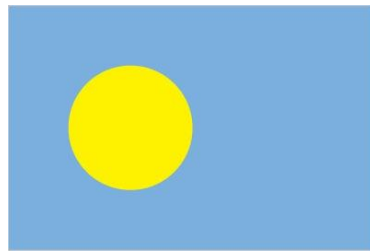




PALAU



INTRODUCTION

After three decades as part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific under US administration, this westernmost cluster of the Caroline Islands opted for independence in 1978 rather than join the Federated States of Micronesia. A Compact of Free Association with the US was approved in 1986 but not ratified until 1993. It entered into force the following year when the islands gained independence.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President Surangel WHIPPS Jr.

Head of Government

President Surangel WHIPPS Jr.

Government Type

presidential republic in free association with the US

Capital

Ngerulmud

Legislature

bicameral National Congress or Olbiil Era Kelulau consists of the Senate (13 seats) and the House of Delegates (16 seats)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 459 sq km
Land: 459 sq km
Water: 0 sq km

Climate

tropical; hot and humid; wet season May to November

Natural Resources

forests, minerals (especially gold), marine products, deep-seabed minerals

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

high-income Pacific island economy; major subsistence agriculture and fishing industries; reliant on US aid; strong tourism has prompted sustainability oversight mechanism; severely disrupted by COVID-19

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$316 million (2019 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$17,579 (2019 est.)

Industries - tourism, fishing, subsistence agriculture

Agricultural products - coconuts, cassava, sweet potatoes, fish, pigs, chickens, eggs, bananas, papaya, breadfruit, calamansi, soursop, Polynesian chestnuts, Polynesian almonds, mangoes, taro, guava, beans, cucumbers, squash/pumpkins, eggplant

Exports \$23.17 billion (2017 est.)

fish, computers, broadcasting equipment, office machinery/parts, scrap vessels (2019)

partners: Japan 70%, South Korea 15%, US 7% (2019)

Imports \$4.715 billion (2017 est.)

refined petroleum, fish, cars, broadcasting equipment, modeling instruments (2019)

partners: South Korea 19%, China 18%, Taiwan 17%, US 17%, Japan 16% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

21,613 (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

0.38% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Palauan (Micronesian with Malayan and Melanesian admixtures) 73%, Carolinian 2%, Asian 21.7%, Caucasian 1.2%, other 2.1% (2015 est.)

Language

Palauan (official on most islands) 65.2%, other Micronesian 1.9%, English (official) 19.1%, Filipino 9.9%, Chinese 1.2%, other 2.8% (2015 est.)

Religion

Roman Catholic 45.3%, Protestant 34.9%, Modekngai 5.7% (indigenous to Palau), Muslim 3%, Church of Jesus Christ 1.5%, other 9.7% (2015 est.)

