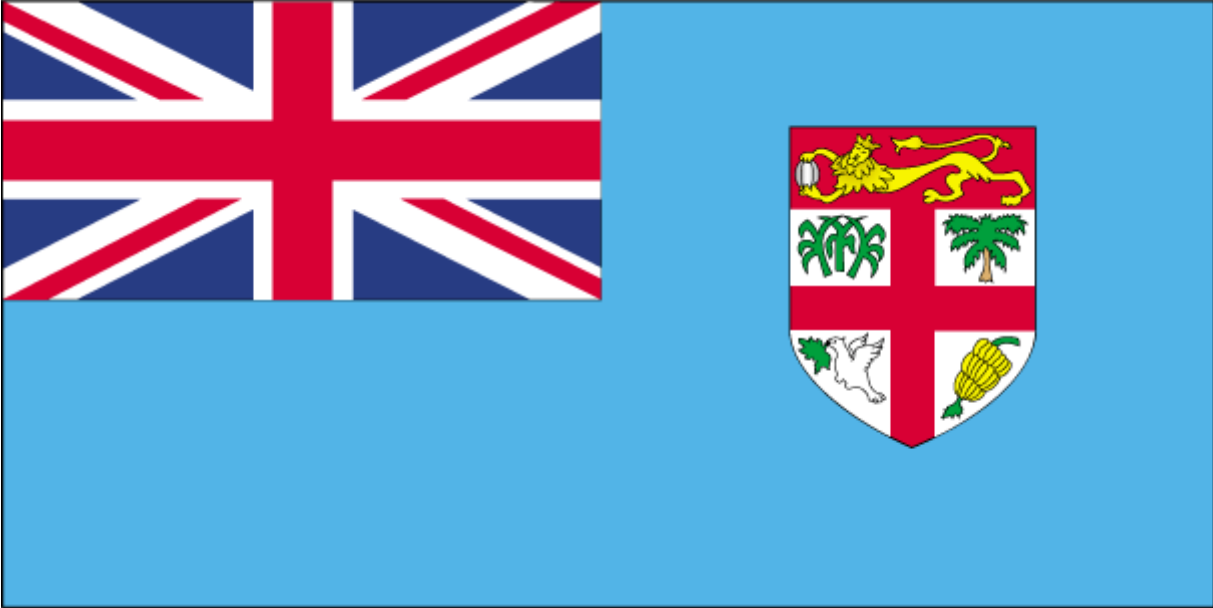




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Introduction

Fiji

Background: Fiji became independent in 1970, after nearly a century as a British colony. Democratic rule was interrupted by two military coups in 1987, caused by concern over a government perceived as dominated by the Indian community (descendants of contract laborers brought to the islands by the British in the 19th century). The coups and a 1990 constitution that cemented native Melanesian control of Fiji, led to heavy Indian emigration; the population loss resulted in economic difficulties, but ensured that Melanesians became the majority. A new constitution enacted in 1997 was more equitable. Free and peaceful elections in 1999 resulted in a government led by an Indo-Fijian, but a civilian-led coup in May 2000 ushered in a prolonged period of political turmoil. Parliamentary elections held in August 2001 provided Fiji with a democratically elected government led by Prime Minister Laisenia QARASE. Re-elected in May 2006, QARASE was ousted in a December 2006 military coup led by Commodore Voreqe BAINIMARAMA, who initially appointed himself acting president. In January 2007, BAINIMARAMA was appointed interim prime minister.

Geography

Fiji

Location: Oceania, island group in the South Pacific Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand

Geographic coordinates: 18 00 S, 175 00 E

Map references: Oceania

Area: *total*: 18,270 sq km

land: 18,270 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than New Jersey

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 1,129 km

Maritime claims: measured from claimed archipelagic straight baselines

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation; rectilinear shelf claim added

Climate: tropical marine; only slight seasonal temperature variation

Terrain: mostly mountains of volcanic origin

Elevation extremes: *lowest point*: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: Tomanivi 1,324 m

Natural resources: timber, fish, gold, copper, offshore oil potential, hydropower

Land use: *arable land*: 10.95%
permanent crops: 4.65%
other: 84.4% (2005)

Irrigated land: 30 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources: 28.6 cu km (1987)

Freshwater withdrawal *total*: 0.07 cu km/yr (14%/14%/71%)
(domestic/industrial/agricultural): *per capita*: 82 cu m/yr (2000)

