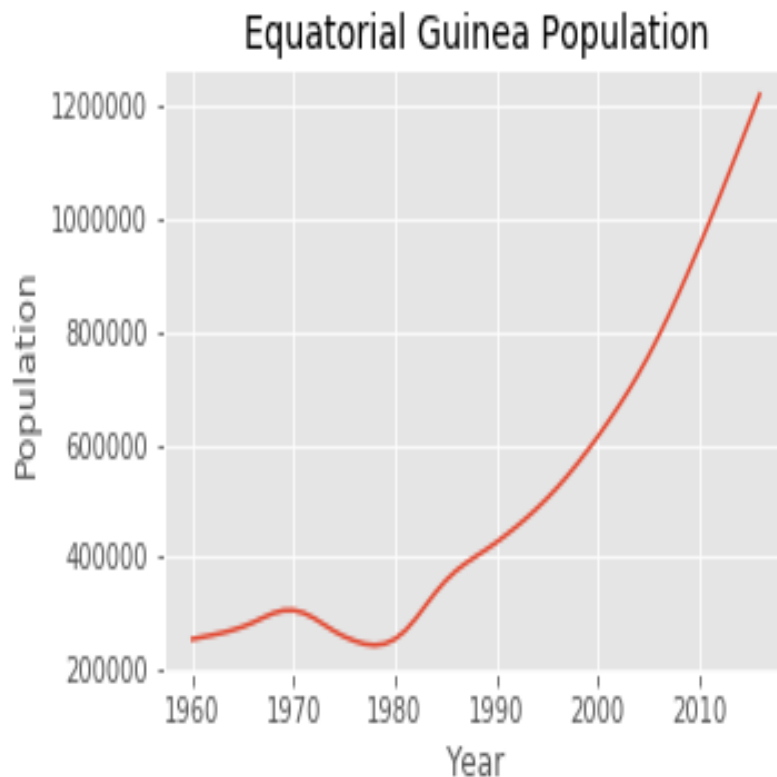


Equatorial Guinea



Equatorial Guinea (Spanish: Guinea Ecuatorial, French: Guinée équatoriale, Portuguese: Guiné Equatorial), officially the Republic of Equatorial Guinea (Spanish: República de Guinea Ecuatorial, French: République de Guinée équatoriale, Portuguese: República da Guiné Equatorial), is a country located in Central Africa, with an area of 28,000 square kilometres (11,000 sq mi). Formerly the colony of Spanish Guinea, its post-independence name evokes its location near both the Equator and the Gulf of Guinea. Equatorial Guinea is the only sovereign African state in which Spanish is an official language. As of 2015, the country had an estimated population of 1,222,245. Equatorial Guinea consists of two parts, an insular and a mainland region. The insular region consists of the islands of Bioko (formerly Fernando Pó) in the Gulf of Guinea and Annobón, a small volcanic island which is the only part of the country south of the equator. Bioko Island is the northernmost part of Equatorial Guinea and is the site of the country's capital, Malabo. The island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe is located between Bioko and Annobón. The mainland region, Río Muni, is bordered by Cameroon on the north and Gabon on the south and east. It is the location of Bata, Equatorial Guinea's largest city, and Oyala, the country's planned future capital. Río Muni also includes several small offshore islands, such as Corisco, Elobey Grande, and Elobey Chico. The country is a member of the African Union, Francophonie, OPEC and the CPLP. Since the mid-1990s, Equatorial Guinea has become one of sub-Saharan Africa's largest oil producers. It is the richest country per capita in Africa, and its gross domestic product (GDP) adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita ranks 43rd in the world; however, the wealth is distributed extremely unevenly, and few people have benefited from the oil riches. The country ranks 135th on the UN's 2016 Human Development Index. The UN says that less than half of the population has access to clean drinking water and that 20% of children die before reaching the age of five. The country's authoritarian government has one of the worst human rights records in the world, consistently ranking among the "worst of the worst" in Freedom House's annual survey of political and civil rights. Reporters Without Borders ranks President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo among its "predators" of press freedom. Human trafficking is a significant problem; the 2012

U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report stated that Equatorial Guinea "is a source and destination for women and children subjected to forced labor and FC sex trafficking." The report rates Equatorial Guinea as a government that does not fully comply with minimum standards and is not making significant efforts to do so." == History == Pygmies probably once lived in the continental region that is now Equatorial Guinea, but are today found only in isolated pockets in southern Río Muni. Bantu migrations between the 18th and 19th centuries brought coastal ethno-linguistic groups as well as the Fang people. Elements of the latter may have generated the Bubi, who migrated from Cameroon to Río Muni and Bioko in several waves and succeeded former Neolithic populations. The Annobón population, originally native to Angola, was introduced by the Portuguese via São Tomé island. === First European contact (1472) === The Portuguese explorer Fernando Pó, seeking a path to India, is credited as being the first European to discover the island of Bioko in 1472. He called it Formosa ("Beautiful"), but it quickly took on the name of its European discoverer. Fernando Pó and Annobón were colonized by Portugal in 1474. In 1778, Queen Maria I of Portugal and King Charles III of Spain signed the Treaty of El Pardo which ceded Bioko, adjacent islets, and commercial rights to the Bight of Biafra between the Niger and Ogoue rivers to Spain. Spain thereby tried to gain access to a source of slaves controlled by British merchants. Between 1778 and 1810, the territory of Equatorial Guinea was administered by the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, based in Buenos Aires. From 1827 to 1843, the United Kingdom had a base on Bioko to control the slave