

# Somali people and djibouti

[People](#)



Djibouti, a small 9000 square miles Horn of Africa (HOA) enclave located at the convergence of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, is strategically important to the U. S. Foreign policy. All instruments of U. S National Power – diplomacy, information, military and economic – are exercised as part of a deliberate and sustained ‘ whole of government’ approach. The U. S. Ambassador to Djibouti, the Honorable Geeta Pasi, leads a State Department and U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Team in enabling U. S.

Strategic policy vision in HOA, while enabling and collaborating with Djibouti in strengthening government, social, economic and international capabilities. Djibouti affects U. S Foreign policy in three major areas: Djibouti’s geographical location and shipping port capabilities; support for U. S Foreign Policy vision in the HOA region; support for U. S. Military operations. Djibouti’s geographical location and deep harbor port provides a strategic and economic advantage over bordering countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, by supporting international shipping and trade.

Landlocked Ethiopia, the major political and economic African Union influence in the region, depends uniquely on Djibouti’s port and modern road infrastructure system (courtesy of the European Union) to receive and deliver goods internationally. The good relations between Djibouti City and Addis Ababa enable stability in the region, supporting U. S Foreign policy. Additionally, Djibouti’s location and stable government neighboring the unpredictable and radically prone countries of Eritrea, Somalia and Yemen (across the 18-mile straight) enables U. S.

State Department efforts to limit the spread of state sponsored terrorism. Furthermore, Djibouti is the linchpin in the Department of State (DoS) and Department of Defense (DoD) civil-military regional efforts to strengthen institutional capabilities of East African militaries in order to promote security and stability throughout the Horn of Africa. (Economic, Diplomatic IOP) Djibouti, a country 99 percent Muslim and primarily of Somali decent, boasts a relatively stable government which remains a dependable supporter of U. S Foreign policy within HOA.

Djibouti supports African Union and U. S. Foreign Policy efforts to eradicate the spread of Islamic extremists groups such as Al-Qaida affiliated al-Shabaab – this commitment includes providing military forces to the African Union Mission in Somalia, supporting the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu, Somalia. Additionally, the Djiboutian government supports USAID efforts throughout Africa by providing warehousing for the only stockpile of humanitarian aid on the African continent. (Diplomatic, Information IOP) Djibouti supports the only U. S Military base on the continent of Africa- it also supports French and Japanese military forces. The U. S Military installation, Camp Lemonnier, houses over 4000 Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force personnel, which includes a robust contingency of Special Operations personnel. Djibouti's support for a U. S Military presence enables the sustained training of East African militaries, a key objective in the State Departments vision to enhance the effectiveness, capability, credibility and status of East African militaries towards civilian populations they serve.

Additionally, having a U. S military presence supports and develops a wide range of military options available to the Commander in Chief during

emergent/contingent operations. Finally, the Djiboutian government support of multi-national military forces provides a base of operations for the JointCoalitionTask Force addressing the piracy issue along the Somali coast. (Diplomatic, Military, Information IOPs) In conclusion, Djibouti's demure size is a stark contrast to the importance this African nation has on U. S. Foreign Policy. With the very real presence of Islamic extremists groups in Africa, the tenuous diplomatic and tribal issues prevalent throughout the region, and the increasing encroachment and influence China imposes on African nations in search of natural resources, it is all the more important for U. S Foreign Policy, executed through DoS and DoD joint efforts, to enable African partnerships similar to what exists with Djibouti.