

# The World Factbook

## Suriname



### Introduction Suriname

**Background:** Independence from the Netherlands was granted in 1975. Five years later the civilian government was replaced by a military regime that soon declared a socialist republic. It continued to rule through a succession of nominally civilian administrations until 1987, when international pressure finally forced a democratic election. In 1989, the military overthrew the civilian government, but a democratically-elected government returned to power in 1991.

### Geography Suriname

**Location:** Northern South America, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between French Guiana and Guyana

**Geographic coordinates:** 4 00 N, 56 00 W

**Map references:** South America

**Area:** *total:* 163,270 sq km  
*land:* 161,470 sq km  
*water:* 1,800 sq km

**Area - comparative:** slightly larger than Georgia

<b>Land boundaries:</b>	<i>total:</i> 1,707 km <i>border countries:</i> Brazil 597 km, French Guiana 510 km, Guyana 600 km
<b>Coastline:</b>	386 km
<b>Maritime claims:</b>	<i>exclusive economic zone:</i> 200 NM <i>territorial sea:</i> 12 NM
<b>Climate:</b>	tropical; moderated by trade winds
<b>Terrain:</b>	mostly rolling hills; narrow coastal plain with swamps
<b>Elevation extremes:</b>	<i>lowest point:</i> unnamed location in the coastal plain -2 m <i>highest point:</i> Juliana Top 1,230 m
<b>Natural resources:</b>	timber, hydropower, fish, kaolin, shrimp, bauxite, gold, and small amounts of nickel, copper, platinum, iron ore
<b>Land use:</b>	<i>arable land:</i> 0.37% <i>permanent crops:</i> 0.06% <i>note:</i> there are 95,000 hectares of arable land, 7,000 hectares of permanent crops, and 15,000 hectares of permanent pastures (1998 est.) <i>other:</i> 99.57%
<b>Irrigated land:</b>	490 sq km (1998 est.)
<b>Natural hazards:</b>	NA
<b>Environment - current issues:</b>	deforestation as timber is cut for export; pollution of inland waterways by small-scale mining activities
<b>Environment - international agreements:</b>	<i>party to:</i> Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands <i>signed, but not ratified:</i> none of the selected agreements
<b>Geography - note:</b>	smallest independent country on South American continent; mostly tropical rain forest; great diversity of flora and fauna that, for the most part, is increasingly threatened by new development; relatively small population, mostly along the coast
<b>People</b>	<b>Suriname</b>
<b>Population:</b>	435,449 (July 2003 est.)
<b>Age structure:</b>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 30.7% (male 68,536; female 65,165) <i>15-64 years:</i> 63.3% (male 141,048; female 134,699) <i>65 years and over:</i> 6% (male 11,686; female 14,315) (2003 est.)
<b>Median age:</b>	<i>total:</i> 25.5 years <i>male:</i> 25.1 years <i>female:</i> 26 years (2002)
<b>Population</b>	0.37% (2003 est.)

<b>growth rate:</b>	
<b>Birth rate:</b>	19.4 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)
<b>Death rate:</b>	6.83 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est.)
<b>Net migration rate:</b>	-8.84 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)
<b>Sex ratio:</b>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.82 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 1.03 male(s)/female (2003 est.)
<b>Infant mortality rate:</b>	<i>total:</i> 24.74 deaths/1,000 live births <i>female:</i> 20.34 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.) <i>male:</i> 28.93 deaths/1,000 live births
<b>Life expectancy at birth:</b>	<i>total population:</i> 69.23 years <i>male:</i> 66.79 years <i>female:</i> 71.78 years (2003 est.)
<b>Total fertility rate:</b>	2.4 children born/woman (2003 est.)
<b>HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:</b>	1.2% (2001 est.)
<b>HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:</b>	3,700 (2001 est.)
<b>HIV/AIDS - deaths:</b>	330 (2001 est.)
<b>Nationality:</b>	<i>noun:</i> Surinamer(s) <i>adjective:</i> Surinamese
<b>Ethnic groups:</b>	Hindustani (also known locally as "East Indians"; their ancestors emigrated from northern India in the latter part of the 19th century) 37%, Creole (mixed white and black) 31%, Javanese 15%, "Maroons" (their African ancestors were brought to the country in the 17th and 18th centuries as slaves and escaped to the interior) 10%, Amerindian 2%, Chinese 2%, white 1%, other 2%
<b>Religions:</b>	Hindu 27.4%, Muslim 19.6%, Roman Catholic 22.8%, Protestant 25.2% (predominantly Moravian), indigenous beliefs 5%
<b>Languages:</b>	Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is native language of Creoles and much of the younger population and is lingua franca among others), Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese
<b>Literacy:</b>	<i>definition:</i> age 15 and over can read and write <i>total population:</i> 93% <i>male:</i> 95%

*female*: 91% (1995 est.)

