



Australia-Oceania :: Kiribati

Introduction :: Kiribati

Background:

The Gilbert Islands became a British protectorate in 1892 and a colony in 1915; they were captured by the Japanese in the Pacific War in 1941. The islands of Makin and Tarawa were the sites of major US amphibious victories over entrenched Japanese garrisons in 1943. The Gilbert Islands were granted self-rule by the UK in 1971 and complete independence in 1979 under the new name of Kiribati. The US relinquished all claims to the sparsely inhabited Phoenix and Line Island groups in a 1979 treaty of friendship with Kiribati.

Geography :: Kiribati

Location:

Oceania, group of 33 coral atolls in the Pacific Ocean, straddling the Equator; the capital Tarawa is about half way between Hawaii and Australia

Geographic coordinates:

1 25 N, 173 00 E

Map references:

Oceania

Area:

total: 811 sq km

country comparison to the world: 187

land: 811 sq km

water: 0 sq km

note: includes three island groups - Gilbert Islands, Line Islands, Phoenix Islands

Area - comparative:

four times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

1,143 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical; marine, hot and humid, moderated by trade winds

Terrain:

mostly low-lying coral atolls surrounded by extensive reefs

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: unnamed elevation on Banaba 81 m

Natural resources:

phosphate (production discontinued in 1979)

Land use:

arable land: 2.47%

permanent crops: 39.51%

other: 58.02% (2011)

Irrigated land:

NA

Natural hazards:

typhoons can occur any time, but usually November to March; occasional tornadoes; low level of some of the islands make them sensitive to changes in sea level

Environment - current issues:

heavy pollution in lagoon of south Tarawa atoll due to heavy migration mixed with traditional practices such as lagoon latrines and open-pit dumping; ground water at risk

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Whaling

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

21 of the 33 islands are inhabited; Banaba (Ocean Island) in Kiribati is one of the three great phosphate rock islands in the Pacific Ocean - the others are Makatea in French Polynesia, and Nauru; Kiribati is the only country in the world to fall into all four hemispheres (northern, southern, eastern, and western)

People and Society :: Kiribati

Nationality:

noun: I-Kiribati (singular and plural)

adjective: I-Kiribati

Ethnic groups:

Micronesian 98.8%, other 1.2% (2000 census)

Languages:

I-Kiribati, English (official)

Religions:

Roman Catholic 55%, Protestant 36%, Mormon 3.1%, Baha'i 2.2%, Seventh-Day Adventist 1.9%, other 1.8% (2005 census)

Population:

103,248 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 195

Age structure:

0-14 years: 32.3% (male 16,989/female 16,355)

15-24 years: 21.2% (male 10,985/female 10,950)

25-54 years: 37.2% (male 18,486/female 19,955)

55-64 years: 5.3% (male 2,515/female 3,004)

65 years and over: 3.9% (male 1,572/female 2,437) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 56.2 %

youth dependency ratio: 49.8 %

elderly dependency ratio: 6.5 %

potential support ratio: 15.5 (2013)

Median age:

total: 23.2 years

male: 22.4 years

female: 24.1 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

1.21% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Birth rate:

22.18 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 75

Death rate:

7.24 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 124

Net migration rate:

-2.86 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 175

Urbanization:

urban population: 44% of total population (2010)

rate of urbanization: 1.9% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

TARAWA (capital) 43,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.93 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.85 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.64 male(s)/female

total population: 0.96 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

9 deaths/100,000 live births (2008)

country comparison to the world: 156

Infant mortality rate:

total: 36.5 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 63

male: 37.74 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 35.21 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 65.11 years

country comparison to the world: 173

male: 62.7 years

female: 67.64 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

2.63 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 77

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

22.3% (2009)

Health expenditures:

10.1% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 25

Physicians density:

0.38 physicians/1,000 population (2010)

Hospital bed density:

1.3 beds/1,000 population (2011)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 77% of population

rural: 50% of population

total: 62% of population

unimproved:

urban: 23% of population

rural: 50% of population

total: 38% of population (2000 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:
urban: 47% of population
rural: 22% of population
total: 33% of population
unimproved:
urban: 53% of population
rural: 78% of population
total: 67% of population (2000 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:
NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:
NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:
NA

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:
46% (2008)
country comparison to the world: 8

Education expenditures:
11.6% of GDP (2002)
country comparison to the world: 4

Literacy:
NA

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):
total: 12 years
male: 12 years
female: 12 years (2008)

Government :: Kiribati

Country name:
conventional long form: Republic of Kiribati
conventional short form: Kiribati
local long form: Republic of Kiribati
local short form: Kiribati
note: pronounced keer-ree-bahss
former: Gilbert Islands
Government type:
republic

Capital:
name: Tarawa
geographic coordinates: 1 21 N, 173 02 E
time difference: UTC+12 (17 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)
note: on 1 January 1995, Kiribati proclaimed that all of its territory was in the same time zone as its Gilbert Islands group (UTC +12) even though the Phoenix Islands and the Line Islands under its jurisdiction were on the other side of the International Date Line

