



GABON

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Introduction

Gabon

Background: Only two autocratic presidents have ruled Gabon since independence from France in 1960. The current president of Gabon, El Hadj Omar BONGO Ondimba - one of the longest-serving heads of state in the world - has dominated the country's political scene for four decades. President BONGO introduced a nominal multiparty system and a new constitution in the early 1990s. However, allegations of electoral fraud during local elections in 2002-03 and the presidential elections in 2005 have exposed the weaknesses of formal political structures in Gabon. Gabon's political opposition remains weak, divided, and financially dependent on the current regime. Despite political conditions, a small population, abundant natural resources, and considerable foreign support have helped make Gabon one of the more prosperous and stable African countries.

Geography

Gabon

Location: Western Africa, bordering the Atlantic Ocean at the Equator, between Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea

Geographic coordinates: 1 00 S, 11 45 E

Map references: Africa

Area: *total:* 267,667 sq km
land: 257,667 sq km
water: 10,000 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Colorado

Land boundaries: *total:* 2,551 km
border countries: Cameroon 298 km, Republic of the Congo 1,903 km, Equatorial Guinea 350 km

Coastline: 885 km

Maritime claims: *territorial sea:* 12 nm
contiguous zone: 24 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate: tropical; always hot, humid

Terrain: narrow coastal plain; hilly interior; savanna in east and south

Elevation extremes: *lowest point:* Atlantic Ocean 0 m
highest point: Mont Iboundji 1,575 m

Natural resources: petroleum, natural gas, diamond, niobium, manganese, uranium, gold, timber, iron ore, hydropower

Land use: *arable land*: 1.21%
permanent crops: 0.64%
other: 98.15% (2005)

Irrigated land: 70 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources: 164 cu km (1987)

Freshwater withdrawal *total*: 0.12 cu km/yr (50%/8%/42%)
(domestic/industrial/agricultural): *per capita*: 87 cu m/yr (2000)

Natural hazards: NA

Environment - current issues: deforestation; poaching

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

Geography - note: a small population and oil and mineral reserves have helped
Gabon become one of Africa's wealthier countries; in general,
these circumstances have allowed the country to maintain and
conserve its pristine rain forest and rich biodiversity

| People | Gabon |
|-------------------------|--|
| Population: | 1,485,832 <i>note</i> : estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2008 est.) |
| Age structure: | <i>0-14 years</i> : 42.1% (male 314,078/female 311,900) <i>15-64 years</i> : 53.9% (male 399,586/female 401,602) <i>65 years and over</i> : 3.9% (male 24,388/female 34,278) (2008 est.) |
| Median age: | <i>total</i> : 18.6 years <i>male</i> : 18.4 years <i>female</i> : 18.9 years (2008 est.) |
| Population growth rate: | 1.954% (2008 est.) |
| Birth rate: | 35.75 births/1,000 population (2008 est.) |
| Death rate: | 12.59 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.) |

Net migration rate: -3.62 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)

Sex ratio: *at birth*: 1.03 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.01 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 0.99 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.71 male(s)/female
total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

Infant mortality rate: *total*: 52.65 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 61.27 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 43.77 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: *total population*: 53.52 years
male: 52.5 years
female: 54.57 years (2008 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.68 children born/woman (2008 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 8.1% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 48,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 3,000 (2003 est.)

Major infectious diseases: *degree of risk*: very high
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne disease: malaria (2008)

Nationality: *noun*: Gabonese (singular and plural)
adjective: Gabonese

Ethnic groups: Bantu tribes, including four major tribal groupings (Fang, Bapounou, Nzebi, Obamba); other Africans and Europeans, 154,000, including 10,700 French and 11,000 persons of dual nationality

Religions: Christian 55%-75%, animist, Muslim less than 1%

Languages: French (official), Fang, Myene, Nzebi, Bapounou/Eschira, Bandjabi

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 63.2%
male: 73.7%
female: 53.3% (1995 est.)

Government**Gabon**

Country name: *conventional long form:* Gabonese Republic
conventional short form: Gabon
local long form: Republique gabonaise
local short form: Gabon

Government type: republic; multiparty presidential regime

Capital: *name:* Libreville
geographic coordinates: 0 23 N, 9 27 E
time difference: UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions: 9 provinces; Estuaire, Haut-Ogooue, Moyen-Ogooue, Ngounie, Nyanga, Ogooue-Ivindo, Ogooue-Lolo, Ogooue-Maritime, Woleu-Ntem

Independence: 17 August 1960 (from France)

National holiday: Independence Day, 17 August (1960)

Constitution: adopted 14 March 1991

Legal system: based on French civil law system and customary law; judicial review of legislative acts in Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Executive branch: *chief of state:* President El Hadj Omar BONGO Ondimba (since 2 December 1967)
head of government: Prime Minister Jean Eyeghe NDONG (since 20 January 2006)
cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the prime minister in consultation with the president
elections: president elected by popular vote for a seven-year term (no term limits); election last held 27 November 2005 (next to be held in 2012); prime minister appointed by the president
election results: President El Hadj Omar BONGO Ondimba reelected; percent of vote - El Hadj Omar BONGO Ondimba 79.2%, Pierre MAMBOUNDOU 13.6%, Zacharie MYBOTO 6.6%

