

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

AREA OF WORLD

PALAU

Snapshot

Country Name: Republic of Palau

Population: estimated 20,000

People Groups: 7

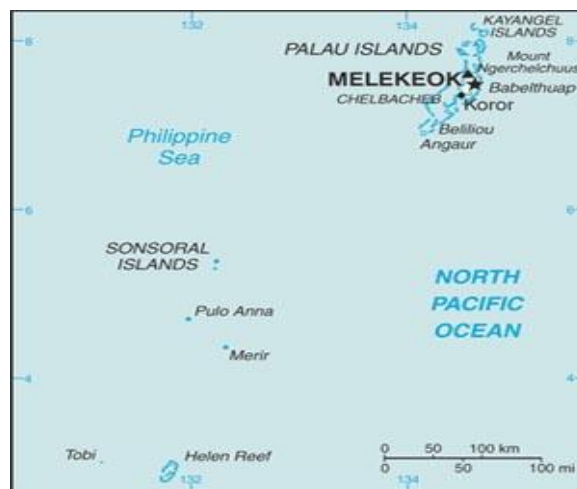
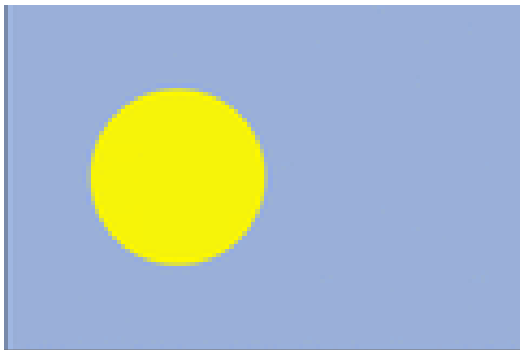
Geography: 8 main islands located 500 miles southeast of the Philippines

Country Founded: Became independent October 1, 1994

Government: Constitutional republic

Religious Snapshot: Christianity 96%; Non-religious 1.6%; Ethnic religions 1.2%

Picture of Flag:



Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: Republic of Palau

Demographics: Palau has an estimated population around 20,000. The 0-14 years of age makes up 22% of the current population. The 15-64 years of age makes up 71% of the population, and the 65 years and older make up 6% of the current population. Life expectancy for women is about 74 years of age. Life expectancy for men is around 68 years of age. The birth rate is 10 live births per 1000 people. The death rate is 8 deaths per 1000 people.

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

Language: Palauan is the official language for all the islands except Sonsoral, Tobi, and Anguar. On the island of Sonsoral, English and Sonsoral are the official languages. On the island of Anguar, Japanese and Anguar are spoken. And on the island of Tobi, the language of Tobi is spoken.

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

Land/Geography: Palau is located in the Pacific Ocean, about 500 miles southwest of the Philippines. Its geographic coordinates are 7 30 N, 134 30 E. There are 8 main islands and about 250 lesser islands, all covering about 459 square kilometers or 285 square miles.

The topography of the islands range from being mountainous to flat, Coastal plains surrounded by coral reefs. The main island of Koror is home to about two thirds of the Palau population.

The climate is tropical with temperatures being hot and humid. The average annual temperature is around 82 degrees. Average annual rainfall is about 150 inches. This makes for a wide variety of flora and fauna. Palau is a major destination for divers as the coral reefs are home to a wide variety of marine life.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palau>

Society/Culture: The Sea has been a major player in the development of society on Palau. Men traditionally went to sea to fish to provide for their families or to do war with opposing tribes. Women traditionally stayed on land, near the more shallow waters, tending children, and tending the fields of taro, a main staple in their diet.

Palauans still focus their villages around 10 major clans. Leaders from each clan provide input on the council that determines the division of land and control of money. The women leaders provide advisory support in the decisions that are made.

The people of Palau are a social people. They graciously welcome the tourist to their islands. As they are a people of oral stories that tell their history and traditions, they will share these with

the guests in their homes, or even at the tourist museums. Koror, the capital has a Cultural Center where one can learn more of the culture of the islands.

If one is a history buff, the islands of Peleliu and Angaur are home to World War II relics and artifacts. Peleliu is home to the WWII Memorial Museum.

