

November 2022

Country – capital	République du Senegal - Dakar ¹
Population	Wolof 39.7%, Pular 27.5%, Serer 16%, Mandinka 4.9%, Jola 4.2%, Soninke 2.4%, other 5.4% (est. 2019). Total population 17.9 million (est. 2022) ²
Geography	West Africa, at North Atlantic Ocean, between Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania. ³
Languages	French (official), Wolof, Pular, Jola, Mandinka, Serer, Soninke ⁴
Writing system	Latin ⁵
Education and literacy	51.9 % is literate, but a large gender gap: male 64.8 %, female 39,8 % (est. 2017). ⁶ In 2015, net enrolment rate in primary education for Senegal was 71.4 %, a significant increase from 54.8 % in 1999. Still, 25.7% of children in school-going age are not enrolled in primary or secondary school. ⁷ Education is compulsory and free in Senegal from age 6-16, although this policy is not enforced in areas where Islamic education is preferred. A combination of poverty and an uncaring administrative attitude also drives many parents and children away. At the end of 6 years, an exam determines whether they may study further. Secondary school is ‘an uneven battleground between the <i>haves</i> and the <i>have-nots</i> ’, who compete for places at better schools. Those who perform badly may end up in classes with ratios as high as 80:1, and many simply vanish from the education radar for ever. There are 3 private and 3 public universities in Senegal. ⁸
Religions	Muslim 97.2% (most adhere to one of the four main Sufi brotherhoods), Christian 2.7% (mostly Roman Catholic) (2019 est.) ⁹
Conflict history and overview	Senegal is considered a bastion of democracy in West Africa and remains the only country in the region that never has experienced a military coup. ¹⁰ A decades-lasting but low-level insurgency in the Casamance was met with a cease-fire in 2012 but sporadic incidents occur ¹¹ . The current president Macky Sall was peacefully elected in 2012. ¹² Corruption still exists but the country has made tremendous progress. ¹³
Humanitarian situation	Life expectancy at birth: 70 yrs (male 68, female 71.8). ¹⁴ Population below poverty line: 39 % (Apr.2022). ¹⁵ Recurring floods during the rainy season and food insecurity, both of which are exacerbated by the effects of climate change, displace many. There are also many refugees from Mauritania. Displaced women and girls are more vulnerable to exploitation and violence and access to life-saving health care is rare. ¹⁶
Human rights situation	Arbitrary arrests of opposition figures, use of excessive force by security forces, restrictive civic space, rape, and other serious human rights abuses continued in 2021. Rape, sexual exploitation, and abuse of students remain serious concerns within Senegal’s education system. Senegalese girls face high levels of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse by teachers and school officials. ¹⁷ Over 100,000 children (<i>talibés</i>) in traditional Quranic schools (<i>daaras</i>) are exploited and forced/beaten to beg daily for food, money. ¹⁸
Situation of women FGM/C – early marriages	Maternal mortality rate: 315 per 100,000 live births (2017). ¹⁹ FGM/C is legally prohibited (1999) but 23.3% of all women aged 15-49 have been cut. This percentage is slightly decreasing amongst young women. There is a large regional/ ethnic variety. ²⁰ The legal minimum age for marriage is 16 years for girls and 18 for boys. 29% of girls in Senegal are married before their 18th birthday and 8% are married before the age of 15. 1% of Senegalese boys are married before the age of 18. ²¹
Situation of LGBTI	Same-sex activities are prohibited and in 2020 alone 36 suspected gay men were arrested. ²² LGBT people and activists are subjected to smear campaigns and abuse, including threats and physical assaults. Media and local rights groups reported dozens of incidents of assault on homosexual people in Senegal in the first half of 2021. ²³
Asylum / migration / internally displaced persons (IDPs)	IDPs (within Senegal) 11,700, due to violence (Casamance) and natural disasters. ²⁴ Malta: Senegalese sea arrivals unknown. ²⁵ In 2021 33 persons lodged asylum applications in Malta; in first half of 2022: 5. The largest nr of Senegalese asylum applications is in Spain. ²⁶

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- ¹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
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 - ⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
 - ⁵ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
 - ⁶ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
 - ⁷ <https://knoema.com/atlas/Senegal/topics/Education/Primary-Education/Drop-out-rate-for-primary-education>
 - ⁸ <https://www.scholaro.com/db/Countries/Senegal/Education-System>
 - ⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
 - ¹⁰ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2018/570490/EXPO_IDA\(2018\)570490_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2018/570490/EXPO_IDA(2018)570490_EN.pdf)
 - ¹¹ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/senegal/>
 - ¹² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
 - ¹³ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2018/570490/EXPO_IDA\(2018\)570490_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2018/570490/EXPO_IDA(2018)570490_EN.pdf)
 - ¹⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
 - ¹⁵ <https://www.wfp.org/countries/senegal>
 - ¹⁶ <https://www.unfpa.org/data/emergencies/senegal-humanitarian-emergency>
 - ¹⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/senegal>
 - ¹⁸ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2018/570490/EXPO_IDA\(2018\)570490_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2018/570490/EXPO_IDA(2018)570490_EN.pdf) ; <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/senegal#a0c0a7>
 - ¹⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/senegal/>
 - ²⁰ <https://www.28toomany.org/country/senegal/> ; https://www.28toomany.org/media/uploads/Country%20Research%20and%20Resources/Senegal/fgm_sen.pdf
 - ²¹ <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/senegal/>
 - ²² <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report>
 - ²³ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/senegal>
 - ²⁴ <https://migrants-refugees.va/country-profile/senegal/>; <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/senegal>
 - ²⁵ <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>
 - ²⁵ <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=I53aKE>

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This factsheet was compiled by Adri van den Berg for Blue Door Education. Adri worked for many years as a Country of Origin Information (COI) researcher, her final post before retiring being with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Malta.