trade, which was moved to Sierra Leone under an agreement with Spain in 1843. In 1844, on restoration of Spanish sovereignty, the area became known as the "Territorios Españoles del Golfo de Guinea." Spain had neglected to occupy the large area in the Bight of Biafra to which it had right by treaty, and the French had busily expanded their occupation at the expense of the area claimed by Spain. The treaty of Paris in 1900 left Spain with the continental enclave of Río Muni, a mere 26,000 km² out of the 300,000 stretching east to the Ubangi river which the Spaniards had initially claimed. The plantations of Fernando Pó were mostly run by a black Creole elite, later known as Fernandinos. The British occupied the island briefly in the early 19th century, settling some 2,000 Sierra Leoneans and freed slaves there. Limited immigration from West Africa and the West Indies continued after the British left. To this were added Cubans, Filipinos and Spaniards of various colours deported for political or other crimes, as well as some assisted settlers. There was also a trickle of immigration from the neighbouring Portuguese islands, escaped slaves and prospective planters. Although a few of the Fernandinos were Catholic and Spanish-speaking, about nine-tenths of them were Protestant and English-speaking on the eve of the First World War, and pidgin English was the lingua franca of the island. The Sierra Leoneans were particularly well placed as planters while labor recruitment on the Windward coast continued, for they kept family and other connections there and could easily arrange a supply of labor. The opening years of the twentieth century saw a new generation of Spanish immigrants. Land regulations issued in 1904–1905 favoured Spaniards, and most of the later big planters arrived from Spain after that. The Liberian labor agreement of 1914 favoured wealthy men with ready access to the state, and the shift in labor supplies from Liberia to Río Muni increased this advantage. In 1940, an estimated 20% of the colony's cocoa production came from African-owned land, nearly all of it was in the hands of Fernandinos. The greatest constraint to economic development was a chronic shortage of labour. Pushed into the interior of the island and decimated by alcohol addiction, venereal disease, smallpox, and sleeping sickness, the indigenous Bubi population of Bioko refused to work on plantations. Working their own small cocoa farms gave them a considerable degree of autonomy. By the late nineteenth century, the Bubi were protected from the demands of the planters by Spanish Claretian missionaries, who were very influential in the colony and eventually organised the Bubi into little mission theocracies reminiscent of the famous Jesuit reductions in Paraguay. Catholic penetration was furthered by two small insurrections in 1898 and 1910 protesting conscription of forced labour for the plantations. The Bubi were disarmed in 1917, and left dependent on the missionaries. Between 1926 and 1959 Bioko and Río Muni were united as the colony of Spanish Guinea. The economy was based on large cacao and coffee plantations and logging concessions and the workforce was mostly immigrant contract labour from Liberia, Nigeria, and Cameroun. Between 1914 and 1930, an estimated 10,000 Liberians went to Fernando Po under a labour treaty that was stopped altogether in 1930. With Liberian workers no longer available, planters of Fernando Po turned to Río Muni. Campaigns were mounted to subdue the Fang people in the 1920s, at the time that Liberia was beginning to cut back on recruitment. There were garrisons of the colonial guard throughout the enclave by 1926, and the whole colony was considered 'pacified' by 1929. Río Muni had a small population, officially a little over 100,000 in the 1930s, and escape across the frontiers into Cameroun or Gabon was very easy. Also, the timber companies needed increasing

numbers of workers, and the spread of coffee cultivation offered an alternative means of paying taxes. Fernando Pó thus continued to suffer from labour shortages. The French only briefly permitted recruitment in Cameroun, and the main source of labour came to be Igbo smuggled in canoes from Calabar in Nigeria. This resolution to the worker shortage allowed Fernando Pó to become one of Africa's most productive agricultural areas after the Second World War.

