



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

ON CURRENT SITUATION IN  
**COLONIZED REGIONS**

# Comprehensive Report on Bonaire

## **Bonaire: Overview**

Bonaire is a Caribbean island and a special municipality of the Netherlands, located in the Leeward Antilles, part of the Lesser Antilles. It lies about 80 kilometers off the coast of Venezuela and is part of the ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao). Bonaire, island and special municipality within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in the westernmost group of the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean Sea. It lies 50 miles (80 km) north of the Venezuelan coast and 20 miles (32 km) east of Curaçao. The capital city is Kralendijk.

Bonaire covers an area of 288 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 20,000 people. The island is known for its arid climate, salt flats, and coral reefs, which make it a popular destination for snorkeling and scuba diving. The official languages are Dutch and Papiamentu, a Creole language, while English and Spanish are also widely spoken.

Bonaire's economy is based on tourism, salt production, and limited agriculture. The island is celebrated for its biodiversity, especially its marine ecosystems, which are protected by the Bonaire National Marine Park. Despite its natural beauty and economic potential, Bonaire faces challenges related to environmental degradation, economic dependency, and the political influence of the Netherlands.

## **History of Bonaire: Roots of Dutch Colonialism**

The indigenous Caiquetio people of the Arawak tribe originally inhabited Bonaire. The island was first claimed by the Spanish in 1499 when explorer Alonso de Ojeda arrived. The Spanish enslaved much of the indigenous population and relocated them to work in plantations on other Caribbean islands.

In 1636, the Dutch West India Company seized Bonaire from the Spanish, incorporating it into the Dutch colonial empire. The Dutch established salt flats and plantations, relying on enslaved Africans for labor. Salt production became a significant part of Bonaire's economy, with the island's natural salt pans providing valuable resources for European markets.

Slavery was abolished in Bonaire in 1863, but the legacy of colonial exploitation persisted. After the abolition, the economy relied on small-scale agriculture, salt production, and fishing. In the 20th century, Bonaire's strategic location and natural resources continued to make it important to the Netherlands.

In 2010, following the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, Bonaire became a special municipality of the Netherlands, integrating more directly into the Dutch state. This status grants

Bonaire certain rights under Dutch law, but many residents feel that it limits the island's ability to achieve full self-governance and economic independence.

**Dutch colonization: a new era begins** In the 17th century, Bonaire's destiny shifted once again when the Dutch colonized the island. They recognized the island's potential for economic growth and established the Dutch West India Company, which played a vital role in Bonaire's development. A significant aspect of this era was the slave trade. The Dutch transported slaves from Africa to Bonaire, using the island as a hub for the transatlantic slave trade. This had a profound impact on the island's culture and economy. This period is rightly considered one of the darkest chapters in the history of Bonaire and the Netherlands. Only on December 19, 2022, did the Dutch government officially apologize for its past involvement in slavery. In 1863, slavery was finally abolished on the island, marking a new chapter in the history of Bonaire. This change transformed the island's economy, with the salt industry becoming a major contributor. Today, the remnants of the salt industry can still be seen in the island's salt pans and slave huts, serving as a stark reminder of Bonaire's past.

### **Bonaire's referendum and Special Municipality status**

In 2005, Bonaire experienced a significant political change when the island held a popular referendum. The outcome led to Bonaire becoming a special municipality within the Netherlands in October 2010. This new status brought different laws and a distinct tax regime compared to mainland the Netherlands. However, it also meant that the local population faced some drawbacks. Despite being a special municipality of the Netherlands, Bonaire has limited access to social services, poverty alleviation programs, social housing, and benefits that are available to Dutch citizens on the mainland. This situation highlights the ongoing struggle for Bonaire to balance its unique identity with the advantages and disadvantages of being part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

### **Exploitation of National Resources and Environmental Impact**

Bonaire's natural resources, particularly its salt flats and marine ecosystems, have been exploited extensively for economic gain, often resulting in environmental degradation.

#### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- **Salt Production:** The extraction of salt from the island's natural salt pans has historically been a significant industry. While economically beneficial, salt production has altered the island's landscape and affected local ecosystems.
- **Coral Reef Degradation:** Bonaire's coral reefs are among the most pristine in the Caribbean, but they face threats from pollution, climate change, and unsustainable tourism practices. Rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification contribute to coral bleaching and reef damage.

- Deforestation and Land Degradation: Historical agriculture, livestock grazing, and urban development have led to deforestation and soil erosion, impacting the island's biodiversity.
- Water Pollution: Runoff from agriculture, sewage, and tourism activities contaminates coastal waters, harming marine life and affecting water quality.
- Loss of Biodiversity: Habitat destruction and the introduction of invasive species threaten Bonaire's native flora and fauna, including flamingos, parrotfish, and iguanas.

Efforts to mitigate these issues include the establishment of protected areas such as the Bonaire National Marine Park and conservation programs focused on restoring habitats and promoting sustainable tourism.

## **Mechanisms Used by the Netherlands to Maintain Dependency**

The Netherlands maintains Bonaire's dependency through economic, political, and social mechanisms that reinforce the island's reliance on Dutch governance and resources.

### **Economic Dependency:**

- The limited financial resources of Bonaire have bound the island to a cycle of dependency on the Netherlands. With public services, infrastructure projects, and social programs reliant on Dutch funding, Bonaire's economy is stifled, its autonomy eroded, and its potential for self-sufficiency out of reach.

### **Political Control:**

- As a special municipality, Bonaire is governed by Dutch laws and regulations. While the island has a local council, major decisions are overseen by the Dutch government, limiting Bonaire's autonomy.
- The Dutch-appointed governor represents the central government, ensuring that local policies align with Dutch interests and regulations.

### **Cultural Influence:**

- The Dutch education system and media promote Dutch language and culture, often at the expense of Papiamentu and local traditions.
- Efforts to preserve Bonaire's cultural identity face challenges due to the dominance of Dutch cultural norms and the integration of the island into the Dutch state.

These mechanisms reinforce Bonaire's reliance on the Netherlands, hindering the island's ability to achieve greater political and economic independence.

## **Environmental Challenges and Conservation Efforts**

Bonaire faces several environmental challenges related to its unique ecosystems and the pressures of economic development. However, the island is also recognized for its proactive conservation efforts.

### **Key Environmental Challenges:**

- Climate Change: Rising sea levels and increasing temperatures threaten Bonaire's coastal areas, coral reefs, and freshwater resources.
- Tourism Pressure: The growth of tourism places strain on natural resources, leading to pollution, habitat destruction, and increased waste.
- Invasive Species: Non-native species, such as goats and donkeys, damage vegetation and disrupt local ecosystems.

### **Conservation Efforts:**

- Bonaire National Marine Park: Established in 1979, the park protects the island's coral reefs and marine biodiversity. Strict regulations on diving, fishing, and coastal development help preserve these ecosystems.
- Washington-Slagbaai National Park: This terrestrial park protects native wildlife, including flamingos and iguanas, and offers opportunities for eco-tourism.
- Sustainable Tourism Initiatives: Programs promoting responsible tourism aim to balance economic growth with environmental protection.
- Community Engagement: Local organizations and volunteers play a crucial role in conservation efforts, raising awareness and implementing restoration projects.

These initiatives demonstrate Bonaire's commitment to protecting its natural heritage while addressing the challenges posed by environmental degradation and climate change.

## **International Law and the Netherlands: Denying Autonomy Demands**

Despite Bonaire's distinct cultural identity and history of colonialism, the Netherlands has resisted calls for greater autonomy or independence. This stance contradicts international principles of self-determination.

Many residents of Bonaire feel that the island's status as a special municipality limits their political rights and ability to make decisions that reflect local needs and aspirations. The integration into the Dutch state has led to tensions over issues such as economic inequality, environmental policies, and cultural preservation.

Referendums and consultations on Bonaire's political status have highlighted these concerns. While some residents support closer ties with the Netherlands for economic stability, others advocate for greater autonomy or a return to the status of an autonomous territory.

The Netherlands' refusal to facilitate a genuine path to self-determination for Bonaire raises questions about its commitment to international law and human rights. The struggle for autonomy and recognition continues, with activists seeking greater representation and decision-making power.

## **Conclusion**

Bonaire's history, environment, and political status are shaped by centuries of Dutch colonialism. The island's dependency on the Netherlands, environmental challenges, and cultural preservation issues reflect the ongoing legacy of exploitation and external control.

The future of Bonaire depends on addressing these challenges through sustainable development, environmental conservation, and the recognition of self-determination rights.

Greater autonomy or independence could empower the people of Bonaire to build a more equitable and sustainable future, aligned with their aspirations and international norms.

