

# The Impact of Geographical Location on the Foreign Policy of the State of the Comoros

**Abdulrahman Hassan Saleh Mojamil, Abdulhameed Hamid Gareed, Mujeeb Abdurahman Ahmed Hajeb**

College of Political Science, Sana'a University, Sana'a, Yemen

## Email address:

[wwwalmjml@gmail.com](mailto:wwwalmjml@gmail.com) (Abdulrahman Hassan Saleh Mojamil), [a\\_hameed90@hotmail.com](mailto:a_hameed90@hotmail.com) (Abdulhameed Hamid Gareed),

[mjybhajb70@gmail.com](mailto:mjybhajb70@gmail.com) (Mujeeb Abdurahman Ahmed Hajeb)

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**Abstract:** The geographical location of any country is of great importance to remain the main concern of decision-makers in the state, as the geographical location is one of the most important factors that judge the strength or weakness of the state, and no country resorts to making any decision regarding its foreign affairs and its relationship with the countries of the outside world without taking into account its geographical location and how it will affect or be affected by the geographical location of the state, as for its internal affairs, any country's awareness of the importance of its geographical location enables it to benefit from it more in building and developing State, and accordingly this research will address the study of the geographical location of the Islamic Arab State of the Comoros by showing the importance of the geographical location for the state geographically and astronomically and for its neighboring countries, and the research will focus on mentioning some of the strengths added by the geographical location of the State of the Comoros and in return to clarify the weaknesses suffered by the state as a result of the geographical location, and the research will address the main point, which is the extent of the impact of the geographical location on the foreign policy of the State of Comoros and its impact on it concluded the research by recalling once again the importance of the geographical location for the State of the Comoros, listing some recommendations that may benefit the decision-maker in the State of Comoros to exploit the strengths of the geographical location and mitigate the consequences of the weaknesses that the geographical location of the State confers.

**Keywords:** Comoros, Geographic Location, Foreign Policy, Astronomical Location, Political Borders

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## 1. Introduction

The State of the Comoros is considered one of the Arab and Islamic countries, and it is rare to hear about it. It is the only country that is separated from the Arab world, and is located on the continent of Africa. It is considered the smallest African country in terms of area, as its total area is approximately 1862 km<sup>2</sup>, and it is an archipelago consisting of four islands [1]. Three of them are subject to the sovereignty of the state itself, which are (Fomboni, Mutsamudu, and Moroni), and the fourth island is still subject to French occupation, which is the island of (Mayotte). The State of the Comoros is geographically located in the southwestern Indian Ocean between the shores

of Tanzania, Mozambique, and Madagascar, near the eastern African coast. Astronomically, the longitude lines intersect from the east at 43.8 degrees, with the latitude lines from the south at 12.02 degrees [2]. Its climate is generally characterized as tropical and temperate, and the city of Moroni is considered its primary capital. According to the 2021 census, its population reaches 888,460 people [3], and it is expected that their people, and thus it ranks 163rd in the world in terms of population, and it ranks 25th in the world in terms of the level of population density in it, as the number of people per square kilometer is 275 people, so it is considered one of the densely populated countries and its residents are called Comorians [2]. Most of the residents of the Republic of the Comoros speak Arabic, which is the official language of the state, along with French, with

dialects differing from one region to another. Islam is the official religion of its population, except for 2% of the population who profess Catholicism, with some minorities who practice Hinduism. Its system of government is a federal republic, and the Republic of the Comoros has been headed by President Ghazi Othmani since 2019 [4].

The problem of the study lies in searching for the effect of geographical location on the foreign policy of the State of the Comoros, which derives its importance from its distinct geographical location as it consists of a group of islands that are characterized by topographical characteristics\* that differ from one island to another, and are also characterized by the presence of geological waters that are considered sources of stored water, as a result Hydraulic pressure between the groundwater on the islands and the waters of the Indian Ocean raises the water level and may reach the surface of the Earth. It is also considered a strategic location because it has a major role in strengthening trade between the Middle East and the continent of Africa. The middle of the Comoros is one of the most important routes used to ship and transport oil from the Middle East. To all countries of the world, and the commercial routes of the Comoros have an important role in strengthening trade ties between the continent of Africa and the entire Arab world, which aims to know the strengths and weaknesses that the geographical location imparts and their impact on the foreign policy of the Republic of the Islands Comoros, and this research paper will address the following points:

- 1) A brief overview of the geographical location and its importance to the Republic of Islands the Comoros.
- 2) The strengths and weaknesses that the geographical location imparts to the State of the Comoros.
- 3) The effect of geographical location on the foreign policy of the Republic of the Comoros.

