

São Tomé and Príncipe

Country Overview

Politics

São Tomé and Príncipe is the smallest nation in all of Africa. It is ruled by a semi-presidential republic. The island nation has had a tumultuous relationship with democracy since its independence in 1975 from Portugal, and has experienced four non-violent and unsuccessful coup attempts in 1995, 1998, 2003, and 2009. The current prime minister, Patrice Trovoada, had his government brought down by a no-confidence vote in 2012, but was subsequently reinstated by legislative elections in 2014. President Evaristo Carvalho (who shares a party affiliation with Prime Minister Trovoada) was elected in September 2016. São Tomé and Príncipe has a mixed legal system which is based on the Portuguese model and recognizes civil and customary law. The supreme court is comprised of five justices who are appointed by the National Assembly. The legislative branch has a single body, the National Assembly, which is made up of 55 members directly elected to 4-year terms.¹

Economy

The World Bank classifies São Tomé and Príncipe as a lower middle income country with a “fragile” economy which is “highly vulnerable” to external shocks. Agriculture has historically been the primary sector of the island nation’s economy, and exports of cocoa, coffee and palm oil have been increasing in recent years. Exports from the country are not adequate to cover import expenditures, and government spending is the primary driver of economic growth (34.2 percent of GDP in 2015). Oil exploration began in 2012, but oil production is not expected to come online until 2020.²

Social/Human Development

São Tomé and Príncipe is a small country of less than 2,000,000 people.³ The UN has given São Tomé and Príncipe a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.574, ranking the country 142nd out of 179 countries. The UN also reports that nearly 50 percent of São Tomé and Príncipeans are living in multidimensional poverty.⁴ The country’s primary language is Portuguese, with 98 percent of residents reporting on the 2012 census that they spoke the language. The small island nation is also incredibly youthful, with over 60 percent of the population younger than 25. Those who live on the island today are descended from Portuguese settlers and African slaves brought to work on sugar plantations.⁵



U.S. Department of State TIP Report Summary (2017)

São Tomé and Príncipe is not included in the U.S. Department of State TIP report.

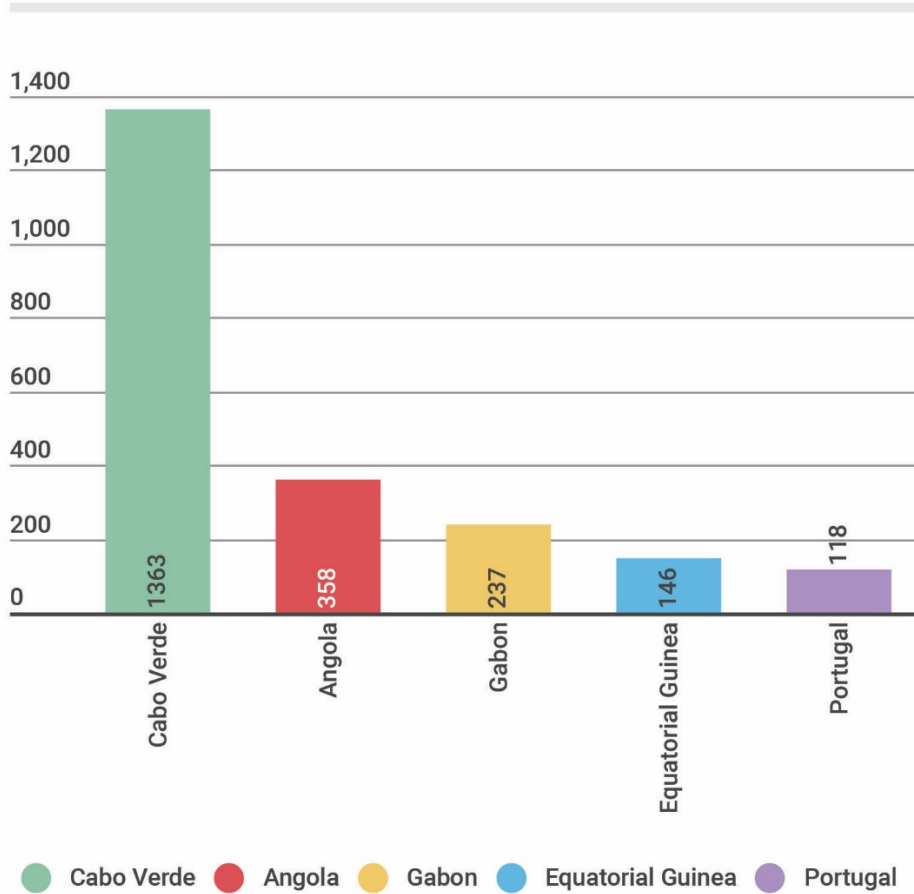
There were no confirmed reports in the past year that the country was a source, destination, or transit country for victims of human trafficking.⁶

