

Djibouti in Perspective

An Orientation Guide



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Chapter 1: Geography

Introduction

Located at the entrance to the Red Sea and close to the Arabian oil fields, the small East African nation of Djibouti (about the size of Vermont) is bordered by Ethiopia to the west and south, Somalia to the southeast, and Eritrea to the northwest.^{1, 2, 3} Besides natural ports with rail links into land-locked Ethiopia, Djibouti's strategic position on one of the world's busiest shipping lanes—connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean—is the nation's most important economic asset.^{4, 5}



©CIA
Flag of Djibouti

Djibouti's natural resources include petroleum, gold, clay, granite, limestone, marble, salt, diatomite, gypsum, pumice, and potential geothermal power from active volcanoes.⁶

The northernmost region of Djibouti lies on the Bab el Mandeb, a narrow 29 km (18 mi) strait that separates the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aden.⁷ South of the Bab el Mandeb, the Djibouti coast is indented by the Gulf of Tadjoura, an east–west inlet that adjoins the Gulf of Aden.⁸ At the southeastern end of the Gulf of Tadjoura is the city of Djibouti, the nation's capital and major port. The western end of the Gulf joins Ghoubbet el Kharâb, a shallow bay separated by a narrow strait from the rest of the Gulf. Inland, much of Djibouti is a barren desert strewn with volcanic rock. The desert is scorching hot for much of the year.⁹

¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti Country Profile," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

² BBC, "Djibouti," 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/hi/country_guides/newsid_9383000/9383941.stm

³ EnchantedLearning.com, "US States (Plus Washington D.C.): Area and Ranking," 2001–2010, <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/usa/states/area.shtml>

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti Country Profile," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

⁴ BBC, "Djibouti," 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/hi/country_guides/newsid_9383000/9383941.stm

⁵ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti Country Profile," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

⁶ BBC, "Djibouti," 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/hi/country_guides/newsid_9383000/9383941.stm

⁷ Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "World Oil Transit Chokepoints," February 2011, http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/World_Oil_Transit_Chokepoints/Full.html

⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: Relief," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti?anchor=ref419327>

⁹ I. M. Lewis, "Djibouti: Physical and Social Geography," in *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London, UK: Europa Publications, 2004), 357.

Geographic Divisions and Topographic Features

Djibouti's southern and western regions feature a series of plateaus separated by low desert plains. The Mabla and Goda Mountains, lying north of the Gulf of Tadjoura, make up the central part of the country. Most of Djibouti's limited forestlands are in these mountains, with the densest strands in Day Forest National Park.¹⁰ To the east of the central mountains is a broad coastal plain that narrows significantly as it sweeps westward along the northern shore of the Gulf of Tadjoura.



©DoD Image
Coastal Plateau

Djibouti lies on a triple junction, a rare geologic feature in which three faults meet. Earthquakes and volcanic activity result from these faults, and much of the western and southern parts of the country are covered by basaltic flows from past volcanic eruptions.¹¹ The highest point in Djibouti is Moussa Ali (2,028 m, 6,654 ft), a stratovolcano (a volcano composed of alternating layers of lava and ash). Its caldera peak (a volcanic feature formed by the collapse after an eruption) marks the point where the borders of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Eritrea all meet.¹² Djibouti's lowest point is saline Lake Assal, which at 155 m (515 ft) below sea level is the lowest point in Africa.¹³

Climate

Djibouti's climate reflects two distinct seasons. From May–September, temperatures are very hot, and little rainfall occurs along the coast. Temperatures cool down somewhat between October and April, the period when the coastal region receives much of its limited rainfall. Coastal regions of Djibouti generally receive less rainfall (13 cm, 5.1 in) than mountainous interior regions (about 38 cm, 15 in).^{14, 15} Mountainous and inland regions are more likely to receive rainfall during the hot months,



©Charles Roffey
Arid region

¹⁰ Youssef Daher Robleh, "The Day Forest, Djibouti," in *Combating Desertification: Freshwater Resources and the Rehabilitation of Degraded Areas in the Drylands* (Paris: UNESCO, 2002), 80, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001276/127651e.pdf>

¹¹ Gezahegn Yirgu, "Recent Eruptions in the Afar Rift (Ethiopia) and Volcanic Risk," (presentation, Afar Rift Consortium, Enhans Workshop, 17–20 January 2011, Pretoria, South Africa), http://www.enhans.org/showcasing/workshop_jan2011/Yirgu.pdf

¹² Smithsonian Institution, Global Volcanism Program, "Mousa Ali," n.d., <http://www.volcano.si.edu/world/volcano.cfm?vnum=0201-123>

¹³ BBC, "Lake Assal–Djibouti," July 2008, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/programmes/tv/wildafrika/lakeasal.shtml>

¹⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: Climate," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti?anchor=ref419327>

¹⁵ BestCountryReports.com, "Precipitation Map of Djibouti," n.d., http://www.atozmapsdata.com/zoomify.asp?name=Country/Modern/Z_Djibou_Precip

often during short cloudbursts that produce flash flooding.^{16, 17} The city of Djibouti averages mean annual temperature of 30 °C (86 °F), with average July high temperatures of 41.7 °C (107 °F).^{18, 19} The city's average rainfall is 13 cm (5 in).

Bodies of Water

As a result of Djibouti's hot, mostly dry climate, no permanent above-ground streams or rivers flow through the country. Many dry stream beds, known as *oueds*, carry water intermittently after heavy rains. The Ambouli *oued*, which separates the eastern and western sides of the city of Djibouti, is frequently a site of serious flooding after major storms. In 1994 and again in 2004, flooding occurred along this *oued*, killing almost 200 people and affecting roughly 220,000 others.^{20, 21, 22}



©Charles Roffey
Lake Assal

Djibouti's only two permanent bodies of water are Lake Assal and Lake Abhé Bad, which are both saline. Lake Assal sits on the floor of a deep depression 4 km northwest of Ghoubbet el Kharâb (the shallow bay at the western end of the Gulf of Tadjoura). The lake's elevation makes it one of the country's hottest locations. (Temperatures of 55°C, or 131°F, have been recorded at the lake.)²³ As one of the world's saltiest lakes, much of the inflow into Lake Assal comes from underground water.²⁴ The salt deposits along the shoreline of Lake Assal are mined for export.²⁵

Lake Abhé Bad is located in Djibouti's southwest corner on the border with Ethiopia. It is fed by the Awash River, which forms the most important river basin in Ethiopia.²⁶ As

¹⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: Climate," 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti?anchor=ref419327>

¹⁷ BBC Weather, "Djibouti," n.d.,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/hi/country_guides/newsid_9383000/9383941.stm

¹⁸ R. H. Hughes and J. S. Hughes, "2.2. Djibouti: Climate," in *A Directory of African Wetlands* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP, Cambridge, UK: WCMC, 1992), 131.

¹⁹ Weather.com, "Monthly Averages for Djibouti," 2011,

<http://www.weather.com/weather/wxclimatology/monthly/graph/DJXX0001>

²⁰ ReliefWeb.org, "Djibouti—Floods Nov 1994 UN DHA Situation Reports 1–5," 22 November 1994,

<http://reliefweb.int/node/35014>

²¹ World Health Organization, "Republic of Djibouti, April 2004 Floods: Assessment Report," 2004,

http://www.recoveryplatform.org/assets/publication/Flood_recovery/Flood_early_recovery_Djibouti_WHO.pdf

²² Regional Disaster Management Center of Excellence, "Djibouti: Climatic," 2008,

<http://www.rdmcoe.org/Participating-States/Djibouti/Climatic>

²³ Pascale Harter, "A Life of Constant Thirst Beside Djibouti's Lake Assal," BBC News, December 2010,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/9254468.stm

²⁴ R. H. Hughes and J. S. Hughes, "2.2. Djibouti: Climate, Wetlands" in *A Directory of African Wetlands* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP, Cambridge, UK: WCMC, 1992), 131–132.

²⁵ Thomas R. Yager, "Djibouti," in *2009 Minerals Yearbook*, U.S. Geological Survey, January 2011,

<http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2009/myb3-2009-dj.pdf>

²⁶ Girma Taddese, Kai Sonder, and Don Peden, "The Water of the Awash River Basin: A Future Challenge to Ethiopia," ILRI, n.d.,

<http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/assessment/files/pdf/publications/WorkingPapers/WaterofAwashBasin.pdf>

upstream irrigation projects on the Awash River have significantly reduced the amount of inflow, Lake Abhé Bad has shrunk considerably since the 1940s.²⁷ To the northwest of Lake Abhé Bad, in Ethiopia, lies Dama Ali, a shield volcano (a volcano built almost entirely of fluid lava) that is thought to have last erupted in 1631 C.E.²⁸

Cities

City	Census Population 2009 ²⁹
Djibouti	353,801
Ali-Sabieh	22,630
Dikhil	19,347
Tadjoura	12,157
Arta	11,043
Obock	9,933

Djibouti

With the exception of city-states such as Singapore, few world cities dominate their nation as Djibouti does. The country of Djibouti is the most urbanized nation in Africa, with roughly 80% of the population living in cities. The vast majority of these Djiboutian urbanites live in Djibouti city.³⁰ According to data from the most recent national census (2009), Djibouti city is home to more than 58% of the country's total population.³¹



©Charles Roffey
Djibouti City

The city of Djibouti traces its roots to the colonial period. In 1888, when the French first took possession of the immediate region, Djibouti was nothing more than a few barren coral islands. Léonce Lagarde, governor of France's colonies and dependencies in the region, claimed it and immediately set to work constructing a port.³² Eight years later, in 1896, the French-built city had a population of 5,000 and was the capital of Côte Française des Somalis (better known as French Somaliland), a newly established colony. Work began in 1897 on a railroad linking Djibouti city to Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. In the same year the French signed a treaty with Abyssinian (Ethiopian) Emperor

²⁷ R. H. Hughes and J. S. Hughes, "2.2. Djibouti: Climate, Wetlands" in *A Directory of African Wetlands* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP, Cambridge, UK: WCMC, 1992), 132.

²⁸ Global Volcanism Program, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, "Dama Ali," n.d., <http://www.volcano.si.edu/world/volcano.cfm?vnum=0201-141&volpage=photos&photo=111070>

²⁹ Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances Chargé de l'industrie et de la Planification, "Recensements de la Population," 2011, <http://www.ministere-finances.dj/RECENSEMENTDE LA POPULATION.html>

³⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: People: Settlement Patterns, Demographic Trends," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti>

³¹ GeoHive.com, "The Republic of Djibouti: Administrative Units," 2011, <http://www.geohive.com/cntry/djibouti.aspx>

³² Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background: The Colony of French Somaliland," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 8.

Menelik designating Djibouti as Ethiopia's official port for foreign trade.^{33, 34} The rail connection to Addis Ababa was not completed until 1917, but in the interim period the French continued to extensively develop Djibouti's port and local infrastructure.³⁵

The modern Djibouti port, redeveloped in the 1980s to handle container traffic, is one of the largest in Africa.^{36, 37} In December 2008, a much larger container terminal opened at Doraleh, located 11 km southwest of the original Djibouti port.³⁸ This ambitious project, which overnight gave Djibouti the largest and most modern terminal facility in East Africa, is expected to make Djibouti a major regional transshipment port.^{39, 40}

The new Doraleh port facility is located just north of Balbala, the area of Djibouti city located west of the Ambouli *oued*. Balbala began as a squatter community that experienced explosive growth after Djibouti's independence from France in 1977. Although Balbala was incorporated into the city in 1987, living conditions for many of the district's 200,000 residents still remain primitive.^{41, 42, 43}

Ali Sabieh

Ali Sabieh, Djibouti's largest town in the hinterlands, is a stop on the railway from Djibouti city to Dire Dawa in Ethiopia. This rail line used to run to Addis Ababa, but it is

³³ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background: The Colony of French Somaliland," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 8.

³⁴ Richard Pankhurst, "The Franco-Ethiopian Railway and Its History: Construction Work Begins," n.d., <http://tezeta.net/37/the-franco-ethiopian-railway-and-its-history>

³⁵ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background: The Colony of French Somaliland," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 9–10.

³⁶ Djibouti Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, "Djibouti Port," 6 January 2010, http://djiboutiembassyke.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=59:djibouti-port&catid=31:djibouti&Itemid=1

³⁷ Arabian Supply Chain, "Top 10 Africa Ports: Djibouti," 12 May 2008, <http://www.arabiansupplychain.com/article-1064-top-10-africa-ports/6/>

³⁸ DP World, "Djibouti-Doraleh," n.d., http://webapps.dpworld.com/portal/page/portal/DP_WORLD_WEBSITE/Marine-Terminals/Locations/Middle-East-Europe-and-Africa/Africa-Overview/Djibouti-Doraleh

³⁹ Data Monitor, UK, "DP World Inaugurates Container Terminal in Djibouti," East Africa Forum, 9 February 2009, <http://www.eastafricaforum.net/2009/02/14/dp-world-inaugurates-container-terminal-in-djibouti/>

⁴⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Djibouti Economy: Giant Container Terminal at Doraleh Inaugurated," *The Economist*, 13 May 2009, http://www.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWArticleVW3&article_id=194510804&country_id=530000053&channel_id=190004019&category_id=500004050&refm=vwCat&page_title=Article&rf=0

⁴¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: History: Urban Development and Challenges," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti>

⁴² Taleex.net, "Djibouti Protesters, Against Ismail Omar Geulle," 4 February 2011, <http://taleex.net/english/2011/02/04/djibouti-protesters-against-ismail-omar-geulle/>

⁴³ Médecins Sans Frontières, "Djibouti, Djibouti City Balbala Project, n.d., <http://www.somali.msf.org/field-news/assisting-somalis/djibouti-djibouti-city/>

now in disrepair.⁴⁴ Ali Sabieh is primarily a market town for the surrounding area's nomadic herders and an administrative center for the Ali Sabieh region.⁴⁵

Dikhil

Like Ali Sabieh, Dikhil is a market town for local herders and an administrative center. It is the largest town on the main road between the Ethiopian border and the city of Djibouti. Dikhil's hospital is the primary health center for the surrounding region.⁴⁶



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View of Dikhil

Tadjoura

Tadjoura is a small coastal town on the northern side of its namesake gulf. Tadjoura's history is extensive by Djiboutian standards.⁴⁷ It served as the seat of a sultanate for hundreds of years and was the leading trading port on the Gulf of Tadjoura until the Ethiopian railroad was completed.⁴⁸ The town's port was modernized in 2000 to handle cargo from small vessels; an even more ambitious plan under discussion by the Djiboutian government is to expand the port to handle non-containerized cargo moving to and from Ethiopia.^{49, 50}

Obock

Located near the northeastern entrance to the Gulf of Tadjoura, Obock was the initial administrative capital of French Somaliland (modern-day Djibouti) and an important coaling station for French ships traveling to and from Indochina.^{51, 52} The French arrived in 1862 and quickly constructed a port at Obock to serve the increased maritime trade soon flowing through the Suez Canal.⁵³ Obock's importance began to fade after 1891

⁴⁴ Seat61.com, "A Beginner's Guide to Train Travel in Ethiopia and Djibouti," 8 March 2011, <http://www.seat61.com/Ethiopia.htm>

⁴⁵ World Food Program Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch (OMEP), "Djibouti: Overview," 25 September 2008, http://epmaps.wfp.org/maps/02817_20080925_DJI_A3_OMEP_Djibouti_Country_Overview_23_September_2008.pdf

⁴⁶ Dawn M. Price, U.S. Army Africa, "402nd Civil Affairs Battalion Delivers Cisterns for Dikhil, Djibouti," 23 April 2011,

http://www.usaraf.army.mil/NEWS/NEWS_110412_DIKHIL_CISTERNS_DELIVERED.html

⁴⁷ Daoud A. Alwan and Yohanis Mibrathu, "Tadjourah," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000), 111.

