

Martinique — Va-PoReg Country Report

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11/20/1815 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of France]: On 09/15/1635, Pierre Belain d’Esnambuc, the French governor of St. Kitts, arrived in St. Pierre’s harbor with 80 to 150 French settlers after being forced out of St. Kitts by the English. D’Esnambuc asserted French sovereignty over Martinique on behalf of King Louis XIII and the „Compagnie des Îles de l’Amérique” (Company of the American Islands). He established the initial European settlement, Fort Saint-Pierre, which is now known as St. Pierre. Over the years, Martinique was subject to multiple British attacks or occupations in 1693, 1759, 1762, and 1779, except for the period between 1802 and 1809 when it was briefly controlled by Britain following the Treaty of Amiens. From 1794 to 1815, Britain maintained control over the island for most of the time, ultimately returning it to France after the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars. As in the Treaty of 1814, the Second Treaty of Paris on 11/20/1815 stipulated that Britain would return Martinique to France.¹ Since then, Martinique has remained a French territory.² LIED does not treat Martinique for its colonial time.

03/19/1946 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Liberal Democracy]/Start Part of Other Country [of France, Liberal Democracy]: In 1946, the French National Assembly unanimously voted to turn Martinique into an overseas department of France. However, during the post-war years, a movement for full independence gained momentum, with figures like Aimé Césaire founding the Progressive Party of Martinique in the 1950s. Tensions reached a breaking point in December 1959, leading to riots following a racially charged incident that resulted in three deaths. In 1962, amid the global shift away from colonialism, the strongly pro-independence Organisation de la jeunesse anticolonialiste de la Martinique (OJAM) was established. Its leaders were initially arrested by French authorities but were later acquitted. Tensions flared again in 1974 when gendarmes shot and killed two striking banana workers. However, the independence movement lost momentum as Martinique’s economy struggled in the 1970s, causing significant emigration.³ Martinique is an outermost region of the European Union, and its residents are granted full political and legal rights as French citizens. The island elects four deputies to the French National Assembly and two senators to the French Senate.⁴ Due to the legal equality of the overseas territory with the regions of mainland France, as well as its representation in the French Parliament and in the European Union, Martinique can be regarded as a part of France. FH, LIED and V-Dem do not provide data for Martinique.

Part of Other Country [of France, Liberal Democracy] as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Notes

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_\(1815\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_(1815))

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martinique#History>

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martinique#History>

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martinique#Governance>