prime minister after consultation with the chief justice (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)).

The People's Action Party (PAP) has remained the dominant party in parliament since 1959. Encyclopedia Britannica suggests this has been achieved through facilitating Singapore's rapid economic growth and improving social welfare as well as suppressing or co-opting domestic opposition through internal-security laws (Ho et al., [2021](#)).

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## Timor-Leste

Population	1.4 million
Land Area	14874km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	72/100 - Free

### History

In the 16th century, Portuguese missionaries began settling on the island while Portuguese traders regularly visited Timor, from Portuguese bases on nearby islands, for sandalwood (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a; Molnar, 2009). As the Dutch East India Company increased its presence and control of trade in the Malay Archipelago in the 17th-century, the Portuguese and Dutch fought for control of Timor and its sandalwood (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). Topasses, descendants of Portuguese who had intermarried local women, controlled the sandalwood trade. They, and their local allies, resisted the Dutch and prevented the Dutch from gaining full control of the island (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a; Molnar, 2009). Portugal's key port on Timor at the time was Lifau. It became an official Portuguese settlement in 1702 and remains an exclave of Timor-Leste (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). Topasses forced the Portuguese governor out of Lifau in 1769. This led to the establishment of the Portuguese settlement of Dili which became the administrative capital for the Portuguese and remains Timor-Leste's capital and largest city (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a; Molnar, 2009).

In the 19th-century and 20th-century, the Dutch and Portuguese gradually established their borders on Timor. The importance of the sandalwood trade declined while the importance of beeswax, coffee, and copra, for export increased (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). Portugal's territories in East Timor depended on subsidies and the colonial administration did little to improve the colony. Most expenditure went to defense and administrators' salaries (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). The local administration also had little power over East Timorese and only exercised authority through local kings and chiefs (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a; Molnar, 2009). The colonial administration's attempts to raise local taxes and implement forced labor for construction of infrastructure and a plantation economy often met with revolt, one of the largest being the Boaventura Rebellion (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a; Molnar, 2009). Revenue depended on taxes from exports that were vulnerable to changes in prices in the global economy. By the start of World War II, most East Timorese remained engaged in subsistence farming (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a).

Japan occupied Timor during World War II. Japan and Australia engaged in fierce fighting in East Timor as both feared that the other would use Timor as a base for launching an offense (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a; Molnar, 2009). Portugal took back control after the war but largely neglected East Timor. Local demands for independence and changing Portuguese public opinion led Portugal to withdraw from East Timor in 1975. Indonesia moved in to occupy the territory for defense reasons and to control oil reserves (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). The Indonesian military quickly occupied Dili and the major towns in the coastal lowlands but faced resistance from pro-independence guerilla groups in the more mountainous hinterland into the 1990s (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). This led to

civil war where the Indonesian military committed human rights abuses that bordered on genocide (Molnar, 2009). Australia, the US and Portugal initially approved Indonesia's plan to annex East Timor. The former two feared the presence of radical socialist elements in East Timor would turn an independent East Timor communist and wished to maintain good relations with an "anti-communist" Indonesia (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a; Molnar, 2009). To gain favor internationally and locally, the central government made large fiscal transfers to East Timor. Most funding went to security. Some funding went to infrastructure, education, and health and had limited effectiveness (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a).

In the 1990s, international opinion changed and some Western democracies began pressuring Indonesia to withdraw by cutting financial support and military assistance to Indonesia (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis led to domestic crises in Indonesia that catalyzed its decision to allow East Timor to hold a referendum regarding independence (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019a). On 30th August 1999, 78.5% of referendum voters favored independence despite threats from militias trained by the Indonesian military. In early September, the military and militias carried out scorched earth and damaged 75% of East Timor's infrastructure until Indonesian parliament approved the referendum results on 20th September (Molnar, 2009). This led the UN Security Council to authorise a UN peacekeeping mission which remained in East Timor till 2012. The UN Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) helped to train a defense force, police, and administration, and dealt with incursions from militia groups (Molnar, 2009). It oversaw elections for the Constituent Assembly in 2001. The latter helped to write East Timor's constitution. In May 2002, Timor-Leste declared independence with UN recognition. In September it became a UN member under the name Timor-Leste (Molnar, 2009).

While post-independence Timor-Leste remains poor, it benefits from international assistance, and oil and gas revenues after extraction started in 2004 (John, Papyrakis, & Tasciotti, 2020; Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2008). Some argue that the dominance of oil and gas may also have limited the diversification of the economy (John et al., 2020). It has experienced gradual social and economic development (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2008, 2019b). In the late-2010s, it resolved maritime border disputes with Australia that concern the ownership of important oil and gas fields (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019b). It is currently an observer state in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and has sought full membership in the organization (Lundahl & Sjöholm, 2019b).

## **Economy**

In the primary sector, agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed 14.2% to Timor-Leste's GDP in 2019 and employ nearly a third of the labor force (General Directorate of Statistics, 2020b). Coffee is the key cash crop grown for export (General Directorate of Statistics, 2020a). More than half of the population of working age engage in subsistence farming (International Labor Organization, 2019). The extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas contributed around 17% of GDP, employs more than 5% of the labor force, contributed 83% of government revenue in 2019, and made up more than 30% of exports by value (General Directorate of Statistics, 2020a, 2020b; International Labor Organization, 2019; John et al., 2020). The Timor-Leste government puts some of the revenue from oil and gas extraction into the Timor-Leste Petroleum Fund to preserve wealth for the long-term (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

In the secondary sector, manufacturing contributed about 1.5% of GDP in 2019 and employed more than 3% of the labor force. Construction contributed about 11% of GDP and employed nearly 8% (General Directorate of Statistics, 2020b; International Labor Organization, 2019). In the tertiary sector, the wholesale and retail trade, transportation and storage, accommodation and food services, combined contributed around 15% of GDP and employed around a quarter of the labor force (ilo2019labor; General Directorate of Statistics, 2020b). Real estate activities contributed around 9.6% of activities. The remaining service sector activities outside of the public sector contributed nearly 6.2% of GDP and employ nearly 7% of the labor force (ilo2019labor; General Directorate of Statistics, 2020b).

The public administration, education, health and other social services contributed around 23% of GDP and employed around 18% of the population (ilo2019labor; General Directorate of Statistics, 2020b).

## Politics

Timor-Leste has a semi-presidential republic. A president serves as chief-of-state and can veto legislation, dissolve parliament and call national elections. All Timor-Leste citizens above 17 can vote and they directly elect the president. The president appoints the leader of the majority party or coalition to serve as the prime minister, the head-of-government. The president appoints Cabinet based on recommendations from the Prime Minister and Parliament. The 65-seat unicameral Parliament, directly elected by citizens, serves as the legislative branch (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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# Europe

## Andorra

Population	85,645
Land Area	285,645 $km^2$
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	93

## History

Andorra's history has produced one of the most unique political systems in the world. After gaining independence from the Muslim Empire of Andulus in 803, the state was granted to the bishops of Urgel (Rodriguez, 2021). In 1278, a quarrel over Andorra between the Spanish bishops of Urgel and the heirs to Urgel, the French counts of Foix, resulted in a co-principality formed by the two parties.

Following the establishment of the co-principality, Andorra was under relative peace until 1933, when France occupied it due to pre-election unrest. The following year, Boris Sjosyreff, a Russian adventurer, further destabilized the state by unilaterally declaring himself prince of Andorra. Additionally, between 1936 and 1940, France sent troops to Andorra to protect it from the Spanish Civil War and Franco's Spain.

After this period, Spain and France were encouraging social, political, and economic reform in Andorra. Meanwhile, the Council of Europe called for the drafting of a constitution. Consequently, in 1993, Andorra became a member of the United Nations and its first constitution was established ("Principality Of Andorra", n.d.-a), which, most notably, reduced the powers of the co-principality, created separate government branches, and legalized political parties ("Principality Of Andorra", n.d.-c).

## Economics

Tourism is by far the most crucial industry to the Andorran economy. Andorra is notable for its ski facilities and resorts ("Principality Of Andorra", n.d.-a). The tourism sector makes up 80% of the country's GDP and attracts over 8 million visitors every year (U.S. Department of State, 2019). The other major industry is agriculture, which is less developed, given that only 5% of Andorra's land is arable (Moody's Analytics, n.d.).

Despite its isolated location, Andorra has attracted many investors and immigrants thanks to its thriving economy and its status as a tax-free port. Investors utilize this opportunity to promote products such as tobacco, alcohol, and jewelry (U.S. Department of State, 2019). Similarly, although Andorra is not an official member of the European Union (EU), it still benefits from EU free trade regulations by being part of the European Customs Union (U.S. Department of State, 2019).

Nonetheless, Andorra's traditionally advantageous duty-free prices, which make goods cheaper than those offered by its European neighbors, were negatively impacted after France and Spain liberalized their economies in the 1990s, thus lowering tariffs ("Principality Of Andorra", n.d.-a). Seeking to attract more foreign investment, in 2006, Andorra

began increasing efforts towards diversifying and opening its economy through a series of economic reforms and laws (U.S. Department of State, 2019).

## Politics

Presently, the role of the French counts of Foix has been replaced by the French president, and the latter, together with the bishops of Urgel, jointly serve as Andorra's chief of state under a parliamentary system.

The state's main ethnicity is Andorran, who make up 48.8% of the population. This is followed by Spanish, 25.1%, Portuguese, 12%, and French, 4.4% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Channel Islands

Population	163,000
Land Area	194km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	British Crown territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

Originally, the Duchy of Normandy owned the Channel Islands (“Channel Islands Profile - Overview”, 2015). Following Norman Conquest in 1066, Normandy and England united under the same Crown (Gardiner, 1998), thus making the islands dependencies of the British Crown (Gardiner, 1998; Lansford, 2021). They islands are thus not part, nor are they overseas territories, of the UK (“Channel Islands Profile - Overview”, 2015). Between 1338 and 1373, the French captured parts of the islands and took control of Jersey and Guernsey for two years (Gardiner, 1998).

According to Cruickshank (Cruickshank, 2016), in 1939, the population in Jersey was 50,000, Guernsey 40,000, Alderney 1,500, and Sark 600. The majority of inhabitants were natives. There were also a few thousands from the UK, who had migrated to the islands because of the more favorable climate and financial advantages. Other groups of Europeans also migrated into the islands for work. Irish and French nationals migrated mainly to aid the potato crops in Jersey, while French, Spanish, and Italians worked in the hotels during the tourist season. This group also included some Jews from continental Europe who had moved into England at the beginning of the Second World War (Cruickshank, 2016).

Between 1940 and 1945, the islands became the only British territory to fall to Germany (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Thirty thousand people left the island in anticipation of the invasion (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The remaining residents suffered under German occupation - some became slave laborers, Jews were sent to concentration camps or became domestic servants (Cruickshank, 2016), and many suffered near starvation (“Channel Islands Profile - Overview”, 2015).

### Economics

The Channel Islands do not belong to the European Union. However, the islands adopt various European laws, including some EU custom regulations, tariffs, and agricultural policies (Lansford, 2021; Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Trade with the UK is considered domestic (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The islands are popular because of their tourist resorts, as well as their low tax rates, which has attracted British migrants (Lansford, 2021).

Financial services are the most important economic activity in Guernsey, accounting for 21% of employment and 32% of total income (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a). The island’s light tax and death duties have greatly aided the development of the offshore financial sector. Other growing sectors include professional services, tourism, retail, and the public sector. On the other hand, declining sectors include construction, manufacturing, and horticulture. Services make up 87% of GDP, agriculture 3%, and industry

10% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a).

The economic composition in Jersey is roughly similar to that of Guernsey, save for the lesser focus on industry. Services make up 96% of GDP, agriculture 2%, and industry 2% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b). Financial services and tourism are the most important of the services sector. Like Guernsey, the island's light tax and death duties contribute significantly to Jersey's offshore financial sector (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b). The most important agricultural crops are potatoes, which are exported mainly to the UK, and the island's unique breed of dairy cattle (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b).

## Politics

The Channel islands include four larger islands - Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark - and smaller islets, rocks, and reefs (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The islands are internally self-governing, though dependent on the British government at Westminster for defence and foreign policy (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Additionally, the political administration of the islands are divided into two bailiwicks, Guernsey and Jersey. Both possess different constitutions, legislatures, and parliaments (Lansford, 2021; Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). A representative known as lieutenant governor, who also serves as commander in chief, connects the parliament to the Crown (Lansford, 2021).

The Ecrehous rocks and Les Minquiers are Jersey dependencies that were disputed between England and France until the International Court of Justice affirmed British sovereignty in 1953. However, the dispute resurged in the late 20th century after the discovery of petroleum in these lands (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Most of the population is of British and Norman-French descent (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a). In Jersey, 49.7% of the population was born in Jersey, 30.9% in the UK, Guernsey, or Isle of Man, 7.2% in Portugal, 3.2% in Poland, 1.9% in Ireland, and 7.1% other (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). On the other hand, 52% of Guernsey's population was native-born, 23.7% UK and Ireland, 2.1% Portugal, 1.5% Latvia, 6.7% other, and 14.1% unspecified (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a).

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## Cyprus

Population	1,281,506
Land Area	9,251km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	94

### History

Long-term Greek settlement in Cyprus began during the Late Bronze Age. During this period, Greek culture came to dominate the island, including its language, institutions, and infrastructure (Kazamias, Petrides, & Koumas, 2012). Around the 9th century B.C., the Phoenicians, a second ethnic group, began settling on the island. Cyprus' strategic location attracted the attention of many empires aside from the Greeks, falling under the hands of the Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans throughout its history (Kazamias et al., 2012).

In 364 AD, the Byzantine Empire took Cyprus. Following 7th century Arab invasions, both groups jointly ruled the island until 965, when the Byzantines consolidated their rule. In 1191, the Crusaders attacked Cyprus and two years later, it became a Frankish kingdom. Cyprus was ruled as a Venetian dependency from 1489 until 1571, when it was taken by the Ottoman Turks. The Ottomans divided the population between Muslim Turks and Christian Greeks (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). After Greek independence in 1829, a group of Greek Cypriots called for union with Cyprus, also known as *enosis*.

Following the Cyprus Convention in 1878, the island became a British protectorate. In return, Britain would defend Turkey against Russia. Britain annexed Cyprus in 1914 after Turkey's alliance to Germany, converting it into a Crown Colony in 1925. Greek and Turkish nationalism grew during British rule (Papadakis, Peristianis, & Welz, 2006). While Greek Cypriots sought *enosis*, Turkish Cypriots sought *takism*, that is, partition. The National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA), an armed organization formed in 1955, led the Greek struggle, while the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT), formed in 1958 and also armed, led the Turkish struggle. There were frequent violent confrontations between both ethnic group (Papadakis et al., 2006).

The solution to the conflict was the creation of an independent state in 1960, with an 80% Greek majority (Papadakis et al., 2006). This did not please either party, and both continued to pursue their respective goals (Papadakis et al., 2006). Disagreements between power-sharing mechanisms lead to violent breakout between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in 1963. UN Peacekeepers were deployed in 1964 and have since supervised the ceasefire ("About|UNFICYP", n.d.).

In 1974, officers from mainland Greece, seeking *enosis*, led a coup against then President Archbishop Makarios III (Bowman & Goult, 2021). The latter managed to escape, and Nikos Sampson, a former EOKA member, was declared President. Five days later, Turkey lead a military intervention into Cyprus and overthrew Sampson. They took control of the northern third of the island, declaring it a Turkish Federated State of Cyprus. In 1983, it was proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), receiving official recognition only from Turkey. In 1996, two Greek Cypriots were killed during

demonstrations near the UN ceasefire line (“Timeline: Key events in Cyprus”, 2009).

In 2002, Cyprus was to be one of the ten countries to be granted EU membership from 2004. The TRNC would be included only if UN talks to reunify the island were successful. That year, the UN proposed a common state with two "component" states and a rotating presidency. In a 2004 referendum, Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of the plan, but Greek Cypriots voted against (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). As such, the TRNC was excluded from EU benefits. In 2011, tensions between Cyprus and Turkey grew over oil and gas exploitation rights (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

## **Economics**

The Republic of Cyprus is dominated by a services sector that makes up more than four-fifths of GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). These include tourism, finance, shipping, and real estate. Overall, services account for 85.5% of GDP, industry 12.5%, and agriculture 2% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Attempts to integrate the two economies have been largely unsuccessful (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The TRNC lacks independent monetary policy and is vulnerable to economic fluctuations in Turkey (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

In 2008, the economy was in recession because of the financial crisis and low demands in the tourism and construction sectors. Additionally, its banking sector suffered from excessive exposure to Greek debt (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). In 2012, Cyprus requested an economic bailout from the European Commission, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, reaching a \$13 billion bailout agreement the following year.

## **Politics**

The Republic of Cyprus is a presidential republic while the TRNC is a (self-declared) parliamentary republic (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). A President serves as both the chief of state and head of government. The vice-presidency is reserved for a Turkish Cypriot, but the position has remained vacant since 1974 because Turkish Cypriots have abstained from participating in the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The conflict between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots shaped the island’s political scene lansford2021political. The Democratic Rally (DISY), founded in 1976, is one of the major parties representing the reunification of Cyprus in the form of a bi-zonal federation (Norwegian Centre for Research Data, n.d.). Another major party is the Progressive Party of Working People of Cyprus (ANKEL), formed in 1941 as successor of the Communist Party. It continues to declare itself a communist party and is traditionally the most accommodating regarding the conflict, maintaining contact with the TRNC through trade unions. On the other hand, the Democratic Party (DIKO), founded in 1976, proposes a solution through UN resolutions.

In the Republic of Cyprus, 98.8% of the population is ethnic Greek, 1% other (including Maronites, Armenians, and Turkish-Cypriots), and 0.2% unspecified (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Overall, Greek Cypriots represent four-fifths of the island, and Turkish Cypriots the other one-fifth (Bowman & Goult, 2021).



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## Faroe Islands

Population	51,943
Land Area	1,393km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Danish territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

Viking settlers arrived in the Faroe Islands in the 9th century and today, their descendants make up the majority of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). They have been under Danish administration since 1380 (Lansford, 2021), though close integration with the country began taking place in after the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, in which Denmark ceded Sweden to Norway but remained with Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands (Wylie, 1987). In 1852, Denmark granted the islands an elected parliament. From 1709 until its abolishment in 1856, the islands were part of the Danish royal trade monopoly.

During World War II, Germany occupied Denmark and Great Britain took control of the Faroe Islands (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). After the war, the islands' relationship with Denmark were put under further scrutiny, and in 1946, a referendum on independence was held (Wylie, 1987). However, the results were highly confusing, with 48.7% voting for independence, 47.1% for the status quo, and the rest wrote "no" (Wylie, 1987). The Faroe Islands thus declared independence because of this slim majority, but the Danish administration dissolved the Faroese Parliament before this could take place. This lead to the Home Rule Act of 1948, which granted the country self-governance under Denmark, as well as its own flag and currency. Another referendum on independence was to be held in 2001, but it was cancelled after the Danish Prime Minister declared that subsidies would be terminated after four years if sovereignty was granted (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

### Economics

Services account for 43% of GDP, industry 39%, and agriculture 18% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The islands are not members of the EU. The economy has grown significantly since 2011 thanks to increasing fish prices and levels of salmon farming and catches (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Fisheries make up 97% of exports and half of GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). However, the island is vulnerable to price fluctuations because of this dependence on fishing.

The islands enjoy annual subsidies from Denmark, which account for 11% of GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Indeed, Danish intervention after the economic crash in the 1990s because of overfishing was of great importance to the islands' recovery (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). Additionally, the Faroe Islands benefit from free trade agreements with the EU, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey. However, it is not a member of the EU.

## Politics

The Faroese parliament consists of 33 members. A Prime Minister serves as the head of government and is usually the leader of the majority party (“Political System”, n.d.). The chief of state is the Queen of Denmark, who is represented by a High Commissioner in the islands. Additionally, two members in the Danish parliament have represented the islands since 1851 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

In the Faroese parliament, parties are mostly divided into two blocs with regards to its ties with Denmark: independence or confederation (Ackrén, 2006). Major parties include the Union Party and the Social Democrat Party, both which advocate for close ties with Denmark (“Denmark election: left tops poll as unionists win in Faroe Islands, pro-independence parties retain both seats in Greenland”, 2019). Additionally, the left-wing Republic and conservative-liberal People’s Party advocate for full independence (Ackrén, 2006; Lansford, 2021).

In contrast to Greenland, another Danish territory, which sent pro-independence representatives to the Danish parliament, the two Faroese representatives belonged to the Social Democrat Party and the Union Party (“Denmark election: left tops poll as unionists win in Faroe Islands, pro-independence parties retain both seats in Greenland”, 2019). Other points of interest in the 2019 elections included public expenses, taxes, and same-sex marriage (Lyck, 2019). More recently, offshore oil and gas have incentivized independence talks (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

85.9% of the population was born in the Faroe Islands, 8.2% Denmark, 1.4% other Nordic countries, and 4.5% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Gibraltar

Population	29,516
Land Area	7km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	British territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

The moors settled in Gibraltar in 711 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). In 1462, the Spanish took it from Granada. English naval officer Sir George Rooke captured it in 1704, and ceded it to Great Britain following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Gibraltar became a British crown colony in 1830. Under British rule, Gibraltar's forts and dockyards served an important role during wartime, especially for imperial communications purposes (Stockey & Grocott, 2012). It played an especially important role in World War II as a military base and fortress for Britain (Bradford, 2014). After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Gibraltar became even more important to Britain, given that its accessibility to routes in the Mediterranean Sea (Rodriguez, 2021).

High levels of self-governance were granted in 1964, which was reinforced by a 1969 constitution that included the creation of the House of Assembly (Lansford, 2021). Gibraltar joined the European Community as a dependency of the UK in 1973. In a 1967 referendum, the majority of Gibraltarians voted in favor of remaining under British control (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The UK granted autonomy in 1969 through a constitution which guaranteed that Gibraltar would not have to accept Spanish rule unless the majority favored it (Lansford, 2021). Subsequently, Spain closed its borders and communications with Gibraltar. Additionally, in an unofficial referendum held in 2002, 98.7% voted against join sovereignty between Spain and Britain (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Since 2004, tripartite talks between Spain, the UK, and Gibraltar have taken place, with a focus on the issue of sovereignty. A 2007 constitution granted Gibraltar full internal self-government.

### Economics

Services make up 100% of Gibraltar's GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). These include tourism, transshipment, the provision of ships and military personnel, and financial services (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; Rodriguez, 2021). The latter makes up one-fifth of the economy (Lansford, 2021). Gibraltar's online gambling sector is one of the most important in the world, and it accounts for 20% of GDP and 10% of jobs (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

Special relations with the EU exempts it from duty payments such as VATs, which enhances supports the transshipment of foreign goods (Lansford, 2021). With no agricultural land and natural resources, Gibraltar depends on imports for foods and fuels (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

## Politics

Gibraltar is a parliamentary democracy. The Parliament consists of 17 members (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and the Chief Minister is usually the leader of the majority party. The chief of state is Queen Elizabeth II, who is represented in the territory by a governor.

Gibraltar is still disputed between Spain and the UK, and tensions have caused non-violent maritime confrontations between the two since 2009 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). As a result from tensions with Spain, it prohibited Gibraltar from access to Spain by land and air (Lansford, 2021) from 1979 until 2006 (Tremlett, 2006). After Brexit, Spanish claims over Gibraltar resurged, though Britain has denied any connection between its decision to leave the EU and its sovereignty over the territory. In response, the EU has stated that Gibraltar will not be affected by any future UK-EU trade deals and as such, agreements between the EU and UK regarding Gibraltar would require Spanish approval (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

79% are Gibraltar nationals, 13.2% other British, 2.1% Spanish, 1.6% Moroccan 1.6, 2.4% other EU, and 1.6% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Gibraltarians enjoy UK citizenship.

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## Kosovo

Population	1,935,259
Land Area	10,887km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	Upper middle income
Freedom House Score	54

## History

Modern Kosovo was part of the Roman and Byzantine Empires before the migration of ethnic Serbs in the 7th century (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Kosovo became the centre of the Serbian Empire during the medieval period, especially under the Nemanjić Dynasty, which lasted from the 12th to 14th century (Allcock, Lampe, & A., 2021). In 1389, Serbia lost to the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Kosovo. Ottoman rule lasted five centuries and significantly increased the Turk and Albanian population in Kosovo (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Albanians became the dominant ethnic group by the end of the 19th century (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

After the First Balkan War of 1912, Serbia declared independence from the Ottoman Empire and retook Kosovo (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Niddrie & Momsen, 2021). After World War II, Kosovo's present-day borders were established and became an autonomous district within the Serbian constituent of Yugoslavia (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Lansford, 2021). Under Yugoslav rule during the 1960s, Albanians were given preferences in administrative positions, thus incentivizing Serbian migration into Serbia proper (Allcock et al., 2021). As consequence of the Yugoslav government's "Albanization" policies (Allcock et al., 2021), by 1991, Serbs made up less than one-fifth of the population (Allcock et al., 2021).

In 1968, the first pro-independence demonstrations led by ethnic Albanians were held ("Chronology of Events Relating to the Kosovo Conflict", 1999). In 1974, Yugoslavia's fourth constitution was established, under which Kosovo became an autonomous province of Serbia. The constitution, in practice, treated provinces as equals to republics (Pavlović, 2004). Kosovo was effectively granted de facto republican status. This increased the desire for social, economic, and political equality within the ethnic Albanian group in Kosovo (Pavlović, 2004). At the same time, this weakened Serbia's statehood as a Yugoslav Republic - Serbia was forbidden from intervening in Provincial affairs against the will of the assemblies (Fraser, 1998).

During the 1970s, Yugoslavia's economy was declining because of increasing energy prices (Allcock et al., 2021). Conflict between the republics over where should the development aid be directed towards, especially within Kosovo, led to protests and civil disorder in 1981 that caused a number of deaths (Allcock et al., 2021). As the republics bargained, Serbian politicians began resenting Kosovo's cooperation with other Yugoslav's republics, especially when it went against Serbia's interest. Slobodan Milošević's, capitalized on this resentment and was elected as Serbia's President in 1989 (Allcock et al., 2021). In that same year, he led the movement to dissolve Kosovo's government, surrendering the territory's autonomy to Serbia (Fraser, 1998; Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The newly imposed rule led to widespread violence, including Albanian rioting in 1990 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

In 1999, the United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Kosovo began administrating Kosovo. Under said arrangement, Kosovo became an autonomous province of the "state union" of Serbia and Montenegro in 2003 and later in 2006, of the Republic of Serbia (Lansford, 2021). Kosovo declared unilateral independence from Serbia in 2008. Serbia denounced this and continues to claim sovereignty over Kosovo. The territory adopted a constitution in 2008.

## Economics

Kosovo's economy is highly dependent on international aid and remittances (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The latter account for 17% of GDP, while contributions from international donors account for 10% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Nonetheless, Kosovars are the second poorest citizens in Europe after Moldovans. The territory has a 33% unemployment rate (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021)

Services account for 70.4% of GDP, industry 17.7%, and agriculture 11.9% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). There is a large informal economy, and with most of the population residing in rural areas, subsistence farming is common, though highly inefficient. High corruption levels and little contract enforcement inhibit economic growth and investment. This has permitted the rise of a black market (Allcock et al., 2021). Additionally, the lack of investment contributed to the decline of mineral and metals production (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The unofficial adoption of the euro in 2002 has helped control inflation levels (Allcock et al., 2021).

## Politics

Kosovo is a parliamentary republic, recognized by 113 countries (Lansford, 2021). In 2010, the International Court of Justice stated that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was not a violation to international law (Lansford, 2021).

In 2014 parliamentary elections, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) won 30.4% of votes, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) 25.2%, Self-Determination 13.6%, and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AKK) 9.5% (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). In 2017, Ramush Haradinaj of the AKK was elected Prime Minister but resigned in 2019 after war crime allegations (Lansford, 2021). In 2020, Albin Kurti, leader of Vetëvendosje, formed a coalition government with the LDK. Kurti dismissed his interior minister over a dispute regarding the coronavirus pandemic, which subsequently led to the LDK's withdrawal from the government. This prompted a no-confidence vote, in which Kurti lost (Lansford, 2021).

92.9% of the population is Albanian, 5.6% other, and 1.5% Serb (Allcock et al., 2021).

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## Iceland

Population	354,230
Land Area	100,250 $sqkm^2$
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	96/100 - Free

## History

The Republic of Iceland is an island country in the North Atlantic Ocean (Karlsson, 2021). The country was first settled by Norwegian and Celtic—Scottish and Irish—immigrants in the late 9th and 10th centuries. Iceland also boasts the world's oldest functioning legislative assembly, the Althingi, established in 930 (Karlsson, 2021).

Iceland was first discovered and settled by Norse people during the Viking Age from the period of 870-930 CE. Although it was known to exist, the island did not boast a settled population until that point in time. Early sources point to Ingólfr Arnarson as the first permanent settler in Iceland who came from Norway in 874. He is known as the founder of Reykjavík, the capital of modern Iceland. By the end of the settlement period, a general Icelandic assembly called the Althingi was established, marking the start of Iceland's Commonwealth period from 930-1262. During this time, the country was governed by a ruling distinct class of chieftains based on heathen worship, called godar of which numbered around 40. The Althingi consisted of a law council through which the godar created and amended laws, and a system of courts of justice in which godar-nominated householders acted on the panels of judges (Karlsson, 2021).

By the end of the 10th century, the Norwegian king, Olaf I Tryggvason imposed Christianity on Norway and sent missionaries to Iceland who were said to be successful in converting the Icelanders. In 999 or 1000, the Althing peacefully decreed Christianity as the national religion. In the early 13th century, Norwegian royal power gained strength and by the mid-13th century, Iceland was involved in violent internal strife with a civil conflict between powerful godars, with the period 1200-1262 known as the Age of the Sturlungs (**Iceland - History | Britannica**). The end of the Icelandic Commonwealth and Iceland's subsequent union with the monarchy of Norway is typically symbolised by the signing of the Old Covenant by the godars (1262-64) or to the adoption of Jónsbók in 1281. Scholarship, however, views Iceland's incorporation into the Norwegian realm as a long process from 1220-1281 that involved the acknowledgement of the Norwegian king as its monarch, the pledge to pay taxes to support the government of Iceland, and the amendment of Iceland's laws to concord with Norwegian laws (Jakobsson, 2021). In 1380, the Norwegian monarchy merged with the Danish crown, bringing Iceland under the rule of Denmark. The Danish crown continued to consolidate its rule over Iceland until 1830 (Karlsson, 2021).

In the 1830s, Iceland was allotted two seats at a new consultative assembly for the Danish Isles and it kindled a desire for the Althingi to be restored as a consultative assembly. The request was granted by Christian VIII and the Althingi was restored in 1845. Denmark's transition into a representative democracy in 1848 sparked off questions regarding Iceland's sovereignty. Although the Althing was vested with legislative power in internal affairs by the Danish King in 1874, formal home rule was not granted until 1904

and Iceland continued to struggle for independence. On December 1, 1918, the country became a separate state under the Danish crown albeit with foreign affairs remaining under Danish purview (Karlsson, [2021](#)).

Iceland experienced high unemployment and class antagonism during the Great Depression of the 1920s. The British and American occupation of Iceland in 1940 and 1941 respectively, during World War II brought an economic boom to the country, as it boosted employment and prosperity. Emboldened by its experience, Iceland eventually terminated its personal union with the Danish crown to establish a republic. On 17 June 1944, Iceland achieved independence and the Icelandic Republic was founded with Sveinn Björnsson as its first president (**Iceland - History | Britannica**). Post-independence,

Iceland has developed into a modern welfare state. In the 1960s and 70s, the country was involved in a series of confrontations with Britain, known as the Cod Wars over fishing rights which came to an end in 1976 when Britain recognised Iceland's expanded exclusive fishing zone. Iceland has been a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation since 1949 and joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1970. Although Iceland is heavily integrated with the European Union as the EFTA was increasingly absorbed by the EU, the country remains a non-EU member state after a controversial 2009 application by the government to the EU met with intense contestation (**Iceland - History | Britannica**).