⁴⁸ World History at KMLA, "Sultanate at Tadjourah," 14 May 2009,

<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/eastafrica/xtadjoura.html>

⁴⁹ Horn of Africa Review, "Regional Issues: Djibouti," September/October 2000, 3, <http://www.ocha-eth.org/Archive/DownloadableReports/hoa1000.pdf>

⁵⁰ AddisVoice.com, "New Djibouti Port is 'All About Ethiopia,'" 23 August 2010, <http://addisvoice.com/2010/08/new-djibouti-port-is-all-about-ethiopia/>

⁵¹ *Encyclopedia of the Nations*, "Djibouti–History," n.d., <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Djibouti-HISTORY.html>

⁵² World History at KMLA, "History of Obock: French Presence at Obock, 1862–1891," 26 April 2008, <http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/eastafrica/obock18621891.html>

⁵³ 123Seashores.com, "Obock: Obock Beach," n.d., <http://www.123seashores.com/beaches/obock-beach>

when the colonial capital moved to Djibouti city, although Obock continued to be the primary port of call for passing French ships for several years thereafter.⁵⁴

In November 1991, Obock suffered from early fighting in the Djiboutian Civil War, causing roughly one-third of the town's residents to flee.⁵⁵ That period of unrest is now mostly a memory, although remnant landmines still plague Obock and Tadjoura.⁵⁶

Natural Hazards

Weather-related events—flooding and droughts—are the most common natural disasters in Djibouti. Droughts, in particular, occur often (about once every five years) and severely damage wildlife and vegetation while disrupting human water supply systems.⁵⁷ The effects of these droughts are magnified by the nation's high population growth rate and its relatively scarce water supplies, even in non-drought conditions.⁵⁸ An estimated 70% of Djibouti's livestock herds have died during the droughts of recent years. Water scarcity has forced many nomadic herders to move to Djibouti city and other urban areas.⁵⁹



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Drought, Djibouti

The country of Djibouti suffers intense flash floods, on average, every seven years. The most recent devastating flood came in 2004, when 11 cm (4.2 in) fell on the city of Djibouti over the course of a few hours. During the night, a wall of water swept through the dry stream beds of Ambouli, killing 50–300 people. The exact toll will never be known because many of the dead were undocumented migrants from Ethiopia living in and near the *oued*.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ World History at KMLA, “French Somali Coast, 1891–1918,” 26 April 2008, <http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/eastafrika/cotedessomalis18911918.html>

⁵⁵ Refworld, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “Djibouti: A November 1991 Government Attack on Obock City, the Number of Casualties and the Treatment of the Afar in Obock by the Current Government (1991–1998),” 1 October 1998,

http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic_463af2212_469f2d5a2_3ae6ac1150_0.html

⁵⁶ Government of Australia, “Travel Advice: Djibouti,” 11 May 2011, <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw/cgi/view/Advice/djibouti>

⁵⁷ Regional Disaster Management Center of Excellence, “Djibouti: Climatic,” 2008, <http://www.rdmcoe.org/Participating-States/Djibouti/Climatic>

⁵⁸ Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, “Disaster Risk Management Programs For Priority Countries: Middle East & North Africa: Djibouti,” 2011, 257,

http://www.gfdr.org/gfdr/sites/gfdr.org/files/publication/DRM_CountryPrograms_2011.pdf

⁵⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices: Djibouti,” n.d., <http://www.fao.org/isfp/country-information/djibouti/en/>

⁶⁰ Hervé Lévit and Tabarek Mohamed Ismaël, International Water Management Institute, “Challenges of Integrated River Basin Management: A Case of a Non-Perennial River in Djibouti (East Africa),” 7–9 March 2005,

http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/research_impacts/Research_Themes/BasinWaterManagement/RIPARWIN/PDFs/8_LeviteTabarekSS_FINAL_EDIT.pdf

Djibouti's location in a zone where tectonic plates meet causes numerous moderate-strength earthquakes in the country. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs zones nearly the entire country at Intensity Level VIII on the Modified Mercalli Scale. This means there is a 20% probability that a "destructive or worse" earthquake will occur within a 50-year time span.⁶¹ The last deadly earthquake to strike Djibouti occurred in 1989, when two people were killed in a seismic event centered near the western Ethiopian border.⁶² Djibouti also has experienced volcanic activity as recently as 1978 at the Ardoukôba rift volcano, which lies in the narrow stretch of land between Lake Assal and Ghoubbet el Kharâb.⁶³ Since very few people live in this area, the overall risk to human life is low.

Environmental Issues

Most of Djibouti's terrain is arid and inhospitable. Nearly all drinking water comes from aging wells that tap groundwater aquifers, and a slight portion of the country's land is forested or arable.^{64, 65}

Water scarcity is a major ongoing concern, particularly in Djibouti city, where most of the country's population lives. Here, only an estimated 75% of the total water needs are met, and salinity levels exceed World Health

Organization standards due to underground seepage of seawater into the coastal aquifer.⁶⁶ In Balbala, the poorest part of Djibouti city, water and food prices have jumped significantly for a population least able to afford increasing costs.⁶⁷ Beyond the immediate water deficit, Djibouti also faces concerns about rising sea levels attributed to climate change, which will further accelerate saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers.⁶⁸



©Charles Roffey
Dry river bed

⁶¹ OCHA Regional Office for Central and East Africa, "Earthquake Risk in Africa: Modified Mercalli Scale," December 2007,

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/7483_OCHAROCEAEarthquakesv2071219.pdf

⁶² United States Geological Survey(USGS), Earthquake Hazards Program, "Significant Earthquakes of the World: 1989," 5 January 2010, http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eqarchives/significant/sig_1989.php

⁶³ Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Global Volcanism Program, "Ardoukôba," <http://www.volcano.si.edu/world/volcano.cfm?vnum=0201-126>

⁶⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Governance, Advocacy and Leadership for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programme, "Country Sector Assessments: Volume 2, Djibouti," 2010, 5.

⁶⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations(FAO), "FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices: Djibouti," n. d., <http://www.fao.org/isfp/country-information/djibouti/en/>

⁶⁶ International Monetary Fund (IMF), "4. Poverty Reduction Strategy's Main Objectives," in *Djibouti: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2004), 82.

⁶⁷ USAID, "Djibouti Food Security Outlook: April Through September 2011," April 2011, http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/Djibouti_OL_2011_04_final_en.pdf

⁶⁸ Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Implementing NAPA Priority Interventions to Build Resilience in the Most Vulnerable Coastal Zones in Djibouti," 26 March 2010, <http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/document/04-15-10%20Council%20document.pdf>

Chapter 1: Assessment

1. Djibouti is one of the busiest ports on the Persian Gulf.

False

While Djibouti is indeed a busy port, it is not located on the Persian Gulf. It is located at the entrance to the Red Sea on one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean.

2. Djibouti's most mountainous region lies north of the Gulf of Tadjoura.

True

Situated in the region north of the Gulf of Tadjoura, the Mabla and Goda Mountains make up the central part of the country.

3. Most of Djibouti's limited coastal rainfall occurs in the fall and winter months.

True

Temperatures in Djibouti cool somewhat between October and April, the period when the nation's coastal region receives much of its limited rainfall.

4. Djibouti has no permanent rivers or streams.

True

As a result of Djibouti's hot, mostly dry climate, no permanent above-ground streams or rivers flow through the country.

5. Djibouti's only permanent body of water is Ghoubbet el Kharâb.

False

Djibouti's only permanent bodies of water are Lake Assal and Lake Abhé Bad. Ghoubbet el Kharâb is a shallow bay at the western end of the Gulf of Tadjoura.

Chapter 2: History

Introduction

Djibouti is a nation rooted in a 19th century colonial origin. Its borders encompass more than one indigenous ethnolinguistic group. The Afars and the Issa Somali clans long used the severe interior lands of this region for nomadic herding and carried out trade at small coastal ports for perfumes and spices from Egypt and eastern Asia.⁶⁹ The sometimes tense relations between these two groups have been a recurring theme in the history of Djibouti since before the colonial era.⁷⁰



©Martin Sherman
Bab el Mandeb straight

Djibouti's strategic location on the narrow Bab el Mandeb straight linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden has always been the region's most valuable asset. It eventually attracted European colonial powers to its few natural ports. Since 1977, when Djibouti became independent from France, the nation has mostly been able to establish itself as the most stable nation of the Horn of Africa, a region where a succession of civil wars, border conflicts, and ethnic secessionist movements have made this one of most fractious corners of the world.

Pre-Colonial History

Until the mid-19th century, historical references to the region now occupied by the Republic of Djibouti are relatively sparse. During the 12th through the mid-17th century, the Djibouti region was part of the Adal Muslim kingdom.⁷¹

Beginning in the early 17th century, the Adal kingdom gradually weakened. Several small sultanates filled the power void, including the Sultanate of Tadjoura.⁷²



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org
Adal Ruins

Modern-day Djibouti's coastal region was of limited maritime importance until the last century and a half. Much of the trade from Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia) flowed through the ports of Massawa (in modern-day Eritrea) and Zeila (in northwestern Somalia). Although coastal settlements existed at Tadjoura and Obock on the northern shore of the Gulf of Tadjoura, they were backwater ports in comparison to Massawa and

⁶⁹ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm> [retrieved 31 May 2011]

⁷⁰ Robert Tholomier, "1. The TFAI's Peoples: A Difficult Fusion," in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 1-2.

⁷¹ Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, "Adal," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 5.

⁷² Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 4.

Zeila.⁷³ Of the two Djibouti port towns, Tadjoura was the busiest, handling caravan trade to and from the interior. Slaves were among the trade items bartered at the Tadjoura waterfront.

Enter the French

Although a few French scientific expeditions to Abyssinia during the late 1830s/early 1840s explored the Djiboutian coast and hinterland, French presence did not begin until 1855. During that year, Henri Lambert, the French Consul in Aden, visited Tadjoura. While in the region, Lambert established a relationship with Aboubaker Ibrahim Chehem, who at the time was the pasha (governor) of Zeila.⁷⁴ After Lambert helped secure Aboubaker's release from prison after the latter man was charged with embezzlement by a political rival, Aboubaker offered to cede to the French the coastal strip around Obock.⁷⁵ Lambert's assassination in 1859, most likely plotted by Aboubaker's rival, put the French acquisition of Obock on hold for a few years. By 1862, however, the French had acquired by treaty territorial cession for all of the modern-day Djibouti coast stretching from southwest of Obock to the present-day northern coastal border with Eritrea.^{76, 77} The French raised their flag at Obock, but for nearly 20 years they otherwise ignored their new foothold on the Red Sea coast.⁷⁸ Even the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 did not provide sufficient motivation for the French to exploit the Obock port.



French colonial wars in Madagascar and Indochina during the 1880s finally spurred the development of Obock, which became a coaling station for French ships traveling along the East African coast. Beginning in 1884, Léonce Lagarde, the French commandant at Obock, negotiated a series of treaties of alliance and protection with local sultans in the region of modern-day Djibouti. One of these treaties was signed in 1885 by chiefs of a Somali subclan known as the Issas. This treaty established France's presence in the stretch of coastline that is now the site of Djibouti city.⁷⁹

⁷³ Louis Werner, "Djibouti: A Future in Arabic," *Saudi Aramco World* 52, no. 2 (March/April 2001), <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200102/djibouti-a.future.in.arabic.htm>

⁷⁴ Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, "Aboubaker Ibrahim Chehem (1815–1885)," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 4.

⁷⁵ Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, "Aboubaker Ibrahim Chehem (1815–1885)," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 4.

⁷⁶ "French Somaliland," in *The Encyclopedia Americana: A Library of Universal Knowledge* 12 (New York: The Encyclopedia Americana Corporation, 1919), 79.

⁷⁷ Sir Edward Hertslet, *The Map of Africa By Treaty* 1 (London, UK: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1894), 269–271.

⁷⁸ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1 One: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 6.

⁷⁹ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 7.

French Somaliland

With Obock as a functioning port—thanks to Lagarde securing funding from the French government—it became the administrative center of a French protectorate. Known as Obock and Dependencies, it included all of the recent cessions. Lagarde was named governor of the colony and served in that role until 1899.

However, Obock was a poor port site because it was located too far from the trading caravan routes of the hinterland. Thus, in 1888 work began on a new port at an unoccupied site on the southern side of the Gulf of Tadjoura. Djibouti, as the new village/port was named, had a good supply of water and a much better natural harbor than Obock.⁸⁰ The new town, supported by a large trade in both legal and illicit arms and ammunition, grew quickly.⁸¹ In 1896 Djibouti became the capital of the French Somaliland colony, which was a reconstitution of the Obock territory and the surrounding protectorates.⁸² The borders of the French Somaliland colony differed only slightly from those of the nation of Djibouti today.



©Carl Guderian
Pavilion of French Somaliland

As Djibouti grew, Lagarde took care to establish strong relations with Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia. In 1897, the two men signed an agreement that defined the border between French Somaliland and Ethiopia. It also established Djibouti as Ethiopia's official port.⁸³ In the same year, construction began on a railroad connecting the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa with the port of Djibouti. However, completing this rail line proved a formidable challenge. Among the problems faced were a daunting terrain that necessitated the building of several bridges and viaducts, resistance from Issa tribespeople along the rail route, and shaky financial backing.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the train began service in 1901. By late 1902 the line to Dire Dawa was completed, creating a boom town in the newly built Ethiopian city. A 1906 bankruptcy by the company constructing the railroad led to a long delay in completing the Addis Ababa segment, which finally opened in 1917.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Richard Pankhurst, "The Franco-Ethiopian Railway and Its History," Tezeta.net, n.d., <http://tezeta.net/37/the-franco-ethiopian-railway-and-its-history>

⁸¹ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 9.