Natural hazards: cyclonic storms can occur from November to January

Environment - current issues: deforestation; soil erosion

Environment - international *party to*: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-
agreements: Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Law of
the Sea, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection,
Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note: includes 332 islands; approximately 110 are inhabited

People	Fiji
Population:	931,741 (July 2008 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years</i> : 30.6% (male 145,430/female 139,498) <i>15-64 years</i> : 64.8% (male 302,460/female 301,344) <i>65 years and over</i> : 4.6% (male 19,413/female 23,596) (2008 est.)
Median age:	<i>total</i> : 25.2 years <i>male</i> : 24.7 years <i>female</i> : 25.7 years (2008 est.)
Population growth rate:	1.388% (2008 est.)
Birth rate:	22.15 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Death rate:	5.66 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Net migration rate:	-2.62 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth</i> : 1.05 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years</i> : 1.04 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years</i> : 1 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over</i> : 0.82 male(s)/female <i>total population</i> : 1.01 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

Infant mortality *total*: 11.88 deaths/1,000 live births
rate: *male*: 13.07 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 10.63 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)

Life expectancy at *total population*: 70.44 years
birth: *male*: 67.9 years
female: 73.1 years (2008 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.68 children born/woman (2008 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult 0.1% (2003 est.)
prevalence rate:

HIV/AIDS - 600 (2003 est.)
people living with
HIV/AIDS:

HIV/AIDS - fewer than 200 (2003 est.)
deaths:

Nationality: *noun*: Fijian(s)
adjective: Fijian

Ethnic groups: Fijian 57.3% (predominantly Melanesian with a Polynesian admixture),
Indian 37.6%, Rotuman 1.2%, other 3.9% (European, other Pacific
Islanders, Chinese) (2007 census)

Religions: Christian 53% (Methodist 34.5%, Roman Catholic 7.2%, Assembly of God
3.8%, Seventh Day Adventist 2.6%, other 4.9%), Hindu 34% (Sanatan 25%,
Arya Samaj 1.2%, other 7.8%), Muslim 7% (Sunni 4.2%. other 2.8%), other
or unspecified 5.6%, none 0.3% (1996 census)

Languages: English (official), Fijian (official), Hindustani

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 93.7%
male: 95.5%
female: 91.9% (2003 est.)

Government	Fiji
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Country name: *conventional long form*: Republic of the Fiji Islands
conventional short form: Fiji
local long form: Republic of the Fiji Islands/Matanitu ko Viti
local short form: Fiji/Viti

Government type: republic

Capital: *name*: Suva (on Viti Levu)
geographic coordinates: 18 08 S, 178 25 E
time difference: UTC+12 (17 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions: 4 divisions and 1 dependency*; Central, Eastern, Northern, Rotuma*, Western

Independence: 10 October 1970 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, second Monday of October (1970)

Constitution: enacted on 25 July 1997 to encourage multiculturalism and make multiparty government mandatory; effective 28 July 1998

Legal system: based on British system; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Executive branch: *chief of state*: President Ratu Josefa ILOILOVATU Uluivuda (since 18 July 2000); note - ILOILOVATU was reaffirmed as president by the Great Council of Chiefs in a statement issued on 22 December, and reappointed by the coup leader Commodore Voreqe BAINIMARAMA in January 2007
head of government: Prime Minister Laisenia QARASE (since 10 September 2000); note - although QARASE is still the legal prime minister, he has been confined to his home island; the president appointed Commodore Voreqe BAINIMARAMA interim prime minister under the military regime
cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the prime minister from among the members of Parliament and is responsible to Parliament; note - coup leader Commodore Voreqe BAINIMARAMA has appointed an interim cabinet
elections: president elected by the Great Council of Chiefs for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); prime minister appointed by the president; election last held 8 March 2006
election results: Ratu Josefa ILOILOVATU Uluivuda elected president by the Great Council of Chiefs; percent of vote - NA

Legislative branch: bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate (32 seats; 14 appointed by the president on the advice of the Great Council of Chiefs, 9 appointed by the president on the advice of the Prime Minister, 8 on the advice of the Opposition Leader, and 1 appointed on the advice of the council of Rotuma) and the House of Representatives (71 seats; 23 reserved for ethnic Fijians, 19 reserved for ethnic Indians, 3 reserved for other ethnic groups, 1 reserved for the council of Rotuma constituency encompassing the whole of Fiji, and 25 open seats; members serve five-year terms)
elections: House of Representatives - last held 6-13 May 2006 (next to be held in 2011)

election results: House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - SDL 44.6%, FLP 39.2%, UPP 0.8%, independents 4.9%, other 10.5%; seats by party - SDL 36, FLP 31, UPP 2, independents 2