## 2. A Brief Overview of the Geographical Location and Its Importance to the Republic of the Comoros

Napoleon said (If you want to look at the world, look at the map). What Napoleon Bonaparte said stems from his awareness of the importance of land area and its location for the state. The one who looks at the map with the naked eye realizes that a state with a large area is not like a state with a small area, and a state that overlooks Waterways are not the same as a landlocked state, and a unified state is not the same as a divided state, so the geographical location represented the main and most important ambition of the colonists.

The important question that must be asked is how do we judge a country as having? a unique and distinct geographical location In order to answer this question, we must think with the mentality of the colonizer, so to speak, and ask the question in another way and say: What makes the geographical location of a country an object of greed and attraction for the colonizer?

The fact that the state possesses a maritime domain that is a corridor for global trade lines is in itself a sufficient factor

to determine that the state possesses a distinct geographical location. Add, for example, its control over one of the straits, or its location under which oil or minerals are hidden, or that it be a link between one continent and another, through From these factors and others, we can judge that the geographical location is a distinct and unique location. One country may possess all of these factors, and another country may possess some or one of them. Thus, the importance of geographical location varies from one country to another.

Therefore, the continent of Africa has represented the subject of ambitions for colonial powers throughout history. This is because of the wealth it possesses for some of its countries and its strategic and distinct geographical location for others, and among these African countries is the federal state of the Comoros, and given the importance of its geographical location, which represents the route through which two-thirds of the world's oil passes from the Middle East to the world, it has been subjected to several occupation attempts to finally occupy Before France in the nineteenth century AD, in 1841 AD, its people later fought a struggle for liberation that ended with the country's independence in 1975 AD. However, the French occupation refused to complete the Comoros' territorial integrity, preferring to maintain its authority over the island of Mayotte until today. This is only [5] because France realizes the importance of the location. The Comoros Islands in general and the island of Mayotte in particular and the wealth it contains in its soil.

In order to realize the importance of the geographical location, which represents one of the natural resources for the State of the Comoros, we must look at three basic indicators through which this becomes clear to us. These indicators are:

### 2.1. The Astronomical Location of the Comoros



Figure 1. The geographical location of the Comoros.

As we mentioned previously, the country of the Comoros,

astronomically, intersects its longitude lines from the east at 43.8 degrees and its latitudes from the south at 12.02 degrees. This means that it is close to the equator, which makes its climate moderate, which contributes to the diversity of its terrestrial and marine plants. It has many rare plants and even animals, and it also has a kind of greenery and beauty, making it a popular destination for tourists from all over the world [6].

## 2.2. The Political Borders of the State of the Comoros

The State of the Comoros is considered a completely maritime country, as it is made up of four large islands in addition to some small islands, which are located in the southwest of the Indian Ocean, south of the continent of Africa. This means that water surrounds it on all sides, and as we mentioned previously, it is located between the shores of both... Tanzania, Mozambique and Madagascar are near the eastern African coast, and this location makes them an eastern-southern gateway to the African continent and a connecting factor between the Middle East and the world.



Figure 2. Political borders of the Comoros.

## 2.3. Countries Neighboring the Comoros

The State of the Comoros is the farthest Arab country, and therefore it does not share land borders with any Arab country. It is located next to non-Arab African countries, namely Madagascar, Tanzania, and Mozambique. These countries are characterized by a kind of peace and economic development, and the State of the Comoros has friendly relations with them, in addition to these The countries there are some uninhabited islands surrounding it.

This unique and distinct location of the Comoros must be either a strength factor for it or a weakness, and this is what we will try to identify in the second.

# 3. The Strengths and Weaknesses That the Geographical Location Imparts to the State of the Comoros

## 3.1. Strengths in Relation to the Geographical Location of the State of the Comoros

The most important strengths of the Comoros'

geographical location are the following:

### 3.1.1. The Comoros Intercepts the Navigation Channel in the Mozambique Canal Between the Middle East and the World Via the Cape of Good Hope

This point is considered the basic and main point that has given the geographical location of the Comoros Islands great importance for it and for the countries of the world, as it is considered the shortest route between the oil-producing Arab countries in particular. And the Western industrialized countries, through which about two-thirds of the world's oil passes between those countries, at an estimated rate of about one million tons per day, which may bring positive economic repercussions to the country of the Comoros on the "peace" that contribute to the development process of the country, through customs duties [7]. Which is imposed on oil-carrying ships, in addition to benefiting from the hard currency revenues it receives from hosting ship crews while the ships are docked at its ports. However, in the event of "war," the island's controlling position on this road gives it the full right to close it whenever it wants. This may cost the world huge costs if another way to cross the oil is searched.

