


Sukhumi

Sukhumi or **Sokhumi** ^[3] (Abkhaz : Аҧсә, *Aqwa* ; Georgian : სოხუმი, [sɔxumi] ( listen) ; Russian : Сухум(и), *Sukhum(i)*) is a city on the Black Sea coast. It is the capital of the breakaway Republic of Abkhazia which has controlled it since the 1992-93 war in Abkhazia , although most of the international community considers it legally part of Georgia .

Sukhumi's history can be traced back to the 6th century BC, when it was settled by Greeks, who named it Dioscurias. During this time and the subsequent Roman period, much of the city disappeared under the Black Sea. The city was named Tskhumi when it became part of the Kingdom of Abkhazia . Contested by local princes, it became part of the Ottoman Empire in the 1570s, where it remained until it was conquered by the Russian Empire in 1810. Following a period of conflict during Russian Civil War , it became part of the Soviet Union , where it was regarded as a holiday resort. As the Soviet Union broke up in the early 1990s, the city suffered significant damage during the Georgian–Abkhazian conflict . The present-day population of 60,000 is only half of the population living there towards the end of Soviet rule.

Naming



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(May 2017) (*Learn how and when to remove this template message*)

In Georgian, the city is known as სოხუმი (*Sokhumi*) or აყუ (*Aqu*),^[4] in Megrelian as აყუიჰა (*Aquijha*),^[5] and in Russian as Сухум (*Sukhum*) or Сухуми (*Sukhumi*). The toponym Sokhumi derives from the Georgian word Tskhomi/Tskhumi, meaning *beech*. It is significant, that "dia" in several dialects of the Georgian language and among them in Megrelian means mother and "skuri" means water.^[6] In Abkhaz, the city is known as Аԥәа (*Aqwa*) which according to native tradition signifies *water*.^[7]

In the ancient Greek sources (Pseudo-Skylax of Kariand- IV c. B. C.) the city is referred to as **Dioscurias** . According to the antique traditions this name originates from the mythical *Dioskouri* , the twin brothers Castor and Pollux , sons of Zeus . It was believed that the town had been established by Castor's and Pollux's coachmen, the Argonauts Telkios and Amphyst. However the names of the town may simply be the Greek comprehension of the old Georgian word combination.

The medieval Georgian sources knew the town as *Tskhumi* (ცხუმი).^{[8][9][10]} Later, under the Ottoman control, the town was known in Turkish as *Suhum-Kale*, which can be derived from the earlier Georgian form Tskhumi or can be read to mean "water-sand fortress".^{[11][12]} Tskhumi in turn is supposed to be derived from the Svan language word for "hot",^[13] or the Georgian word for "hombeam tree".

The ending -i in the above forms represents the Georgian nominative-suffix. The town was initially officially described in Russian as Сухум (*Sukhum*), until 16 August 1936 when this was changed to Сухуми (*Sukhumi*). This remained so until 4 December 1992, when the Supreme Council of Abkhazia restored the original version, that was approved in Russia in autumn 2008, ^[14] even though Сухуми is also still being used.

In English, the most common form today is *Sukhumi*, although *Sokhumi* is increasing in usage and has been adopted by sources including *Encyclopædia Britannica*,^[15] *MSN Encarta*,^[16] Esri^[17] and Google Maps.^[18]

General information


Sukhumi is located on a wide bay of the eastern coast of the Black Sea and serves as a port, rail junction and a holiday resort. It is known for its beaches, sanatoriums, mineral-water spas and semitropical climate. Sukhumi is also an important air link for Abkhazia as the Sukhumi Dranda Airport is located nearby the city. Sukhumi contains a number of small-to-medium size hotels serving chiefly the Russian tourists. Sukhumi botanical garden was established in 1840, one of the oldest botanical gardens in the Caucasus.

The city has a number of research institutes, the Abkhazian State University and the Sukhumi Open Institute. From 1945 to 1954 the city's electron physics laboratory was involved in the Soviet program to develop nuclear weapons.

The city is a member of the International Black Sea Club .^[19]

History



The Sohum-Kale fort in the early 19th century. 

The history of the city began in the mid-6th century BC when an earlier settlement of the second and early first millennia BC, frequented by local Colchian tribes, was replaced by the Milesian Greek colony of **Dioscurias** (Greek : Διοσκουριάς). The city is said to have been so named for the Dioscuri , the twins Castor and Pollux of classical mythology . It became busily engaged in the commerce between Greece and the indigenous tribes, importing wares from many parts of Greece, and exporting local salt and Caucasian timber, linen , and hemp . It was also a prime center of slave trade in Colchis. [20] The city and its surroundings were remarkable for the multitude of languages spoken in its bazaars. [21]

Although the sea made serious inroads upon the territory of Dioscurias, it continued to flourish until its conquest by Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus in the later 2nd century.