⁸² Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 8.

⁸³ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 7.

⁸⁴ Richard Pankhurst, "The Franco-Ethiopian Railway and Its History," Tezeta.net, n.d., <http://tezeta.net/37/the-franco-ethiopian-railway-and-its-history>

⁸⁵ Richard Pankhurst, "The Franco-Ethiopian Railway and Its History," Tezeta.net, n.d., <http://tezeta.net/37/the-franco-ethiopian-railway-and-its-history>

Internal and External Concerns

Although most of France's attention was devoted to the coastal port of Djibouti and the new railroad, feuding between Afar and Issa tribespeople of the interior eventually led to the creation of a French administrative post. Established at Dikhil, it was the center of a district that marked the transition between the pasturelands of the Afars and Issas.⁸⁶ In 1935, Albert Bernard, the administrator for the post, and several of his Somali (Issa) troops were massacred while pursuing Afar warriors who had rustled cattle from Issa nomads.⁸⁷ This act of violence between the Afars and Issas occurred against the backdrop of an Italian invasion of Ethiopia, which would have a strong ripple effect in French Somaliland.



©travlr / flickr.com
Locomotive, Dire Dawa

For a year and a half after the Italian takeover of Ethiopia, business boomed in French Somaliland as the Italians used the Djibouti railway to bring in supplies to their new colony. Eventually, however, the Italians began using their upgraded port facility at Assab (in modern-day Eritrea) as the primary trade link to the Red Sea.⁸⁸ From that point on, Franco-Italian relations worsened between their respective East African colonies. In 1938, the Italian government increased its demands that France cede Somaliland to Italy. As a result, a large contingent of French troops (mostly of Senegalese origin) were sent to the French Somaliland/Ethiopia frontier.^{89, 90} Surrounded by Italian-controlled colonial lands on three sides, French Somaliland seemed destined to become a pawn in the showdown between Italy and France.

World War II

Italy declared war on France and Great Britain on 10 June 1940 when the French government was already fleeing the German advance. Fifteen days later, the French Vichy government, under the leadership of the collaborationist Marshall Philippe Pétain, signed an armistice with Italy. Among the terms of the armistice was a declaration that French Somaliland be demilitarized.⁹¹ It also stipulated that Italy have



©Greg Bishop
East Africa Campaign

⁸⁶ Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, "Dikhil," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 36–37.

⁸⁷ Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, "Albert Bernard," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 23.

⁸⁸ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 12.

⁸⁹ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 14.

⁹⁰ Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, "Chronology," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), xxi.

⁹¹ Vichy French authorities were later able to convince their Italian allies that total demilitarization was unwise. At the time of French surrender of French Somaliland to Free French forces in late 1942, there

full access to use the port of Djibouti and the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railroad.⁹² British Somaliland, lying to the southeast of French Somaliland, was overrun by the Italian forces in August 1940. It was then absorbed into the growing colony known as Italian East Africa.⁹³

The British, operating from their port at Aden on the opposite side of the Red Sea, quickly retaliated with a naval blockade against the port of Djibouti. The French governor of Somaliland, Pierre Nouailhetas, responded with a brutal crackdown against anyone in French Somaliland suspected of having anti-Vichy sentiments. When the British-led East African campaign against the Italians liberated most of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and British Somalia by mid-1941, Allied forces surrounded the colony on all sides.⁹⁴ Nouailhetas refused to negotiate with the British. The British, for many reasons, decided not to invade, but rather to tighten the blockade on French Somaliland. By the end of 1941, residents of Djibouti battled starvation.⁹⁵ The blockade loosened somewhat in early 1942, as some of the British ships blocking the harbor were pulled out and sent to the battle areas in the Pacific and Indian oceans.⁹⁶ Not until late 1942—and only after the British agreed to respect French claims to the colony—did the Vichy officials in Djibouti agree to surrender to Free French authorities.⁹⁷

Post-War Somaliland

Following the war, French Somaliland remained an Overseas Territory of France but gradually gained more autonomy in local affairs.⁹⁸ In 1946 a Council of Representatives, of which half the members were natives to the colony, was created. Initially, 6 of the 10 non-European members were elected, two each from Somaliland's three major ethnic groups (Somalis, Afars, and Arabs).⁹⁹



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Somaliland

Many of the Somalis within French Somaliland were members of one of two groups: the majority Issas and the Gadaboursis. In 1949,

were roughly 8,000 troops in Djibouti. See Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 20.

⁹² "The Franco-Italian Armistice," *Bulletin of International News* 17, 13 July 1940, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/25642819>

⁹³ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 17.

⁹⁴ BBC History, "Fact File: East African Campaign," June 2003 & September 2005, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/timeline/factfiles/nonflash/a1057547.shtml>

⁹⁵ *Time Magazine*, "World War, Southern Theater: Story of a Siege," 6 October 1941, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,790256,00.html>

⁹⁶ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 20.

⁹⁷ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 1: The Historical Background," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 21.

⁹⁸ Robert Tholomier, "Introduction," in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), ix.

⁹⁹ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, "Chapter 3: The Government Structure," in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 38–40.

after a Gadaboursi was elected to the French Council of the Republic, violence broke out between the two Somali clans, resulting in 38 deaths.¹⁰⁰ This was not the last time that violence, fueled by ethnic- and clan-delineated political and economic rivalries, plagued Djibouti.¹⁰¹

The French National Assembly of the *loi-cadre* passed an overseas territory reform act in 1956. This act increased the region's autonomy. In Somaliland, the new law led to the formation of a Territorial Assembly in 1957, ushering in a new era of local politics.^{102, 103} Another change was the establishment of a Governmental Council that shared executive power with the French-appointed governor. It was headed by the Assembly-elected vice-president, the highest-ranking native official.¹⁰⁴

The two most influential political figures to emerge during this period were Hassan Gouled Aptidon and Mahamoud Harbi Farah, rivals from the two major Issa clans in Djibouti.¹⁰⁵ In 1958, the two men stood on opposite sides of a vote on the new French constitution. Harbi, then Vice President of the Government Council, pushed for a “no” vote, which would have made French Somaliland an independent state. Harbi's ultimate goal was to merge the French territory into a “Greater Somalia,” encompassing all the regions of the Horn of Africa in which Somalis were the dominant ethnic group.¹⁰⁶ Gouled campaigned for a “yes” vote and won a major political victory when French Somaliland voters overwhelmingly supported the new constitution. Harbi left French Somaliland shortly after the referendum vote and spent the next two years in voluntary exile. He continued to promote the pan-Somalism cause until September 1960, when he died in an airplane crash.¹⁰⁷

Road to Independence

In March 1967, another referendum on independence was held in French Somaliland. The voting took place less than 9 months after French President Charles de Gaulle's visit to Djibouti was met by widespread street demonstrations for



©OliBac / flickr.com
Charles De Gaulle

¹⁰⁰ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 4: The Political Scene,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 62–63.

¹⁰¹ Peter J. Schraeder, “Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From ‘Eye of the Hurricane’ to ‘Boiling Cauldron,’” *African Affairs* 92, no. 367, 203–221, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

¹⁰² Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, “Loi Cadre,” in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 72.

¹⁰³ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 4: The Political Scene,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 66.

¹⁰⁴ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 4: The Government Structure,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 44.

¹⁰⁵ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 4: The Political Scene,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 66.

¹⁰⁶ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 4: The Political Scene,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 69–71.

¹⁰⁷ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 4: The Political Scene,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 69–71.

independence. The vote went against independence by a margin of roughly 60–40. The vote closely followed ethnic lines; most Issa-Somalis voted for independence and Afars and Arabs voted against.^{108, 109} A few months later, a new statute was passed by the French Parliament and the Territorial Assembly granted the Territoire Français des Afars et des Issas (French Somaliland’s new name) autonomy in many of its internal affairs.

Ethnic tensions between the Issas and Afars flared into violence on several occasions in 1967 and early 1968, sometimes targeting leading local politicians. For instance, Ali Aref Bourhan, an Afar political leader who led the Governmental Council for most of the period between 1960 and 1977, escaped an assassination attempt in May 1968.¹¹⁰ Several other attempts on Ali Aref’s life occurred in late 1975 as political violence once again escalated during a period of heightened demands for complete independence from France.¹¹¹

A new citizenship law was created in 1976. The law was judged more beneficial for the Issa-Somali population because revised citizenship restrictions allowed more of them to be recognized as French citizens (and thus potential voters).¹¹² The new citizens quickly had a chance to exercise their new voting rights in May of the following year, when yet another referendum on independence was held. Most of the resistance to independence had evaporated in the decade since the last vote and the referendum passed easily.¹¹³ On 27 June 1977, Djibouti became an independent state.

The Hassan Gouled Era

Hassan Gouled was elected the first president of Djibouti, the nation’s new name. Nearly 20 years after he first became one of Djibouti’s early political leaders, Gouled faced a large list of challenges during the country’s first years. Foremost among these was the war in the adjoining Somali-inhabited Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Here, the Ethiopian army was fighting a pro-Somalia separatist group. Djibouti soon became a sanctuary for 30,000 Somali refugees fleeing the fighting in Ogaden. One of the nation’s economic lifelines—the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad—was sabotaged by the Somali rebels and remained inoperative for a year.^{114, 115} Terrorist attacks by Afar militant



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org
Hassan Gouled

¹⁰⁸ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 4: The Political Scene,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 96.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Tholomier, “Chapter 1: The TFAI’s Peoples: A Difficult Fusion,” in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 5.

¹¹⁰ Robert Tholomier, “Chapter 1: The TFAI’s Peoples: A Difficult Fusion,” in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 6–7.

¹¹¹ Robert Tholomier, “Chapter 2: The Governmental Process,” in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 18–19.

¹¹² Robert Tholomier, “Chapter 2: The Internal Policy of the Territory,” in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 38–39.

¹¹³ Robert Tholomier, “Chapter 4: Viewpoints on Independence,” in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 73–74.

¹¹⁴ Robert Tholomier, “Chapter 8: Postscript (1977–1980),” in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 131–134.

groups operating out of Ethiopia also plagued Djibouti during its early years.¹¹⁶ Despite the significant ethnic strains between the Issas, who dominated the nation's capital, and the Afars of the northern and western hinterlands, Gouled kept the country together for more than a decade. The relative peace in the volatile Horn of Africa was considered an accomplishment.¹¹⁷

In 1979, Gouled formed the *Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès* (RPP), a political party that became the conduit for government patronage.^{118, 119} Between 1981 and 1992 the RPP was Djibouti's sole legal political party.¹²⁰ Gouled, an Issa, carefully selected ministers so as to maintain ethnic balance between the Afars and Issas.¹²¹ All of Gouled's Prime Ministers, including Barkat Groud Hamadou who served from 1978–2001, were Afars.¹²²

The Djibouti Civil War

Although not in an overwhelmingly blatant manner, Issas, nonetheless, continued to dominate the nation's civil service, military, and RPP.¹²³ Accordingly, tensions once again began to mount between the Issas and Afar tribespeople, culminating in an Afar attack on military barracks in Tadjourah in January 1991. The attack led to the arrest of the former President of the Governmental Council, Ali Aref Bourhan. He was later sentenced to 10 years in prison.¹²⁴

In November 1991, roughly 3,000 Afar fighters representing the *Front pour le Resauration de l'Unité et la Démocratie* (FRUD) launched an offensive that resulted in

¹¹⁵ Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Djibouti – Politics, Government, and Taxation," n.d., <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Africa/Djibouti-POLITICS-GOVERNMENT-AND-TAXATION.html>

¹¹⁶ Robert Tholomier, "Chapter 8: Postscript (1977–1980)," in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 133–135.

¹¹⁷ Adam Bernstein, "Hassan Gouled Aptidon, First President of Djibouti," *Washington Post*, 30 November 2006, <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/1170668111.html?FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&date=Nov+30%2C+2006&author=Adam+Bernstein++Washington+Post+Staff+Writer&pub=The+Washington+Post&edition=&startpage=B.6&desc=Hassan+Gouled+Aptidon%2C+First+President+Of+Djibouti>

¹¹⁸ Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Djibouti – Politics, Government, and Taxation," n.d., <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Africa/Djibouti-POLITICS-GOVERNMENT-AND-TAXATION.html>

¹¹⁹ Robert Tholomier, "Chapter 8: Postscript (1977–1980)," in *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 137.

¹²⁰ Minorities at Risk Project, "Chronology for Afars in Djibouti," Refworld, 2004, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic,463af2212,469f2d5a2,469f3882c,0.html>

¹²¹ Peter J. Schraeder, "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From 'Eye of the Hurricane' to 'Boiling Cauldron,'" *African Affairs* 92, no. 367, 203–221, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

¹²² Peter J. Schraeder, "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From 'Eye of the Hurricane' to 'Boiling Cauldron,'" *African Affairs* 92, no. 367, 203–221, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

¹²³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: History: Independence and the Gouled Presidency (1977–1999): Balancing Ethnic Tensions," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti>

¹²⁴ Amnesty International, "Document – Djibouti: Prisoners of Conscience – Unfair Trial by Security Tribunal," n.d., <http://195.234.175.160/en/library/asset/AFR23/004/1992/en/89209df8-ed9c-11dd-9ad7-350fb2522bdb/afr230041992en.html>

the capture of most of northern Djibouti. (Only at the towns of Tadjoura and Obock were government forces able to hold out.)¹²⁵ A massacre of 30 Afars in the Arhiba district of Djibouti in December 1991 drew attention from international nongovernmental organizations and caused a shift in the Gouled administration's civil war policy. Shortly after the massacre, Gouled signaled his willingness to enter negotiations with FRUD about a multiparty political system in Djibouti. After FRUD called a ceasefire in February 1992, the government lifted its northern economic blockades and quickly submitted a draft constitution calling for a multiparty political system of no more than four parties.¹²⁶ The new constitution, Djibouti's first, was approved by an overwhelming majority in September 1992. Three months later Djibouti had its first multiparty elections. The RPP won all the legislative seats, taking over 70% of the total vote.¹²⁷ Few Afars, however, took part in either the referendum vote or the legislative elections.