Iceland has an extremely homogenous population, with between 60 % and 80% of the population deriving from Nordic stock from Norway and the remaining comprising of Celtic stock from Scotland and Ireland (**Iceland | History; Maps; Flag; Population; Climate; & Facts | Britannica**). The current population stands at: 81.7 % Icelandic, 5.6% Polish, 1% Danish, 11.7% Others ([2021](#))..

## Economy

Iceland's economy combines a capitalist structure and free-market principles with an extensive welfare system. Its EU accession application has been frozen but it is a Schengen Area member. Excluding the 2008 economic crisis, Iceland has achieved high growth, low unemployment and even distribution of income in recent years, marking itself as a high-income European country. Tourism, aluminium, smelting and fishing are the pillars of the economy, although the traditional dependence on fisheries is giving way to tourism. Tourism accounted for 8.6% of the country's GDP in 2016 and 39% of total exports of merchandise and services. Iceland's GDP per capita is USD 52,300. The country's main industries include: tourism, fish processing; aluminium, smelting, geothermal power, hydropower and medical/pharmaceutical products. Its main agricultural products include: milk, mutton, poultry, potatoes, barley, pork, eggs, beef, other meat, and sheep skins ([2021](#))..

## Politics

Iceland is a unitary parliamentary republic. Administratively, it is split into 69 municipalities. The president is directly elected by simple majority popular vote for a 4-year term without any term limits and acts as the chief of state. The leader of the majority party or majority coalition is appointed prime minister and acts as the head of government following legislative elections. The cabinet is appointed by the president upon recommendation of the prime minister. The unicameral 63-seat Althingi or Parliament serves as the legislative branch with members being directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by closed-list proportional representation vote using the D'Hondt method and serving 4-year terms. All citizens above 18 years of age can vote in elections for the President and in their constituencies. Iceland has a civil law system influenced by the Danish model (2021).

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## Isle of Man

Population	90,895
Land Area	572km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	British Crown territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

Isle of Man has been inhabited for over 10,000 years (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). It was part of the Norwegian Kingdom in the 9th century until 1266, when the island was ceded to Scotland. The English took control of it in 1333, and it became a British Crown dependency in 1765 after the Purchase Act (Moore, 2015).

Some shift towards home-rule took place after the Isle of Man Customs, Harbours, and Public Purposes Act in 1866, which gave the Tynwald (the island's legislature) some degree of financial control over the island (Kermode, 2001). Significant progress in regards to home-rule started in 1947, when the Tynwald was allowed to re-purchase lands sold to the Crown in the 1820s (Moore, 2015). After the Isle of Man Act in 1958, the Tynwald gained control over the island's finances, as well as command over its ports and harbors for the first time since 1765 (Moore, 2015).

### Economics

Services account for 86% of GDP, industry 13%, and agriculture 1% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Important sectors include tourism and manufacturing (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The majority of the island's income is dependent on offshore banking and business services (Lansford, 2021). This has been fomented by the low taxes and other incentives for high-technology companies and financial institutions (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Additionally, online gambling sites make up 10% of the island's income (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Isle of Man has special relations with the EU. It falls under EU customs territory and enjoys free trade (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) but is fiscally independent from it (Lansford, 2021). The UK is the island's main trading partner (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The island has historically maintained close economic ties with the UK, which has attracted migration and investment. By 1996, 44% of the population was from the UK (Kermode, 2001). The UK's withdrawal from the EU will affect Isle of Man's relationship with the EU, which will have to be renegotiated (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

### Politics

Isle of Man is a parliamentary democracy. Queen Elizabeth II serves as the chief of state, and is represented on the island by a lieutenant governor. The latter is appointed by the monarch. A chief minister serves as the head of government and is indirectly elected by the Tynwald.

The island does not have a party system (Kermode, 2001). In the 2001 elections, independents won 19 seats in the House of Keys (Lansford, 2021). Candidates connected to the Alliance for Progressive Government (APG), a political group but not an official

party, won 3 seats, while the Manx Labour Party (MLP) won 2. Similar results were found in 2016, where independents won 21 seats (Lansford, 2021).

92.6% of the population are British nationals, 5% European, 1% Asian, 1% African, and 0.2% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Luxembourg

Population	639,589
Land Area	2,586km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	97

## History

The present-day geographical territory which constitutes Luxembourg has been inhabited since 5140 BCE and at different points been part of the Roman Empire, the Frankish Kingdom and the Kingdom of Lotharingia (“Luxembourg - Communications | Britannica”, n.d.). However, Luxembourg’s history as an independent and separate entity is usually traced from 963 when count Segifroid took control of a small castle (The name Luxembourg comes from the term ‘Lucilinburhuc’ which means “Little Fortress”). This castle was subsequently expanded and better fortified and became the center of Luxembourg (Péporté, Kmec, Majerus, & Margue, 2010).

By the Middle Ages, Luxembourg had become a prominent center and four of its dukes became the Holy Roman Emperor. From the 15th-century onwards, a series of Burgundians, Spanish, French and Austrian dukes seized control of Luxembourg. In Luxembourg’s popular historical narratives these conquests and shifts in power have been seen as invasions or foreign domination. In 1795, Luxembourg lost its status as a duchy and was considered a territory of the French Republic. After Napoleon’s defeat in 1814, the Congress of Vienna reinstated Luxembourg’s status as a duchy under the King of the United Kingdom of Netherlands granting it “independence” (Péporté et al., 2010). Due to conflicting claims of ownership between the Dutch and the Belgians, the duchy was divided in 1839, with the western part assimilating into Belgium and the eastern part remaining with the Dutch (which later became present-day Luxembourg) (“Luxembourg - Communications | Britannica”, n.d.).

In 1866, with the dissolution of the German confederation, Luxembourg became a sovereign entity. It was occupied by Germany in 1914 till 1918. Duchess Marie Adelaide did not protest against the German occupation for which she was deposed by the Allied powers. The constitution was amended in 1919 which transferred national sovereignty from the monarch to the ‘nation’ and executive powers to the Chamber of Deputies. Luxembourg was again occupied by Germany in 1940. When the Allied forces liberated Luxembourg in 1944, it actively participated in the formation of the new international institutions being set up. Luxembourg was a founding member of the UN, and the European Union (“Luxembourg - Communications | Britannica”, n.d.).

It continues to play a central role in the EU. Luxembourgers have been appointed as EU presidents and many of the EU’s important institutions and offices are located in Lux-

embourg (including the European Parliament and the Court of Justice of the European Union) (“The European institutions in Luxembourg”, [n.d.](#)).

## Economics

Historically, Luxembourg’s economy has relied on iron exports. However, by the 1980s most of its iron ore deposits had been exhausted and the economy’s focus shifted to financial services and technology development (“Luxembourg - Communications | Britannica”, [n.d.](#)). Presently, Luxembourg’s economy is highly dependent on its financial sector, which accounts for about 35% of its GDP (“Luxembourg”, [2022](#)). It houses numerous international banks and financial institutions as well as the European headquarters of many corporations. Luxembourg has been able to attract financial and corporate players due to its liberal tax regime and laws that allow for secretive banking. Its small size is also a favorable factor as companies find it easier to negotiate and work with regulatory and national agencies (WALTHER, SCHULZ, & DÖRRY, [2011](#)).

Luxembourg’s financial sector has come under scrutiny especially after “LuxLeaks”, an investigative report which revealed Luxembourg’s tax rulings and how multinational corporations were able to evade taxation under the lax tax system (Huesecken & Overesch, [2015](#)).

Luxembourg has also invested in high-growth and high-skilled industries such as financial and space technology as well as telecommunications. The Radio-Television-Luxembourg (RTL - Group) based out of Luxembourg is the leading broadcasting company in Europe. Luxembourg is also home to SES Global -world’s biggest satellite operator (“Luxembourg - Communications | Britannica”, [n.d.](#)).

Luxembourg has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. Its rate of growth is relatively higher than other OECD countries (“Luxembourg”, [2022](#)). Furthermore, Luxembourg’s economy has also proven resilient. This was evident after the 2008 financial crisis when Luxembourg’s economy was able to sustain the recession much better than other OECD countries (WALTHER et al., [2011](#)). Its highly-skilled, multilingual workforce, its deep connectedness and centrality with the European Union and policies that allow for secretive banking and lax taxation make it an attractive destination for foreign corporations.

## Politics

Luxembourg is a constitutional monarchy. The formal head of the state is the Grand Duke. Actual executive power lies with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The legislative branch consists of a unicameral Chamber of Deputies which has 60 seats which are allocated through proportional representation. A council of States, consisting of 21 members, is appointed by the Duke. The Council of States mostly serves an advisory role to the Chamber of Deputies and the Duke and resolves administrative disputes. While the Chamber members serve for a term of 5 years, the Council members are appointed for 12 years (“Luxembourg - Communications | Britannica”, [n.d.](#)).

Luxembourg has universal and compulsory voting. However, for the past few decades, no one has been penalized for not voting (“The case against Luxembourg’s compulsory voting”, [n.d.](#)). Luxembourg has a multi-party system. Most governments are formed



by coalitions of one or more parties. The three major parties are: the Christian Social People's Party (Chrëschtlech Sozial Vollekspartei; CSV), the Socialist Workers' Party of Luxembourg (Lëtzebuergesch Sozialistesche Arbechterpartei; LSAP), and the Democratic Party (DP). Currently, a coalition government of LSAP, DP and the Green Party is in power which is headed by prime minister Xavier Bettel (Kies, Dumont, & Schmit, 2019).

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## Malta

Population	460,891
Land Area	316km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	89

### History

Malta has a rich and long history with archaeological evidence of human settlements dating as far back as 5000 BCE. Malta's importance as a port connecting Europe and North Africa was recognised by the many civilisations which vied for its control. Between 8th century BCE and 16th century CE, the island was under the control of the Phoenicians, Romans, Greeks, Byzantium, the Roman Catholic church and Arabs (Buxton, 1924).

The French, under Napoleon Bonaparte, captured and took control of Malta in 1798. However, by the mid-1800s, the British had managed to oust the French and occupied Malta. The British heavily utilized Malta's maritime location and its importance as a port center increased. The opening of the Suez canal in 1869 further increased Malta's political and economical importance ("Malta - The arts | Britannica", n.d.).

During World War 2, the Maltese supported the British and the city was subjected to attacks from the Axis powers. The Maltese were granted limited self-government in 1947, with the British still controlling matters concerning defense, nationality and aviation. Since the British considered Malta a strategic territory and the Maltese economy was highly dependent on them, there were efforts to integrate Malta into the United Kingdom. However, talks failed after the UK rejected the demand for achieving 'equivalence', that is, having comparable levels of social welfare and incomes between Malta and the UK within 10 years (Smith, n.d.). Following this, the Maltese government resigned and reaffirmed the demand for complete independence. A state of emergency was declared and Malta was placed under direct colonial rule. In 1962, with the British more sympathetic to decolonisation, a new constitution was put in place which allowed for self-government, with only foreign affairs being under the purview of the British. Borg Oliver of the Nationalist Party won the 1962 election and his formal request for independence was supported by the British (Smith, n.d.). Malta finally became an independent, sovereign country in 1964. It became a member of the council of Europe in 1974 and a member of the European Union in 2004 ("Malta - The arts | Britannica", n.d.).

### Economics

Malta's economy is highly reliant on the service sector. The service sector accounts for 88.7 percent of Malta's GDP (2017) which is followed by industry at 10.2 percent and agriculture at 1.1 percent ("Malta", 2022). Within the service sector, Malta's financial services, gaming services and tourism account for most of its growth. It has had some of the lowest unemployment rates amongst the eurozone countries and was foremost in growth in the eurozone between 2014 to 2016. ("Malta", 2022). Malta's tourism sector has continued to grow over the years. Malta is home to three UNESCO world Heritage sites

(Centre, [n.d.](#)) and approximately 2.5 Million people visited the island in 2019 (“Inbound tourist arrivals for personal purposes Malta 2019”, [n.d.](#)).

Malta has offered favorable tax policies which have attracted foreign investment. However, recent concerns about tax-evasion within the EU could have an impact on Malta’s financial sector which heavily relies on foreign money (“Malta”, [2022](#)).

Malta is also heavily reliant on trade to meet its food, energy and fresh water needs. It has limited natural resources, with limestone being the only utilized resource (“Malta - The arts | Britannica”, [n.d.](#)). Agriculture, due to land fragmentation is also not feasible. The manufacturing sector has also moved away from the historically prominent ship-building industry to tech and pharmaceutical production (“Malta - The arts | Britannica”, [n.d.](#))

## Politics

Malta is a parliamentary republic. The unicameral house of representatives has 65 seats. Every Maltese citizen over the age of 18 has the right to vote. There are two major parties: The Nationalist Party (Partit Nazzjonalista; PN) and the Malta Labour Party (Partit Laburista; MLP). Robert Abela, from the Malta Labour Party won the last election (2020) and was appointed Prime minister. A third party, The Democratic Alternative (Alternattiva Demokratika; AD), exists but has never secured a seat in the parliament (“Malta - The arts | Britannica”, [n.d.](#))

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# Latin America

## Antigua and Barbuda

Population	99,175
Land Area	443km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	85

### History

Christopher Columbus visited the largest island, Antigua in 1493. Antigua became an English colony in 1632 (Niddrie, Momsen, & Tolson, 2021). The Carib people's resistance and Antigua's lack of fresh water discouraged colonialism (Foreign Commonwealth Office, 2007). Niddrie et al. notes (2021), on the other hand, that the island of Barbuda was colonized in 1668, passed to the Codrington family (one of the most important British planters at the time) in 1865, and back to Britain later in the 19th century. Eventually, the latter became a dependency of Antigua due to how closely administered the islands were. Importantly, through the West Indies Act of 1967, Antigua, together with its dependencies, became an associated state with the UK, meaning that the state oversaw internal affairs while the UK oversaw external affairs.

Antigua achieved full independence in 1981 after George Walter, at the time the Prime Minister, began an independence movement in opposition to Britain's push for a federation of independent islands (Niddrie et al., 2021). Barbuda and Redonda, as dependent states, also became independent as unitary states to Antigua, despite Barbuda's call for its own independence (Foreign Commonwealth Office, 2007).

### Economics

During colonial times, Antigua and Barbuda's economy was built upon agriculture and labor, with Antigua focusing on sugar and Barbuda on plantations. Presently, the state relies heavily on tourism, valued at an estimated 50% of its GDP (U.S. Department of State, 2007). Other important sectors include construction, banking, communications, retail, and internet gambling (U.S. Department of State, 2007).

The island is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. For example, all 1,700 habitants in Barbuda were evacuated to Antigua in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017; by the following year, half of Barbuda remained without access to water ("A Dictionary of Contemporary World History", 2021). Additionally, its economic growth is vulnerable to dependence on US tourism (International Trade Centre, n.d.). In order to decrease its vulnerabilities against natural disasters, the state has increased efforts to attract foreign investment and diversify its economy towards more sectors such as transportation (U.S. Department of State, 2007).

### Politics

The small state is formed by three islands: Antigua, Barbuda, and an uninhabited dependency, Redonda. The state inherited a British-style parliamentary system, ruled under a

constitutional monarchy, with a representative head of state alongside legislative, executive, and judicial government branches (Antigua and Barbuda’s Government Information and Services, n.d.). According to Riches & Palmowski (“A Dictionary of Contemporary World History”, 2021), even before independence, from 1946 until 2004, Vere Bird, his family, and the corresponding Antigua Labor Party (ALP) governed the state. Especially in the 1980s, many citizens viewed the party as corrupt, causing discontent and paving the way for Lester, Bird’s son, to become Prime Minister after his anti-corruption campaign. However, Lester was unable to control the rampant corruption, and in 2004, the family lost their hold over the government to the United Progressive Party. Nonetheless, the ALP took control again in 2014 after the previous party became unpopular due to the 2008 recession and the collapse of the Antigua-based Stanford bank (“A Dictionary of Contemporary World History”, 2021), the state’s largest private employer (Tucker, 2013). 87.3% of its population is of African descent, 4.7% is mixed, 2.7% is Hispanic, 1.6% is white, 2.7% other, and 0.9% unspecified (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Aruba

Population	120,917
Land Area	180km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Dutch territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

## History

The Spanish discovered Aruba in 1499, who soon named it “Useless Islands” because it lacked precious metals (Alofs, 2004). Finding no use for the island, the Spanish deported a large part of the population to Hispaniola for labor. Even so, Aruba did not remain completely uninhabited thanks to the Indians who migrated from South America during this period. Later in 1636, the Spanish offered little resistance when the Dutch colonized Aruba given that they paid little attention to it in the first place (Aruba Tourism Authority, n.d.).

For a short period of time, the island fell under British control as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars; however, it was soon returned to the Dutch in 1816 (Harmannus, 2021). The state’s independence year is 1986, when it achieved autonomous status after seceding from the Netherlands Antilles (“Aruba History - What’s the History of Aruba?”, n.d.). According to De Jong (2005), this secession was granted under the condition that Aruba become an independent state after ten years, a process aided by the Netherlands’ support. However, wanting to remain part of the Netherlands, Aruba discarded its initial plan for full independence in 1995. To this day, it is considered an autonomous state under the Netherlands, without any foreseeable plans of breaking away from said status (De Jong, 2005).

## Economics

In 1924, the discovery of oil made Aruba one of the most important refineries, ushering a period important economic development (Aruba Tourism Authority, n.d.). According to Alofs (2004), this newfound industry attracted foreign labor from not only other parts of the Americas, but also Europe and China, thus increasing Aruba’s nationality count to over forty nationalities. However, in the 1950s, tourism replaced the oil industry as the territory’s economic pillar. With the development of this new industry, more immigrants arrived to Aruba, including from countries such as the Philippines and the Netherlands. Not surprisingly, the history of migrational labor has made it such that in 2001, over 30% of the population was born outside Aruba (Alofs, 2004). Presently, the oil industry continues to be of importance, although 87% of its economy depends - directly or indirectly - on tourism (International Monetary Fund, 2019-06).

## Politics

Governed under a parliamentary democracy as part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba’s Chief of State is the King of Netherlands, while a Prime Minister holds the title of Head of Government. The most represented ethnic groups are: Aruban at 66%, Colombian, 9.1%, Dutch, 4.3%, and Dominican, 4.1% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Relative to other Caribbean states, Aruba has a rather minor population of pure African descendants because it does not have a history of slave labor. Under Spanish colonization, for instance, Aruba's economy was based around piracy and smuggling (Harmannus, 2021). Furthermore, without a history of African immigration nor of a dominant Indian population, Aruba does not possess a strong heritage from said groups (Alofs, 2004). On the other hand, Dutch influences are amongst the strongest as a consequence of 360 years of colonization, whereas Spanish influence is more a result of migration and blood ties than of colonization (Alofs, 2004).

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## Bahamas, The

Population	352,655
Land Area	13,880km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	91

### History

Christopher Columbus landed on The Bahamas in 1492, formally making it a Spanish possession through the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. The country's population during this period is estimated at around 40,000 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The Spanish did not settle in the islands and it remained largely depopulated for over a century, particularly because all 40,000 natives were moved to other neighboring islands for labor (Saunders, 2021) or died from European diseases (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

The Bahamas was only re-populated in the 1640s when the English started settling in. Amidst the religious tensions of the English Civil War, Capt. William Sayle, governor of Bermuda, led a mission in hopes of finding an island where English religious dissidents could worship freely (Saunders, 2021). Around 1648, he sailed to The Bahamas together with a group of 70 Bermudan religious Independents and English people, thus officially initiating English settlement. The British Crown claimed the island as an official colony in 1717 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), and though the Spanish reoccupied the islands in 1782, it was quickly returned to the British the following year with the Treaty of Paris ("Bahamas Profile - Timeline", 2019).

The Bahamas achieved complete internal autonomy from Britain in 1964 through the establishment of an official constitution. Efforts towards self-governance increased when the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), led by Lynden Pindling, won the first legislative elections in 1967 ("Bahamas Profile - Timeline", 2019). After successful negotiations for independence in 1973, the state came to be known as The Commonwealth of The Bahamas (Saunders, 2021), inheriting a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

### Economics

Crucial economic sectors such as tourism and banking began being developed in the 1950s, especially because Pindling's government placed priority on the development of these industries (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). In fact, according to Bounds (Bounds, 1972), tourism came to be so important that by the 1960s it accounted for 90% of the state's GNP. The economy of The Bahamas, then, was a "monoculture" heavily dependent on a single industry. This would bring about fatal consequences when the United States, the country's largest source of visitors, was hit by a recession in 1970. In light of this, the government started diversifying its economy towards financial services (Bounds, 1972); presently, tourism accounts for 60% of the GDP, while financial services account for 20% (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

Bounds (Bounds, 1972) further observes that The Bahamas also openly embraced the idea of a "freeport" zone as part of the 1950s efforts to diversify its economy. This was

officialized through The Hawksbill Creek Act of 1955, which granted 149,000 acres of land exempt from import duty to the Grand Bahama Port Authority, a private development corporation. This area became a main tourist attraction, especially thanks to the rapid construction of resorts, restaurants and golf courses. Furthermore, several manufacturing companies, ranging from cement to oil, and mainly originating from the United States, located their operations in the freeport zone. This diversified the island's import economy. The success of The Bahamas' industrialization and banking sector is primarily attributed to its comparative advantage on tax freedoms (Bounds, 1972).

Two important events have had a lasting impact on The Bahamas' economy (Bounds, 1972). The first was Pindling's electoral victory in 1967, which effectively shifted the government from white-controlled to black-controlled. Indeed, with 85% of its population being of African-descent, politicians belonging to said ethnicity have an electoral advantage (Bounds, 1972). To respond to the quick industrialization and the resulting influx of white foreign workers coming into the country, Pindling began a movement to replace foreign labor with native Bahamians. This caused tension between the government and employers, the latter who were forced to hire and train often unskilled and unqualified Bahamian labor. The second event, however, had an even more devastating effect on the country's economy. Aside from the loss of life, Hurricane Dorian (2019) incurred US\$3.4 billion in damages on the islands - a quarter of the state's GDP (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019).

## Politics

The Bahamas is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy, with its chief of state being Queen Elizabeth II (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party/coalition, serves as the head of government (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). 90.6% is black, 4.7% white, 2.1% mixed, 1.9% other, and 0.7% unspecified (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

In 1992, the PLP lost its hold on power after 25 years because of drug-trafficking and corruption allegations ("Bahamas Profile - Timeline", 2019), and was replaced by The Free National Movement (FNM). The latter was, in part, formed by alienated anti-independence PLP members (Saunders, 2021). In 2002, the FNM lost to the PLP, regained victory in 2007, and lost once again in 2012 ("Bahamas Profile - Timeline", 2019). In 2017, Hubert Minnis of the FNM was elected Prime Minister (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Barbados

Population	301,865
Land Area	430km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	95

### History

Barbados remained unpopulated until the English settled in 1627 and began building cultivations for exportation purposes (Phillips, 2021). According to Watson (Watson, 2011), Britain had initially brought English/Irish servants and prisoners to the island for labor. When this became too costly, they resorted to African slaves. The need for labor increased rapidly, making Barbados not only the English colony with the largest white population in America, but also the most populated overall. The English labor initiative was so successful that by the 1660s Barbados had become the most profitable sugar plantation in the world, aided by the island's flat and arable land ("Early Carolina Settlement: Barbados Influence", 2020). The state's shift into a productive slave force was also noticeable in demographics: in 1629, white people made up 97% of Barbados' population, while black people made up 3%; by 1766, the population was 21% white and 79% black (Watson, 2011). Indeed, by the 18th century, the once depopulated island had more than 80,000 people (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

After a series of movements against slavery, full emancipation was finally achieved in 1838 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Watson (2011) argues that Barbados was the only Caribbean island at the time to support the abolition of slavery because of its relatively unique demographics. Comparatively, its population had a low ratio of blacks to white, a large population of permanent white residents, and a large population of native-born blacks. The latter was true because, unlike other Caribbean colonies, Barbados did not have an excess of men over women, so black slaves were able to reproduce amongst themselves within the island, without having to rely on African imports. This meant that Barbados was not dependent on importing slave labor.

Even after the abolition of slavery, labor conditions remained inhumane (Phillips, 2021), thus generating discontent that was exacerbated during the Great Depression. Palgrave Macmillan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) denotes the founding of the The Barbados Labor Party (BLP) in 1938, which advocated for better worker conditions and political rights. Universal suffrage was granted in 1951 and following that, in 1961, internal self-government. The Democratic Labor Party (DLP), founded by Errol Barrow, led the country to independence in 1966.

### Economics

Even as the largest economy in the Eastern Caribbean (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021), the country's economy depends on tourism, has a small domestic market and is vulnerable to climate change (World Bank, n.d.). Presently, Barbados has moved beyond its historical dependence on sugar plantation; the most important industries, aside from tourism, are construction and financial services (World Bank, n.d.). The latter is helped by being in the same time zone as eastern US and an educated workforce

(Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The country has, however, been twice accused of being a tax haven: once in 2002 by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and in 2017 by the European Union (“Barbados Profile - Timeline”, 2018). While the services sector has continued to grow steadily, the agriculture sector is increasingly less relevant (World Trade Organization, 2008).

## Politics

Like other Commonwealth countries, Barbados is a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Since independence, Barbados has been governed by both the BLP and DLP (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). However, in 2015, its Prime Minister expressed the desire to make Barbados a republic, implying the removal of Queen Elizabeth II as the head of state (“Barbados Profile - Timeline”, 2018).

92.4% of the population is of African descent, 3.1% is mixed, 2.7% is white, 1.3% East Indian, 0.2% other, 0.3% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Belize

Population	405,633
Land Area	22,966km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper middle income
Freedom House Score	87

## History

For many centuries, the Mayans resided in Belize in relative peace until Spanish settlement in the 16th century (Griffith, Bolland, & Alford, 2021). Shoman (2010) also notes the presence of British buccaneers during the mid-17th century, who settled in parts of Belize against Spain's wish. To end this conflict, the Spanish granted special permission for the British to continue exploiting longwood in unsurveyed areas of Belize. The British, however, continually exceeded the limits of what was accorded with Spain in terms of territory and activity. Griffith et al. (2021) observe that Spanish efforts to keep the British away and assert sovereignty over the territory were completely defeated during the Battle of St George's Caye, where Spain lost. After a period as an unofficial colony, Belize became an official British colony under the name British Honduras in 1862. This colony shared the same colonial administrator as Jamaica until 1884, when a separate governor took over Belize's administration. Throughout that period, longwood and mahogany, harvested by imported African slaves, were major trade products.

As a result of British rule, Belize has territorial disputes with Guatemala that remain unresolved. According to Perez et al. (2009), in 1839, Guatemala had claimed total sovereignty over Belize on the grounds that it was a Spanish inheritance. To settle this, the Anglo-Guatemalan Treaty was signed in 1859, under which the British understood they had defined the borders between the two territories. Guatemala, on the other hand, understood it as a treaty that gave up Guatemala's right to the land. For the treaty to come into effect, Britain promised to build a road to "improve communications" between Guatemala and Belize. Construction never took place, and thus, Guatemala officially claimed the treaty void in 1859. Due to this dispute, Belize had to delay its independence until 1981, despite the 1961 UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Even when Guatemala finally recognized Belize's sovereignty in 1991, border disputes continue (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

## Economics

Services - in particular tourism - is Belize's most important industry, followed by agricultural exports (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Major export products include sugar and citrus fruits, which account for 50% of all exports. Other items include marine products (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). According to the World Bank (2017), the agriculture sector is the second largest industry in the country, accounting for 13% of its GDP. The oil industry, developed in 2005, was also key to the country's development for a period of time, at most representing 7% of its GDP. However, the industry currently represents only 1% of GDP because of lowering international prices and decreasing reserves.

Belize is one of the countries most vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change, with annual incurred damages amounting to 4% of the country's GDP. This is not surprising

given that Belize's tourism and agriculture industry rely heavily on climate-sensitive resources (World Bank, 2017).

## Politics

Belize is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II, while a Prime Minister, the leader of the majority party, serves as the head of government (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

According to Griffith et al., (2021), universal suffrage was granted in 1954, the same year George Price became leader of the People's United Party (PUP). The PUP dominated the country during the post-independence period, until the United Democratic Party (UDP), led by Manuel Esquivel, took power in 1984. Leadership has alternated between the two parties ever since. Most notably, major riots against the PUP took place in 2005 after they raised taxes and were accused of corruption. Afterwards in 2008, the UDP won the elections under Dean Barrow, who became the first black Prime Minister in the country (Griffith et al., 2021). This is despite the fact that the country's population is 52.9% Mestizo, 25.9% Creole 25.9%, and only 1.2% white (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Bermuda

Population	72,084
Land Area	54km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	British territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

First sighted around 1503 by Juan Bermudez, a Spanish navigator (Heaton & Rushe, 2021), Bermuda is Britain's oldest surviving colony (Fortenberry, 2016). According to Crooker (2009), Spain, despite being aware of the natural resources in the island, was uninterested in colonizing small and remote islands like Bermuda. Settlement only began when the English accidentally stumbled upon the island after one of the Virginia Company's ships, the Sea Venture, shipwrecked at Bermuda in 1610. Seeing the potential value of the island and free from any resistance (because it lacked an indigenous population), the Virginia Company sent 60 settlers into Bermuda in 1612. Within three years, the island had reached a population of 1,200 men (Crooker, 2009).

The first African slaves arrived in 1616, initially for pearl diving (Wilkinson, 1958) and later for tobacco, maize, and cassava production (Jarvis, 2010). The colonists, however, became increasingly dissatisfied with the treatment towards both white and black slaves. In 1684, they sued the Somers Island Company, the private investors who had been administering the island since 1615, and consequently, the British government took control of Bermuda (Crooker, 2009). Following this, the "Maritime Revolution" took place (Fortenberry, 2016), thus expanding Bermuda's economy into shipbuilding, smuggling and privateering (Crooker, 2009). Slavery was abolished with the rest of the British Empire in 1833 (Heaton & Rushe, 2021).

In 1968, a new constitution was established and Bermuda was granted internal self-government ("Bermuda Profile - Timeline", 2014). That year, the United Bermuda Party (UBP), a multi-racial party, ruled under a parliamentary government (Heaton & Rushe, 2021). Paralleling this event was the worsening situation of the tourism sector because of racial tensions. Black residents, who made up 60% of the population, complained that jobs in the sector were being held by white foreigners ("Governor of Bermuda and Aide Are Assassinated", 1973). Political tensions peaked when Sir Richard Sharples, the then Governor of the British colony, was assassinated in 1973. The culprit cited the motive as making "[...]the black people in particular, become aware of the evilness and wickedness of the colonialist system in this island[...]and... ]to show that these colonialists were just ordinary people like ourselves[...]and that we need not stand in fear and awe of them" (Orr, 2009, p. 34). Tensions and rioting led to official talks that aimed at ending racial discrimination. This resulted in a referendum for independence in 1997 that was rejected by nearly three-fourths of the population (Heaton & Rushe, 2021).

### Economics

The most important industry in Bermuda is the service sector, which encompasses financial services and insurance. It accounts for 85% of the country's GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b). Of secondary importance is the tourism industry, accounting for

5% of its GDP, but a large share of employment (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b) in related areas such as construction and services (Crooker, 2009). Eighty percent of Bermuda's visitors come from the US (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b). Notably, the tourism industry overtook the agriculture industry because of the development of luxury steamships in the 1920s, which brought in large numbers of tourists. According to Fortenberry (2016), Bermuda currently possesses considerable social and economic stability. In fact, if it decided to pursue independence, it would be the fourth highest GDP per capita in the world. However, there are concerns that ending relations with Britain could put this at risk.

## Politics

Bermuda is an overseas UK territory and a self-governing parliamentary democracy. The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II, while the premier is the leader of the majority party/coalition (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a).

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) won the elections in 1998 (Heaton & Rushe, 2021). The party was founded in 1968 and was representative of the black population. In 2012, it lost to the One Bermuda Alliance (OBA), which represented the white population. This party was a merger of the UBP and the Bermuda Democratic Alliance. However, its leader, Craig Cannonier, resigned because of corruption scandals involving US businessmen. In July 2017, power returned to the PLP, with David Burt serving as Premier.