## Government **Suriname**

**Country name:** *conventional long form*: Republic of Suriname  
*conventional short form*: Suriname  
*local short form*: Suriname  
*former*: Netherlands Guiana, Dutch Guiana  
*local long form*: Republiek Suriname

**Government type:** constitutional democracy

**Capital:** Paramaribo

**Administrative divisions:** 10 districts (distrikten, singular - distrikt); Brokopondo, Commewijne, Coronie, Marowijne, Nickerie, Para, Paramaribo, Saramacca, Sipaliwini, Wanica

**Independence:** 25 November 1975 (from Netherlands)

**National holiday:** Independence Day, 25 November (1975)

**Constitution:** ratified 30 September 1987

**Legal system:** based on Dutch legal system incorporating French penal theory

**Suffrage:** 18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:** *chief of state*: President Rinaldo Ronald VENETIAAN (since 12 August 2000); Vice President Jules Rattankoemar AJODHIA (since 12 August 2000); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government  
*head of government*: President Rinaldo Ronald VENETIAAN (since 12 August 2000); Vice President Jules Rattankoemar AJODHIA (since 12 August 2000); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government  
*cabinet*: Cabinet of Ministers appointed by the president from among the members of the National Assembly  
*elections*: president and vice president elected by the National Assembly or, if no presidential or vice presidential candidate receives a constitutional majority in the National Assembly after two votes, by the larger People's Assembly (869 representatives from the national, local, and regional councils), for five-year terms; election last held 6 May 2000 (next to be held NA May 2005)  
*election results*: Rinaldo Ronald VENETIAAN elected president by the National Assembly; percent of legislative vote - Rinaldo Ronald VENETIAAN 72.5%; Rashied DOEKHIE (NDP) 19.6%; total votes cast - Rinaldo Ronald VENETIAAN (New Front) 37 votes, Rashied DOEKHIE (NDP) 10 votes  
*note*: widespread demonstrations during the summer of 1999 led to the call for elections a year early

**Legislative** unicameral National Assembly or Nationale Assemblée (51 seats;

- branch:** members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)  
*election results:* percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - NF 33, MC 10, DNP 2000 3, DA '91 2, PVF 2, PALU 1  
*note:* widespread demonstrations during the summer of 1999 led to the call for elections a year early  
*elections:* last held 5 May 2000 (next to be held NA May 2005)
- Judicial branch:** Court of Justice (justices are nominated for life)
- Political parties and leaders:** Democratic Alternative '91 or DA '91 (a coalition of the Alternative Forum or AF and Party for Brotherhood and Unity in Politics or BEP, formed in January 1991) [Winston JESSURUN]; Democratic National Platform 2000 or DNP 2000 (coalition of two parties, Democratic Party and Democrats of the 21st Century) [Jules WIJDENBOSCH]; Independent Progressive Democratic Alternative or OPDA [Joginder RAMKHILAWAN]; Millennium Combination or MC (a coalition of three parties, Democratic Alternative, Party for National Unity and Solidarity, and National Democratic Party) [leader NA]; National Democratic Party or NDP [Desire BOUTERSE]; Naya Kadam or NK [leader NA]; Party for Renewal and Democracy or BVD [Tjan GOBARDHAN]; Party of National Unity and Solidarity or KTPI [Willy SOEMITA]; Pertjaja Luhur [Paul SOMOHARDJO]; Progressive Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union or PALU [Ir Iwan KROLIS]; The New Front or NF (a coalition of four parties Suriname National Party or NPS, Progressive Reform Party or VHP, Suriname Labor Party or SPA, and Pertjaja Luhur) [Runaldo Ronald VENETIAAN]; The Progressive Development Alliance (a combination of three parties, Renewed Progressive Party or HPP, Party of the Federation of Land Workers or PVF, and Suriname Progressive People's Party or PSV) [Harry KISOENSINGH]
- Political pressure groups and leaders:** General Liberation and Development Party or ABOP [Ronnie BRUNSWIJK]; Mandela Bushnegro Liberation Movement [Leendert ADAMS]; Tucayana Amazonica [Alex JUBITANA, Thomas SABAJO]; Union for Liberation and Democracy [Kofi AFONGPONG]
- International organization participation:** ACP, Caricom, ECLAC, FAO, G-77, IADB, IBRD, ICAO, ICFTU, ICRM, IDB, IFAD, IFRCs, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ITU, LAES, NAM, OAS, OIC, OPANAL, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTrO
- Diplomatic representation in the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador Henry Lothar ILLES  
*FAX:* [1] (202) 244-5878  
*consulate(s) general:* Miami  
*telephone:* [1] (202) 244-7488  
*chancery:* Suite 460, 4301 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008
- Diplomatic representation from the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador Daniel A. JOHNSON  
*embassy:* Dr. Sophie Redmondstraat 129, Paramaribo  
*mailing address:* Department of State, 3390 Paramaribo Place, Washington, DC, 20521-3390