I Politically, post-war colonial history has three fairly distinct phases: up to 1959, when its status was raised from 'colonial' to 'provincial', following the approach of the Portuguese Empire; between 1960 and 1968, when Madrid attempted a partial decolonisation aimed at keeping the territory as part of the Spanish system; and from 1968 on, after the territory became an independent republic. The first phase consisted of little more than a continuation of previous policies; these closely resembled the policies of Portugal and France, notably in dividing the population into a vast majority governed as 'natives' or non-citizens, and a very small minority (together with whites) admitted to civic status as *emancipados*, assimilation to the metropolitan culture being the only permissible means of advancement. This 'provincial' phase saw the beginnings of nationalism, but chiefly among small groups who had taken refuge from the Caudillo's paternal hand in Cameroun and Gabon. They formed two bodies: the *Movimiento Nacional de Liberación de la Guinea* (MONALIGE), and the *Idea Popular de la Guinea Ecuatorial* (IPGE). The pressure they could bring to bear was weak, but the general trend in West Africa was not. A decision of 9 August 1963, approved by a referendum of 15 December 1963, gave the territory a measure of autonomy and the administrative promotion of a 'moderate' group, the *Movimiento de Unión Nacional de la Guinea Ecuatorial* (MUNGE). This proved a feeble instrument, and, with growing pressure for change from the UN, Madrid gave way to the currents of nationalism.

=== Independence (1968) ===
 Independence was conceded on 12 October 1968 and the region became the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Francisco Macías Nguema was elected president. In July 1970, Macías Nguema created a single-party state and made himself president for life in 1972. He broke off ties with Spain and the West. In spite of his condemnation of Marxism, which he deemed "neo-colonialist", Equatorial Guinea maintained very special relations with socialist countries, notably China, Cuba, and the USSR. He signed a preferential trade agreement and a shipping treaty with the Soviet Union. The Soviets also made loans to Equatorial Guinea. The shipping agreement gave the Soviets permission for a pilot fishery development project and also a naval base at Luba. In return the USSR was to supply fish to Equatorial Guinea. China and Cuba also gave different forms of financial, military, and technical assistance to Equatorial Guinea, which got them a measure of influence there. For the USSR, there was an advantage to be gained in the War in Angola from access to Luba base and later on to Malabo International Airport. In 1974 the World Council of Churches affirmed that large numbers of people had been murdered since 1968 in an ongoing reign of terror. A quarter of the entire population had fled abroad, they said, while 'the prisons are overflowing and to all intents and purposes form one vast concentration camp'. Out of a population of 300,000, an estimated 80,000 were killed. Apart from allegedly committing genocide against the ethnic minority Bubi people, he ordered the deaths of thousands of suspected opponents, closed down churches and presided over the economy's collapse as skilled citizens and foreigners fled the country. On Christmas 1975, Macías Nguema had 150 alleged coup plotters executed. The nephew of Macías Nguema, Teodoro Obiang deposed Macías Nguema on 3 August 1979, in a bloody coup d'état; over two weeks of civil war ensued until Macías Nguema was captured. He was tried and executed soon afterward. In 1995 Mobil, an American oil company, discovered oil in Equatorial Guinea. The country subsequently experienced rapid economic development, but earnings from the country's oil wealth have not reached the population and the country ranks low on the UN human development index. Some 20% of children die before age 5 and more than 50% of the population lacks access to clean drinking water. President Teodoro Obiang is widely suspected of using the country's oil wealth to enrich himself and his associates. In 2006, Forbes estimated his personal wealth at \$600 million. In 2011, the government announced it was planning a new capital for the country, named Oyala. As of February 2016, Obiang is Africa's longest serving dictator.