53.8% of the population is of African descent, 31% White, 7.5% mixed, 7.1% other, and 0.6% unspecified (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b).

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## British Virgin Islands

Population	37,891
Land Area	151km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	British territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

Made up of four large islands and 32 smaller ones, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) is a British overseas territory. Columbus discovered the islands in 1493 (Debono, Dreisin, Evans, & Pragnell, 2017). By this time, the Arawak Indians who had resided there since 100 BC had been expelled from the islands by the Caribs (Government of the Virgin Islands, n.d.). Debono et al. (2017) observe that in 1555 a Spanish invasion force was sent to claim the islands, resulting in the fleeing or death of the Caribs. Later in 1648, the Dutch settled in Tortola island, where four fifths of the population currently reside. The English claimed the islands in 1666 and in 1672 the BVI was annexed to Britain and administered together with the Leeward Islands (“British Virgin Islands”, 2019).

Sustained English settlement only began in 1680, after some English planters from Anguilla moved to the BVI (O’Neal, 2012). European settlement in the island increased with the arrival of pirates and the Europeans from other islands who were seeking to avoid criminal punishment. Some of these Europeans had brought slaves with them (O’Neal, 2012), and later on, the high demand of sugar plantations would increase the amount of slaves in the islands (“British Virgin Islands Colony”, n.d.). In 1717, there were around 547 blacks; by 1756, there were over 6,000 (O’Neal, 2012). Britain granted emancipation in 1834 after the Slave Emancipation Act.

In 1773, a constitutional government was granted only to be surrendered in 1867 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) with the establishment of a legislature; in 1902, the governor-in-council became only legislative authority (“British Virgin Islands”, 2019). Amidst claims for more self-rule, the British government appointed a legislative council in 1950, along with a new constitution (Government of the Virgin Islands, n.d.). In 1956, the Leewards Islands Federation was abolished, followed by the abolishment of the office of the governor in 1960, thus making the BVI an official British colony (Debono et al., 2017).

### Economics

The BVI’s main industry is tourism, which accounts for 45% of its national income (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021) and one fourth of the jobs in the islands (Debono et al., 2017). Offshore banking is another important economic sector. There were around 400,000 registered companies in the BVI in 2001 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The BVI have not shown any signs that it wants independence from Britain, mainly because of economic reasons such as avoiding tax burdens and preventing damage to the tourism industry (“British Virgin Islands”, 2019).

Historically, the BVI has had deep ties to the US Virgin Islands, the latter being the result of a 1917 US purchase of three islands - Saint Croix, Saint John, and Saint Thomas. In 1958, the British Virgin Islands refused to join the West Indies Federation in order

to maintain the close ties it had developed with the US islands (“British Virgin Islands”, 2019). Indeed, the BVI’s economy is so closely related with the US Virgin Islands that it’s been using the US dollar as its official currency since 1959 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Politics

BVI is an overseas UK territory and a self-governing parliamentary democracy. The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II, while the premier is the leader of the majority party/coalition (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021)

A constitutional order in 1967 granted the islands autonomy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021) in the form of a ministerial government (“British Virgin Islands”, 2019). According to Meditz (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989), The Virgin Islands Party’s (VIP) leader, Lavity Stouff, served as chief minister that year. He was replaced in 1975 by the United Party (UP), the rivaling party. Though both parties have alternated in power since then, changes in policy have remained stable throughout; in fact, the political scene in late 1980s BVI was that of a highly stable two-party system, in contrast to the unstable politics present throughout the Caribbean at the time. More recent developments include the British Overseas Territory Act of 2002, which officially made the BVI an overseas territory and granted its population British citizenship (“British Virgin Islands”, 2019). A constitution established in 2007 gave the island further autonomy (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

76.3% of the BVI’s population is African/black, 5.5% Latino, and 5.4% White (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Cayman Islands

Population	63,131
Land Area	264km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	British Territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

The Cayman Islands (CI) consist of three islands: Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, and Cayman Brac. There is little evidence of there ever being an indigenous presence, although the Ameridians used the islands as a stopover when migrating into more resourceful islands (West, 2003). Christopher Columbus sighted the CI in 1503, though little interest was shown in the islands' resources and as such, no Spanish settlement took place (Wells, 2018). Instead, the islands became a source for food, mainly of turtles and fresh water (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989).

Under the 1670 Treaty of Madrid, Spain ceded the islands to Britain. British mariners, privateers, shipwrecked passengers, and African slaves were the first to settle there (Ferguson, Winker, & Ebanks, 2021). By 1734, however, the majority of settlers were from Jamaica. The CI became a dependency of Jamaica from 1863 until 1959 (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989; Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), the year it began internal self-governance. After Jamaica's independence in 1962, the islands returned to direct British rule (Ferguson et al., 2021). This was not immediately welcomed. In 1960, Ormond Panton, a non-white Camaynian, challenged the British administration and gained popularity among Camaynians. Later, he formed the Cayman National Democratic Party (CNDP), which led to the creation of other political parties, namely, the Christian Democratic Party. There were tensions between two sides: those who wished to continue being part of Jamaica, and those who wished to be under British control. With respected political leaders in the CNDP, many Camaynians had hoped the CNDP party would lead the CI. Although it did manage to obtain a majority of electoral votes, the British administration had the power to nominate and thus, shift the balance of the Assembly in their favor. As a consequence, the CNDP lost significant support, suffering a major loss in the 1965 elections (West, 2003).

### Economy

The members of the CI Legislative Assembly have maintained a clear stance on not pursuing independence. This is mainly due to economic concerns, considering their limited capacity as a small state, and likewise, to be able to continue taking advantage of the investment confidence that is derived from being connected to Britain (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). Nonetheless, the islands do not depend on the British government for its budget, and in fact, the 2009 Constitution limits the amount of money that can be borrowed from Britain, with flexibility granted for pressing matters (Cayman Islands Government, n.d.).

Tourism and offshore businesses remain the islands' most important economic pillars, with the former accounting for 70% of its GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Over three-quarters of visitors are from the US (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Additionally, social, political, and economic stability, as well as tax neutrality, has allowed for the successful development of the financial industry (Cayman Islands Government, n.d.). Indeed, the CI has long been considered a major financial centre, with 47 of the 50 largest banks having a presence in the islands since 1997 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Aside from stability, the islands are a highly attractive investment destination because there is no income, corporation, nor capital gains taxes (Cayman Islands Government, n.d.).

## Politics

CI has historically enjoyed political stability, especially relative to the rest of the Caribbean islands. After the period of divisive two-party politics in the 1960s, political parties disappeared in the CI (West, 2003) and thereafter, seats in the Legislative Assembly were occupied by either candidates or independents with no significant differences in ideology or policy (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). In 2009, a new constitution granted the CI further autonomy through the establishment of the office of premier and the enlargement of the Legislative Assembly (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). In 2020, an amendment to the constitution made the CI the third British overseas territory to replace the Legislative Assembly with a Parliament (Ferguson et al., 2021). Presently, as a self-governing territory of the United Kingdom, the CI operates under a parliamentary democracy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Leadership has alternated between the United Democratic Party, formed in 2001, and the People's Progressive Movement, formed in 2002.

Like other Caribbean islands, slaves were brought to the CI, who engaged in cotton, coffee, and sugar plantations (West, 2003). Nonetheless, according to Wells (2018) slavery in the CI was less harsh compared to other Caribbean countries: by the emancipation of slavery in 1834, the ratio of slaves to non-slaves was 1:1, compared to the average 10:1 in the Caribbean. Several reasons are cited for this, including the absence of large scale sugar plantations (Wells, 2018) and widespread interracial marriage due to the lack of white women (West, 2003). Presently, 40% of its population is mixed, 20% white, 20% black, and 20% expats/others (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021)

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## Curacao

Population	151,885
Land Area	444km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Dutch Territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

The Caiquetios, a coastal tribe of the Arawak people, were the first to settle in Curaçao. They lived in small communities and mostly worked as fishermen or cultivators (Goslinga, 2012). The Spanish sighted Curacao in 1499, who deported the native inhabitants into other Caribbean islands for labor (“Curaçao”, 2019). During the Spanish period, the Indians enjoyed considerable power and lived like much of their ancestors had: unlike other Caribbean countries, they were allowed to govern and organize themselves as they had done previously, only that it had to be under Spanish supervision (Goslinga, 2012).

In the 1500s, Sephardic Jews from Portugal emigrated to Curaçao, making the island the oldest Jewish community in the hemisphere (“Curaçao”, 2019). Other Jewish groups came from Brazil and Spain, and most of them dedicated themselves to trade (Goslinga, 2012). A search for salt directed the Dutch towards Curcao in 1634, who, after a victory against the Spanish (Goslinga, 2012), occupied it and made it an important centre for commerce and slave trade in the region by virtue of its natural harbor (“Curaçao”, 2019). The capital, Willemstad, was built by the Dutch West India Company (WIC) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The Dutch imported African slaves, with the first group arriving in 1639. Although, as Soboslai (Soboslai, 2012) notes, because of Curacao’s climate, plantations never developed into large scale. Instead, smuggling, pirateering, and slave trade were the major economic activities. In fact, the island would come to be the centre of slave trade for the WIC in the Caribbean (Goslinga, 2012), with estimates indicating that the number of Africans that passed through the island reached 1 million Africans (Aggett & Van De Leur, 2020). In 1828, Curaçao became a part of the Dutch West Indies and in 1845, of the Netherlands Antilles.

### Economics

Curacao’s economy declined after the Dutch made slavery illegal in 1863. Economic growth in the 20th century was dependent on oil, namely, the construction of Isla Refineria, a Venezuelan oil refinery (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Another refinery that came to be crucial to the island’s economy is the Royal Dutch Shell, constructed in 1918 (Aggett & Van De Leur, 2020). Presently, Curacao’s economy is mainly based on oil refining, tourism and offshore finance (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). 85% of its GDP and a majority of its employment is derived from the services sector (Lansford, 2021).

The economy is highly dependent on Venezuela’s crude oil, importing from there most of its oil and exporting it to the US or Asia. Being just 37 miles from Venezuela (“Curaçao”, 2019), the Venezuelan crisis has had negative impacts on its economy (International Monetary Fund, 2020). Moreover, due to its dependency on oil refineries (Aggett & Van De Leur, 2020), the economy suffered a major decline when the Shell refinery closed in 1985. The devaluation of the Venezuelan currency in 1983 and the changes in American



fiscal policy in 1987 further contributed to Curacao's economic decline. To mitigate this, the government encouraged tourism, increasing the amount of tourists by half a million between 1997 and 2007 (emerald). Curacao also benefits from its natural harbor; most notably, the port of Willemstad encompasses a free trade zone (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Politics

The Dutch granted internal Curacao self-government in 1954 and in 2010, after the Netherlands Antilles was dissolved, full autonomy in its internal affairs (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2021), the Netherlands oversees all defense and foreign affairs matters. Curacao's chief of state is the King of the Netherlands, while it also has a head of government, represented by a Prime Minister, and a cabinet. The governor is appointed by the Dutch monarch, while the parliament elects the leader of the majority party as Prime Minister through legislative election.

The 1969 uprising left a significant mark on Curacaoan politics, which Sharpe (Sharpe, 2009) observes entailed the transition from a white ruling elite to black populist politics. This uprising was the result of a labor dispute between the Curaçao Federation of Workers (CFW) and the contractors of Royal Dutch Shell, Werkspoor Caribbean (WESCAR). At the time, Dutch Shell was the main employer in the country and tensions within the majority black workers had already been escalating for some time. The workers thus demanded an agreement on labor and wages, which was not reached. As such, the workers rose against WESCAR as well as the government, which was perceived as siding with the company. The Dutch military intervened to calm the situation.

The government has remained unstable in recent years. According to Lansford (Lansford, 2021), in 1999, the National People's Party (PNP) government, represented by Camelia-Romer, collapsed because of a dispute over a national recovery plan. Later in 2003, Anthony Godett of the Workers' Liberation Front (FOL) won the elections but had to resign because of corruption allegations. In December of that same year, he was sentenced to prison for forgery, bribery, and money laundering. He was succeeded by Bernhard Komproe in July, and by Luisa-Godett (his sister) in August. In 2004, the government collapsed again because the PNP denied Komproe from continuing as justice minister.

Following this, Luis Godett resigned, and Entienne Ys from the Restructured Antilles Party (PAR) became Prime Minister. After being granted autonomy in 2010, Gerrit Schotte took office as the leader of the Movementu Futuro Kòrsou (MFK). He asked for early elections in 2012, resulting in a coalition government between the PAIS and PNP. In 2014, Godett was arrested over allegations of money laundering and bribery, followed by a 3-year sentence in 2016. That same year, Hensley Koeiman won elections as the leader of the PAR, but his government collapsed after seven weeks when his coalition lost majority support in parliament ("Curaçao Government Collapses And Calls For New Elections In April", 2015). Gilmar Pisas of the MFK served as a Prime Minister for a short period after this. In 2021, he won a majority in parliamentary elections ("Curaçao Election Result Will Set Off Alarm Bells in Netherlands", 2021).

Curacao's population is 75.4% Curacaoan, 6% Dutch, 3.6% Dominican, 3% Bonairean, amongst others (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Ethnically, 85% is of mixed African ancestry (Lansford, 2021). Additionally, Goldberg (2019) notes that in 2019, there were 10,000 to 13,000 Venezuelan refugees in Curacao, a significant amount given the island's

small population. The Curacaoan government has been actively deporting, arresting, and/or detaining them.

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## Dominica

Population	74,584
Land Area	751km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper middle income
Freedom House Score	93

### History

The Caribs forced the Arawak people, who originally inhabited Dominica, out of the island (Niddrie & Momsen, 2021). Dominica is one of the most mountainous islands in the Caribbean (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). The Caribs tended to settle on the island's coasts (Layng, 1973). High mountains benefited the Caribs during the period European settlement: when Christopher Columbus sighted the island in 1493, the Caribs successfully protected themselves against Spanish colonization by attacking them and using the mountains as a safe haven.

Due to Carib resistance and Dominica's topography, it took 200 years for the Europeans to colonize Dominica. In 1627, the French claimed the island, although it would be disputed with the English for fifty years (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). Finally, both parties agreed that Dominica was Carib possession in 1660 (Layng, 1973). This was officialized through the Treaty of Aix la Cha in 1748, although neither side adhered to the agreement. As such, Dominica was exchanged many times between the English and French after the 1750s. From 1778 until 1784, the French governed the island, under which free colored Dominicans were treated with equality.

Later, the Treaty of Versailles granted Britain official control over Dominica (Honychurch, 1995). Circumstances were less peaceful then because the French continued to threaten invasion. Furthermore, the British actively attempted to eliminate the political and religious freedoms the French had established in Dominica. Under British rule, Dominica was administered as part of the Leewards Islands between 1883 and 1940 (Niddrie & Momsen, 2021). When the Leewards Islands dissolved in 1967 (Niddrie & Momsen, 2021), Dominica was granted autonomy over its internal affairs as an associated state of the UK, finally gaining independence in 1978 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021) .

### Economics

According to Layng (1973), although there were African slaves in Dominica, plantations never fully developed because of the island's topography. Dominica enjoyed a brief period of economic prosperity when, following the American Revolution, it was allowed to trade with the United States. However, the outbreak of war in 1812 and the hurricanes that hit the island in 1813 and 1816 lead to economic decline.

Niddrie et al. (2021) observe that Dominica is of the poorest countries in the Caribbean. This is, in part, due to its high vulnerability to hurricanes, which has devastated its economy numerous times. The most important sector is agriculture. The main crops are bananas, citrus fruits, and coconuts. The importance of agriculture decreased in the late 20th century because hurricanes tended to destroy crops. The fishing industry also declined after Hurricane David destroyed most fishing boats in 1979, although it

recovered later thanks to foreign financial aid. The Central Intelligence Agency (2021) notes how tourism has become increasingly important to the island's economy, but in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017, Dominica was left with a damaged agriculture sector and infrastructure (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The government has also dedicated significant efforts towards developing offshore financial services. Dominica is one of the few countries in the region that grants passports to foreigners for free through an investment programs.

## Politics

Presently, Dominica is one of the most politically stable countries in the Caribbean (Layng, 1973). In 1831, the House of Assembly passed the Brown Privilege Bill, allowing free blacks to vote and run for political office (Layng, 1973). According to Sandra et al. (1989), by 1838, Dominica was the only British Caribbean colony at the time to have a majority black legislature. Another important milestone in Dominican politics is the election of Edward Oliver Leblanc, a farmer and representative of the Dominica Labor Party (DLP), as the country's leader in 1967. He was the first person without connections to the governing elite to be elected in Dominica. After achieving independence in 1978, Patrick Roland John became Prime Minister, although, because of corruption allegations, he was replaced the following year by Oliver Seraphine, who represented the DLP (Niddrie & Momsen, 2021).

Dominica has the largest Carib presence in the Caribbean, and most of them live in a reservation (Boxill & Severin, 2004). There were around 4,000 Caribs in 1998, although they're one of the country's poorest populations (Boxill & Severin, 2004). Indeed, a 2009 country-wide poverty assessment found that the poverty rate was highest amongst the Carib people residing in St. David (Pan-American Health Organization, 2012). Traces of Carib culture is evident in the country, with increased government efforts towards reviving traditions that suffered during the colonization period (Niddrie & Momsen, 2021). 86.6% of the country's population is of African descent, 9.1% mixed, 2.9% indigenous, and 1.3% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## El Salvador

Population	6,528,135
Land Area	21,041 $km^2$
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower middle income
Freedom House Score	63

### History

Indigenous groups - the Pocam, Chortí, Lenca, and Pipil - resided in El Salvador before Spanish occupation (Flemion, Browning, Varela, & Schultze-Kraft, 2021). Between 300 and 900, El Salvador was heavily influenced by the neighbouring Maya culture (White, 2008). The Pipil became the dominant group around 1054. During this time, El Salvador enjoyed a large population, extensive trade networks, and a vibrant culture. The Spanish had conquered Guatemala and Mexico prior to El Salvador. This proved beneficial to their colonization efforts in El Salvador because Spanish diseases, from which the indigenous peoples had no resistance to, killed up to 50% of the population before their arrival in 1524. Under Spanish rule, native traditions were quickly destroyed and the remaining indigenous people were forced into slavery along with the imported Africans.

El Salvador obtained independence from Spain in 1821, and from the Central American Federation in 1839 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). According to Percy (2005), late 20th century El Salvador was characterized by turbulent politics and violence. Most notably, in 1931, the military overthrew the government and established a military government that lasted over five decades. The following year, 20,000 civilians were killed because Communist activists had killed 30 civilian and military personnel. This historic event is known as *La Matanza* and it marked the beginning of the elite's efforts at repressing political opposition.

Repressive military rule and social inequality (Niddrie & Momsen, 2021) caused a civil war that lasted between the 1970s and 1980s. As Percy (2005) observes, inflation was beyond 60% during the 1970s, and the military committed fraud during the 1972 and 1977 elections to stay in power. The Left, including guerillas, communists, and activists, banded together to fight against the military. Notably, in 1980, the Father Oscar Romero, Archbishop of El Salvador, was murdered by the military. He had been threatened several times for speaking out against the military and for his compassion for civilians. His death triggered the civil war between the military and the leftists, who were organized as the Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) (Percy, 2005). A 1992 peace treaty between the government and the rebels finally ended the violence. The country is still recovering from decades of civil war, with crime and social inequality being major problems that have been further exacerbated by natural disasters such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998 (Niddrie & Momsen, 2021).

### Economics

The civil war heavily damaged the Salvadorian economy. It only began to recover after the 1992 peace accord. The country suffers from low levels of economic growth, high crime rates, and natural disasters (World Bank, 2020). Currently, El Salvador is the fourth largest economy in Central America. Its economy is heavily dependent

on remittances, which accounted for around 21% of its GDP in 2019 (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019).

An important sector of the country's economy is agriculture, which accounts for 12.6% of its GDP (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Nonetheless, with the fall of coffee production, the country has shifted to a services-based economy, now accounting for 60.5% of its GDP, especially in the areas of commerce and finance. Exports are worth 22.6% of its GDP (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019), bolstered by trade agreements such as the 2006 Central America–Dominican Republic–United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA–DR) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The USA is El Salvador's largest trading partner, worth around 50% of all exports, and also the largest source of remittances.

## Politics

El Salvador is a presidential republic and its President serves both as the chief of state and head of government. The President is elected by popular vote (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). In 2009, Mauricio Funes of the FMLN became the first leftist president in over two decades ("El Salvador Profile - Timeline", 2018). Despite his major efforts on tackling growing gang violence, it continued to escalate during his presidency (2021). Sánchez Cerén, who took office in 2012, continued to work towards eradicating such violence, taking more hard-line and aggressive approaches; yet, homicide rates continued to increase. To this day, many Salvadorans continue to flee to the United States to escape the violence, poverty, and political turmoil in the country. In 2019, Nayib Bukele, after successfully running a populist anti-corruption campaign, was elected President as a representative of the Grand Alliance for National Unity (GANU), thus dethroning the FMLN after three-decades of power.

The population is 86.3% mestizo, 12.7% white, and 1% other (Flemion et al., 2021). The poor economic state during the country's civil war had a lasting impact on El Salvador's demographics. Around one-fifth of Salvadorans left, mostly to neighbouring countries and the United States. Mass deportation of undocumented Salvadorans in the United States began in the 2000s.

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## Grenada

Population	113,570
Land Area	344km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper middle income
Freedom House Score	89

### History

Prior to European settlement, the Caribs, who overtook the Arawaks, resided in Grenada. When sighted by the Spanish in 1498, the Spanish made no effort to colonize it, perhaps because of Carib resistance (Britter, 2021; Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). It is for this same reason that the English failed in their first attempt at colonizing Grenada in 1609 (Steele, 1974). The French, who brought in large amount of slaves, were the first Europeans to settle in 1652 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). The British occupied Granada in 1762. The French reconquered it in 1779, and returned it to the British in 1783 through the Treaty of Versailles (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). The latter established English institutions, sugar plantations, and brought in more African slaves (Britter, 2021; Steele, 1974). In 1795, the ideas of the French Revolution, particularly the abolition of slavery, inspired a rebellion led by French planter and mulatto general Julien Fedon (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989; Niddrie & Momsen, 2021). Britain granted emancipation in 1833 (Britter, 2021).

From 1885 to 1958, Britter notes (2021), Grenada was part of the West Indies Federation, and also served as the headquarters of the British Windward Islands government (Britter, 2021). When the federation dissolved in 1962, Grenada hoped to federate with the Windward Islands, along with Barbados and the Leeward Islands. This never occurred, and instead, in 1967, it became a self-governing state associated with the UK. The Grenada United Labor Party (GULP), led by trade unionist Eric M. Gairy, won the country's first elections as an Associated State. GULP won again in 1972. In 1974, Grenada became independent and the same party won, making Gairy the first Prime Minister of Grenada (Steele, 1974).

By 1976, Gairy's extravagant spending and corruption became palpable; his policies was often compared to that of Haiti's Duvalier (Lansford, 2021; McDonald, 1969). Opposition against him began to grow, notable by the rise of grass-root movement of opposition farmers (Lansford, 2021; McDonald, 1969). During the elections of that year, three opposition parties - the Grenada National Party (GNP), the New Jewel Movement (NJM), and the United People's Party (UPP) - successfully decreased the GULP's representation in the House. In 1979, taking advantage of Gairy's being overseas, the NJM staged a successful coup (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). Maurice Bishop, inspired by Marxist states such as Cuba, ruled Grenada under the People's Revolutionary Government (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). In 1983, a military coup ended their control, resulting in Bishop's death. The US intervened militarily six days later and restored a constitutional government (Britter, 2021; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Economics

The four most important sectors of the Grenadian economy are tourism, construction, transport, and private education, accounting for 50.1% of total GDP in 2017 (National Portal of the Government of Grenada, [n.d.](#)). Additionally, Grenada depends on tourism and St. George's University for foreign exchange (Lloyds Bank, [2021](#)). Agriculture is also an important sector, particularly for exports. Major crops include spices, nutmeg, bananas, cocoa, and fish (National Portal of the Government of Grenada, [n.d.](#)). Its main trading partners are the US, UK, European Union, Canada, and other Caribbean islands (National Portal of the Government of Grenada, [n.d.](#)). Efforts to diversify the economy have included expanding the citizenship by investment program, which simultaneously led to the growth of the construction and manufacturing industries (Lloyds Bank, [2021](#)).

Grenada's economy is highly vulnerable to hurricanes (Palgrave Macmillan, [2017](#)). For instance, Hurricane Ivan in 2004 left damages that amounted to 150% of Grenada's GDP. The economy also contracted during the 2008 financial crisis, and recovery began gaining momentum in 2014, with the increase of US exports and global energy prices.

## Politics

Grenada is a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)). The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II, while a Prime Minister, the head of the majority party in the House of Representatives, serves as the executive authority (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)). In 1995, Keith Mitchell of the New National Party (NNP) became Prime Minister ([2021](#)). He won the next two terms, although in his third and last one, he was accused of accepting bribes. Although no conclusive evidence was found, he lost the 2008 elections to Tillman Thomas, who represented the National Democratic Congress (NDC). In the 2013 elections, Mitchell won all 15 seats in the House, becoming Prime Minister for a fourth term.

82.4% of the population is black, descendants of African slaves. 13.3% are mixed, 2.2% East Indian, 1.3% other, and 0.9% unspecified (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)).

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## Guyana

Population	786,559
Land Area	215,000 $km^2$
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	middle income
Freedom House Score	73/100 - Free

### History

Guyana was likely inhabited in the first millennium BCE, with groups of Arawak, Carib, and perhaps Warao as the first settlers. Early communities practiced shifting agriculture, which was complemented with hunting (Richardson & Menke, 2021).

In 1498, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus sighted Guyana. Spain then claimed the ‘Wild Coast’, a region between the Amazon and Orinoco deltas including modern-day Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana, but did not act extensively in the area (Richardson & Menke, 2021). In 1580, the Dutch set up trading posts upriver. They set up the colonies Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice (Farley, 1955). By the mid-1600s, they had started transporting West African slaves into the colonies to work on sugarcane plantations (Farley, 1955; Richardson & Menke, 2021). Laurens Storm vans Gravesande, governor of Essequibo and Demerara from 1742 to 1772, spearheaded efforts to explore the interior of the colonies and move Dutch estates downriver towards more fertile areas (Richardson & Menke, 2021). In 1796, the British captured Guyana from the Dutch and remained largely in possession of the territory. In 1814, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice were officially ceded to the British by the Dutch (Paxton, 1987), and in 1831 the colonies were unified into British Guiana (Richardson & Menke, 2021).

In 1807, the slave trade was abolished, leaving 100,000 slaves in Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. After full emancipation in 1838, blacks left plantations to set up settlements along the coast. Planters hence began importing labour from various countries, the most significant portion coming from India (Richardson & Menke, 2021). Upon earning their freedom, indentured Indian labourers settled in coastal villages close to the estates. In 1870, gold was discovered in Guyana, increasing the speed of settlement (Richardson & Menke, 2021).

The British modified Guyana’s Dutch-adapted constitution in 1891 and 1928, first giving more power to local officials then shifting back towards British political dominance (Richardson & Menke, 2021). In 1953, a new constitution introduced major changes such as universal adult suffrage, a ministerial system, and bicameral elected legislature (Richardson & Menke, 2021). Yet, the first elected government — the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), led by socialist-leaning Cheddi Jagan — appeared pro-communist to the point that in October 1953 the British pressured Jagan into resigning, suspended the constitution and deployed troops. The constitution was restored in 1957 (Prados & Jimenez-Bacardi, 2020). The PPP had split along ethnic lines: the primarily Indo-Guyanese PPP continued to be headed by Cheddi Jagan, while the primarily Afro-Guyanese were led by Forbes Burnham in the People’s National Congress (PNC). In 1957 and 1961 elections, the PPP won working majorities. However, in 1962 Jagan introduced an austerity budget and tax increase that mainly fell onto the African and mixed population, without consulting the opposition (Prados & Jimenez-Bacardi, 2020). Up till 1964, violent ri-

ots and demonstrations broke out between Afro- and Indo-Guyanese groups, and several months'-long sugar worker strikes were held (Global Security, 2017). In early 1964, one such sugar worker demonstration triggered violence that grew beyond the authorities' control. The British governor Sir Richard Edmonds Luyt declared a state of emergency, deployed British troops to Guyana in May, and declared a moratorium on political activity in June (Global Security, 2017; University of Central Arkansas, n.d.).

On 7 December 1964, a new election was held, with the PNC receiving significant financial and political support from the CIA (Prados & Jimenez-Bacardi, 2020). Despite heavy gerrymandering of expatriate votes in the PNC's favour and other electoral irregularities, the PPP won 46% of votes to the PNC's 41%. Yet, the British governor offered only PNC's Burnham the chance to form a coalition government, allowing him to become prime minister (Prados & Jimenez-Bacardi, 2020). Guyana achieved independence on May 26, 1966. A 1968 general election granted the PNC full power, amidst claims of electoral fraud and the Central Intelligence Agencies (CIA)'s continued funding of Burnham. In total, the US National Security Council approved 2.08 million USD for covert action programmes in Guyana from 1962 to 1968 (Global Security, 2017).

Burnham increasingly turned away from the US and became a dictator (Prados & Jimenez-Bacardi, 2020). In 1970, he declared his government to be socialist. In 1980, he introduced a new constitution which granted him expanded powers as executive president. Burnham died in 1985 (Richardson & Menke, 2021).

In 1978, over 900 people died in the Jonestown massacre in the Guyanese jungle. At the instruction of Reverend Jim Jones, leader of the Peoples Temple cult from America, cult members drank cyanide-laced punch in a mass murder-suicide. The massacre is the second-largest single incident of intentional civilian death in American history after the 9/11 attacks (Conroy, 2018).

Burnham was succeeded by the then-prime minister Hugh Desmond Hoyte, who won elections that year amidst charges of electoral irregularities. Hoyte denounced communism, liberalised the economy, and accorded more rights to the Guyanese in the late 1980s (Richardson & Menke, 2021). Elections held in 1992 were regarded internationally as free and fair, and brought the PPP and Jagan to power. Jagan's new policies were more democratic and economically liberal. He died in 1997 and his wife, Janet Jagan, was elected as president that same year. She stepped down in 1999 due to failing health (Richardson & Menke, 2021).

Bharrat Jagdeo was appointed president by the PPP and reelected in 2001 and 2006 (Richardson & Menke, 2021). Donald Ramotar of the PPP was elected president in 2011 but the PPP and its coalition partner failed to retain a majority in the National Assembly against the coalition A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) and the Alliance for Change (AFC) party, leading to legislative deadlock (Richardson & Menke, 2021). In 2015, APNU-AFC narrowly won against the PPP, and the coalition's candidate David Granger became president (Richardson & Menke, 2021).

In 2015, significant amounts of oil were discovered offshore Guyana, with several more oilfield discoveries in the following years (Richardson & Menke, 2021). Guyana began oil production in 2019.

The APNU-AFC and PPP increased their efforts to dominate government and control the development of new industry and wealth from the oil boom (Richardson & Menke,

2021). In 2018, Granger’s government narrowly lost a vote of no-confidence for failing to act quickly enough to regulate the oil boom. APNU-AFC attempted to overturn the ruling but was unsuccessful (Richardson & Menke, 2021). Granger won a subsequent March 2020 election, but his victory was marred by attempted fraud. A national recount established the PPP’s victory (Freedom House, 2021). In August 2020, Mohamend Irfaan Ali became Guyana’s president (Richardson & Menke, 2021).

## Economics

Guyana’s services sector contributes to 69% of its GDP, while agriculture and industry contribute 15% each (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Guyana’s key industries include bauxite, sugar, rice milling, timber, textiles, and gold mining, while main agricultural products include rice, sugar cane, coconuts, pumpkins, and squash (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Its key export partners are Trinidad and Tobago (31% of exports), Canada (11%), Portugal (11%), and Ghana (8%) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

ExxonMobil, which found oil in Guyana in 2015, estimates that Guyana holds at least 10 billion barrels of crude oil, which could make the country one of the richest per capita in the western hemisphere over the next 20 years (Arsenault, 2021). Oil production started in 2019 (Arsenault, 2021). Between 2019 and 2020 Guyana saw 43% economic growth, one of the fastest rates in the world (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). On 29 December 2021, Guyana’s parliament approved a sovereign wealth fund to oversee the country’s revenues from the oil boom (Marks, 2021). The National Resources fund will grant parliament oversight of oil revenues instead of the Minister of Finance, increasing transparency and proper governance (Marks, 2021).