*telephone:* [597] 472900

*FAX:* [597] 420800

**Flag description:** five horizontal bands of green (top, double width), white, red (quadruple width), white, and green (double width); there is a large, yellow, five-pointed star centered in the red band

## **Economy**      **Suriname**

**Economy - overview:** The economy is dominated by the bauxite industry, which accounts for more than 15% of GDP and 70% of export earnings. Suriname's economic prospects for the medium term will depend on renewed commitment to responsible monetary and fiscal policies and to the introduction of structural reforms to liberalize markets and promote competition. The government of Ronald VENETIAAN has begun an austerity program, raised taxes, and attempted to control spending. However, in 2002, President VENETIAAN agreed to a large pay raise for civil servants, which threatens his earlier gains in stabilizing the economy. The Dutch Government has agreed to restart the aid flow, which will allow Suriname to access international development financing. The short-term economic outlook depends on the government's ability to control inflation and on the development of projects in the bauxite and gold mining sectors.

**GDP:** purchasing power parity - \$1.469 billion (2002 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:** 1.2% (2002 est.)

**GDP - per capita:** purchasing power parity - \$3,400 (2002 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:** *agriculture:* 13%  
*industry:* 22%  
*services:* 65% (2001 est.)

**Population below poverty line:** 70% (2002 est.)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:** *lowest 10%:* NA%  
*highest 10%:* NA%

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):** 17% (2002 est.)

**Labor force:** 100,000

**Labor force - by occupation:** agriculture NA%, industry NA%, services NA%

**Unemployment rate:** 17% (2000)

<b>Budget:</b>	<i>revenues:</i> \$393 million <i>expenditures:</i> \$403 million, including capital expenditures of \$34 million (1997 est.)
<b>Industries:</b>	bauxite and gold mining, alumina production, oil, lumbering, food processing, fishing
<b>Industrial production growth rate:</b>	6.5% (1994 est.)
<b>Electricity - production:</b>	1.959 billion kWh (2001)
<b>Electricity - production by source:</b>	<i>fossil fuel:</i> 25.2% <i>hydro:</i> 74.8% <i>other:</i> 0% (2001) <i>nuclear:</i> 0%
<b>Electricity - consumption:</b>	1.822 billion kWh (2001)
<b>Electricity - exports:</b>	0 kWh (2001)
<b>Electricity - imports:</b>	0 kWh (2001)
<b>Oil - production:</b>	10,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)
<b>Oil - consumption:</b>	10,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)
<b>Oil - exports:</b>	NA (2001)
<b>Oil - imports:</b>	NA (2001)
<b>Oil - proved reserves:</b>	37 million bbl (37257)
<b>Natural gas - proved reserves:</b>	0 cu m (37257)
<b>Agriculture - products:</b>	paddy rice, bananas, palm kernels, coconuts, plantains, peanuts; beef, chickens; forest products; shrimp
<b>Exports:</b>	\$445 million f.o.b. (2002)
<b>Exports - commodities:</b>	alumina, crude oil, lumber, shrimp and fish, rice, bananas
<b>Exports - partners:</b>	US 25.3%, Norway 20.4%, France 8.2%, Trinidad and Tobago 6.4%, Iceland 6%, Canada 5.9%, Netherlands 5.6% (2002)
<b>Imports:</b>	\$300 million f.o.b. (2002)
<b>Imports - commodities:</b>	capital equipment, petroleum, foodstuffs, cotton, consumer goods

