

Republic of Nauru



Nauru, an island located in a remote region of the Pacific, has been inhabited for over 3,000 years. It is unknown where the first inhabitants of the island originated from, as their language is unique to the region. Western Europeans first made contact with the island in 1798, and the island, at the time known as Pleasant Island, soon became a stopping point for whaling ships to restock their supplies. Nauru was annexed in 1888 by the German Empire. After the Empire's fall in World War I, the island became a mandate of the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations. Nauru was occupied by the Japanese during World War II, and fell under UN trusteeship after the war. Nauru finally gained its independence in 1968. It is currently the world's third-smallest state in land area behind Monaco and the Vatican.

Nauru's economy has never recovered to its peak in the 1960s and 1970s, when, thanks to phosphate mining, the island had the highest per capita income of any sovereign nation. By the early 2000s, Nauru's once vast deposits of the mineral were almost entirely exhausted. The center of the island has been cleaned bare through highly intrusive strip mining, which began under German colonial rule and was then continued by the Australians and the Nauruans. An estimated 75% of Nauru's land has been rendered useless through the extraction of the phosphate deposits.

Nauru has relied heavily on foreign assistance over the last decade and a half. The island's largest benefactor is Australia, which has given assistance to Nauru in exchange for the creation of the Nauru Regional Processing Centre on the island, an immigration detention

facility used to hold refugees which have tried to reach Australia by boat. 380 refugees currently reside at the detention facility. In addition, Australia assumes responsibility for Nauru's defense, and the Australian dollar is used as the national currency.

Due to its mining past, Nauru could be greatly impacted by drought or rising sea levels. With little arable land and no option of moving further inland, island residents could be forced to migrate in these instances.

Geography

Official name: Republic of Nauru

Conventional Short Form:

Region: Oceania

Area: 21 sq km

Bordering Countries: Nauru's nearest neighbor is Kiribati, about 300 km away

Physical features: Nauru has a sandy beach and a ring of fertile soil around the island with a phosphate plateau in the center. The island's highest point is located along the plateau rim, which reaches 61 m above sea level.

Climate: Tropical with a monsoonal pattern

Natural Hazards:

People and Society

Population: 9,591 (July 2016 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Nauruan (58%), other Pacific Islander (26%), Chinese (8%), European (8%)

Official Language: Nauruan

Other Languages Spoken: English, Kiribati, and Chinese

Religions: Protestant 60.4%, Roman Catholic 33%, other 3.7%, none 1.8%, unspecified 1.1%

Capital city: No official capital but government offices in Yaren District

Other major cities: N/A

Median Age (*half the people are younger than this age and half are older*)

Male: 26.5

Female: 25.5

Total population: 26.1 (2016 est.)

Literacy Rate (*percentage of the population 15 and older who can read and write*)

Male: 95.7%

Female: 97.2%

Total population: 96.5% (2011 census)

Life Expectancy at Birth (*average number of years to be lived by those born in the same year*)

Male: 63

Female: 70.5

Total population: 67.1 (2016 est.)

Government

Founded: January 31, 1968

Type of Government: Parliamentary Republic

Country Leaders

Chief of State/Head of Government: President Baron Waqa

Allies: Australia

Enemies: N/A

Economic Geography

Currency: Australian Dollar

GDP: \$150.8 million (2016 est.)

Natural Resources: Phosphates, fish, coconuts

Unemployment Rate: 23% (2011 est.)

Population Below Poverty Line: N/A

Major export and imports

Exports: Phosphates

Imports: Food, fuel, manufactures, building materials, machinery

Biggest trading partners

Exports: India, New Zealand, South Korea, Australia

Imports: Australia, Fiji, Japan, China

More information can be found at:

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