- Legislative branch: bicameral legislature consists of the Senate (91 seats; members elected by members of municipal councils and departmental assemblies to serve six-year terms) and the National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale (120 seats; members are elected by direct, popular vote to serve five-year terms)
elections: Senate - last held 26 January and 9 February 2003 (next to be held by January 2009); National Assembly - last held 17 and 24 December 2006 (next to be held in December 2011)
election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PDG 53, RNB 20, PGP 4, ADERE 3, RDP 1, CLR 1, independents 9; National Assembly - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PDG 82, RPG 8, UPG 8, UGDD 4, ADERE 3, CLR 2, PGP-Ndaot 2, PSD 2, independents 4, others 5
- Judicial branch: Supreme Court or Cour Supreme consisting of three chambers - Judicial, Administrative, and Accounts; Constitutional Court; Courts of Appeal; Court of State Security; County Courts
- Political parties and leaders: Circle of Liberal Reformers or CLR [General Jean Boniface ASSELE]; Congress for Democracy and Justice or CDJ [Jules Aristide Bourdes OGOULIGUENDE]; Democratic and Republican Alliance or ADERE [Divungui-di-Ndinge DIDJOB]; Gabonese Democratic Party or PDG (former sole party) [Simplice Nguedet MANZELA]; Gabonese Party for Progress or PGP [Benoit Mouity NZAMBA]; Gabonese Union for Democracy and Development or UGDD [Zacherie MYBOTO]; National Rally of Woodcutters or RNB; National Rally of Woodcutters-Rally for Gabon or RNB-RPG (Bucherons) [Fr. Paul M'BA-ABESSOLE]; Party of Development and Social Solidarity or PDS [Seraphin Ndoat REMBOGO]; People's Unity Party or PUP [Louis Gaston MAYILA]; Social Democratic Party or PSD [Pierre Claver MAGANGA-MOUSSAVOU]; Union for Democracy and Social Integration or UDIS; Union of Gabonese Patriots or UPG [Pierre MAMBOUNDOU]
- Political pressure groups and leaders: NA
- International organization participation: ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AU, BDEAC, CEMAC, FAO, FZ, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMIS, UNWTO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

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Flag description: three equal horizontal bands of green (top), yellow, and blue

Economy

Gabon

Economy - overview: Gabon enjoys a per capita income four times that of most of sub-Saharan African nations. but because of high income inequality, a large proportion of the population remains poor. Gabon depended on timber and manganese until oil was discovered offshore in the early 1970s. The oil sector now accounts for 50% of GDP. Gabon continues to face fluctuating prices for its oil, timber, and manganese exports. Despite the abundance of natural wealth, poor fiscal management hobbles the economy. The devaluation of the CFA franc - its currency - by 50% in January 1994 sparked a one-time inflationary surge, to 35%; the rate dropped to 6% in 1996. The IMF provided a one-year standby arrangement in 1994-95, a three-year Enhanced Financing Facility (EFF) at near commercial rates beginning in late 1995, and stand-by credit of \$119 million in October 2000. Those agreements mandated progress in privatization and fiscal discipline. France provided additional financial support in January 1997 after Gabon met IMF targets for mid-1996. In 1997, an IMF mission to Gabon criticized the government for overspending on off-budget items, overborrowing from the central bank, and slipping on its schedule for privatization and administrative reform. The rebound of oil prices since 1999 have helped growth, but drops in production have hampered Gabon from fully realizing potential gains, and will continue to temper the gains for most of this decade. In December 2000, Gabon signed a new agreement with the Paris Club to reschedule its official debt. A follow-up bilateral repayment agreement with the US was signed in December 2001. Gabon signed a 14-month Stand-By Arrangement with the IMF in May 2004, and received Paris Club debt rescheduling later that year. Short-term progress depends on an upbeat world economy and fiscal and other adjustments in line with IMF policies.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$20.18 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$11.3 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 5.6% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$14,100 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture*: 5.8%
industry: 58.2%
services: 36% (2007 est.)

Labor force: 582,000 (2007 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: *agriculture*: 60%
industry: 15%
services: 25%

Unemployment rate: 21% (2006 est.)

Population below poverty line: NA%

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

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 5% (2007 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 24.2% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: *revenues*: \$3.534 billion
expenditures: \$2.347 billion (2007 est.)

Public debt: 50% of GDP (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: cocoa, coffee, sugar, palm oil, rubber; cattle; okoume (a tropical softwood); fish

Industries: petroleum extraction and refining; manganese, gold; chemicals, ship repair, food and beverages, textiles, lumbering and plywood, cement

Industrial production growth rate: 5.2% (2007 est.)

