

# CAPE VERDE (CAP-VERT)

## National Flag and Emblem



## Locator Map



TEXT HIGHLIGHTS: Diaries updates, key events, brief analysis and relating news articles in timeline

## Overview

Cape Verde was colonized by the Portuguese started from 1456. The Portuguese used Cape Verdeans as administrators throughout their African empire, and as labor on their shipping lines.

During the 19th century Cape Verdeans used to crew American whalers in the Atlantic. Since this time, Cape Verdeans have had a strong tradition of emigrating to find work. Major droughts and famines have historically also propelled mass migrations from the islands. The country became

independent in 1975, following the collapse of the Portuguese empire after the Carnation Revolution in Lisbon of 1974. The aspiration of the leader of the independence struggle, Amílcar Cabral, for an eventual political union between Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau was never to come to fruition however, and was abandoned in 1981 following the overthrow in Guinea Bissau of President Luís Cabral, also a Cape Verdean. Until 1981, the country was ruled by Aristide Pereira and by the party which brought independence, the PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde), which became the PAICV (the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde) in 1981. Pereira's rule was stable and benevolent, but did not allow for political pluralism. In 1990, under domestic and international pressure, he opened up the political system to multi-partyism.

Declared Portuguese overseas territory in 1951. The national liberation front, known as the "African Party for the Independence of Guinea & Cape Verdes (PAIGC)" began an armed struggle against the Portuguese colonialism in 1961

Following the Portugal revolution of April, 1974, the Cape Verdeans elected a legislation on the 30th of June, 1975 which received instruments of independence from Portugal on the 5th July 1975

Headship since independence: Head of State

Mr. Aristides Pereira, then deputy head of the PAIGC Front under Mr. Amílcar Lopes Cabral of Guinea Bissau, to become founder/president, of Cape Verde (Cap-Vert) serving from 1975 - 1991.

An eventual political union was planned with Guinea-Bissau, however, on the 14th of November, 1980, after change of government in Guinea Bissau, the Cape Verdeans broke links with Guinea-Bissau, relations became strained, an official reason quoted as "Change of government in Guinea-Bissau" then, abandoned its goal for unification.

An Island Republic of West Africa.

Cape Verde located in the mid-Atlantic ocean, some 300 miles /about 450 km/ off the west coast of Africa. A group of 10 volcanic islands 8 islets, divided into Barlavento (windward) and Sotavento (leeward) groups. Colonized by the Portuguese started from 1456 until it became an overseas territory of Portugal in 1951. The national liberation front, known as the "African Party for the Independence of Guinea & Cape Verde

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Cape Verde became independent in 1975, a year after its sister colony, Guinea-Bissau, won freedom from Portugal. The two countries planned to unite, but the plan was ditched after a coup in Guinea-Bissau in 1980 strained relations. The former Portuguese colony comprises 10 islands and five islets, all but three of which are mountainous. In 1991 Cape Verde held its first free presidential elections, which were won by Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro, who replaced the islands' first president, Aristides Pereira. The Cape Verde's expatriate population is greater than it's domestic one, most Cape Verdeans have both African and Portuguese antecedents. The Cape Verde constitution amended three times in 1992, 1995 and 1999. Recently Cape Verde opposition candidate Mr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca has won Cape Verde's presidential elections, beating the ruling-party rival, Mr. Manuel Inocencio Sousa. Mr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca secured 55% of the vote in the run-off elections on the 21st August 2011, compared with Mr. Manuel Sousa's 45%. The two have contested the poll after president Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires stepped-down at the end of his two terms.

President:- Jorge Carlos Fonseca won presidential elections with a decisive second-round victory in August 2011, beating the ruling party candidate. Mr Fonseca, the candidate for the main opposition Movement for Democracy (MFD) needs to govern with a prime minister from the PAICV ruling party after they won a parliamentary election earlier in the year. Mr Fonseca, a former foreign minister, beat his socialist rival Manuel Inocencio Sousa in a battle between the candidates of the two parties that have dominated the political scene for the past two decades. The campaign hinged on the need to modernize the economy of the former Portuguese colony and keep the tourism boom alive while dealing with unemployment rates of up to 18%. Mr Fonseca replaced Pedro Pires, who

served a maximum two terms. The Cape Verde relatively enjoys stable democratic system and is one of the most stable countries in Africa, analysts say. Poor in natural resources, prone to drought and with little arable land, the Cape Verde islands have won a reputation for achieving political and economic stability.

Accession to power of president Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires -12th February, 2001 by

election.

Tentative election calendar - Parliamentary & Presidential, August.

Cape Verdes – Timeline Diaries updates, and related key notes:

1456 - First Europeans arrive in Cape Verde

1495 - Cape Verde becomes a Portuguese Crown Colony.

1956 - Amilcar Cabral, nicknamed as Abel Jassi, a native of Cape Verdean, co-founds the African Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) in Guinea-Bissau.

