

ATLAS INTELLIGENCE

CIA WORLD FACTBOOK-STYLE TERRITORY REPORT

MARTINIQUE

French Caribbean | Lesser Antilles



Territory Reference Series | August 2026

Global Intelligence for the Informed Citizen

MARTINIQUE - TERRITORY PROFILE

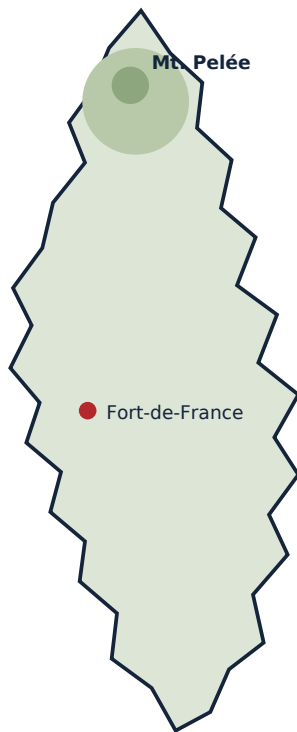
An integral French and European jurisdiction geographically embedded in the Caribbean.

Political status	Territorial Collectivity of France
Capital	Fort-de-France
Population	358,818 (2026 provisional estimate)
Area	1,128 sq km
Currency	Euro (EUR)
Official language	French
Regional language	Martinican Creole (Kréyol Matnik)
EU status	Outermost Region of the European Union
Highest point	Mount Pelée - 1,397 m
Defense responsibility	France

Background. Martinique is a volcanic island in the Lesser Antilles. France established permanent control in the seventeenth century. Plantation agriculture, especially sugar, shaped the colonial economy; slavery was permanently abolished in the French colonies in 1848. Martinique became an overseas department in 1946. Since 2016, the Collectivité Territoriale de Martinique (CTM) has exercised responsibilities formerly divided between departmental and regional councils.

Residents are French citizens, participate in French national elections, use the euro, and are citizens of the European Union.

GEOGRAPHY



Stylized island locator

Location. Lesser Antilles, between Dominica and Saint Lucia; Caribbean Sea to the west and Atlantic Ocean to the east.

Coordinates. Approximately 14°40'N, 61°00'W.

Terrain. Mountainous and volcanic in the north, with lower hills, plains, bays, and beaches toward the south.

Climate. Tropical maritime, moderated by northeast trade winds. The wetter season generally runs June-November; the island lies within the Atlantic hurricane region.

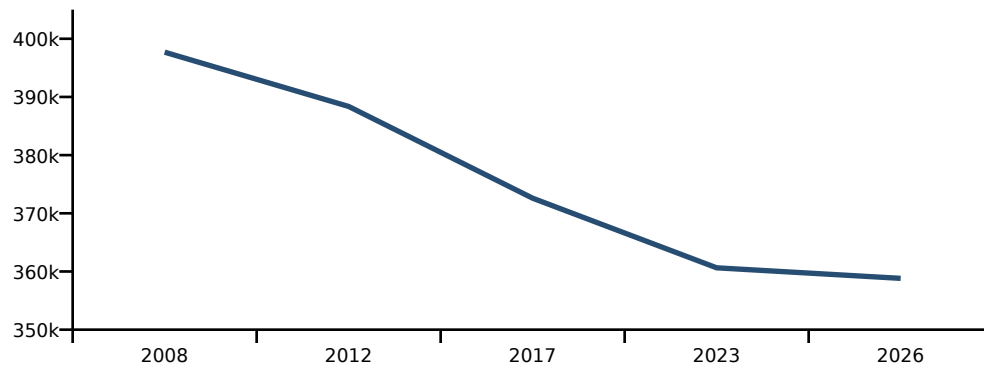
Natural hazards. Hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes, landslides, flooding, coastal erosion, and volcanic activity.

Mount Pelée. Active volcano and the island's highest point at 1,397 m. Its 8 May 1902 eruption destroyed Saint-Pierre and killed roughly 28,000-30,000 people.

Maritime jurisdiction is exercised by France. The territorial sea extends 12 nautical miles; broader exclusive economic-zone claims are delimited by neighboring jurisdictions.

PEOPLE AND SOCIETY

Population trend, 2008-2026



Source: INSEE; 2026 value provisional.

Martinique's population has contracted substantially since its late-2000s peak. INSEE estimates 358,818 residents at 1 January 2026, provisionally, compared with 397,693 in 2008. The decline is increasingly associated with population aging, low birth rates, and outward migration, especially among younger adults.

Demographic significance. Population contraction is a strategic socioeconomic issue: it affects labor-force depth, tax capacity, public services, housing demand, and the long-term sustainability of local economic activity.

Languages. French is the official language. Martinican Creole remains widely spoken and is a central element of local cultural identity.

Religion. Predominantly Christian, especially Roman Catholic, with Protestant and other communities present.

Urbanization. Population and economic activity are concentrated around Fort-de-France and the central urban corridor, including Le Lamentin and Schoëlcher.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL STATUS

Martinique is an integral part of the French Republic under the constitutional framework applicable to France's overseas departments and regions. It is not an independent state and is more integrated with France than a conventional dependency.

Collectivité Territoriale de Martinique (CTM). Since 1 January 2016, the CTM has combined responsibilities previously held by the departmental and regional councils. The institutional structure includes the Assembly of Martinique and an Executive Council.