== Politics ==
 The current president of Equatorial Guinea is Teodoro Obiang. The 1982 constitution of Equatorial Guinea gives him extensive powers, including naming and dismissing members of the cabinet, making laws by decree, dissolving the Chamber of Representatives, negotiating and ratifying treaties and serving as commander in chief of the armed forces. Prime Minister Vicente E Hate Tomi was appointed by Obiang and operates under powers delegated by the President. During the three decades of his rule, Obiang has shown little tolerance for opposition. While the country is nominally a multiparty democracy, its elections have generally been considered a sham. According to Human Rights Watch, the dictatorship of President Obiang used an oil boom to entrench

and enrich itself further at the expense of the country's people. Since August 1979 some 12 real and perceived unsuccessful coup attempts have occurred. According to a March 2004 BBC profile, politics within the country are currently dominated by tensions between Obiang's son, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, and other close relatives with powerful positions in the security forces. The tension may be rooted in a power shift arising from the dramatic increase in oil production which has occurred since 1997. In 2004 a plane load of suspected mercenaries was intercepted in Zimbabwe while allegedly on the way to overthrow Obiang. A November 2004 report named Mark Thatcher as a financial backer of the 2004 Equatorial Guinea coup d'état attempt organized by Simon Mann. Various accounts also named the United Kingdom's MI6, the United States' CIA, and Spain as tacit supporters of the coup attempt. Nevertheless, the Amnesty International report released in June 2005 on the ensuing trial of those allegedly involved highlighted the prosecution's failure to produce conclusive evidence that a coup attempt had actually taken place. Simon Mann was released from prison on 3 November 2009 for humanitarian reasons. A 2004 US Senate investigation into the Washington-based Riggs Bank found that President Obiang's family had received huge payments from US oil companies such as Exxon Mobil and Amerada Hess. Since 2005, Military Professional Resources Inc., a US-based international private military company, has worked in Equatorial Guinea to train police forces in appropriate human rights practices. In 2006, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hailed Obiang as a "good friend" despite repeated criticism of his human rights and civil liberties record. The US Agency for International Development entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Obiang, in April 2006, to establish a social development Fund in the country, implementing projects in the areas of health, education, women's affairs and the environment. In 2006, Obiang signed an anti-torture decree banning all forms of abuse and improper treatment in Equatorial Guinea, and commissioned the renovation and modernization of Black Beach prison in 2007 to ensure the humane treatment of prisoners. However, human rights abuses have continued. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International among other non-governmental organizations have documented severe human rights abuses in prisons, including torture, beatings, unexplained deaths and illegal detention. The anti-corruption lobby Transparency International put Equatorial Guinea in the top 12 of its list of most corrupt states. Freedom House, a pro-democracy and human rights NGO, described Obiang as one of the world's "most kleptocratic living autocrats," and complained about the US government welcoming his administration and buying oil from it. Dismissing international voices that call for more transparency, Obiang has long held that oil revenues are a state secret. In 2008 the country became a candidate of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative – an international project meant to promote openness about government oil revenues – but failed to qualify before an April 2010 deadline. The advocacy group Global Witness has been lobbying the United States to act against Obiang's son, Teodorin, vice-president and a government minister. It says there is credible evidence that he spent millions buying a Malibu, California mansion and private jet using corruptly acquired funds – grounds for denying him a visa. In February 2010, Equatorial Guinea signed a contract with the MPRI subsidiary of the US defense corporation L3 Communications for coastal surveillance and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Obiang was re-elected to serve an additional term in 2009 in an election the African Union deemed "in line with electoral law". Obiang re-appointed Prime Minister Ignacio Milam Tang in 2010. Under Obiang, the basic infrastructure of Equatorial Guinea has improved. Asphalt now covers more than 80% of the national roads and ports and airports are being built by Chinese, Moroccan and French contractors across much of the country. However, when a British parliamentary and press entourage toured the country as guests of the president in 2011, The Guardian newspaper reported that very few of Equatorial Guinea's citizens seem to benefit from improvements, with reports of empty three-lane highways and many empty buildings. The Obiang regime is an ally of the USA. During a meeting on the sidelines of the recent United Nations General Assembly, Obiang urged the US to strengthen cooperation between the United States and Africa. President Barack Obama posed for an official photograph with President Obiang at a New York reception. In November 2011, a new constitution was approved. The vote on the constitution was taken though neither the text or its content was revealed to the public before the vote. Under the new constitution the president was limited to a maximum of two seven-year terms and would be both the head of state and head of the government, therefore eliminating the prime minister. The new constitution also introduced the figure of a vice president and called for the creation of a 70-member senate with 55 senators elected by the people and the 15 remaining designated by the president. Surprisingly, in the following cabinet reshuffle it was announced that there would be two vice-presidents in clear violation of the constitution that was just taking effect. In October 2012, during an interview with Christiane Amanpour on CNN, Obiang was

