INTRODUCTION
The eastern half of the island of New Guinea was divided between Germany (north) and the UK (south) in 1885. The latter area was transferred to Australia in 1902, which occupied the northern portion during World War I and continued to administer the combined areas until independence in 1975. Since 2001, Bougainville has experienced autonomy. In a 2019 referendum, almost 98% of voters choose eventual independence.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
Queen ELIZABETH II represented by Governor General Grand Chief Sir Bob DADAE
Head of Government
Prime Minister James MARAPE
Government Type
parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm
Capital
Port Moresby
Legislature
unicameral National Parliament (111 seats)

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
lower middle-income Pacific island economy; very diverse, primarily informal agricultural labor force; natural resource rich extraction account for export volume; growing youth population faces lack of formal employment; hit by COVID-19
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $36.69 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $4,100 (2020 est.)
Industries - copra, palm oil, plywood production, wood chip production, mining, crude oil and petroleum products, construction, tourism, livestock, dairy products, spice products, fisheries products
Agricultural products - oil palm fruit, bananas, coconuts, fruit, sweet potatoes, game meat, yams, roots/tubers, vegetables
Exports $8.522 billion (2017 est.)
natural gas, gold, copper, lumber, crude petroleum, nickel, palm oil, fish, coffee (2019)
partners: Australia 26%, China 26%, Japan 22%, Taiwan 7% (2019)
Imports $1.876 billion (2017 est.)
refined petroleum, excavation machinery, crude petroleum, foodstuffs, delivery trucks (2019)
partners: Australia 33%, China 19%, Singapore 14%, Malaysia 9% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population 7.4 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth 1.61% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity Melanesian, Papuan, Negrito, Micronesian, Polynesian
Language Tok Pisin (official), English (official), Hiri Motu (official), some 839 indigenous languages spoken (about 12% of the world's total); many languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers
Religion Protestant 64.3%, Roman Catholic 26%, other Christian 5.3%, non-Christian 1.4%, unspecified 3.1% (2011 est.)