Administrative divisions:
3 units; Gilbert Islands, Line Islands, Phoenix Islands; note - in addition, there are 6 districts (Banaba, Central Gilberts, Line Islands, Northern Gilberts, Southern Gilberts, Tarawa) and 21 island councils - one for each of the inhabited islands (Abaiang, Abemama, Aranuka, Arorae, Banaba, Beru, Butaritari, Kanton, Kiritimati, Kuria, Maiana, Makin, Marakei, Nikunau, Nonouti, Onotoa, Tabiteuea, Tabuaeran, Tamana, Tarawa, Teraina)

Independence:
12 July 1979 (from the UK)

National holiday:
Independence Day, 12 July (1979)

Constitution:
preindependence - The Gilbert and Ellice Islands Order in Council 1915, The Gilbert Islands Order in Council 1975; latest promulgated 12 July 1979 (at independence); amended 1995

Legal system:
English common law supplemented by customary law

International law organization participation:
has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCT

Suffrage:
18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:
chief of state: President Anote TONG (since 10 July 2003); Vice President Teima ONORIO; note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government
head of government: President Anote TONG (since 10 July 2003); Vice President Teima ONORIO
cabinet: 12-member cabinet appointed by the president from among the members of the House of Parliament (For more information visit the **World Leaders website** ☺)
elections: the House of Parliament nominates the presidential candidates from among its members following parliamentary elections and then those candidates compete in a general election; president elected by popular vote for a four-year term (eligible for two more terms); election last held on 13 January 2012 (next to be held in 2015); vice president appointed by the president
election results: Anote TONG 42.2%, Tetaua TAITAI 35%, Rimeta BENIAMINA 22.8%

Legislative branch:
unicameral House of Parliament or Maneaba Ni Maungatabu (46 seats; 44 members elected by popular vote, 1 ex officio member - the attorney general, 1 nominated by the Rabi Council of Leaders (representing Banaba Island); members serve four-year terms)
elections: legislative elections were held in two rounds - the first round on 21 October 2011 and the second round on 28 October 2011 (next to be held in 2015)
election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - NA, other 2 (includes attorney general)

Judicial branch:
highest court(s): High Court (consists of a chief justice and other judges as prescribed by the president)
note - the High Court has jurisdiction on constitutional issues
judge selection and term of office: chief justice appointed by the president on the advice of the cabinet in consultation with the Public Service Commission (PSC); other judges appointed by the president on the advice of the chief justice along with the PSC
subordinate courts: Court of Appeal; magistrates' courts

Political parties and leaders:

Boutokaan Te Koaua Party or BTK [Anote TONG]
Kamaeuraogan Te I-Kiribati Party or KTK [Tetaua TAITAI]
Maurin Kiribati Pati or MKP [Rimeta BENIAMINA]

note: there is no tradition of formally organized political parties in Kiribati; they more closely resemble factions or interest groups because they have no party headquarters, formal platforms, or party structures

Political pressure groups and leaders:

NA

International organization participation:

ACP, ADB, AOSIS, C, FAO, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, IOC, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), OPCW, PIF, Sparteca, SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UPU, WHO, WMO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

Kiribati does not have an embassy in the US; there is an honorary consulate in Honolulu

Diplomatic representation from the US:

the US does not have an embassy in Kiribati; the US ambassador to Fiji, currently Ambassador Frankie A. REED, is accredited to Kiribati

Flag description:

the upper half is red with a yellow frigatebird flying over a yellow rising sun, and the lower half is blue with three horizontal wavy white stripes to represent the Pacific ocean; the white stripes represent the three island groups - the Gilbert, Line, and Phoenix Islands; the 17 rays of the sun represent the 16 Gilbert Islands and Banaba (formerly Ocean Island); the frigatebird symbolizes authority and freedom

National symbol(s):

frigatebird

National anthem:

name: "Teirake kaini Kiribati" (Stand Up, Kiribati)

lyrics/music: Urium Tamuera IOTEBÄ

note: adopted 1979

Economy :: Kiribati

Economy - overview:

A remote country of 33 scattered coral atolls. Kiribati has few natural resources and is one of the least developed Pacific Islands. Commercially viable phosphate deposits were exhausted at the time of independence from the UK in 1979. Copra and fish now represent the bulk of production and exports. The economy has fluctuated widely in recent years. Economic development is constrained by a shortage of skilled workers, weak infrastructure, and remoteness from international markets. Tourism provides more than one-fifth of GDP. Private sector initiatives and a financial sector are in the early stages of development. Foreign financial aid from the EU, UK, US, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, UN agencies, and Taiwan accounts for 20-25% of GDP. Remittances from seamen on merchant ships abroad account for more than \$5 million each year. Kiribati receives around \$15 million annually for the government budget from an Australian trust fund.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$669 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 212

\$651.2 million (2011 est.)

\$633.9 million (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$172.6 million (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

2.8% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 118

2.7% (2011 est.)

-0.5% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$6,200 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 144

\$6,200 (2011 est.)