## Politics

Guyana has a unicameral, 65-seat National Assembly. Members are elected for 5-year terms (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The head of the state is the president. Forty representatives are elected in one nationwide constituency via proportional representation, while 25 more are elected to 10 geographical constituencies (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Up to 7 ex-officio seats can be held by unelected parliamentary officials and cabinet ministers (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

European Union (EU) Observers reported that the 2020 most recent elections were competitive and generally free. However, senior officials from the Guyana Elections Commission were judged to have manipulated results in the largest electoral district in an attempt by the former government to retain power. This sparked a month-long recount. Due to pressure from the international community, the PPP eventually emerged as the winners based on the recount results (Freedom House, 2021).

Guyana’s population is 40% East Indian, 29% of African descent, 20% mixed, 11% Amerindian, and 0.5% other (including Portuguese, Chinese, and White) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Guyana has one of the highest emigration rates in the world. Around 50% of citizens reside abroad (Center for Strategic International Studies, 2020).

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## Jamaica

Population	2,816,602
Land Area	10,991 $km^2$
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper middle income
Freedom House Score	80

## History

The Spanish settled in Jamaica in 1509 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). In 1655, England took control of the island and established a plantation economy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021), however, they only gained official claim over Jamaica after the 1670 Treaty of Madrid. In 1662, non-slaves were granted the rights of English citizens, which included the right to establish their own laws. The English also established other governing positions such as a governor and a House of Assembly were also established early on in Jamaica's history (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989).

After the founding of the Royal African Company in 1672, Jamaica became a crucial slave market as well as one of Britain's most important agricultural economies (Ferguson, Bryan, Buisseret, & Black, 2021). With the abolishment of slavery in 1834, said economy collapsed (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The 1944 constitution established the House of Representative, a Legislative Council, and an Executive Council (Ferguson et al., 2021). A two party-system surfaced after this, formed by the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), led by Alexander Bustamante, and the People's National Party (PNP), led by Norman Manley (Ferguson et al., 2021; Lansford, 2021). Jamaica joined the Federation of West Indies in 1958, withdrew in 1961, and became independent in 1962 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Violent gangs, organized crime by political parties, drug trafficking, poverty, and money laundering were prevalent issues during the 1970s - many of which persist to this day (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Most recently in 2018, a state of emergency was declared in St. James Parish after a sudden escalation in violence and murders.

## Economics

Over 70% of Jamaica's GDP is dependent on the services sector (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The tourism sector is the country's largest employer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) as well as its main source of foreign exchange (World Trade Organization, 2010). According to the World Trade Organization (2010), mining is the most important non-service export, with Jamaica being one of the world's most important producers of bauxite and alumina. Over 90% of its exports are directed towards the United States, Canada, and the EU. Presently, the country continues to move away from sectors such as agriculture, mining, and manufacturing in favor of the services.

Jamaica is still recovering from the global economic crisis. Challenges to its economic growth include structural issues and vulnerability to natural disasters (World Trade Organization, 2010). Since 2013, Jamaica has been collaborating closely with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to address various economic issues, namely, its debt-to-GDP ratio, which, in 2013, amounted to 147% of its GDP (International Monetary Fund, 2019;

Lansford, 2021).

## Politics

Jamaica is a constitutional monarchy in a parliamentary democracy. The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II, while a Prime Minister, the head of the majority party/coalition in the House of Representatives, serves as the head of government (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Since independence, power has alternated between the JLP and the PNP (Lansford, 2021; Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

In 2007, Bruce Golding of the JLP was elected (Lansford, 2021). His rule was put under scrutiny after the US requested the extradition of drug lord Christopher "Dudus" Coke (Lansford, 2021). The arrest involved security forces and the death of several people, and also highlighted the issue of political parties collaborating with gangs (Ferguson et al., 2021; Lansford, 2021). Consequently, Golding resigned in 2010 (Lansford, 2021). Andrew Holness of the JLP succeeded him, winning a second term in the 2020 elections (Lansford, 2021).

Around 77% of Jamaica's population is of African descent, and 15% is mixed afro-European (Lansford, 2021).

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## Puerto Rico

Population	3,142,779
Land Area	9,104km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	US territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

The Spanish colonized Puerto Rico in the 16th century. Taino and Carib resistance was quickly overpowered and they were turned into slaves, along with imported labor from Africa (Flores, 2009). Puerto Rico was handed to the US after Spanish loss in the Spanish-American War through the 1898 Treaty of Paris (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Since 1917, Puerto Ricans have been granted US citizenship (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

In the 1920s, a minor yet violent independence movement surged in Puerto Rico, led by the Radical Nationalist Party (PNPR) (Lansford, 2021). Unarmed demonstrators of the PNPR were shot by the police in the Ponce Massacre of 1937 (Maldonado-Denis, 1969), resulting in 19 deaths and 100 wounded (Flores, 2009). Another notable move for independence took place in 1950, when a group of supporters of the PNPR attempted to assassinate President Truman; in 1954, another group was responsible for injuring members of the US Congress. (Lansford, 2021).

In 1952, after ratifying the constitution, Puerto Rico became a commonwealth with a representative government and an elected governor (Flores, 2009; Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Between 1940 and 1968, the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) ruled the political scene in Puerto Rico. It was responsible for Operation Bootstrap, which helped the economy recover dramatically after 1948. Since 1968, the New Progressive Party (PNP), a pro-statehood party, has governed alternately with the PPD (Lansford, 2021).

### Economics

After WWII, Puerto Rico began making the shift from an agricultural economy to an industrial/services economy (Mathews, Wagenheim, & Kal, 2021). By 2002, agriculture made up less than 1% of the country's total net income, while manufacturing accounted for 45.7% (Government Development Bank for Puerto Rico, n.d.). Puerto Rico exports around 50% more than it imports, and over 80% of its exports go towards the US (Bram, Martinez, & Steindel, 2008). An important sector is tourism, attracting over 3.6 million tourists in 2008 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Additionally, Puerto Rico's status as an unincorporated US territory has attracted many investors thanks to the tax exemptions granted to US municipal debt (Bustillo & Velloso, 2015).

Economic growth in Puerto Rico has been negative in the last 11 years due to shifting tax preferences in US firms and rising in oil prices (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The island is also vulnerable to hurricanes; most recently in 2017, Hurricane Maria caused over 2,970 deaths and US\$ 91 billion in damages (Lansford, 2021).

## Politics

Puerto Rico is self-governing unincorporated territory of the US, with a local government and executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The chief of state is the US President and Vice President, while a Governor serves as the head of government and is elected by popular vote. Puerto Ricans cannot vote for the US chief of state, although they can vote in presidential primary elections (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). In recent 2020 elections, Pierluisi of the PNP was voted governor, defeating the PPD (Lansford, 2021).

In a non-binding 2012 referendum, which had about 80% participation rate, 54% of Puerto Ricans expressed that they did not wish to remain under the present territorial status. 73% of the population also voted on a second question, in which 61.1% expressed that they wished for statehood, 33.3% for sovereign free association, and 5.5% for independence. However, statehood requires approval by the Washington Congress (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Currently, the separatist movement is led by the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the Marxist Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). Combined, the two parties hold less than 6% of electoral votes (Lansford, 2021).

75.8% of the population is white, 12.4% black/African-American, 8.5% other and 3.3% mixed. 99% of the population is Latino. Migration towards the US has been common due to low employment rates; there was a surge in migration rates in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Sint Maarten (Dutch part)

Population	44,564
Land Area	34km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Dutch territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

The Arawak and Carib people resided in the island when it was sighted by Christopher Columbus in 1493 (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). The Dutch settled in 1631, making Sint Maarten their first colony in the Caribbean (Dew, 1992). It was likely that the Dutch were unaware of the French settlement that took place two years prior in the northern part of the island (Dew, 1992). The British, French, and Spanish were attracted by the salt deposits and fought for ownership over the island with the Dutch. In 1633, the Spanish captured the island, defeating all Dutch resistance (Hartog, 1981). Following the Treaty of Concordia in 1648, the island was divided into St Martin, in the north, and Sint Maarten, in the south (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Between the 18th and 19th century, slavery expanded rapidly because of the cotton, sugar, and tobacco plantations (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Slavery was abolished in 1863.

In 1954, Sint Maarten became part of the Netherlands Antilles. In 1986, Aruba successfully became an autonomous island within the Netherlands, which increased Curacao's political dominance in the region (Veenendaal, 2015). This strengthened Sint Maarten's resolve towards achieving the same status as Aruba (Veenendaal, 2015). In a 2000 referendum, 70% of voters approved for Sint Maarten's self-governance. Sint Maarten finally gained autonomy after the Netherlands Antilles dissolved in 2010 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), likewise releasing the island from Curacao's political dominance (Veenendaal, 2015).

### Economics

After the decline of the salt industry in the 20th century (Lansford, 2021), tourism came to be the most important economic industry, accounting for 80% of jobs in the island (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The rapid development of the industry resulted in high levels of labor migration into Sint Maarten, especially from other Caribbean islands (Alberts, 2016; Benoit, 2008). Aside from airports, visitors often arrive through cruise ships and yachts (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The majority of food is imported because of limited agricultural and fishing activity (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Indeed, only 10% of the land is arable (Lansford, 2021). Additionally, energy and goods are also mainly imported (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Sint Maarten is vulnerable to natural disasters. Hurricane Irma in 2017, for instance, damaged 90% of the island's buildings (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). To receive €370 million in recovery aid from the Netherlands, Sint Maarten agreed to cut public sector and official salaries by 12.5% and 25%, respectively (Lansford, 2021). It also allowed its financial institutions to receive increased surveillance from the Dutch Central Bank (Lansford, 2021).

## Politics

Sint Maarten is a constitutional monarchy in a parliamentary democracy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The chief of state is the King of the Netherlands, while the Prime Minister is the leader of the majority party as elected by the Parliament (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Since 1990, politics in the country has been dominated by the former Democratic Party of St. Maarten (DP) and the National Alliance (NA). In 2010, the United People's (UP) party first appeared in the ballots, and in 2018, it merged with the DP, though the alliance dissolved before the 2020 elections (Lansford, 2021).

It's population consists of mixed African, Carib, and European ancestry (Lansford, 2021). 29.9% of the population was born in Sint Maarten, 10.2% in the Dominican Republic, 7.8% in Haiti, 6.6% Jamaica, 5.9% Saint Martin, 5% Guyana, 4.4% Dominica, amongst others (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## St. Kitts and Nevis

Population	54,149
Land Area	261km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	89

### History

The Caribs and Arawaks resided in St. Kitts and Nevis prior to European settlement (Hubbard, 2002). Christopher Columbus first sighted the island in 1493, but the Spanish did not settle there because of the lack of gold and their preoccupations with other existing colonies (Hubbard, 2002). The British first settled in the islands in 1623, while the French settled later in 1627 (Momsen & Mills, 2021). After the war between the two, the French ceded Saint Kitts to the British through the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht (Momsen & Mills, 2021). On the other hand, the English settled in Nevis in 1628 (Momsen & Mills, 2021). The development of sugar trade made Saint Kitts the richest British colony per capita in the Caribbean (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021), and also increased the number of slaves to a ten to one ratio of slaves to Europeans by the end of the 18th century (Hubbard, 2002). There was a Dutch presence in the island, who were mainly involved in the trade aspect of the thriving sugar economy (Hubbard, 2002).

Saint Kitts and Nevis were ruled as different states until 1882, when Britain unified them with Anguilla (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Momsen & Mills, 2021). The unified islands became part of the West Indies Federation in 1952 (Lansford, 2021). In the early 19th century, tensions had prevailed, and still prevail, among the Federated Leeward Islands Colony, of which the three islands belonged to. Part of these tensions is due to the fact that the St. Kitts government acted as the Federation government and as such, was given more governing authority than Nevis and Anguilla (Hubbard, 2002). During this time, a labor movement began gaining momentum in St. Kitts. A notable strike was held in 1948, which counted with the participation of 10,000 workers (Hubbard, 2002). In 1967, St. Kitts and Nevis became an independent state associated with the United Kingdom (Momsen & Mills, 2021), and finally, independent in 1983 (Hubbard, 2002).

### Economics

In the 1970s, tourism began replacing sugar as the major source of income (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The drop in sugar prices in the 1980s caused significant damage to the country's sugar dependent economy (Momsen & Mills, 2021). After decades of losses, the government terminated the sugar industry in 2005. Increased efforts to diversify the economy lead to the development of export manufacturing and offshore banking (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The US is by far the most important trade partner, accounting for 68.7% of exports (Momsen & Mills, 2021). By 2009, agriculture accounted for only 1.5% of GDP, services 78.5%, and industry 20.0% (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

The state is vulnerable to natural disasters. Additionally, it suffers from high levels of public debt, though this has decreased significantly in recent years - from 154% of its GDP in 2011 to 83% in 2013. Foreigners can obtain citizenship through investment in the state (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).



## Politics

St. Kitts and Nevis is a federal parliamentary democracy in a constitutional monarchy. It's chief of state is Queen Elizabeth II, while a Prime Minister serves as head of government. The latter is the head of the majority party/coalition (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

In 2015, team Unity, a coalition formed by the People's Action Movement (PAM), the Concerned Citizens' Movement (CCM), and the People's Labour Party (PLP), won the elections (Lansford, 2021). Timothy Harris of the PLP became Prime Minister, thus putting an end the two decades of rule of the St. Kitts Labour Party (SKLP) (Lansford, 2021). The PLP won a second term in 2020 (Lansford, 2021).

An issue of increasing political importance is homicide - in 2018, the state was number nine in the world in terms of per capita murder rate (Lansford, 2021). The government has been giving increasing priority to the issue, notable by the 78% decrease in crime rates in 2019 thanks to the government's "Peace Initiative" (Lansford, 2021).

Currently, Nevis is allowed to secede from St. Kitts by passing a bill. Two-thirds of their elected legislators must approve said bill, in addition to two-thirds support in an island referendum. In 1995, Denzil Douglas, then Prime Minister, put forward the idea of separating the St. Kitts and Nevis government (Lansford, 2021). In 1992, all members of the Nevis Assembly voted in favor (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), though only 61.8% - less than the required two-thirds - of Nevis voters showed their support in the island referendum (Lansford, 2021).

90.4% of the population is black, 5.0% mulatto, 3.0% Indo-Pakistani, 1.0% white, and 0.6% other (Momsen & Mills, 2021).

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## St. Lucia

Population	166,637
Land Area	616km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper middle income
Freedom House Score	91

### History

The island was originally inhabited by the Arawaks and Caribs (Liverpool, 1983). The English attempted to colonize St. Lucia in 1605 and 1638, but failed to do so because Carib resistance. In 1650, the French settled and later in 1660, signed a treaty with the Caribs (Momsen, Niddrie, & R., 2021). St. Lucia was highly disputed between England and France, switching ownership 14 times over its history - seven times under the French and seven times under the British (“St. Lucia assumes full independence”, 1979).

Following the Treaty of Paris in 1814, the island was officially handed to the UK, becoming part of the British Windward Islands colony and consequently, being administered by the governor of Barbados (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Momsen et al., 2021). Slavery was abolished in 1834. In 1958, St. Lucia joined the West Indies Federation until the latter dissolved in 1962. The West Indies act of 1967 granted St. Lucia internal self-government (Momsen et al., 2021). The island gained independence in 1979 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

### Economics

In 2010, services accounted for 79.9% of GDP, industry 16.6%, and agriculture 3.5% (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Tourism is the island’s most important economic sector, accounting for 65% of GDP as well as being the major source of income, employment, and foreign exchange (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The agriculture sector includes export produce such as bananas, mangoes, and avocados (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Up until 1964, sugarcane was the main crop, but this changed after the majority of cane fields were replaced with banana crops (Momsen et al., 2021).

The economy is vulnerable to natural disasters, and its dependency on tourists and foreign oil. Hurricane Tomas in 2010 was responsible for US\$336 million in damages (Lansford, 2021). Flooding in 2013 caused an additional US\$99 million in damages. The introduction of a value-added tax (VAT) in 2012, along with low tourism rates, further hindered economic growth during this period (Lansford, 2021). St. Lucia also has a high amount of public debt; in 2012, it was 77% of GDP. As a response to the state’s high public wages and lack of productivity, the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council was created in 2013 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

### Politics

St. Lucia is a parliamentary democracy in a constitutional monarchy. It’s chief of state is Queen Elizabeth II, while a Prime Minister serves as head of government. The latter is the head of the majority party/coalition (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Political leadership in the country has alternated between the Saint Lucia Labor Party (SLP), representing the left, and the United Workers' Party (UWP), representing the conservatives. In the first post-independence elections, the SLP was elected. However, internal rivalry in the party caused the resignation of two prime ministers within the span of two years. In 1982, the UWP was elected, retaining power until the SLP was elected in 1997. More recently, in the 2016 elections, the UWP was re-elected with Allen Chastanet as Prime Minister. He was soon accused for misfeasance and breach of trust during his past role as government minister (Momsen et al., 2021)

In 2013, public sector workers organized a strike against the government, the latter which opposed a union demand for a 6% salary increase (Lansford, 2021). Another source of discontent is the high unemployment rate; in 2020, youth unemployment was at 38% (Lansford, 2021).

85.3% of the population is black, 10.9% mixed, 2.2% East Indian, 0.6% white, 0.6% mulatto, and 0.4% other (Momsen et al., 2021).

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## St. Martin (French part)

Population	32,680
Land Area	54km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	French territory
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

Christopher Columbus sighted the island in 1493 and the Dutch settled in 1631 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). It was partitioned between the Dutch and French in 1648 through the Treaty of Mount Concordia (St. Martin Tourist Office, n.d.). However, it was only after 1815 that French control of St. Martin was consolidated; prior to that, it fell various times under Dutch or English rule because of the European wars (Lansford, 2021).

During the colonial period, salt, cotton, and tobacco were important economic sectors. After the 1700s, sugarcane became the major source of income, which in turn, increased the importation of African slaves. Slavery was abolished in 1848, leading to the decline of the sugarcane economy (Lansford, 2021).

In 1703, St. Martin was administered as a Guadeloupe dependency (Hartog, 1981), though this began to change after a 2003 referendum, wherein 76% of St. Martin's voters were in favor of becoming a separate overseas collectivity. This became official in 2007, when President Chirac signed the legislation and the first Territorial Council met in July of that year (Lansford, 2021).

### Economics

After slavery was abolished in 1848, the economy suffered for a period of time. In the 1970s, the tourism sector began to grow (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017) and presently, 85% of the labor force engages with the tourism sector. During the development of the tourism industry, St. Martin had relied heavily on foreign labor, mostly from poorer Caribbean islands, which lead to an increase in migration levels (Benoit, 2008). Two important things for the island's tourism industry is the dollar's purchasing power and the close distance between the US and St. Martin (St. Martin Tourist Office, n.d.). Another important economic sector is finance, which complements and facilitates tourism.

The majority of food is important due to limited agriculture and fishing, as is energy and manufactured goods (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The island is vulnerable to natural disasters. In 2017, Hurricane Irma destroyed 95% of St. Martin (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

### Politics

St. Martin is an overseas French territory and operates as a parliamentary democracy. It's chief of state is the French President, while the population elects a Territorial Council (Benoit, 2008). The President of the Territorial Council is voted by its members for a

5-year term (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). There is a St. Martin representative and senator in the French Parliament (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017).

After becoming an overseas collectivity in 2007, Louis Constant-Fleming of the Union for Progress (UPP) party won the elections, obtaining 40% of the first-round votes. In 2012, Alain Richardson of the Togetherness, Responsibility, Success (RRR) party was elected President. Most recently in 2018, Daniel Gibbes was elected, in representation of L'Union pour la Démocratie (UD).

African, British, Dutch, French, and Creole ancestry are the most common in St. Martin (Lansford, 2021). 62.0% of the population is from St. Martin, 18.0% from Haiti, 8.0% the Dominican Republic or Dominica, 8.0% Europe or North America, and 0.4% other (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017).

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## St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Population	101,145
Land Area	389km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper middle income
Freedom House Score	91

### History

Columbus first sighted St. Vincent in 1498, though Carib resistance inhibited Spanish (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989), British, French, and Dutch colonization until the early 18th century, when the Caribs granted the French limited settlement (Fraser, Naddrie, & Tolson, 2021). The island was disputed between France and the UK throughout the 18th century, and it was handed to the UK in 1783 following the Treaty of Versailles (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The Caribs led two wars between 1772 and 1795 to counter British presence, but after the second, they were exiled from the island (Fraser et al., 2021). The remaining Caribs sought refuge in the inner parts of the island until 1805, when the British forgave their rebellion (Fraser et al., 2021).

St. Vincent joined the Windward Islands in 1783 after the Treaty of Paris, alongside Grenada, Dominica, Tobago, and the Grenadines (Fraser et al., 2021; Lansford, 2021). Following the union's collapse, Saint Vincent was granted administrative control over the Grenadines' northern islands, while Grenada took over the others (Fraser et al., 2021; Lansford, 2021). In 1877, the British established a crown colony system, under which the British crown administered the islands through a governor and a nominated council (Fraser et al., 2021).

During British rule, there was a thriving plantation economy, consisting of produce such as sugar, coffee, indigo, tobacco, cotton, and cocoa (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Slavery was abolished in 1834 after the Slave Emancipation Act. Following this, immigrants, particularly from Portugal and South Asia, became the main source of labor (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Fraser et al., 2021).

St. Vincent was part of the West Indies Federation from 1958 until its collapse in 1962. In 1969, St. Vincent became an Associated State with the UK, and gained independence in 1979 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Soon after, it became known as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. (Fraser et al., 2021).

### Economics

Services make up 75.5% of the GDP, industry 17.4%, and agriculture 7.1% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Presently, cotton and sugarcane production have been replaced with banana production and tourism (Fraser et al., 2021). The latter are also the country's major employers (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The island is vulnerable to natural disasters and external economic shocks. Agricultural output is dependent on global market prices, similar to the tourism sector, which suffered from the global slowdown in 2008 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). St. Vincent and the Grenadines also suffers from high public debt, at 67% of GDP in 2013 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The government has directed efforts towards diversifying into the

economy, including the finance sector (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

## Politics

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a constitutional monarchy in a parliamentary democracy. The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II, while a Prime Minister, the head of the majority party, serves as the head of government (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

According to (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989), the majority of the main political parties were established after independence. Initially, leadership within these parties were very inconsistent, with parties constantly switching leaders between each other. For instance, James Mitchell won Grenadines' parliamentary seat in 1966 while representing the St. Vincent Labor Party (SVLP). This same party became his biggest opposition from 1984, the year he became Prime Minister, to 1987. In 1972, he was reelected in Parliament as an independent, having resigned from the SVLP because of internal disagreements. Later on, he represented the People's Political Party (PPP), an independent, and the New Democratic Party (NDP).

The PPP had the most popular support until its electoral defeat to the SVLP in 1979 following the rise of a conservative middle class (Lansford, 2021; Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). The SVLP possessed major political dominance before 1984, mainly thanks to the black middle class, though it lost support after corruption allegations (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). The NDP, which Mitchell founded in 1975, was simultaneously rising in popularity, defeating the SVLP in the 1984 elections. In 2001, the center-left Unity Labour Party (ULP) won the elections, dethroning the NDP's 16-year rule (Lansford, 2021). The ULP won a fifth term in 2020 ("ULP wins 9 seats in St. Vincent 2020 elections", 2020).

71.2% of the population is of African descent, 23% mixed, 3% Indigenous, 1.1% East Indian/Indian, and 0.2% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Trinidad and Tobago

Population	1,221,047
Land Area	5,128km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Independent
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	82

### History

Arawaks inhabited Trinidad when Columbus arrived in 1498, while the Caribs inhabited Tobago (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). The Spanish surrendered Trinidad to the British in 1797 after it had been largely neglected for 300 years by the Spanish. On the other hand, the British attempted to settle in Tobago in 1721, but in 1781, the French captured it and established a sugar economy. The British took Tobago in 1802 and beginning in 1899, the island was administered together with Trinidad. During this time, sugar continued as the main economic activity, which declined after the abolishment of slavery in 1834 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). To compensate, Indians were imported into the islands for labor between 1845 and 1917, who worked on sugar production and the cocoa industry. These industries were replaced by the end of the 19th century with oil and asphalt (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

Universal suffrage was granted in 1946 and internal self-rule in 1956 (Birth, 1994). The People's National Movement (PNM), a party representative of the middle-class black population, won electoral victory in 1956. The PNM led Trinidad and Tobago into independence in 1962, and stayed in power for thirty years. Post-independence, the country remained in relative peace until the 1970 Black Power movement riots. These riots were inspired by the black consciousness movements from the United States in the 1960s. The rioters threatened the country's governance (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989), especially in light of the PNM's leaving economic control to the European and North American groups (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989; Quinn, 2014).

The PNM ruled from independence until 1986, when the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) won the elections. The PNM lost because of the country's economic decline and the formation of the NAR itself, which was the country's first solid opposition to the party (Lansford, 2021). In contrast to the PNM, the NAR has more East Indians representatives. In 1987, the NAR was faced with the challenge of recovering the economy in face of drop in global oil prices (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., 1989). It agreed, together with the IMF, to raise prices of public utilities and cut government expenditure (Searle, 1991). By 1988 unemployment rose to 23%.

In 1990, the country entered a state of emergency when the Jamaat al Muslimeen group attempted to overthrow the NAR's government. The Prime Minister was taken hostage and the police headquarters were assaulted with bombs (Searle, 1991). The group surrendered after six days and twenty four deaths, returning power to the government (Birth, 1994; Searle, 1991). In 2011, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar of the United National Congress (UNC) declared a state of emergency once again in face of the increasing violent crimes linked to drug trade in the country (Hutchinson-Jafar, 2011).

## Economics

Petroleum and natural gas production and processing has made Trinidad and Tobago one of the richest economies in the Caribbean. Oil and gas makes up 42% of GDP and 84% of exports, and 51% of government revenue (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). However, its responsible for less than 3% of employment (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

In 2007, the government terminated the sugar industry, which had become unprofitable after the EU withdrew its subsidies (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Focus was turned towards developing a more balanced agricultural sector dedicated for domestic needs (Lansford, 2021). Diversifying the economy is one of the government's priorities, facilitated by its stable democracy and educated English-speaking workforce (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Areas of interest include tourism, agriculture, information and communications technology, and shipping.

Corruption has undermined economic growth (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago has been consistently dropping in the World Bank's ease of doing business rankings, going from 88th out of 189 in 2016 to 105th in 2020 in rank of difficulty of conducting business (Lansford, 2021).

## Politics

Trinidad and Tobago is a parliamentary republic. A President acts as the chief of state, while a Prime Minister as the head of government. The President is elected by select members of the Senate and House of Representatives who make up an electoral college. Generally, the President appoints the leader of the majority party as Prime Minister (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). After the 1990 coup, power has alternated between the PNM and the UNC, the latter founded in 1989.

Trinidad accounts for 95% of the country's area and population, as well as a large majority of its wealth (Lansford, 2021). 37% of the population are descendants of African slaves and 36% of the East Indian laborers that arrived in the 19th century (Lansford, 2021). Most ethnic Africans live in urban areas, while most ethnic East Indians work as independent farmers. The rest of the population consist of Europeans, Chinese, and mixed ancestry. Most residents in Tobago are of African descent.

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## Turks and Caicos Islands

Population	57,196
Land Area	948km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	British territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

Most scholars believe that Ponce de Leon discovered the Turks and Caicos Islands in 1512, though others believe that Columbus did so first in 1492 (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., [1989](#)). Regardless, the Spanish did not settle there; rather, Bermudan salt collectors arriving from the Grand Turk Island established the first permanent settlement in 1678. The Bermudians successfully prevented Bahamian annexation in 1700, a Spanish invasion in 1710, and a French invasion in 1763. The French succeeded in 1764, exiling the Bermudians to Haiti.

The French and Spanish competed for the Turks and Caicos Islands until the British Crown secured it in 1766 (Palgrave Macmillan, [2017](#)). In 1799, the Bahamas Islands government annexed the islands and in 1848, they separated and had their own President (Meditz, Hanratty, et al., [1989](#)). Later in 1874, the Turks and Caicos Islands were administered as a Jamaican colony until the latter's independence in 1962. This arrangement had been more convenient for the ships that often travelled between England and Jamaica because they often passed through the Turks and Caicos Islands, rather than the Bahamas (Ferguson & Bounds, [2020](#)). The Bahamas controlled the islands for a brief period between the 1960s and 1970s, and after Bahamian independence in 1973, the Turks and Caicos were administered by a British governor.

### Economics

The major sources of income are tourism, offshore financial services, and fishing. Services account for 90.6% of GDP, industry 8.9%, and agriculture 0.5% (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)). Tourism makes up 35.5% of the country's GDP, while hotel and restaurant jobs are the major employers (Gatewood & Cameron, [2009](#)). The US accounts for 75% of all tourists (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)). The majority of goods and food on the islands are imported.

### Politics

The Turks and Caicos Islands is an overseas UK territory and a parliamentary democracy. The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II, while the premier is the leader of the majority party (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)).

In 1986, constitutional rule was suspended after some ministers were accused of drug smuggling (Ferguson & Bounds, [2020](#)). Consequently, the British imposed direct rule, also establishing a commission to revise corruption and patronage laws (Lansford, [2021](#)). In 1988, the islands returned to constitutional government, with the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) winning elections. In the following 1991 elections, the Progressive National Party (PNP) won. Since then, power has alternated between these two parties.

After a series of financial and human rights reforms, the British government began granting all islanders British citizenship in 2002 (Ferguson & Bounds, 2020). Constitutional reforms in 2006 granted the premier more internal power over the islands' affairs (Cameron & Gatewood, 2008). In 2009, Premier Michael Misick resigned because of corruption allegations. That same year, the British government imposed direct rule on the islands following corruption allegations among the ruling class (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). This arrangement ended in 2012 and elections were held.

87.6% of the population is black, 7.9% white, 2.5% mixed, 1.3% East Indian, 0.7% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Virgin Islands (U.S.)

Population	105,870
Land Area	1,910 $km^2$
Legal Status	US territory
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High income
Freedom House Score	N/A

### History

The U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) include the islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, and around 50 smaller islands. When St. Croix was first sighted by Columbus in 1493, it was inhabited by the Caribs who had conquered the earlier Tainos (Evans, 2020). In 1555, the Spanish defeated the native population and claimed the islands. The French took the islands in 1650 from the Spanish. The latter abandoned them around 1700, thus reinforcing Danish influence (Dookhan, 1994).

The first permanent Dutch settlement in St. Thomas dates to 1672. Its harbors made it an important trading center, especially for entrepot trade and later on, as port of calls (Dookhan, 1994). The Dutch settled in St. John in 1718 and St. Croix, which the Dutch purchased from the French to expand the agriculture economy in 1734 (Dookhan, 1994). The last two became centers of sugar and cotton production (Dookhan, 1994). Slavery lasted from 1672 to 1848, after 'General' Buddhoe led a mass uprising in St. Croix (Dookhan, 1994).

The US purchased the islands from Denmark in 1917 for \$25 million (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). According to Dookhan (Dookhan, 1994), in acquiring the islands, the US sought to establish naval bases to defend the Panama Canal. St. Thomas and St. Croix hosted vital military bases during World War II. In 1927, residents were granted US citizenship. First the UN Navy and the department of the interior governed the islands from 1931 to 1971 (Lansford, 2021).

Constitutional reform in 1936 granted universal suffrage (Dookhan, 1994). In 1970, the first popular governor elections took place and in 1976, the islands received the right to draft a constitution, to be approved by the US Congress (Evans, 2020). A draft was submitted in 2009 and in 2012, revisions to the document as per US recommendations were being made.

