
COMPANION TO THE EIGHT-VOLUME REFERENCE

AFRICA

APPENDIX C

Country Profiles — Central Africa

Angola · Cameroon · Central African Republic · Chad · Republic of the
Congo · DR Congo · Equatorial Guinea · Gabon · São Tomé and Príncipe

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About These Profiles

AFRICA: AN ENCYCLOPEDIC REFERENCE — 2026 EDITION

This is the third of five regional installments of the **Country Profiles**, the companion series to the eight-volume main reference compiled and edited by Marie-Soleil Seshat Landry and published by Landry Industries Inc. under the Marie Landry's Spy Shop imprint, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.

The eight-volume reference (Volumes I-VIII) is complete, and the companion series profiles all 54 African states across five appendices — A: North Africa, B: West Africa, C: Central Africa, D: East Africa, and E: Southern Africa. **This appendix covers the nine states of Central Africa** — the Congo Basin and Gulf of Guinea heartland, defined by vast oil, mineral, and rainforest wealth and by some of the world's longest-serving leaders. Each profile gives a country's essential data at a glance, followed by a short narrative.

A NOTE ON DATA, CURRENCY, AND CITATION INTEGRITY

Country data is a snapshot taken in **June 2026**. Central Africa saw an unusually busy electoral cycle, and several results were verified for this appendix: **Gabon** (coup leader Oligui Nguema elected president, May 2025); **Cameroon** (Paul Biya's disputed eighth term, October 2025); the **Central African Republic** (Touadéra's third term, December 2025); and the **Republic of the Congo** (Sassou Nguesso's fifth term, March 2026). The **DR Congo's** eastern conflict and its fragile peace process were also verified as of early 2026. All current heads of state and latest population and GDP figures are keyed to the numbered *References*.

Stable facts — capitals, areas, independence dates, currencies, and official languages — are from established reference knowledge. GDP is nominal and in US dollars; figures are the latest available estimates and may carry a short lag. Nothing is reproduced verbatim.

Companion series:

A — NORTH AFRICA · B — WEST AFRICA (*PUBLISHED*)

C — CENTRAL AFRICA (*THIS INSTALLMENT*)

Angola · Cameroon · Central African Republic · Chad · Republic of the Congo · DR Congo · Equatorial Guinea · Gabon · São Tomé and Príncipe

D — EAST AFRICA · E — SOUTHERN AFRICA (*TO FOLLOW*)

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APPENDIX C

Central Africa

The green heart of the continent — the Congo Basin rainforest, the world's second-largest, and a belt of oil and mineral states along the Gulf of Guinea. A region of staggering natural wealth and staggering inequality, governed in large part by Africa's most entrenched leaders.

1. Angola
2. Cameroon
3. Central African Republic
4. Chad
5. Republic of the Congo
6. DR Congo
7. Equatorial Guinea
8. Gabon
9. São Tomé & Príncipe

Central Africa: The Nine States

Central Africa is dominated by the basin of the Congo River and its rainforest — the planet’s second-largest after the Amazon and a globally vital carbon sink — and by the oil of the Gulf of Guinea. Six of the nine states (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon) share the Central African CFA franc within the CEMAC monetary union, while Angola, the DR Congo, and São Tomé and Príncipe keep their own currencies. It is also the region of Africa’s most durable rulers — Equatorial Guinea’s Obiang, in power since 1979, is the world’s longest-serving head of state — and of the resource curse in its starkest form, where immense wealth coexists with widespread poverty. The profiles follow in alphabetical order.

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 1 OF 9

Angola

Republic of Angola

CAPITAL & LARGEST CITY	Luanda
POPULATION	~ 37 million
AREA	1,246,700 km ²
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	Portuguese
CURRENCY	Angolan kwanza (AOA)
HEAD OF STATE	President João Lourenço (since 2017; re-elected 2022); 2025 chairperson of the African Union ^[6]
INDEPENDENCE	11 November 1975 (from Portugal)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~ US\$95 billion — among Africa’s larger economies; per-capita ~US\$2,600
KEY SECTORS	Oil (Africa’s second-largest producer), diamonds, gas, agriculture

Angola endured one of the Cold War’s longest proxy conflicts — a civil war from independence in 1975 until 2002 — before oil wealth powered a dramatic, if deeply unequal, postwar boom. The second-largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, it remains heavily dependent on crude and is working to diversify under President João Lourenço, who has pursued anti-corruption measures since succeeding the long-ruling José Eduardo dos Santos in 2017. Lourenço held the rotating chairmanship of the African Union in 2025, raising Angola’s diplomatic profile, including in mediation over the neighbouring DR Congo.^[6]

