



Africa :: Comoros

Introduction :: Comoros

Background:

Comoros has endured more than 20 coups or attempted coups since gaining independence from France in 1975. In 1997, the islands of Anjouan and Moheli declared independence from Comoros. In 1999, military chief Col. AZALI seized power of the entire government in a bloodless coup, and helped negotiate the 2000 Fomboni Accords power-sharing agreement in which the federal presidency rotates among the three islands, and each island maintains its local government. AZALI won the 2002 federal presidential election, and each island in the archipelago elected its president. AZALI stepped down in 2006 and President SAMBI was elected to office. In 2007, Mohamed BACAR effected Anjouan's de-facto secession from the Union of Comoros, refusing to step down when Comoros' other islands held legitimate elections in July. The African Union (AU) initially attempted to resolve the political crisis by applying sanctions and a naval blockade to Anjouan, but in March 2008 the AU and Comoran soldiers seized the island. The island's inhabitants generally welcomed the move. In May 2011, Ikililou DHOININE won the presidency in peaceful elections widely deemed to be free and fair.

Geography :: Comoros

Location:

Southern Africa, group of islands at the northern mouth of the Mozambique Channel, about two-thirds of the way between northern Madagascar and northern Mozambique

Geographic coordinates:

12 10 S, 44 15 E

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 2,235 sq km

country comparison to the world: 180

land: 2,235 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

slightly more than 12 times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

340 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical marine; rainy season (November to May)

Terrain:

volcanic islands, interiors vary from steep mountains to low hills

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m
highest point: Karthala 2,360 m

Natural resources:

NEGL

Land use:

arable land: 44.06%
permanent crops: 31.17%
other: 24.77% (2011)

Irrigated land:

1.3 sq km NA (2003)

Total renewable water resources:

1.2 cu km (2011)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.01 cu km/yr (48%/5%/47%)
per capita: 16.86 cu m/yr (1999)

Natural hazards:

cyclones possible during rainy season (December to April); volcanic activity on Grand Comore

volcanism: Karthala (elev. 2,361 m) on Grand Comore Island last erupted in 2007; a 2005 eruption forced thousands of people to be evacuated and produced a large ash cloud

Environment - current issues:

soil degradation and erosion results from crop cultivation on slopes without proper terracing; deforestation

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

important location at northern end of Mozambique Channel

People and Society :: Comoros

Nationality:

noun: Comoran(s)
adjective: Comoran

Ethnic groups:

Antalote, Cafre, Makoa, Oimatsaha, Sakalava

Languages:

Arabic (official), French (official), Shikomoro (a blend of Swahili and Arabic)

Religions:

Sunni Muslim 98%, Roman Catholic 2%

Population:

752,288 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 164

Age structure:

0-14 years: 41.8% (male 156,812/female 157,917)
15-24 years: 18.7% (male 67,934/female 72,589)
25-54 years: 31.6% (male 112,825/female 124,991)
55-64 years: 4.1% (male 13,827/female 17,290)
65 years and over: 3.7% (male 13,370/female 14,733) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 81.6 %
youth dependency ratio: 76.4 %
elderly dependency ratio: 5.2 %
potential support ratio: 19.3 (2013)

Median age:

total: 19 years
male: 18.3 years
female: 19.6 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

1.97% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 53

Birth rate:

30.26 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 43

Death rate:

7.97 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 102

Net migration rate:

-2.63 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 172

Urbanization:

urban population: 28% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 2.84% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

MORONI (capital) 54,000 (2011)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 0.99 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.94 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.9 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.81 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.92 male(s)/female

total population: 0.94 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

280 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 43

Infant mortality rate:

total: 67.12 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 21

male: 78.09 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 55.82 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 63.12 years

country comparison to the world: 183

male: 60.89 years

female: 65.41 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

3.93 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 42

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

25.7% (2000)

Health expenditures:

4.5% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 152

Physicians density:

0.15 physicians/1,000 population (2004)

Hospital bed density:

2.2 beds/1,000 population (2006)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 91% of population

rural: 97% of population

total: 95% of population

unimproved:

urban: 9% of population

rural: 3% of population

total: 5% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 50% of population

rural: 30% of population

total: 36% of population

unimproved:

urban: 50% of population

rural: 70% of population

total: 64% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

0.1% (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 117

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

fewer than 500 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 155

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

fewer than 100 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 146

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

4.4% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 164

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

25% (2000)

country comparison to the world: 25

Education expenditures:

7.6% of GDP (2008)

country comparison to the world: 17

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 75.5%

male: 80.5%

female: 70.6% (2011 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 10 years

male: 11 years

female: 9 years (2005)

Child labor - children ages 5-14:

total number: 39,550

percentage: 27 % (2000 est.)