<http://www.visit-palau.com/aboutpalau/index.cfm>

Literacy: Literacy rate for Palau averages about 92 % of the adult population, 15 years or age or older. It is estimated that men have a higher average at 93% and women a lower average of 90%.

20% of all government expenditure goes to education. Elementary education is free and compulsory for all children up to the age of 14.

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

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, Twelfth Edition, Vol.4; 2007, p. 650.

Government: Palau is a democratic government. They elect their president and vice president every four years. In November 2008 elections Johnson Toribiong was elected president and head of state; Vice President was Kerai Mariur.

The Palau National Congress has two houses; the Senate and the House of Delegates. The Senate is made up of 13 members that are elected from around the country. The House has 16 members that are elected from the 16 states that make up Palau. All these members are elected to serve four year terms.

There is a Council of Chiefs that comes from the 16 states. These are the traditional leaders. This council acts in an advisory capacity to the president. This Council is consulted when matters of tradition are involved.

The judicial branch is made up of the Supreme Court, the Court of Common Pleas, and the Land Court. Court appointments are for life.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1840.htm#people>

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

Economy: The average income per family in Palau is roughly \$9,000 per year. This is considered quite high for Pacific countries. However, much of the country's income is subsidized by the United States government with the Compact of Free Association. This agreement was made in 1994. It says the US Government will fund \$800 million dollars to Palau over a 15 year period. This assistance ended in December 2009.

Palau exports nearly \$6 million annually. Products exported are shellfish, tuna, copra, and garments made on the islands.

Imports to Palau include machinery, foodstuffs, and fuels. Palau spends nearly \$107 million on import items.

Tourism provided nearly 50% of the gross domestic product for Palau in 2007. Thus, the service sector is a large source of employment. The government provides nearly 31% of all jobs on the islands. Construction projects provided nearly 15% of all jobs.

Agriculture is mostly subsistence farming. Even fishing is not a large source of revenue for the country. Money is collect mainly from license fees from fishing vessels. Only about 6% of the country's revenue comes from the agriculture sector.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ps.html>
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1840.htm#people>

History

It is thought that Palauan descendants came from around the Pacific region, primarily from Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia, with the largest percentage from Polynesia. Human existence seems to have gone back thousands of years. Palau was known to have a fairly efficient matrilineal society where land, money, and title came through the female line. Patrilineal division of land and money was set up by the Japanese when they took over the islands in 1914.

But, before the Japanese came on the scene, the Spanish claimed the islands in 1686 for King Charles II of Spain. The whole area was known as the Carolines. Spain continued to rule this part of the Pacific Ocean until 1898 when the Carolines were sold to Germany.

Germany held Palau and other island until 1914 when Japan took them in World War I. The League of Nations allowed Japan to have procession over Palau in 1920. At that point, Koror Island became the administrative center for the Japanese for the north Pacific.

When World War II began, Palau became a major target due to the Japanese headquarters on Koror. The United States fought the Japanese in 1944 and gained procession of the tiny nation. After WWII was over Palau became a United Nations Trust Territory, which was administered by the United States.

In 1980 a constitution was adopted and in 1981 Palau became an independent republic. It could now make its own laws. To help Palau as it gained independence, the US government agreed to provide economic aid for a particular period. This official aid ended in 2009. The US continues to be responsible for Palau's defense if ever need should arise.

In 2003 Palau became a member of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission or SOPAC. This group strives to develop the manufacture of mineral and other nonliving resources to help diminish poverty for the people in the Pacific region.

In 2004, the then president, Tommy Remengesau, tried to have the Palau constitution amended from a bicameral house to a unicameral house of legislation. The Senate at the time failed to act on the proposal and so the president signed into law a Constitutional Convention held from May 2005 through June 2005. 25 delegates were to review the Constitution and make proposed amendments. Any amendment proposals to the Constitution would have to be approved in the 2008 election with three quarters of the states and majority in the popular vote.

In November 2008 elections Johnson Toribiong was elected president and head of state; Vice President was Kerai Mariur. There has been no indication as to the outcome of the Constitutional Convention.