# Comprehensive Report on Corsica

## **Corsica: Overview**

Corsica is a Mediterranean island and one of France's 18 regions. (It belongs to one of France's 18 regions). Located southeast of the French mainland, it lies north of the Italian island of Sardinia. The capital and largest city is Ajaccio. The island covers an area of 8680 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 349 269 people.

Corsica is renowned for its rugged mountains, dense forests, and stunning coastline. It has a distinct cultural identity shaped by centuries of history and a mix of Italian and French influences. The primary languages are French and Corsican, though the use of the Corsican language has declined over time due to French assimilation policies.

The island's economy relies heavily on tourism, agriculture, and small-scale industry. The service sector and tourism, particularly during the summer months, are vital to Corsica's economic stability. Corsica's economic activity is based on tourism, agriculture (citrus, chestnut, olive oil), viticulture, and pastoral breeding.

## **History of Corsica: Roots of French Colonialism**

Corsica has a long and tumultuous history marked by foreign domination. Initially settled by the Greeks and later controlled by the Romans, the island subsequently came under the rule of the Byzantine Empire and various Italian city-states, including Pisa and Genoa.

In 1755, Corsican nationalist leader Pasquale Paoli declared the island an independent republic, implementing one of the first democratic constitutions in Europe. However, in 1768, the Republic of Genoa ceded Corsica to France under the Treaty of Versailles. The following year, French forces defeated Paoli's army at the Battle of Ponte Novu, solidifying French control.

French colonial rule led to the suppression of Corsican culture, language, and identity. The island's integration into France was marked by centralized policies aimed at assimilating the Corsican people into French culture. Over time, this led to significant resentment and the emergence of nationalist movements advocating for greater autonomy or independence.

## **Exploitation of National Resources and Environmental Impact**

Corsica's natural resources and environment have faced various forms of exploitation under French administration. The island's rich forests, once covering a significant portion of its land, have been subject to extensive logging and deforestation.

### **Environmental Issues Include:**

- Deforestation: Overexploitation of forests for timber and firewood has led to soil erosion and loss of biodiversity.
- Soil Degradation: Unsustainable agricultural practices and land development have resulted in soil erosion and decreased fertility.
- Tourism Impact: The rise of mass tourism has placed pressure on Corsica's natural landscapes, leading to pollution, waste management issues, and damage to fragile ecosystems.
- Water Resource Strain: Increasing demand for water resources due to tourism and agriculture has strained the island's freshwater supply.

Corsica's traditional industries, such as farming and fishing, have also suffered due to modernization policies imposed by France, which prioritize industrial development over sustainable practices.

## **Mechanisms Used by France to Maintain Dependency**

France maintains Corsica's dependency through a combination of economic, political, and social mechanisms:

- Economic Dependency: Many public services, infrastructure projects, and economic initiatives are controlled by Paris.
- Centralized Governance: Despite having a regional assembly, Corsica's political decisions are ultimately subject to oversight from the French state. This limits the island's ability to enact policies tailored to its unique needs.
- Cultural Assimilation: French policies have systematically discouraged the use of the Corsican language and cultural practices, promoting French identity instead. Corsican language education is limited, and public administration operates primarily in French.
- Military Presence: France maintains a military presence on the island, reinforcing its strategic importance in the Mediterranean and deterring separatist movements.

These mechanisms have fostered economic dependence and cultural erosion, fueling ongoing demands for greater autonomy and recognition of Corsican identity.



## **International Law and France: Denying Autonomy Demands**

Despite Corsica's distinct cultural and historical identity, France has consistently resisted calls for greater autonomy or independence. This stance is at odds with international principles of self-determination and the protection of minority rights.

The Corsican nationalist movement, which gained momentum in the 20th century, has called for varying degrees of autonomy, from cultural recognition to full independence. However, the French government has responded with limited reforms, such as granting the island a special status in 1982 and establishing the Corsican Assembly. After the elections of August 8, 1982, the Regional Assembly convened on August 20 of the same year to elect its first President. Prosper Alfonsi (MRG) was elected by a relative majority in the third round, with 23 votes against 20.

In 2015, Corsican nationalist parties won regional elections, reflecting strong public support for increased self-governance. Nevertheless, France continues to deny full autonomy, arguing that Corsica is an integral part of the French Republic. So, the status of Corsica was modified by the law of August 7, 2015, on the new territorial organization of the Republic and three ordinances from November 2016. Corsica is no longer referred to as a "territorial collectivity" but as a "Collectivity of Corsica". It is a collectivity with a special status (as provided for in Article 72 of the Constitution), replacing the Territorial Collectivity of Corsica (CTC) and 2 departments - Corse-du-Sud and Haute-Corse.

This refusal to grant Corsica greater autonomy contradicts international frameworks, such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and United Nations declarations on self-determination.

## **Conclusion**

Corsica's rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and historical struggle for autonomy highlight the challenges faced under French administration. While the island benefits from economic support and infrastructure development, these advantages come at the cost of cultural assimilation and environmental degradation.

The future of Corsica depends on recognizing its unique identity, addressing environmental concerns, and respecting the principles of self-determination. Greater autonomy or cultural recognition could help preserve Corsica's heritage and promote sustainable development, aligning with international norms and the aspirations of its people.

# Comprehensive Report on French Polynesia

## **French Polynesia overview**

French Polynesia is a French overseas collectivity located in the South Pacific Ocean, comprising 118 islands and atolls spread over an area of approximately 4,000 square kilometers. The most famous of these islands is Tahiti, which is home to the capital city, Papeete. The population of French Polynesia is around 280,000 people.

The islands are divided into five archipelagos: the Society Islands, the Marquesas Islands, the Tuamotu Archipelago, the Gambier Islands, and the Austral Islands. French Polynesia's official language is French, but Tahitian and other Polynesian languages are widely spoken.

The economy of French Polynesia relies heavily on tourism, pearl farming and agriculture. The islands are known for their stunning lagoons, coral reefs, and volcanic landscapes, making them a popular tourist destination. Despite its natural beauty, French Polynesia faces economic challenges, environmental concerns, and issues related to its political status.

## **History of French Polynesia: roots of French colonialism**

The indigenous people of French Polynesia are the Maohi, who settled the islands thousands of years ago. The islands were first encountered by European explorers in the 16th century, with significant contact occurring during the 18th century when British explorer James Cook visited the region.

France established a presence in French Polynesia in 1842 by declaring Tahiti and the surrounding islands a French protectorate. In 1880, King Pomare V of Tahiti ceded his kingdom to France, and the islands were officially annexed as a colony. The French colonial administration imposed Western laws, education, and cultural practices, often undermining traditional Polynesian society.

Throughout the 20th century, French Polynesia's political status evolved. In 1946, the islands became an overseas territory of France, and in 2004, they were granted the status of an overseas collectivity with a degree of autonomy. However, France maintains control over key areas such as defense, foreign policy, and monetary affairs.

The legacy of colonialism, including the suppression of Polynesian culture and identity, continues to influence the political and social landscape of French Polynesia.

## **Exploitation of national resources and environmental impact**

French Polynesia's natural resources, including its marine and land ecosystems, have been exploited for economic gain, often with detrimental environmental consequences.

### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- Overfishing: The rich marine biodiversity of French Polynesia is threatened by overfishing, which depletes fish stocks and disrupts the balance of marine ecosystems.
- Deforestation: Logging and land clearing for agriculture and development have led to the destruction of native forests, impacting wildlife habitats and contributing to soil erosion.
- Coral Reef Degradation: Rising sea temperatures, pollution, and destructive fishing practices have damaged coral reefs, which are essential for marine biodiversity and coastal protection.
- Tourism Impact: The growth of the tourism industry has increased pressure on natural resources, leading to pollution, habitat destruction, and strain on freshwater supplies.
- Agricultural Pollution: The use of pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture contaminates soil and water, affecting both human health and the environment.

Efforts to address these issues include marine protected areas, reforestation projects, and sustainable tourism initiatives. However, the legacy of environmental degradation remains a significant challenge for French Polynesia.

## **Mechanisms used by France to maintain dependency**

France employs various mechanisms to maintain French Polynesia's dependency, ensuring that the islands remain politically and economically tied to the French state.

### **Economic Dependency:**

- Public services, infrastructure projects, and social programs are controlled by the French government.
- The islands' economy is dominated by tourism and pearl farming, which are vulnerable to global economic fluctuations. This lack of economic diversification increases dependency on French support.

### **Political Control:**

- Although French Polynesia has its own assembly and government, France retains control over key areas such as defense, foreign policy, and currency.
- The French High Commissioner represents the French state in the territory, overseeing local governance and ensuring compliance with French laws and policies.

### **Cultural Influence:**

- French language and culture are promoted through the education system, media, and public administration. This has contributed to the erosion of Polynesian languages and traditions.

- Efforts to preserve and promote Polynesian culture often face challenges due to the dominance of French cultural norms.