French sovereign responsibilities. France retains responsibility for defense, foreign affairs, currency, justice, national security, and major elements of taxation and social policy.

European Union. Martinique is an Outermost Region of the EU. EU law generally applies, with adaptations permitted because of geographic remoteness and structural economic conditions.

Regional integration. Martinique has expanded cooperation with neighboring Caribbean states and regional organizations while remaining constitutionally French. This reflects its dual position as a French/EU jurisdiction and a Caribbean society.

ECONOMY

Martinique has a modern, service-oriented economy closely tied to metropolitan France and the European Union. Public administration, healthcare, education, retail, transportation, finance, tourism, construction, agriculture, food processing, and petroleum refining are important activities.

Structural feature	Assessment
Services	Dominant share of economic activity
Public sector	Major employer and stabilizing source of demand
Agriculture	Bananas, sugarcane, tropical produce
Signature export	Rhum agricole and related products
Tourism	Important external-revenue sector
Trade balance	Large structural merchandise deficit
Key vulnerability	Import dependence and high consumer prices

Rum. Martinique's internationally recognized rhum agricole is produced primarily from fresh sugarcane juice. The industry supports agriculture, tourism, cultural identity, and high-value exports.

Tourism. Beaches, Mount Pelée, tropical forests, diving, sailing, Fort-de-France, Saint-Pierre, historic estates, distilleries, cruise traffic, and French-Caribbean cuisine underpin the visitor economy.

Trade. Martinique imports much of what it consumes. Metropolitan France and the wider EU dominate commercial ties. The merchandise deficit is structurally offset in part by services, tourism, fiscal transfers, and public-sector flows.

INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

Transport. Road transport dominates internal movement. Martinique Aimé Césaire International Airport near Le Lamentin is the principal aviation gateway. The Port of Fort-de-France handles containers, petroleum products, bulk cargo, cruise vessels, and passenger traffic.

Telecommunications. Modern mobile and broadband networks are integrated with French and European systems.

Energy. Imported fossil fuels remain important. Diversification efforts emphasize solar power, biomass, waste-to-energy, efficiency, and other renewable options. Reducing petroleum dependence is both an economic and resilience objective.

Environmental pressures. Coastal development, erosion, tropical storm damage, waste management, climate change, marine ecosystem stress, and legacy agricultural contamination remain persistent concerns.

Chlordecone. Historic use of the pesticide in banana cultivation produced long-lived contamination in some soils and aquatic environments. The issue remains a major environmental, agricultural, public-health-policy, and political challenge.

SECURITY AND STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Martinique has no independent armed forces. France provides territorial defense, maritime security, law enforcement support, disaster response, counter-narcotics capability, and protection of French sovereignty.

Strategic value to France. Martinique contributes a permanent French sovereign presence in the Caribbean, maritime surveillance, logistics, regional access, counter-narcotics operations, and humanitarian-assistance/disaster-response capacity.

Transnational crime. Martinique lies within the wider Caribbean transit environment linking South American cocaine production areas with European markets. French customs, police, gendarmerie, naval, and judicial authorities therefore devote substantial resources to interdiction and investigation.

ATLAS strategic indicator panel



ATLAS INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

Martinique should be viewed less as a conventional dependent Caribbean territory than as a European political and economic jurisdiction geographically embedded in the Caribbean. Its strategic importance derives from this dual identity.

Politically and economically, Martinique is firmly anchored to France and the European Union. Geographically, commercially, environmentally, and increasingly institutionally, its natural operating environment is the Caribbean.

The territory's most important long-term vulnerability is demographic-economic rather than military. A declining and aging population, high living costs, import dependence, limited local employment opportunities, and continued migration toward metropolitan France could progressively weaken the local economic base.

Its countervailing strengths are substantial: French and EU institutional backing, developed infrastructure, political stability, high human-development standards by regional comparison, strong tourism potential, recognizable agricultural brands, and a strategically useful Caribbean location.

Outlook: Stable, with moderate long-term socioeconomic pressures.

Confidence: High.

KEY LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

1. Demographic contraction. Aging and outward migration threaten workforce depth and the tax base.
2. Cost of living. Import dependence contributes to persistent affordability pressures and periodic social tension.
3. Economic dependence. French and EU fiscal support stabilizes the economy but reinforces structural dependence.
4. Limited diversification. Small market size, distance, and high costs constrain industrial expansion.
5. Environmental legacy. Chlordecone contamination will remain a long-duration policy problem.
6. Natural hazards. Hurricanes, earthquakes, landslides, flooding, and volcanic activity remain persistent risks.

SOURCES AND REFERENCE NOTES

This ATLAS territory report follows the organizational style of a public-domain country/territory factbook while using current official French statistical and territorial sources. It is an independent ATLAS reference product and is not produced by or affiliated with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Primary sources consulted

- INSEE, Population estimates - Martinique, published 14 January 2026: 358,818 provisional population estimate for 2026.
- INSEE, Martinique territorial comparator and 2026 demographic releases.
- Ministère chargé des Outre-Mer, Martinique territory profile: 1,128 sq km; Mount Pelée 1,397 m; geography and institutional background.
- Collectivité Territoriale de Martinique, institutional materials describing CTM competencies and structure.
- French and European institutional sources for constitutional and EU Outermost Region status.

Visual note: the flag panel uses the Martinican Ipséité design. Maps are original ATLAS schematic graphics intended for orientation rather than navigation.

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