The FRUD continued their battle against government forces until late 1994, when most of the organization's leaders signed a peace accord leading to a disarmament and integration of some of the FRUD fighters into the country's military. A dissident wing of the group led by former Djibouti Prime Minister Ahmed Dini Ahmed, never accepted the peace pact. The group continued fighting until 2001, when they signed a peace treaty with the government.¹²⁸

The Ismail Omar Guelleh Era

Gouled remained Djibouti's president until 1999, when he stepped down at the age of 83 due to ill health. His last election win came in 1993, the only time in his 22 years as president that he faced other candidates.¹²⁹ Gouled chose his nephew Ismail Omar Guelleh to succeed him. He had long served his uncle as both chief of staff and head of the state security forces.¹³⁰ Guelleh defeated his sole challenger, Moussa Ahmed Idriss, in the 1999 presidential election, which was judged by international observers to be "generally fair" and marred by "only minor technical difficulties."¹³¹ Less than 9 months after the election, Guelleh survived a coup attempt led by the Djibouti's former Police Chief Yacin Yabeh Galab, who was fired by Guelleh



¹²⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From 'Eye of the Hurricane' to 'Boiling Cauldron,'" *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993), 203–221, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

¹²⁶ Peter J. Schraeder, "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From 'Eye of the Hurricane' to 'Boiling Cauldron,'" *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993), 203–221, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

¹²⁷ Peter J. Schraeder, "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From 'Eye of the Hurricane' to 'Boiling Cauldron,'" *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993), 203–221, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

¹²⁸ Andrew McGregor, Jamestown Foundation, "Djibouti Facing Local Insurgency and Threats From Somali Islamists," *Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 9 (25 September 2009), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35539](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35539)

¹²⁹ African Elections Database, 14 April 2011, <http://africanelections.tripod.com/dj.html>

¹³⁰ Encyclopedia of World Biography, "Ismail Omar Guelleh," 2006, <http://www.notablebiographies.com/newsmakers2/2006-Ei-La/Guelleh-Ismail-Omar.html>

¹³¹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2000*, 23 February 2001, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/665.htm>

shortly after he became president.^{132, 133} Guelleh was reelected in 2005, running unopposed because other political parties boycotted the election.¹³⁴

During Guelleh's presidency, the port of Djibouti has experienced a dramatic trade increase. This has happened, in part, because Eritrea's port of Assab, formerly Ethiopia's main sea outlet, was closed in 1998. At that time, Eritrea and Ethiopia began a 2-year war over a border dispute that still simmers on and off.¹³⁵ The Guelleh administration also agreed in 2002 to host the U.S. military's Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonnier. This force of roughly 2,000 Americans provides developmental, humanitarian, and anti-terrorist assistance for Djibouti and other countries in the region.¹³⁶

In April 2011, Guelleh ran for a third term as president, a move that required passing a constitutional amendment to extend the two-term limit. Guelleh easily defeated his single opponent in an election that most political parties sat out and urged voters to boycott. Nonetheless, the reported turnout included about 70% of the registered Djiboutian voters.¹³⁷ Large street protests broke out in the capital during the months leading up to the election.¹³⁸

¹³² Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2000*, 23 February 2001, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/665.htm>

¹³³ Encyclopedia of World Biography, "Ismail Omar Guelleh," 2006, <http://www.notablebiographies.com/newsmakers2/2006-Ei-La/Guelleh-Ismail-Omar.html>

¹³⁴ BBC News, "Djibouti Leader Wins One-Man Poll, 9 April 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4421515.stm>

¹³⁵ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

¹³⁶ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

¹³⁷ BBC News Africa, "Djibouti: President Ismael Omar Guelleh Wins Third Term," 9 April 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13024117>

¹³⁸ BBC News Africa, "Djibouti: Ismael Omar Guelleh Faces Huge Protest March," 18 February 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12510799>

Chapter 2: Assessment

6. Djibouti was part of the Abbasid sultanate between the 7th and 9th centuries.

False

During the 12th through the mid-17th centuries, the Djibouti region was part of the Adal Muslim kingdom.

7. Djibouti's earliest ports were Tadjoura and Obock.

True

The coastal region of modern-day Djibouti was of limited maritime importance until the last century and a half. While coastal settlements did exist at Tadjoura and Obock on the northern shore of the Gulf of Tadjoura, they were backwater ports in comparison to Massawa and Zeila.

8. Obock was the first French territorial outpost in the Djibouti region, although it was mostly neglected for nearly two decades.

True

By 1862, the French had acquired, by treaty, territorial cession for all of the modern-day Djibouti coast, stretching from southwest of Obock to the present-day northern coastal border with Eritrea. The French raised their flag at Obock, but for nearly 20 years they otherwise ignored their new foothold on the Red Sea coast.

9. The village/port of Djibouti grew quickly after it was founded in 1888.

True

The port on the southern side of the Gulf of Tadjoura has a good supply of water and is a better natural harbor than Obock. Supported by a flourishing arms trade, the town of Djibouti grew quickly and became the capital of French Somaliland.

10. A milestone in Djibouti's history was the 1917 completion of the railroad that linked the port of Djibouti to Cairo in Egypt.

False

In 1897, construction began on a railroad connecting the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa with the port of Djibouti. A 1906 bankruptcy by the company constructing the railroad led to a long delay in completing the Addis Ababa segment, which finally was opened in 1917.

Chapter 3: Economy

Introduction

Djibouti's modern economy centers on its strategic location on the Red Sea. With few natural resources to exploit, Djibouti's port has become the country's economic engine. It provides a maritime trade outlet to neighboring Ethiopia, one of Africa's most populous countries. Over the last decade, foreign investment in upgraded port facilities and other infrastructure projects have helped spur steady economic growth in Djibouti. Nonetheless, rampant poverty and unemployment remain burdensome national problems. The government has tried to broaden the nation's economy through initiatives targeting investment in light industry and in selective service sectors such as banking, tourism, and telecommunications.¹³⁹



©Charles Roffey
Port, Djibouti City

Agriculture

Less than 1% of the land in Djibouti is arable.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, agriculture generates only 3–5% of Djibouti's gross domestic product (GDP) and produces only 10% of its food. Nevertheless, 25–33% of the population (and 90% of the rural populace) work in the agricultural sector. In rural areas, livestock herding (mostly goats) has been the traditional way of life. The protein-rich milk and other dairy products provided by these animals are a primary nutritional source for nomadic herders.¹⁴¹ However, several waves of drought in recent years have decimated many of the herds. In turn, the impoverished herders and their families have migrated to cities. This has placed additional pressure on overburdened urban infrastructure.¹⁴²



©Charles Roffey
Goats, Obock

The minimal farming that does take place in Djibouti occurs on about 1,500 garden plots of 0.5–3 ha (1.2–7.4 acres).¹⁴³ Overall, there are approximately 1,000 ha (2,500 acres) of land under cultivation. Most of these small farms produce fruits and vegetables used

¹³⁹ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Recent Economic Developments and Prospects," 8 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

¹⁴⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti," in *The World Factbook*, 14 June 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

¹⁴¹ Jennifer N. Brass, "The Political Economy of Livestock Policy: The Case of Djibouti" (working paper no. 02–08, IGAD Livestock Policy Initiative, Institute for International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 4, http://www.igad-lpi.org/publication/docs/IGADLPI_WP02_08_Djibouti.pdf

¹⁴² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices: Djibouti," 2011, <http://www.fao.org/isfp/country-information/djibouti/ru/>

¹⁴³ Jennifer N. Brass, "The Political Economy of Livestock Policy: The Case of Djibouti" (working paper no. 02–08, IGAD Livestock Policy Initiative, Institute for International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 18, http://www.igad-lpi.org/publication/docs/IGADLPI_WP02_08_Djibouti.pdf

primarily for personal consumption.¹⁴⁴ In near-urban areas, grasses may be cultivated for livestock feed, providing more marketable livestock.¹⁴⁵ Djibouti's fragile food situation has prompted the government to negotiate the designation of 5,000 ha (12,400 acres) of arable land in both Sudan and Ethiopia for growing crops for the Djiboutian market.¹⁴⁶

Djibouti has more than 370 km (230 mi) of coastline, but fishing contributes minimally to the agricultural economy; a little more than 4% of its exploitable fishing resources are being harvested. A lack of boats, a fishing force with limited training, and the use of inappropriate fishing techniques have been some of the factors limiting the local catch.¹⁴⁷

Industry

The industry sector generates less than 3% of the nation's GDP. Djibouti has little industry beyond a Coca Cola bottling plant, an ice making factory, a desalination plant, and a new factory that produces soft drinks and popsicles.^{148, 149, 150} The underlying reason for this lack of industry is the country's historical difficulty in attracting foreign investment to build plants and factories. Djibouti, a country depending on costly food and energy imports, has a relatively high cost of living for a poor nation. It also lacks a large population of educated and skilled workers.¹⁵¹



¹⁴⁴ World Trade Organization, "Progress Has Been Made in Stabilizing the Economy; Further Reforms Would Help Diversification," 27 February & 1 March 2006, 48,

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp260_e.htm

¹⁴⁵ Jennifer N. Brass, "The Political Economy of Livestock Policy: The Case of Djibouti" (working paper no. 02-08, IGAD Livestock Policy Initiative, Institute for International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 19, http://www.igad-lpi.org/publication/docs/IGADLPI_WP02_08_Djibouti.pdf

¹⁴⁶ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Structural Issues," 8 June 2011,

<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

¹⁴⁷ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Recent Economic Developments and Prospects," 8 June 2011,

<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

¹⁴⁸ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Recent Economic Developments and Prospects," 8 June 2011,

<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

¹⁴⁹ Jennifer N. Brass, "The Political Economy of Livestock Policy: The Case of Djibouti" (working paper no. 02-08, IGAD Livestock Policy Initiative, Institute for International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 3, http://www.igad-lpi.org/publication/docs/IGADLPI_WP02_08_Djibouti.pdf

¹⁵⁰ Groupe Coubèche, "Djibouti Distribution-Industrie: Key Points," n.d.,

http://www.coubeche.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=53&lang=en

¹⁵¹ Jennifer N. Brass, "The Political Economy of Livestock Policy: The Case of Djibouti" (working paper no. 02-08, IGAD Livestock Policy Initiative, Institute for International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 3, 11, http://www.igad-lpi.org/publication/docs/IGADLPI_WP02_08_Djibouti.pdf

Energy Resources

Djibouti has very little indigenous fossil fuel and no water sources to supply hydroelectric energy, although the government has been seeking foreign investment for offshore exploration.¹⁵² The nation's electrical needs are mostly fulfilled by power plants run on costly imported diesel oil.¹⁵³ Demand often outstrips supply, especially in summer when the surge of air conditioning use causes periodic power outages.¹⁵⁴ Djibouti's electricity source was entirely domestic until May 2011, when Ethiopia began exporting power to its northern neighbor.¹⁵⁵



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org
Lake Assal, site for possible geothermal project

Because Djibouti has no refineries, all of its oil and fuel products—gasoline, jet fuel, kerosene—are imported as refined products.¹⁵⁶ Alternative energy sources such as geothermal, solar, and wind, have all been explored as potential power options, but no projects have advanced beyond the planning stage. A proposed geothermal project at Lake Assal has successfully passed a feasibility study, but the government has had difficulty attracting the necessary investment to begin construction.¹⁵⁷ An Australian company signed a joint venture with Djibouti's Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources in October 2010 to develop the Lake Assal geothermal field, with the initial phase being the construction of a 50 megawatt power plant. But full financing for the project has yet to be arranged.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti," in *The World Factbook*, 14 June 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

¹⁵³ Houssein Osman Guelleh, "Automation of a Geothermal Power Plant in Djibouti: Type of Suitable Control Equipment and Degree of Automation for Djibouti" (paper, REYST report 03–2010, Reykjavík Energy Graduate School of Sustainable Systems, Reykjavík, Iceland, January 2010) 9, http://www.reyst.is/media/PDF/Houssein_small.pdf

¹⁵⁴ Afrol News, "Djibouti Desperate for Energy Investors," Hiiraan Online, 20 January 2011, http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2011/jan/djibouti_desperate_for_energy_investors.aspx

¹⁵⁵ William Davison, "Ethiopia Begins Electricity Imports to Djibouti, Utility Says," Bloomberg.com, 10 June 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-06-10/ethiopia-begins-electricity-exports-to-neighboring-djibouti-utility-says.html>

¹⁵⁶ Reegle.info, "Djibouti: Reliance," n.d., <http://www.reegle.info/countries/DJ#sources>

¹⁵⁷ Afrol News, "Djibouti Desperate for Energy Investors," Hiiraan Online, 20 January 2011, http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2011/jan/djibouti_desperate_for_energy_investors.aspx

¹⁵⁸ Earth Heat Resources, Ltd., "Earth Heat to Develop Major Geothermal Resource in the Rift Valley," 22 October 2010, http://www.earthheat.com.au/pdf/asx/22-10-10_-_Fiale_Announcement.pdf

Mineral Resources

Salt is Djibouti's primary mineral resource. Since 1998, salt mining has been carried out by private companies at Lake Assal, the world's second-saltiest lake.¹⁵⁹ Salt production has increased significantly since 2004, when Ethiopia, the primary destination for Djibouti's salt, lifted a steep tariff on salt imports.¹⁶⁰



©Charles Rolfe
Salt caravan

Djibouti also has viable, recoverable deposits of perlite, a volcanic glass that has numerous commercial applications. Perlite production in Djibouti commenced in 2009.¹⁶¹ Total perlite deposits in Djibouti are estimated to be 23 million tonnes (25.4 tons), or roughly 14 times the worldwide perlite production in 2009.^{162, 163}

Trade

Djibouti has a persistently negative trade balance because it does not produce any significant exports. Virtually all of Djibouti's manufactured goods and the overwhelming majority of its food are imported. Nearly 50% of these imports come from France and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE is the corporate home of the Dubai World Group, whose subsidiaries run the port and airport in Djibouti as well as several other trade and tourism facilities.^{164, 165}



©AR AlHashemi
Airport

Some of Djibouti's trade shortfall is made up indirectly in port fees and transit taxes on goods shipped through Djibouti's port by landlocked African countries such as Ethiopia.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ Mark Bitterman, "Djibouti's Mystery – Salt From Lake Assal," Salt News, 28 August 2010, <http://www.saltnews.com/2010/08/djiboutis-mystery-salt-from-lake-assal/>

¹⁶⁰ Thomas R. Yager, "The Mineral Industry of Djibouti," in *2009 Minerals Yearbook*, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, January 2011, 12.1, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2009/myb3-2009-dj.pdf>

¹⁶¹ Wallace P. Bolen, "Perlite," in *2009 Minerals Yearbook*, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, January 2011, 55.4, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/commodity/perlite/myb1-2009-perli.pdf>

¹⁶² African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Structural Issues," 8 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