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

São Tomé and Príncipe has a high rate of out migration, with a current migration rate of -8.5 migrants/1,000 population.⁷ The most significant migrant sending countries were Cabo Verde, Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Portugal.⁸ There were no significant populations of refugees in the last reporting year.⁹

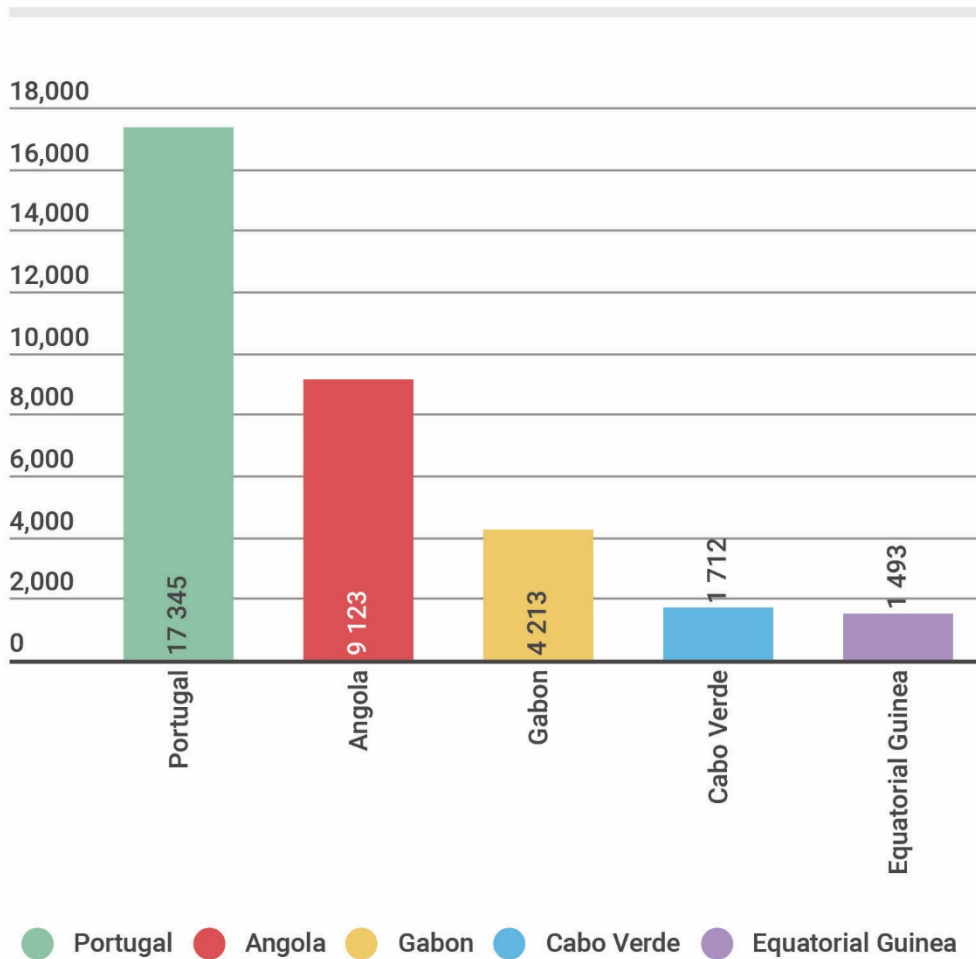


Migrants to São Tomé and Príncipe



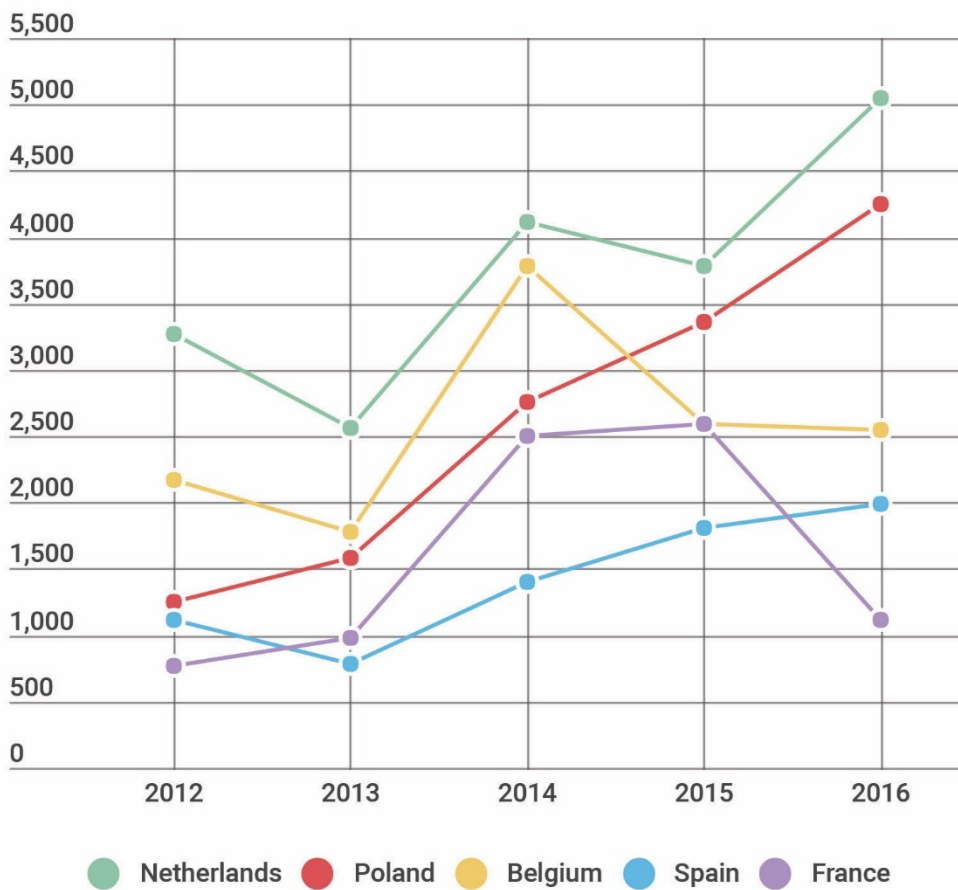
The countries with the most migrants from São Tomé and Príncipe include Portugal, Angola, Gabon, Cabo Verde and Equatorial Guinea.¹⁰

Migrants from São Tomé and Príncipe



Exports and Trade

São Tomé and Príncipe Export Partners (USD/Thousands)



Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers' Rights

Freedom of Association

The law in São Tomé and Príncipe protects workers' rights to form and/or join unions, bargain collectively, and conduct strikes (although this right is strictly controlled). Workers in the public sector do not have the right to bargain collectively. The law does not prohibit anti-union discrimination by employers or retaliation against strikers. The government generally enforces laws guaranteeing the right of workers to partake in collective actions, but the government remains the country's largest employer and the workers employed in the public sector are not afforded the same rights.¹¹

Working Conditions

There is no minimum wage in São Tomé and Príncipe, although the government recently announced that it would implement the country's first national minimum wage at STD 1.1 million (USD 50) a month. The minimum wage in the public sector is STD 975,000 (USD 44) a month. The legal workweek is 40 hours, but working two jobs is common practice. The government has not been able to effectively enforce labor laws in the country, as there are only 15 labor inspectors currently employed. There are no labor laws which govern the sprawling informal sector in the country, and workers in the palm oil and cocoa farming sectors are particularly vulnerable to abuse.¹²

Discrimination

