



Mayotte — Va-PoReg Country Report

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03/25/1841 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of France]: On 03/25/1841 the reign of the last sultan on Mayotte ended.¹ In 1843, France established colonial authority over Mayotte. Much like their efforts in the West Indies and Réunion, the French government had aspirations to transform Mayotte into a sugar-producing region. However, sugar production in Mayotte remained lackluster, and the sugar crisis of 1883-1885 spelled the end of this industry, even as it reached its peak production. In 1885, during the Berlin Conference, France assumed control over the entire Comoros archipelago, even though French traders were already exerting influence there. The colony was then named „Mayotte and Dependencies.”²

01/01/1946 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Liberal Democracy]/Start Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Liberal Democracy]: Already since 1945 the archipelago of the Comoros of which Mayotte was part until 1975, elected deputies to the French National Assembly. In 1946, a General Council was elected for the first time which became the Territorial Assembly in 1952 and the Chamber of Deputies in 1962.³ LIED does not treat Mayotte during its colonial period. On 07/06/1975, the Comorian parliament passed a resolution asserting independence. Mayotte’s decision to stay under French authority, even as the Comoros declared its independence in the wake of the 1974 referendum, set the course for its future.⁴ From 1975 onward, the French administered Mayotte independently from the rest of the Comoros. This distinction came about when the three northernmost islands of the Comoros, primarily Muslim, declared their independence, while the residents of Mayotte, encompassing both Muslim and Christian communities, opted to remain under French authority. In 1976, the French government introduced a distinct status known as „collectivité territoriale” for the island. In 1979, the United Nations adopted a resolution confirming the sovereignty of the Comoros over Mayotte. This regime change event is coded as a strategic restructuring, as it marks the formal change of Mayotte’s status enacted by the ruling elite in France in response to the territory’s vote to remain French. The direction is coded as a liberalization, since the inhabitants transitioned from colonial subjects to citizens with full political rights within the French Republic.

01/01/1946 End Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Liberal Democracy]/Start Part of Other Country [of France, Liberal Democracy]: On 03/31/2011, Mayotte attained the status of an overseas department of France as a result of the March 2009 Mahoran status referendum, which received overwhelming approval from approximately 95% of the voters. This transition into an overseas department implies that Mayotte will align its legal and social framework with that of mainland France. This transformation will necessitate the discontinuation of certain customary laws, the adoption of the standard French civil code, and reforms in the areas of the judiciary, education, social services, and taxation. The implementation of these changes is expected to occur over a span of approximately 20 years.⁵ FH, LIED and V-Dem do not provide data for Mayotte. 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, Mayotte can be regarded as a part of France.

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

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sultans_on_the_Comoros

² <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mayotte#ref4733>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_the_Comoros

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

⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayotte#Politics>