¹⁶³ Wallace P. Bolen, "Perlite," in *2009 Minerals Yearbook*, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, January 2011, 55.4, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/commodity/perlite/myb1-2009-perli.pdf>

¹⁶⁴ International Trade Centre, "Trade Performance HS: Imports of Djibouti - 00 All Industries (2009, in USD Thousands)," 2011, <http://legacy.intracem.org/menus/countries.htm?as=%28S%28ghh4fd45wpfyo255q34ptr3k%29%29>

¹⁶⁵ Fortune.com, "Grand Vision: Moving Up a Gear," (advertising section, n.d.) S4, http://www.timeincnewsgrupecustompub.com/sections/071015_Djibouti.pdf

¹⁶⁶ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

Tourism

Djibouti's tourism sector remains small, although it has shown steady growth over the last decade. Tourist arrivals in Djibouti increased from 20,000 in 2000 to more than 58,000 in 2009, the last year for which data are available.^{167, 168} A majority of these visitors are French nationals.¹⁶⁹ The country only has about 1,200 lodging rooms, most of which are in the city of Djibouti.¹⁷⁰



Banking and Currency

In recent years, competition has increased in Djibouti's modest banking sector. For many years, two French-owned commercial banks dominated Djibouti's banking industry: the Bank for Commerce and Industry and the Indosuez Bank. Between 2006 and 2011, nine new foreign banks opened for business, several of which are Islamic banks (i.e. banks that do not charge interest).^{171, 172} While the new banks' deposits have grown by 25% since 2009, their combined business still makes up 10% of the banking sector.¹⁷³ The banking sector's ability to further expand is hampered by the fact that only 8% of all Djiboutians have bank accounts. The government has tried to address this problem in several ways, including guaranteeing access to a bank account for those workers earning more than a specified amount each month.¹⁷⁴



Djibouti's currency is the Djiboutian franc (ISO code: DJF). Since 1949 the DJF has been pegged against the U.S. dollar (USD). In the early 1970s, the DJF-to-USD exchange rate

¹⁶⁷ Proinvest, "Regional Investment Conference Tourism: Country Profile: Djibouti," 27–29 June 2007, 7, http://www.bk-conseil.com/espaceinformation/documentation/tourism/Djibouti_Country_Profile.pdf

¹⁶⁸ Djibouti Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, "Experts of ECA Discussing the Future of Tourism in East Africa, Djibouti," 22 February 2011,

http://djiboutiembassyke.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=291:experts-of-eca-discussing-the-future-of-tourism-in-east-africa-djibouti&catid=36:all&Itemid=50

¹⁶⁹ Proinvest, "Regional Investment Conference Tourism: Country Profile: Djibouti," 27–29 June 2007, 7, http://www.bk-conseil.com/espaceinformation/documentation/tourism/Djibouti_Country_Profile.pdf

¹⁷⁰ Djibouti Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, "Experts of ECA Discussing the Future of Tourism in East Africa, Djibouti," 22 February 2011,

http://djiboutiembassyke.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=291:experts-of-eca-discussing-the-future-of-tourism-in-east-africa-djibouti&catid=36:all&Itemid=50

¹⁷¹ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement – Djibouti," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157268.htm>

¹⁷² Martina Fuchs, "Djibouti Sees Boom in Banking Sector," Reuters, 22 March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157268.htm>

¹⁷³ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement – Djibouti," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157268.htm>

¹⁷⁴ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement – Djibouti," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157268.htm>

was reset on two occasions, in both cases increasing the value of the DJF relative to the dollar. Since 1973, the exchange rate has been steady at 177.721 DJF to 1 USD.¹⁷⁵

Investment

Foreign direct investment in Djiboutian businesses steadily increased during much of the 2000s, reaching a peak of USD 234 million in 2008.¹⁷⁶ Much of this investment has focused on the development of a new port facility at Doraleh, which includes both a container terminal and an oil jetty and terminal. The container terminal alone, a joint venture between the government of Djibouti and the Dubai-based port operator DP World, cost USD 400 million. It was financed through an innovative mixture of Islamic shari'a-compliant loans carrying no interest and conventional bank loans.¹⁷⁷



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Port, Doraleh

When the Doraleh Port Facility was being constructed, another subsidiary of DP World's parent company built the Kempinski Djibouti Palace Hotel, the largest and most luxurious hotel in the nation.¹⁷⁸ This hotel, built at a cost of USD 300 million, has hosted several high-profile regional and international conferences. It is credited for partially stimulating the rise in tourism in the country.¹⁷⁹

The completion of the Doraleh Port Facility and the Kempinski Djibouti Palace Hotel in the late 2000s, and the lack of projects in the pipeline, explains the drop in foreign direct investment in 2009 and 2010.¹⁸⁰

Dubai has been far from the only foreign investor in Djibouti. The governments of France and the United States, both of which have military installations in the country, funnel developmental aid into Djibouti, although French contributions have been declining in

¹⁷⁵ Kurt Schuler, "Tables of Modern Monetary Systems," n.d., <http://users.erols.com/kurrency/dj.htm>

¹⁷⁶ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement – Djibouti," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157268.htm>

¹⁷⁷ Ethan Chorin, "Articulating a 'Dubai Model' of Development: The Case of Djibouti" (paper, Dubai School of Government, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, September 2010), 35–36, <http://www.dsg.ae/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FOwx0Fhcqdo=>

¹⁷⁸ Ethan Chorin, "Articulating a 'Dubai Model' of Development: The Case of Djibouti," (paper, Dubai School of Government, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, September 2010), 40–43, <http://www.dsg.ae/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FOwx0Fhcqdo=>

¹⁷⁹ Ethan Chorin, "Articulating a 'Dubai Model' of Development: The Case of Djibouti" (paper, Dubai School of Government, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, September 2010), 47–48, <http://www.dsg.ae/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FOwx0Fhcqdo=>

¹⁸⁰ Ethan Chorin, "Articulating a 'Dubai Model' of Development: The Case of Djibouti" (paper, Dubai School of Government, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, September 2010), 67, <http://www.dsg.ae/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FOwx0Fhcqdo=>

recent years.¹⁸¹ Much of U.S. aid has targeted social, governance, health, education, and security issues.¹⁸² The only U.S. private investment of any major significance in Djibouti has been in a salt mine in the Lake Assal area. China, which has partially funded numerous infrastructure projects throughout Africa, also has been actively involved in Djiboutian development. Chinese companies have constructed several buildings in Djibouti, including major government structures such as the People's Palace (the nation's primary culture and arts venue) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building.^{183, 184}

Transportation

Djibouti's upgraded port facilities are the nation's economic lifeline. Other transportation infrastructures that link to the ports are also of critical importance in assuring Djibouti's strong role as a regional trading hub. DP World, the Dubai company that runs Djibouti's ports, also manages Djibouti International Airport, the country's only significant air facility. The airport serves as a point of entry for goods being transshipped elsewhere either by ship or land. It also is used by both the French and U.S. military to support their local bases.¹⁸⁵



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Train tracks

Most of the goods travelling to or from Ethiopia via Djibouti's ports arrive by truck along a paved road that traverses the southwestern section of Djibouti. The road then angles to the northeast and the city of Djibouti. Another road connects Djibouti with the city of Dire Dawa in Ethiopia, but this road is not paved along the Ethiopian section.¹⁸⁶ In June 2010, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development agreed to loan the Djibouti government USD 27 million to build a paved road connecting Tadjourah to the northern Ethiopian road system.¹⁸⁷ This road will provide an important link to the planned transshipment port at Tadjourah.¹⁸⁸ The Kuwait Fund is also supplying USD 32 million

¹⁸¹ Ethan Chorin, "Articulating a 'Dubai Model' of Development: The Case of Djibouti" (paper, Dubai School of Government, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, September 2010), 67, <http://www.dsg.ae/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FOwx0Fhcqdo=>

¹⁸² Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

¹⁸³ Mike Nelson, "Djibouti's Foreign Relations," Wesleyan University, 14 April 2010, <http://africanworldpolitics.site.wesleyan.edu/2010/04/14/djiboutis-foreign-relations/>

¹⁸⁴ Everyculture.com, "Countries and Their Culture: Djibouti," n.d., <http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Djibouti.html>

¹⁸⁵ Ethan Chorin, "Articulating a 'Dubai Model' of Development: The Case of Djibouti" (paper, Dubai School of Government, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, September 2010), 41, <http://www.dsg.ae/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FOwx0Fhcqdo=>

¹⁸⁶ Jean-Bernard Carillet, et al, "Getting There and Away," in *Ethiopia and Eritrea* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2009), 262.

¹⁸⁷ *The Middle East Times*, "Signature of a Loan Agreement for K.D. 8 Million for the Financing of Tadjourah – Belho Road Project," 30 June 2010, http://www.mideast-times.com/left_news.php?newsid=1244

¹⁸⁸ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Structural Issues," 8 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

of financing for the construction of a paved road from Tadjourah to the small port town of Obock in northern Djibouti.¹⁸⁹

The rail connection between Djibouti and Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, is in disrepair and now only runs as far as Dire Dawa. In May 2011, the government of India pledged a USD 300 million line of credit for a new rail line linking Addis Ababa and Djibouti.¹⁹⁰ Djibouti and Ethiopia, co-owners of the existing railway, have tried for years to find funding for rehabilitation of the track between Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. However, the failure to negotiate an agreement with a private company to run the rail concession has stalled support from European grant-giving agencies.¹⁹¹

Standard of Living

By all measures, the quality of life for the average Djiboutian is low. Poverty and unemployment are rampant in Djibouti. The most recent income-level data (from 2006) revealed that 74% of Djibouti's population lived in relative poverty and more than 42% suffered extreme poverty.¹⁹² The unemployment level stood at 54% in 2010, down from 4 years earlier but still exceptionally high. Malnutrition levels for young children are among the highest in the world, with studies showing that nearly one-third of Djiboutian children suffer from growth retardation or emaciation. The incidence of tuberculosis among the Djibouti population is the highest in the world.¹⁹³



©moomoobloo/flickr.com
Khat leaf

Djibouti's economy has experienced steady growth in recent years, although the effects of this mini-economic boom have not affected the average Djiboutian. The government, in response, has plowed an increasing percentage of its budget into social welfare. In particular, the health and education sectors have received nearly one-third of the country's total expenditures.¹⁹⁴

Even though most Djiboutians earn very little money, a significant percentage of the population buys and uses the drug khat, a mild stimulant that is chewed by the user. Khat is imported from Ethiopia daily (the leafy green plant loses its potency quickly after

¹⁸⁹ Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, "Project Details," 17 May 2011, <http://www.kuwait-fund.org/index.php?option=kfaedprojectdetails&id=3364>

¹⁹⁰ AAOnline.com, "India Pledges 300 Mln USD for Ethio-Djibouti Railway," 24 May 2011, <http://addisababaonline.com/india-pledges-300-mln-usd-for-ethio-djibouti-railway/>

¹⁹¹ Arthur Foch, "The Paradox of the Djibouti-Ethiopia Railway Concession Failure" (paper, Proparco, Centre d'Économie de la Sorbonne, Paris, France, 2011), http://www.afd.fr/jahia/webdav/site/proparco/shared/PORTAILS/Secteur_prive_developpement/PDF/SPD_9/Proparco_SPD_9_UK_The-paradox-of-the-Djibouti-Ethiopia-railway-concession-failure.pdf

¹⁹² African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Social Context and Human Resource Development," 20 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

¹⁹³ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Social Context and Human Resource Development," 20 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

¹⁹⁴ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Social Context and Human Resource Development," 20 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

being harvested) and produces a euphoric feeling as well as a reduction in appetite. One estimate places the average percentage of Djiboutian household income spent on khat at 30%.¹⁹⁵ A typical khat session may last 5 hours, and nearly one-quarter of the population (mostly men) chew it every day.¹⁹⁶ A widely unpopular attempt in the late 1970s to ban khat in Djibouti nearly brought down the government of Hassan Gouled Aptidon.¹⁹⁷ Since then the government has largely taken a hands-off stance toward the drug, which is legal in the country.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ UNICEF, “Tackling Khat Consumption in Djibouti: A Strong New Political Commitment,” 4 September 2008, http://www.unicef.org/media/media_45624.html

¹⁹⁶ K24TV, “Inside Djibouti – The Khat Trade,” YouTube, 21 May 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-v2T9jUe_o

¹⁹⁷ Adam Bernstein, “Hassan Gouled Aptidon, First President of Djibouti,” *Washington Post*, 30 November 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/29/AR2006112901450.html>

¹⁹⁸ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Djibouti,” 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

Chapter 3: Assessment

1. Djibouti's recent droughts have had a major impact on traditional herding practices.

True

In rural areas, livestock herding (mostly goats) has long been the traditional way of life. However, the droughts in recent years have decimated many of the herds.

2. Djibouti's cheap labor costs have made the country a magnet for foreign companies investing in light industry.

False

Djibouti, a country depending on costly food and energy imports, has a relatively high cost of living for a poor nation and lacks a large population of educated and skilled workers. Accordingly, the country has had difficulty attracting foreign investment to build plants and factories.

3. Most of Djibouti's electrical needs are met by power plants using domestically mined coal.

False

Djibouti has very little indigenous fossil fuel and no hydroelectric energy resources. The nation's electrical needs are mostly met by power plants running on costly imported diesel oil. In May 2011, Djibouti began importing electricity from Ethiopia.

4. Djibouti has no mineral resources of any type.

False

Salt is Djibouti's primary mineral resource. Since 1998, salt mining has been carried out by private companies at Lake Assal, the world's second-saltiest lake. Djibouti also has viable, recoverable deposits of perlite.

5. Djibouti consistently imports more than it exports.

True

Djibouti has a persistently negative trade balance because it does not produce any significant products for export. Virtually all of Djibouti's manufactured goods and the overwhelming majority of its food are imported.

Chapter 4: Society

Introduction

Djibouti is a multi-ethnic nation that has largely remained stable, despite lingering inter-ethnic and sometimes interclan tensions. Numerous ethnic-driven conflicts in the countries surrounding Djibouti have often involved ethnic groups and clans whose members also live in Djibouti. Therefore, Djibouti's relative stability is a significant national accomplishment. Djibouti is divided along ethnic lines but people share languages, religion, and a historical tradition of pastoral nomadism.¹⁹⁹ After more than a century of colonial rule, the *lingua franca* is French, a language that is spoken mostly by the nation's educated elite.