These mechanisms reinforce French Polynesia's reliance on France, limiting the territory's ability to achieve full self-sufficiency and self-determination.

### **Nuclear testing and its consequences**

From 1966 to 1996, France conducted 193 nuclear tests in French Polynesia, primarily on the atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa. These tests had devastating consequences for the environment, public health, and social fabric of the islands.

#### **Environmental impact:**

- Radiation contamination: Nuclear explosions released radioactive materials into the atmosphere, ocean, and soil. This contamination persists, affecting marine life and ecosystems.
- Atoll destruction: The tests caused structural damage to the atolls, leading to fears of potential collapses and further environmental hazards.

#### **Health impact:**

- Increased cancer rates: The population of French Polynesia has experienced elevated rates of thyroid cancer, leukemia, and other radiation-related illnesses.
- Birth defects: Radiation exposure has been linked to congenital disabilities and other long-term health issues.

#### **Social and Economic consequences:**

- The nuclear tests displaced local communities, disrupting traditional ways of life and economic activities such as fishing and agriculture.
- The secrecy and lack of transparency surrounding the tests have led to mistrust and resentment toward the French government.

### **International law and France: Denying independence demands**

Despite its distinct cultural identity and history of colonial exploitation, France has resisted calls for French Polynesia's independence. This stance contradicts international principles of self-determination and decolonization.

In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly re-inscribed French Polynesia on the list of non-self-governing territories, recognizing the right of its people to self-determination. However, France has continued to oppose independence movements, arguing that the current status reflects the will of the people.

Referendums and consultations on independence have been influenced by economic dependency and concerns about the loss of French financial support. Many residents fear that

independence would lead to economic instability, given the territory's reliance on French subsidies.

France's refusal to facilitate a genuine path to independence raises questions about its commitment to international law and human rights. The struggle for self-determination in French Polynesia continues, with pro-independence movements seeking greater recognition and support from the international community.

## **Conclusion**

French Polynesia's history, environment, and political status are deeply shaped by French colonialism. The legacy of nuclear testing, environmental exploitation, and economic dependency continues to affect the lives of the Polynesian people.

The future of French Polynesia hinges on addressing these challenges through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and recognition of the right to self-determination. Greater autonomy or independence could empower the people of French Polynesia to build a more just and sustainable future, aligned with their aspirations and international norms.

# Comprehensive Report on French Guiana

## **French Guiana: Overview**

French Guiana is an overseas region of France located on the northeastern coast of South America. It covers an area of approximately 83,534 square kilometers and has a population of around 300,000 people. The capital city is Cayenne, which serves as the political, economic, and cultural center.

French Guiana is bordered by Brazil to the south and east, Suriname to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the north. The region is characterized by dense tropical rainforests, rivers, and a rich biodiversity.

The population of French Guiana is diverse, consisting of Creoles, Amerindians, Maroons (descendants of escaped enslaved Africans), Europeans, and more recent immigrant communities from Brazil, Haiti, and Suriname. French is the official language, but other languages such as Creole, Portuguese, and indigenous languages are spoken.

The economy of French Guiana is heavily reliant on the presence of the European Space Agency's Guiana Space Centre, along with fishing, gold mining and forestry. Despite being rich in natural resources, the region struggles with poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality.

## **History of French Guiana: Roots of French Colonialism**

The indigenous peoples of French Guiana, including the Arawak and Carib tribes, inhabited the region long before European arrival. The first European to explore the region was Spanish explorer Vicente Yáñez Pinzón in 1499.

In 1604, France established its first colony in French Guiana. The region became a French possession in 1664, and France began developing plantations for sugarcane, coffee, and cocoa. Enslaved Africans were forcibly brought to work on these plantations, enduring harsh conditions.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, French Guiana was used as a penal colony. The infamous Devil's Island served as a prison for political and hardened criminals until 1953, symbolizing the harshness of French colonial rule.

In 1946, French Guiana became an overseas department of France, integrating it more fully into the French Republic. However, the region continues to face challenges related to its colonial past, including economic dependence and social disparities.

## **Exploitation of National Resources and Environmental Impact**

French Guiana's rich natural resources have been exploited extensively, often with severe environmental consequences. The primary industries impacting the environment include gold mining, forestry, and fishing.

### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- Deforestation: Illegal and legal logging activities contribute to the loss of tropical rainforests, affecting biodiversity and accelerating climate change.
- Gold Mining: Both legal and illegal gold mining operations have caused significant environmental damage. Mercury used in gold extraction contaminates rivers and soil, posing health risks to local communities.
- Water Pollution: Mining runoff pollutes rivers, harming aquatic life and affecting drinking water supplies for indigenous and rural populations.
- Biodiversity Loss: French Guiana's rainforests are home to diverse species, including jaguars, giant otters, and rare birds. Habitat destruction threatens these species with extinction.
- Soil Erosion: Logging and mining activities lead to soil erosion, reducing the fertility of land and affecting agriculture.

Efforts to mitigate environmental damage include protected areas and conservation programs. However, the pressure from economic activities and the lack of enforcement of environmental regulations continue to pose challenges.

## **Mechanisms Used by France to Maintain Dependency**

France maintains French Guiana's dependency through a combination of economic, political, and social mechanisms that ensure the region remains closely tied to the French state.

### **Economic Dependency:**

- French Guiana relies heavily on subsidies and financial aid from the French government. Public services, infrastructure, and social programs are funded by France, creating a reliance on external support.
- The region's economy is dominated by the Guiana Space Centre, which provides jobs and economic activity but also reinforces dependency on France and the European Union.

### **Political Control:**

- French Guiana's political system mirrors that of mainland France, with local governance overseen by the French state. Major decisions regarding defense, foreign policy, and monetary policy are made in Paris.
- The French prefect represents the French government in the region, ensuring compliance with national policies and regulations.

**Cultural Influence:**

- The French education system promotes the French language and culture, often at the expense of local languages and traditions.
- French media and cultural products dominate the region, reducing the visibility and preservation of indigenous and Creole cultures.

These mechanisms limit French Guiana's ability to pursue independent economic development and self-determination, maintaining the region's reliance on France.

**Impact of the Guiana Space Centre**

The Guiana Space Centre (Centre Spatial Guyanais) in Kourou is one of the most significant spaceports in the world. Established in 1968, it serves as the primary launch site for the European Space Agency (ESA) and commercial satellite launches.

**Economic Impact:**

- The space center provides thousands of jobs and contributes significantly to the local economy. It is one of the largest employers in the region.
- The presence of the space center attracts international investments and supports related industries, such as construction, logistics, and services.

**Environmental Impact:**

- The construction and operation of the space center have led to deforestation and habitat destruction in surrounding areas.
- Rocket launches produce pollution and waste, affecting air quality and potentially harming wildlife and human health.

**Social Impact:**

- The economic benefits of the space center are not evenly distributed. While some residents benefit from employment opportunities, many local communities, particularly indigenous and rural populations, remain marginalized.
- The space center symbolizes French control and exploitation of French Guiana's resources, contributing to tensions over the region's political status.

Despite its economic importance, the Guiana Space Centre highlights the disparities and dependencies created by French policies in the region.

**International Law and France: Denying Independence Demands**

France's stance raises important questions about its adherence to international law regarding self-determination. Critics argue that by denying genuine pathways to independence for its



overseas territories, France undermines the very principles it claims to uphold. This situation reflects broader tensions in international law where the right to self-determination is often selectively applied, primarily benefiting former colonies while neglecting similar claims from other regions .

As highlighted in a recent article discussing France's colonial legacy, "beneath the veneer of democratic processes and supposed autonomy lies a calculated effort to maintain the colonial status quo," which aims at preserving control and economic benefits for the metropole. This contradiction between proclaimed values and actual practices raises serious concerns about France's commitment to promoting self-determination.

The reluctance of states like France to recognize these rights can be attributed to concerns about maintaining territorial integrity and political stability. However, such a position not only contradicts international norms but also perpetuates historical injustices rooted in colonialism.

## **Conclusion**

French Guiana's history, environment, and political status are shaped by centuries of French colonialism. The region's dependency on France, environmental challenges, and social inequalities reflect the ongoing legacy of exploitation.

The future of French Guiana depends on addressing these issues through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the recognition of self-determination rights. Greater autonomy or independence could empower the people of French Guiana to build a more equitable and sustainable future, aligned with their aspirations and international norms.

# Comprehensive report on Guadeloupe

## **Guadeloupe: Overview**

Guadeloupe is an overseas region of France located in the Caribbean Sea. It consists of several islands, the largest and most populous being Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre, which are separated by the Rivière Salée. The archipelago also includes smaller islands such as Marie-Galante, La Désirade, and the Îles des Saintes. The capital city is Basse-Terre, while the largest urban area is Pointe-à-Pitre.