Government:: Comoros

Country name:

conventional long form: Union of the Comoros

conventional short form: Comoros

local long form: Udzima wa Komori (Comorian); Union des Comores (French); Jumhuriyat al Qamar al Muttahidah (Arabic)

local short form: Komori (Comorian); Comores (French); Juzur al Qamar (Arabic)

Government type:

republic

Capital:

name: Moroni

geographic coordinates: 11 42 S, 43 14 E

time difference: UTC+3 (8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

3 islands and 4 municipalities*; Anjouan (Ndzuwani), Domoni*, Fomboni*, Grande Comore (N'gazidja), Moheli (Mwali), Moroni*, Moutsamoudou*

Independence:

6 July 1975 (from France)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 6 July (1975)

Constitution:

23 December 2001

Legal system:

mixed legal system of Islamic religious law, the French civil code of 1975, and customary law

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICtJ jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Ikililou DHOININE (since 26 May 2011)

head of government: President Ikililou DHOININE (since 26 May 2011)

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the president
(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** [↗](#))

elections: as defined by the 2001 constitution, the presidency rotates every four years among the elected presidents from the three main islands in the Union; election last held on 7 November and 26 December 2010 (next to be held in 2014)

election results: Ikililou DHOININE elected president; percent of vote - Ikililou DHOININE 61.1%, Mohamed Said FAZUL 32.7%, Abdou DJABIR 6.2%

Legislative branch:

unicameral Assembly of the Union (33 seats; 15 deputies are selected by the individual islands' local assemblies and 18 by universal suffrage to serve for five years);

elections: last held on 6 and 20 December 2009 (next to be held in 2014)

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - pro-union coalition 19, autonomous coalition 4, independents 1; note - 9 additional seats are filled by deputies from local island assemblies

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court or Cour Supreme (consists of 7 judges); Constitutional Court (consists of 8 members)

judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court judges selected - 2 by the president of the Union, 2 by the Assembly of the Union, and 1 each by the 3 island councils; judges appointed for life; Constitutional Court members appointed - 1 by the president, 1 each by the 3 vice presidents, 1 by the Assembly, and 1 each by the island executives; all members serve 6-year renewable terms

subordinate courts: Court of Appeals (in Moroni); Tribunal de premiere; island village (community) courts; religious courts

Political parties and leaders:

Camp of the Autonomous Islands or CdIA (a coalition of parties organized by the islands' presidents in opposition to the Union President)

Convention for the Renewal of the Comoros or CRC [AZALI Assowmani]

Front National pour la Justice or FNJ [Ahmed RACHID] (Islamic party in opposition)

Mouvement pour la Democratie et le Progress or MDP-NGDC [Abbas DJOUSSOUF]

Parti Comorien pour la Democratie et le Progress or PCDP [Ali MROUDJAE]

Rassemblement National pour le Development or RND [Omar TAMOU, Abdoulhamid AFFRAITANE]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

other: environmentalists

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AMF, AOSIS, AU, CAEU (candidates), COMESA, FAO, FZ, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, InOC, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAS, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO (observer)

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Roubani KAAMBI; note - also serves as Permanent Representative to the UN

chancery: Mission to the US, 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 418, New York, NY 10017

telephone: [1] (212) 750-1637

FAX: [1] (212) 750-1657

Diplomatic representation from the US:

the US does not have an embassy in Comoros; the ambassador to Madagascar is accredited to Comoros