Under the Roman emperor Augustus the city assumed the name of **Sebastopolis** ^[22] (Greek : Σεβαστούπολις). But its prosperity was past, and in the 1st century Pliny the Elder described the place as virtually deserted though the town still



continued to exist during the times of Arrian in the 130s. ^[23] The remains of towers and walls of Sebastopolis have been found underwater; on land the lowest levels so far reached by archaeologists are of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. In 542 the Romans evacuated the town and demolished its citadel to prevent it from being captured by Sassanid Iran . In 565, however, the emperor Justinian I restored the fort and Sebastopolis continued to remain one of the Byzantine strongholds in Colchis until being sacked by the Arab conqueror Marwan II in 736.

Afterwards, the town came to be known as **Tskhumi** . ^[13] Restored by the kings of Abkhazia from the Arab devastation, it particularly flourished during the Georgian Golden Age in the 12th–13th centuries, when Tskhumi became a center of traffic with the European maritime powers, particularly with the Republic of Genoa . The Genoese established their short-lived trading factory at Tskhumi early in the 14th century.

The Ottoman navy occupied the town in 1451, but for a short time. Later contested between the princes of Abkhazia and Mingrelia , Tskhumi finally fell to the Turks in the 1570s. The new masters heavily fortified the town and called it **Sohumkale** , with *kale* meaning "fort" but the first part of the name of disputed origin. It may represent Turkish *su* , "water", and *kum* , "sand", but is more likely to be an alteration of its earlier Georgian name. ^[13] At the request of the pro-Russian Abkhazian prince, the town was stormed by the Russian Marines in 1810 and turned, subsequently, into a major outpost in the North West Caucasus. (See Russian conquest of the Caucasus#Black Sea Coast). Sukhumi was declared the seaport in 1847 and was directly annexed to the Russian Empire after the ruling Shervashidze princely dynasty was ousted by the Russian authorities in 1864. During the Russo-Turkish War, 1877–1878 , the town was temporarily controlled by the Ottoman forces and Abkhaz- Adyghe rebels.

Following the Russian Revolution of 1917 , the town and Abkhazia in general were engulfed in the chaos of the Russian Civil War . A short-lived Bolshevik government was suppressed in May 1918 and Sukhumi was incorporated into the Democratic Republic of Georgia as a residence of the autonomous People's Council of Abkhazia and the headquarters of the Georgian governor-general. The Red Army and the local revolutionaries took the city from the Georgian forces on 4 March 1921, and declared Soviet rule. Sukhumi functioned as the capital of the "Union treaty" Abkhaz Soviet Socialist Republic associated with the Georgian SSR from 1921 until 1931, when it became the capital of the Abkhazian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Georgian SSR. By 1989, Sukhumi had 110,000 inhabitants and was one of the most prosperous cities of Georgia. Many holiday dachas for Soviet leaders were situated there.

Beginning with the 1989 riots , Sukhumi was a centre of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict , and the city was severely damaged during the 1992–1993 War . During the war, the city and its environs suffered almost daily air strikes and artillery shelling, with heavy civilian casualties. ^[24] On 27 September 1993 the battle for Sukhumi was concluded by a full-scale campaign of ethnic cleansing against its majority Georgian population (see Sukhumi Massacre), including members of the pro-Georgian Abkhazian government (Zhiuli

Shartava , Raul Eshba and others) and mayor of Sukhumi Guram Gabiskiria . Although the city has been relatively peaceful and partially rebuilt, it is still suffering the after-effects of the war, and it has not regained its earlier ethnic diversity. Its population in 2003 was 43,716, compared to about 120,000 in 1989. ^[25]

Population

Demographics

Historic population figures for Sukhumi, split out by ethnicity, based on population censuses: ^[26]

Year	Abkhaz	Armenians	Estonians	Georgians	Greeks	Russians	Turkish	Ukrainians	Total
1897 Census	1.8% (144)	13.5% (1,083)	0.4% (32)	11.9% (951)	14.3% (1,143)	0.0% (1)	2.7% (216)		7,998
1926 Census	3.1% (658)	9.4% (2,023)	0.3% (63)	11.2% (2,425)	10.7% (2,298)	23.7% (5,104)	---	10.4% (2,234)	21,568
1939 Census	5.5% (2,415)	9.8% (4,322)	0.5% (206)	19.9% (8,813)	11.3% (4,990)	41.9% (18,580)	---	4.6% (2,033)	44,299
1959 Census	5.6% (3,647)	10.5% (6,783)	---	31.1% (20,110)	4.9% (3,141)	36.8% (23,819)	---	4.3% (2,756)	64,730
1979 Census	9.9% (10,766)	10.9% (11,823)	---	38.3% (41,507)	6.5% (7,069)	26.4% (28,556)	---	3.4% (3,733)	108,337
1989 Census	12.5% (14,922)	10.3% (12,242)	---	41.5% (49,460)	---	21.6% (25,739)	---	---	119,150
2003 Census	65.3% (24,603)	12.7% (5,565)	0.1% (65)	4.0% (1,761)	1.5% (677)	16.9% (8,902)	---	1.6% (712)	43,716
2011 Census	67.3% (42,603)	9.8% (6,192)	---	2.8% (1,755)	1.0% (645)	14.8% (9,288)	---	---	62,914

Religion

Ancient Sebastopolis was a Latin bishopric, but the diocese ceased to exist with the advent of Orthodoxy.