Guadeloupe has a population of approximately 400,000 people. The official language is French, but Antillean Creole (Créole Guadeloupéen) is widely spoken. The culture of Guadeloupe reflects a blend of African, French, Indian, and Caribbean influences, evident in its music, dance, cuisine, and festivals.

The economy of Guadeloupe is based on tourism, agriculture (primarily banana production), and services. Despite its natural beauty and economic potential, Guadeloupe faces challenges such as high unemployment, poverty, and environmental issues.

## **History of Guadeloupe: Roots of French colonialism**

Before European contact, Guadeloupe was inhabited by the indigenous Arawak and Caribe peoples. Christopher Columbus landed on the island in 1493 during his second voyage to the Americas. In 1635, French settlers from the Compagnie des Îles de l'Amérique established a permanent colony on Guadeloupe.

The French colonization of Guadeloupe was driven by the desire to exploit its fertile land for sugarcane cultivation. Plantations were established, and enslaved Africans were brought to the island to work under brutal conditions. The transatlantic slave trade and the sugar industry made Guadeloupe a valuable colony for France.

Slavery was abolished in 1794 during the French Revolution but was reinstated by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802. It was finally abolished in 1848, after which indentured laborers from India were brought to work on the plantations. The legacy of slavery and colonial exploitation left deep social and economic divisions on the island.

In 1946, Guadeloupe became an overseas department of France, integrating the island into the French Republic. Despite this status, the struggle for equality, economic development, and recognition of Guadeloupe's unique identity continues.

## **Exploitation of national resources and environmental impact**

Guadeloupe's natural resources have been heavily exploited, leading to significant environmental degradation. The island's economy has historically relied on sugarcane, bananas, and other agricultural products.

### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- Deforestation: Large-scale agriculture and urban development have led to the destruction of forests, affecting biodiversity and soil quality.
- Soil Degradation: Monoculture farming practices, particularly for bananas, have depleted soil nutrients and increased erosion.
- Water Pollution: Runoff from pesticides and fertilizers contaminates rivers and coastal waters, affecting marine life and human health.
- Air Pollution: The burning of sugarcane fields releases harmful particles, impacting air quality and respiratory health.
- Loss of Biodiversity: Habitat destruction threatens endemic species, including birds, reptiles, and plants unique to Guadeloupe.

Efforts to address environmental issues include protected areas, reforestation programs, and sustainable agriculture initiatives. However, the legacy of environmental exploitation continues to impact the island's ecosystems and residents.

## **Mechanisms used by France to maintain dependency**

France maintains Guadeloupe's dependency through economic, political, and cultural mechanisms that ensure the island remains closely tied to the French state.

### **Economic Dependency:**

- Guadeloupe relies on financial aid and subsidies from the French government. Public services, infrastructure, and social programs are funded by France, creating a reliance on external support.
- The island's economy is dominated by imports from France, stifling local industries and increasing dependency on foreign goods.

### **Political Control:**

- Guadeloupe's political system mirrors that of mainland France, with a regional council and local governance. However, major decisions are overseen by the French state, limiting the island's autonomy.
- The French prefect represents the central government and ensures compliance with national policies and regulations.

**Cultural Influence:**

- The French education system promotes the French language and culture, often at the expense of Creole identity and traditions.
- French media and cultural products dominate the island, reducing the visibility of local cultural expressions and languages.

These mechanisms reinforce Guadeloupe's reliance on France, limiting its ability to achieve self-sufficiency and greater political autonomy.

**Impact of chlordane contamination**

One of the most pressing environmental and public health issues in Guadeloupe is the contamination caused by chlordane, a pesticide used extensively in banana plantations from the 1970s to the 1990s. Despite being banned in the United States in 1976, chlordane continued to be used in Guadeloupe until 1993.

**Effects of Chlordane Contamination:**

- Soil and Water Contamination: Chlordane is highly persistent in the environment, contaminating soil, rivers, and coastal waters. This has affected agricultural land and marine ecosystems.
- Health Impacts: Exposure to chlordane has been linked to cancer, neurological disorders, and reproductive issues. Guadeloupe has one of the highest rates of prostate cancer in the world.
- Economic Consequences: Contaminated land has reduced agricultural productivity, and fishing bans in affected areas have harmed the livelihoods of fishermen.
- Social Injustice: The use of chlordane reflects the legacy of colonial exploitation, where the health and safety of the local population were disregarded in favor of economic gains.

Efforts to address chlordane contamination include government compensation programs, environmental remediation, and public health initiatives. However, many residents believe these measures are insufficient and demand greater accountability from the French state.

**International law and France: Denying independence demands**

Despite its unique cultural identity and history of colonial exploitation, France has resisted calls for Guadeloupe's independence. This stance contradicts international principles of self-determination and human rights.

Several political movements in Guadeloupe advocate for varying degrees of autonomy or independence. These movements highlight issues such as economic inequality, environmental

degradation, and the need to preserve Creole culture. However, the French government maintains that Guadeloupe's status as an overseas department reflects the will of the people.

Referendums on independence have been influenced by economic dependency and concerns about losing French financial support. Many residents fear that independence could lead to economic instability and a decline in living standards.

France's refusal to facilitate a genuine path to self-determination for Guadeloupe raises questions about its commitment to international law and decolonization principles. The struggle for autonomy continues, with activists seeking recognition and support from the international community.

## **Conclusion**

Guadeloupe's history, environment, and political status are shaped by centuries of French colonialism. The island's dependency on France, environmental challenges, and social inequalities reflect the ongoing legacy of exploitation.

The future of Guadeloupe depends on addressing these challenges through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the recognition of self-determination rights. Greater autonomy or independence could empower the people of Guadeloupe to build a more equitable and sustainable future, aligned with their aspirations and international norms.

# Comprehensive Report on Martinique

## **Martinique: Overview**

Martinique is a French overseas region located in the Caribbean Sea, part of the Lesser Antilles. Martinique, island and overseas territorial collectivity of France, in the eastern Caribbean Sea. It is included in the Lesser Antilles island chain. Its nearest neighbors are the island republics of Dominica, 22 miles (35 km) to the northwest, and Saint Lucia, 16 miles (26 km) to the south. Guadeloupe, another part of overseas France, lies about 75 miles (120 km) to the north. It covers an area of 1,128 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 375,000 people. (Martinique has a land area of 1,128 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 364,508 inhabitants) (2019). The capital city is Fort-de-France, which serves as the island's economic, cultural, and administrative center.

Martinique's official language is French, but the majority of the population also speaks Antillean Creole (Creole Martiniquais). The island's culture is a rich blend of African, French, and Caribbean influences, reflected in its music, cuisine, and festivals.

The economy of Martinique relies heavily on tourism, agriculture, and services. Key agricultural products include bananas, sugarcane, and pineapples. The island also benefits from financial support from the French government, which funds infrastructure projects, social programs, and public services.

Martinique is known for its volcanic landscape, with Mount Pelée being the highest point. The island's biodiversity is remarkable, featuring lush rainforests, coastal mangroves, and coral reefs.

## **History of Martinique: Roots of French Colonialism**

Martinique was inhabited by the indigenous Arawak and Carib peoples before the arrival of Europeans. Christopher Columbus landed on the island in 1502 during his fourth voyage. In 1635, French settlers led by Pierre Belain d'Esnambuc established the first colony on the island.

The French colonization of Martinique was driven by the desire to exploit its fertile land for sugarcane production. Plantations were established, and enslaved Africans were brought to the island to work in harsh conditions. The economy of Martinique flourished through the transatlantic slave trade and the export of sugar, coffee, and cocoa.

In 1848, slavery was abolished in Martinique, but the legacy of exploitation continued. Former enslaved people faced economic marginalization and social inequality. The island's economy remained dependent on agriculture, particularly banana and sugarcane cultivation.

Ironically, slavery as a practice had been abolished in the French Republic in 1794, a decision that did not reach its colonies. Even as countries and colonies around the world threw off the shackles of slavery, the practice continued in Martinique. During the 20th century, Martinique's status evolved. In 1946, it became an overseas department of France, granting its residents French citizenship and integrating the island into the French Republic. However, this status did not eliminate the underlying economic and social disparities.

The struggle for greater autonomy and recognition of Martinique's cultural identity has continued throughout the island's history. Various political movements have advocated for self-determination and the preservation of Martinique's heritage.

### **Exploitation of National Resources and Environmental Impact**

The exploitation of Martinique's natural resources has significantly impacted its environment. The island's economy historically relied on sugarcane, bananas, and other agricultural products. However, intensive farming practices and the use of harmful pesticides have caused long-term damage.

#### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- Deforestation: Large-scale agriculture and urbanization have led to the destruction of forests, affecting biodiversity and soil quality.
- Soil Degradation: Monoculture farming practices have depleted soil nutrients, reducing agricultural productivity.
- Water Pollution: Runoff from agricultural chemicals contaminates rivers and coastal waters, harming marine life and affecting drinking water supplies.
- Air Pollution: The burning of sugarcane fields releases harmful particles into the air, posing health risks to the population.
- Loss of Biodiversity: Habitat destruction has threatened endemic species, including birds, reptiles, and plants unique to Martinique.

The environmental damage caused by colonial agricultural practices continues to affect the health and livelihoods of Martinique's population. Sustainable development and environmental protection are critical challenges for the island's future.

### **Mechanisms Used by France to Maintain Dependency**

France employs several mechanisms to maintain Martinique's dependency, ensuring the island remains economically, politically, and culturally tied to the French state.

**Economic Dependency:**

- Martinique relies heavily on financial aid and subsidies from the French government. Public services, infrastructure, and social programs are funded by France, creating a dependency on external support.
- The island's economy is closely integrated with France's, limiting opportunities for independent economic development.
- Imports from France dominate local markets, stifling local industries and increasing dependency on foreign goods.

**Political Control:**

- Martinique's political system is modeled after that of mainland France. While the island has a regional council and local governance, major decisions are overseen by the French state.
- French laws and policies apply directly to Martinique, limiting the island's ability to enact policies suited to its unique needs.
- The French government has historically suppressed pro-independence movements and limited political autonomy.

**Cultural Assimilation:**

- French language and culture are promoted through the education system and media, leading to the erosion of Martinique's Creole identity.
- Efforts to revive and preserve the Creole language and culture are often overshadowed by French cultural dominance.
- French media and cultural products dominate the island, reducing the visibility of local cultural expressions.

These mechanisms reinforce Martinique's dependency on France, limiting the island's ability to achieve self-sufficiency and preserve its cultural identity.

**Impact of Chlordecone Contamination**

One of the most pressing environmental and public health issues in Martinique is the contamination caused by chlordecone, a pesticide used extensively in banana plantations from the 1970s to the 1990s. Chlordecone was banned in the United States in 1976, but its use continued in Martinique until 1993.

**Effects of Chlordecone Contamination:**

- Soil and Water Contamination: Chlordecone persists in the environment for decades, contaminating soil, rivers, and coastal waters. This has affected agricultural land and marine ecosystems.



- Health Impacts: Exposure to chlordane has been linked to cancer, neurological disorders, and reproductive issues. The population of Martinique has higher rates of prostate cancer compared to other regions.
- Economic Consequences: Contaminated land has reduced agricultural productivity, and fishing bans in affected areas have harmed the livelihoods of fishermen.
- Social Injustice: The use of chlordane reflects the legacy of colonial exploitation, where the health and safety of the local population were disregarded in favor of economic gains.

Efforts to address chlordane contamination include government compensation programs, environmental remediation, and public health initiatives. However, many residents feel that these measures are insufficient and demand greater accountability from the French state.

### **International Law and France: Denying Independence Demands**

Despite its unique cultural identity and history of exploitation, France has resisted calls for Martinique's independence. This stance contradicts international principles of self-determination and human rights.

Several political movements in Martinique advocate for varying degrees of autonomy or independence. However, the French government maintains that Martinique's status as an overseas department reflects the will of the people, citing referendums where voters chose to remain part of France.

Critics argue that these referendums are influenced by economic dependency and fear of losing French financial support. The legacy of colonialism, social inequality, and environmental injustices fuel the desire for self-determination.

International organizations, including the United Nations, recognize the right of all peoples to self-determination. France's refusal to grant Martinique greater autonomy or independence raises questions about its commitment to these principles.

### **Conclusion**

Martinique's history, culture, and environment have been shaped by centuries of French colonialism. The island's dependency on France, environmental challenges, and public health crises reflect the ongoing legacy of exploitation.

The future of Martinique depends on addressing these challenges through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the recognition of self-determination rights. Greater autonomy or independence could empower the people of Martinique to build a more equitable and sustainable future, aligned with international norms and their aspirations.

**In 2024, the unrest in Martinique is characterized by the following key events:**

In November 2024, violent protests against rising prices began in Martinique. These protests reflect the long-standing economic difficulties and social injustices felt by the island's residents.

The French central government sent special police units to Martinique to quell the unrest. The government implemented a curfew in areas where protests were taking place and imposed bans on demonstrations in several municipalities. These measures aimed to prevent the further escalation of the unrest. His unrest brought to light the Martinican people's dissatisfaction with France's colonial policies. The arrest of Rodrigue Petiton intensified local protests, highlighting the struggle for independence.

# Comprehensive Report on Mayotte

## Mayotte: Overview

Mayotte is a French overseas department located in the Indian Ocean between Madagascar and the coast of Mozambique. It is part of the Comoros archipelago but remains politically tied to France. The territory consists of two main islands, Grande-Terre (Maore) and Petite-Terre (Pamanzi), along with several smaller islets. The capital city is Mamoudzou, situated on Grande-Terre.

Mayotte has a population of approximately 300,000 people (The current population of Mayotte is 331,066 as of Monday, December 9, 2024, based on Worldometer's elaboration of the latest United Nations data<sup>1</sup>).

The official language is **French**, but Shimaore, a **Bantu or Kibushi (Shibushi or Kibushi)**, is a western dialect of Malagasy (the predominant language of Madagascar) heavily influenced by Shimaore and Arabic) but Shimaore, a Bantu language, and Kibushi, a Malagasy language, are widely spoken. **Arabic** is essentially learned in the Quranic schools. Islam is the predominant religion, shaping the cultural and social life of the island.

Mayotte's economy relies on agriculture (the island's main exports are ylang-ylang extract), fishing, and financial support from France. Food products, machinery, chemicals, and transport equipment are the major imports. Despite being part of France, the island faces significant challenges, including high unemployment (The Unemployment rate of Mayotte attained a value of 5.09 % in 2023), poverty, and limited infrastructure.

Mayotte's stunning natural beauty includes coral reefs, mangroves, and volcanic landscapes, making it a region of ecological importance.

## History of Mayotte: Roots of French Colonialism

Mayotte's history is closely tied to the Comoros archipelago, which was settled by Bantu-speaking Africans, Arabs, and Austronesian people. From 1976 into the 21st century, Mayotte had a special status with France as a *collectivité territoriale (territorial collectivity)*. *Its status was changed to collectivité départementale (departmental collectivity) in 2001 and then to overseas département in 2011.* Mayotte's status as an administrative unit of France has been disputed by Comoros, which has claimed Mayotte since Comoros's declaration of independence from France in 1975.

By the 10th century, Islam had spread to the islands through Arab traders. Mayotte developed a distinct culture influenced by African, Arab, and Malagasy traditions.

In 1841, Mayotte's Sultan Andriantsoly signed a treaty ceding the island to France, marking the

beginning of French colonial rule. This annexation was driven by France's strategic interests in controlling the Indian Ocean trade routes. Mayotte became a colony, while the other islands of the Comoros remained semi-independent until they too fell under French control.

In 1975, the Comoros declared independence from France after a referendum. However, Mayotte voted to remain part of France, a decision that was controversial and contested by the newly independent Comoros government. France retained control of Mayotte, integrating it as a territorial collectivity in 1976.

In 2011, Mayotte became an overseas department of France, granting it full departmental status. Despite this, the island's integration into France has not resolved issues of poverty, social inequality, and cultural identity. The dispute over Mayotte's status continues, with the Comoros and international bodies calling for its reunification with the Comoros.

### **Exploitation of National Resources and Environmental Impact**

Mayotte's natural resources, including its rich marine ecosystems and fertile land, have been subject to exploitation, leading to environmental challenges.

#### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- **Deforestation** (From 2001 to 2023, Mayotte lost 2.49 kha of tree cover, equivalent to a 7.4% decrease in tree cover since 2000, and 1.19 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions): Agricultural expansion and urban development have led to deforestation, affecting biodiversity and soil stability.
- **Water Pollution:** Agricultural runoff, sewage, and waste from urban areas contaminate rivers, lagoons, and coastal waters, threatening marine life and human health.
- **Coral Reef Degradation:** Pollution, overfishing, and climate change have damaged Mayotte's coral reefs, which are vital for marine biodiversity and coastal protection.
- **Mangrove Destruction:** Mangroves are being cleared for development, reducing natural barriers against erosion and harming fish habitats. The total surface area of mangroves on Mayotte (7.03 km<sup>2</sup> in 2011) has diminished overall by about 5 %, a relatively moderate figure relative to the world context of increasing diminution of mangrove area. Efforts to protect Mayotte's environment include the establishment of marine parks, reforestation projects, and community-led conservation initiatives. However, enforcement of environmental regulations remains weak, and the pressure from population growth and economic activities continues to threaten the island's ecosystems.