### Economics

The development of tourism and consequently, increased tourist spending on the islands in the 1950s led to dynamic economic growth (Dookhan, 1994). When travel to Cuba was closed to Americans, the USVI saw a dramatic increase in tourists - from 60,000 in 1954 to 200,000 in 1959 (Dookhan, 1994). Sugar production was terminated in 1966 (Dookhan, 1994), and the agriculture sector was diversified from sugarcane to fruits and vegetables (Evans, 2020). Presently, tourism, trade, and rum production account for the majority of GDP and employment. Services constitute 78% of GDP, industry 20%, and agriculture 2% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). There are 2.5 to 3 million annual tourists in the islands (Agency, 2021).

The USVI are vulnerable to natural disasters, especially storms and hurricanes. The islands are still recovering from damages caused by two hurricanes in 2017, with recovery estimated to cost \$7.5 billion - nearly twice its GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The majority of food is imported (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Additionally, the islands have traditionally relied on imported petroleum for energy, though the government has increased efforts to create more efficient energy use in the islands (Evans, 2020).

## Politics

The USVI is a republican government. It has an executive, legislative, and judicial branch. The chief of state is the US President and Vice President, while a Governor and Lieutenant governor serve as the head of government. They are elected by popular vote. Residents of the islands cannot vote for the US chief of state, although they can vote in presidential primary elections (Agency, 2021). Currently, the main parties are Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands, the Independent Citizens Movement (ICM), and the Republican Party of the Virgin Islands, in addition to independent candidates.

The population is 76% Black, 15.6% White, 1.4% Asian, 4.9% other, and 2.1% mixed (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). 46.7% of the population is native-born (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

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# Middle East

## Bahrain

Population	1.5 million
Land Area	760km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	11/100 - Not Free

## History

Throughout history, Bahrain has served as an entrepot port and commercial center in the Persian Gulf (Karolak, 2014; Zahlan, 2016). From the 16th to 18th centuries, the Portuguese, Dutch, British and local leaders competed for control of trade in the Persian Gulf. The lack of stability enabled an increase in piracy against British ships in the 18th century, leading the British India Company to ask the Royal Navy for assistance to suppress piracy in the region (Rabi, 2006).

In the first half of the 19th century, Britain and some Arab sheikhdoms signed a series of agreements that forbade piracy at sea, led to the cessation of inter-tribal warfare at sea, and enabled the British to increase their naval presence at sea to keep peace and enforce the agreements. Bahrain's al-Khalifa dynasty first signed a treaty with Britain in 1820 and acceded to all treaties in the Gulf in 1861 (Crystal & Smith, 2021; Rabi, 2006). These treaties, known as 'Exclusive Treaties', allowed Britain to take over the foreign affairs of Bahrain in return for Britain's military protection with the most comprehensive and definite treaty signed in 1892

In the early twentieth century, the pearl industry remained the most important with the pearl diving fleet employing at least half of Bahrain's male population. Others provided services like boat building and banking. In the 1930s, competition from Japanese cultured pearls caused the decline of the Gulf pearl industry and American oil companies began discovering and drilling for oil in Bahrain (Joyce, 2012). Britain expanded its naval and air facilities in Bahrain due to its strategic location along major British air routes and to protect its interests in the region's oil. US forces shared the facilities with Britain (Joyce, 2012).

In line with Britain's policy of cutting defense spending east of the Suez, Britain decided to withdraw its forces from the Gulf in 1968 (Crystal & Smith, 2021; Rabi, 2006). Bahrain proclaimed independence in August 1971, signed a treaty of friendship with the United Kingdom and became a member of the UN and the Arab League. In 1981, Bahrain joined the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which has led to closer economic and defense ties with other Gulf states. During the Gulf War from 1990 to 1991 and the Iraq War in the 2000s, Bahrain allowed coalition forces to use its airfields and port. The US created the US Navy Fifth Fleet in 1995 which continues to headquarter its operations in Bahrain (Crystal & Smith, 2021; Joyce, 2012).

The monarch established a Consultative Council in 1993. In 2001, Bahrainis supported the ratification of the National Action Charter in a referendum. A new constitution followed the charter in 2002 and established a constitutional monarchy (Crystal & Smith,



2021). The rate of progress of economic and political reform did not meet growing public demand for it. This culminated in protests and demonstrations during the Arab Spring of 2011 which were put down with police and military force (Joyce, 2012).

Low oil prices in 2018 led to a debt crisis in 2018. This led to the implementation of fiscal reforms to cut spending and increase revenue. This included the implementation of a value-added tax in 2019 (Crystal & Smith, 2021).

## Economy

By sector, oil and gas, financial services, manufacturing, government services, and construction contributed 17.8%, 16.5%, 14.5%, 11.8%, and 7.3% to Bahrain's total GDP in 2019, respectively (Bahrain Ministry of Finance and National Economy, 2020).

The oil and gas industry contributes around 85% of government revenue (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Its products made up nearly 50% of exports in 2019 (Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2021). Bahrain's national oil company, Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco), produces some oil and extracts natural gas from offshore reserves. However, Bahrain's reserves are lower than its neighbors. Bapco earns more from importing and refining Saudi Arab crude for export (Crystal & Smith, 2021).

The aluminium industry contributes around 12% of GDP (Gahlaut, 2020). Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), a company mostly owned by Bahrain's sovereign fund Mumtalakat, is one of the world's largest aluminium smelters. 34% of its output goes to local companies that make downstream aluminium products (Gahlaut, 2020). Aluminium products made up more than 20% of exports in 2019 (Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2021).

Bahrain's key service exports are Islamic banking services and tourism. Bahrain has built on its history as a commercial center and remains a regional hub for Islamic banking, insurance and offshore financial services in the Gulf (Crystal & Smith, 2021). The tourism industry makes up about 12-15% of GDP (Karolak, 2014). In 2019, Bahrain received more than 11 million international arrivals. Nearly 90% of visitors arrive from Saudi Arabia via the causeway and just over 1.2 million arrive by air. Saudi Arabia, India and Kuwait are the key sources of tourists (Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, 2020). Competition from other Gulf states, with larger budgets, trying to grow their tourism industry poses a challenge for Bahrain (Karolak, 2014).

## Politics

Bahrain is a constitutional monarchy ruled by the al-Khalifa dynasty. The monarch, who serves as chief-of-state, appoints the prime minister and the Cabinet (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The bicameral 80-seat National Assembly serves as the legislative branch. It consists of a lower house, the 40-seat Council of Representatives directly elected by single-seat constituencies, and an upper house, the 40-seat Consultative Council appointed by the monarch. (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Crystal & Smith, 2021).

Its legal system draws on influences from Islamic Sharia law, English common law, Egyptian civil, criminal, and commercial codes, and customary law. Bahrain has separate courts to adjudicate matters regarding Sharia and civil law (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The royal family and many of Bahrain's political and economic elite are Sunni Muslims while most Bahrainis are Shi'a Muslims. This difference remains the underlying cause of political and social tensions in Bahrain (Crystal & Smith, 2021).

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## Israel

Population	8.7 million
Land Area	21937km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	76/100 - Free

## History

After World War I, the League of Nations granted Britain a mandate over Palestine. At the time, most of the population were Arab. In line with the Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which the British government committed to facilitating the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, and its mandate, Britain encouraged Jewish immigration to Palestine in the 1920s (Mathew, 2013; Ochsenwald, Stone, Elath, & Sicherman, 2021). The Jewish community in British Palestine established its own assembly, trade union, schools, medical services, taxation system, courts, and some industrial enterprises (Jones, Faris, Khalidi, Fraser, Kenyon, Khalidi, Brice, Albright, Bugh, & Bickerton, 2021). The British mandate government developed administrative institutions, municipal services, infrastructure (Jones et al., 2021). The British government restricted Jewish immigration in the late 1930s to gain Arab support for the Allies in World War II (Ochsenwald et al., 2021).

After the Holocaust and World War II, Britain received international pressure to admit more Jews into Palestine whilst facing local and regional Arab opposition towards a new Jewish state in Palestine (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). In 1947, Britain began withdrawing from Palestine. The UN General Assembly voted to divide British Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state despite Arab opposition (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). This decision caused tension and violent conflicts that continue to the present. Israel became a UN member in 1949 (Ochsenwald et al., 2021).

Israel's first regular election in 1949 and elected the Mapai (Labor) Party and its coalition to power (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). The coalition consisted of secular and Orthodox Jewish parties. The first Prime Minister, Ben-Gurion, allowed the Orthodox Jews control over marriage, divorce, conversion and other personal status issues in return for support on security issues (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). To maintain the coalition, the government avoided drafting a written constitution or bill of rights (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). The Mapai Party built on the quasi-government institutions it controlled during the British Mandate era and managed to control Israeli politics until 1977 (Zilberfarb, 2005).

To support the growing number of Jewish immigrants to Israel in the 1950s, the Israeli government heavily intervened in the economy (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Zilberfarb, 2005). The government gave preferential treatment to Histadrut companies, companies owned by the umbrella organizations for the labor unions that operated similar to government-owned companies, and ran a welfare state (Zilberfarb, 2005). Israel imported about 20-25% of its needs and depended on international aid, grants, contributions and loans raised or backed by the government to purchase the imports (Zilberfarb, 2005). It spent about 7.5% of its GDP on average on defense during the decade. The government gradually liberalized the economy in the 1960s and 1970s (Zilberfarb, 2005).

Israel's military actions against Palestinian guerillas in neighboring countries increased tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbors (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). Egypt, Jordan and Syria encircled and blockaded Israel in 1967. Israel's Defense Force (IDF) responded, captured and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank and the Golan Heights (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Schein, 2017). Economic ties between Israel and the Palestinian territories deepened (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Schein, 2017). Israel increased its defense spending and local production of weapons after the war, benefiting the local metal and electronic industries and possibly building the foundation for its modern-day high-tech industry (Schein, 2017).

Egypt and Syria attacked Israel in 1973, leading to the Yom Kippur War (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Schein, 2017). The war cost between a half and two-thirds of Israel's 1973 nominal GDP. The subsequent international oil embargo imposed by Arab oil producers caused severe inflation and unemployment in Israel till the mid-1980s (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Schein, 2017).

From 1985, Israel's government adopted economic reforms to reduce its deficit spending. The reforms reduced government involvement in the economy and increased competition in markets dominated by Histadrut-controlled monopolies (Zilberfarb, 2005). Many Histadrut-owned companies lacked competitiveness and became privatized. The government also reformed capital and foreign exchange markets, and adopted more disciplined fiscal policy (Zilberfarb, 2005).

In the 21st century, Israel has generally continued its transition from a more socialist economy towards a free market economy (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Zilberfarb, 2005). It has continued to engage in various conflicts with militant groups in the region and entered neighboring territories outside of their borders to do so (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). Israel has also signed peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, and recently received recognition from Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Israel's military continues to occupy most of the West Bank.

## Economy

In 2018, manufacturing, mining and quarrying contributed around 13.2% of GDP (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019b). The sector employed 11.2% of the labor force (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019d). About 43% of manufacturing jobs were in medium-high to high technology industries (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019a). The sector produced 94% of Israel's exports by value in 2018 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019a). Top exports include cut diamonds, high-technology electronics and equipment, and pharmaceuticals (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

In the tertiary sector, financial services, real-estate linked activities, professional, technical, scientific and administrative services collectively contributed around 18.4% of GDP and employed 11.9% of the labor force (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019b, 2019d). The wholesale and retail trade contributed around 11.5% of GDP and employed around 11% of labor force (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019b, 2019d). Information and communications services contributed 9.2% of GDP and employed 5.3% of the labor force (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019b, 2019d).

The public administration, education, and health sectors contributed around 18.8% of GDP in 2018 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019b). The three sectors employed

34.4% of the labor force (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019d). Most government revenue comes from domestic taxes such as income, corporate and property taxes (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019a, 2019c).

The agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector contribute over 1% of GDP and employed less than 1% of the labor force (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019b). About 13.2% of Israel's land is used for agriculture (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019a). Key produce include potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, peppers, bananas, dairy, eggs and poultry (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019a).

## Politics

Israel has a parliamentary democracy. Israelis directly vote the 120 members of the unicameral Knesset that serves as the legislative branch. The Knesset elects a president for a single 7-year term. After each legislative election, the president usually tasks the head of the largest party to form a government and serve as prime minister (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). All citizens can vote when they turn 18.

Nearly three-quarters of Israel's population is Jewish and around 21% is Arab (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). According to Freedom House, the Israeli government has passed laws that discriminate against Arab and Palestinian citizens. Many residents belonging to these minorities and living in Jewish settlements in the West Bank do not have citizenship (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Kuwait

Population	4.2 million
Land Area	17818km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	36/100 - Partly Free

## History

Some clans from the Anazzah tribe in the Nejd migrated towards to Gulf coast in the late-seventeenth century and founded Kuwait in the early-eighteenth century (Crystal, 1990). Kuwait's location allowed it to develop an entrepot trade. It sat on caravan routes travelling from the Arabian peninsula to Baghdad and Aleppo; had one of the Gulf's best natural harbors; and it developed a smuggling trade into Ottoman territory by taking advantage of high tariffs in the nearby Ottoman port of Basra (Crystal, 1990). The clans also acquired maritime and shipbuilding skills and engaged in pearl diving (Crystal, 1990).

The Sabah family, due to its diplomacy and negotiating skills, became the ruling family in Kuwait in the mid-eighteenth century (Crystal, 1990). The Ottoman ruler made Sheik Abdalla of Kuwait a provincial governor in 1870. In the late-1890s, disagreements between Sheik Mubarak and the Ottomans led to military threats from the Ottomans (Crystal, 1990). This led Mubarak to sign a treaty in 1899 with Britain that granted latter power over Kuwait's defense and foreign affairs (Crystal, 1990; Rabi, 2006).

In the early-twentieth century, pearling and its supporting industries like boat building remained key in the economy. From 1905-1906, Kuwait had 461 pearl boats that employed around more than a quarter of the population (Crystal, 1990). The industry declined in the 1930s due to competition from Japanese production of cultured pearls (Crystal, 2014).

Sheik Mubarak decided to levy import taxes, a pearling tax, a house tax, and a pilgrimage tax to fund his military campaigns in the desert (Crystal, 1990). He also introduced price controls. These actions upset the local merchant class. In protest, the richest pearl buyers led a secession to Bahrain in 1909. Other large traders and their staff joined them. This organized opposition succeeded because Mubarak depended on merchant revenues and the merchants had popular support (Crystal, 1990). Mubarak conceded to the merchants and cancelled taxes. All the merchants returned by 1911 and this event helped consolidate the unity and power of the merchant class in Kuwait (Crystal, 1990).

Britain negotiated the Kuwait-Saudi border in 1922 at the Conference of Al-'Uqayr. Kuwait lost two-thirds of its territory (Rabi, 2006; Sadek, Crystal, Ochsenswald, & Anthony, 2021). In 1923, Britain set Kuwait's border with Iraq. In 1938, the merchant community led the Majlis movement to demand parliamentary representation. Kuwait discovered oil within its border in the same year (Crystal, 1990, 2014).

Oil came to dominate the Kuwaiti economy after World War II (Crystal, 2014). The Sabah family used the oil revenue to consolidate their power. They gave the merchant class a continued share in oil revenue in exchange for the latter's retreat from formal political participation (Crystal, 2014). The Kuwaiti government retained ownership of



the energy sector and operated it while permitting a private sector dominated by the old merchant class to flourish (Crystal, 2014).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the monarchy used oil revenues to expand the bureaucracy to dispense more subsidies, social services and provide employment to the majority of Kuwaiti nationals (Crystal, 2014; Hertog, 2016). The Sabah family placed their members in the key positions. These actions further reduced the power of tribal leaders and allowed the monarchy to form ties with the national population (Crystal, 2014; Hertog, 2016).

In 1958, Kuwait requested British recognition of its right to conduct foreign relations and join international organizations. Britain transferred gradually jurisdiction to Kuwait from 1960 and recognized its independence in 1961 (Rabi, 2006; Sadek et al., 2021). The Sabah family started incorporating various groups into the National Assembly to reduce the merchant community's influence in the political process (Hertog, 2016). Kuwait continued to maintain economic and defense ties with Britain.

Soon after independence, Iraq announced its intentions to annex Kuwait. Britain responded by deploying troops in on the Kuwait-Iraq border (Rabi, 2006). The new Iraqi regime formally recognized Kuwaiti borders in October 1963 (Sadek et al., 2021). Kuwait became a UN member in May 1963 and formed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with its other founding members in 1981. (Sadek et al., 2021).

During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, Kuwait provided Iraq with financial support and allowed Iraqi military supplies to pass through its borders as Kuwait feared Iranian hegemony in the region (Sadek et al., 2021). Iran retaliated by conducted sabotage operations on key oil production facilities in Kuwait and attacking Kuwaiti tankers. The war encouraged Kuwait to develop closer ties with its Arab Gulf neighbors (Sadek et al., 2021).

In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait to control its oil reserves and increase its coastline with the Persian Gulf (Sadek et al., 2021). A coalition acting under the authority of the United Nations and the leadership of the US and Saudi Arabia liberated Kuwait in late February 1991. (Sadek et al., 2021).

## **Economy**

Oil and gas extraction remains the largest sector in Kuwait's economy. The country has 6% of the world's known oil reserves (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The government has nationalized the industry under the Kuwait Petroleum Company which oversees other state-owned companies that control various stages of the oil supply chain in Kuwait (Sadek et al., 2021). It contributes over 50% of GDP, around 90% of government revenue and over 90% of export revenues (Central Bank of Kuwait, 2020; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Kuwait's manufacturing sector contributes around 6.7% of GDP and mainly produces refined petroleum products like fertilizers and petrochemicals (Central Bank of Kuwait, 2020; Sadek et al., 2021).

Kuwaiti citizens make up about 15% of the labor force (Central Bank of Kuwait, 2020). Kuwait's public sector employs around three-quarters of the Kuwaiti labor force and around 16% of the total labor force (Central Bank of Kuwait, 2020; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Kuwait's government expenditure is worth more than 50% of GDP (Central Bank of Kuwait, 2020). Community, social and personal services make up more than 45% of non-oil GDP (around 21.4% of total) (Central Bank of Kuwait, 2020). The

government saves about 10% of revenue annually into the Fund for Future Generations to reduce Kuwait's economic vulnerability to volatile oil prices [cia2021kuwait](#).

Other important non-oil sectors include financial services and real estate linked activities which contribute around 8% of GDP each. Transport, storage and communication services contributed around 5.7% and the wholesale and retail trade contributed around 3.4%. A few merchant families continue to dominate most of the non-oil industries in the private sector (Crystal, [2014](#)).

## Politics

Kuwait has a constitutional monarchy. The Sabah family is the current ruling family and an Emir serves as chief-of-state. The ruling family selects the Emir from within the family and the National Assembly confirms the choice (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)).

The unicameral 65-seat National Assembly, or Majlis al-Umma, serves as Kuwait's legislative branch. Kuwaiti citizens above the age of 21 that have held citizenship for more than 20 years can directly elect 50 members in 5 multi-seat constituencies by simple majority vote. The Cabinet fills the remaining 15 seats. The Emir appoints the prime minister who serves as head-of-government. The prime minister appoints 15 Cabinet ministers with approval from the Emir (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)).

Kuwait's merchant class which has strong family ties within it and remains an important social force (Crystal, [2014](#)). Relative to other Arab Gulf States, Kuwait's merchant class is most capable of autonomous collective action (Hertog, [2016](#)).

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## Lebanon

Population	5.26 million
Land Area	10400km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper Middle Income
Freedom House Score	43/100 - Partly Free

### History

After World War I, Allied powers occupied former Ottoman territories in the Middle East. The League of Nations awarded France a mandate over Syria and Lebanon in 1920 which became formalised in 1923 (Bugh, Kingston, Maksoud, Samir G. Khalaf, & Ochsenwald, 2021; Hakim, 2019). The French administration improved public utilities and communications, and expanded education (Bugh et al., 2021).

In 1926, with the cooperation of Christian and some Muslim notables and professionals, France introduced a constitution as part of its mandate obligations (Hakim, 2019). The constitution provided the Lebanese Republic a strong presidency and created a parliament with proportional representation from the various religious communities (Hakim, 2019). However, it also granted vast powers to the French High Commissioner. This allowed France to interfere heavily in Lebanese affairs. This included suspending the constitution in 1932 and 1939 (Hakim, 2019).

During World War II, Britain and Free France stationed forces in Lebanon in 1941 to prevent Vichy France from enabling the Axis powers to move troops through it (Bugh et al., 2021; Kardahji, 2015). Growing opposition to colonial rule led Free France, with British support, to proclaim Lebanon's independence on 22 November 1943. Free France still refused to relax its control over Lebanon. British and French troops only fully withdrew in 1946 (Bugh et al., 2021; Hakim, 2019; Kardahji, 2015). Lebanon became one of the UN's original members in October 1945.

After World War II, the Lebanese government generally pursued laissez-faire economic development with limited intervention in the market (Hourani, 2015; Kardahji, 2015). It minimized taxes and government expenditure and left social development to the private sector and NGOs (Kardahji, 2015). This encouraged the growth of an externally-oriented service economy built on financial services and tourism, making Lebanon a financial center for the Middle East (Hourani, 2015; Kardahji, 2015). It also enabled a highly unequal distribution of wealth and power. Lebanon's old merchant families dominated the economy, especially the banking sector, and politics (Hourani, 2015; Kardahji, 2015).

Conflict in the Middle East led to a rise in the number of Palestinian guerillas in Lebanon. This catalyzed the growth of various social and political movements, and sectarian-based guerillas (Bugh et al., 2021). Important merchant families helped fund these militias to try improve their politico-economic position (Hourani, 2015). The increase in occasional communal violence deepened the fault line between Christian and Muslims and eventually escalated into a civil war from 1975 to 1990 (Bugh et al., 2021). The conflict caused most of Lebanon's administrative bodies, including the army, to disintegrate (Bugh et al., 2021). Economic activity persisted as Lebanon continued to attract regional capital, some industries transitioned to home production, and the Lebanese printing industry

grew during the war to cater to regional demand (Hourani, 2015; Salibi, n.d.).

Syrian military intervention in 1990 ended the civil war (Bugh et al., 2021). The war caused more than 100,000 deaths, displaced nearly a million and cost several billion dollars' worth of damage to property and infrastructure (Bugh et al., 2021). The National Assembly ratified the Ta'if Accord in 1989 to determine how to distribute political and economic power in the country. The accord set the parameters of the Second Lebanese Republic beginning in 1990 (Nizameddin, 2006).

In the 1990s and 2000s, Lebanon and international support gradually pressured Syria to withdraw its forces and reduce its influence in Lebanese government (Bugh et al., 2021). The Lebanese government implemented various economic policies to aid in the post-war reconstruction efforts of the country (Nizameddin, 2006). These policies also enabled the oligarchy of merchant families in Lebanon to perpetuate their pre-war control of most of Lebanon's wealth (Hourani, 2015).

As of 2021, Lebanon remains in an economic and financial crisis (World Bank, 2021). Lebanon has the world's third highest public-debt-to-GDP ratio. This has led to a loss of confidence in the government, severe inflation and brain drain (World Bank, 2021). The various factions in government cannot find consensus and did not take any action to resolve Lebanon's growing debt (Bugh et al., 2021; World Bank, 2021).

## **Economy**

In 2018-2019, around the primary sector contributed around 5% of GDP and employed around 3.6% of the labor force (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2019a, 2019b). The mountainous terrain and availability of freshwater enables the cultivation of a variety of crops (Bugh et al., 2021).

The secondary sector contributed around 10% of GDP. Half of that came from manufacturing and the other half from construction and utilities (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2019a). Manufacturing employs 10.9% of the labor force while construction employs 8.9% (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2019b). Lebanon's key manufactures include food products, construction material and textiles (Bugh et al., 2021).

The tertiary sector contributed the remaining. The most important activities are real estate linked activities, the retail and wholesale trade, and financial services which contributed around 15%, 12% and 9% of GDP, respectively (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2019a). The key tertiary employment sectors are the wholesale and retail trade which employs 19.8% of the labor force, transport and storage services which employ 4.9%, and accommodation and food services which employ 4.4% (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2019b).

The public sector contributed around 16% of GDP (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2019a). The public administration and defense sector employs 9.9% of the labor force. Education employs 8.6%, and health and social services employ 4.4% (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2019b).

## **Politics**

Lebanon has a parliamentary republic. Most citizens above the age of 21 can directly elect members of the 128-seat unicameral National Assembly. The members serve 4-year

terms and elect the president who serves as chief-of-state. The president, in consultation with the Assembly, appoints a prime minister to serve as head-of-government (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Lebanon has served as a refuge for persecuted Christian and Muslim groups since the 7th-century (Bugh et al., 2021). This has led to the diversity of religious groups in Lebanon. 30.6% of Lebanese are Sunni Muslims, 30.5% are Shia Muslims and around a fifth are Maronite Catholics. Most of the remainder consists of Christians from other denominations such as Greek Orthodox and Druze (Bugh et al., 2021; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Lebanon's constitution has generally included provisions to ensure that all groups have representation in government. The civil war deepened existent sectarian divides in the country (Bugh et al., 2021).

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## Qatar

Population	2.4 million
Land Area	11586km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	25/100 - Not Free

### History

From the 16th to 18th centuries, the Portuguese, Dutch, British and local leaders competed for control of trade in the Persian Gulf. The lack of stability enabled an increase in piracy against British ships in the 18th century, leading the British India Company to ask the Royal Navy for assistance to suppress piracy in the region (Rabi, 2006).

In the first half of the 19th century, Britain and some Arab sheikhdoms signed a series of treaties that forbade piracy at sea, led to the cessation of inter-tribal warfare at sea, and enabled the British to increase naval presence at sea to keep peace and enforce the agreements. Bahrain signed its first treaty with Britain in 1820 (Rabi, 2006). Britain regarded Qatar as a Bahraini dependency until 1867 (J. Crystal, 1990).

In the 1860s, growing tensions between the al-Khalifa based in Bahrain and Qatar's tribes culminated in conflict. In 1867, the al-Khalifa allied with forces in Abu Dhabi and destroyed the coastal settlements of Doha and Wakra in Qatar (J. Crystal, 1990; Ulrichsen, 2020). In 1868, the tribes of Qatar attacked Bahrain killing over 1000 people and destroying 600 ships (J. Crystal, 1990). To prevent further such breaches of the treaties in the Gulf, the British Political Resident based in Bahrain visited Qatar. He met with leading sheiks and signed the Treaty of 1868 with Muhammad al-Thani (J. Crystal, 1990). While the treaty still recognized Qatar's tributary ties to Bahrain, it recognized Qatar as an autonomous entity and granted special standing to the al-Thani family (J. Crystal, 1990; Ulrichsen, 2020).

The Ottomans occupied the eastern regions of the Arabian peninsula in 1871 and Muhammad's son, Qasim, tried to build closer ties to the former (J. Crystal, 1990). Qasim gradually pushed out the Indian trading community in the 1870s, increasing the al-Thani's commercial importance (J. Crystal, 1990). Qasim eventually sought British support though because the Ottomans wished to intervene heavily in local matters and threatened military action (J. Crystal, 1990). Britain limited its influence in Qatar to avoid antagonizing the Ottomans (J. Crystal, 1990). After the Saudis took neighboring territory from the Ottomans in 1913, Britain signed a treaty with Qatar that resembled those Britain had with other states in the region (J. Crystal, 1990; Rabi, 2006).

Most settlements in Qatar depended on pearling. In 1907, the industry had 817 boats and employed nearly half the population (J. Crystal, 1990). While pearling remained dominant till the 1950s, it began to decline in the 1920s and 30s due to growing competition from Japanese cultured pearls (J. Crystal, 1990, 2014).

The Petroleum Development (Qatar) Ltd, formed in 1935, discovered oil in 1939. The company later became the Qatar Petroleum Company which Qatar nationalized between 1974 and 1976 (Ulrichsen, 2020). Oil extraction stopped during World War II. The pearl industry's decline, an embargo by Bahrain and the pause on oil extraction left Qatar in



economically dire straits (J. Crystal, 1990; Ulrichsen, 2020). This caused a mass exodus of people and merchants from Qatar and left the weakened al-Thani as the chief family (J. Crystal, 1990). Oil production resumed in 1947 and exports began in 1949 (J. Crystal, 1990).

The al-Thanis began using oil revenue to consolidate power. In return for a continued share in oil revenues, powerful merchant families in Qatar agreed to stay out of the formal political process. The al-Thanis implemented policies that allowed their family and a few privileged others to dominate ownership of the non-oil private sector (J. Crystal, 2014).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the monarchy used oil revenues to expand the bureaucracy and dispense more subsidies, social services and provide employment to the majority of Qatari nationals (J. Crystal, 2014; Hertog, 2016). Various al-Thani family members took up the key positions in government. These actions further reduced the power of tribal leaders and allowed the monarchy to form ties with the national population (J. Crystal, 2014; Hertog, 2016).

In 1968, Britain announced its military withdrawal from the Gulf (Rabi, 2006). Qatar declared independence and became a UN member in September 1971. It formed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981 with 5 other Gulf states (J. A. Crystal & Anthony, 2021).

To reduce dependence on oil, Qatar decided to develop the North Field, one of the world's largest natural gas reserves, in 1981. It planned and signed contract to develop LNG infrastructure between 1987 and 1991 (J. A. Crystal & Anthony, 2021; Ulrichsen, 2020).

In 1995, Sheik Hamad ousted his father Sheik Khalifa and became Emir. Iraq's annexation of Kuwait and border skirmishes with Saudi Arabia in the early 1990s encouraged Hamad to develop stronger international linkages outside the Gulf and to accelerate Qatar's development of LNG (Ulrichsen, 2020). Qatar exported its first cargo of LNG in 1997 to Japan. It continues to remain one of the top three natural gas exporting countries and maintains long-term contracts for natural gas with the large East Asian economies Ulrichsen, 2020. In 2003, Qatar's Al Udeid air base became the linchpin in US military involvement in the Gulf (Ulrichsen, 2020).

Qatar's increasing autonomy and other actions led to growing tensions with its Gulf neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia (Ulrichsen, 2020). In June 2017, a coalition consisting of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed an economic blockade (J. A. Crystal & Anthony, 2021). Qatar managed to mitigate the impacts of the blockade and shifted trade ties away from its neighbors. The coalition lifted the blockade in January 2021 (J. A. Crystal & Anthony, 2021).

## **Economy**

Qatari nationals make up around 5% of the labor force. Government departments employ nearly 70% of Qatari nationals. Non-Qatari nationals make up most of the labor force in all other industries (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019a).

The extraction of oil and especially natural gas remains the key industry in Qatar. Qatar holds 13% of the world's natural gas reserves (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). It contributed around 35% of GDP from 2015 to 2019 (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019b). In 2019, natural gas made up more than 60% of exports while crude petroleum



made up around 18% of exports (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019b). It employs around 4% of the labor force (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019a).

From 2015-2019, manufacturing and construction contributed around 8% and 12% of GDP, respectively (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019b). In 2019, they employed around 7.4% and 42% of the labor force, respectively (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019a).

Key industries in the service sector include the wholesale and retail trade, financial and insurance services, and real estate linked activities. From 2015 to 2019, they contributed around 8%, 8% and 7% of total GDP respectively (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019b). In 2019, they employed around 12%, 0.7% and 0.5% of the labor force respectively (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019a).

From 2015 to 2019, the public sector contributed around 11.5% of total GDP (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019b). Government departments and government companies employed around 6.2% and 3.2% of the total labor force in 2019 (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2019a).

## Politics

Qatar has an absolute monarchy. The Emir serves as chief-of-state and appoints the prime minister and the Council of Ministers. It has a 45-seat unicameral Advisory Council, or Majlis al-Shura, that serves as the legislative branch. Qatari's directly elect 30 members while the emir appoints the remaining 15 seats. All Qatari citizens can vote when they turn 18.

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## United Arab Emirates

Population	9.8 million
Land Area	83600km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	17/100 - Not Free

### History

From the 16th to 18th centuries, the Portuguese, Dutch, British and local leaders competed for control of trade in the Persian Gulf. The lack of stability abetted piracy against British ships in the 18th century, leading the British India Company to ask the Royal Navy for assistance to suppress piracy in the region (Rabi, 2006).

