

Somalia

Geography

Location: Eastern Africa, bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, east of Ethiopia

Area:

total area: 637,660 sq km

land area: 627,340 sq km

Land boundaries: total 2,366 km, Djibouti 58 km, Ethiopia 1,626 km, Kenya 682 km

Coastline: 3,025 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 200 nm

Climate: principally desert; December to February - northeast monsoon, moderate temperatures in north and very hot in south; May to October - southwest monsoon, torrid in the north and hot in the south, irregular rainfall, hot and humid periods (tangambili) between monsoons

Terrain: mostly flat to undulating plateau rising to hills in north

Natural resources: uranium and largely unexploited reserves of iron ore, tin, gypsum, bauxite, copper, salt

Land use:

arable land: 2%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 46%

forest and woodland: 14%

other: 38%

Irrigated land: 1,600 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: famine; use of contaminated water contributes to human health problems; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; desertification

natural hazards: recurring droughts; frequent dust storms over eastern plains in summer

Note: strategic location on Horn of Africa along southern approaches to Bab el Mandeb and route through Red Sea and Suez Canal

People

Population: 7,347,554 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 45% (female 1,653,175; male 1,650,377)

15-64 years: 51% (female 1,845,886; male 1,932,012)

65 years and over: 4% (female 138,264; male 127,840) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 15.58% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 45.53 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 13.3 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 123.62 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 119.5 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 55.74 years
male: 55.48 years
female: 56 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 7.13 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Somali(s)
adjective: Somali

Ethnic divisions: Somali 85%, Bantu, Arabs 30,000

Religions: Sunni Muslim

Languages: Somali (official), Arabic, Italian, English

Literacy:
total population: 24%

male: 36%
female: 14%

Government

Names:

conventional short form: Somalia

former: Somali Republic

Capital: Mogadishu

Independence: 1 July 1960 (from a merger of British Somaliland, which became independent from the UK on 26 June 1960, and Italian Somaliland, which became independent from the Italian-administered UN trusteeship on 1 July 1960, to form the Somali Republic)

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: light blue with a large white five-pointed star in the center; design based on the flag of the UN (Italian Somaliland was a UN trust territory)

Economy

Overview: One of the world's poorest and least developed countries, Somalia has few resources. Moreover, much of the economy has been devastated by the civil war.

Industries: a few small industries, including sugar refining, textiles, petroleum refining (mostly shut down) (1994)

Agriculture: dominant sector, led by livestock raising (cattle, sheep, goats); crops - bananas, sorghum, corn, mangoes, sugarcane; not self-sufficient in food; distribution of food disrupted by civil strife; fishing potential largely unexploited

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 22,500 km

Pipelines: crude oil 15 km

Ports: Bender Cassim (Boosaaso), Berbera, Chisimayu
(Kismaayo), Merca, Mogadishu

Airports:
total: 76

Defence Forces

Branches: no functioning central government military forces; clan militias continue to battle for control of key economic or political prizes