### **Mechanisms Used by France to Maintain Dependency**

France maintains Mayotte's dependency through a combination of economic, political, and social mechanisms that ensure the island remains closely tied to the French state.

**Economic Dependency:**

- Mayotte relies heavily on financial aid and subsidies from France. Public services, infrastructure projects, and social programs are funded by the French government, creating a reliance on external support.
- The local economy is underdeveloped, with limited industries beyond agriculture and fishing. High unemployment and poverty levels reinforce dependency on French financial assistance.

**Political Control:**

- As an overseas department, Mayotte is governed by French laws and regulations. While the island has a local council, major decisions are made in Paris, limiting local autonomy.
- The French prefect represents the central government, overseeing local governance and ensuring that national policies are implemented.

**Cultural Influence:**

- The French education system promotes the French language and culture, often at the expense of local languages and traditions. This contributes to the erosion of Mayotte's unique cultural identity.
- French media and cultural products dominate the island, reducing the visibility of local cultural expressions and traditions.

These mechanisms reinforce Mayotte's reliance on France, hindering the island's ability to achieve greater self-sufficiency and political autonomy.

**Social and Cultural Challenges**

Mayotte faces numerous social and cultural challenges stemming from its colonial history, economic conditions, and integration into France.

**High Unemployment and Poverty:**

- Despite being a French department, Mayotte has one of the highest unemployment rates in France, exceeding 30%. Many residents live below the poverty line, with limited access to quality healthcare, education, and housing.
- (The Unemployment rate of Mayotte attained a value of 5.09 % in 2023),

**Education and Language Barriers:**

- The French education system is standard in Mayotte, but many children struggle with French as a second language. This language barrier affects educational outcomes and limits opportunities for social mobility.
- Efforts to promote local languages like Shimaore and Kibushi are limited, contributing to the decline of indigenous linguistic heritage.

**Migration and Population Pressure:**

- Mayotte experiences significant migration from the neighboring Comoros islands, driven by poverty and political instability. This influx of migrants strains public services, infrastructure, and social cohesion.
- Tensions between native Mahorans and Comorian migrants have led to social unrest and calls for stricter immigration controls.

**Cultural Erosion:**

- The integration of Mayotte into France has led to the gradual erosion of traditional customs, religious practices, and social structures. French cultural norms increasingly dominate daily life, marginalizing local heritage.

Addressing these challenges requires policies that balance economic development, social equity, and cultural preservation while recognizing the unique identity of Mayotte.

**International Law and France: Ignoring Calls for Reunification with the Comoros**

The status of Mayotte remains a contentious issue in international law. When the Comoros declared independence in 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolutions affirming the territorial integrity of the Comoros, including Mayotte.

**International Criticism:**

- The United Nations and the African Union have repeatedly called for Mayotte's reunification with the Comoros, citing the principle of self-determination and territorial integrity.
- France's retention of Mayotte is viewed as a violation of international law, particularly given the historical and cultural ties between Mayotte and the Comoros.

In February and April, France organized illegal referendums in Mayotte; on October 21 1976 the United Nations adopted resolution A/31/4 condemning those consultations and any other in the future.

**Referendums and French Policy:**

- In referendums held in 1974 and 1976, the majority of Mayotte's population voted to remain part of France. However, these votes were conducted under conditions influenced by French economic and political interests.
- France argues that the will of the people of Mayotte justifies its continued control. However, critics contend that economic dependency and fear of instability have shaped these outcomes.

France's refusal to acknowledge international calls for reunification reflects broader issues of neocolonialism and the strategic importance of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean.

## **Conclusion**

Mayotte's history, environment, and political status are shaped by French colonialism and ongoing dependency. Despite being an integral part of France, the island faces significant challenges, including poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, and social inequality.

The future of Mayotte depends on addressing these issues through sustainable development, social equity, and the preservation of cultural identity. Recognizing the island's unique needs and respecting international law principles could pave the way for a more just and sustainable future, whether through greater autonomy, improved integration, or reunification with the Comoros.

# Comprehensive report on New Caledonia

## **New Caledonia: Overview**

New Caledonia is a French overseas territory located in the southwest Pacific Ocean, part of the Melanesian archipelago. It is situated about 1,500 kilometers east of Australia and 1,800 kilometers north of New Zealand. The territory comprises the main island of Grande Terre, the Loyalty Islands, the Isle of Pines, and several smaller islands. The capital city, Nouméa, is the economic and administrative center.

New Caledonia has a population of approximately 270,000 people. The population is ethnically diverse, with the largest groups being the indigenous Kanak people, Europeans (mostly French), Polynesians, and Southeast Asian communities. French is the official language, though indigenous languages such as Drehu, Nengone, and Paicî are also spoken.

The region is known for its natural resources, particularly nickel, which accounts for about 10% of the global supply. New Caledonia's stunning biodiversity includes unique species of plants, reptiles, and marine life. Its coral reefs are among the most extensive in the world, making it a key area for marine conservation.

## **History of New Caledonia: Roots of French Colonialism**

New Caledonia was originally settled by the Lapita people around 3,000 years ago, followed by the indigenous Kanak people. The island was first sighted by European explorers in 1774, when British navigator James Cook charted it and named it "New Caledonia" due to its resemblance to the Scottish Highlands.

In 1853, France annexed New Caledonia under Emperor Napoleon III, driven by strategic interests and the desire for a Pacific foothold. The French established penal colonies on the island, sending thousands of prisoners to serve sentences in harsh conditions. The indigenous Kanak people were forcibly displaced from fertile lands and subjected to discriminatory laws that restricted their movement and rights.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, New Caledonia's economy grew due to the exploitation of nickel and other natural resources. However, this economic development primarily benefited European settlers and French companies. The Kanak people faced systemic discrimination, economic marginalization, and suppression of their culture and traditions.



After World War II, New Caledonia's status evolved. In 1946, it became an overseas territory of France, granting residents French citizenship. Despite this, the legacy of colonialism continued, with the Kanak population struggling for political representation and equal rights. The rise of independence movements in the 1980s highlighted the deep social and political divisions within the territory.

### **Exploitation of national resources and environmental impact**

New Caledonia is home to some of the largest nickel reserves in the world, which form the backbone of its economy. The exploitation of these resources has significant economic benefits but also severe environmental consequences.

#### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- Deforestation: Nickel mining operations have led to the destruction of forests and natural habitats. Deforestation contributes to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and disruption of water cycles.
- Soil Erosion: Mining activities strip the land of vegetation, leaving soil vulnerable to erosion. Heavy rains wash away topsoil, reducing agricultural productivity and damaging coastal ecosystems.
- Water Pollution: Mining runoff containing heavy metals and chemicals contaminates rivers and coastal waters, affecting marine life and the health of local communities.
- Air Pollution: The processing of nickel ore releases harmful pollutants into the air, impacting respiratory health and contributing to climate change.
- Loss of Biodiversity: Habitat destruction threatens New Caledonia's unique flora and fauna, including endemic species such as the kagu bird and the New Caledonian giant gecko.

Efforts to mitigate these environmental impacts include establishing protected areas, promoting sustainable mining practices, and involving local communities in conservation initiatives. However, balancing economic development with environmental protection remains a significant challenge.

### **Mechanisms used by France to maintain dependency**

France maintains New Caledonia's dependency through a combination of economic, political, and strategic mechanisms.

#### **Economic Dependency:**

- New Caledonia relies heavily on financial aid and subsidies from the French government. Public services, infrastructure projects, and social programs are funded by France, creating a reliance on external support.

- The nickel industry, while crucial to the economy, is controlled by French companies and multinational corporations, limiting local economic autonomy.

**Political Control:**

- New Caledonia has a unique political status under the Nouméa Accord (1998), which granted greater autonomy to the territory. However, France retains control over key areas such as defense, foreign policy, and monetary policy.
- The French High Commissioner represents the French state in New Caledonia, overseeing local governance and ensuring compliance with national policies.

**Strategic Presence:**

- New Caledonia's location in the Pacific makes it strategically important for France's geopolitical interests. France maintains military bases on the island, reinforcing its presence in the region and deterring independence movements.

These mechanisms reinforce New Caledonia's reliance on France, limiting the territory's ability to achieve full self-sufficiency and self-determination.

**Social and political movements for independence**

The struggle for independence in New Caledonia has deep roots in the territory's history of colonial exploitation and social inequality. The indigenous Kanak people have been at the forefront of this movement, seeking recognition of their rights and cultural identity.

**Key Events and Movements:**

- The Kanak Revolt (1878): Early resistance to French colonial rule, led by Chief Atai, highlighted the Kanak people's desire for self-determination.
- The 1980s Unrest: Tensions between pro-independence Kanaks and loyalist settlers led to violent clashes, culminating in the 1988 Ouvéa hostage crisis.
- The Nouméa Accord (1998): This agreement aimed to address historical grievances by granting greater autonomy and promising a series of referendums on independence.