Labor law in São Tomé and Príncipe prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, religious belief, political affiliation, social origin, and/or philosophical conviction. These laws are generally enforced in practice, but the law does not explicitly prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of color, age, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or HIV-positive status. The law does not differentiate between migrant workers and citizens in terms of anti-discrimination laws.¹³

Forced Labor

The law prohibits forced labor of every kind (including child labor), and although the country lacks sufficient enforcement capabilities, the U.S. Department of State reports that there were no reported cases of forced labor on the small island nation in the year 2016.¹⁴



Child Labor

The minimum age for non-hazardous work in São Tomé and Príncipe is 14, and the minimum age for hazardous work is 18. The law does not define the term “hazardous”, therefore making the effective enforcement of these laws difficult at best. Employers in the formal sectors of the economy were reported to have generally respected laws governing child labor, but in the informal sector children labor in light agricultural and domestic work, and have also been documented working as street vendors in larger urban areas.¹⁵

Civil Society Organizations

There were only a handful of civil society organizations operating in São Tomé and Príncipe over the course of last year, but those that did were not impeded by the government and authorities were generally accepting of their viewpoints and recommendations.¹⁶

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

Conventions	Status
ILO 29 Forced Labor	In force
ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	In force
ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	In force
ILO 100 Equal Remuneration	In force
ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor	In force
ILO 111 Discrimination	In force
ILO 138 Minimum Age	In force
ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies	Not ratified
ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor	In force
ILO 97 Migration for Employment	Not ratified