Judicial branch: Supreme Court (judges are appointed by the president); Court of Appeal; High Court; Magistrates' Courts

Political parties and leaders: Dodonu Ni Taukei Party or DNT [Fereti S. DEWA]; Fiji Democratic Party or FDP [Filipe BOLE] (a merger of the Christian Democrat Alliance or VLV [Poesci Waqalevu BUNE], Fijian Association Party or FAP, Fijian Political Party or SVT (primarily Fijian) [Sitiveni RABUKA], and New Labor Unity Party or NLUP [Ofa SWANN]); Fiji Labor Party or FLP [Mahendra CHAUDHRY]; General Voters Party or GVP (became part of United General Party); Giritmit Heritage Party or GHP; Justice and Freedom Party or AIM; Lio 'On Famor Rotuma Party or LFR; National Federation Party or NFP (primarily Indian) [Pramond RAE]; Nationalist Vanua Takolavo Party or NVTLP [Saula TELAWA]; Party of National Unity or PANU [Ponipate LESAVUA]; Party of the Truth or POTT; United Fiji Party/Sogosogo Duavata ni Lewenivanua or SDL [Laisenia QARASE]; United Peoples Party or UPP [Millis Mick BEDDOES]

Political pressure groups and leaders: Group Against Racial Discrimination or GARD [Dr. Anirudk SINGH] (for restoration of a democratic government); Viti Landowners Association

International organization participation: ACP, ADB, C (suspended), CP, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICCt, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, OPCW, PCA, PIF, Sparteca, SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMIS, UNMIT, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission:* vacant; note - Penijamini R. LOMALOMA (Charge d'Affaires)
chancery: 2000 M Street, NW, Suite 710, Washington, DC 20036
telephone: [1] (202) 466-8320
FAX: [1] (202) 466-8325

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Larry Miles DINGER
embassy: 31 Loftus Street, Suva
mailing address: P. O. Box 218, Suva
telephone: [679] 331-4466
FAX: [679] 330-0081

Flag description: light blue with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and the Fijian shield centered on the outer half of the flag; the shield depicts a yellow lion above a white field quartered by the cross of Saint George featuring stalks of sugarcane, a palm tree, bananas, and a white dove

Economy**Fiji**

Economy - Fiji, endowed with forest, mineral, and fish resources, is one of the most developed of the Pacific island economies, though still with a large subsistence sector. Sugar exports, remittances from Fijians working abroad, and a growing tourist industry - with 400,000 to 500,000 tourists annually - are the major sources of foreign exchange. Fiji's sugar has special access to European Union markets, but will be harmed by the EU's decision to cut sugar subsidies. Sugar processing makes up one-third of industrial activity but is not efficient. Fiji's tourism industry was damaged by the December 2006 coup and is facing an uncertain recovery time. The coup has created a difficult business climate. Tourist arrivals for 2007 are estimated to be down almost 6%, with substantial job losses in the service sector. In July 2007 the Reserve Bank of Fiji announced the economy was expected to contract by 3.1% in 2007. Fiji's current account deficit reached 23% of GDP in 2006. The EU has suspended all aid until the interim government takes steps toward new elections. Long-term problems include low investment, uncertain land ownership rights, and the government's inability to manage its budget. Overseas remittances from Fijians working in Kuwait and Iraq have decreased significantly.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$5.079 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$4.969 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 3.9% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$5,500 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture: 8.9%*
industry: 13.5%
services: 77.6% (2004 est.)

Labor force: 117,500 (2006 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: *agriculture: 70%*
industry and services: 30% (2001 est.)