asked whether he would step down at the end of the current term (2009–2016) since the new constitution limited the number of terms to two and he has been reelected at least 4 times. Obiang answered he refused to step aside because the new constitution was not retroactive and the two-term limit would only become applicable from 2016. 26 May 2013 elections combined the senate, lower house and mayoral contests all in a single package. Like all previous elections, this was denounced by the opposition and it too was won by Obiang's PDGE. During the electoral contest, the ruling party hosted internal elections which were later scrapped as none of the president's favorite candidates led the internal lists. Ultimately, the ruling party and the satellites of the ruling coalition decided to run not based on the candidates but based on the party. This created a situation where during the election the ruling party's coalition did not provide the names of their candidates so effectively individuals were not running for office, instead the party was the one running for office. The May 2013 elections were marked by a series of events including the popular protest planned by a group of activists from the MPP (Movement of Popular Protest) which included several social and political groups. The MPP called for a peaceful protest at the Plaza de la Mujer square on 15 May. MPP coordinator Enrique Nsolo Nzo was arrested and official state media portrayed him as planning to destabilize the country and depose the president. However, and despite speaking under duress and with clear signs of torture, Nsolo said that they had planned a peaceful protest and had indeed obtained all the legal authorizations required to carry out the peaceful protest. In addition to that, he firmly stated that he was not affiliated with any political party. The Plaza de la Mujer square in Malabo was occupied by the police from 13 May and it has been heavily guarded ever since. The government embarked on a censorship program that affected social sites including Facebook and other websites that were critical to the government of Equatorial Guinea. The censorship was implemented by redirecting online searches to the official government website. Shortly after the elections, opposition party CPDS announced that they were going to protest peacefully against the 26 May elections on 25 June. Interior minister Clemente Engonga refused to authorize the protest on the grounds that it could "destabilize" the country and CPDS decided to go forward, claiming constitutional right. On the night of 24 June, the CPDS headquarters in Malabo were surrounded by heavily armed police officers to keep those inside from leaving and thus effectively blocking the protest. Several leading members of CPDS were detained in Malabo and others in Bata were kept from boarding several local flights to Malabo. == Geography == Equatorial Guinea is in west central Africa. The country consists of a mainland territory, Río Muni, which is bordered by Cameroon to the north and Gabon to the east and south, and five small islands, Bioko, Corisco, Annobón, Elobey Chico (Small Elobey), and Elobey Grande (Great Elobey). Bioko, the site of the capital, Malabo, lies about 40 kilometers (25 mi) off the coast of Cameroon. Annobón Island is about 350 kilometers (220 mi) west-south-west of Cape Lopez in Gabon. Corisco and the two Elobey islands are in Corisco Bay, on the border of Río Muni and Gabon. Equatorial Guinea lies between latitudes 4°N and 2°S, and longitudes 5° and 12°E. Despite its name, no part of the country's territory lies on the equator—it is in the northern hemisphere, except for the insular Annobón Province, which is about 155 km (96 mi) south of the equator. === Climate === Equatorial Guinea has a tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons. From June to August, Río Muni is dry and Bioko wet; from December to February, the reverse occurs. In between there is gradual transition. Rain or mist occurs daily on Annobón, where a cloudless day has never been registered. The temperature at Malabo, Bioko, ranges from 16 °C (61 °F) to 33 °C (91 °F), though on the southern Moka Plateau normal high temperatures are only 21 °C (70 °F). In Río Muni, the average temperature is about 27 °C (81 °F). Annual rainfall varied from 1,930 mm (76 in) at Malabo to 10,920 mm (430 in) at Ureka, Bioko, but Río Muni is somewhat drier. === Ecology === Equatorial Guinea spans several ecoregions. Río Muni region lies within the Atlantic Equatorial coastal forests ecoregion except for patches of Central African mangroves on the coast, especially in the Muni River estuary. The Cross-Sanaga-Bioko coastal forests ecoregion covers most of Bioko and the adjacent portions of Cameroon and Nigeria on the African mainland, and the Mount Cameroon and Bioko montane forests ecoregion covers the highlands of Bioko and nearby Mount Cameroon. The São Tomé, Príncipe, and Annobón moist lowland forests ecoregion covers all of Annobón, as well as São Tomé and Príncipe. === Administrative divisions === Equatorial Guinea is divided into eight provinces. The newest province is Djibloho, created in 2017 with its headquarters at Oyala, the country's future capital. The other seven provinces are as follows (capitals appear in parentheses): Annobón (San Antonio de Palé) Bioko Norte (Malabo) Bioko Sur (Luba) Centro Sur (Evinayong) Kié-Ntem (Ebebiyín) Litoral (Bata) Wele-Nzas (Mongomo) The provinces are further divided into districts. == Economy == Before independence Equatorial Guinea exported cocoa, coffee and timber, mostly to its colonial ruler, Spain,