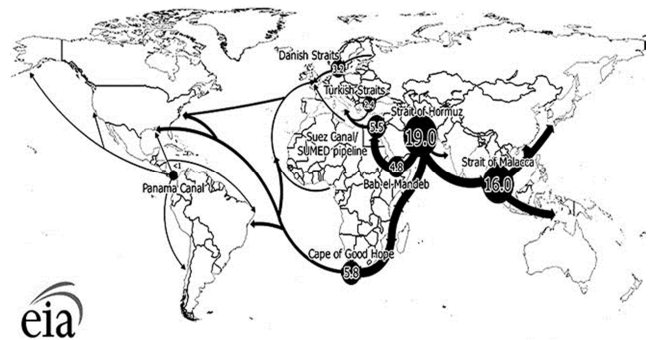


Figure 3. Straits, corridors and shipping lines for major tankers.

### 3.1.2. Security and Stability in the Comoros

You may wonder how security and stability are considered a strength for this country? But the answer is simple if we link it to the state's location and its importance to the world. As a location through which about two-thirds of the world's oil passes, states must strive to keep it in a state of security and stability because they are aware of what they can gain if this state is no longer in a state of security and stability. The factor makes the state live in a state in which it can proceed with construction and development with few crises that may result from a state of insecurity and stability.

### 3.1.3. The Unique and Distinguished Astronomical Location of the Comoros

The astronomical location of the State of the Comoros is a strong factor that gives it a moderate tropical climate that contributes to plant and animal diversity, which gives the country beauty in nature that makes it a destination for lovers of natural scenery in the world, which brings it abundant economic returns that contribute to the wheel of development and development of the country if it is done well. Exploiting it, in addition, enables the state to exploit this climate in the

pursuit of self-sufficiency in terms of agricultural and livestock crops.

### **3.1.4. Easy Transportation Between Comoros and Neighboring Countries**

Sea transportation is always considered easier than land transportation, and this advantage is possessed by the State of the Comoros, as all its borders are free, which contributes to the ease of transportation and commercial and non-commercial transportation between it and neighboring countries, in addition to the ease of movement between the islands of the state itself, being an island state. far apart from each other.

### **3.1.5. The Cultural and Cognitive Diversity of the Comoros**

The location of the Comoros Islands at the crossroads between the countries of the Middle East and the world, in addition to, as we mentioned, its possession of a unique and distinguished astronomical location that makes it a destination for tourists from all over the world, contribute to the State of the Comoros being characterized by cultural and cognitive diversity as a result of the multiplicity of cultures that travelers and tourists carry with them to the country. This country, which makes the country a forum for cultures and cognitive diversity, which enables the population to benefit culturally and cognitively from those arriving to their country, which establishes a state of coexistence among the people of the Comorian community themselves, and the disappearance of internal differences between the people of the Comorian community itself, and it also enables them to introduce their culture to the world. Their customs and traditions and to convey a better picture of the Comorian society.

### **3.1.6. The Continental Shelf of the Comoros Islands from the East**

The marine biosphere is an important strength factor for any country, and thus, with the Comoros islands owning this continental shelf to the east, it gains the right to explore for the riches the sea hides in its depths, as it is known that the Comoros islands possess the best coral reefs in the world.

### **3.1.7. Fish Wealth in the Territorial Waters of the Comoros**

There is no doubt that a maritime state like the Comoros Islands must benefit from the fish wealth that falls within its maritime domain, and thus contribute to strengthening the state's economic strength by exporting fish to the world, and exploiting this wealth, the importance of which may exceed the importance of oil if it is properly exploited and managed.

## **3.2. Weaknesses in Relation to the Geographical Location of the State of the Comoros**

They are the following points:

### **3.2.1. Separation of the Comoros from the Arab World**

The fact that there are no land geographical links between the Comoros and the Arab world leads to weak Arab cohesion between the Comorian community and the rest of

the Arab community in other countries, to the point that today you find among the members of the Arab community those who do not know that the Comoros is one of the Arab countries, despite the activity. What the Comoros country is doing in an attempt to deepen communication between itself and the rest of the countries of the Arab world, this is in the case of peace, but in the case of war, its separation from the Arab world makes the process of supply and assistance difficult and makes it an easy prey for the enemy. [8]

### **3.2.2. The Comoros Islands Are Located on the Oil Transit Line from Arab Countries to the World [9]**

The state's position on this line imposes the necessity of maintaining the security and safety of oil and commercial ships, which in turn leads to the state being preoccupied with this aspect in exchange for neglecting other aspects that are more important to the citizen, such as striving to increase military capacity in order to maintain the security and safety of those ships, as well as Its location makes it the focus of attention of those who want to destabilize the security and stability of the international community and place the burdens of that on the State of the Comoros. In addition, its location still makes it the focus of the covetousness of the major powers. France's adherence to the island of Mayotte, which it considers the Comoros an integral part of its territory, is the greatest evidence of this. that.