Titular see

The diocese of **Sebastopolis in Abasgia** (meaning 'in Abchasia ') was nominally restored as a Catholic Latin.

It has had the following incumbents, but is now vacant:

- Celestino Annibale Cattaneo, Capuchin Franciscans (O.F.M. Cap.) (1936.03.03 – 1946.02.15)

Lowest elevation	5 m (16 ft)
Population (2011)	
 • Total	62,914 ^[2]
Time zone	MSK (UTC+4)
Postal code	384900
Area code(s)	+7 840 22x-xx-xx
Vehicle registration	ABH



Colchian Coin of Dioscurias, late 2nd century BC. Obverse: Two pilei surmounted by stars Reverse: Thyrus , ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΙΑΔΟΣ



Sukhumi botanical garden



Sukhumi in 1912. Early color photo by Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii

- Henri-Édouard Dutoit (1949.04.23 – 1953.04.17)
- Luigi Cossio (1955.08.12 – 1956.01.03)
- Giuseppe Paupini (1956.02.02 – 1969.04.28), later cardinal

Main sights

Sukhumi houses a number of historical monuments, notably the Besleti Bridge built during the reign of queen Tamar of Georgia in the 12th century. It also retains visible vestiges of the defunct monuments, including the Roman walls, the medieval Castle of Bagrat , several towers of the Great Abkhazian Wall constructed by the early modern Mingrelian and Abkhazian princes amid their territorial disputes; the 14th-century Genoese fort and the 18th-century Ottoman fortress. The 11th century Kamani Church (12 kilometres (7 miles) from Sukhumi) is erected, according to tradition, over the tomb of Saint John Chrysostom . Some 22 km (14 mi) from Sukhumi lies New Athos with the ruins of the medieval city of Anacopia. The Neo-Byzantine New Athos Monastery was constructed here in the 1880s on behest of Tsar Alexander III of Russia .

Northward in the mountains is the Voronya Cave , the deepest in the world, with a depth of 2,140 meters. ^[27]

Climate

Sukhumi has a humid subtropical climate (Köppen *Cfa*), that is almost cool enough in summer to be an oceanic climate .



Climate data for Sukhumi													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	8 (46)	9 (48)	12 (54)	16 (61)	19 (66)	23 (73)	25 (77)	26 (79)	23 (73)	19 (66)	15 (59)	11 (52)	17.2 (62.8)
Average low °C (°F)	2 (36)	2 (36)	5 (41)	8 (46)	12 (54)	17 (63)	19 (66)	19 (66)	15 (59)	11 (52)	7 (45)	3 (37)	10 (50.1)
Average precipitation mm (inches)	137 (5.39)	113 (4.45)	135 (5.31)	123 (4.84)	115 (4.53)	127 (5)	100 (3.94)	123 (4.84)	127 (5)	121 (4.76)	133 (5.24)	152 (5.98)	1,506 (59.28)
Average rainy days	17	15	16	15	12	11	10	10	10	12	16	16	160
Source # 1: Weatherbase ^[28]													
Source # 2: Georgia Travel Climate Information ^[29]													

Administration

On 2 February 2000, President Ardzinba dismissed temporary Mayor Leonid Osia and appointed Leonid Lolua in his stead. ^[30] Lolua was reappointed on 10 May 2001 following the March 2001 local elections. ^[31]

On 5 November 2004, in the heated aftermath of the 2004 presidential election , president Vladislav Ardzinba appointed head of the Gulripsh district assembly Adgur Kharazia as acting mayor. During his first speech he called upon the two leading candidates, Sergei Bagapsh and Raul Khadjimba , to both withdraw. ^[32]

On 16 February 2005, after his election as President, Bagapsh replaced Kharazia with Astamur Adleiba , who had been Minister for Youth, Sports, Resorts and Tourism until December 2004. ^[33] In the 11 February 2007 local elections, Adleiba successfully defended his seat in the Sukhumi city assembly and was thereupon reappointed mayor by Bagapsh on 20 March. ^[34]