but also to Germany and the UK. On 1 January 1985, the country became the first non-Francophone African member of the franc zone, adopting the CFA franc as its currency. The national currency, the *ekwele*, has previously been linked to the Spanish peseta. The discovery of large oil reserves in 1996 and its subsequent exploitation contributed to a dramatic increase in government revenue. As of 2004, Equatorial Guinea is the third-largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its oil production has risen to 360,000 barrels per day (57,000 m³/d), up from 220,000 only two years earlier. Forestry, farming, and fishing are also major components of GDP. Subsistence farming predominates. The deterioration of the rural economy under successive brutal regimes has diminished any potential for agriculture-led growth. In July 2004, the United States Senate published an investigation into Riggs Bank, a Washington-based bank into which most of Equatorial Guinea's oil revenues were paid until recently, and which also banked for Chile's Augusto Pinochet. The Senate report showed at least \$35 million siphoned off by Obiang, his family and regime senior officials. The president has denied any wrongdoing. Riggs Bank in February 2005 paid \$9 million in restitution for Pinochet's banking, no restitution was made with regard to Equatorial Guinea. From 2000 to 2010, Equatorial Guinea had the highest average annual increase in GDP (Gross Domestic Product), 17%. Equatorial Guinea is a member of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). Equatorial Guinea tried to be validated as an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)–compliant country, working toward transparency in reporting of oil revenues and prudent use of natural resource wealth. The country obtained candidate status on 22 February 2008. It was then required to meet a number of obligations to do so, including committing to working with civil society and companies on EITI implementation, appointing a senior individual to lead on EITI implementation, and publishing a fully costed Work Plan with measurable targets, a timetable for implementation and an assessment of capacity constraints. However, when Equatorial Guinea applied to extend the deadline for completing EITI validation, the EITI Board did not agree to the extension. According to the World Bank, Equatorial Guinea has the highest GNI (Gross National Income) per capita of any sub-Saharan country, 83 times larger than the GNI per capita of Burundi, the poorest country. === Transportation === Due to the large oil industry in the country, internationally recognized carriers fly to Malabo International Airport which, in May 2014, had several direct connections to Europe and West Africa. There are three airports in Equatorial Guinea — Malabo International Airport, Bata Airport and the new Annobon Airport on the island of Annobon. Malabo International Airport is the only international airport Every airline registered in Equatorial Guinea appears on the list of air carriers prohibited in the European Union (EU) which means that they are banned from operating services of any kind within the EU. However freight carriers provide service from European cities to the capital. == Demographics == The majority of the people of Equatorial Guinea are of Bantu origin. The largest ethnic group, the Fang, is indigenous to the mainland, but substantial migration to Bioko Island since the 20th century means the Fang population exceeds that of the earlier Bubi inhabitants. The Fang constitute 80% of the population and comprise around 67 clans. Those in the northern part of Río Muni speak Fang-Ntumu, while those in the south speak Fang-Okah; the two dialects have differences but are mutually intelligible. Dialects of Fang are also spoken in parts of neighboring Cameroon (Bulu) and Gabon. These dialects, while still intelligible, are more distinct. The Bubi, who constitute 15% of the population, are indigenous to Bioko Island. The traditional demarcation line between Fang and 'Beach' (inland) ethnic groups was the village of Niefang (limit of the Fang), east of Bata. Coastal ethnic groups, sometimes referred to as Ndowe or "Playeros" (Beach People in Spanish): Combes, Bujebas, Balengues, and Bengas on the mainland and small islands, and Fernandinos, a Krio community on Bioko Island. together comprise 5% of the population. Europeans (largely of Spanish or Portuguese descent, some with partial African ancestry) also live in the country, but most ethnic Spaniards left after independence. A growing number of foreigners from neighboring Cameroon, Nigeria, and Gabon have immigrated to the country. According to the Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations (2002) 7% of Bioko islanders were Igbo, an ethnic group from southeastern Nigeria. Equatorial Guinea received Asians and native Africans from other countries as workers on cocoa and coffee plantations. Other black Africans came from Liberia, Angola, and Mozambique. Most of the Asian population is Chinese, with small numbers of Indians. Equatorial Guinea has also been a destination for fortune-seeking European settlers from Britain, France and Germany. Israelis and Moroccans also live and work here. Oil extraction since the 1990s has contributed to a doubling of the population in Malabo. After independence, thousands of Equatorial Guineans went to Spain. Another 100,000 Equatorial Guineans went to Cameroon, Gabon, and Nigeria because of the dictatorship of Francisco Macías Nguema. Some Equatorial Guinean communities are also found in Latin America, the United States, Portugal, and France. === Languages === For years,