© DoD Image
Young girls, Dikhil

Ethnic and Linguistic Groups

Most people in Djibouti belong to one of two main ethnic groups: the Afars (also known as the Danakils) and the Issa Somalis. Each of these groups have clan and subclan classifications. While the Afars and Somalis are culturally and linguistically related, they have traditionally been rivals for political and economic power.²⁰⁰



© DOD Image
School children

Afars

The Afars are concentrated in northern and southwestern Djibouti, including the regions of Obock, Tadjourah, and western Dikhil. Their language, like that of the Somalis, is part of the Eastern Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family.²⁰¹ Traditionally, the Afar lands were split into several sultanates. Today, the Tadjourah sultanate still exists; the present sultan plays a largely ceremonial role, serving mostly as a “court of last resort” in Afar interclan disputes.²⁰² Afars make up an estimated 20–30% of Djibouti's population.^{203, 204, 205} Afars also live in

¹⁹⁹ Everyculture.com, “Countries and Their Culture: Djibouti,” 2011, <http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Djibouti.html>

²⁰⁰ Everyculture.com, “Countries and Their Culture: Djibouti,” 2011, <http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Djibouti.html>

²⁰¹ M. Lewis, ed., “Language Family Index: Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East,” in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_family.asp?subid=993-16

²⁰² Louis Werner, “Djibouti: A Future in Arabic,” *Saudi Aramco World*, March/April 2001, <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200102/djibouti-a.future.in.arabic.htm>

²⁰³ Freedom House, “Freedom in the World – Djibouti (2006),” Refworld, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 19 December 2005,

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country..FREEHOU..DJI..473c555249.0.html>

²⁰⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, “Djibouti: People,” in *The World Factbook*, 14 June 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

²⁰⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, “Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From ‘Eye of the Hurricane’ to ‘Boiling Cauldron,’” *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993): 204, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

the regions of Ethiopia and Eritrea that adjoin Djibouti, an area sometimes referred to as the “Afar triangle.”^{206, 207}

Issa Somalis

When the French arrived in what is now Djibouti, the Issas were the only Somali clan they encountered along the southern coast of the Gulf of Tadjourah.²⁰⁸ The Issas are a subclan of the Dir, one of the six major Somali clans. Traditionally nomadic, the Issas lived in the region where, today, the Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia borders meet.²⁰⁹ In terms of social organization, the Issas have a more egalitarian group structure than the more hierarchical Afars. Within Djibouti, the Issas are divided into two clan families—the majority Abgal and the Dalol. Both subclans consist of several subclans.²¹⁰ Djibouti’s two presidents since independence—Hassan Gouled Aptidon and his nephew Ismail Omar Guelleh—are members of the Mamassan, an Abgal subclan.²¹¹ Overall, the Issas are estimated to represent about one-third of Djibouti’s population.²¹²

The Gadaboursis, another Dir subclan, live in Djibouti city. By one estimate, the Gadaboursis, may represent 15% of the nation’s population. Nonetheless, they have been viewed as foreigners by some Issas because they migrated from northern Somalia in the 20th century during the construction of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway and the expansion of the city’s port.^{213, 214} The Isaaks (approximately 13% of the Djibouti population) are a third Somali clan living in Djibouti city. Like the Gadaboursis, they migrated to Djibouti from Somalia in the last century.²¹⁵

Others

Djibouti’s Arab population (approximately 6%) largely come from Yemen and mostly work in the business sector in Djibouti city. While Modern Standard Arabic is one of Djibouti’s two national languages (French is the other), the form of Arabic spoken is the

²⁰⁶ Louis Werner, “Djibouti: A Future in Arabic,” *Saudi Aramco World*, March/April 2001, <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200102/djibouti-a.future.in.arabic.htm>

²⁰⁷ Peter J. Schraeder, “Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From ‘Eye of the Hurricane’ to ‘Boiling Cauldron,’” *African Affairs*, 92, no. 367 (April 1993): 204, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

²⁰⁸ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, “Chapter 2: Nomads and Sedentaries,” in *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 26–27.

²⁰⁹ Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas, “Ethnic Groups: Somali’s Clan Families and Major Subclans,” 2002, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/somalia_ethnic_2002.jpg

²¹⁰ James S. Olson, “Issa,” in *The Peoples of Africa: An Ethnohistorical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 244.

²¹¹ Amedee Bollee, “Djibouti: From French Outpost to US Base,” *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (2003): 481, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006990?seq=2>

²¹² Peter J. Schraeder, “Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From ‘Eye of the Hurricane’ to ‘Boiling Cauldron,’” *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993): 205, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

²¹³ Peter J. Schraeder, “Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From ‘Eye of the Hurricane’ to ‘Boiling Cauldron,’” *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993): 205, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

²¹⁴ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “Djibouti,” Refworld, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1 April 1991, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic/463af2212,469f2d5a2,3ae6ad1a18,0.html>

²¹⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, “Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From ‘Eye of the Hurricane’ to ‘Boiling Cauldron,’” *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993): 205, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723496?seq=12>

southern Yemeni dialect.^{216, 217} European expatriates (mostly French) and U.S. military personnel also reside in the country, as do fluctuating numbers of refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia.²¹⁸

Religion

Islam is Djibouti's state religion, and nearly all of the country's population is Sunni Muslim.²¹⁹ The constitution grants freedom of religion, and tolerance toward other religions (primarily Christian denominations attended by foreigners) is the norm.²²⁰ The Islam practiced in Djibouti is less conservative than in some other countries. Alcohol is available in stores and nightclubs.

Women cover their heads, but tend to dress more fashionably than in other nearby Muslim countries.²²¹ Among the Afars, Sufi rituals as well as traditions drawn from the ancient animistic Cushitic religion lend an unorthodox element to their practice of Islam.^{222, 223}



© Charles Roffey
Mosque, Djibouti City

Gender Issues

At the beginning of the 2000s, many cultural gender practices criticized by global women's rights organizations were prominent in Djibouti. Female genital mutilation (FGM) was rampant among girls over age 7 (98%), literacy among girls was low (32% vs. 60% for boys), and women were legally discriminated against in rights regarding inheritance, divorce, and employment.²²⁴



© Charles Roffey
Women, Djibouti City

²¹⁶ M. Lewis, ed., "Arabic, Ta'izzi-Adeni Spoken," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=acq

²¹⁷ M. Lewis, ed., "Languages of Djibouti," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=djibouti

²¹⁸ CultureGrams 2009, "Republic of Djibouti: The People: Population," 2009, <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/Staff/hendrickjohn/Africa/Djibouti.pdf>

²¹⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148683.htm>

²²⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148683.htm>

²²¹ CultureGrams 2009, "Republic of Djibouti: The People: Religion," 2009, <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/Staff/hendrickjohn/Africa/Djibouti.pdf>

²²² Encyclopedia.com, "Afar," in *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*, Vol. 9 (New York: Gale, 1996), <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Afar.aspx#1-1G2:3458001454-full>

²²³ Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby, eds., "Afar: Religion," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life: Volume 1 Africa*, 2nd ed. (Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 8, <http://gen.lib.rus.ec/get?nametype=orig&md5=CDA0BEEA05C6A2E04D964791173AB76C>

²²⁴ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1999*, 23 February 2000, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/1999/243.htm>

A decade later, there have been advances in women's rights. Women have become increasingly visible in government and business. A 2008 presidential decree mandating that women occupy no less than 20% of all high-level public sector jobs has helped them achieve this position. Still, inequities exist and some widely condemned practices such as FGM continue, particularly in rural areas.²²⁵ Outreach programs by governmental and non-governmental organizations to stop FGM seem to be having some effect, especially in Djibouti city.²²⁶ Likewise, an action plan promoting increased school attendance has raised the primary school attendance rate for girls to above 50%.²²⁷ Despite these improvements and a new 2002 Family Code that better protects the rights of women and children, gender inequities still remain, especially in the rights of inheritance.^{228, 229}

Traditional Clothing

Many Djibouti women wear colorful traditional dress. Typically, this includes a headscarf (*shalmat*) and a long flowing gown (*dira*) worn over an underskirt (*gorgorat*). Men, particularly in the city, are more likely to wear Western-style shirts and trousers. In rural areas, local herders often wear a *ma'awees* (*futa* in French), similar to a sarong, with a T-shirt or short-sleeved shirt worn on top. Women use henna to decorate their feet and hands, often for ceremonial occasions such as weddings. Older men use it to dye their hair and beards red.²³⁰



© DOD Image
Traditional dress

Arts

Djibouti's Somalis and Afars both have a strong oral tradition that includes poetry and song.²³¹ Somali poetry, in particular, is known for its alliterative, metaphorical style. Before a formal script was introduced in the early 1970s, nearly all of this poetry was composed and performed orally. Even today, most Somali poetry is read aloud rather than silently.²³² In rural Somali villages in Djibouti, local history and news is communicated via poetry recited by the *gabaye* (the village reader). As literacy rates

²²⁵ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010*, 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154343.htm>

²²⁶ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010*, 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154343.htm>

²²⁷ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

²²⁸ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

²²⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010*, 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154343.htm>

²³⁰ CultureGrams 2009, "Republic of Djibouti: The People: Personal Appearance," 2009, <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/Staff/hendrickjohn/Africa/Djibouti.pdf>

²³¹ CultureGrams 2009, "Republic of Djibouti: Lifestyle: The Arts," 2009, <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/Staff/hendrickjohn/Africa/Djibouti.pdf>

²³² SomaliCulture.net, "The Poetry of Somalia," n.d., <http://www.somaliculture.net/poems/index.html>

increase and the nation urbanizes, such oral traditions will most likely fade. Among young people in Djibouti city, they are already becoming a thing of the past.^{233, 234}

Dance is another important aspect of Afar life. It is a common part of social celebrations such as weddings (although it is not as common at Somali social events).²³⁵ Afars are also known for their handicrafts. Afar men traditionally carry a special curved sword known as a *gile*, housed in a leather sheaf. Afar women weave baskets, mats, and wall decorations.^{236, 237}

Folklore and Folk Traditions

Traditionally, Somalis and Afars handed down stories and clan histories orally from generation to generation. For example, the Issas trace their history back to Aqil Abuu Taalib, a cousin of the prophet Muhammad.^{238, 239} A shrine in Djibouti marks his miraculous appearance there.²⁴⁰ The Afars, in turn, have a colorful legend that relates to the origin of the first Afar sultan, Ado'ali.²⁴¹

Sports and Recreation

Djibouti's most popular sport is football (soccer).²⁴² The men's national team competes in international and African tournaments but is often defeated. As of mid-2011, the Djibouti team was the second-lowest ranked team in Africa (only the Seychelles was lower).²⁴³ Women's football also has been gaining in popularity, with more than 20 club teams now competing.²⁴⁴



©Staff Sgt. Robert Barnett/US Army Africa
Service member playing soccer with locals

²³³ Everyculture.com, "Countries and Their Cultures: "Djiboutians," 2011,

<http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Costa-Rica-to-Georgia/Djiboutians.html>

²³⁴ CultureGrams 2009, "Republic of Djibouti: Lifestyle: The Arts," 2009,

<http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/Staff/hendrickjohn/Africa/Djibouti.pdf>

²³⁵ CultureGrams 2009, "Republic of Djibouti: Lifestyle: The Arts," 2009,

<http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/Staff/hendrickjohn/Africa/Djibouti.pdf>

²³⁶ Swords and Antique Weapons, "Sold Item s4436," n.d.,

http://www.swordsantiqueweapons.com/s436_full.html

²³⁷ FeMSEDA, "Afar Region's Handicrafts," n.d., [http://www.ethiopianhandicraft-](http://www.ethiopianhandicraft-femseda.org/Afar%20Region%27s%20Handicrafts.htm)

[femseda.org/Afar%20Region%27s%20Handicrafts.htm](http://www.ethiopianhandicraft-femseda.org/Afar%20Region%27s%20Handicrafts.htm)

²³⁸ Everyculture.com, "Countries and Their Cultures: Djiboutians," 2011,

<http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Costa-Rica-to-Georgia/Djiboutians.html>

²³⁹ I. M. Lewis, "Myth and History in Somali Genealogies," in *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1994), 104–105.

²⁴⁰ I. M. Lewis, "Myth and History in Somali Genealogies," in *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1994), 104–105.

²⁴¹ Daoud A. Alwan and Hohanis Mibrathu, "Hadal Mahiss," in *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 57–58.

²⁴² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: Cultural Life: Sports and Recreation," 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti/280752/Sports-and-recreation>

²⁴³ Fifa.com, "Djibouti: Ranking," 18 May 2011,

<http://www.fifa.com/associations/association=dji/ranking/gender=m/index.html>

²⁴⁴ Shafi'I Mohyaddin Abokar, "Women Football Vastly Growing in Djibouti," Hiraan Online, 29 October 2009, http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2009/oct/women_football_vastly_growing_in_djibouti.aspx

Djibouti has participated in the Summer Olympics since 1984. Its athletes have mostly competed in running events. In 1988 Hussein Ahmed Salah won a bronze medal in the men's marathon, the nation's only Olympic medal to date.²⁴⁵ Djibouti also briefly had a Davis Cup team in tennis during the mid-1990s, even though tennis courts and tennis equipment are in short supply.^{246, 247}

A popular local game, pétanque, was introduced initially by the members of the French army. Similar in its rules to bocce ball, pétanque is often played at night under city streetlights.^{248, 249} By comparison, dominoes and card games are favorite male pastimes during Djibouti's hot afternoons, often played during long khat-chewing sessions.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: Cultural Life: Sports and Recreation," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti/280752/Sports-and-recreation>

²⁴⁶ Maps of World.com, "Tennis in Djibouti," n.d., <http://www.mapsofworld.com/djibouti/sports/tennis.html>

²⁴⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: Cultural Life: Sports and Recreation," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti/280752/Sports-and-recreation>

²⁴⁸ Geneve-Petanque.com, "39th World Championships of Pétanque: Djibouti," 12 July 2003, http://www.geneve-petanque.com/en/1_championships/Djibouti.htm

²⁴⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Djibouti: Cultural Life: Sports and Recreation," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166928/Djibouti/280752/Sports-and-recreation>

²⁵⁰ CultureGrams 2009, "Republic of Djibouti: Lifestyle: Recreation," 2009, <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/Staff/hendrickjohn/Africa/Djibouti.pdf>

Chapter 4: Assessment

11. The Afars are the dominant ethnic group in the southeastern part of Djibouti.

False

The Afars are concentrated in northern and southwestern Djibouti, including the Regions of Obock, Tadjourah, and western Dikhil. Somali clans (Issas, Gadaboursis, and Isaaks) are the dominant ethnic group in southeastern Djibouti and the city of Djibouti.

12. Djibouti's Arab population primarily speaks the southern Yemeni dialect.

True

Djibouti's Arab population (approximately 6%) largely come from Yemen. While Modern Standard Arabic is one of Djibouti's two national languages (French is the other), the form of Arabic spoken in the country is the southern Yemeni dialect.