### **3.2.3. The Fragmented State of the Comoros Is Surrounded by Water on All Sides**

It makes it easy for colonization by surrounding it from all directions with ships and warships, and if one of its islands is captured, it is difficult to recover it due to the difficulty of transporting supplies and aid to it, if the factors are industrial, but if the factors are natural, such as the occurrence of floods or marine volcanoes that lead to the occurrence Floods cause major damage to its islands if they do not remove them.

### **3.2.4. The Influx of Cultures into the Comoros**

The cultures that flock to it as a result of what is imposed on it by its location may play a negative - negative - role that leads to the deepening of differences and the emergence of movements demanding the preservation of Comorian customs, values and traditions, and may use violence for this, or it may lead to the dissolution of the state's national identity as a result.

### **3.2.5. Possible oil Spill in the Waters of the Comoros**

Since the country is considered a corridor for giant oil tankers from the oil-producing countries represented by the Eastern countries to the oil-consuming countries represented by the Western countries, this may cause the possibility of oil leakage from the tankers that carry the oil into the waters, which leads to the killing of marine life and water pollution, and may cause... The occurrence of larger disasters could be devastating, such as the possibility of an oil tanker exploding, for example.



## 4. The Effect of Geographical Location on the Foreign Policy of the Comoros

The geographical location is one of the most important factors through which each country takes into account its strengths and weaknesses in formulating its foreign policy. Therefore, any ill-considered policy that does not take into account the geographical location of the country in its pursuit of a foreign policy towards another country as an individual case or the international community as a general case may cause... It has the right to do things that it did not take into account, such as occupying part of it, for example, or receiving sanctions that force it to submit to the policies of other countries if it were a landlocked country, for example, and subjected to an economic blockade. Based on this, how does the Comoros country build its foreign policy, taking into account the influence of its geographical location? This is at all levels and in various political, economic and social aspects.

### 4.1. From a Political Standpoint

The geographical location of the Comoros imposes on it to build its foreign policy on the basis of cooperation with the international community in particular and neighboring countries in particular. It is clear that the Comoros gives priority to its foreign policy over its internal state policy. The Comoros is also considered one of the countries that is classified as Within the neutral countries or what are called non-aligned countries [5], and in continuation of the attempt of the State of the Comoros to annex the island of Mayotte, which is occupied by France and refuses to give it up, it continues to exploit any international forum or regional or global conference by calling on the international community to put pressure on France and restore The island of Mayotte, which the Comoros considers an integral part of its territory that should be subject to its sovereignty.

### 4.2. From an Economic Standpoint

The geographical location affects the State of the Comoros more positively than negatively, making the location one of the most important economic tributaries that the State of the Comoros depends on to cover its basic \_ consumer \_ and development requirements, which necessitates it to pursue a balanced foreign policy through which it preserves this resource. It adopts foreign policies to serve the national interest of the state, and currently, in light of the geopolitical conditions that Europe or the West in general is suffering from, it is intensifying its pressure on Western countries by exploiting the geographical location to force France to withdraw from the island of Mayotte and return it to the geography of the State of the Comoros.

### 4.3. From a Social Perspective

The fact that the State of the Comoros is located on the transit zone of international trade between East and West and its distinguished astronomical location makes the State of the

Comoros adopt a foreign policy consistent with the identity of the Comorian society, and flexible with the international community as it represents a meeting place for multiple cultures from different countries. [10]

## 5. Conclusion

A country like the Comoros, with its distinct geographical location, deserves the Comorian government to pay most attention to how to benefit from it by developing strategies and adopting policies that enhance the state's strength at all levels, but this can only be achieved by the state's focus on building an efficient and effective naval and air force. To ensure the security and stability of the state and maritime navigation, so that the state can then accelerate the wheel of progress and development, the State of the Comoros should also maintain a friendly relationship with the countries of the region and neighboring countries, and strive diligently to strengthen the Arab ties between it and the rest of the other Arab countries, as it should In return, the Arab countries should pay more attention to the Comoros country, as it is part of them and separate from its body, and should not turn a blind eye to it. It is a strange irony that an Arab country of such importance is rarely heard about or about its importance.

The bottom line is, "Yes," there are weaknesses represented by the geographical location in addition to the strengths. However, the strengths, if exploited optimally, will reduce the impact of the weaknesses on the state. In addition, the strengths can be exploited by the Comorian people immediately, unlike the weaknesses that either It rarely affects or is either required, let us call it, by weak points of entry into a state of war, or by natural factors that may or may not occur. After this report, we leave the decision to the Comorian people to decide whether to exploit this resource or not?



Figure 4. Flog of the Republic of Comoros.

## ORCID

Abdulrahman Hassan Saleh Mojamil:  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2249-6013>

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