In the first half of the 19th century, Britain and some Arab sheikhdoms signed a series of agreements that forbade piracy at sea, led to the cessation of inter-tribal warfare at sea, and enabled the British to increase naval presence at sea to keep peace and enforce the agreements. The sheikhdoms of the modern United Arab Emirates signed these treaties in 1820 and a more comprehensive treaty in 1853. These treaties led Europeans to call the region the Trucial Coast and the sheikhdoms that signed them became the Trucial States. These treaties, known as 'Exclusive Treaties', allowed Britain to take over the foreign affairs of the Trucial Coast in return for Britain's military protection. Britain and the Trucial States signed the most comprehensive and definite 'exclusive treaty' in 1892. Apart from piracy, Britain felt its influence in the Gulf aligned with its security interests for its holdings in the Indian subcontinent (Rabi, 2006).

Prior to World War II, Britain kept its control of the region to a minimum and generally respected tribal custom. The war emphasised the importance of oil in Britain's military operations and encouraged greater involvement in the region despite India and Pakistan declaring independence (Alhammedi, 2013; Rabi, 2006). While nearby Gulf States developed economically due to their oil revenues, the Emirates did not discover oil until 1960. Before that period roughly a quarter of its workforce worked in the neighbouring states. This led to discontent in the Trucial States as Emiratis felt Britain was responsible for its lack of economic and social development (Alhammedi, 2013). This, combined with international pressure and possible oil concessions if oil was discovered, led Britain to invest more in health and education in the Trucial States (Alhammedi, 2013).

In addition, to show further commitment to the 'Trucial States' development, Britain established the Trucial States Council in 1952 with their Political Agent in the region as chair. Britain hoped this would increase cooperation between the Sheikdoms to deal with the economic issues caused by the decline in the pearl trade (Alhammedi, 2013; Peterson & Crystal, 2021). Pearling, fishing, and date plantations were key economic activities in the Trucial States but the pearl trade declined in the 1930s due to competition from Japanese cultured pearls (Alhammedi, 2013; Joyce, 2012). The Council set up various committees overseeing education, health, and economic development, and contributed to the foundations of the modern federation of emirates. Britain transferred management of the Council to the sheikhs in 1965. Britain also set up the Trucial Oman Levies (TOC) in 1952 to deal with internal conflict between sheikhs and possible incursions from larger powers in the region. The TOC provided economic opportunities for locals and formed

the foundation of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE's) armed forces (Alhammadi, 2013).

In line with Britain's policy of cutting defense spending east of the Suez, Britain announced in 1968 that it would withdraw its forces from the Gulf (Crystal & Smith, 2021; Rabi, 2006). The UAE proclaimed independence in December 1971, signed a treaty of friendship with the United Kingdom and became a member of the UN and Arab League. In 1981, the UAE joined the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which has led to closer economic and defense ties with other Gulf states.

Abu Dhabi, whose oil reserves and large area made it leader of UAE, has pushed to centralize more functions under the federal government since 1973. This has met with some opposition from the emirates of Dubai and Ras al-Kaimah (Peterson & Crystal, 2021). In the late-20th and early-21st century, the UAE has been actively diversifying its economy from oil and gas and has come further than most of its Gulf neighbours. The UAE held its first election, with a limited electoral college, in 2006 (Peterson & Crystal, 2021).

## **Economy**

In Abu Dhabi, the largest emirate by land area, oil and natural gas activities made up nearly half of the UAE's GDP in 2018 (Statistics Centre Abu Dhabi, 2019). This is equivalent to about 30% of the UAE's GDP overall (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Construction, manufacturing, financial activities, and real estate are other major contributors to Abu Dhabi's GDP. They contributed around 10%, 6%, 7%, and 4% respectively. Nearly 60% of citizens are employed by the government, and about 9% are employed in oil and gas. The remainder of citizens work in various services (Statistics Centre Abu Dhabi, 2019).

In Dubai, the second-largest emirate by land area and largest by population, services contribute more to the economy. The retail and wholesale trade contributed around 26% of GDP in 2018, transportation and storage activities around 12.5%, financial services around 10%, real estate activities around 7%, and food and accommodation services around 5% (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2019a). Many of these services are linked to the tourism industry that saw 16.7 million visitors in 2019 (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2019b). In Dubai's secondary sector, manufacturing around 9% of Dubai's total GDP and construction around 6%. Public administration contributed around 5% of Dubai's GDP (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2019a).

Key products manufactured in the UAE include refined petroleum and petrochemicals, fertilisers, aluminum, cement, and construction materials (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Peterson & Crystal, 2021). The UAE is the world's 5th-largest producer of aluminum and accounts for 50% of its production in the Middle East (Gahlaut, 2020).

## **Politics**

The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven monarchies. The seven monarchs form the Federal Supreme Council (FSC), which serves as the highest constitutional authority and meets four times a year. The council elects the president, vice president, prime minister, and deputy prime ministers. The monarch of Abu Dhabi currently serves as president. The monarch of Dubai serves as vice president and prime minister. The prime minister chooses a Council of Ministers with approval from the president. The monarchs

of Abu Dhabi and Dubai have effective veto power in the council (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The unicameral 40-seat National Council serves as the legislative branch. An electoral college selected by the seven monarchs elects 20 members while the monarchs appoint the remaining 20 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The legal system is based on a combination of Islamic Sharia law and civil law (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Non-citizens make up 87.9% of the population while ethnic Emiratis make up 11.6% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Non-citizens lack political rights and a clear path to citizenship (Freedom House, 2020).

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## West Bank and Gaza

Population	4.57 million
Land Area	6220km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	Occupied Territories
UN Member	UN Non-member Observer-state
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	Gaza: 11/100 - Not Free West Bank: 25/100 - Not Free

### History

After World War I, the League of Nations granted Britain a mandate over Palestine. At the time, most of the population were Arab. In line with the Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which the British government committed to facilitating the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, and its mandate, Britain encouraged Jewish immigration to Palestine in the 1920s (Mathew, 2013; Ochsenwald, Stone, Elath, & Sicherman, 2021). The British mandate government developed administrative institutions, municipal services, infrastructure (Jones, Faris, Khalidi, Fraser, Kenyon, Khalidi, Brice, Albright, Bugh, & Bickerton, 2021).

After the Holocaust and World War II, Britain received international pressure to admit more Jews into Palestine whilst facing local and regional Arab opposition towards a new Jewish state in Palestine (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). In 1947, Britain began withdrawing from Palestine. The UN General Assembly voted to divide British Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state despite Arab opposition (Ochsenwald et al., 2021). Wealthy Palestinian merchants and urban notables moved from the major cities to neighboring Arab countries while the urban middle class moved to all-Arab towns such as Nablus and Nazareth (Jones et al., 2021). Around 276,000 Palestinians moved to the West Bank and 160,000 to 190,000 fled to the Gaza Strip (Jones et al., 2021).

Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip from 1948 to 1967. Egypt ran a repressive regime that heavily restricted local autonomy and economic development (Jones et al., 2021). Jordan formally annexed the West Bank in 1950. It granted citizenship to Palestinians and provided education (Jones et al., 2021). The economy remained agrarian and hardly any industrial development occurred. By 1967, the West Bank had 47% of Jordan's population and contributed 30% of its GDP (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021c).

During the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel's Defense Force (IDF) captured and occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (WBGS) (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Schein, 2017). This led to increased economic ties between Israel and the Palestinian territories. Per capita income in the WBGS doubled from 1967 to 1990 (Piterberg, Kirk, & Davis, 2013). Israel had a shortage of unskilled labor so 150,000 workers from the WBGS commuted to Israel daily to work (Ochsenwald et al., 2021; Schein, 2017). These changes failed to generate long-term domestic sources of economic development for the WBGS though (Piterberg et al., 2013).

The Likud Party government of Israel encouraged the growth of Jewish settlements and improved transport infrastructure in the West Bank in the 1970s and 1980s to increase Israeli control of the region (Jones et al., 2021; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica,



2021c). Local Palestinian leaders responded to occupation by strengthening social organizations like labor unions, and religious, educational and political institutions (Jones et al., 2021). These actions led the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), founded in 1964, to act more like a state government (Jones et al., 2021). Apart from launching military attacks against Israel, it increased its presence by establishing youth groups, providing economic assistance to families, and building rival political infrastructure (Jones et al., 2021). By the early 1980s, the PLO had set up a bureaucratic structure that provided health, housing, educational, legal, media, and labor services for Palestinians that outdid Israeli and Jordanian alternatives for Palestinians (Jones et al., 2021).

The PLO gained recognition from Arab nations in the 1970s. In the 1980s, West European nations and the Soviet Union supported PLO participation in peace negotiations with Israel (Jones et al., 2021). Negotiations in the early 1990s led the PLO and Israel signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. The accords led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the gradual transfer of governing functions from Israel to the PA (Jones et al., 2021; Piterberg et al., 2013). By the end of the 1990s, Israel had reverted control of under 20% of the West Bank and about two-thirds of the Gaza Strip to full Palestinian control. Most of the West Bank remained under Israeli military occupation with combined PA civil administration in some areas (Jones et al., 2021).

Economic outcomes worsened in the WBGS during the 1990s and 2000s. After the Oslo Accords, Israel increased barriers to movement within the territories through the need for permits and more checkpoints (Piterberg et al., 2013). These restrictions limited the employment opportunities of Palestinians in Israel, reduced the amount of inter-city and international trade, and discouraged the growth of the private sector (Piterberg et al., 2013). The public sector, with the support of international funding, had to employ many Palestinians who used to find work in Israel (Piterberg et al., 2013).

In the 2010s, occasional Hamas attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip has led to frequent violent conflict between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Israel continues to expand its settlements in the West Bank. Poverty and limited economic opportunities remain obstacles to improved well-being (Jones et al., 2021; Piterberg et al., 2013).

## **Economy**

Agriculture contributes around 3% of the GDP of the West Bank and the Gaza strip. They use 43.3% of their total area for agriculture (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b). In the West Bank, people cultivate fruits and vegetables on irrigated land along the Jordan River valley. Outside the valley, people graze sheep and grow cereal, olives, and fruits in other hilly areas in the West Bank that receive sufficient rainfall (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021c). 11.5% of the labor force is employed in agriculture (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b). The population in the Gaza Strip uses 75% of land for agriculture (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021a). Citrus is the main crop grown in the Gaza Strip. It also grows wheat, olives, and vegetables for export (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021a). 5.2% of the population is employed in agriculture (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a).

The secondary sector contributed around 20% of their economies. Industry in the Gaza Strip employed 10% of the labor force and is concentrated around the city of Gaza. It manufactures textiles, furniture, and processes food (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021a). The West Bank has small-scale manu-



facturing operations that employs 34.4% of the population. They produce products like soap, textiles, olive-wood carvings and mother-of-pearl souvenirs (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b).

The service sector contributes the remaining GDP and employs the remaining workforce in both territories. Unemployment in both territories approaches 28% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021a, 2021b). The Palestinian territories continue to depend heavily on international aid and donations for revenue and to provide employment and income to Palestinians in the public sector (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021b; Piterberg et al., 2013).

## Politics

Hamas and Fatah are the two main parties in Palestinian politics. Fatah is a key member of the PLO. Hamas disagrees with the PLO and Fatah on building a secular state and challenges their authority in the Gaza Strip (Jones et al., 2021).

The Hamas-led government seized control of the Gaza Strip and split from the Palestinian Authority in 2007. As of 2021, they have yet to reconcile (Jones et al., 2021). The Palestinian Authority continues to partial jurisdiction over Palestinian residents in the West Bank (Freedom House, 2020). The Basic Law serves as a temporary constitution. According to it, Palestinians should directly elect a president and the 132 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) every four years (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021b). Freedom House reports that the Palestinian Authority has not held an election since 2005 and has no functioning legislature (Freedom House, 2020).

Israel's military continues to occupy most of the West Bank and restricts civil and political liberties (Freedom House, 2020). Israel has also expanded Jewish settlements in the West Bank where Jewish settlers hold Israeli citizenship and enjoy the same rights as those living in Israel (Freedom House, 2020).

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# Oceania and the Pacific Islands

## American Samoa

Population	46 360
Land Area	224km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	US Territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	Upper-middle Income
Freedom House Score	Not Assessed

## History

Humans first settled in American Samoa 3000 years ago. They practiced slash-and-burn agriculture on the islands and introduced domesticated pigs, chickens and dogs (Blackford, 2007).

The United States of America (USA) annexed Tutuili and Annu'u islands in 1900 and the Manu'a Archipelago in 1904. The US put the navy in charge and set up a coal refueling and communications center on Tutuili at Pago Pago which has a good natural harbor (Blackford, 2007). Pago Pago now serves as the capital and commercial center of American Samoa.

The naval administration generally worked in consultation with the local leaders, minimizing their influence on local ways of living. They appropriated 121 acres for military use and helped enforced ordinances to prevent non-residents from owning land and businesses on the islands (Blackford, 2007). This left 99% of land in Samoan ownership until 1951. They also improved health services and introduced a public system of elementary and secondary schools. Most Samoans continued with their lifestyle of subsistence farming and fishing. The shift from coal to oil for fuel obsoleted naval operations in American Samoa, so the navy withdrew from 1951-1952 (Blackford, 2007). The Federal government eventually transferred authority over the islands to the Department for Interior in 1956 (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2015).

In the post-war period, due to its proximity to nearby fisheries, the US federal government encouraged the growth of the tuna processing industry on the islands. They invested in infrastructure, allowed relaxed labor standards, offered generous tax and tariff breaks and subsidized supplies, transportation and insurance (Poblete, 2020).

In 1961, the American Samoan government also invited the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries to study how to increase fishery production leading to the federal government testing and introducing new fishing techniques to increase production between 1961 and 1987 (Poblete, 2020).

At present, American Samoan leaders wish to retain their status as a US territory (Blackford, 2007). Traditional titles and land tenure systems remain largely unchanged, with 90% of lands still in communal ownership (Blackford, 2007; Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Foreign entrepreneurs still have restricted access to the islands (Blackford, 2007).

## Economy

The territorial government employs about one-third of the labor force and transfers from the federal government constitute about 60% of government revenue (American Samoa Department of Commerce Statistics Division, 2017).

In the private sector, tuna fishing and processing are the key industry employing 15.5% of the labor force and making processed fish products American Samoa's largest export (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). This industry consumes tin, petroleum and seafood that make a large proportion of the territory's imports (Hamano, 2011). This industry has declined due to increased international competition and federally mandated wage hikes (Columbia Books and Information Services, 2020; Pobleto, 2020).

American Samoa also heavily relies on remittances. A lack of employment opportunities in America Samoa has led to large diasporas in Hawaii and California estimated at 62000 in the 1990s, larger than the resident population of the islands (Blackford, 2007). Attempts to diversify into tourism have had limited success, with less than 6000 tourists in 2017 (American Samoa Department of Commerce Statistics Division, 2017), due to American Samoa's isolation, lack of regular flights and vulnerability to natural disasters (Blackford, 2007).

## Politics

While remaining a US unincorporated territory, American Samoa adopted its own constitution in 1967 and held its first elections in 1977 in which residents over the age of 18 can vote in (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; of the Interior, 2015).

American Samoa has its own judiciary, a locally elected bicameral Legislature called the Fono consisting of an 18-seat Senate and 21-seat House of Representatives and a locally elected governor for head of government who appoints 12 cabinet members with consent of the Legislature (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Fiji

Population:	935 970
Land Area:	18274km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status:	UN-recognized state
UN Member:	Yes
Socio-economic Status:	Upper Middle Income
Freedom House Score:	61/100 - Partly Free

### History

Humans first settled in Fiji around 3500 years ago. The settlers brought domesticated pigs and practiced agriculture. European commercial interest in Fiji started in the early 1800s due to sandalwood. When Fiji's sandalwood had been depleted, Europeans traded for sea cucumber processed by the Fijians. Competing Euro-American interests for land to grow tropical crops led to disputes over land and political power with indigenous Fijians resulting in violent conflict throughout the 1860s (Foster & MacDonald, 2021).

Fiji became a British crown colony in 1874. The first governor initiated policies to limit native Fijians' involvement in commercial developments to maintain their way of life and prevent the creation of a white settler colony. He banned sales of Fijian land to settlers, collected tax from Fijians in agricultural produce and governed via indirect rule built on the traditional political structure of chiefs (Foster & MacDonald, 2021; Veracini, 2008).

To encourage economic development, Britain invited the Australian Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) to establish sugarcane plantations and processing mills in Western Fiji. They brought in around 60,500 indentured laborers from India from 1879 to 1916 and encouraged them to settle permanently after their contracts ended (Minorities at Risk, 2006). CSR encouraged a monoculture of sugarcane in Fiji by providing fertilizer at cost, capital equipment below maintenance cost, loans with below-market interests rates and land at low rent for Indian tenant farmers. Eastern Fiji engaged mainly in the production and trade of copra during the colonial period (Knapman, 1985).

Fiji's sugar exports surpassed the West Indies by 1913 and Fiji had one of the highest per capita value of exports amongst tropical colonies. However, most of the profit did not return to the local economy and instead went to companies mostly based in Australia and New Zealand, stunting opportunities for economic growth (Knapman, 1985). Fiji continued to process sugar and copra and manufacture only butter, biscuits and soap throughout the colonial period (Knapman, 1985).

The British policy of fiscal conservatism in colonies, and CSR's opposition to taxation, meant that most of Fiji's revenue did not go into public services and infrastructure until 1929. British imperial policy began encouraging loan-financed development in the colonies through the Colonial Development Bill. From 1929 to 1939, Fiji's governor spent 1.3 million pounds on infrastructure like roads, schools and water, accounting for 44% of public works expenditure in the entire colonial period up to that point (Knapman, 1985).

Britain began working in consultation with Fijians to write a constitution in the 1960s. The 1966 constitution provided for a Westminster-style democracy with an electoral system accounting for ethnicity. Fiji achieved independence on 10 October 1970. The constitution set up a 52-seat parliament with 12 seats allocated on a communal basis between Indians and Fijians, 8 seats reserved for the general electors and the remain-

ing seats split evenly between Indian and Fijian voters. This allowed native Fijians to dominate local politics so long as they collaborated with the general electors (Foster & MacDonald, 2021; Prasad, 2014).

The Alliance Party, representing indigenous Fijians, ruled until 1987 when a coalition of progressive native and Indo-Fijians won the elections. The military, dominated by indigenous Fijians, overthrew the government a month later and a new constitution was adopted in 1990 and revised in 1997 (Foster & MacDonald, 2021). The sugar industry, which remained important for three decades after independence due to favorable trade deals with the European Union, declined as the military government did not support the industry. Indian farmers and foreign investors faced economic uncertainty after the coup as the then-Native Lands Trust Board refused to grant new land leases or renew existing ones for non-indigenous Fijians (Prasad, 2014).

A subsequent coup occurred in 2000 which had an ethno-nationalist agenda like the 1987. The recent 2006 coup brought the Bainimarama government to power which has formulated a more inclusive economic and political agenda. It brought back some international confidence, demonstrated by Australia and New Zealand lifting travel bans to Fiji and increasing tourism (Prasad, 2014). The Native Land Trust continues to own and lease close to 90% of the land and a new constitution was adopted in 2013 (Foster & MacDonald, 2021).

## **Economy**

In 2019, agriculture contributed 6.8% to Fiji GDP and employed near 3.4% of the labor force; manufacturing contributed 10.4% and employed around 13.75% of the labor force; financial services contributed 7.1% and employed around 3% of the labor force; the wholesale and retail trade contributed 8.6% and employed nearly 17% of the labor force. Public administration, inclusive of education and health services, contributed 15.5% of GDP and employed around 23.4% of the labor force (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2020a, 2020b).

Fiji's key exports are processed food items, like beverages, spirits, and refined sugar, which made up 40.2% of exports in 2016. Gold, animal products, textiles, vegetable products and wood made up around 11%, 10.6%, 9.6%, 8.5% and 5.4% of 2016 exports, respectively (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The textile industry exports mainly to Australia and New Zealand due to the presence of favorable trade deals (Foster & MacDonald, 2021).

Tourism and remittances contribute most to Fiji's foreign exchange earnings (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). In 2019, Fiji earned more than 2 billion Fijian dollars and received around 894000 international visitors. Most tourists came from Australia, New Zealand, and the US (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2020c, 2021)

## **Politics**

Fiji has a parliamentary republic. The unicameral Parliament has 51 seats. The head-of-government, the Prime Minister, is the leader of the majority party. The head-of-state, the president, is elected by parliament. All Fijian citizens can vote when they turn 18 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Fiji has a history of political instability that seems to have improved in the recent decade after the last coup in 2006. Native Fijians make up nearly 57% of the population while



Fijians of Indian descent make up 37.5% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The ethnic composition of Fiji has contributed to political instability and military coups in the past due to indigenous ethno-nationalism. Native Fijians fear that the proportion of Indo-Fijians can allow the latter to control politics and the economy. This has led to policies that discriminate against Indo-Fijians. It remains to be seen whether the current regime can maintain more inclusive political and economic policies (Minorities at Risk, 2006; Prasad, 2014).

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## French Polynesia

Population:	295 120
Land Area:	4167km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status:	French Overseas Country
UN Member:	No
Socio-economic Status:	High Income
Freedom House Score:	Not Assessed

### History

French Polynesia consists of five archipelagos – the Societies, Tuamotu, Marquesas, Austral and Gambier. More than 275 000 live in the Societies with most residing on Tahiti, the largest island.

Humans from Western Polynesia first settled on the Marquesas around 200 BCE and spread out to the Societies by the 9th century. Various European exploration expeditions sighted and/or landed on the islands from the 1500s to the 1700s (Foster & West, 2021). In the 1800s, the French sought territories in the Pacific for strategic naval positions, a stopping point for trade between the Americas and China, and a port of call for whalers. France made Tahiti and the nearby islands a protectorate in 1842 and exercised a de facto protectorate over the other archipelagos until the 1880s, despite Britain's protests (Aldrich, 1989). In 1880, France annexed Tahiti and made them Etablissements francais d'Océanie (EFO). France gradually annexed the other archipelagos into the EFO up till 1900. France received formal recognition from Britain of its annexation in 1887 (Aldrich, 1989).

France initially tried to establish plantations. Tahiti exported fresh fruit, especially oranges, to California from the 1850s until the 1880s when California developed its own orange groves. In the long-run, only copra proved profitable and became a key source of income for islanders. Tahiti exported as much as 8 million tons a year (Aldrich, 1989). Apart from a few temporarily successful ventures when the relevant commodity prices were high, the difficulty of obtaining labor and distance from major markets made it unprofitable to invest capital in plantations for cash crops like coffee, cotton, and sugarcane (Aldrich, 1989).

Compagnie française des phosphates de l'Océanie (CFPO) formed from smaller mining companies in 1908 and mined phosphate on Makatea. At its peak in the 1950s, CFPO phosphate made up 40% of Tahiti's exports and 25% of the territory's revenue through taxes and fees. Most mining ceased in the 1960s (Aldrich, 1989).

A naval government ruled the colony until 1885 (Foster & West, 2021). After 1885, France created a civilian administration with an appointed French governor, a Privy Council, and a General Council to represent the islands. The colony's government had some say in fiscal policy. The French reduced the powers of the General council in 1899 and replaced it with an advisory council in 1903 (Foster & West, 2021).

During World War II, French Polynesia sided with Charles de Gaulle and the Allies. France changed its status from a colony to an overseas territory in 1946. This provided French Polynesia with a territorial assembly and representation in the French Senate and National Assembly. France extended the powers of the territorial assembly in 1957 (Foster & West, 2021).

France built nuclear weapons testing facilities on the uninhabited Mururoa Atoll and based their administrators on Tahiti in the 1960s. The military carried out 16 air tests from 1966 to 1974. After encountering international pressure to stop surface tests, the French military continued carrying out 147 underground tests under Mururoa and Fanning lagoon from 1975 to 1995 (Dropsy & Montet, 2018). France signed the protocols of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty in 1996 (Foster & West, 2021).

The scale of military operations transformed the local economy during this period as investment poured in to construct the required infrastructure and facilities. By 1965, more than 1000 companies worked for the testing center. French financial transfers peaked at nearly 70% of GDP in 1966 before averaging out at around 30%. Civil and military administrations' contribution to GDP grew from 12% to 34% (Dropsy & Montet, 2018).

Independence movements in the second half of the twentieth century were most concerned with French nuclear policy, land rights and gaining power within local politics. Greater calls from French Polynesia for local autonomy led to France granting more autonomy in 1984 and recognition of its local indigenous political and cultural identity. France also allowed French Polynesia to create a flag and its own anthem (Mrgudovic, 2012).

France granted more power over economic matters in 1996 (Dropsy & Montet, 2018). France passed the Organic Law that made French Polynesia an overseas country in 2004. This granted it autonomy over all matters except those reserved for the French state and permitted French Polynesia to have external representation within French Embassies (Dropsy & Montet, 2018; Mrgudovic, 2012)

In 2013, the UN placed French Polynesia on its list of non-self-governing territories working toward self-determination in response to lobbying from pro-independence groups.

## **Economy**

The French Polynesian economy is becoming increasingly service-oriented. The Institut de la Statistique de la Polynésie française (ISPF), the government body that reports French Polynesian statistics, reports that at the end of 2019 French Polynesia had over 29400 registered enterprises. More than 75% engage in the tertiary sector. Around 12.8% engage in construction and the remaining enterprises in the secondary sector mostly process agricultural output (Institut de la Statistique de la Polynésie française, 2020). Tourism employs around 17% of the labor force. In 2019, French Polynesia received 300,000 visitors (World Bank, 2021b).

The primary sector made up around 8% of the economy in 2012. Pearl farming, the largest industry after tourism, contributed 54% of French Polynesia's exports in 2015 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Other key exports include copra and coconut oil, processed fruit products including jams, jellies and tuna (World Bank, 2021a).

France distributes fiscal transfers equivalent to 20-30% of French Polynesia's GDP. About half of the finance goes towards service provided by the Territorial Government such as health and education while the remaining half goes towards French responsibilities such as security and defense (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2021; Dropsy & Montet, 2018)

## Politics

French Polynesia has remained an overseas country of France since 2003 and awaits a future referendum on independence. The French president serves as head-of-state. French Polynesia indirectly elects two senators via electoral college to the French Senate and directly elects 3 deputies to the French National Assembly. The French president also appoints a high commissioner for French Polynesia on the advice of the Ministry for Interior. Locally, French Polynesia has a 57-seat unicameral assembly which elects a president to serve as head-of-government (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

France continues to govern French Polynesia's defense and security. It provides fiscal transfers and the Institut d'émission d'outre-mer (IEOM) issues its currency, the CFP franc, shared by France's other Pacific territories.

The archipelagos remain on the UN's list of non-self-governing territories working toward self-determination. However, community leaders from some of the archipelagos such as the Marquesas, Tuamotu and Gambier wish to gain more autonomy while remaining a part of France, due to distrust of Tahitian dominance should they gain independence. They also seek continued French fiscal support, whilst some Tahitian groups and leaders seek independence (Mrgudovic, 2012). Shifting political alliances, and reforms introduced by local politician Gaston Flosse in 2004 that try to ensure the under-representation of pro-independence parties in the local assembly, has led to high government turnover and instability (Mrgudovic, 2012).

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## Guam

Population:	168 800
Land Area:	544km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status:	US Territory
UN Member:	No
Socio-economic Status:	High Income
Freedom House Score:	Not Assessed

## History

The first people migrated to Guam from Southeast Asia and Taiwan 4000 years ago. Before European contact with the island, the native Chamorro population engaged in fishing, agriculture that included rice cultivation, pottery and trade with nearby islands (Herman, 2017).

Spain claimed Guam in 1565 but only colonized it in the late-1600s as they faced organized resistance from the local Chamorro population until 1685. They did not develop the island's economy and it remained a way station for ships sailing to the Philippines (Blackford, 2007).

The US bought Guam from Spain in 1898 after winning the Spanish-American War and placed the navy in charge of the island. The navy built some military installations, improved sanitation and medical services on the island which led to a local population increase (Blackford, 2007). The US considered the island's natives as non-citizen 'nationals' and did not extend political rights to them (Quimby, 2011). Most of the local population continued to engage in subsistence farming. During World War II, Japan occupied Guam from December 1941 to July 1944 (Blackford, 2007).

In 1946, the Truman administration included Guam on the United Nation's list of non-self-governing territories as part of its civil rights agenda and the international decolonization movement. In 1950, in response to growing local demands for self-government, the US Congress passed the Guam Organic Act that made Guam residents US citizens, transferred federal jurisdiction from the navy to the Department for Interior (Quimby, 2011; US Department for Interior, 2015). The act established a local executive, legislature and judiciary branch. A governor, appointed by the federal government until Guam's first governor election in 1970, serves as head of government. In 1969, Guamanians voted against reunification with the Northern Marianas and throughout the 1970s the Guamanians tried to negotiate for a commonwealth status like Puerto Rico but did not succeed (Rogers, 2011).

Throughout the Cold War, the US used military facilities on Guam to support its operations in the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnam War (1955-1975) as part of its policy to prevent the spread of communism in Asia.

President John F Kennedy removed the military security clearance required to visit Guam in 1962. This enabled more people to visit Guam, and the growth of the tourism industry (Blackford, 2007; Quimby, 2011; Rogers, 2011). This led to increased Japanese investment in infrastructure and tourist facilities in Guam. The US military built a new ammunitions wharf in the late-1980s which allowed the conversion of the old wharf in Apra Harbor to a cruise center in the 1990s and more commercial developments around the harbor. While tourism industry has generally grown, events such as the 1997 Asian

Financial Crisis and typhoons have led to drops in some years (Blackford, 2007; Quimby, 2011). Guam's importance as a military base in the Pacific grows as the US wishes to deter Chinese military activities and protect its interests in the Asia-Pacific region (Quimby, 2011; Ruane, Anderson, Cruz, Donaldson, Garrido, Guerrero, Kabigting, Terlaje, Vinca, & Wiley, 2020).

## **Economy**

The US military, Guam's local government (GovGuam) and the tourism industry account for the employment of nearly all residents (Blackford, 2007; Ruane, Barcinas, Cayanan, Garrido, Meneses, Salalila, Sayama, Tenorio, & Tretnoff, 2019).

As of 2019, GovGuam and the Federal government employed 18.3 % and 6.3% of the labor force respectively (Ruane et al., 2019). About 60% of government revenue derives from tourism-related sources such as income taxes, sales taxes and hotel occupancy taxes and 30% from federal and military spending. The US and Japanese governments have also been contributing billions to the development of military facilities and supporting infrastructure as they relocate US military operations from Okinawa (Quimby, 2011; Ruane et al., 2020).

Tourism accounted for 17.8% of Guam's GDP in 2016 and over a third of jobs (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Quimby, 2011). Guam received more than a million visitors each year for most the 2000s. In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Guam received 1.63 million visitors. Most of these tourists come from Japan and South Korea. The limited diversity of visitor origins leaves Guam's economy vulnerable to the conditions of the two East Asian economies (Ruane et al., 2019).

Due to economic uncertainty caused by volatile tourism and occasional drops in US defense spending, Guam has a significant diaspora of 60000-70000 in Hawaii and the mainland US. Most are active and retired armed service personnel (Quimby, 2011). However, Guam is not as dependent on remittances as other Pacific island nations.

## **Politics**

Guam has its own local government with a judiciary, a 15-seat unicameral legislature and a governor who appoints the Cabinet with consent from the legislature (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The governor holds direct responsibility for the police, health and education services on the island. Taxes paid by Guamanians to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) go directly to Guam's own treasury instead of the federal treasury (Rogers, 2011). All Guamanians can vote when they turn 18 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

While Guamanians are US citizens, as residents of a territory they cannot vote in federal elections, receive no voting rights in Congress, do not receive the same protection from federal powers as Americans in states and do not receive the same social and economic benefits as other states (Rogers, 2011).