Unemployment rate: 7.6% (1999)

Population below poverty line: 25.5% (FY90/91)

Household *lowest 10%: NA%*
income or *highest 10%: NA%*
consumption by
percentage share:

Inflation rate 4.8% (2007)
(consumer prices):

Budget: *revenues: \$1.363 billion*
expenditures: \$1.376 billion (2006)

Agriculture - sugarcane, coconuts, cassava (tapioca), rice, sweet potatoes, bananas; cattle,
products: pigs, horses, goats; fish

Industries: tourism, sugar, clothing, copra, gold, silver, lumber, small cottage industries

Industrial NA%
production growth
rate:

Electricity - 1.046 billion kWh (2005)
production:

Electricity - 735.6 million kWh (2006)
consumption:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)
exports:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)
imports:

Oil - production: 0 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - 9,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)
consumption:

Oil - exports: 2,268 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 10,870 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved 0 bbl (1 January 2006 est.)
reserves:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)
production:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)
consumption:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)
exports:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005)
imports:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (1 January 2006 est.)
proved reserves:

Current account -\$507 million (2006 est.)
balance:

Exports: \$1.202 billion f.o.b. (2006)

Exports - sugar, garments, gold, timber, fish, molasses, coconut oil
commodities:

Exports - partners: US 16.6%, UK 13%, Australia 10.6%, Samoa 5.2%, Tonga 4.5%, NZ 4.4%
(2006)

Imports: \$3.12 billion c.i.f. (2006)

Imports - manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, petroleum
commodities: products, food, chemicals

Imports - partners: Singapore 29.5%, Australia 21.5%, NZ 17.2%, China 4.1% (2006)

Economic aid - \$63.96 million (2005)
recipient:

Debt - external: \$127 million (2004 est.)

Stock of direct \$NA
foreign
investment - at
home:

Stock of direct \$NA
foreign
investment -
abroad:

Market value of \$586.7 million (2005)
publicly traded
shares:

Currency (code): Fijian dollar (FJD)

Exchange rates: Fijian dollars per US dollar - NA (2007), 1.7313 (2006), 1.691 (2005),
1.7331 (2004), 1.8958 (2003)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications	Fiji
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Telephones - main lines in use: 112,500 (2005)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 205,000 (2005)

Telephone system: *general assessment:* modern local, interisland, and international (wire/radio integrated) public and special-purpose telephone, telegraph, and teleprinter facilities; regional radio communications center
domestic: telephone or radio telephone links to almost all inhabited islands; most towns and large villages have automatic telephone exchanges and direct dialing; combined fixed and mobile-cellular density is about 35 per 100 persons
international: country code - 679; access to important cable links between US and Canada as well as between NZ and Australia; satellite earth stations - 2 Inmarsat (Pacific Ocean)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 13, FM 40, shortwave 0 (1998)

Television broadcast stations: NA

Internet country code: .fj

Internet hosts: 12,137 (2007)

Internet users: 80,000 (2006)

Transportation	Fiji
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Airports: 28 (2007)

Airports - with paved runways: *total:* 3
over 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1
914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2007)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total:* 25
914 to 1,523 m: 7
under 914 m: 18 (2007)

Railways: *total:* 597 km
narrow gauge: 597 km 0.600-m gauge
note: belongs to the government-owned Fiji Sugar Corporation; used to haul sugarcane during harvest season (May to December) (2006)

Roadways: *total*: 3,440 km
paved: 1,692 km
unpaved: 1,748 km (2000)

Waterways: 203 km
note: 122 km navigable by motorized craft and 200-metric-ton barges (2006)

Merchant marine: *total*: 8 ships (1000 GRT or over) 17,376 GRT/8,788 DWT
by type: passenger 3, passenger/cargo 3, roll on/roll off 2
foreign-owned: 1 (Australia 1) (2008)

Ports and terminals: Lautoka, Suva

Military	Fiji
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Military branches: Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF): Land Forces, Naval Forces (2008)

Military service age and obligation: 18 years of age for voluntary military service; reserve obligation to age 45 (2006)

Manpower available for military service: *males age 16-49*: 242,567
females age 16-49: 238,556 (2008 est.)

Manpower fit for military service: *males age 16-49*: 189,282
females age 16-49: 202,350 (2008 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually: *males age 16-49*: 9,077
females age 16-49: 8,728 (2008 est.)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: 2.2% (2005 est.)

Transnational Issues	Fiji
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Disputes - none international:

Trafficking in persons: *current situation:* Fiji is a source country for children trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation and a destination country for a small number of women from China and India trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation
tier rating: Tier 3 - Fiji does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; the government has demonstrated no action to investigate or prosecute traffickers, assist victims, take steps to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, or support any anti-trafficking information or education campaigns; Fiji has not ratified the 2000 UN TIP Protocol (2008)

Information current as of 7 August, 2008

SOURCES: The CIA World Factbook

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