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Carana

Carana is one of six countries located on the island of Kisawa, situated in the Indian Ocean off the eastern coast of Africa. Carana has a population of approximately 8.6 million and is a lower-income country, with a GNP/capita of \$2,568 PPP (roughly similar to that of Senegal). A former French colony, Carana gained its independence in 1962. It suffered years of authoritarian rule and a brief but destructive civil war (2006-08), before re-emerging as a fragile democracy in 2009.

Galasi is the capital of Carana, with an ethnically- and religiously-mixed population of some 2 million or so. It is the country's major port, located in the delta of the Kalesi River with access to the Indian Ocean, and has been at the center of post-war reconstruction and development.

Demographics

Carana's population is divided among three major ethno-tribal groups—the **Falin**, **Tatsi**, and **Kori**—and a number of smaller ones. Estimates of ethnic origin are uncertain, given migration, displacement, unreliable data, and intermarriage. Demographers currently estimate the Falin population at 45% of the total, predominately in the east; the Kori at 30% of the population, predominately in the west; and the Tatsi at 15% of the population, predominately in the south.

The Falin population is roughly evenly split between Christians and Muslims, while the other two groups are largely Christian or animist in religious beliefs.

The history of Islam in the country dates back to trade with the Arab world in the 11th century. Coastal areas were ruled by the Omani Al Bu Said dynasty through much of the 18th century, until displaced by French colonial rule in 1850. A few years later, ethnic conflict in northern Kisawa led thousands of Muslim Falin to seek refuge within the new French colony. Many of these were never formally inscribed in the Caranan population registry (the so-called *non-inscrit*), although they soon integrated into local society and the economy. Indeed, to this day, Muslims of Falin ethnicity continue to occupy a prominent role in the business community, reflecting the impact of early trading networks as well as the later influx of merchants with regional connections.

Republic of Carana
Republique de Carana



Flag



Emblem



Capital and largest city Galasi

Official Languages Kisawan
French
English

Religions Christianity
Islam
Animist

Demonym Caranan

Christianity first arrived in coastal areas of Carana as early as the 4th century following the conversion of the Ethiopian Kingdom of Aksum, and again with the evangelical mission of **St. Mychil of Crediton** some four hundred years later. From the 14th century onwards, Catholic missionaries made major inroads in the interior areas of the country, where animist beliefs were commonplace. Catholic influence deepened during the later period of French administration, with the Church developing a series of understanding with the colonial authorities that allowed it to administer education and health services. This had a lasting effect on the country, making Christianity (often combined with local traditions and beliefs) into the predominate religion within two generations.

The Caranan civil war (2006-08) transformed the human geography of the country in important ways. Internal displacement, resettlement, and especially post-war economic growth saw many Tatsi and Kori migrate from the rural hinterlands to major cities, and especially to Galasi itself. As a result, the city rapidly expanded, with large squatter slums emerging on its outskirts. Galasi also became much more diverse and representative of the country as a whole. Those of Falin ethnicity, who had once comprised perhaps two-thirds of the total, represented at best half the population of the capital by 2015.

History

Carana gained its independence in 1962 following a period of nationalist strikes and protests. The first post-independence government of President **Joseph Uroma** enjoyed widespread support from all sections of the country, but as economic performance flagged and discontent grew, the regime grew steadily more authoritarian. In 1970, national elections were postponed. In 1971 a military coup overthrew Uroma, and General **Christian Hakutu** became the country's new leader. While promising greater freedom, the new regime rapidly became a corrupt and brutal dictatorship. In 1975, power struggles within the military brought Colonel **Idrissa Tarakoni** to power—but little else would change for a decade.

In the mid-1980s, international pressure—and a growing fiscal crisis that left Carana in desperate need of support from the International Monetary Fund and aid donors—led to economic and political reforms, including new elections in 1986. The leading political parties all mobilized the bulk of their electoral support along ethnic lines: the Falin-dominated **Parti démocratique de Carana** (PDC); the **Front national caranais** (FNC), which had strong ties to the Tatsi ethnic group; and the **Parti de la convention Caranaise** (PCC), which had a Kori base.