13. Almost all of Djibouti's population is Sunni Muslim.

True

Islam is Djibouti's state religion, and nearly all of the country's population is Sunni Muslim.

14. The Islam practiced in Djibouti is generally more liberal than in other nearby Muslim countries.

True

Generally, the Islam practiced in Djibouti is less conservative than in some other countries. Alcohol is available in stores and in the country's nightclubs; women cover their heads, but tend to dress more fashionably than in other nearby Muslim countries.

15. The Djibouti government has not tried to curb female genital mutilation.

False

Attempts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to stop FGM seem to be having some effect, especially in Djibouti city.

Chapter 5: Security

Introduction

Djibouti is a small country in a region marked by ethnic conflicts, bloody border wars, and failed (or failing) states. Djibouti's weak military makes preserving security difficult, but a defense arrangement with France has provided some shield against attack. Generally, the government has tried to stay neutral in conflicts with its neighbors.



© DOD Image
Djiboutian Army

Djibouti has suffered its own ethnic conflicts, such as the revolt led by the Afar-dominated *Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et de la Démocratie* (FRUD) insurgency in the 1990s. By 2001, most FRUD combatants had ceased fighting after the second of two peace agreements was signed (the first was signed in 1994). Nonetheless, FRUD remnants continue to wage a low-level insurgency in the northern part of Djibouti to this day.²⁵¹

U.S.-Djiboutian Relations

The U.S. and Djibouti have closely collaborated over the last decade on both military and developmental matters. Since 2002, the U.S. military has leased Camp Lemonnier, a former French Foreign Legion base adjacent to Djibouti International Airport. Currently, Camp Lemonnier houses about 2,200 U.S. military and civilian personnel and is the only U.S. military base on the African continent. It operates as a Forward Operating Site for the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa under the U.S. Military's Africa Command (AFRICOM).^{252, 253, 254} Although security assistance and counterterrorism support is a central mission of the Task Force, its personnel provide aid to humanitarian operations and assist with the building and repairing of local infrastructure (wells, roads, hospitals, schools, etc.).²⁵⁵



© Peter Casier
UN WFP food distribution

²⁵¹ Berouk Mesfin, "Elections, Politics and External Involvement in Djibouti," Institute for Security Studies, 14 April 2011, 7, <http://www.hiiraan.com/2011/May/20110517-135955%2015Apr11Djibouti.pdf>

²⁵² Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

²⁵³ Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," Congressional Research Service, 22 March 2011, 9, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>

²⁵⁴ USAID, U.S. Department of State, "Fiscal Year 2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations: Book II," 2010, 47, http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2010/2010_CBJ_Book_2.pdf

²⁵⁵ Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," Congressional Research Service, 22 March 2011, 21, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>

Djibouti also houses USAID's only non-U.S.-based warehouse for humanitarian food relief, ultimately destined for countries in Africa and Asia.²⁵⁶ Because the country has been plagued by droughts and chronic food insecurity, an average of approximately USD 2.1 million of this food aid has annually gone to Djibouti since 2004.²⁵⁷ Several million dollars of additional USAID funding is allocated each year to provide support for educational opportunity programs and health care systems. In 2010, a little more than USD 1 million of aid was also provided to help train workers for job skills needed in the private sector.²⁵⁸ Overall, between 2004 and 2009, the U.S. was the world's third-largest bilateral provider of developmental assistance to Djibouti, trailing France and Japan.²⁵⁹

Trade between Djibouti and the U.S. is mostly one way. In 2009, for example, the U.S. exported USD 197 million of goods to Djibouti (over half of which were agricultural products), while Djiboutian imports to the U.S. totaled USD 3 million in value.²⁶⁰

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Eritrea

Djibouti has maintained friendly relations with all its neighbors, but Eritrea has been the most challenging. Both countries claim Ras Doumeira, located on the coastal peninsula of the Djibouti–Eritrea border. In June 2008, three days of fighting broke out in the Ras Doumeira region, resulting in the death of more than 35 combatants.^{261, 262} Another Eritrea–Djibouti border skirmish at Ras Doumeira 12 years earlier narrowly avoided escalating into full-scale conflict.²⁶³ In December 2009, the United Nations Security Council placed an arms embargo on Eritrea, which it criticized for not trying to resolve its dispute with Djibouti. Eritrea was also criticized for providing



²⁵⁶ USAID, U.S. Department of State, "USAID: Djibouti," 28 June 2011,

<http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/countries/djibouti>

²⁵⁷ USAID, U.S. Department of State, "Food Aid Donation to the Republic of Djibouti," 15 December 2010,

http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Article/1360/Food_Aid_Donation_to_the_Republic_of_Djibouti

²⁵⁸ USAID, U.S. Department of State, "Fiscal Year 2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations: Book II," 2010, 48, http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2010/2010_CBJ_Book_2.pdf

²⁵⁹ Aidflows, World Bank, "Djibouti: Beneficiary View – Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) – Sources of ODA: Top 10 Donors (in US\$M)," n.d.,

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/CFPEXT/Resources/299947-1266002444164/index.html>

²⁶⁰ Office of the United States Trade Representative, "Djibouti," n.d., <http://www.ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/east-africa/djibouti>

²⁶¹ VOANews.com, "African Union Praises Eritrea, Djibouti Border Mediation," 8 June 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/Eritrea-Djibouti-to-Enter-Mediation-on-Border-Issue-95862894.html>

²⁶² Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti: International Disputes," in *The World Factbook*, 5 July 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

²⁶³ Menas Borders, "Border Focus: Eritrea and Djibouti," 2011, http://www.menasborders.com/menasborders/border_focus/Eritrea-Djibouti.aspx

financial and logistical help to Islamic insurgent groups undermining UN efforts to bring stability to Somalia.²⁶⁴

The tension between Eritrea and Djibouti can partially be explained by Djibouti's close relations with Ethiopia. Eritrea fought to break away from Ethiopia for several decades between the 1960s and the early 1990s; it achieved independence in 1993. Since then, Ethiopia and Eritrea have been in a bitter standoff that ignited between 1998 and 2000. Relations have remained tense and unresolved since the end of fighting.²⁶⁵ Djibouti benefitted economically from the 1998–2000 Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict because its port became the trade outlet for Ethiopia. Eritrea accused Djibouti of supporting Ethiopia's war efforts, so Djibouti broke off relations with Eritrea in November 1998. Diplomatic relations between the two nations were not fully reestablished until 2001.²⁶⁶ Relations were subsequently broken again during the 2008 border conflict.²⁶⁷

In June 2010, Eritrea and Djibouti signed a Qatar-mediated agreement outlining the process by which the Ras Doumeira border will be demarcated.²⁶⁸ The agreement placed Qatar in charge of monitoring the contested border region until the dispute is settled.²⁶⁹

Somalia

Djibouti borders the northwestern section of Somalia, which was known as British Somaliland during the colonial period. Today, this area of Somalia is known as Somaliland. In 1991, Somaliland declared independence from the rest of Somalia, but no other country in the world has recognized it as a sovereign state.²⁷⁰ Djibouti allows people to cross its border using a Somaliland passport, even though the Djiboutian



²⁶⁴ United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1907 (2009): Adopted by the Security Council at its 6254th Meeting, on 23 December 2009,” 23 December 2009, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/665/58/PDF/N0966558.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁶⁵ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Ethiopia,” 23 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm>

²⁶⁶ Medhane Tadesse, “The Djibouti-Eritrea Conflict,” InterAfricaGroup, October 2008, 3–4, http://www.ssrnetwork.net/uploaded_files/4402.pdf

²⁶⁷ United Nations Security Council, “Letter Dated 11 September 2008 From the Secretary General Addressed to the President of the Security Council: Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Djibouti-Eritrea Crisis,” 12 September 2008, 11, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/F7C0E5B6F23B3076852574C900695941-Full_Report.pdf

²⁶⁸ United Nations Security Council, “Djibouti/Eritrea,” July 2010, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.6115643/k.6B3E/July_2010brDjiboutiEritrea.htm

²⁶⁹ Awate.com, “Agreement Between the State of Eritrea and the Republic of Djibouti,” 7 June 2010, http://awate.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Text_of_Eritrea_Djibouti_Agreement.pdf

²⁷⁰ Marc Lacey, “The Signs Say Somaliland, but the World Says Somalia,” *New York Times*, 5 June 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/05/world/africa/05somaliland.html>

government does not recognize Somaliland as a country.²⁷¹ Somaliland has growing economic ties with Djibouti, although its main port, Berbera, competes with Djibouti for the livestock trade from Ethiopia's Somali-inhabited regions.^{272, 273}

Since 1995, when the United Nations pulled its forces out, Somalia has been a nation without a central government.²⁷⁴ Djibouti has hosted several meetings between leaders of Somali factions with the aim of developing a lasting peace process. A 2008 agreement between Somalia's Transition Federal Government (TFG) and former Islamist rebels was signed in Djibouti. The agreement ultimately led to Ethiopian forces pulling out of Somalia.²⁷⁵ With the assistance of African Union troops, the TFG has subsequently battled the insurgent group al-Shabab, which was classified as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the U.S. Government in March 2008.²⁷⁶

One of the many unfortunate results of the long conflict in Somalia is that many Somalis have been forced to flee their country. Most of these refugees are now in Kenya, although Djibouti houses roughly 14,000 Somalis, almost all of whom live in the Ali Addeh camp in southeastern Djibouti.²⁷⁷

Ethiopia

Djibouti and Ethiopia share common economic interests that make bilateral relations of utmost importance to both countries.²⁷⁸ Djibouti's port is Ethiopia's main import and export outlet. This port trade, in turn, spurs much of Djibouti's economic activity. The two nations are also linked by transportation and power infrastructure. Ethiopia and Djibouti have long been connected by a joint-owned rail system (although its current



© Charles Roffey
Djibouti / Ethiopia border

²⁷¹ Marc Lacey, "The Signs Say Somaliland, but the World Says Somalia," *New York Times*, 5 June 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/05/world/africa/05somaliland.html>

²⁷² *The Economist*, "Djibouti's Troubles: Wee But Worrisome," 24 February 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/18233712>

²⁷³ Nisar Majid, "Livestock Trade in the Djibouti, Somali and Ethiopian Borderlands," Chatham House, September 2010, http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/17234_0910majid.pdf

²⁷⁴ Ted Dagne, "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects For a Lasting Peace," Congressional Research Service, 20 April 2011, 25, http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL33911_20110420.pdf

²⁷⁵ Ted Dagne, "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects For a Lasting Peace," Congressional Research Service, 20 April 2011, 11, http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL33911_20110420.pdf

²⁷⁶ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State "Chapter 6. Terrorist Organizations," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140900.htm>

²⁷⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "2011 UNHCR Country Operations Profile - Djibouti," 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e483836>

²⁷⁸ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Political Context," 8 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

disrepair has rendered the railway less useful). In addition, a heavily used road system connects the port of Djibouti with Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.²⁷⁹ In May 2011, Ethiopia began exporting hydroelectrically generated electricity via transmission lines to Djibouti.²⁸⁰ It is also the primary food exporter to Djibouti.²⁸¹

Despite their numerous mutual interests, Djibouti and Ethiopia have not always agreed on key issues. Several times during the early 2000s, the two nations differed over which factions to support in their bids to re-unify Somalia.²⁸² Port access and the port fees that Ethiopia pays Djibouti have also been issues of contention at times.^{283, 284, 285} Ethiopian officials have discussed plans to use other ports, and a port in neighboring Sudan is already being used for sesame exports from northwestern Ethiopia. The port in Berbera, Somaliland is another option because of its proximity to Addis Ababa. But this site still requires much investment in road and port infrastructure.²⁸⁶

Yemen

Djibouti's neighbor across the narrow Bab el Mandeb strait is Yemen. This troubled country was frequently in the headlines during the "Arab Spring" of 2011 when the authoritarian regime of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh created unrest. At the same time, Islamist militants in southern Yemen believed to be aligned with Al Qaeda fought with government security forces for control of cities near the country's key port at Aden.²⁸⁷ In the north, local tribes people sabotaged oil pipelines and power plants. The cumulative effect of this violence and unrest was a tattered economy suffering from shortages of electricity, fuel, and water.^{288, 289}



²⁷⁹ ICA Briefing Memorandum, "The Djibouti-Ethiopia Railway," 3–4 December 2007, 3–6, http://www.icafrica.org/fileadmin/documents/Transport_Meeting/S4-Djibouti-Ethiopia_Railway-Final-EN.pdf

²⁸⁰ William Davison, "Ethiopia Begins Electricity Exports to Neighboring Djibouti, Utility Says," Bloomberg.com, 10 June 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-06-10/ethiopia-begins-electricity-exports-to-neighboring-djibouti-utility-says.html>

²⁸¹ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Political Context," 8 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

²⁸² Patrick Gilkes, "Ethiopia: Recent History," in *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London, UK: Europa Publications, 2003), 414.