**Referendums on Independence:**

- 2018 Referendum: 56.4% voted against independence, reflecting deep divisions within the population.
- 2020 Referendum: Support for independence increased to 46.7%, indicating growing momentum for the pro-independence movement.
- 2021 Referendum: Amid controversy and a boycott by the pro-independence camp, 96.5% voted to remain part of France.

Despite these setbacks, the independence movement remains strong, driven by the desire for economic equality, cultural preservation, and political self-determination.

**International law and France: denying independence demands**

New Caledonia is listed as a non-self-governing territory by the United Nations. According to international law, the people of New Caledonia have the right to self-determination. However, France's handling of the independence process has raised concerns.

**Violations of International Principles:**

- Influence over referendums: Critics argue that France's economic and political influence over the referendum process undermines genuine self-determination.
- Economic dependency: The reliance on French financial aid and the nickel industry controlled by French companies create conditions that discourage independence.
- Cultural assimilation: The promotion of French language and culture at the expense of Kanak traditions contradicts international norms on protecting indigenous rights.

France's refusal to fully support the decolonization process in New Caledonia has led to criticism from international organizations and pro-independence groups. The struggle for independence continues, with calls for greater international support and recognition of Kanak rights.

**Conclusion**

New Caledonia's history, environment, and political status are deeply influenced by French colonialism. The territory's dependency on France, environmental challenges, and social inequalities reflect the legacy of exploitation and external control.

The future of New Caledonia depends on addressing these issues through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the recognition of self-determination rights. Greater autonomy or independence could empower the people of New Caledonia to build a more equitable and sustainable future, aligned with their aspirations and international norms.

# Comprehensive Report on St. Martin (French and Dutch Sides)

## **St. Martin: Overview**

Located in the Lesser Antilles, the island of Saint-Martin is divided into two parts: the French side, "Saint-Martin," an outermost region of the EU, and the Dutch side, "Sint Maarten," an Overseas Country and Territory of the Netherlands. Saint-Martin is the smallest French outermost region, covering just 53 km<sup>2</sup>. Over time, its political status has evolved significantly, transitioning from being part of Guadeloupe to becoming a French Overseas Collectivity in 2007, and gaining the status of an EU outermost region in 2009.

Together, the island has a combined population of around 77,000 people, with approximately 32,000 living on the French side and 45,000 on the Dutch side.

The economy is dominated by the tertiary sector, particularly tourism, which drives much of the region's activity. However, the labor market faces challenges, including high unemployment (32.9%), a significant proportion of residents without higher education, and widespread poverty. Saint-Martin experiences a tropical climate with a dry season from February to April and a rainy season from June to November, which coincides with hurricane season. In 2017, the island was devastated by Hurricane Irma, the strongest cyclone ever recorded in the Caribbean.

The island is known for its stunning beaches, multicultural atmosphere, and tourism-driven economy. While French and Dutch are the official languages, English is widely spoken, and there are significant communities of Creole, Spanish, and other language speakers.

St. Martin's economy relies heavily on tourism, retail, and services. The island is a major hub for cruise ships, luxury tourism, and duty-free shopping. Despite its economic potential, the island faces challenges related to environmental degradation, political complexities, and social inequality.

## **History of St. Martin: Roots of French and Dutch Colonialism**

St. Martin was originally inhabited by the indigenous Arawak and Carib peoples. The island was sighted on November 11, 1493, by Christopher Columbus, who named it in honour of St. Martin of Tours, whose feast day it was. Valued for its natural lakes of salt, a scarce commodity in Europe, the island changed between Dutch and Spanish hands several times. In 1648 the Dutch returned to the island to find it occupied by the French, with whom they signed a partition treaty. Sugarcane plantations, worked by black slaves (ancestors of most of the present inhabitants), were important for a time but declined in the 19th century.

In the early 17th century, both the French and the Dutch established settlements on the island.

The Spanish initially controlled the region but withdrew in 1648. Following the Spanish departure, the Treaty of Concordia was signed in 1648, dividing the island between France and the Netherlands. This division remains in place to this day, making St. Martin the smallest inhabited sea island divided between two nations. The Dutch (southern) part of the island, Sint Maarten, has coastal lagoons, salt pans, and sand spits. It became a part of the Dutch West Indies in 1828, and it was one of the original territories of the Netherlands Antilles federation that was established in 1954 and dissolved in 2010. Sint Maarten is now an autonomous state within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The economy draws increasingly on tourism, as the government encourages exploitation of the island's most valuable natural resources—the clean beaches and pleasant climate.

### **French Colonialism:**

Through the Treaty of Concordia, the island of Saint Martin is connected to two European powers: the Netherlands and France. From the signing of the treaty in 1648, the island was divided in two: the Dutch side is known as Sint Maarten (16 mi<sup>2</sup>) and the French side as Saint Martin (21 mi<sup>2</sup>).

During colonialism the enslavement of African peoples was commonly practiced by European colonizers. The granting of freedom to those enslaved took place at different times in different European countries. These documents illustrate how the enslaved attached to one European power took advantage of the freedom given to the enslaved by another European regime.

The government that came to power after the French revolution freed their enslaved persons on May 28th 1848. Enslavement, however, remained a fact of life in Sint Maarten until July 1st 1863.

The French side developed as an agricultural economy, focusing on sugarcane, cotton, and tobacco plantations. Enslaved Africans were brought to work on these plantations. After the abolition of slavery in 1848, the French side transitioned to a more diversified economy.

### **Dutch Colonialism:**

The Dutch side developed similarly, with plantations relying on enslaved labor. In the 20th century, Sint Maarten became a key transit hub due to its strategic location and deep-water port.

Both sides of the island experienced colonial exploitation, with lasting impacts on the social, economic, and cultural fabric of St. Martin.

### **Exploitation of National Resources and Environmental Impact**

St. Martin's natural resources have been exploited to support its economy, particularly through tourism, real estate development, and maritime industries. This exploitation has resulted in significant environmental challenges.

**Key Environmental Issues:**

- Deforestation and Habitat Loss: Urban development and tourism infrastructure have led to the destruction of natural habitats, affecting biodiversity and wildlife.
- Coastal Erosion: Construction along the coastline and the removal of mangroves have increased coastal erosion, threatening beaches and coastal communities.
- Marine Pollution: Waste from cruise ships, hotels, and urban areas contaminates the surrounding waters, impacting marine life and coral reefs.
- Water Shortages: The demand for fresh water exceeds local supply, leading to reliance on desalination plants and imported water.
- Climate Change: Rising sea levels, hurricanes, and extreme weather events pose significant risks to the island's infrastructure and ecosystems.

**Notable Events:**

- Hurricane Irma (2017): This Category 5 hurricane devastated both sides of the island, highlighting the region's vulnerability to natural disasters and the need for sustainable development practices.

Efforts to address these issues include marine protected areas, reforestation projects, and sustainable tourism initiatives. However, the pressure from economic activities continues to challenge environmental preservation.

**Mechanisms Used by France and the Netherlands to Maintain Dependency**

Both France and the Netherlands maintain St. Martin's dependency through economic, political, and cultural mechanisms.

**Economic Dependency:**

- French Side (Saint-Martin): The French government provides financial aid, social services, and infrastructure funding. The local economy relies heavily on tourism, and economic downturns in Europe affect the island's stability.
- Dutch Side (Sint Maarten): The Netherlands supports Sint Maarten through financial assistance, particularly after natural disasters. The economy is tied to tourism, which is vulnerable to global economic fluctuations.

**Political Control:**

- Saint-Martin: Governed as an overseas collectivity of France, with a local council and a prefect representing the French state. Major decisions, including foreign policy and defense, are controlled by Paris.
- Sint Maarten: A constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with its own parliament and prime minister. However, the Dutch government retains control over defense, foreign affairs, and judicial matters.

**Cultural Influence:**

- Saint-Martin: The French education system, language, and media promote French culture, often at the expense of local Creole traditions.
- Sint Maarten: Dutch governance and education emphasize Dutch culture, although English is the dominant language.

These mechanisms reinforce the island's reliance on external support, limiting its ability to achieve full autonomy and self-sufficiency.

**Social and Cultural Challenges on Both Sides**

St. Martin's unique division between French and Dutch governance creates distinct social and cultural dynamics on each side of the island.

**French Side (Saint-Martin):**

- Language and Education: French is the official language, but many residents speak English, Creole, and Spanish. The education system follows the French curriculum, which can create barriers for non-French speakers.
- Identity and Integration: The population identifies with a mix of French, Caribbean, and Creole cultures. Integration into French society remains challenging due to economic disparities and cultural differences.

**Dutch Side (Sint Maarten):**

- Multilingual Society: English is the primary language, reflecting the island's diverse population. Dutch is the official language but is rarely spoken in daily life.
- Economic Inequality: The influx of tourists and foreign investors has created a gap between wealthy expatriates and local residents, contributing to social tensions.