From 1986 through to 2006, power was held by a succession of PDC governments, first under **Roselyn Okatsi** and then under **Jacques Ogavo**. In 2006, the Ogavo government forced through a constitutional amendment which lifted presidential term limits, and Ogavo was then re-elected in a

Government	Unitary presidential constitutional republic
•President	Peter-Paul Xavier
Legislature	Unicameral Parliament
Independence	1962
•From France	
Area	112,00 km2
Population (2014)	8.6 million
GDP (PPP)	2017 est
•Total (PPP)	\$22.1 billion
•Per capita	\$2,568
HDI (2016)	0.510 152 nd
Gini (2016)	47.8
Currency	Caranan Franc (CFR)
Drives on the	right

controversial national election. The opposition parties, and many observers, accused the government of intimidation and electoral fraud. Protests soon erupted, which were suppressed with growing force by the Caranan Defence Forces (Forces de la defense de Carana - FDC) and the national Gendarmerie. By the following year, the violence had escalated into a full-scale civil war, with the opposition **Movement Patriotique de Carana** (MPC) and smaller rebel groups effectively challenging the government in the western and southern parts of the country. The fighting did severe damage to an already precarious economy and infrastructure, resulting in forced displacement and a major humanitarian crisis.

In 2008, following African Union and United Nations mediation, the **Kalari Peace Agreement** was signed. A transitional government of national reconciliation was formed, a hybrid African Union-United Nations peacekeeping mission was deployed, and new national elections were held. The security forces were also reduced in size, and made more representative of the population. The national Gendarmerie took on many of the internal security tasks previously performed by the FDC.

With many political actors discredited by allegations of corruption or association with past human rights abuses, and the adoption of proportional representation electoral system which made it easier for new parties to emerge, the electoral landscape of the country underwent a major change in the 2009 and 2013 elections. In particular, the **Parti chrétien-démocrate de Carana** (PCDC) was able to transcend ethnic fault-lines by crafting an electoral message that spoke to the shared Christian beliefs of the majority of Caranese. In the first post-war coalition government, PCDC Finance Minister **Peter-Paul Xavier** was credited with working with donors and the business community to jump-start the war-ravaged economy. Xavier was first elected President in 2013, with the PCDC winning a majority in the National Assembly. The primary opposition party was now the so-called “Renewal and Reform” (**PDC-RR**) faction of the former Parti démocratique de Carana, which continued to mobilize its support almost exclusively from within the Falin ethnic group.

The rise of the PCDC was aided by the rapid growth of Protestant evangelical churches during the civil war and its thereafter. These had provided a message of faith and hope in difficult times, as well as being in the forefront of many local aid efforts. The most important of these has been the **Church of Redemption**, an evangelical coalition led by **Reverend Moses Zion**. Zion has effectively used social media, television, and other informational and communication technologies to promote his message. The Church of Redemption has also recently acquired its own television station, **Lighthouse TV** (“lighting the way to a new Carana”). By contrast, the once-dominant Catholic Church has slowly lost both adherents and influence.

While Carana’s post-conflict transition and return to democracy are celebrated as a regional success story, there has been a darker side to all this too. During the 2013 electoral campaign, the PCDC raised the issue of the “les non-inscrits,” successfully arguing before the courts that several

PDC-RR candidates were not citizens and therefore not eligible to stand for office because their forbearers had never been registered by the French colonial authorities. During the 2017 elections, this expanded to a broader scapegoating of the (predominately Falin) Muslim community, playing upon the Muslim heritage of many unpopular wartime PDC leaders and CDF commanders, as well as harnessing popular discontent at the wealth of the Muslim business elite who were accused of having been war-profiteers. The campaign put the PDC-RR and its largely secular leadership in a difficult position: on the one hand, it was clearly an effort to split the Falin community; on the other hand, too vigorous a defence of the Muslim minority could well cause some Christian Falin to shift their political allegiances.

Regional and International Context

To the north, the neighbouring, Muslim-majority country of **Sumora** has viewed the rise of Christian populism in Carana with mounting concern. Several waqf and other religious institutions span both countries, and many Caranan Muslim religious leaders studied in the seminaries in the Sumoran capital. Sumora has been especially alarmed at the PCDC's treatment of the issue of *les non-inscrits*, (many of whom have ancestral ties to Sumora) fearing that this population might one day be forced out of Carana through discrimination, or even future violence. Were religious violence to erupt in the country, Sumora would undoubtedly consider raising the issue in the African Union, United Nations, or other similar settings.

The AU/UN stabilization mission deployed to Carana in support of the Kalari peace agreement was reduced in scale after the successful 2009 elections. The current **United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Republic of Carana** (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République du Carana), known by its French acronym **MONUSCA**, provides limited civilian police (CIVPOL) support to the Caranan government. United Nations agencies, foreign donors, and international non-governmental organizations continue to play an important role in supporting reconstruction and development.