**Imports - partners:** US 22.2%, Netherlands 15.6%, China 11.9%, Trinidad and Tobago 11.2%, France 7.5%, Netherlands Antilles 7.2%, Japan 5.7% (2002)

**Debt - external:** \$321 million (2002 est.)

**Economic aid - recipient:** Netherlands provided \$37 million for project and program assistance, European Development Fund \$4 million, Belgium \$2 million (1998)

**Currency:** Surinamese guilder (SRG)

**Currency code:** SRG

**Exchange rates:** Surinamese guilders per US dollar - 2,346.75 (2002), 2,178.5 (2001), 1,322.47 (2000), 859.44 (1999), 401 (1998)  
*note:* during 1998, the exchange rate splintered into four distinct rates; in January 1999 the government floated the guilder, but subsequently fixed it when the black-market rate plunged; the government currently allows trading within a band of SRG 500 around the official rate

**Fiscal year:** calendar year

## Communications Suriname

**Telephones - main lines in use:** 64,000 (1997)

**Telephones - mobile cellular:** 4,090 (1997)

**Telephone system:** *general assessment:* international facilities are good  
*domestic:* microwave radio relay network  
*international:* satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean)

**Radio broadcast stations:** AM 4, FM 13, shortwave 1 (1998)

**Radios:** 300,000 (1997)

**Television broadcast stations:** 3 (plus seven repeaters) (2000)

**Televisions:** 63,000 (1997)

**Internet country code:** .sr

**Internet Service Providers (ISPs):** 2 (2000)

**Internet users:** 14,500 (2002)

## Transportation Suriname

**Railways:** *total:* 166 km (single-track)

*standard gauge*: 80 km 1.435-m gauge  
*note*: Suriname railroads are not in operation (2001)  
*narrow gauge*: 86 km 1.000-m gauge

**Highways:** *total*: 4,492 km  
*paved*: 1,168 km  
*unpaved*: 3,324 km (2000)

**Waterways:** 1,200 km  
*note*: most important means of transport; oceangoing vessels with drafts ranging up to 7 m can navigate many of the principal waterways

**Pipelines:** oil 51 km (2003)

**Ports and harbors:** Albina, Moengo, New Nickerie, Paramaribo, Paranam, Wageningen

**Merchant marine:** *total*: 2 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 2,421 GRT/2,990 DWT  
*ships by type*: cargo 1, container 1 (2002 est.)

**Airports:** 46 (2002)

**Airports - with paved runways:** *total*: 5  
*over 3,047 m*: 1  
*under 914 m*: 4 (2002)

**Airports - with unpaved runways:** *total*: 41  
*1,524 to 2,437 m*: 1  
*914 to 1,523 m*: 5  
*under 914 m*: 35 (2002)

## **Military**      **Suriname**

**Military branches:** National Army (including small Navy and Air Force elements), Civil Police

**Military manpower - availability:** *males age 15-49*: 123,159 (2003 est.)

**Military manpower - fit for military service:** *males age 15-49*: 72,039 (2003 est.)

**Military expenditures - dollar figure:** \$NA

**Military expenditures - percent of GDP:** 1.6% (FY97 est.)

## **Transnational Issues**      **Suriname**

**Disputes -** area disputed by French Guiana between Riviere Litani and Riviere

**international:** Marouini (both headwaters of the Lawa); area disputed by Guyana between New (Upper Courantyne) and Courantyne/Koetari [Kutari] rivers (all headwaters of the Courantyne); territorial sea boundary with Guyana is in dispute

**Illicit drugs:** growing transshipment point for South American drugs destined for Europe and Brazil; transshipment point for arms-for-drugs dealing

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