the official languages were Spanish (the local variant is Equatoguinean Spanish) and French. Portuguese was also adopted as an official language later in 2010. Spanish has been an official language since 1844. It is still the language of education and administration. 67.6% of Equatorial Guineans can speak it, especially those living in the capital, Malabo. French was only made official in order to join the Francophonie and it is not locally spoken, except in some border towns. Aboriginal languages are recognized as integral parts of the "national culture" (Constitutional Law No. 1/1998 January 21). Indigenous languages include Fang, Bube, Benga, Ndowe, Balengue, Bujeba, Bissio, Gumu, Igbo, Pichinglis, Fa d'Ambô and the nearly extinct Baseke. Most African ethnic groups speak Bantu languages. Fa d'Ambô, a Portuguese creole, has vigorous use in Annobón Province, in Malabo (the capital), and among some speakers in Equatorial Guinea's mainland. Many residents of Bioko can also speak Spanish, particularly in the capital, and the local trade language Pichinglis, an English-based creole. Spanish is not spoken much in Annobón. In government and education Spanish is used. Noncreolized Portuguese is used as liturgical language by local Catholics. The Annobonese ethnic community tried to gain membership in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). The government financed an Instituto Internacional da Língua Portuguesa (IILP) sociolinguistic study in Annobón. It documented strong links with the Portuguese creole populations in São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. Due to historical and cultural ties, in 2010 the legislature amended article four of the Constitution of Equatorial Guinea, to establish Portuguese as an official language of the Republic. This was an effort by the government to improve its communications, trade, and bilateral relations with Portuguese-speaking countries. It also recognizes long historical ties with Portugal, and with Portuguese-speaking peoples of Brazil, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Cape Verde. Some of the motivations for Equatorial Guinea's membership pursuit into the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) included access to several professional and academic exchange programs and facilitated cross-border circulation of citizens. The adoption of Portuguese as an official language was the primary requirement to apply for CPLP acceptance. In addition, the country was told it must adopt political reforms allowing effective democracy and respect for human rights. The national parliament discussed this law in October 2011. In February 2012, Equatorial Guinea's foreign minister signed an agreement with the IILP on the promotion of Portuguese in the country. In July 2012, the CPLP refused Equatorial Guinea full membership, primarily because of its continued serious violations of human rights. The government responded by legalizing political parties, declaring a moratorium on the death penalty, and starting a dialog with all political factions. Additionally, the IILP secured land from the government for the construction of Portuguese language cultural centres in Bata and Malabo. At its 10th summit in Dili in July 2014, Equatorial Guinea was admitted as a CPLP member. Abolition of the death penalty and the promotion of Portuguese as an official language were preconditions of the approval. === Religion === The principal religion in Equatorial Guinea is Christianity, the faith of 93% of the population. Roman Catholics make up the majority (87%), while a minority are Protestants (5%). 2% of the population follows Islam (mainly Sunni). The remaining 5% practise Animism, Bahá'í Faith, and other beliefs. === Health === Equatorial Guinea's innovative malaria programs in the early 21st century achieved success in reducing malaria infection, disease, and mortality. Their program consists of twice-yearly indoor residual spraying (IRS), the introduction of artemisinin combination treatment (ACTs), the use of intermittent preventive treatment in pregnant women (IPTp), and the introduction of very high coverage with long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets (LLINs). Their efforts resulted in a reduction in all-cause under-five mortality from 152 to 55 deaths per 1,000 live births (down 64%), a sharp drop that coincided with the launch of the program. In June 2014 four cases of polio were reported, the country's first outbreak of the disease. === Education === Under Francisco Macias, education was neglected, and few children received any type of education. Under President Obiang, the illiteracy rate dropped from 73% to 13%, and the number of primary school students rose from 65,000 in 1986 to more than 100,000 in 1994. Education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 14. The Equatorial Guinea government has partnered with Hess Corporation and The Academy for Educational Development (AED) to establish a \$20 million education program for primary school teachers to teach modern child development techniques. There are now 51 model schools whose active pedagogy will be a national reform. In recent years, with change in economic/political climate and government social agendas, several cultural dispersion and literacy organizations have been founded, chiefly with the financial support of the Spanish government. The country has one university, the Universidad Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial (UNGE), with a campus in Malabo and a Faculty of Medicine located in Bata on the mainland. In 2009 the university produced the first 110 national doctors. The Bata Medical School is