\$6,100 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 24.3%

industry: 7.9%

services: 67.8% (2010 est.)

Agriculture - products:

copra, taro, breadfruit, sweet potatoes, vegetables; fish

Industries:

fishing, handicrafts

Industrial production growth rate:

NA%

Labor force:

7,870

country comparison to the world: 218

note: economically active, not including subsistence farmers (2001)

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 2.7%

industry: 32%

services: 65.3% (2000)

Unemployment rate:

2% (1992 est.)

country comparison to the world: 13

Population below poverty line:

NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Budget:

revenues: \$55.52 million

expenditures: \$107.1 million (2010 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

32.2% of GDP (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 84

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):
-29.9% of GDP (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 215
Fiscal year:
NA
Inflation rate (consumer prices):
0.2% (2007 est.)
country comparison to the world: 6
Market value of publicly traded shares:
\$NA
Current account balance:
\$-35.01 million (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 63
\$-21 million (2007 est.)
Exports:
\$7.066 million (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 214
\$17 million (2004 est.)
Exports - commodities:
copra 62%, coconuts, seaweed, fish
Imports:
\$80.09 million (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 216
\$62 million (2004 est.)
Imports - commodities:
foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, miscellaneous manufactured goods, fuel
Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:
\$8.37 million (2010 est.)
Debt - external:
\$10 million (1999 est.)
country comparison to the world: 197
Exchange rates:
Australian dollars (AUD) per US dollar -
0.9695 (2011 est.)
1.0902 (2010)
1.2822 (2009)
1.2059 (2008)

Energy :: Kiribati

Electricity - production:
25 million kWh (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 212
Electricity - consumption:
23.25 million kWh (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 212
Electricity - exports:
0 kWh (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 215
Electricity - imports:
0 kWh (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 206
Electricity - installed generating capacity:
5,000 kW (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 208
Electricity - from fossil fuels:
100% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 18
Electricity - from nuclear fuels:
0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 118
Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:
0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 176
Electricity - from other renewable sources:
0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 188
Crude oil - production:
0 bbl/day (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 182
Crude oil - exports:
0 bbl/day (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 139
Crude oil - imports:
0 bbl/day (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 204
Crude oil - proved reserves:
0 bbl (1 January 2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 149
Refined petroleum products - production:
0 bbl/day (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 191

Refined petroleum products - consumption:
300 bbl/day (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 209
Refined petroleum products - exports:
0 bbl/day (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 188
Refined petroleum products - imports:
420.2 bbl/day (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 206
Natural gas - production:
0 cu m (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 149
Natural gas - consumption:
0 cu m (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 160
Natural gas - exports:
0 cu m (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 128
Natural gas - imports:
0 cu m (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 85
Natural gas - proved reserves:
0 cu m (1 January 2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 155
Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:
59,340 Mt (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 208

Communications
::
Kiribati

Telephones - main lines in use:
9,000 (2012)
country comparison to the world: 201
Telephones - mobile cellular:
16,000 (2012)
country comparison to the world: 211
Telephone system:
general assessment: generally good quality national and international service
domestic: wire line service available on Tarawa and Kiritimati (Christmas Island); connections to outer islands by HF/VHF radiotelephone; wireless service available in Tarawa since 1999
international: country code - 686; Kiribati is being linked to the Pacific Ocean Cooperative Telecommunications Network, which should improve telephone service; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Pacific Ocean) (2010)
Broadcast media:
1 TV broadcast station that provides about 1 hour of local programming Monday-Friday; multi-channel TV packages provide access to Australian and US stations; 1 government-operated radio station broadcasts on AM, FM, and shortwave (2009)
Internet country code:
.ki
Internet hosts:
327 (2012)
country comparison to the world: 188
Internet users:
7,800 (2009)
country comparison to the world: 204

Transportation
::
Kiribati

Airports:
19 (2013)
country comparison to the world: 137
Airports - with paved runways:
total: 4
1,524 to 2,437 m: 4 (2013)
Airports - with unpaved runways:
total: 15
914 to 1,523 m: 10
under 914 m: 5 (2013)
Roadways:
total: 670 km (2011)
country comparison to the world: 190
Waterways:
5 km (small network of canals in Line Islands) (2012)
country comparison to the world: 108
Merchant marine:
total: 77
country comparison to the world: 58
by type: bulk carrier 7, cargo 35, chemical tanker 6, passenger 1, passenger/cargo 1, petroleum tanker 12, refrigerated cargo 15
foreign-owned: 43 (China 26, Hong Kong 2, Russia 1, Singapore 9, South Korea 1, Taiwan 2, Vietnam 2) (2010)
Ports and terminals:
Betio (Tarawa Atoll), Canton Island, English Harbor

Military
::
Kiribati

Military branches:
no regular military forces (establishment prevented by the constitution); Police Force (2011)
Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 25,190 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 18,364

females age 16-49: 20,302 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 1,132

female: 1,120 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

NA

Military - note:

Kiribati does not have military forces; defense assistance is provided by Australia and NZ

Transnational Issues:: Kiribati

Disputes - international:

none