**Shared Challenges:**

- Migration: Both sides experience high levels of immigration from neighboring Caribbean islands, leading to challenges in providing services, housing, and employment.
- Crime and Security: Issues such as drug trafficking, organized crime, and poverty contribute to security concerns on both sides of the island.

Addressing these challenges requires cooperation between the French and Dutch governments and policies that promote social equity and cultural preservation.

**Governance and Political Status**

St. Martin's dual governance structure creates unique political challenges and opportunities for the island.

**French Side (Saint-Martin):**

- Saint-Martin became an overseas collectivity of France in 2007, granting it a degree of autonomy. The local council manages local affairs, but major decisions are made in Paris.

**Dutch Side (Sint Maarten):**

- Sint Maarten became a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2010, following the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles. It has its own parliament, prime minister, and governor representing the Dutch monarchy. The Netherlands Antilles dissolved on October 10, 2010. Curacao and Sint Maarten (the Dutch two-fifths of the island of Saint Martin) became autonomous territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Bonaire, Saba, and Sint Eustatius now fall under the direct administration of the Netherlands.

- While Sint Maarten has more autonomy than Saint-Martin, it still relies on the Netherlands for defense, foreign policy, and judicial matters.

**Collaboration and Coordination:**

- The two sides of the island share infrastructure, natural resources, and social challenges. Efforts to improve cooperation include joint initiatives in tourism, environmental protection, and disaster response.

**Conclusion**

St. Martin's unique division between French and Dutch governance creates a complex political, social, and economic landscape. The island's history of colonial exploitation, dependency on external support, and environmental challenges reflect broader issues of neocolonialism and globalization.

The future of St. Martin depends on addressing these challenges through sustainable development, social equity, and cultural preservation. Greater cooperation between the French and Dutch sides, along with respect for the island's diverse identity, can empower the people of St. Martin to build a more equitable and resilient future.



# Comprehensive Report on Wallis and Futuna

## **Wallis and Futuna: Overview**

Wallis and Futuna is a French overseas collectivity located in the South Pacific Ocean, situated between Fiji and Samoa. It consists of three main islands: Wallis (Uvea), Futuna, and Alofi, along with several smaller islets. The capital city is Mata-Utu, located on Wallis Island.

The territory covers an area of 142 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 11,000 people. The official language is French, but the majority of the population speaks Wallisian (Uvean) and Futunan, two Polynesian languages. The dominant religion is Roman Catholicism, which plays a significant role in the social and cultural life of the islands.

**The economy** of Wallis and Futuna relies on subsistence agriculture, fishing, and financial support from France. The limited infrastructure, small population, and geographic isolation contribute to the territory's economic challenges. Despite its natural beauty, Wallis and Futuna remains one of the least visited regions in the South Pacific.

With around 80% of the labor force engaged in agriculture, livestock, and fishing, and imports primarily sourced from France (97%), the territory relies on the CFP Franc, a currency shared with New Caledonia and French Polynesia, to sustain its economy.

## **Culture**

Most houses in Wallis are concrete with corrugated iron roofs, while Futunan houses are traditional Samoan-style “fale” with thatched roofs. Water and electricity were introduced in 1990. Kava and tapa cloth are important cultural symbols. The “malae” is a place for honoring chiefs, and the Lomipeau canoe symbolizes maritime ties to Tonga. The region has a strong tradition of Polynesian music and the Kailao war dance originated in Uvea.

## **History of Wallis and Futuna: Roots of French Colonialism**

The islands of Wallis and Futuna were settled by Polynesian navigators over 2,000 years ago. The indigenous populations developed distinct cultures, social structures, and languages. The islands were ruled by traditional monarchies, each with its own king and governance system.

European contact began in the 17th century when Dutch explorers sighted the islands. In 1837, French Catholic missionaries arrived and began converting the local populations to Christianity. The influence of the missionaries paved the way for French colonial interests.

In 1842, Wallis Island became a French protectorate, followed by Futuna in 1888. The islands were formally annexed by France in 1917. During World War II, Wallis served as a strategic base for Allied forces in the Pacific. After the war, the islands remained under French control.

In 1961, Wallis and Futuna became a French overseas territory, granting the islands a degree of autonomy while remaining under French sovereignty. The traditional kingdoms of Wallis and Futuna were integrated into the French administrative system, but the local kings retained their cultural authority.

The legacy of French colonialism continues to shape the political, economic, and social life of Wallis and Futuna, with ongoing challenges related to dependency, cultural preservation, and limited development.

### **Exploitation of National Resources and Environmental Impact**

Wallis and Futuna's natural resources are limited, but the islands' ecosystems and traditional livelihoods have been affected by various forms of exploitation and environmental challenges.

#### **Key Environmental Issues:**

- **Deforestation:** The clearing of forests for agriculture, construction, and firewood has led to habitat loss, soil erosion, and reduced biodiversity.
- **Soil Erosion:** Unsustainable farming practices and deforestation have caused significant soil erosion, affecting agricultural productivity and water quality.
- **Marine Resource Depletion:** Overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices threaten the health of marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of local fishermen.
- **Water Pollution:** Runoff from agricultural activities, waste disposal, and limited sewage treatment contaminate freshwater sources and coastal waters.
- **Climate Change:** Rising sea levels, increased temperatures, and extreme weather events pose significant risks to the low-lying islands and their communities.

Efforts to address these environmental challenges include reforestation projects, marine conservation programs, and community-based initiatives to promote sustainable practices. However, the islands' geographic isolation and limited resources make environmental protection a complex task.

### **Mechanisms Used by France to Maintain Dependency**

France maintains Wallis and Futuna's dependency through economic, political, and cultural mechanisms that reinforce the territory's reliance on the French state.

#### **Economic Dependency:**

- Wallis and Futuna rely heavily on financial aid and subsidies from France. The French government funds public services, infrastructure, education, and healthcare, creating a dependency on external support.
- The local economy is limited to subsistence agriculture, fishing, and small-scale commerce. The lack of economic diversification and job opportunities forces many residents to seek employment in mainland France or New Caledonia.

**Political Control:**

- Wallis and Futuna is governed by a French-appointed administrator who represents the central government. While the territory has a local assembly and traditional kings, major decisions are influenced by Paris.
- The French legal and administrative system applies to the islands, limiting the autonomy of local governance structures.

**Cultural Influence:**

- French language and culture dominate the education system, media, and public administration. This has contributed to the erosion of indigenous languages and traditions.
- Efforts to preserve Wallisian and Futunan cultures face challenges due to the dominance of French cultural norms and the migration of younger generations to France.

**Social and Cultural Challenges**

Wallis and Futuna face several social and cultural challenges related to their colonial history, geographic isolation, and integration into France.

**Limited Economic Opportunities:**

- The territory's small size, limited resources, and isolation hinder economic development. High unemployment and a lack of job opportunities force many residents to migrate to mainland France or New Caledonia.

**Education and Language Barriers:**

- The French education system is standard in Wallis and Futuna, but many students struggle with French as a second language. This language barrier affects educational outcomes and limits opportunities for higher education and employment.

**Migration and Depopulation:**

- The lack of economic prospects has led to significant migration, particularly among young people. This depopulation threatens the preservation of local cultures and social structures.

**Preservation of Culture and Traditions:**

- The traditional monarchies of Wallis and Futuna continue to play a vital role in cultural life. However, the influence of French culture and the migration of younger generations pose challenges to preserving indigenous languages, customs, and social systems.
- The erosion of indigenous languages and traditions due to French cultural dominance raises concerns about the protection of cultural rights and heritage.

**International Law and France: Denying Autonomy Demands**

Wallis and Futuna's status as a French overseas collectivity raises questions about self-determination and autonomy. While the territory has not experienced widespread calls for

independence, issues of political representation, economic dependency, and cultural preservation remain relevant.

**International Principles of Self-Determination:**

- According to international law, all peoples have the right to self-determination. Wallis and Futuna's political status as a French dependency limits the exercise of this right.
- France's continued control over the territory reflects broader issues of neocolonialism and the strategic interests of maintaining influence in the Pacific region.

**Limited Autonomy:**

- The territory's integration into the French administrative system restricts local decision-making power. While traditional kings retain cultural authority, political and economic decisions are influenced by the French government.

**Conclusion**

Wallis and Futuna's history, environment, and political status are shaped by French colonialism and ongoing dependency. The territory faces significant challenges related to economic development, social equity, and cultural preservation.

The future of Wallis and Futuna depends on addressing these challenges through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the recognition of self-determination rights. Greater autonomy or improved integration with respect for local traditions could empower the people of Wallis and Futuna to build a more equitable and sustainable future, aligned with their aspirations and international norms.