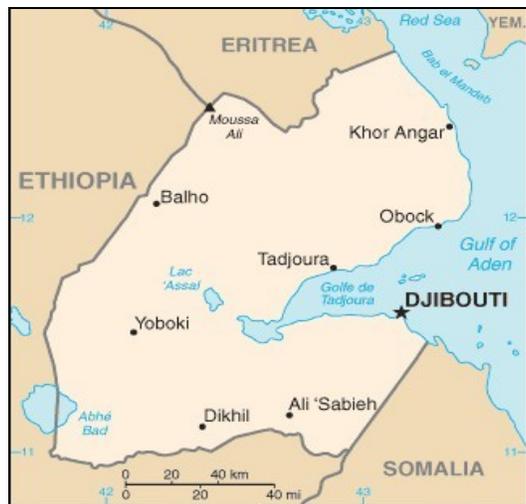




**Flag:** Two equal horizontal bands of light blue (top) and light green with a white isosceles triangle based on the hoist side bearing a red five-pointed star in the center; blue stands for sea and sky and the Issa Somali people; green symbolizes earth and the Afar people; white represents peace; the red star recalls the struggle for independence and stands for unity.



**Background:** The French Territory of the Afars and the Issas became Djibouti in 1977. Hassan Gouled Aptidon installed an authoritarian one-party state and proceeded to serve as president until 1999. Unrest among the Afars minority during the 1990s led to a civil war that ended in 2001 following the conclusion of a peace accord between Afar rebels and the Issa-dominated government. In 1999, Djibouti's first multi-party presidential elections resulted in the election of Ismail Omar Guelleh; he was re-elected to a second and final term in 2005. Djibouti occupies a strategic geographic location at the mouth of the Red Sea and serves as an important transshipment location for goods entering and leaving the east African highlands. The present leadership favors close ties to France, which maintains a significant military presence in the country, but is also developing stronger ties with the US. Djibouti hosts the only US military base in sub-Saharan Africa and is a front-line state in the global war on terrorism.

ence in the country, but is also developing stronger ties with the US. Djibouti hosts the only US military base in sub-Saharan Africa and is a front-line state in the global war on terrorism.

**Geography:** Location, Eastern Africa, bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, between Eritrea and Somalia. Area: total: 23,000 sq. km. Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Massachusetts. Land boundaries: total: 516 km. Border countries: Eritrea 109 km, Ethiopia 349 km, Somalia 58 km. Coastline: 314 km. Climate: desert; torrid, dry. Terrain: coastal plain and plateau separated by central mountains. Natural resources: geothermal areas, gold, clay, granite, limestone, marble, salt, diatomite, gypsum, pumice, and petroleum. Natural hazards: earthquakes, droughts, occasional cyclonic disturbances from the Indian Ocean bring heavy rains and flash floods. Environment - current issues: inadequate supplies of potable water; limited arable land; desertification and endangered species. Geography - note: strategic location near world's busiest shipping lanes and close to Arabian oilfields; terminus of rail traffic into Ethiopia; mostly wasteland, Lac Assal (Lake Assal) is the lowest point in Africa.

**Military Notes:** Under French military protection until 1977, Djibouti has a small military for internal security; Djibouti Armed Forces (Forces Armees Djiboutiennes, FAD): Djibouti National Army (includes Navy), Djiboutian Air Force (Force Aerieenne Djiboutienne), National Gendarmerie (GN)) (2012). AS of 2013 Djibouti had Four Infantry regiments, an Independent Infantry Battalion, an Artillery Regiment and a Armored/Morotized Regiment in the Army. (CIA Factbook 2012)



**1985 Car, Armd, 4x4. Panhard AML-90.**

Right: Djibouti AML-90 circa 2006. Over the last 20 years Djibouti has received four AML-60s, 16 AML-90s and 18 AML-245s. How many of these vehicles remain in service is unknown as of 2013.

**1995 Veh, Recce. Panhard VBL.**

An unknown number of these cars were delivered in the late 1990s.

**1999 Carrier, Personnel, Armored, 8x8. BTR-60PB.** Up to 10 of these vehicles may have been in service during the '90s.

**2001 Vehicle, Reconnaissance, 4x4 VBL M-11.** Up to 10 M-11s may have been transferred from France.

**2001 Carr, Pers, Armd, 4x4, Casspir Mk 3.**



Remarks: Vickers OMC of South Africa delivered nine refurbished Casspir APCs to the Djibouti Army in 2001 (see South Africa for vehicle details).

**2011 Vehicle, Utility, .75-ton , 4x4. Land Rover Defender.**

In 2011, 28 LR Defender vehicles were transferred from French stocks to upgrade Djiboutian logistics ability. These vehicles were to be used in support of the African Union operation in Somlaia (AMISOM).



New Land Rover Defenders. (Photo: EMA France)