The Chamorros, natives of Guam, make up about 37% of the population. While most Chamorro leaders today value Guam's relationship with the US and the citizenship status of Guamanians, they also seek greater local political autonomy, limits to federal power in Guam, protection and primacy of indigenous rights. Historically, relaxed immigration and military land acquisition policies have threatened these goals (Quimby, 2011).



In response, the US military services operating on the island have become more consultative and sensitive to local needs over time as shown by the delays to the relocation of the ammunition wharf away from Guam's commercial port in the 1970s and 80s (Blackford, 2007). Tensions between the US military and the Chamorro population still exist. These tensions stem from local concerns on infrastructure capacity, cultural sites and the environment stemming from planned expansions of military facilities on Guam as the US relocates facilities from Okinawa to support defense and foreign policy priorities in the Asia-Pacific region (Quimby, 2011).

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## Kiribati

Population	111 800
Land Area	811km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	93/100 - Free

### History

Kiribati consists of Banaba Island, the Gilbert Islands, the Phoenix Islands, and the Line Islands. Most of the population resides in the Gilbert Islands. Humans from Southeast Asia first settled on the Gilbert Islands and Banaba around 4000 to 5000 years ago. An influx of Samoans migrated to the Gilbert Islands in the 14th century (Foster & Macdonald, [2021-03-10](#)).

Europeans first sighted the islands in the 16th century. Commercial activities started in the 19th century when whalers stopped by the islands and coconut oil traders visited. European settlers recruited some islanders to work in plantations on other Pacific islands in the mid-19th century (Foster & Macdonald, [2021-03-10](#)).

Britain reluctantly made the Gilbert Islands a protectorate in 1892 at Germany's request. Germany wished to protect their commercial interests and holdings in the Pacific from American interests. Britain sought international support from Berlin for its role in Egypt (Macdonald, [2001](#)). In 1916, Britain placed the protectorates over the Gilbert Islands and the Ellice Islands under the common administration of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (GEIC). Britain eventually annexed the Line Islands into the GEIC and in 1937 it annexed the Phoenix Islands in anticipation of resettling the Gilbertese and to protect its aviation interests in the Pacific (Macdonald, [2001](#)).

The discovery of phosphate on Banaba Island in 1900 led Britain to add the islands to the resource-poor Gilbert Islands protectorate in 1901 (Chappell, [2016](#)). The mining operations provided half of the GEIC's revenue. Britain moved the administrative capital of the Gilbert Islands to Banaba in 1908 due to its economic importance (Chappell, [2016](#)).

During World War II, Japan occupied the Gilbert Islands and fortified them until the Allies defeated them. On Banaba Island, food shortages during the war led the Japanese to relocate most residents to other Pacific Islands as forced labor. The local garrison killed the remaining 160 residents in August 1945 (Macdonald, [2001](#)). The wartime destruction of Banaba Island led Britain to move the administrative capital back to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands and resettled the surviving former inhabitants of Banaba Island on Rabi Island near Fiji (Macdonald, [2001](#)). The British Phosphate Commission (BPC) eventually continued mining operations on Banaba Island until most phosphates were exhausted. Britain also moved the administrative capital back to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. In the post-war period, Tarawa attracted around 25% of the GEIC's population. Most of Britain's economic development proposals remained limited to Tarawa and neglected the outer islands (Chappell, [2016](#)).

In 1964, based on local demands from greater political participation, the GEIC government created a consultative Advisory Council. This council enabled indigenous leaders' participation in the colony's governance. In 1967, the colonial administration established

House of Representatives and Governing Council, followed by Legislative and Executive Councils in 1971, and a House of Assembly with a “self-governing” cabinet in 1974 (Chappell, 2016).

The Gilbert Islands, along with the Phoenix and Line Islands, became independent in 1979 as the Republic of Kiribati. The Kiribati central government decentralized authority and created a constitution requiring extensive consultation with local councils. The new nation kept the former GEIC Reserve Fund built by phosphate revenues. The Ellice Islands, which became Tuvalu, did not receive a share of the Reserve Fund. In the 1980s, Kiribati’s economy depended on remittances and grants from Britain and the Asian Development Bank. It negotiated an agreement with New Zealand which agreed to accept a quota of skilled I-Kiribati migrants to assist with overpopulation and economic development on the islands (Chappell, 2016). Kiribati also took advantage of its position around the equator by allowing Japan and China to set up satellite launch facilities in the islands in the late 1990s (Foster & Macdonald, 2021-03-10).

Kiribati became a UN member in 1999. In the 21st century, climate change has caused rising sea levels to threaten to submerge the islands. Kiribati lobbies heavily at the UN for industrial powers to reduce their carbon emissions (Chappell, 2016). In 2014, the Kiribati government bought 20 km<sup>2</sup> of land in Fiji to serve as possible new homeland (Foster & Macdonald, 2021-03-10).

## **Economy**

In 2016, Kiribati’s primary sector, consisting of agriculture and fisheries, contributed around 26% of GDP. Its exportable products, copra, coconut oil and fish, made up around 14.5% ,46.6%, and 38.9% of all domestically produced exports, respectively (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2018, 2019b).

The secondary sector, including manufacturing, construction, and utilities, made up 14.2% of GDP. Construction makes up the bulk, contributing 9% to total GDP. Most manufacturing activity processes the output of the primary sector (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2018).

The tertiary sector contributes the remaining GDP. Within this sector, the government contributes nearly 26% of total GDP, real estate linked activities made up around 10.5% of GDP, the retail and wholesale trade made up 8% of GDP, and financial services made up around 7% of GDP (Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2018).

Key sources of government revenue include fishing licenses, which make up around 70% of annual government revenue in the 2010s subject to seasonal fluctuations, income and company taxes, foreign aid, and contributions from its Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund (RERF). As of end-2018, the RERF has amassed close to AUD\$1 billion in reserves (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020; Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2019a). Remittances also serve as a key source of income for many Kiribatians.

## **Politics**

Kiribati has a presidential republic with its own judiciary, legislative and executive branch. Its constitution combines elements of the Westminster democracy, customary law and includes provisions requiring the government to consult local councils, the mane-aba on various issues (Chappell, 2016). The legislative branch consists of the unicameral

46-seat House of Assembly, called the Maneaba Ni Maungatabu, with 44 seats directly voted by Kiribati citizens. Candidates for president are nominated from the House of Assembly and then stand for direct election by the populace. The president serves as both head-of-state and head-of-government. All Kiribati citizens can vote when they turn 18 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020).

Australia and New Zealand cover Kiribati's defense arrangements. Kiribati uses the Australian dollar as its official currency (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020).

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## Marshall Islands

Population	77 920
Land Area	181km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper Middle Income
Freedom House Score	93/100 - Free

### History

Humans first settled on the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) about 2000 years ago. Europeans explored the islands from the 1500s to the mid-1800s. Germany signed a treaty with local chiefs to set up a coaling station on Jaluit Atoll and signed an agreement with Great Britain in 1886 to establish a protectorate over the islands (Kiste, 2021).

Before the Germans' arrival, some local chiefs gave uninhabitable land to American businesses looking to grow coconut plantations for copra (LaBriola, 2019). The chiefs hoped that these relationships with foreigners would improve their social status, access to trade goods and the lives of their constituents (LaBriola, 2019). This resulted in the planting of around 25000 acres of coconut trees, which the Germans valued for copra, and made the Marshall Islands the economic center of Micronesia during the German colonial period (Yoo & Steckel, 2016).

At the start of World War I, Japan occupied most Micronesian islands and their German naval bases at the request of the British. Germany surrendered the islands and after the war the Allies awarded Japan the islands under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (Hezel & Foster, 2020; Yoo & Steckel, 2016). Compared to other Micronesian islands, the Marshalls remained relatively untouched by Japanese influence due to their remoteness and few migrants moved there due to poor coral soils (Peattie, 1984).

The US occupied the islands during World War II after heavy fighting with Japanese forces (Kiste, 2021). In 1947 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) made the islands a trust territory of the US named the Trust Territory over the Pacific Islands (TTPI) (Quimby, 2013; Rogers, 2011; US Department for Interior, 2015). The US repaired infrastructure, improved sanitation and expanded American-style education throughout the islands. However, they did not carry out much economic development in the RMI during the TTPI period and forbade foreign companies from doing business with TTPI countries until 1974 (Yoo & Steckel, 2016).

The US evacuated the populations of Bikini and Enewetak atolls in RMI and conducted 67 atmospheric nuclear tests on them from 1946 up until 1958. A year after nuclear testing concluded, the US designated Kwajalein as a location for testing intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) delivery systems (Hirshberg, 2012; Kiste, 2021). The US military moved displaced Marshallese to Ebeye which remains the Pacific's densest island. Marshallese continue to commute by ferry from Ebeye to Kwajalein to provide services to Americans residing there. This segregation of the Marshallese population that became increasingly impoverished in Ebeye led to condemnation from Marshallese leaders and the international press. In addition, the military increased restrictions on Marshallese citizens' use of medical and shopping facilities on Kwajalein despite low lease payments. This led to protests from Marshallese landowners and workers in the 1970s and 80s,

resulting in increased lease payments (Hirshberg, [2012](#)).

The RMI voted to separate from other TTPI countries in 1978. It adopted its constitution and became a sovereign nation in 1979. In 1982, it signed the Compact of Free Association with the US. In 1983, the RMI reopened negotiations on the compact's provision on the compensation for Marshallese citizens affected by nuclear testing. A further agreement set up a fund to improve living conditions on Ebeye. The RMI became a member of the UN in 1991 (Kiste, [2021](#); US Department for Interior, [2015](#))

## **Economy**

US financial assistance and the lease of land to the US missile testing range on Kwajalein remain key sources of government revenue (Kiste, [2021](#)). The grants make up about half of government revenue. The US bases on Kwajalein employ nearly 1000 people of around 8% of the labor force (Republic of Marshall Islands Economic Policy, Planning and Statistic Office, [2018](#)).

As of 2017, the public sector employs around 40% of the workforce and contributes about 40% to GDP. Wholesale and retail trade employs about 18% and contributes 12% to GDP. Construction and fisheries employ about 6% each and contributed 5.7% and 16.2% to GDP respectively (Republic of Marshall Islands Economic Policy, Planning and Statistic Office, [2018](#)).

The RMI plays a key role in the global maritime industry. The Marshallese ship registry, which began operations in 1990, is the second largest in the world after Panama's. The Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority (MIMRA) levies fees and licenses on foreign and domestic fishing vessels. Its policies have made the capital, Majuro, the world's largest tuna transshipment port (Republic of Marshall Islands Economic Policy, Planning and Statistic Office, [2018](#)).

Outside of the Kwajalein and Majuro atolls, the key urban areas, subsistence farming and fishing are the key economic activity. Copra production remains a key source of income for Marshallese (Kiste, [2021](#)). The Tobolar Copra Processing Authority (TCPA), a public enterprise of the RMI government, processes copra in Majuro and exports its derivatives. It processed nearly 6000 tons of copra and paid out US\$3.35 million to copra farmers in 2017 (Republic of Marshall Islands Economic Policy, Planning and Statistic Office, [2018](#)).

## **Politics**

The RMI has an executive branch headed by a president with 10-seat presidential Cabinet, a 33-seat parliament called the Nitijela, a 12-member Council of Iroij which consists of tribal leaders that serves a consultative function on traditional law and customs, and a judiciary (Central Intelligence Agency, [2020](#); Republic of Marshall Islands Economic Policy, Planning and Statistic Office, [2018](#)). All citizens can vote when they turn 18.

Under its Compact of Free Association with the US, the US grants financial assistance till 2023, allows RMI citizens uninhibited travel to the US and is responsible for the RMI's defense. The RMI also continues to host the U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll (USAKA) Reagan Missile Test Site. After 2023, a Trust Fund jointly funded by the US and the RMI will help provide income for the islands (US Department for Interior, [2015](#)). The

Marshall Islands also tends to vote with the US at the UN (Republic of Marshall Islands Economic Policy, Planning and Statistic Office, 2018).

The Marshallese make up 92.1% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Marshallese society remains matrilineal with land ownership rights passing down through the mother each generation. Shared land ownership bonds extended families together and most islanders continue to maintain land ownerships as a primary measure of wealth. The Marshallese continue to respect traditional systems of land ownership and customary law and hold them in high regard (Republic of Marshall Islands Economic Policy, Planning and Statistic Office, 2018).

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## Micronesia, Federated States of

Population	102 440
Land Area	702km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income
Freedom House Score	92/100 - Free

### History

Humans from Vanuatu and Fiji first settled in the Marshall Islands about 3000 years ago and spread westward into most islands in the modern-day Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) (Hezel & Foster, [2020](#)).

The Spanish Empire colonized the islands in 1886. After Spain lost the Spanish-American war in 1898, it agreed to sell its remaining islands in the Pacific to Germany under the German Spanish Treaty of 1899 for 25 million pesetas. Germany wished to set up naval coaling stations and look after its interests in the Pacific (Associated Press, [1899](#)).

Japan occupied islands and their German naval bases, at the request of the British at the start of World War I. After the war, the Allies awarded Japan the islands under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles as a League of Nations mandate (Hezel & Foster, [2020](#); Yoo & Steckel, [2016](#)).

The Japanese government, with the assistance of corporate monopolies, economically developed the islands. The companies invested in copra production, sugarcane plantations and refining, fisheries, retail, construction, and other industries across Micronesia. The islands eventually became self-sufficient and generated surplus revenue for the empire (Peattie, [1984](#)).

The companies imported labor from Japanese regions, especially Okinawa and Tohoku, where population growth and a lack of economic opportunities encouraged emigration to Micronesia. Others followed to supply services to the laborers. This led the Japanese population to outnumber the native Micronesians on most islands. While the Japanese provided native Micronesians with basic education, they still treated them as second-class citizens (Peattie, [1984](#)).

In 1941, as tensions in the Pacific rose, the Japanese navy increased fortifications on the islands, stationed combat vessels in the region and headquartered the Fourth Fleet in Chuuk. The base at Chuuk played an important role for the Japanese navy in some battles during World War II. As the US advanced across the Pacific, US bombardment and bombing of the islands destroyed most of their settlements and infrastructure. They sunk the Fourth Fleet in February 1944. The sunken ships became a premium tourism destination for wreck diving and remain central to Chuuk's tourism industry (Peattie, [1984](#); Stumpf & Cheshire, [2019](#)).

After the war, the US ended Japanese administration of the islands and repatriated Japanese garrisons and civilians back to Japan. In 1947, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) made the islands a trust territory of the US named the Trust Territory over the Pacific Islands (TTPI) (Quimby, [2013](#); Rogers, [2011](#)). The US carried out post-war reconstruction, improved public sanitation, and expanded American-style education across Micronesia. It did not carry out much economic development in the FSM during



this period and forbade foreign companies from doing business with TTPI countries until 1974 (Veenendaal, 2014; Yoo & Steckel, 2016).

Micronesian leaders began negotiations with the US for self-government in 1969 and a constitution was drafted in 1975. The FSM remained in the TTPI until 1978 and gained independence in 1979. It entered the Compact of Free Association with the US in 1986 and became a member of the UN in 1991 (Hezel & Foster, 2020; of the Interior, 2015).

## **Economy**

The FSM economy relies on subsistence agriculture, fishing and the local government which contributed 16%, 9% and 11% of GDP respectively (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020; FSM Statistics Division, 2020d). The largest industries by employment are the local government which employs nearly 40% of the labor force and the retail trade which employs over 20% of the labor force (FSM Statistics Division, 2020c).

Fishery, which employs around 2% of the population, produces most of the FSM's exports (FSM Statistics Division, 2020c). In 2019, the FSM exported US\$127 million worth of fishery products which made up 98.6% of all exports (Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2020).

The FSM seeks to grow its tourism industry to diversify its economy and decrease reliance on US aid. However, a lack of policies linking air transportation and tourism make this difficult given the islands' remoteness (Stumpf & Cheshire, 2019). International visitor arrivals steadily decreased from around 14000 in 2007 to less than 10000 in 2016 (FSM Statistics Division, 2020b).

The FSM private sector remains small partially due to scarce access to finance and high credit costs. The US government provides US\$130 million in assistance each year which makes up about a third of government revenue (FSM Statistics Division, 2020a; The Heritage Foundation, 2021). The funds have been designed to help the FSM achieve economic growth and long-term self-reliance (Stumpf & Cheshire, 2019).

## **Politics**

The FSM has a republican style government like the US with its own judiciary, a 14-seat unicameral Congress and an executive branch with a president as head of state and government. All FSM citizens can vote when they turn 18 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020).

Under its Compact of Free Association with the US, the US grants financial assistance till 2023, allows FSM citizens uninhibited travel to the US and is responsible for the FSM's defense. Many FSM citizens serve in the US military and further their education in the US. (of the Interior, 2015).

Most governmental functions, outside of defense and foreign affairs, are delegated to the four state governments of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Each state's natives speak different languages and/or dialects though most use English for government and commerce. Freedom House reports that minority groups have full political rights. However, some discontent with the distribution of funding has led to discussion for Chuuk secession (Hezel & Foster, 2020).

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colonial-institutions/C85D153A256D6465632711E5788FDD80

## Nauru

Population	9 770
Land Area	21km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	77/100-Free

### History

For most of the 1800s, native Nauruans' interactions with foreigners consisted of whaling crews stopping for food and water. The presence of foreigners led to the availability of firearms which enable a civil war between the 12 tribes which reduced the population by 40% (Unit, 2001). Germany, to protect German traders' interests in the Pacific, incorporated Nauru into its Marshall Islands protectorate in 1888. Germany permitted the British Pacific Phosphate Company to mine Nauru's phosphate deposits in 1906. Phosphate mining operations began in 1907 and a small fee was paid to Nauruan landowners for each ton of phosphate shipped (Foster & Kiste, 2020; Storr, 2020).

During World War I, Australia occupied the island and expelled German nationals. After the war, the League of Nations granted Britain, Australia, and New Zealand a mandate of the island. The three set up the British Phosphate Commission (BPC) to continue phosphate mining operations on the island for export to their agricultural sectors, especially Australia's. While Australia handled the administration of Nauru, the BPC had effective control of matters on the island and could restrict the administrations powers, leading to the League's Permanent Mandate Commission (PMC) to fear that the interests of Nauruans were subordinate to those of phosphate extraction. Nauruans were paid three pence in royalty for each ton of phosphate extracted (Storr, 2020).

During World War II, Japan occupied Nauru. They took 1200 Nauruans to Chuuk as forced laborers for their military installations and brought in the Japanese South Seas Development Company to continue mining operations on the island. After the war, Australia repossessed the island and in 1946 the surviving forced laborers returned to Nauru. In 1947, the UN made Nauru a trust territory under Britain, Australia and New Zealand again. Australia continued to provide most of the local governance and the BPC continued mining operations, primarily exporting to Australia and New Zealand. The royalties from phosphate mining increased to 13 pence per ton of phosphate with a third going directly to Nauruan landowners and the remaining two-thirds going into trust funds for Nauruans future (Foster & Kiste, 2020; Storr, 2020).

In 1951, the administering authority passed the Nauru Local Government Council (NLGC) Ordinance which formalized existing ad-hoc arrangements into a public elected municipal council with its own secretariat. The NLGC only played an advisory role to the Administrator. In the 1960s, international pressure for decolonization led the UN to push Australia for a clear plan for Nauruan independence. This led to the Nauru Talks in the mid-1960s which eventually led to independence in 1968 in spite of much resistance from the Australian government (Storr, 2020).

Nauru nationalized the phosphate mining industry. In the 1970s and 80s, the nation had one of the world's highest GDP per capita. The government set up trust funds to

invest the phosphate profits but mismanagement, abuses of the funds and poor investments combined with the decline of phosphate production as resources dwindled placed Nauru in a dire financial situation by the 1990s. This led Nauru to seek new sources of revenue. Nauru started earning revenue from fishing licenses in the 1990s. Nauru enacted legislation attracting offshore financial services in the early 1990s which made it a haven for tax avoidance and money laundering for some time. In the 21st century, Nauru also receives finance from the Australian government in return for hosting Australian offshore processing centers for refugees. (Foster & Kiste, 2020; Storr, 2020).

## Economy

According to Nauru's 2019 census, the Nauru government employs around 1300 people. State-owned entities, including the regional processing centers, utilities and the phosphate mining company, employ close to one thousand. The private sector employs 1200. Most the remaining population are dependents (Nauru Department of Finance, 2020a).

Fishing licenses which make up more than a quarter of revenue while local taxes make up around a quarter of government revenue (Nauru Department of Finance, 2020b). The Australian government contributes about 30% to Nauru's revenue in 2017 to run detention centers for refugees on the island. The detention centers remain a subject of international concern (Foster & Kiste, 2020; Storr, 2020)

Improved mining technologies allowed Nauru to exploit a secondary layer of phosphate reserves in 21st century, contributing significantly to exports in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Phosphate production has since declined again as the remaining reserves dwindle. Nauru has invested profits from phosphate mining into trust funds to ensure future self-reliance (Foster & Kiste, 2020; Nauru Department of Finance, 2020a).

## Politics

Nauru is a parliamentary republic with its own judiciary. The president, who is head-of-state and head-of-government, appoints a Cabinet from its 19-seat unicameral parliament. All Nauruans can vote when they turn 20. Nauru makes voting compulsory (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Nauru continues to use the Australian dollar and Australia provides technical assistance to the government bureaucracy. Many Nauruans also pursue further education in Australia (Foster & Kiste, 2020; Storr, 2020).

Nauru has received international criticism during the 2010s for becoming more authoritarian under the Waqa/Adeang government (Firth, 2016). Freedom House 2020 report on Nauru notes improvements to the democratic situation since 2018. Corruption remains a problem (Freedom House, n.d.).

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## New Caledonia

Population	293 608
Land Area	18575km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	French Special Collectivity
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	Not assessed

### History

Melanesians first settled on New Caledonia around 3000 BCE. They had little contact with other societies until the 1840s when sandalwood traders visited, and missionaries set up operations on the island (Shineberg & Foster, 2021). France annexed the island in 1853 to meet strategic naval and imperial objectives which included a possible location for a penal colony (Aldrich, 1989; Muckle, 2012). France established a penal settlement on New Caledonia which existed from 1863 to 1897 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Muckle, 2012).

Various European settlers attempted to establish plantations and livestock stations but its long distance from large overseas markets in Europe and America, difficulties importing labor, and competition from other regional and international producers made it difficult to set up an agricultural industry for export (Aldrich, 1989).

Settlers discovered nickel and other ores in the early 1860s. Mining operations began within a decade of the discovery. The first nickel smelter started operations on the island in 1877 (Muckle, 2012). Entrepreneurs started Société Le Nickel (SLN) in 1880 and remains a major player in New Caledonia's mining industry (Aldrich, 1989). Along with other mining companies, SLN brought in labor from Japan and Southeast Asia to work in the mines and meet the growing demand for nickel in steelmaking and coinage in the 1890s and early 20th century. New Caledonia was the world's largest supplier of nickel for a time (Aldrich, 1989).

To gain land for the settlers, the French often resettled local Kanaks on to less productive land or evicted Kanaks who ended up in a smaller number of villages centered around missions or churches. Despite decreasing land holdings, the indigenous people still managed to maintain their traditional settlement pattern of dispersed homesteads with gardens (Muckle, 2012). To encourage Melanesians to take up wage labor, the French implemented a head tax in 1899 on each head of household which led to further resentment resulting in numerous uprisings (Muckle, 2012; Shineberg & Foster, 2021).

Almost a thousand Kanaks and more than seven hundred French citizens from New Caledonia volunteered and fought for France in World War I, around two-thirds of which returned (Muckle, 2012). This contribution to the war remains a key symbol of strong ties with France. On 28 April 1917, accumulating grievances from 60 years of French occupation and local rivalries culminated in a major war and Kanak rebellion in New Caledonia. This led to some minor reforms in the French administration afterwards (Muckle, 2012).

From 1885 to 1956, a locally elected general council advised the governor on territorial affairs and voted on the local budget. In 1953, France granted French citizenship to all New Caledonians. A Territorial Assembly was formed in 1957. An influx of white



settlers and Polynesians migrated to New Caledonia before and during the nickel boom from 1969-1972 which led to Melanesians becoming a minority on the island for the first time (Shineberg & Foster, 2021).

Organized movements for independence grew in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1984, the French government granted full self-government in territorial affairs under the Lemoine Statute but the independence group Front de Liberation Nationale Kanake et Socialiste (FLNKS) rejected it, boycotted the elections that year and temporarily captured most of the territory outside Noumea (Shineberg & Foster, 2021).

In 1988, the FLNKS, the pro-settler Rally for Caledonia and the French government negotiated the Matignon accords (Shineberg & Foster, 2021). This led to the division of New Caledonia into three provinces with greater autonomy. This granted the indigenous Kanak's a majority in two of the three provinces and allowed them to pursue their own development agenda (Blaise, 2017). In 1998, the Noumea Accord was signed and then approved by referendum leading to New Caledonia's change of status from a French overseas territory to a special collectivity in 1999 (Blaise, 2017; Shineberg & Foster, 2021). These changes aimed to give New Caledonia greater autonomy and re-balance power from the settler population towards the indigenous population (Blaise, 2017).

Recent referenda for New Caledonia's independence held in 2018 and 2020 have rejected independence with a third referendum scheduled for 2022.

## Economy

The Institut d'Émission d'Outre-Mer (IEOM) issues New Caledonia's currency, the CFP franc, which is used by all French territories in the Pacific. The IEOM also collects and publishes economic data on France's territories in the Pacific.

According to the IOEM, at the end of 2018, New Caledonia had 60, 235 registered companies. Three-quarters of businesses operate in the urban areas around the capital, Noumea, in the South Province. Around 20% of businesses operate in the North Province and the remainder in the Loyalty islands. Seventy percent of all businesses carry out service activities, 18% are engaged in the secondary sector and 12% in agriculture (New Caledonia Business, 2021).

The IOEM also published the value added by activity sector in 2016. Goods and services including retail and finance contributed 40% of value, administration contributed 22% of value, trade and construction each contributed 11%, manufacturing contributed 9%, nickel directly contributed 5% and agriculture the remaining 2% (New Caledonia Business, 2021).

New Caledonia is the world's fifth-largest producer of nickel ore with 95% of exports dependent on nickel ore and the metallurgical industry (New Caledonia Business, 2021). It holds 11% of the world's known reserves, the world's second largest (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The mining and metallurgical sector account for 14% of the island's employment with half of that directly involved in mining and refining activities and the other half engaged in subcontracting, construction, transport and associated services (Bahers, Higuera, Ventura, & Antheaume, 2020). Nickel refining consumes more than 75% of the island's energy production (Shineberg & Foster, 2021). The industry remains vulnerable to the volatility of nickel prices.

Tourism provides another source of employment and income. In 2019, New Caledonia

received around 126600 arrivals by air and around 344000 arrivals by cruise ship (New Caledonia Business, 2021). Most visitors come from Australia, New Zealand, Japan and France.

France gives financial support equivalent to 15% of New Caledonia's GDP to support health, education, and security forces on the island (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Shineberg & Foster, 2021)

## Politics

New Caledonia has remained a special collectivity of France since 1998. Independence referenda held in 2018 and 2020 rejected independence in favor of the status quo with France (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

New Caledonia has three provinces. Each province has a directly elected Provincial Assembly based off proportional representation vote. The unicameral Territorial Congress then selects its 54 members based on the proportional partisan makeup of the Provincial Assemblies. New Caledonia also has a Customary Senate where the traditional councils of the Kanaks rule on laws affecting the indigenous population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

New Caledonia indirectly elects 2 members to the French Senate and directly elects two members to the French National Assembly. The president of France serves as head-of-state. A French-appointed commissioner and the president of the New Caledonian government serve as heads-of-government. France looks after New Caledonia's defense and internal security (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Shineberg & Foster, 2021).

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## Northern Mariana Islands

Population	51 659
Land Area	464km <sup>2</sup>
Legal Status	US Territory
UN Member	No
Socio-economic Status	High Income
Freedom House Score	Not assessed

### History

The Spanish Empire colonized the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) in the late 1600s but did little to develop it economically (Blackford, 2007). After Spain lost the Spanish-American war in 1898, it agreed to sell its remaining islands in the Pacific to Germany under the German Spanish Treaty of 1899 for 25 million pesetas. Germany wished to set up naval coaling stations and look after its interests in the Pacific (Associated Press, 1899).

After World War I, the Allies awarded the islands to Japan under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles as a League of Nations mandate. Japan developed the three larger islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota and increased fishery, sugar and copra production (Blackford, 2007; Peattie, 1984; Quimby, 2013; Rogers, 2011). It also built sugar refineries and conducted a land survey to create a land register between 1937 and 1939 (Peattie, 1984; Yoo & Steckel, 2016).

During World War II, the United States (US) fought for Saipan as part of their Pacific island-hopping strategy in the summer of 1944. After the war, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) made most of Micronesia a trust territory of the US named the Trust Territory over the Pacific Islands (TTPI) (Quimby, 2013; Rogers, 2011).

From 1953 to 1962, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) used facilities on Saipan to train operatives for sabotage missions in communist Asian states. When the CIA left, the TTPI headquarters moved from Guam to Saipan and occupied the former's facilities and the Northern Mariana Islands shifted from the Navy to the Department for the Interior (Quimby, 2013; Rogers, 2011).

The post-war presence of the CIA and then the TTPI HQ provided NMI residents with economic opportunities and a level of interaction with the Americans that other TTPI islands did not have. This led to the local Chamorro population viewing the Americans more favorably than others in the Pacific (Quimby, 2013). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Chamorro population of the NMI sought separation from the TTPI to join the US but the UN rejected their requests. They then sought to merge with Guam, the largest island in the Mariana Islands chain with a significant population of Chamorros, as Guam residents already had US citizenship. Guam rejected a merger with NMI in a 1969 plebiscite due to resentment of some NMI Chamorro's roles as translators to the Japanese during the harsh wartime occupation and Guamanians feared that NMI would financially burden Guam (Quimby, 2013; Rogers, 2011).

When other islands in the TTPI refused the US offer of US commonwealth in 1970, NMI carried out separate negotiations with the US for political union. In 1975, the Covenant passed and made the Commonwealth of the NMI (CNMI) a US territory. The CNMI adopted its constitution in 1977 and the CNMI local government began operating in

1978 (of the Interior, [2015](#); Quimby, [2013](#)). To facilitate economic development, the local government insisted on greater control over taxation, immigration and wage laws (Quimby, [2013](#)).

The US allowed tourists to visit TTPI locations in 1968. After becoming a commonwealth, the CNMI government came up with a tax policy that included the lack of real estate and sales taxes to attract foreign investors. This helped the initial growth of the tourism industry which remains highly volatile with visitor numbers ranging from about 300,000 to 700,000 a year (Quimby, [2013](#)).

From 1983 to 2009, the CNMI also supported a sizeable garment industry. Relaxed immigration laws, labor regulations, wages lower than most of the US, low taxes, a lack of trade quotas and duties with the US all made the CNMI an attractive location for East Asian garment manufacturers to produce garments in the CNMI and export them to the US. The industry attracted many foreign workers from Asia, especially the Philippines, which has resulted in 50% of CNMI residents being ethnically Asian (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#); Quimby, [2013](#)). At its peak in 1999, the garment industry exported US\$1 billion, employed 17000 workers, and paid the CNMI US\$79 million in taxes. In the 2000s, rising wages, the removal of trade quotas and reduction of trade duties eventually made manufacturing garments in the CNMI uncompetitive, leading to the industry's decline and lower employment figures (Quimby, [2013](#)). Along with the volatility of tourist numbers, this has put the CNMI in an economically difficult position.

## **Economy**

Since the collapse of the garment industry, the CNMI mainly depends on agriculture, tourism and the territorial government.

The agriculture sector includes cattle ranching and small farms producing breadfruit, coconuts, tomatoes and melons and exports a small amount of the produce (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#)). In 2018, the islands had 253 farms producing selling US\$1.58 million in crops (US Department of Agriculture, [2020](#)).

Tourism contributes around a third of GDP and employs about a third of the population (US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, [2019](#); US Department of Commerce Central Statistics Division, [2020](#)). Most tourists come from Japan, China and South Korea which leaves the industry vulnerable to changing economic conditions in East Asia. The industry is also vulnerable to typhoons (Quimby, [2013](#)).