Flag description:

four equal horizontal bands of yellow (top), white, red, and blue, with a green isosceles triangle based on the hoist; centered within the triangle is a white crescent with the convex side facing the hoist and four white, five-pointed stars placed vertically in a line between the points of the crescent; the horizontal bands and the four stars represent the four main islands of the archipelago - Mwali, N'gazidja, Ndzuwani, and Mahore (Mayotte - territorial collectivity of France, but claimed by Comoros)

note: the crescent, stars, and color green are traditional symbols of Islam

National symbol(s):

four stars and crescent

National anthem:

name: "Udzima wa ya Masiwa" (The Union of the Great Islands)

▶ [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Said Hachim SIDI ABDEREMANE/Said Hachim SIDI ABDEREMANE and Kamildine ABDALLAH

note: adopted 1978

Economy :: Comoros

Economy - overview:

One of the world's poorest countries, Comoros is made up of three islands that have inadequate transportation links, a young and rapidly increasing population, and few natural resources. The low educational level of the labor force contributes to a subsistence level of economic activity, high unemployment, and a heavy dependence on foreign grants and technical assistance. Agriculture, including fishing, hunting, and forestry, contributes 50% to GDP, employs 80% of the labor force, and provides most of the exports. Export income is heavily reliant on the three main crops of vanilla, cloves, and ylang-ylang; and Comoros' export earnings are easily disrupted by disasters such as fires. The country is not self-sufficient in food production; rice, the main staple, accounts for the bulk of imports. The government - which is hampered by internal political disputes - lacks a comprehensive strategy to attract foreign investment and is struggling to upgrade education and technical training, privatize commercial and industrial enterprises, improve health services, diversify exports, promote tourism, and reduce the high population growth rate. Political problems have inhibited growth, which averaged only about 1% in 2006-09 but more than 2% per year in 2010-12. Remittances from 150,000 Comorans abroad help supplement GDP. In September 2009 the IMF approved Comoros for a three-year \$21 million loan, but the government has struggled to meet program targets, such as restricting spending on wages, strengthening domestic revenue collection, and moving forward on structural reforms. In December 2012, IMF and the World Bank's International Development Association supported \$176 million in debt relief for Comoros, resulting in a 59% reduction of its future external debt service over a period of 40 years.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$887.4 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207

\$866 million (2011 est.)

\$847.5 million (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$600 million (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

2.5% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 124

2.2% (2011 est.)

2.1% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$1,300 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 209

\$1,300 (2011 est.)

\$1,300 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 96%

government consumption: 17%

investment in fixed capital: 18.7%

investment in inventories: 6.6%

exports of goods and services: 15.3%

imports of goods and services: -53.7%
(2012 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 50%

industry: 10%

services: 40% (2011 est.)

Agriculture - products:

vanilla, cloves, ylang-ylang (perfume essence), copra, coconuts, bananas, cassava (manioc)

Industries:

fishing, tourism, perfume distillation

Industrial production growth rate:

NA%

Labor force:

268,500 (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 80%

industry and services: 20% (1996 est.)

Unemployment rate:

20% (1996 est.)

country comparison to the world: 160

Population below poverty line:

60% (2002 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 0.9%

highest 10%: 55.2% (2004)

Budget:

revenues: \$166.4 million

expenditures: \$157.7 million (2012 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

27.7% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 108

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

1.4% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 31

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

6% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

6.8% (2011 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

1.93% (31 December 2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 110

2.21% (31 December 2009 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

10.5% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

7.29% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$151.6 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 179

\$128.4 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$212.1 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 186

\$198.2 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$140.5 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 184

\$120.6 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Current account balance:

-\$67 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 65

-\$60.4 million (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$19.6 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

\$25.2 million (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

vanilla, ylang-ylang (perfume essence), cloves, copra

Exports - partners:

Netherlands 58.8%, Singapore 10.6%, Turkey 9.3%, France 5.6%, India 5% (2012)

Imports:

\$208 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 206

\$206.6 million (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

rice and other foodstuffs, consumer goods, petroleum products, cement, transport equipment

Imports - partners:

Pakistan 16.9%, France 13.9%, UAE 11%, India 8.3%, China 6.5%, Kenya 5.8%, Singapore 5.1% (2012)

Debt - external:

\$136.1 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

\$277.9 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Exchange rates:

Comoran francs (KMF) per US dollar -

382.9 (2012 est.)

