



## Gabonese Republic (République Gabonaise) **Gabon**

**Flag:** three equal horizontal bands of green (top), yellow, and blue; green represents the country's forests and natural resources, gold represents the equator (which transects Gabon) as well as the sun, blue represents the sea.

**Background:** As part of the European colonization movement of the late 1880s



France officially occupied a portion of the central West coast of Africa which would become Gabon in 1885. In 1910, Gabon officially became one of the four territories of French Equatorial Africa; a federation that survived until 1959. These territories (including Gabon) became independent on August 17, 1960. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba - one of the longest-serving heads of state in the world - dominated the country's political scene for four decades (1967-2009) following independence from France in 1960. A nominal multiparty system and a new constitution were introduced in the early 1990s. However, allegations of electoral fraud in 2002-03 and then in 2005 exposed the weaknesses of the formal political structures. Following President Bongo's death in 2009, new elections brought Ali Bongo Ondimba, son of the former president, to power. Despite constrained political conditions, Gabon's small population, abundant natural resources, and considerable foreign support have helped make it one of the more prosperous and stable African countries.

**Geography:** Located on the equator, Gabon is bordered by Equatorial Guinea to the northwest, Cameroon to the north, the Republic of the Congo on the east and south, and the Atlantic Ocean's Gulf of Guinea to the west. It has an area of nearly

1000,000 square miles (270,000 sq km) and a population estimated at 1.5 million. Its capital and largest city is Libreville. Gabon generally has an equatorial climate with rainforests covering 85% of the country. There are three distinct regions: the coastal plains (ranging between 12 to 180 miles (approximately 20 to 300 km) from the ocean's shore, the mountains (the Cristal Mountains to the northeast of Libreville, and the Chaillu Massif in the center, and the savanna in the east. Gabon's largest river is the Ogooué which is some 750 miles (+/- 1200 km) long. Besides nature park-lands natural resources include: petroleum, magnesium, iron, gold, uranium, and timber forests.

**Military Notes:** As of 2012, the Gabonese Defense Forces (Forces de Defense Gabonaise) consist of: Land Force (Force Terrestre), Gabonese Navy (Marine Gabonaise), Gabonese Air Forces (Forces Aeriennes Gabonaises, FAG). (Reference CIA World Factbooks 2006 & 2012 and Wikipedia 2012)

Right: Gabonese Army, French built ACMAT 4x4 Armored Personnel Carrier, circa 2012.



**1970 Car, Armd, 4x4, Panhard AML-90 and AML-60.**



An unknown number were delivered but probably no more than 24 total. (see France for vehicle details).

**1970 Car, Armd, 4x4, Panhard AML-60.**

**1978 Car, Armd, 6x6. EE-9 Cascavel.**

While most military vehicles for the Gabonese military have come from France, there have been exceptions. 12 to 14 EE-9s were ordered from Brazil. (see Brazil for vehicle details).

**198X Carr, Pers, Armd, 6x6. Engesa EE-11 Urutu.**

11 or 12 carriers were delivered from Brazil (see Brazil for vehicle details).

**1995 Vehicle, Reconnaissance, 4x4, Panhard VBL.**

Up to 14 of these amphibious scouting vehicles were delivered over several years.

**1995 Car, Armored, 6x6, Panhard ERC-90 Sagaie 2.**



Probably no more than six of these 90mm cannon armed vehicles were delivered.



**1995 Vehicle, Armored, 6x6, Anti-Aircraft, Panhard ERC-20.** Probably no more than three or four of these dual 20mm cannon armed vehicles were delivered. (see France for vehicle details)

**2000 Vehicle, Utility, 4x4, Peugeot P4.**

The P4 is the French version of the German Mercedes-Benz G-wagen, and serves the same purpose.

**2005 Carrier, Personnel, Armored, 4x4 ACMAT.**

An unknown number of these vehicles have been delivered from France.

**2005 Carrier, Personnel, Armored, 6x6 ZFB-05.** At least three of these Chinese produced amphibious carriers have been taken into service.