Electricity - 1.52 billion kWh (2005)
production:

Electricity - 1.241 billion kWh (2005)
consumption:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)
exports:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)
imports:

Oil - production: 266,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)
Oil - 13,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)
consumption:

Oil - exports: 228,000 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 2,436 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved reserves: 1.748 billion bbl (2007 est.)

Natural gas - 95.91 million cu m (2005 est.)
production:

Natural gas - 95.91 million cu m (2005 est.)
consumption:

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

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005)
imports:

Natural gas - 32.59 billion cu m (1 January 2006 est.)
proved reserves:

Current account balance: \$1.45 billion (2007 est.)
Exports: \$6.952 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)
Exports - crude oil 77%, timber, manganese, uranium (2001)
commodities:

Exports - partners: US 31.5%, China 15.1%, France 9.1%, Malaysia 5.8%, Trinidad and Tobago 4.8% (2006)

Imports: \$2.107 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, construction materials
commodities:

Imports - partners: France 28.1%, US 19.3%, Belgium 5.3%, Netherlands 4.8%, China 4.1%
(2006)

Economic aid - \$53.87 million (2005)
recipient:

Reserves of \$1.236 billion (31 December 2007 est.)
foreign exchange
and gold:

Debt - external: \$4.895 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Market value of \$NA
publicly traded
shares:

Currency (code): Communauté Financière Africaine franc (XAF); note - responsible authority
is the Bank of the Central African States

Exchange rates: Communauté Financière Africaine francs (XAF) per US dollar - 481.83
(2007), 522.89 (2006), 527.47 (2005), 528.29 (2004), 581.2 (2003)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Gabon

Telephones - main 36,500 (2006)
lines in use:

Telephones - 1.169 million (2007)
mobile cellular:

Telephone *general assessment*: adequate service by African standards and improving
system: with the help of a growing mobile cell network system with three providers;
mobile-cellular subscribership exceeded 50 per 100 persons in 2006
domestic: adequate system of cable, microwave radio relay, tropospheric
scatter, radiotelephone communication stations, and a domestic satellite
system with 12 earth stations
international: country code - 241; landing point for the SAT-3/WASC fiber-
optic submarine cable that provides connectivity to Europe and Asia;
satellite earth stations - 3 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean)

Radio broadcast AM 6, FM 7 (plus 11 repeaters), shortwave 4 (2001)
stations:

Television 4 (plus 4 repeaters) (2001)
broadcast stations:

Internet country code: .ga

Internet hosts: 288 (2007)

Internet users: 81,000 (2006)

| Transportation | Gabon |
|----------------|-------|
|----------------|-------|

Airports: 53 (2007)

Airports - with paved runways: *total: 10*
over 3,047 m: 1
2,438 to 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 7
914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2007)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total: 43*
1,524 to 2,437 m: 7
914 to 1,523 m: 13
under 914 m: 23 (2007)

Pipelines: gas 384 km; oil 1,427 km (2007)

Railways: *total: 814 km*
standard gauge: 814 km 1.435-m gauge (2006)

Roadways: *total: 9,170 km*
paved: 937 km
unpaved: 8,233 km (2004)

Waterways: 1,600 km (310 km on Ogooue River) (2007)

Merchant marine: *registered in other countries: 2 (Cambodia 1, Panama 1) (2008)*

Ports and terminals: Gamba, Libreville, Lucinda, Port-Gentil

| Military | Gabon |
|----------|-------|
|----------|-------|

Military branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, National Gendarmerie, National Police

Military service age and obligation: 20 years of age for compulsory and voluntary military service (2007)

Manpower available for military service: *males age 16-49: 331,181*
females age 16-49: 332,498 (2008 est.)

Manpower fit for military service: *males age 16-49: 192,717*
females age 16-49: 188,539 (2008 est.)

Manpower *males age 16-49*: 16,558
reaching militarily *females age 16-49*: 16,577 (2008 est.)
significant age
annually:

Military 3.4% (2005 est.)
expenditures -
percent of GDP:

Transnational Issues

Gabon

Disputes - UN urges Equatorial Guinea and Gabon to resolve the sovereignty dispute
international: over Gabon-occupied Mbane Island and lesser islands and to establish a
maritime boundary in hydrocarbon-rich Corisco Bay

Refugees and *refugees (country of origin)*: 7,178 (Republic of Congo) (2007)
internally
displaced persons:

Trafficking in *current situation*: Gabon is predominantly a destination country for children
persons: trafficked from other African countries for the purpose of forced labor; girls
are primarily trafficked for domestic servitude, forced market vending,
forced restaurant labor, and sexual exploitation, while boys are trafficked for
forced street hawking and forced labor in small workshops
tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - Gabon is on the Tier 2 Watch List for its
failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat human trafficking
in 2007, particularly in terms of efforts to convict and punish trafficking
offenders; the government has not reported the convictions or sentences of
any trafficking offenders; the government did not take steps to reduce
demand for commercial sex acts (2008)

Information current as of 7 August, 2008

SOURCES: The CIA World Factbook

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