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 2 OF 9

Cameroon

Republic of Cameroon

CAPITAL	Yaoundé; largest city Douala (the economic capital)
POPULATION	~29 million
AREA	475,442 km ²
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	French and English
CURRENCY	Central African CFA franc (XAF)
HEAD OF STATE	President Paul Biya (since 1982; re-elected to an eighth term in October 2025, at age 92 — the world’s oldest head of state) ^[3]
INDEPENDENCE	1960 (from France); the British Southern Cameroons joined in 1961
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$50 billion ; per-capita ~US\$1,700
KEY SECTORS	Oil and gas, cocoa, coffee, timber, agriculture; the Port of Douala

Often called “Africa in miniature” for its geographic and cultural diversity, Cameroon has been ruled by Paul Biya since 1982, making him among the world’s longest-serving leaders. His disputed re-election to an eighth term in October 2025, at the age of 92, triggered deadly protests after the opposition candidate also claimed victory.^[3] The country is bilingual — a legacy of French and British rule — and that divide underlies the Anglophone separatist conflict that has gripped its two English-speaking regions since 2017, while Boko Haram militancy afflicts the far north.

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 3 OF 9

Central African Republic

Central African Republic (CAR)

CAPITAL & LARGEST CITY	Bangui
POPULATION	~5.5 million
AREA	622,984 km ²
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	French and Sango
CURRENCY	Central African CFA franc (XAF)
HEAD OF STATE	President Faustin-Archange Touadéra (since 2016; re-elected to a third term in December 2025 after term limits were removed) ^[4]
INDEPENDENCE	13 August 1960 (from France)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$2.5 billion; per-capita ~US\$450 — among the world's lowest
KEY SECTORS	Diamonds, gold, timber, uranium, subsistence agriculture

One of the world's poorest and least stable countries despite rich deposits of diamonds, gold, and uranium, the Central African Republic has suffered recurring coups and civil conflict since independence. President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, re-elected to a third term in December 2025 after a 2023 referendum abolished term limits, has leaned heavily on Russian paramilitary support — first Wagner, now its successor forces — to secure his government and the capital in exchange for access to mineral concessions.^[4] Much of the territory lies outside effective state control.

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 4 OF 9

Chad

Republic of Chad

CAPITAL & LARGEST CITY	N'Djamena
POPULATION	~19 million
AREA	1,284,000 km ² — one of Africa's largest
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	French and Arabic
CURRENCY	Central African CFA franc (XAF)
HEAD OF STATE	President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno (took power 2021 on his father's death; elected president May 2024) ^[1]
INDEPENDENCE	11 August 1960 (from France)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$13 billion ; per-capita ~US\$700
KEY SECTORS	Oil (the dominant export), livestock, cotton, gold

A vast, arid, landlocked country straddling the Sahara and the Sahel, Chad is an oil producer that nonetheless ranks among the world's least developed nations and hosts large refugee populations, including many fleeing the war in neighbouring Sudan. When long-ruling president Idriss Déby was killed on the battlefield in 2021, his son Mahamat Idriss Déby took power at the head of a transitional council, then won a contested presidential election in May 2024, continuing the family's rule.^[1] Once a close Western counter-terrorism partner, Chad has more recently distanced itself from France.

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 5 OF 9

Republic of the Congo

Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville)

CAPITAL & LARGEST CITY	Brazzaville
POPULATION	~5.7 million
AREA	342,000 km ²
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	French
CURRENCY	Central African CFA franc (XAF)
HEAD OF STATE	President Denis Sassou Nguesso (in power since 1979, with a break in 1992-97; re-elected to a fifth term in March 2026) ^[5]
INDEPENDENCE	15 August 1960 (from France)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$15 billion; per-capita ~US\$2,600 ^[5]
KEY SECTORS	Oil (Africa's third-largest exporter), timber, agriculture

Not to be confused with its much larger neighbour across the Congo River, the Republic of the Congo is a major oil exporter ruled for more than four decades by Denis Sassou Nguesso, one of Africa's longest-serving leaders. He won a fifth term in March 2026 with nearly 95 percent of the vote, in an election boycotted by the main opposition and accompanied by a nationwide internet shutdown.^[5] Despite oil revenues and one of sub-Saharan Africa's larger reserves, the country carries a heavy debt burden and more than half its people live in poverty.

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 6 OF 9

DR Congo

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

CAPITAL & LARGEST CITY	Kinshasa (a megacity of ~17 million)
POPULATION	~110 million — among Africa's most populous
AREA	2,344,858 km ² — the second-largest country in Africa
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	French (with Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba)
CURRENCY	Congolese franc (CDF)
HEAD OF STATE	President Félix Tshisekedi (since 2019; re-elected 2023) ^[2]
INDEPENDENCE	30 June 1960 (from Belgium)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$70 billion ; per-capita ~US\$650 despite vast mineral wealth
KEY SECTORS	Cobalt (~70% of world supply), copper, coltan, gold, diamonds, tin