1960 - PAIGC-led liberation war begins against Portuguese rule in Guinea-Bissau, with many Cape Verdeans joining in.

1975 - Cape Verde becomes independent and adopts constitution envisaging unity with Guinea-Bissau.

1980 - Cape Verde ditches plans for unity with Guinea-Bissau following coup in latter.

1981 - African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) replaces the PAIGC and becomes the country's sole party.

1991 - Antonio Mascarenhas Gomez Monteiro becomes president following Cape Verde's first free election.

1992 - A new constitution brings in a multi-party system.

1996 - Mascarenhas Gomez Monteiro is re-elected and his party, the Movement for Democracy, wins a majority of seats in parliamentary elections.

January 2001 - Government accepts defeat in parliamentary elections, paving the way for the return to power of the former ruling African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde, the PAICV.

March 2001 - Pedro Pires, from the Party for the Independence of Cape Verde, is elected president after beating his rival, the Movement for Democracy's Carlos Veiga, by 17 votes.

January-February 2006 - Governing PAICV wins parliamentary elections and incumbent leader, Pedro Pires, is victorious in closely-contested presidential polls.

June 2006 - Some 7,000 Nato troops take part in war games on Sao Vicente island. This is the organization's first major deployment in Africa.

December 2007 - World Trade Organization (WTO) council approves Cape Verde's accession to the organization.

August 2009 - US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ends seven-nation tour of Africa in Cape Verde.

November 2009 - National emergency declared following outbreak of dengue fever.

July 2010 - A Syrian prisoner who had been detained at Guantanamo Bay by the US is transferred to Cape Verde.

October 2010 - UN office on drugs and crime, UNODC, launches a project for cooperation between Brazil and seven West African countries - including Cape Verde - to tackle drug trafficking.

February 2011- Governing PAICV party wins parliamentary elections.

August 2011 - Jorge Carlos Fonseca becomes president.

December 2011 - Two days of national mourning are declared on death of singer Cesaria Evora, considered to be one of the greatest exponents of Morna, a form of blues regarded as Cape Verde's national music. Cesaria Evora is a famous Cape Verdean female singer considered a national hero, she dies recently at the age of 70. Cesaria Evora was forced to retire earlier this year due to ill-health, she began her career singing in the bars of Mindelo in the west African island nation. Nicknamed the "Barefoot diva", Cesaria Evora was considered one of the world's greatest exponents of Morna, a form of blues considered the national music of Cape Verde islands. The music is a testament to the country's history, including the slave trade and it's physical remoteness in the Atlantic ocean islands, hundreds of kilometers off-Africa's west coast. Two days of national mourning had been declared in the small island nation with it's president Jorge Carlos Fonseca calling her "one of the major cultural references of Cape Verde".

## COUNTRY FACT FILE

### Location

In the Atlantic ocean, localization 445 km from the African occidental coast b/n the parallels 15 & 17 latitude North.

### Official title of the state

The Republic of Cape Verde (Cap-vert) English:

Republica do Cabo Verde (national): Is an island country, spanning an archipelago of 10 islands located in the central Atlantic Ocean, 570 kilometers off the coast of Western Africa.

### Flag description

Five unequal horizontal bands: the top-most band of blue - equal to one half the width of the flag - is followed by three bands of white, red, and white, each equal to 1/12 of the width, and a bottom stripe of blue equal to one quarter of the flag width: a circle of 10, yellow, five-pointed stars is centered on the red stripe and positioned 3/8 of the length of the flag from the hoist side: blue stands for the sea and the sky, the circle of stars represents the 10 major islands united into a nation, the stripes symbolize the road to formation of the country through peace (white) and effort (red).

### Neighbours

Nearest are Mauritania & Senegal.

Land Boundaries: None

### Local division

17 administrative Municipal councils (Concelhos) in 10 Islands and 8 islets.

### Government type

Republic - semi-presidential

### Legislation chamber

Unicameral - National Assembly

## Form of State

A multi-party republic with one legislative house. The National Assembly, 72 seats, members are elected by popular vote to serve for five-year terms. Cape Verde: is a Republic with a president, who is the head of state, and a prime minister who heads the government. The prime minister is appointed by parliament.

## Executive branch

Separated by chief of State and head of Government. President elected by popular vote to serve for five-year terms, eligible for a second term. Head of Government to be appointed by the president with consent of the legislature.

## Judicial chamber

Supreme tribunal of Justice.

## Capital city

Praia /in Sao-Tiago Island/ Altitude 30 mtrs/98 ft. Geographic coordinates 14.55N , 23.31W. The capital of Cape Verde Islands. A port city situated on the south coast of the island of Sao Tiago. Praia is a Portuguese meaning for "Beach", it lies on the southern coast of Sao-Tiago island in the Sotavento (leeward) island groups. First the area settled as shipping lane and founded by "Praia de Santa Maria", a Portuguese explorer in 1770s.