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

<http://www.palaugov.net/index.html>

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, Twelfth Edition, Vol.4; 2007, p. 646.

Religion

Non Christian

Folk religions: About 1.2% of the population follows ethnic religions such as Folk Buddhism, Chinese folk, or Baha'i. Numbers combined are thought to be around 400 or so who claim to follow such teachings.

Jehovah's Witness: About 1% of the total population is a part of this religious group. There are 5 congregations with 150 members.

Modekngei: An ethnic religion found only in Palau, began in 1912. It combines the pagan traditions with Christian tradition. About 640 people claim to be practicing members.

Mormon: Mormon missionaries came to Palau around 1978. Currently membership is around 178 in five congregations.

Non-religious: About 1.8% of the Palauan population claims no interaction with any kind of religious affiliation. It is estimated the percentage may be as high as 3% by 2025.

Roman Catholic: 48% of the Palauan population is associated with the Roman Catholic Church. The Church has been a part of the culture since Spanish missionaries came in 1891. The Church supports an elementary and secondary school in Koror. It is estimated the Church has around 3,600 members in 18 congregations.

<http://www.operationworld.org/country/micr/owtext.html>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php>

<http://www.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/palau>

http://www.adherents.com/adhloc/Wh_267.html

Christian or Evangelical

Assembly of God: Missionary work began in Palau around 1980. Today there is 2 congregations with 24 members.

Evangelical Church: It is estimated there are 18 congregations with 2,200 members of the evangelical church. No particular denomination is noted.

Liebenzell Mission: An evangelical organization that sponsors Pacific Islands College on Palau. The mission was instrumental in translating the New Testament in 1950 and the entire Bible by 1985.

<http://www.operationworld.org/country/micr/owtext.html>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php>

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Volume 1, 2001, p.575.

People Groups

15741

American, US (200)

Americans on Palau have come due to business or military endeavors. Though the majority of the people indicate Protestant religious beliefs, many are nominal believers. It is not known if any are Evangelical Christian. A large variety of Christian resources are available in English, including the Bible, the *Jesus* film, and printed Gospel materials.

19007

Deaf (unknown)

The number of Deaf in Palau is not known. As the country is predominately Roman Catholic, it is thought that many of the Deaf may participate in the Church activities. It is not known what Gospel resources are available for the Deaf.

15175

Filipino (3,500)

The Filipino people in Palau speak primarily Tagalog. The majority of the people follow the tenets of Christianity. It is thought less than 5% may be Evangelical Christian. Many Gospel resources are available in Tagalog including a complete Bible translation, audio recordings, the *Jesus* film, assorted printed matter, and worship music.

14271

Palauan (13,000)

The Palauan people represent in their history many other groups from the Micronesian Pacific area in which they live. Their primary language is Palauan. Many also speak English. They follow the tenets of Christianity. Less than 5% are thought to be Evangelical Christian. They

have the New Testament translated into their language. Other Christian resources in their language include the *Jesus* film, and audio recordings.

14999

Sonsorol (1,100)

One of the Palau islands isonsorol. The people here are from the Micronesian people cluster. Their primary language is Sonsorol. Though it is thought the Sonsorol people follow the tenets of Christianity, statics are not available for actual percentage. Resources available in their primary language do not exist. Some resources are available in the main languages of the country.

15522

Tobian (30)

The Tobian people, also known as the Tomu, live primarily on the Palau island of Tobi. Their primary language is Tobian, but with so few people the language is nearly extinct. It is thought that since the primary religion of Palau is Christianity, it is possible the Tobian people practice its tenets. Statics are not available for record. Christian resources in Tobian do not exist. There are resources available in the primary languages of Palau.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tox

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should help the Christians in Palau to maintain adherence to biblical teachings. Syncretism is widespread with the traditional folk religions. Christians can make available the true biblical teachings to combat this syncretism..
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop and share with the believers in Palau materials on sharing the good news with followers of the Roman Catholic Church.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should learn about and relate the Gospel to the various clans of Palau.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should become concerned about people on the other inhabited islands of Palau. Gospel proclamation and church starting should be intensified on these islands.