The territory's government contributes about 20% of the GDP and employs nearly 20% of the population (US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, [2019](#); US Department of Commerce Central Statistics Division, [2020](#)).

## **Politics**

The CNMI government mimics the US system. It has its own judiciary, a bicameral legislature with a 20-seat House of Representatives and a 9-seat Senate with 3-seats each for Saipan, Tinian and Rota, and an executive branch led by a governor (Central Intelligence Agency, [2021](#); Quimby, [2013](#)). All citizens can vote for local government upon turning 18.

As citizens of a US commonwealth, they cannot vote in presidential elections and lack

votes in Congress. Unlike other US territories though, the CNMI has greater protections from the federal government as changing key provisions of the CNMI constitution requires mutual consent from both local and federal governments (Quimby, 2013).

The native Chamorro population makes up 34.2% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Despite not being the largest ethnic group, they build on their traditional extended family networks and dominate the political, economic, and cultural spheres of life on the islands (Foster & Ballendorf, 2021).

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## Palau

Population	21 690 (Source: CIA Factbook)
Land Area	459km <sup>2</sup> (Source: CIA Factbook)
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	High Income (Source: World Bank)
Freedom House Score	92/100 - Free

## History

The Pope declared that Palau was a Spanish territory in 1885. The Spanish did little to economically develop the islands, remaining primarily concerned with the spread of Catholicism (Veenendaal, 2014). After the Spanish-American War, Germany bought Palau from Spain in 1899. The Germans' key commercial interests were copra plantations, the extraction of phosphates and bauxite. They also replaced the Palauan currency of shells and corals with a monetary system (Veenendaal, 2014).

The Japanese seized German naval bases and islands in the Pacific during World War I at the request of the British. After the war, the League of Nations gave Japan a mandate over Germany's former territories in the South Pacific. Japan set up their administrative capital for the South Pacific islands, which they called Nan'yō, and a key naval base in Koror on Palau. (Peattie, 1984; Veenendaal, 2014).

The Japanese government, with the assistance of corporate monopolies, economically developed the islands. The companies invested in copra production, sugarcane plantations and refining, fisheries, retail, construction, and other industries across the South Pacific. They continued bauxite and phosphate extraction operations in Palau. The islands eventually became self-sufficient and generated surplus revenue for the empire (Peattie, 1984).

The companies brought in labor from Japanese regions, especially Okinawa and Tohoku, where population growth and a lack of economic opportunities encouraged emigration to Palau, and the broader archipelago of Micronesia. Others followed to supply services to the laborers. In Palau, the Japanese also dispatched numerous civilian administrators. This led the Japanese population to outnumber Palauan natives by 2 to 1 (Peattie, 1984). While the Japanese provided native Micronesians with basic education, improved healthcare, and infrastructure, they still treated them as second-class citizens (Peattie, 1984).

The Japanese carried out land surveys in Micronesia from 1932 to 1937 and made a land register in Palau from 1939 to 1941 (Yoo & Steckel, 2016). The Japanese improved harbors and airstrips, fortified Palau and positioned combat units in the area just before the outbreak of World War II. Fierce battles occurred between September and November 1944 due to the Japanese naval base at Koror (Peattie, 1984).

After the war, the US ended Japanese administration of the islands and repatriated Japanese garrisons and civilians back to Japan. In 1947, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) made the islands a trust territory of the US named the Trust Territory over the Pacific Islands (TTPI) (Peattie, 1984; Veenendaal, 2014). The US carried out post-war reconstruction, improved public sanitation, and expanded American-style education across Micronesia. The US judiciary continued to use the land registry set

up by the Japanese administration to settle land disputes. It did not carry out much economic development in Palau during this period and forbade foreign companies from doing business with TTPI countries until 1974 (Yoo & Steckel, 2016). Bauxite mining ceased as American equipment would require major modifications to process Palauan ore (Veenendaal, 2014; Yoo & Steckel, 2016).

Palau had its own municipal and national assemblies starting from the 1950s with their decisions subject to TTPI administration approval. It adopted a constitution after two referendums in 1981 and signed a Compact of Free Association with the US in 1982 but could not meet the minimum number of voters in a referendum until 1993. There were local disagreements over the US having the rights, under the Compact, to lease land from Palau for military purposes, storing or testing nuclear weapons. This led to rising tensions and political turmoil in Palau in the 1980s (Shuster & Foster, 2021; Veenendaal, 2014, 2016).

Palau only gained independence and became a UN member in 1994 after the Clinton administration repealed and modified nuclear stipulations. As the last member of the TTPI to gain independence, it avoided making the same errors other former TTPI members made with US financial assistance (Veenendaal, 2014, 2016).

## Economy

Palau's economy depends mainly on subsistence agriculture, fishing and tourism (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). US grants make up about 40% of government revenue. The public sector employs about 30% of Palauans. The wholesale and retail trade employs about 14% and construction employs about 9% (Republic of Palau Ministry of Finance Bureau of Budget and Planning, 2019).

Fishery products are Palau's top export. In 2019, it exported US\$12.7 million worth of seafood products (Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2020), US\$1.3 million in fish processing services and earned US\$9.5 million in fishing license fees (Republic of Palau Ministry of Finance Bureau of Budget and Planning, 2019).

Palau has tried to establish a tourism industry in the 1990s and 2000s (Veenendaal, 2014). In 2019, Palau exported US\$96.3 million in tourism services and received around 94000 international arrivals (Republic of Palau Ministry of Finance Bureau of Budget and Planning, 2019). In descending order, most tourists come from the People's Republic of China, Japan and South Korea. The IMF notes the tourism industry, while highly volatile, has further potential for growth but is hampered by policies Palau has put in place to restrict tourist numbers and protect its marine environment (International Monetary Fund, 2019).

## Politics

Palau has a presidential republic with an executive branch, a legislature, and a judiciary. The bicameral legislature, called the National Congress or Olbiil Era Kelulau, has a 13-seat Senate and a 16-seat House of Delegates. All citizens can vote when they turn 18 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Palau is also divided into 16 states with extensive autonomy. Each state has its own governor, executive branch, state legislature, traditional leaders, state treasury and bureaucracy (Veenendaal, 2016).



The Republic of Palau remains in a 50-year Compact of Free Association with the US. The US provides Palau with financial and economic assistance up till 2024, handles Palau's defense and allows Palauans uninhibited access to the US. Hundreds of Palauans serve in the US military and further their education in the US. Palau continues to use the US dollar as its currency (of the Interior, 2015; Veenendaal, 2014).

People of Palauan descent make up 73% of the population. International migrants from Asia, especially the Philippines, make up a third of the labor force. Freedom House notes that while Palau's citizens have full political rights, the foreign nationals do not and there are no provisions for naturalization (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020; Freedom House, 2020).

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## Samoa

Population	203 770 (Source: CIA Factbook)
Land Area	2821km <sup>2</sup> (Source: CIA Factbook)
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper Middle Income (Source: World Bank)
Freedom House Score	81/100 - Free

### History

Polynesians first settled in Samoa around 1000 BCE. They lived in villages ruled by councils of matai (chiefs) consisting of 30 or more households. They cultivated yams, taro, breadfruit, bananas, sugarcane, and coconuts (Foster, 2021).

Europeans began settling in Samoa in the 1800s and had developed a settlement around Apia Harbor, located at the present-day capital Apia, by the 1850s (Foster, 2021). European trading companies bought land in Samoa to grow cash crops like cotton, cocoa, and especially copra. The US, Germany and Britain all had interests in Samoa. Their traders and plantation owners actively supported competing Samoan lineages leading to severe conflict and frequent famines. After tensions and near-war between the colonial powers in the 1890s, the three powers signed Treaty of Berlin in 1899 that gave Germany the western islands of Samoa (Droessler, 2018).

The German colonial officials practiced ‘salvage colonialism’ in Samoa.(Droessler, 2018; Steinmetz, 2004). ‘Salvage colonialism’ means that the colonizing power implements policies to protect the indigenous way of life as is from external threats (Steinmetz, 2004). They allowed Samoans to continue running small-scale agriculture and passed regulations to leave most land in Samoan ownership despite resistance from the settler community. German-owned copra plantations brought in contract workers from other Pacific islands and China to meet their labor demands (Davidson & Davidson, 1967; Droessler, 2018). This resulted in Samoan family plantations producing about 80% of copra exports and a German company growing the remaining 20% (Droessler, 2018).

The Germans tried to increase Samoan copra production by mandating each family head grow 50 coconut trees a year and limited their longer traditional family visits (malaga) by prohibiting travel to American Samoa (Davidson & Davidson, 1967; Droessler, 2018). These measures had limited success as Samoans sold only as many coconuts as they needed to support a living. A restriction of malaga partially, along with other actions by the German governor to undermine the power of the matai, led to the first Mau movement as Samoans feared the colonists threatened their ancient privileges. The Mau movements refer to the non-violent movements driven by Somoans for their independence in the 20th-century (Campbell, 2005; Droessler, 2018).

Samoans had access to information on international copra prices during the colonial period too. When they realized the Euro-American traders deceived them, they formed cooperatives which the colonial authorities constantly shut down as they posed a threat to Euro-American trading interests. (Davidson & Davidson, 1967; Droessler, 2018).

When World War I started, New Zealand (NZ) occupied German Samoa with no resistance from the Germans or Samoans. During occupation, more than 20% of Samoans died from the Spanish flu pandemic from 1918 to 1919. The perceived negligence of

NZ during the pandemic strengthened Samoan unity against foreign rule (Davidson & Davidson, 1967; Foster, 2021).

After the League of Nations granted a mandate over Western Samoa in 1920 to NZ, the administration improved on the German precursor to the present-day Legislative Assembly (Fono) consisting of matai and gave it a semi-legislative role and information on government affairs (Campbell, 2005; Davidson & Davidson, 1967). The administration introduced district councils which had tax-levying powers and could borrow money for road, sanitation and water-supply projects (Campbell, 2005; Davidson & Davidson, 1967). It attempted to carry out large, expensive infrastructure projects, create a board to market and export copra and cocoa, and lift restrictions on credit for indigenous Samoans to encourage local entrepreneurship (Campbell, 2005). These and other planned policies met with opposition from the fiscally conservative settler business community who wished to protect their own business interests (Campbell, 2005). The favoring of some chiefs in the Fono by the administration also caused resentment from other chiefs. This culminated in the growth of the second Mau movement and resulted in a Mau demonstration on 1929 where NZ sent armed troops that shot and killed unarmed protesters (Campbell, 2005; Davidson & Davidson, 1967; Foster, 2021).

During World War II, an American garrison stationed on Upolu and built roads and an airport, improving the economy. NZ allowed a Western Samoa council of state and a legislative assembly to be established in the late 1940s (Campbell, 2005; Foster, 2021).

NZ and Samoa implemented various constitutional changes in the 1950s and NZ gradually handed over administration of Samoa (Davidson & Davidson, 1967). It gained independence from NZ at the start of 1962, becoming a UN member in 1976. Samoa instituted universal suffrage in 1990 (Foster, 2021).

## **Economy**

Samoa's key exports are fish, fruit juices, taro, beer and coconut derivatives. In 2018, the primary industries, consisting of agriculture and fisheries, contributed 7.2% and 2.2% of GDP, respectively. Secondary industries contributed 14.2% of GDP in total. Within the secondary sector, construction contributed 6.2% to total GDP and manufacturing contributed 5.8%. Most manufacturing activities in Samoa process food from the agricultural sector. The tertiary sector contributes most of GDP with 32.9% coming from commerce which includes retail and wholesale trade. Financial and business services made up 8.9% and 4.1% of GDP, respectively. Public Administration contributes 8.2% of GDP (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was a major contributor to the economy which was estimated to account for 25% of GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Samoa received 160,304 visitors in 2018. The majority were visiting friends and relatives. About 49,000 visited Samoa for a vacation. The largest sources of tourists are New Zealand followed by Australia (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Samoans migrate primarily to Australia, New Zealand and the US to pursue higher education and better economic opportunities. The volume of remittances Samoa receives as proportion of GDP is nearly 25% (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Domestic taxes make up 81.1% of government revenue and grants make up 7.5% with the remainder coming from other sources including government investments and administra-

tive fees. Samoa has its own currency, the tala, and its own central bank which regulates financial activity on the islands (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020; Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2020)

## Politics

Samoa has a parliamentary republic with an independent judiciary. The Legislative Assembly, also called the Fono, has 50 seats with members serving five-year terms (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Only traditional heads of family can run as candidates (Freedom House, 2021).

The Fono elects the head-of-state every 5 years, and the head-of-state appoints the leader of the majority party in the Fono as Prime Minister. The head-of-state also appoints the Cabinet on advice of the Prime Minister. All citizens can vote when they turn 21 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020).

The Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) has held the majority in the Fono from 1998 to 2021. In the April 2021 election, Fa'atuatua i le Atua Samoa ua Tasi (FAST) won the election but remains locked out of the parliament building by the HRPP, posing a threat to Samoa's democracy (Davidson & Davidson, 1967; Foster, 2021).

Samoa maintains its Treaty of Friendship with New Zealand signed on 1 August 1962. New Zealand looks after Samoa's defense and gives consideration to Samoa's request for technical, administrative and other assistance (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020).

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## Solomon Islands

Population	690,600 (Source: CIA Factbook)
Land Area	27,986 $km^2$ (Source: CIA Factbook)
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income (Source: World Bank)
Freedom House Score	79/100 - Free

### History

The first inhabitants of Solomon islands are thought to have occupied Bougainville island during the Pleistocene era 29,000 years ago (n.d.). Though the ethnic identity of these first inhabitants is unclear, evidence shows that the Austronesian Lapita people occupied the island around 25,000 years ago (Sheppard, Thomas, Summerhayes, & Association, 2009).

Beginning in 1568 and into the 1800s, Solomon islanders came into contact with Spanish, British and French voyagers(Lawrence, 2014). Trade relationships were established, though attempts at long-term colonial settlements failed. During the late 19th century, the recruitment of native islanders for labor in neighboring European settlements accelerated(Agency, 2022). At the same time, Christian and Anglican missionaries from Europe prevailed(Laracy, 1976).

In 1899, Germany established an arrangement with Britain that transferred its colonial rights in northern Solomon to be under the Britain protectorate(Agency, 2022). Although generally humane, the Britain rule was met with violent resistance from the Kawio people of Malaita in 19072, and a retaliation murder was committed by the British (Agency, 2022).

English voyagers attempted to build large-scale plantations, but due to disputed land tenure with the islands and a dependency on Imperial funds among other reasons, economic growth was slow and unsuccessful. Furthermore, the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1902 resulted in fewer European settlers and a deficit economy(Lawrence, 2014).

Heavily involved in the WW2 Pacific island Theater, Solomon Islands encountered deaths and destruction from Allies-Japanese conflicts within its region(Agency, 2022). The islanders' enrollment in and exposure to Allied forces heightened their racial consciousness and prompted their open criticism of the colonial regime(Anna Annie, 2017).

In the mid 1940s to 1950s, the district leaders such as Aliko Nono'ohimae made efforts to advance economic development and autonomous reign through what is known as the Maasina rule(Anna Annie, 2017). As decolonization spread, a new constitution was developed in 1974 under Peter Kenilorea, who served as the first Prime Minister of the country. Together with his successor, Solomon Mamaloni, they pushed for Solomon's independence from Britain in 1978(Agency, 2022).

From 1999 to 2003, Solomon Islands broke into a series of civil wars between the island of Malaita and the Guadalcanal in Honiara. Refugee Malaitans migrating to Guadalcanal raised ethnic and political tensions. The then PM Sogavare was ousted due to a failing bankruptcy during the wars. The wars ended when the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), among other Pacific Island representatives, arrived by request to reinforce security(Agency, 2022).



Sogavare's successor, Sikua, established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008 to recover from the Tensions. From 2014 to present, Sogavare has continued to serve as PM.(Agency, 2022)

## Economy

The economy of Solomon Islands revolves around primary industries of subsistence agriculture and tuna fishing, thanks to its rich natural resources of fish and forest(Agency, 2022). Its service sector comprised 58.1% of its total GDP in 2017(n.d.).

Its largest exports include lumber and fish, among other agricultural products such as oil palm fruit and cocoa. The country was ranked 27th largest producer of cocoa worldwide in 2017. As its largest export partner, China shares 65 percent of its total exports in 2019(Agency, 2022).

However, the country relies heavily on foreign imports for most manufactured goods, petroleum products, and machinery, resulting in a total of USD560 million in 2020, more than the value of its exports in the same year(Agency, 2022).The country also faces major gaps in infrastructure and services(**project procurement strategy for development (ppsd) for p** (Walter & Sheppard, 2009)

Indigenous currencies such as shell money are still used in Malaita. (**solomon islands \_history**) The government seeks to increase tourism to advance economic growth. (2019)

## Politics

A Commonwealth realm, the country runs by a parliamentary democracy under the constitutional monarchy of England. The Chief of State is Queen Elizabeth II of England, while the head of government is the current Prime Minister Derek Sikua, elected by Parliament(Agency, 2022). The country's unicameral National Parliament has 50 seats elected for 4 year terms, elected through universal suffrage. All citizens over 21 can vote. The chief justice and the Cabinet are appointed by the governor-general(n.d.).

Fluid coalitions of political parties exist(**central intelligence agency \_2022**). Local governments take control in matters such as education and health(n.d.).

Since 2003, the Australian-led multi-national Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands had helped effectively in rebuilding government institutions(Dinnen, 2008).

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## Tonga

Population	105 780 (Source: CIA Factbook)
Land Area	747km <sup>2</sup> (Source: CIA Factbook)
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Upper Middle Income (Source: World Bank)
Freedom House Score	79/100 - Free

### History

Austronesians first settled in Tonga about 3000 years ago. European visits to Tonga began in the 17th century with missionaries arriving in the late-18th century. From 1799 to 1852, Tonga went through a period of war and disorder that Taufa'ahau ended (Foster & Latufeku, 2021).

He became monarch under the name King George Tupou I. Under his reign he centralized authority and made Tonga a unified and independent country (Corbett, Veenendaal, & Ugyel, 2017; Foster & Latufeku, 2021). The king promulgated a written code of laws in 1850, which the Wesleyan missionaries in Tonga helped to write, that granted him the sole right to appoint all chiefs, governors and judges (Bade, 2021). To show loyalty to the king, chiefs converted to Wesleyan Christianity so that by the 1850s all Tongans were Christians. An updated legal code in 1862 removed further privileges from local chiefs and granted the chiefs a generous stipend as compensation (Bade, 2021).

Wesleyan missionaries also assisted to write Tonga's first written constitution, based heavily on Hawaii's 1852 constitution, which an assembly of chiefs passed in September 1875 (Bade, 2021; Corbett et al., 2017; Foster & Latufeku, 2021). The constitution guaranteed fundamental freedoms and equality, created a Legislative Assembly with 20 representatives of the people and 20 nobles, gave the king the right to nominate the cabinet and governors and appoint the chiefs and ensured all land remained within Tongan ownership. The Tongan government and chiefs can lease land for limited periods to foreigners but all land continues to remain in Tongan ownership up till the present day (Bade, 2021).

France signed a convention with Tonga in 1855 declaring peace and friendship. Germany, Britain, and the United States (US) recognized Tonga's independence by signing Treaties of Friendship in 1876, 1879 and 1888, respectively (Bade, 2021; Foster & Latufeku, 2021). These treaties gave reciprocal rights to rent land, trade and allowed military vessels to enter one another's waters (Bade, 2021).

German companies dominated European trade and commercial interests in Tonga, especially the trade of copra, in the late 19th century (Bade, 2021). Germany, Britain and the US signed a treaty in Berlin that ceded Tonga as part of the British sphere of influence in the Pacific. In 1900, Britain forced Tonga to become its protectorate to discourage any German advances on Tonga that might stem from German economic dominance or friendly diplomatic relations (Bade, 2021). Under its treaty with Britain, Tonga agreed to conduct all foreign affairs through a British consul who had veto power over Tonga's foreign policy and finances (Foster & Latufeku, 2021). From 1918 to 1965, Queen Salote reigned, consolidated her power with the assistance of the Church of Tonga and largely eschewed modernization (Corbett et al., 2017).

In 1970, Tonga regained full control of all domestic and foreign affairs and joined the Commonwealth. Tonga, under King Tapou IV, pursued a modernist development agenda and invested in infrastructure and education. This led some to consider Tonga a regional model for economic growth and progress (Corbett et al., 2017). Providing Tonga's population with higher education also enabled the pro-democracy movements to emerge in the 1970s. Reform advocates started to win significant representation in the legislature in the 1990s (Corbett et al., 2017; Foster & Latufeku, 2021).

Tonga became a UN member in 1999. In the 2006, the first non-noble prime minister was appointed in March and in September King Tapou V succeeded his father. A pro-democracy demonstration later that month turned into a riot that lasted several weeks and led to the destruction of the capital's business district (Foster & Latufeku, 2021). In the following years, the new king began divesting himself of ownership of many of the state assets that constituted the wealth of the monarchy and announced the cession of the monarchy's absolute power (Foster & Latufeku, 2021). The constitutional reforms made Tonga's government more democratic and led to the monarch making most decisions in consultation with the Prime Minister except for those regarding the judiciary (Corbett et al., 2017; Foster & Latufeku, 2021).

## **Economy**

The primary sector contributes around 20% of GDP and produces most of Tonga's exports (Tonga Statistics Department, 2020d). In 2019, fish made up 31% of Tonga's domestic exports and vegetable products made up 55%. Key vegetable products include root crops which made up 17% of total domestic exports, kava which made up 15% and squash pumpkins which made up around 13.7% (Tonga Statistics Department, 2020b).

The secondary sector contributes around 15% and includes manufacturing, construction, and utilities. Construction contributes around 45% of that and manufacturing around 35% (Tonga Statistics Department, 2020d). Tonga manufactures products for its construction industry, furniture, clothing, food products and small handicrafts. The country has cooperative societies to process and market agricultural produce (Foster & Latufeku, 2021).

The tertiary sector contributes the remaining GDP. Public administration and services, including health and education, make up nearly 14% of total GDP. The retail and wholesale trade contributes around 9.7% of total GDP, real estate linked activities around 9%, and financial service around 5% (Tonga Statistics Department, 2020d).

Remittance from Tongans living abroad contribute remittances equivalent to nearly a third of GDP (Heritage Foundation, 2021; Tonga Statistics Department, 2020a). Most remittances come from the US followed by New Zealand, then Australia (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.). Tourism is the second-largest source of hard currency earnings and contributed around 20% of GDP and employment in 2019 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020; Kumar, Chandra, & Patel, 2021). The government also depends heavily on foreign aid with grants making up around 20-30% of government revenue between 2015 and 2020 (Tonga Statistics Department, 2020c).

## Politics

Tonga has a constitutional monarchy. The Tongan monarch serves as head-of-state and appoints the Cabinet based on nominations from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is elected by the Legislative Assembly and serves as head-of-government. The 26-seat unicameral Legislative Assembly, the Fale Alea, has 17 representatives directly elected by the Tongan electorate and 9 seats indirectly elected by hereditary chiefs (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). The constitution allows the Prime Minister to choose up to 4 ministers from outside of the assembly to add on the 26 (Corbett et al., 2017).

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## Tuvalu

Population	11 448 (Source: CIA Factbook)
Land Area	26km <sup>2</sup> (Source: CIA Factbook)
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income (Source: World Bank)
Freedom House Score	93/100 - Free

### History

The first settlers arrived from Samoa in the 14th century. Europeans sighted the islands during voyages from the 16th century onwards. From the 1820s, whalers and traders visited the islands regularly (MacDonald, 2021).

Britain reluctantly made the Ellice Islands a protectorate in 1892 at Germany's request. Germany wished to protect their commercial interests and holdings in the Pacific from American interests as Britain sought international support from Berlin for its role in Egypt (Macdonald, 2001). In 1916, Britain placed the protectorates Gilbert Islands and the Ellice Islands under the common administration of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (GEIC). Numerous Ellice Islanders sought education and employment in Tarawa or with the phosphate industry on Nauru and Banaba islands (MacDonald, 2021).

During World War II, US forces were based on some of the Ellice Islands' atolls. No fighting occurred on the islands, unlike on the Gilbert Islands, allowing mission schools to continue operations. This would contribute to ethnic tensions after the war when British officials hired Ellice Islanders for important positions. When Britain moved the GEIC administrative capital to Tarawa in 1945, they brought in some educated administrators from the Ellice Islands (Chappell, 2016).

Gilbert Islanders have Micronesian heritage and speak a different native tongue than the Ellice Islanders that have Polynesian descent. In Tarawa, Gilbertese felt the British officials favored Ellice Islanders for public sector jobs and perceived that the Ellice islanders considered themselves superior to Gilbertese (Chappell, 2016). On the Ellice Islands, voters felt neglected due to the GEIC concentrating most economic development in Tarawa on the Gilbert Islands which had a Gilbertese majority. Britain thought building up a separate administration on the Ellice Islands would cost too much. This led Ellice Islanders to fear that when the GEIC gained independence, the Gilbertese would dominate politics and neglect them (Chappell, 2016).

In a 1974 referendum, 92% of Ellice Islanders voted for separation from the Gilbert Islands leading to the complete partitioning of the GEIC by 1976 (Macdonald, 2001). The Ellice Islands gained independence as Tuvalu in 1978 after facing great difficulty establishing the basic infrastructure for a separate, independent government. The Gilbertese remained in control of financial reserves from Banaba Island phosphate mining revenues. In 1987, New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Japan and South Korea helped Tuvalu to create a Trust Fund (Chappell, 2016).

Tuvalu became a member of the UN in 2000. In the 21st century, climate change has caused sea levels to rise and threatens to submerge the islands. Tuvalu lobbies heavily at the UN for industrial powers to reduce their carbon emissions (Chappell, 2016).

## Economy

In 2011, agriculture and fishing contributed around 22.5% of GDP. The secondary sector contributed around 9% of GDP with most of that coming from construction. The tertiary sector contributed the remaining with public administration, health and education contributing around 28.4% of GDP, financial and real estate services contributing around 15.9%, and the retail trade contributing around 10.9% (Tuvalu Central Statistics Division, 2011).

Key sources of government revenue include fishing licenses, which were equivalent to 45% of GDP in 2013, foreign aid, contributions from the Tuvalu Trust Fund and royalties from leasing its Internet domain name “.tv”. Remittances are an important source of income for households (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## Politics

Tuvalu has a parliamentary democracy under the UK’s constitutional monarchy. The British monarch serves as head-of-state and appoints a governor general as her representative in Tuvalu on recommendation of Tuvalu’s prime minister. The governor general appoints the Cabinet on recommendation of the prime minister (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). The legislative branch consists of a directly elected unicameral 16-seat House of Assembly called the Fale I Fono and maintains a consultative process with local councils (Chappell, 2016). The assembly elects the prime minister from one of its members to serve as head-of-government. All Tuvaluans can vote when they turn 18 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

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## Vanuatu

Population	303 009 (Source: CIA Factbook)
Land Area	12189km <sup>2</sup> (Source: CIA Factbook)
Legal Status	UN-recognized state
UN Member	Yes
Socio-economic Status	Lower Middle Income (Source: World Bank)
Freedom House Score	82/100 - Free

## History

Humans first settled in Vanuatu from Melanesian islands west of it around 1300 BCE. Limited European contact with the islands and the indigenous people of Vanuatu, ni-Vanuatu, began in the early-1600s. In 1774, James Cook mapped the islands and named them the New Hebrides. Missionaries and sandalwood traders began to settle on the islands' fringes in the 1840s (Foster & Adams, 2021).

In the late-1860s, Europeans began to purchase coastal lands suitable for plantations agriculture, especially for cotton. The plantations brought in indentured labor from nearby Pacific islands. By the early 1870s, Europeans had bought most of suitable coastal plantation land. In the late-1870s, strictly enforced regulations on British plantation owners, especially regarding labor, by British administrators in the Pacific in contrast to looser regulations on French plantation owners under the French flag led to the ascendancy of French interests in Vanuatu (Adams, 1986). The decline in the profitability of cotton growing in the Pacific led to more maize, sugarcane, tobacco, vanilla and copra plantations on the islands (Adams, 1986).

Britain and France set up a rudimentary joint naval commission (JNC) over the islands in 1887 to intervene in conflicts over land. They did this to protect the interests of their missionaries and planters, respectively. (Adams, 1986; Foster & Adams, 2021; Stevens, 2017). The limitations on the powers of the JNC to resolve conflicts led to the two powers annexing the islands in 1906. They established a joint administration over a condominium of the New Hebrides. The British appointed a governor accountable to the Western Pacific High Commissioner in Fiji, and the French appointed a governor accountable to the governor of New Caledonia (Foster & Adams, 2021; Stevens, 2017). The mixed use of British, French, customary and joint legal systems weakened law enforcement (Stevens, 2017). The condominium also meant ni-Vanuatu remained stateless till independence due to Britain and France's reluctance to grant citizenship (Rawlings, 2012; Stevens, 2017).

During the 1900s, to increase earnings from copra and with encouragement from missions, ni-Vanuatu set up co-operatives to collect and sell their copra leading to them dominating the local copra trade. European planters faced great financial difficulty due to labor shortages, competition with ni-Vanuatu growers and variable access to markets until colonial officials enabled planters to bring in indentured labor from Vietnam after 1922 (Adams, 1986).

The islands served as a major Allied base during World War II. In the 1960s and 1970s, ni-Vanuatu campaigned for independence. Ni-Vanuatu leaders wished to protect ni-Vanuatu land rights, local customs and resolve their status of statelessness. The former raised local and international awareness of the ni-Vanuatu's statelessness and the lack of legal, civil, social and political rights that came with it (Rawlings, 2012, 2015).



In 1977, British, French and New Hebrides representatives met in Paris and agreed upon future independence. In 1979, the islands held elections and set up a constitution. On 30 July 1980, the New Hebrides declared independence under the name the Republic of Vanuatu, remained within the Commonwealth and entered a defense pact with Papua New Guinea a month later (Foster & Adams, 2021). It became a UN member in the same year.

In 1997, Vanuatu's government adopted a comprehensive reform program funded by the Asian Development Bank. The program aimed to reform the civil service and public sector institutions, improve infrastructure and attract more foreign investment (Foster & Adams, 2021).

## **Economy**

In 2017, the primary sector, consisting of agriculture and fisheries, contributed around also generates Vanuatu's key exports which includes kava, roots/tubers, copra, coconut oil, cocoa, frozen fish, sea cucumbers, tuna and beef (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2020b). The secondary sector, which includes construction, utilities and the processing of agricultural produce, contributed around 10% of GDP (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2017). The services sector contributed nearly 65% of GDP. It includes the retail trade which contributed nearly 13% of total GDP, government services which contributed around 12.5% of total GDP and the financial sector which contributed nearly 6% of total GDP (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2017).

Tourism provides employment especially on the islands of Tanna and Santo Island which in 2019 received around 39% and 35% of all Vanuatu's international visitors, respectively. In 2018, Vanuatu received around 115,600 international arrivals by air and around 234,500 by cruise ship. More than half of international visitors came from Australia followed by around 10% each from New Caledonia and New Zealand. Annual visitor arrivals peak in December (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2020a). The industry remains vulnerable to cyclones in the region.

Vanuatu has no individual or corporate income taxes which has encouraged the growth of an offshore banking sector (Heritage Foundation, 2021). Most tax revenue comes from import duties and value-added taxes. Additional sources of revenue include foreign aid, mainly from Australia and New Zealand (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

## **Politics**

Vanuatu has a parliamentary republic with an independent judiciary. The 52-seat parliament usually elects the leader of the majority party or coalition to serve as prime minister. Parliament and an electoral college consisting of the 6 province presidents indirectly elect the president to serve as chief-of-state. All citizens can vote when they turn 18 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; Foster & Adams, 2021).

Due to its former status as an Anglo-French condominium, Vanuatu inherited a legal system that uses a mix of English common law, French law, and ni-Vanuatu customary law. Freedom House finds that the largely independent judiciary can hold officials accountable in high-profile cases. Its former status has also led to a multi-party system with a frequently changing elected government divided between its Anglophone and Francophone citizens (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).



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