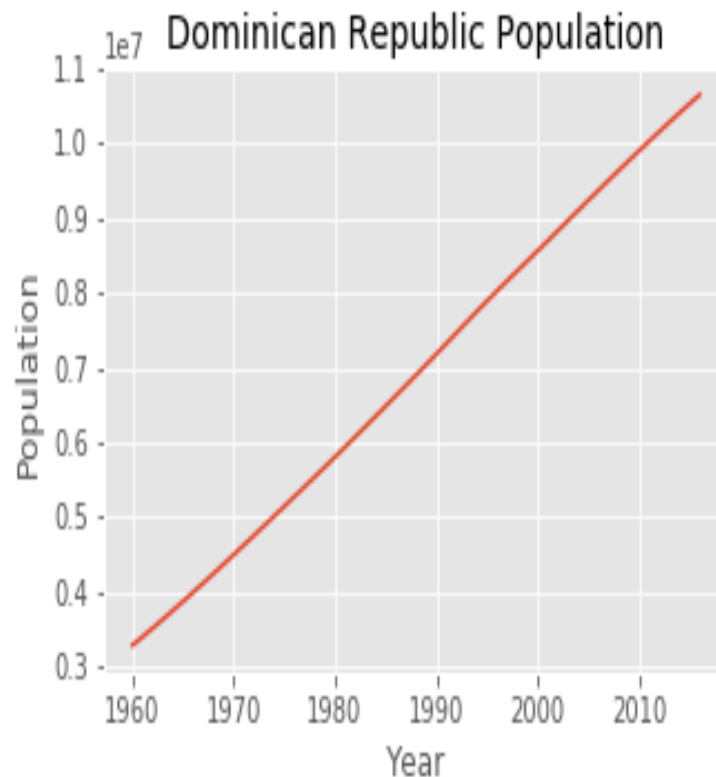


Dominican Republic



Coordinates: 19°00′N 70°40′W﻿ / ﻿19.000°N 70.667°W﻿ / 19.000; -70.667The Dominican Republic
(Spanish: República Dominicana [reˈpuβliˈka ðoˈminiˈkana]) is a sovereign state located in the island of Hispaniola, in the Greater Antilles archipelago of the Caribbean region. It occupies the eastern five-eighths of the island, which it shares with the nation of Haiti, making Hispaniola one of two Caribbean islands, along with Saint Martin, that are shared by two countries. The Dominican Republic is the second-largest Caribbean nation by area (after Cuba) at 48,445 square kilometers (18,705 sq mi), and third by population with approximately 10 million people, of which approximately three million live in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo, the capital city. Christopher Columbus landed on the island on December 5, 1492, which the native Taíno people had inhabited since the 7th century. The colony of Santo Domingo became the site of the first permanent European settlement in the Americas, the oldest continuously inhabited city, and the first seat of the Spanish colonial rule in the New World. After more than three hundred years of Spanish rule the Dominican people declared independence in November 1821. The leader of the independence movement José Núñez de Cáceres, intended the Dominican nation to unite with the country of Gran Colombia, but no longer under Spain's custody the newly independent Dominicans were forcefully annexed by Haiti in February 1822. Independence came 22 years later after victory in the Dominican War of Independence in 1844. Over the next 72 years the Dominican Republic experienced mostly internal conflicts and a brief return to colonial status before permanently ousting Spanish rule during the Dominican War of Restoration of 1865. A United States occupation lasted eight years between 1916 and 1924, and a subsequent calm and prosperous six-year period under Horacio Vásquez Lajara was followed by the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo until 1961. A civil war in 1965, the country's last, was ended by U.S. military occupation and was followed by the authoritarian rule of Joaquín Balaguer, 1966–1978. Since then, the Dominican Republic has moved toward representative democracy and has been led by Leonel Fernández for most of the time since 1996. Danilo Medina, the Dominican Republic's current president, succeeded Fernandez in 2012, winning 51% of the electoral vote over his opponent ex-president

Hipólito Mejía.