The DR Congo is the geographic giant of central Africa and the indispensable supplier of the cobalt and copper that power the global energy transition — yet it remains one of the world's poorest countries, a textbook case of the resource curse. Its mineral-rich east has been wracked for decades by armed conflict; in early 2025 the Rwandan-backed M23 rebellion escalated sharply, seizing the major cities of Goma and Bukavu and displacing millions.^[2] A fragile, US- and Qatar-brokered peace process — the Washington accord between the DRC and Rwanda and the Doha track with M23 — was under way but far from fully implemented as of 2026.^[2]

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 7 OF 9

Equatorial Guinea

Republic of Equatorial Guinea

CAPITAL	Malabo (on Bioko island); a new capital, Ciudad de la Paz (Djibloho), is under construction
POPULATION	~1.7 million
AREA	28,051 km ²
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	Spanish, French, and Portuguese
CURRENCY	Central African CFA franc (XAF)
HEAD OF STATE	President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (since 1979 — the world's longest-serving head of state) ^[6]
INDEPENDENCE	12 October 1968 (from Spain)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$12 billion; a high per-capita figure masked by extreme inequality
KEY SECTORS	Oil and natural gas (the overwhelming majority of revenue), timber

The only African state with Spanish as an official language, Equatorial Guinea has been ruled by Teodoro Obiang Nguema since he seized power from his uncle in 1979, making him the world's longest-serving head of state.^[6] An oil boom from the 1990s gave the small nation one of Africa's highest average incomes on paper, but the wealth is concentrated among the ruling family while much of the population remains poor, and the country is routinely cited for corruption and repression. Declining oil output has prompted a search for new revenue.

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 8 OF 9

Gabon

Gabonese Republic

CAPITAL & LARGEST CITY	Libreville
POPULATION	~2.3 million
AREA	267,668 km ²
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	French
CURRENCY	Central African CFA franc (XAF)
HEAD OF STATE	President Brice Oligui Nguema (led the 2023 coup; elected president April 2025, sworn in May 2025) ^[1]
INDEPENDENCE	17 August 1960 (from France)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$20 billion; per-capita the highest in mainland Africa ^[1]
KEY SECTORS	Oil, manganese (a leading world producer), timber from its vast rainforest

A heavily forested, oil-rich country with the highest income per head in mainland Africa — though a third of its people live in poverty — Gabon was governed by the Bongo family for 56 years until General Brice Oligui Nguema, a cousin of the ousted president, led a coup in August 2023.^[1] After a transition and a new constitution, Oligui won the April 2025 presidential election in a landslide and was inaugurated in May, opening Gabon’s “Fifth Republic.” The country retains some of the last large tracts of intact Central African rainforest.

CENTRAL AFRICA · PROFILE 9 OF 9

São Tomé and Príncipe

Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

CAPITAL & LARGEST CITY	São Tomé
POPULATION	~230,000 — the smallest population of any African state
AREA	964 km ² (two main islands in the Gulf of Guinea)
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	Portuguese
CURRENCY	São Tomé and Príncipe dobra (STN)
HEAD OF STATE	President Carlos Vila Nova (since 2021)
INDEPENDENCE	12 July 1975 (from Portugal)
GDP (NOMINAL)	~US\$0.6 billion ; per-capita ~US\$2,500
KEY SECTORS	Cocoa, tourism, fisheries; prospective offshore oil

An archipelago of two main volcanic islands off the coast of Central Africa, São Tomé and Príncipe is the continent's smallest country by population and second-smallest by area. A former Portuguese cocoa colony, it is one of Africa's more stable democracies, with regular changes of government, though its small, aid-reliant economy is vulnerable to external shocks. Long-anticipated offshore oil has yet to materialise at scale, leaving cocoa, fishing, and a nascent eco-tourism sector as the mainstays.

References — Appendix C

All sources accessed June 2026. Listed in order of first citation. Volatile figures (leaders, latest population, latest GDP) are verified to these sources and are June 2026 snapshots; stable facts (capitals, areas, independence dates, currencies, languages) are from established reference knowledge. Population and GDP estimates may carry a short lag.

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2. International Crisis Group; Security Council Report; Al Jazeera; The New Humanitarian. *DR Congo's eastern conflict* (President Félix Tshisekedi, re-elected 2023; the Rwandan-backed M23 seized Goma and Bukavu in early 2025, displacing millions; the Washington accord between the DRC and Rwanda, signed December 2025, and the Doha framework with M23 remained fragile and largely unimplemented into 2026). crisisgroup.org · securitycouncilreport.org
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6. Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2026 elections); African Union. *Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and long-serving leaders* (Angola's President João Lourenço, in office since 2017 and the African Union's 2025 chairperson; Equatorial Guinea's Teodoro Obiang Nguema, in power since 1979, the world's longest-serving head of state). africacenter.org

END OF APPENDIX C — CENTRAL AFRICA

Appendix D — *Country Profiles: East Africa* (14 states, from Burundi to Uganda) — follows in the next installment.