Cabo Verde

Country Overview

Politics
Cabo Verde is a parliamentary republic with a president who acts as head of state and a prime minister who acts as head of government. The first multiparty elections in Cabo Verde were held in 1990, after 15 years of single party rule following the country’s independence in 1975. Since then, the small island nation located off the coast of Senegal has continued to be a relatively stable democracy.¹ Cabo Verde was noted as one of the most improved countries measured by the Fragile States Index from 2015-2016.²

Economy
The World Bank classifies Cabo Verde as a “lower middle income” country.
The Cabo Verdean economy is largely driven by tourism and related service industries, and is supplemented by foreign aid and remittances from the large Cabo Verdean emigre population.³ The major export commodity is fish/seafood.

Social/Human Development
Cabo Verde scores a 0.648 on the U.N. Human Development Index (HDI), ranking it 122 out of 188. Various issues such as disease, drought, and economic malaise have sparked large migrations of people to the mainland in search of work and/or stability. It is estimated that there are likely more Cabo Verdeans living in the diaspora than actually in the country.⁴ Cabo Verdean society is comprised of three main ethnic groups: Creoles (71 percent), Africans (28 percent), and Europeans (1 percent). The urban population accounts for 65.5 percent of the total population, and people are dispersed unevenly among the nine islands in the country. Islands in the east are more sparsely populated and are used primarily for their large salt deposits, while the islands in the south tend to get more rainfall and support higher population densities.⁵

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2 Watch List

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report, trafficking risk may be found among Cabo Verdean children in export supply chains including agriculture.

Read the full TIP report at: https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271158.htm

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

Cabo Verde has a net migration rate of -0.6 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Emigration vastly outpaces the number of people migrating to the country. The top migrant sending countries to Cabo Verde are Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe and Senegal, while the top destination countries are Portugal, the United States, and France.
Migrants from Cabo Verde

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>57,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>35,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>22,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>11,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>10,459</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Portugal
- United States of America
- France
- Netherlands
- Angola
Exports and Trade

The top exports from Cabo Verde in 2016 were fish and apparel.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Value (USD/Thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knitted Apparel</td>
<td>2,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>23,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td>3,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparations of Meat and Fish</td>
<td>27,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Knitted Apparel</td>
<td>3,666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top importers of goods from Cabo Verde were Spain, Portugal, Italy, Sierra Leone and the United States.9
Cabo Verde Export Partners (USD/Thousands)
Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers’ Rights

Freedom of Association

Workers in Cabo Verde have the legal right to form and join labor unions, bargain collectively, and strike without fear of reprisal from the government or their employers. There are certain sectors of the economy deemed “essential” in which workers’ right to strike could legally be impinged upon. These sectors include: telecommunications, justice, meteorology, health, firefighting, postal service, funeral services, water and sanitation services, transportation, ports and airports, private security, and the banking and credit sectors.

The ILO is currently working with unions and employers in the country to expand dialogues between the two parties, as collective bargaining is fairly new to many sectors of the Cabo Verdean economy.\textsuperscript{10}

Working Conditions

The law stipulates a minimum monthly wage of ESC 11,000 (USD 110.95). The government defines the poverty income level as ESC 105 (USD 1.05) a day. Workers are legally able to refuse hazardous and/or unsafe working conditions, and governmental authorities reportedly protect workers making such claims effectively.\textsuperscript{11} In general, the legal regime governing workers’ rights is adhered to by employers and enforced by state authorities in Cabo Verde.\textsuperscript{12} Legal protections for workers extend to those working in the informal sectors of the economy, but unions and authorities both agree that enforcement capabilities of labor laws need to be increased (shortcomings have been attributed to the lack of trained inspectors working for agencies monitoring working conditions, especially in the less-populated islands).\textsuperscript{13} The most prevalent abuse in the Cabo Verdean economy is related to workers working more hours than legally permitted; this primarily affects domestic workers, health professionals, farmers, fishermen, and commercial workers.\textsuperscript{14} The U.S. State Department has indicated that migrant workers are more likely to face abuse/illegal working conditions.\textsuperscript{15}

Discrimination

Cabo Verdean labor law prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation based on race, color, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, political opinion, ethnic origin, age, HIV-positive status or having other communicable diseases, or social status, and the government in general has effectively enforced the law.\textsuperscript{16}

Gender-based discrimination remains an issue in the Cabo Verdean workforce, and it has been reported that women often face discrimination in hiring, with many not receiving equal pay for equal work in comparison to their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{17}
There are also reports that migrant workers have often worked without contracts with their employers, therefore exempting their labor from applicable laws. These workers often worked in poor conditions.18

**Forced Labor**

The law prohibits all forms of forced labor, and these laws have reportedly been well-enforced by Cabo Verdean authorities.19

**Child Labor**

The minimum work age for children in Cabo Verde is 15, and children between the ages of 15-18 are not permitted to work more than 38 hours a week by law.20

**Civil Society Organizations**

Domestic and international human rights organizations have been able to operate freely and publish their findings without government interference, and government authorities have been moderately receptive to these groups’ views and recommendations.21

**Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILO 29 Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 100 Equal Remuneration</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 111 Discrimination</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 138 Minimum Age</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 97 Migration for Employment</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Promotion of Emigration/Remittance Economy

Emigration is widespread among the Cabo Verdean population, and the diaspora outnumbers the number of citizens living in the country. Many emigrate to West Africa, western Europe, or the United States illegally, overstaying tourist visas to work. Remittance flows into the country from the diaspora are among the highest in all of Africa (in terms of percentage of GDP).

Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Cabo Verde scored a 71.5 in the 2016 Fragile States Index (FSI), placing it in the “elevated warning” category and ranking the country 101st out of 178. The FSI scale goes from 0 (indicating a “sustainable” political system), to 120 (indicating a political system on “high alert”). Cabo Verde was one of the most improved countries measured by the fragile states index from 2015-2016.

Level of Crime and Violence

The U.S. State Department considers crime to be a “critical threat” in Cabo Verde. According to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, Cabo Verde had a homicide rate of 10.3 for every 100,000 people, lower than the average African rate of 12.5.

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores Cabo Verde as a 59 out of 100, where 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and 100 signals “Very Clean.” The World Economic forum rates corruption as a 3.0 on their index for rating the most problematic factors for doing business, making it a relatively insignificant factor. 19 percent of civilians considered the national police to be corrupt.

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

Cabo Verde scores a 0.648 on the Human Development Index (HDI), ranking it 122 out of 188 countries. Cabo Verde scored higher on the HDI scale than neighboring countries including Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia. Cabo Verde’s HDI drops to a score of 0.518 when adjusted for inequality.
Poverty is less pervasive in Cabo Verde than in many of its regional neighbors. The UN claims that only 8.1 percent of the country’s population live below the nationwide poverty line.32

Environmental Factors

Water shortages, desertification and overfishing in Cabo Verde’s fishing industry are the primary environmental issues.33

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Fishing

Fishing Overview

The small island nation sits adjacent to the Canaries current, which provides ideal conditions for a thriving fishing industry. The island’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) covers 734,265 square kilometers of the Atlantic. Fish exports are vital to the Cabo Verdean economy.34 Although fishing and fish processing is a mainstay of the Cabo Verdean economy, the island’s marine resources are widely considered to be underutilized.35 The potential yield for the fishing industry is estimated at 43,000 to 50,000 tons/year, but only two-thirds of this potential is utilized. The lobster and tuna industries are the most underutilized, mostly due to lack of deep water fishing technology and/or fleet modernization.36

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Fishing

There is limited evidence that child labor is used in the fishing sector in Cabo Verde.37
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Endnotes