²⁸³ Abbay Media, "Port of Djibouti Rejects Ethiopian Shipping Lines Request for Dedicated Space," 7 July 2010, <http://abbaymedia.com/News/?p=2654>

²⁸⁴ Dalje.com, "Ethiopia: Djibouti Port Fees Will Fuel Inflation," 12 December 2008, <http://dalje.com/en-economy/ethiopia--djibouti-port-fees-will-fuel-inflation/214140>

²⁸⁵ Desalegn Sisay, "Ethiopia – Djibouti: Row Erupts Over New Port Directive," Afrik.com, 20 April 2010, http://nazret.com/blog/index.php/2010/04/20/ethiopia_djibouti_row_erupts_over_new_po

²⁸⁶ Addis Voice, "Ethiopia Eying Berbera Port (ERTA)," 24 December 2010, <http://addisvoice.com/2010/12/ethiopia-eying-berbera-port-erta/>

²⁸⁷ Laura Kasinof, "Strategic Sit Is Captured by Militants in Yemen," *New York Times*, 29 June 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/30/world/middleeast/30yemen.html?sq=yemen&st=cse&scp=3&pagewanted=print>

Djibouti watched the events in Yemen unfold with great interest. Most of Djibouti's minority Arab population either originate from or trace their ancestry to Yemen. The two nations have a recent history of good relations. Only months before the 2011 demonstrations in Yemen began, the presidents of the two countries met in Djibouti to discuss matters of mutual interest, such as regional security against piracy and terrorism.²⁹⁰ Prior to that, in July 2010, top leaders from both countries discussed increasing economic ties between Djibouti and Yemen.²⁹¹ Progress on these issues depends on the outcome of Yemen's current struggles, which have been described as a "perfect storm of state failure."²⁹²

Military

Djibouti's military consists of a National Army, which includes the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Gendarmerie (military police).²⁹³ The size of the National Army has shrunk since 2001, when a peace accord was signed with the remnants of the FRUD insurgency.²⁹⁴ Presently, Djibouti's active forces include 8,000 Army, 2,000 Gendarmerie, 250 Air Force, and 200 Navy personnel.²⁹⁵

Another 2,500 or so paramilitary forces are part of the National Security Force, reporting to the Ministry of the Interior.²⁹⁶



© DOD Image
Djiboutian Army in training

Djibouti's armed forces are only one part of the total military presence in the nation. Both France and the United States have military installations in Djibouti, with a combined total of about 5,200 personnel (3,000 French, 2,200 American).²⁹⁷ Under a security arrangement with France, the French military guarantees Djibouti's territorial integrity in

²⁸⁸ Sudarsan Raghavan, "In Yemen, Violence Fuels Economic Collapse," *Washington Post*, 1 July 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-yemen-attacks-fuel-economic-collapse/2011/06/22/AGrvMIth_story.html

²⁸⁹ Robert F. Worth and Laura Kasinor, "Chaos in Yemen Drives Economy to Edge of Ruin," *New York Times*, 2 June 2011,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/03/world/middleeast/03yemen.html?hp=&pagewanted=print>

²⁹⁰ Yemen News Agency (SABA), "Saleh, Gelleh Accent Keeness on Advancing Bilateral Relations," 11 November 2010, <http://75.125.15.108/en/news228612.htm>

²⁹¹ Yemen News Agency (SABA), "Yemen, Djibouti Discuss Security, Economic Cooperation," 28 July 2010, <http://www.sabanews.net/en/news220935.htm>

²⁹² Brian Whitaker, "Yemen – the Next Failed State?," *The Guardian*, 27 July 2009,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jul/27/yemen-failed-state>

²⁹³ Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti: Military," in *The World Factbook*, 14 June 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>

²⁹⁴ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011,

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

²⁹⁵ James Hackett, ed., "Chapter 9: Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Military Balance 2011* (London, UK: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), 421–422.

²⁹⁶ James Hackett, ed., "Chapter 9: Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Military Balance 2011* (London, UK: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), 422.

²⁹⁷ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Djibouti," 9 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm>

the event of a foreign attack. In July 2011, Japan also opened a military base in Djibouti to host its Maritime Self-Defense Force, the first Japanese military base to be located overseas since World War II.²⁹⁸

In May 2011, the Djibouti government announced that it was sending two battalions of troops to Somalia to provide technical support for African Union peacekeeping forces. Al-Shabab, an Islamist group that still controls much of central/southern Somalia, subsequently threatened to treat the Djibouti troops as invading forces.^{299, 300} Djibouti has also sent 38 police officers to Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa to participate in the United Nations peacekeeping mission there.^{301, 302, 303}

Terrorist Groups and Activities

Djibouti has limited resources to develop its own counterterrorism capabilities. But it has been a strong partner in international efforts to reign in terrorist activities in the Horn of Africa and southern Arabian Peninsula.³⁰⁴ Since 2001, when most of the remaining members of the FRUD insurgency reached an agreement with the Djibouti government, only two terrorist attacks have taken place on Djibouti soil.^{305, 306} In



January 2004, six people were injured in a bombing of the Ethiopia-Djibouti railroad. However, the attack in Djibouti may have been tied to Oromo rebel groups in Ethiopia.^{307, 308} More than six years later, in April 2010, six governmental and non-

²⁹⁸ Alex Martin, "First Overseas Military Base Since WWII to Open in Djibouti," *The Japan Times*, 2 July 2011, <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110702f2.html>

²⁹⁹ BaidoMedia.com, "Somalia's Al-Shabaab Warns Djibouti Against Sending Its Troops to the War Torn Country of Somalia," 17 May 2011, <http://baidoamedia.com/?p=2119>

³⁰⁰ Hamsa Omar "Somalia's al-Shabaab Militia Warns Djibouti Against Deployment of Troops, Somaliland Press, 1 July 2001, <http://somalilandpress.com/somalia%E2%80%99s-al-shabaab-militia-warns-djibouti-against-deployment-of-troops-22314>

³⁰¹ United Nations, "UN Mission's Contributions By Country," 31 May 2011, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2011/may11_5.pdf

³⁰² The once stable country officially known in English as the Republic of the Ivory Coast was divided by a civil war in 2002 between government forces and a rebel group known as the New Forces, *See* BBC News, "Ivory Coast Country Profile," 12 April 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/1043014.stm

³⁰³ Central Intelligence Agency, "Cote D'Ivoire," in *The World Factbook*, 5 July 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iv.html>

³⁰⁴ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Chapter 2: Country Reports: Africa Overview," 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

³⁰⁵ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Global Terrorism Database, "Incidents: Djibouti," 2010, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=56>

³⁰⁶ National Counterterrorism Center, Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, "Djibouti," n.d., <https://wits.nctc.gov/FederalDiscoverWITS/index.do?Rd=Country|4294937639|Djibouti&rpp=500&Ns=Country&N=0>

³⁰⁷ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Global Terrorism Database, "Incidents: Djibouti," 2010, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=56>

³⁰⁸ David H. Shinn, "Ethiopia: Governance and Terrorism," in *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Baltimore, MD: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 109–110.

governmental aid workers were briefly held hostage near Obock, an attack thought to have been carried out by remnant FRUD rebels.³⁰⁹

Djibouti has good reason to fear terrorist attacks. Two U.S.-designated terrorist organizations—al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Shabab—operate in Yemen and Somalia, respectively.^{310, 311} In addition, the Eritrean government is believed to have provided financial support to several of the opposition groups fighting in Somalia, including al-Shabab.³¹² Al-Shabab's suicide bombings in Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010 were particularly ominous because they were the first al-Shabab attacks outside Somalia. Fears of al-Shabab becoming a full-fledged transnational terrorist organization increased. Uganda, like Djibouti, provides troop support for the African Union mission in Somalia.^{313, 314}

Other Issues Affecting Stability

Access to Food, Water, and Energy

Djibouti's limited water and arable land make the nation's poor extremely vulnerable to the effects of prolonged drought or spikes in worldwide food prices.³¹⁵ Djibouti also has few energy resources. As a result, the cost of providing access to electricity has hindered the country's ability to expand its economic base beyond the service sector activities tied to the port. Such economic reliance on transshippings makes Djibouti extremely vulnerable to regional political instabilities and to slowdowns in the world economy that affect normal shipping patterns and levels.³¹⁶

³⁰⁹ National Counterterrorism Center, Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, "Djibouti," n.d., <https://wits.nctc.gov/FederalDiscoverWITS/index.do?Rd=Country|4294937639|Djibouti&rpp=500&Ns=Country&N=0>

³¹⁰ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Chapter 2: Country Reports: Africa Overview," 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

³¹¹ Politico.com, "Clinton Named Al-Qaeda Yemen as Terror Group a Month Ago," 18 January 2010, http://www.politico.com/blogs/joshgerstein/0110/Clinton_named_AlQaeda_Yemen_as_terror_group_a_month_ago.html

³¹² United Nations Security Council, "Letter Dated 10 March 2010 From the Chairman of the Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea Addressed to the President of the Security Council," 10 March 2010, http://somalitalkradio.com/2010/mar/un_report_somalia.pdf

³¹³ U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti: Country Specific Information," 9 October 2010, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1101.html

³¹⁴ James Hackett, ed., "Chapter 9: Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Military Balance 2011* (London, UK: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), 402.

³¹⁵ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Overview," 22 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

³¹⁶ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Structural Issues," 22 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

Piracy

Attacks on international ships by Somali-based pirates in the Indian Ocean have become a growing and highly publicized problem since 2007.³¹⁷ Although most of the early attacks took place along the coast from central Somalia to northern Tanzania, more recent pirate ventures have spread to the shipping lanes of the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.³¹⁸ Djibouti, located at the narrowest part of this vital maritime route, has been hurt financially by the increasing pirate activity because insurers raised their premiums on ships docking in Djibouti.³¹⁹



© Charles McCain
Pirate skiff, Djibouti coast

Election Protests

In the run-up to Djibouti's 2011 presidential election, several thousand people participated in an unprecedented protest rally that became violent.^{320, 321} In the wake of the violent protests, arrests of opposition political leaders and a governmental ban on opposition political meetings and demonstrations followed.³²²

Although Djibouti has been nominally democratic since independence in 1977, it has not had unrestricted multiparty elections.³²³ Djibouti has had two presidents—both from the same political party and the same Issa subclan.^{324, 325} In 2011, President Ismail Omar Guelleh announced he would run for a third term after the country's National Assembly approved an amendment overturning the constitution's two term limit. This event galvanized the February 2011 protests. Guelleh was subsequently elected to a third term in the April 2011 election, which was boycotted by other political parties.³²⁶ While no

³¹⁷ Reuters Africa, "Somali Piracy Becoming 'Criminal Enterprise,'" 16 February 2011, <http://af.reuters.com/article/somaliaNews/idAFLDE71F27E20110216?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0>

³¹⁸ James Hackett, ed., "Chapter 9: Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Military Balance 2011* (London, UK: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), 403.

³¹⁹ Sami Abdi, "Djibouti, EU Discuss Anti Piracy Mission Off Somali Coast," Africa News, *Sunatimes*, 31 January 2011, <http://africatopnews.com/2011/01/31/djibouti-eu-discuss-anti-piracy-mission-off-somali-coast.html>

³²⁰ Sapa-AP, "Djibouti Evicts US Vote Group Ahead of Election," Times Live, 17 March 2011, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/article973245.ece/Djibouti-evicts-US-vote-group-ahead-of-election>

³²¹ African Economic Outlook, "Djibouti: Political Context Overview," 22 June 2011, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/east-africa/djibouti/>

³²² Berouk Mesfin, Institute for Security Studies, "Elections, Politics and External Involvement in Djibouti," 14 April 2011, 6, <http://www.hiiraan.com/2011/May/20110517-135955%2015Apr11Djibouti.pdf>

³²³ Berouk Mesfin, "Elections, Politics and External Involvement in Djibouti," Institute for Security Studies, 14 April 2011, 2, <http://www.hiiraan.com/2011/May/20110517-135955%2015Apr11Djibouti.pdf>

³²⁴ Amadee Bollee, "Djibouti: From French Outpost to US Base," *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 97 (September 2003): 481, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006990?seq=1>

³²⁵ "Djibouti: Political Organizations," in *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London, UK: Europa Publications, 2004), 369.

³²⁶ Reuters, "Djibouti Opposition Boycotts Presidential Election," 11 March 2011, <http://af.reuters.com/article/djiboutiNews/idAFLDE72A1R720110311>

major political protests have taken place since February 2011, the protests demonstrated that Djibouti is subject to the same pro-democratic reform sentiments that fueled political change in many countries of North Africa and the Middle East during the first half of 2011.³²⁷

³²⁷ *The Economist*, "Djibouti's Troubles: Wee But Worrisome," 24 February 2011, http://www.economist.com/node/18233712?story_id=18233712

Chapter 5: Assessment

1. A low-level insurgency by the Afar-dominated *Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et el al Démocratie* (FRUD) continues to the present day in northern Djibouti.

True

By 2001, most of the FRUD combatants had ceased fighting after the second of two peace agreements was signed. Nonetheless, FRUD remnants continue to wage a low-level insurgency in the northern part of Djibouti to this day.

2. The U.S. military base at Camp Lemonnier is one of five such U.S. military facilities in Africa.

False

Camp Lemonnier is the only U.S. military base on the African continent. It operates as a Forward Operating Site for the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa under the U.S. Military's Africa Command (AFRICOM).

3. The U.S. is the world's largest provider of bilateral aid to Djibouti.

False

Overall, between 2004 and 2009, the U.S. was the world's third-largest bilateral provider of developmental assistance to Djibouti, trailing France and Japan.

4. The coastal area of Ras Doumeira is a contested border region between Djibouti and Somalia.

False

Eritrea and Djibouti both claim Ras Doumeira, located on the coastal section of the Djibouti–Eritrea border. In June 2008, three days of fighting broke out in the Ras Doumeira region.

5. Djibouti's port prospered during the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia because Ethiopian trade shifted from Eritrean ports to Djibouti.

True

Djibouti benefitted economically from the 1998–2000 Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict, which resulted in Djibouti's port becoming the trade outlet for Ethiopia.

Final Assessment

1. The city of Djibouti was developed by the French during the late 19th century.
2. In recent years, a large, new port has opened. It lies southwest of Djibouti city's original port.
3. Before the construction of the city of Djibouti, Tadjoura was the capital of French Somaliland.
4. Djibouti's two most common natural disasters are floods and droughts.
5. While much of Djibouti is very arid, the city of Djibouti has an abundant water supply because of the numerous wells in the city.
6. Bad relations between the Afar and Issa tribespeople of the French Somaliland interior led the French to open an administrative outpost at Dikhil.
7. For more than two years during World War II, French Somaliland was administrated with the collaborationist Vichy French regime.
8. Djibouti's independence came in 1958, when voters rejected a new French constitution that would have maintained French Somaliland's territorial status.
9. Between 1989 and 1992, Djibouti was officially a one-party political system. This party was the *Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès* (RPP), formed by President Hassan Gouled Aptidon.
10. During Ismail Omar Guelleh's presidency, trade activity at the port of Djibouti has declined dramatically as a result of the Eritrea-Ethiopia war.
11. The exchange value of Djibouti's national currency, the Djiboutian franc, is pegged against the U.S. dollar.
12. Over the last decade, Djibouti has been unable to attract much foreign investment.
13. Most of Ethiopia's freight that moves through Djibouti's ports is transported by road rather than rail.
14. Djibouti's new Doraleh Port Facility was a joint venture between the government of Djibouti and a Kuwaiti company.
15. Even though much of Djibouti's population is poor, a significant percentage of household income is spent on the drug khat.

16. Traditional dress is rarely seen in Djibouti because almost all men and women wear Western-style clothing.
17. Dance is an important part of Afar social events.
18. Djibouti's Issas claim to be descended from a relative of the prophet Muhammad.
19. Tennis is the most popular sport in Djibouti.
20. Djibouti's only Olympic medal came during the 2008 games, when Hussein Ahmed Salah placed first in sailing.
21. Thousands of Somali refugees currently live in a camp in Djibouti.
22. Most of Djibouti's food imports come from France.
23. Yemen, Djibouti's neighbor, is struggling because of unrest directed against the government and several regional insurgencies.
24. The U.S., France, and Japan all have military bases in Djibouti.
25. Djibouti has been the site of many attacks by the terrorist organizations al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and al-Shabab.

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