## Names of main towns

Mindelo, Santo-Filipe.

## Main inhabited islands

Sao-tiago, Vicente, Santo-antao, Fogo, Sao-nicolau, Sal, Brava, Maio, Boa-vista.

## Date of independence

5th July, 1975

## Religions (Major)

Roman Catholics 80%, African traditional.



Main spoken languages

Portuguese (official), Creole widely spoken.

Currency unit

Cape Verdes Escuado (CVEsc)=100 Centavos

Area in Km<sup>2</sup>

4,033.00

Country area comparison in Africa

51 out of 55 states

Demographic terms:

Average annual population growth rate 1.459 %

Birth rate 21.67 births per 1,000 population

Death rate 6.41 deaths per 1,000 population

Average life expectancy: 70.41 years

Male 68.24 years: Female 72.64 years

Illiteracy rate (%)

Male: 11, Female: 21

Average per capita income

USD 3, 800

Population density

126.1/km<sup>2</sup>

Urban population (%)

61

Contributor groups (%)

Farming, Fishing: 9, Industry: 17: Social service 74

## Main Export Items

Frozen and fresh fish meat, livestock, vegetables, coffee, Shoes, clothes, fish, bananas, hides, pozzolana (volcanic rock, used to make cement).

Economy is based on

Agriculture, fishery, Salt & entrepote trade. Tourism is on the rise, but there are concerns that it poses a threat to the Cape Verde's rich marine life. It is an important nesting site for loggerhead turtles and humpback whales feed in the islands' waters.

## Climate

Dry and tropical. Rainfall is very erratic and there are long period without rain. The climate across all the Islands is similar with little variation in temperature and a short rainy season. Temperature fluctuate between 20oc and 25oc year- round, and the rainy season extends generally from August to the end of October.

Extremes:

Lowest point: The Atlantic coast 0 mtr.

Highest point: Mt. Fogo 2829 meters.

Weather of the Capital city (Praia) average temperature 20-27oc.

Altitude 30 mtrs/98 ft

Hottest Month June-September

Coldest Month December-March

Driest Month November -June

Wettest Month July-August

Measures

Metric system

Time zone

1 hour behind GMT/UTC. At summer -3 hours less than Portugal. At winter -2 hours less than Portugal.

## Public holidays

January 1 (New year), January 20 (Heroes day), May 1 ( Labor day), July 5 (independence).

## Ethnic groups

Creole (Mulattos) 71%, Africans 28%, Europeans 1%.

## Topographic & Environmental concern

Cape Verde islands are 18 (10 islands, 8 islets) in numbers volcanic in origin (active crater on Fogo island), the landscape is eroded and stark, with vegetation mostly in interior valleys. Environment: soil erosion: deforestation due to demand for wood used as fuel: water shortages: desertification: environmental damage has threatened several species of birds and reptiles: illegal beach sand extraction: overfishing.

## Economic Overview

### Industry

Food processing, beverages, fish processing, leather shoes, garments, salt mining, ship-repair.

### Chief crops

Bananas, coffee, sugarcane, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, peanuts, fish.

Note: Economy is heavily dependent on remittances from migrant workers.

### Natural resources

Salt, Basalt rock, Limestone, Kaolin, Fish, Clay, Gypsum.

### Land in use (%)

Arable land: 10

Grassland: 6

Forest woods: 0

Other: 84

### Marine:

Coastline: 965 km.

Commercial Sea port:-

Mindelo (main port)

### Development prospect:

The execution of large public investment programs has boosted economic activity but also led to a rise in the budget deficit (10.9% of GDP) and total public debt (67.2% of GDP), according to the IMF. Tourism and the government's investment program remain the main drivers of growth. In 2011 construction began on an \$83m resort on Sal Island that will take about three years to complete. Cape Verde's airports handled 1.3m international arrivals from January to September 2011, a 10.3% increase on the same period in 2010.

Cape Verde is one of the few African countries likely to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, having already ticked four of the eight goals – achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. But donor support is important to sustaining these outcomes. With its graduation to Middle Income Country (MIC) status category, Cape Verde faces reduced access to concessional loans and has asked to extend its access to Low Income Country (LIC) instruments to 2015 in order to address structural bottlenecks.

Electricity company Electra, InfraCo, the Africa Finance Corporation and the Finnish Fund for Industrial Cooperation inaugurated a 10MW section of a wind farm project on Santiago Island in October 2011 as part of a national program to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. In 2012, wind power should account for about 25% of the national energy supply. The administration is restructuring the electricity parastatal and national airline with an eye to their privatization. In August, the Santa Caterina municipality signed a deal with Australia's Water Resources group for a 4,000m<sup>3</sup>/day desalination plant.

Fishing plays an important role in the economy. In October, the government started substantive negotiations with China National Fisheries Corporation for the privatization of the Cabnave shipyard and the construction of a new fishing logistics centre.