



Djibouti

Republic of Djibouti

Africa

Geography

Area 23,200 sq km. A hot, dry, desert enclave between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, with possibly the hottest average temperatures of any country on earth.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	879,053	1.78%
2020	1,027,401	1.52%
2030	1,192,219	1.42%

Capital Djibouti 577,000. **Urbanites** 88.1%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 36%. **Life expectancy** 55.1 yrs.

Peoples

Somali 61%. In three major clans in southern half of the country: Issa (half of Djibouti's Somali population); Gadaboursi; Issaq.

Afar(Danakil) 28%. In northern half.

Arab 8%. Yemeni, Omani, Saudi.

Other 3%. French 2.2%; several other nationalities, including other African.

This breakdown is only an estimate; it does not account for the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees and the very fluid Somali population, including a refugee camp population.

Literacy 72.2%. **Official languages** French and Arabic.

Trade languages Somali, Afar.

Alllanguages 10. **Indigenous languages** 5.

Languages with Scriptures 3Bi 1NT 1por.

Economy

Lack of water, arable land and natural resources makes the country's viability dependent on French aid and the large French and American military bases. The US base is a huge source of income and employment for Djibouti. The deepwater ports of Djibouti, the rail link to landlocked Ethiopia (85% of port activity involves trade with Ethiopia) and Djibouti's status as a free trade zone are its only major economic assets. Development is occurring, but the cost of living

is rising. Unemployment rates of 50-80% combine with high levels of *qat* consumption to seriously stunt the potential of the workforce.

HDI Rank 155th/182. **Public debt** 47.5% of GDP. **Income/person** \$1,252 (3% of USA).

Politics

The French took control of the area in 1884 because of its strategic location, but the boundaries straddled a centuries-old conflict zone between Afars and Somalis. Independent since 1977 as a multiparty republic, it is dominated by Somali Issas. Civil war raged between them in 1991-94; peace accords were finally signed by all in 2001. Only French and American military presence prevented Djibouti from embroilment in regional conflicts between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. Shari'a law was replaced in 2002 by a Family Court.

Religion

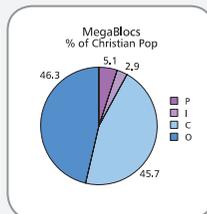
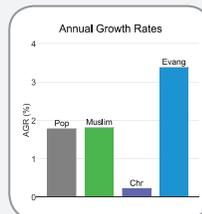
Islam is the religion of the state and of almost every native, but there is considerable religious freedom for foreigners. Proselytism is not technically illegal, but is discouraged; even interest in conversion brings risk of intense persecution. The following tables do not include the large US military base in the country.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	97.03	852,945	1.8%
Christian	1.75	15,383	0.2%
Non-religious	1.20	10,549	1.8%
Hindu	0.02	176	-6.2%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	4	0.09	1,000	1.9%
Independent	6	0.05	<500	4.8%
Catholic	1	0.80	7,000	0.0%
Orthodox	2	0.81	7,000	-0.1%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	5	3,846	7,000
Ethiopian Orth Ch	O	1	3,500	7,000
Ethiopian Protestants	P	6	300	600
Other foreign churches	I	5	125	250
French Protestant Ch	P	1	100	200
Other denominations[2]		5	165	340
Total Christians[13]		23	8,036	15,390

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	0.1	1,207	3.4%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	<0.1	674	3.1%



Challenges for Prayer

1 **Djibouti, Africa's third-smallest state, is a haven of calm** in a stormy region. Western military presence, due to the strategic location, helps foster a climate of relative peace, safety and freedom. Pray that these present freedoms may not be eroded by the politics of the Horn of Africa nor by the Islamist voice that seeks to shape Djibouti according to its own set of values.

2 **Serious social and economic problems** continue to plague Djiboutians, notably widespread famine, extreme unemployment and the rising urban issues of human trafficking, prostitution and drug abuse. The French Protestant, Roman Catholic and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches represent the only active Christian witness recognized by the government. They sponsor various social projects, including work among refugees and the poor. Seventh-day Adventists run both an eye clinic and a dental-care clinic. Pray for effective cooperation and unity among Christians. Pray for fruitful ministry amid abject poverty and human suffering.

3 **Mission work is a challenge** in this hot, dry, but often humid land, and working conditions are extreme. Physical and spiritual oppression, economic disparity, ethnic tensions and a paucity of believers lead easily to discouragement and worker attrition. Pray for the present ministries in education, public health, literature, Bible translation, literacy and youth work – opportunities to witness abound in these. Pray that contacts lead to disciples for Jesus. Pray for God to send long-term workers, especially from nearby countries and people groups. Pray for unprecedented spiritual breakthroughs, long-awaited but as yet unseen. There is notable interest in Christianity from a small but increasing number of locals.

4 **Several evangelical fellowships exist among the immigrant groups** flooding Djibouti in recent years – from Ethiopia, Madagascar, Congo-DRC, the Philippines, Eritrea and other places. Many of these congregations share a strong spiritual burden to reach the Somali and Afar peoples. Pray that they may be relevant and effective in their witness. Pray that their own reconciliation and unity made possible in Christ might be a witness to the divided and hostile peoples of Djibouti.

5 **The few Somali and Afar believers** are often isolated and suffer many pressures from relatives. Their families may ostracize, beat or even kill them for deserting Islam. Pray that they might stand firm in their commitment to follow Jesus. There are many disruptive forces such as tribalism and jealousy that create division among the believers and make them reluctant to meet together. Pray for a new bond of unity. Many of the believers are jobless, and some are illiterate – pray for effective use of literacy and vocational training programmes. Small groups of local believers are gathering for fellowship. Pray for effective use of the Scriptures in these meetings and for the Holy Spirit to work in each life. Pray that God will raise up strong Christian leaders from among and for the Somali and Afar believers.

6 **Pray for the peoples of Djibouti:**

- a) **The Afars'** main territories are in Ethiopia and Eritrea, where there is little witness at present. In Djibouti, the primarily nomadic Afar are increasingly urbanized due to economic pressures. There is no known church among them.
- b) **The Somalis** are a small branch of the larger populations in Somalia and Ethiopia. The Somalis in Djibouti are a key for the evangelization of their kinsmen across the border.
- c) **Arabs, both local and Yemeni,** need a specific approach directed to their spiritual needs. There is no work among them, despite possibly being more accessible here than in Yemen.
- d) **The ethnic minorities.** As a strategic port city, Djibouti attracts foreigners from many lands. Most of these – French, Greek, Pakistani, Senegalese, Indian and others – have little exposure to vibrant Christian witness.

7 **Christian support ministries:**

- a) **Bible translation and distribution.** The Afar NT is published, as are parts of the nearly completed OT. There is a key project to record both Afar Scripture songs and the entire NT on tape – a vital means of communicating God's Word in a largely illiterate population. Praise God for the recent printing of a newly revised Somali Bible.

- b) **Audio resources.** GRN has Scripture and Christian recordings available in Somali, Afar and Arabic as well as most of the expat languages. Pray for their wide distribution.
- c) **Radio broadcasts** by FEBA and TWR lead the way in radio ministry, broadcasting into Djibouti with 7.5 hours per week in both Afar and Somali. There are also broadcasts in Amharic, Arabic and Tigrina.
- d) **The JESUS film** is available in Somali, Afar and Arabic. Pray for Spirit-inspired fruit wherever it is shown.
- e) **Innovative outreach using Internet technology and fine arts** is in development. Pray for guidance as believers make use of resources and talents available to them.