353.9 (2011 est.)

371.46 (2010 est.)

Energy :: Comoros

Electricity - production:

52 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Electricity - consumption:

48.36 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 179

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 171

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

6,000 kW (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

83.3% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 89

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 67

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

16.7% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 100

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 122

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 119

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 95

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 171

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 117

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 165

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

1,025 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 199

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 165

Refined petroleum products - imports:

1,009 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 194

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 114

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 130

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 122

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

149,600 Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 199

Communications :: Comoros

Telephones - main lines in use:

23,600 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 185

Telephones - mobile cellular:

216,400 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 180

Telephone system:

general assessment: sparse system of microwave radio relay and HF radiotelephone communication stations

domestic: fixed-line connections only about 3 per 100 persons; mobile cellular usage about 30 per 100 persons

international: country code - 269; landing point for the EASSy fiber-optic submarine cable system connecting East Africa with Europe and North America; HF radiotelephone communications to Madagascar and Reunion (2010)

Broadcast media:

national state-owned TV station and a TV station run by Anjouan regional government; national state-owned radio; regional governments on the islands of Grande Comore and Anjouan each operate a radio station; a few independent and small community radio stations operate on the islands of Grande Comore and Moheli, and these two islands have access to Mayotte Radio and French TV (2007)

Internet country code:

.km

Internet hosts:

14 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 225

Internet users:

24,300 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 187

Transportation :: Comoros

Airports:

4 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 185

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 4

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1

914 to 1,523 m: 3 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 880 km

country comparison to the world: 186

paved: 673 km

unpaved: 207 km (2002)

Merchant marine:

total: 149

country comparison to the world: 39

by type: bulk carrier 16, cargo 83, carrier 5, chemical tanker 5, container 2, passenger 2, passenger/cargo 1, petroleum tanker 17, refrigerated cargo 10, roll on/roll off 8

foreign-owned: 73 (Bangladesh 1, Bulgaria 4, China 1, Cyprus 2, Greece 4, Kenya 2, Kuwait 1, Latvia 2, Lebanon 2, Lithuania 1, Nigeria 1, Norway 1, Pakistan 5, Russia 12, Syria 5, Turkey 8, UAE 8, UK 1, Ukraine 10, US 2) (2010)

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Moroni, Mutsamudu

Military :: Comoros

Military branches:

Army of National Development (l'Armee du Developpement Nationale, AND); Comoran Security Force (also called Comoran Defense Force (Force Comorienne de Defense, FCD), includes Gendarmerie), Comoran Coast Guard, Comoran Federal Police (2013)

Military service age and obligation:

18 years of age for 2-year voluntary military service; no conscription; women first inducted into the Army in 2004 (2012)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 184,236

females age 16-49: 183,363 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 134,562

females age 16-49: 145,797 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 8,831

female: 8,809 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

2.8% of GDP (2006)

country comparison to the world: 45

Transnational Issues :: Comoros

Disputes - international:

claims French-administered Mayotte and challenges France's and Madagascar's claims to Banc du Geyser, a drying reef in the Mozambique Channel; in May 2008, African Union forces were called in to assist the Comoros military recapture Anjouan Island from rebels who seized it in 2001

Trafficking in persons:

current situation: Comoros is a source country for children subjected to forced labor and reportedly sex trafficking; Comoran children are forced to labor within the country in domestic service, roadside and street vending, baking, agriculture, and sometimes criminal activities; some Comoran students at Koranic schools are exploited for forced agricultural or domestic labor, sometimes being subjected to physical and sexual abuse; Comoros may be particularly vulnerable to transnational trafficking because of inadequate border controls, government corruption, and the presence of criminal networks

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - Comoros does not comply fully with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so; although the government provided some funding to UNICEF-supported, NGO-run centers, victim protection provisions remained very modest; the government relies on donor funding and international organization partners for the majority of its anti-trafficking efforts; a new law was passed prohibiting child trafficking and the penal code was revised to include prohibitions against and penalties for human trafficking, but these modifications await parliamentary adoption (2013)