supported principally by the government of Cuba and staffed by Cuban medical educators and physicians. Equatorial Guinea predicts that it will have enough national doctors in the country to be self-sufficient within the next five years. == Culture == In June 1984, the First Hispanic-African Cultural Congress was convened to explore the cultural identity of Equatorial Guinea. The congress constituted the center of integration and the marriage of the Hispanic culture with African cultures. === Tourism === Equatorial Guinea currently has no UNESCO World Heritage Site or tentative sites for the World Heritage List. The country also has no documented heritage listed in the Memory of the World Programme of UNESCO nor any intangible cultural heritage listed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. === Media and communications === The principal means of communication within Equatorial Guinea are three state-operated FM radio stations. BBC World Service, Radio France Internationale and Gabon-based Africa No 1 broadcast on FM in Malabo. There are also five shortwave radio stations. Television Nacional, the television network, is state operated. The international TV programme RTVGE is available via satellites in Africa, Europa, and the Americas and worldwide via Internet. There are two newspapers and two magazines. Equatorial Guinea ranks at position 161 out of 179 countries in the 2012 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index. The watchdog says the national broadcaster obeys the orders of the information ministry. A "news blackout" was imposed on reporting of uprisings in Arab states in North Africa in 2011, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Most of the media companies practice heavy self-censorship, and are banned by law from criticising public figures. The state-owned media and the main private radio station are under the directorship of the president's son, Teodor Obiang. Landline telephone penetration is low, with only two lines available for every 100 persons. There is one GSM mobile telephone operator, with coverage of Malabo, Bata, and several mainland cities. As of 2009, approximately 40% of the population subscribed to mobile telephone services. The only telephone provider in Equatorial Guinea is Orange. There were more than 42,000 internet users by December 2011. === Music === There is little popular music coming out of Equatorial Guinea. Pan-African styles like soukous and makossa are popular, as are reggae and rock and roll. Acoustic guitar bands based on a Spanish model are the country's best-known indigenous popular tradition. === Sports === Equatorial Guinea was chosen to co-host the 2012 African Cup of Nations in partnership with Gabon, and hosted the 2015 edition. The country was also chosen to host the 2008 Women's African Football Championship, which they won. The women's national team qualified for the 2011 World Cup in Germany. In June 2016, Equatorial Guinea was chosen to host the 12th African Games in 2019. Equatorial Guinea is famous for the swimmers Eric Moussambani, nicknamed "Eric the Eel", and Paula Barila Bolopa, "Paula the Crawler", who had astoundingly slow times at the 2000 Summer Olympics. == See also == == Notes == == References == == Sources == This article incorporates public domain material from the CIA World Factbook website <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>. Max Liniger-Goumaz, *Small Is Not Always Beautiful: The Story of Equatorial Guinea* (French 1986, translated 1989) ISBN 0-389-20861-2. Ibrahim K. Sundiata, *Equatorial Guinea: Colonialism, State Terror, and the Search for Stability* (1990, Boulder: Westview Press) ISBN 0-8133-0429-6. Robert Klitgaard. 1990. *Tropical Gangsters*. New York: Basic Books. (World Bank economist tries to assist pre-oil Equatorial Guinea) ISBN 0-465-08760-4. D.L. Claret. *Cien años de evangelización en Guinea Ecuatorial (1883–1983) / One Hundred Years of Evangelism in Equatorial Guinea* (1983, Barcelona: Claretian Missionaries). Adam Roberts, *The Wonga Coup: Guns, Thugs and a Ruthless Determination to Create Mayhem in an Oil-Rich Corner of Africa* (2006, PublicAffairs) ISBN 1-58648-371-4. == External links == Equatorial Guinea at Curlie (based on DMOZ) Wikimedia Atlas of Equatorial Guinea Official Government of Equatorial Guinea website (under construction) Guinea in Figures – Official Web Page of the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea Country Profile from BBC News. "Equatorial Guinea". The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. Equatorial Guinea from UCB Libraries GovPubs. Key Development Forecasts for Equatorial Guinea from International Futures. Equatorial Guinea news headline links from AllAfrica.com. History of Equatorial Guinea, PBS Wide Angle interactive timeline. Once Upon a Coup, PBS Wide Angle documentary about the 2004 coup attempt.