



## Micronesia — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[officially known as Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)]

02/12/1899 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of Germany]: On 02/12/1899 Caroline Islands became part of German New Guinea. Spain had sold the islands to Germany under the German-Spanish Treaty.<sup>1</sup> The Germans needed more workers for their plantations and expanded their forced labor policies significantly between 1899 and 1914. Inhabitants were each required to work a minimum of four weeks per year and to pay a poll tax.<sup>2</sup> On 10/18/1910, a rebellion by the Sokehs tribe began. A group of workers refused to work and threatened the German overseers who subsequently fled. Upon his arrival on the island, the district commissioner and several other colonial administrators were shot dead. Word of the incident reached the colonial office in Berlin on 12/26/1910.<sup>3</sup> Several ships were sent to the Sokeh island to get the situation under control. On 03/01/1911, the last of the rebels gave up. Six Sokehs had died during the conflict. On 02/24/1911, 15 rebels were executed by firing squads. The rest of the Sokeh tribe was banished to Babelthup in the German Palau Islands.<sup>4</sup>

10/05/1914 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of Germany, Constitutional Monarchy]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Japan, Autocratic Monarchy]: On this date the first Japanese squadron anchored off the island of Kusaie. Two squadrons had been ordered to temporarily occupy the German territories in Micronesia. Within two months, the Japanese Imperial Army had occupied all of the German colonial territories in the Pacific.<sup>5</sup> During the first five years of occupation, the islands were transformed into a de facto Japanese colony. The territory was divided into five naval territories which all reported to naval headquarters at Truk.<sup>6</sup>

12/17/1920 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Japan, Autocratic Monarchy]/Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [as International Mandate of Japan, Autocratic Monarchy]: On this date, the former German colonies in the Pacific north of the equator legally became a League of Nations Mandate under the administration of Japan. Thereby, Japan gained control of the domestic legal system. The post of Governor of the South Seas Mandate was created. He reported directly to the Prime Minister of Japan until the Colonial Ministry was established in 1929. The islands mainly provided Japan with a strategic military location.<sup>7</sup>

02/17/1944 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of Japan, Autocratic Monarchy]/Start No Central Authority: This date marked the beginning of Operation Hailstone, a military operation carried out by the United States. Due to their „leapfrogging” strategy, they managed to defeat the IJN. Nevertheless, Japan began to rebuild Truk as a bomber airbase after the first attacks. Another US attack followed on 04/29/1944. The British then attacked again in August 1945.<sup>8</sup> Micronesia does not appear in LIED’s data before 1948.

07/18/1947 End No Central Authority/Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [as Trust Territory of the USA, Electoral Democracy]: On this date, Security Council Resolution 21 was passed. It established the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) under the control of the United States who had defeated the Japanese occupants during the Pacific War. The US controlled the Islands from a base in Guam until 1951 and then from a base in Saipan.<sup>9</sup> According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held until 1961, from 1962 onward only multiparty legislative elections were held. Moreover, LIED identifies political liberties as absent until 1961 and as present from 1962 onwards.

09/28/1964 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of USA, Electoral Democracy]/Start Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of USA, Electoral Democracy]: On this day the Congress of Micronesia, as the legislature of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, was created and was composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives with 21 members. The three islands which were part of Micronesia during this time elected 10 members to the Assembly.<sup>10</sup> According to LIED only multiparty legislative elections were held. Universal suffrage was achieved. Pre-independence parliamentary elections were held on 03/27/1979.<sup>11</sup> LIED identifies political liberties as present. While the territory was granted limited self-government with the establishment of the Congress of Micronesia in 1964, ultimate authority remained with the U.S. administration. This combination of external sovereignty with partial internal autonomy corresponds to the logic of indirect rule, even though the TTPI's legal status as a trusteeship distinguished it from classic colonial possessions.

05/10/1979 End Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [as Trust Territory of the USA, Liberal Democracy]/Start Liberal Democracy: On this date, the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia was ratified giving autonomy to the Caroline Islands.<sup>12</sup> In the 1979 elections, universal suffrage had been introduced.<sup>13</sup> On 11/03/1986 Micronesia gained independence. However, the status as trust territory was effectively dissolved on 12/22/1990. The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is characterized as a relatively stable democracy with regular and competitive elections. Nonetheless, secessionist movements have intermittently disrupted the country's politics and posed challenges to its unity. The judiciary operates independently, and civil liberties are generally upheld.<sup>14</sup> Micronesia is a federal representative democracy. Legislative powers are wielded by the president and but mainly by a unicameral national congress.<sup>15</sup> Fair and Free general elections for the 14 members of congress were held on 03/07/2023. As there are no parties in Micronesia, all candidates run as independents. Subsequently, President Wesley Simina was elected in the first regular session of congress on 03/11/2023.<sup>16</sup> This practice was repeated in the 04/03/2025 parliamentary elections, where ten of the fourteen seats in Congress were contested by independent candidates. The elections were conducted peacefully and resulted mainly in the re-election of incumbents.<sup>17</sup> The previous president David Panuelo has reported dealing with China as a serious challenge, alleging political interference and threats amid tensions in the Pacific.<sup>18</sup> Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since the country's democratization process, the elections held scored constant competitiveness (LIED). Besides, political liberties were achieved ever since 1979 (LIED). FH has been monitoring Micronesia since 1991 and has classified it as free since then. V-Dem does register the country in its data. We classify Micronesia as a liberal democracy. However, it has to be stated that in comparison to other cases information on this microstate is scarce.

Liberal Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional Sources (Somoza 2001)

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Federated\\_States\\_of\\_Micronesia#European\\_colonisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Federated_States_of_Micronesia#European_colonisation)

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German\\_New\\_Guinea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_New_Guinea)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokehs\\_rebellion#History\\_of\\_the\\_rebellion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokehs_rebellion#History_of_the_rebellion)

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokehs\\_rebellion#The\\_response](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokehs_rebellion#The_response)

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial\\_Japanese\\_Navy\\_in\\_World\\_War\\_I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Japanese_Navy_in_World_War_I)

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_Seas\\_Mandate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Seas_Mandate)

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_Seas\\_Mandate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Seas_Mandate)

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Hailstone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Hailstone)

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trust\\_Territory\\_of\\_the\\_Pacific\\_Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trust_Territory_of_the_Pacific_Islands)

<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress\\_of\\_the\\_Trust\\_Territory\\_of\\_the\\_Pacific\\_Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_of_the_Trust_Territory_of_the_Pacific_Islands)

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979\\_Micronesian\\_parliamentary\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979_Micronesian_parliamentary_election)

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Federated\\_States\\_of\\_Micronesia#Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Federated_States_of_Micronesia#Independence)

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_suffrage#cite\\_note-centralasiainstitute.org-37](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_suffrage#cite_note-centralasiainstitute.org-37)

<sup>14</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/micronesia/freedom-world/2023>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Micronesia-republic-Pacific-Ocean/Government-and-society>

<sup>16</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesley\\_Simina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesley_Simina)

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025\\_Micronesian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Micronesian_general_election)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/10/outgoing-president-of-micronesia-accuses-china-of-bribery-threats-and-interference>

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## References

Somoza, Alexander (2001): Federated States of Micronesia, in: Grotz, Florian, Nohlen, Dieter & Hartmann, Christof (Hrsg.), Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 633–642.