17



Political Risk Factors

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores São Tomé and Príncipe as a 46 out of 100, where a 0 signals “highly corrupt” and 100 signals “very clean.” São Tomé and Príncipe ranks 62 out of 176 on that index.¹⁸ This current rank marks progress in combating corruption in the country, as it ranked 76th on the same index in 2014.¹⁹

Level of Crime and Violence

The U.S. Department of State reports that the crime level in São Tomé and Príncipe is “low.”²⁰

Political Instability or Conflict

São Tomé and Príncipe scores a 72.1 in the 2016 Fragile States Index (FSI), placing it firmly in the “alert” category and ranking the country 97th out of 178. The FSI scale goes from 0 (indicating a “sustainable” political system), to 120 (indicating a political system on “high alert”).²¹

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

São Tomé and Príncipe’s HDI value for 2015 was 0.574, positioning it at 142 out of 188 countries and territories. When adjusted for inequality, São Tomé and Príncipe’s HDI value falls to 0.432.²² The small island nation is home to one of the smallest economies in all of Africa, and there is no single industry which drives the growth of the national economy. In recent years coffee, cocoa, and palm oil have become more prevalent, but the primary driver of the economy remains government spending. The islands are also heavily reliant on imports, and much of the domestic spending and economic activity ends up benefiting economies off the island that are providing needed goods.²³

Level and Extent of Poverty

São Tomé and Príncipe scores 0.217 on the United Nations’ multidimensional poverty index (MPI), and according to the same organization 47.5 percent of São Tomé and Príncipe citizens are living in multidimensional poverty. An additional 21.5 percent of the population lives near the multidimensional poverty line.²⁴



Degree of Gender Inequality

The law in São Tomé and Príncipe provides for equal rights regardless of gender, but in practice women often face discrimination which limits access to education and work.²⁵

Environmental Factors

The main environmental concerns are farming related, including deforestation and the overuse of the small amount of arable land available on the islands.²⁶

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Cocoa

Cocoa Overview

Cocoa production has expanded exponentially since the early 1990s, when the price of the commodity took a severe downturn on the international market. Now, with the introduction of a processing plant on the islands and a drastic increase in production, the crop has become the most important facet of São Tomé and Príncipe's export economy.²⁷ Unlike many other cocoa producing countries, cocoa is often grown on larger-scale plantation as a remnant of colonial agricultural practices.²⁸

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Cocoa

There is limited evidence that child labor is engaged in agriculture more broadly in São Tomé and Príncipe, although cocoa is not noted specifically.²⁹



Gift of the United States Government

This report was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.



Endnotes

¹ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tp.html>

² The World Bank. *São Tomé and Príncipe: Overview*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview>

³ The World Bank. *São Tomé and Príncipe: Overview*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview>

⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Reports: International Human Development Indicators*. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/STP>

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tp.html>

⁶ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>

⁷ International Organization for Migration (IOM). *Global Migration Flows*. 2016. <https://www.iom.int/world-migration>

⁸ International Organization for Migration (IOM). *Global Migration Flows*. 2016. <https://www.iom.int/world-migration>

⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *São Tomé and Príncipe*.

<http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,STP,,56370d974,0.html>

¹⁰ International Organization for Migration (IOM). *Global Migration Flows*. 2016. <https://www.iom.int/world-migration>

¹¹ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>

¹² U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>

¹³ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>

¹⁶ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>

¹⁷ International Labour Organization. *São Tomé and Príncipe: Ratifications*. http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_INSTRUMENT_SORT,P11200_COUNTRY_ID:2,103341

¹⁸ Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. 2016. <https://www.transparency.org/country/STP>

¹⁹ The World Bank. *São Tomé and Príncipe: Overview*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview>

²⁰ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Diplomatic Security (OSAC). *São Tomé and Príncipe 2017 Crime & Safety Report*. <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=21489>

²¹ Fund For Peace. *Fragile States Index 2016*. <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/>

²² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Reports: International Human Development Indicators*. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/STP>

²³ The World Bank. *São Tomé and Príncipe: Overview*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview>

²⁴ The World Bank. *São Tomé and Príncipe: Overview*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview>

²⁵ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252931.pdf>



²⁶ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: São Tomé and Príncipe*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tp.html>

²⁷ Plaut, Martin. "Chocolate boost for Sao Tome farmers." BBC News. March 7, 2011. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12261276>

²⁸ Deutsche Welle (DW). "Growing cocoa on Sao Tome und Principe: a new export drive." <http://www.dw.com/en/growing-cocoa-on-sao-tome-und-principe-a-new-export-drive/g-17168468>

²⁹ U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of International Labor Affairs. *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor: São Tomé and Príncipe*. 2016. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/sao-tome-principe>