In April 2007, while President Bagapsh was in Moscow for medical treatment, the results of an investigation into corruption within the Sukhumi city administration were made public. The investigation found that large sums had been embezzled and upon his return, on 2 May, Bagapsh fired Adleiba along with his deputy Boris Achba , the head of the Sukhumi's finance department Konstantin Tuzhba and the head of the housing department David Jinjolia . ^[35] On 4 June Adleiba paid back to the municipal budget 200,000 rubels. ^[36] and on 23 July, he resigned from the Sukhumi city council, citing health reasons and the need to travel abroad for medical treatment. ^[37]

On 15 May 2007, president Bagapsh released Alias Labakhua as First Deputy Chairman of the State Customs Committee and appointed him acting Mayor of Sukhumi, a post temporarily fulfilled by former Vice-Mayor Anzor Kortua . On 27 May Labakhua appointed Vadim Cherkezia as Deputy Chief of staff. ^[38] On 2 September, Labakhua won the by-election in constituency No. 21, which had become necessary after Adleiba relinquished his seat. Adleiba was the only candidate and voter turnout was 34%, higher than the 25% required. ^[39] Since Adleiba was now a member of the city assembly, president Bagapsh could permanently appoint him Mayor of Sukhumi on 18 September. ^[40]

Following the May 2014 Revolution and the election of Raul Khajimba as President, he on 22 October dismissed Labakhua and again appointed (as acting Mayor) Adgur Kharazia , who at that point was Vice Speaker of the People's Assembly . ^[41] Kharazia won the 4 April 2015 by-election to the City Council in constituency no. 3 unopposed, ^[42] and was confirmed as mayor by Khajimba on 4 May. ^[43]

List of Mayors

#	Name	From		Until		President	Comments
Chairmen of the (executive committee of the) City Soviet:							
	Vladimir Mikanba	1975	[44]	1985	[44]		
	D. Gubaz	<=1989		>=1989			
	Nodar Khashba	1991	[44]				First time
	Guram Gabiskiria	1992		27 September 1993			
Heads of the City Administration:							
	Nodar Khashba	1993	[44]	26 November 1994		Vladislav Ardzinba	Second time
		26 November 1994		1995	[44]		
	Garri Aiba	1995		2000			
	<i>Leonid Osia</i>			2 February 2000	[30]		Acting Mayor
	Leonid Lolua	2 February 2000	[30]	5 November 2004	[32]		
	<i>Adgur Kharazia</i>	5 November 2004	[32]	16 February 2005	[33]		Acting Mayor, first time
	Astamur Adleiba	16 February 2005	[33]	2 May 2007	[35]	Sergei Bagapsh	
	<i>Anzor Kortua</i>	May 2007		15 May 2007			Acting Mayor
	Alias Labakhua	15 May 2007		29 May 2011		Alexander Ankvab	
		29 May 2011		1 June 2014			
		1 June 2014		22 October 2014			
	Adgur Kharazia	22 October 2014		Present		Raul Khajimba	Second time

Transport

The city is served by several trolleybus and bus routes. Sukhumi is connected to other Abkhazian towns by bus routes.

There is a railway station in Sukhumi, that has a daily train to Moscow via Sochi .

Babushara Airport now handles only local flights due to the disputed status of Abkhazia.



International relations

See also: List of twin towns and sister cities in Georgia

Twin towns — Sister cities

Sukhumi is twinned with the following cities:

- Ufa , Russia
- Krasnodar , Russia
- Tiraspol , Transnistria
- Cherkessk , Russia
- Podolsk , Russia ^[45]
- Volgograd , Russia
- Grozny , Russia
- Stepanakert , Nagorno-Karabakh Republic
- Arkhangelsk , Russia ^[46]
- Nizhny Novgorod , Russia
- Sant'Antioco , Italy ^[47]^[48]
- Side , Turkey ^[49]

See also

- Sukhumi District
- List of twin towns and sister cities in Georgia

References

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Sources and external links

- GigaCatholic for the titular see, linking to incumbent biographies
- UNOMIG photo gallery of Sukhumi
- News from FM Radio Abkhazia

Administrative divisions of Abkhazia		
Districts	Gagra · Gali · Gudauta · Gulripshi · Ochamchira · Sukhumi · Tkvarcheli	
Cities	Sukhumi	
Towns	Gagra · Gali · Gudauta · New Athos · Ochamchire · Pitsunda · Tkvarcheli	
Other settlements	Adzyubzha · Agubedia · Avadhara · Baslaku · Bedia · Bzipi · Chkhalta · Chuburkhindji · Gulripshi · Guma · Leselidze · Ilori · Kvemo Barghebi · Labra · Lykhny · Myussera · Pskhu · Psou · Gantiadi · Merkheuli · Mokvi	
See also: Administrative divisions of Georgia		
Cities, towns and townlets in Georgia		
Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia	Sokhumi · Akhali Atoni · Gagra · Gali · Gudauta · Ochamchire · Tkvarcheli · <i>Bichvinta · Gantiadi · Gulripshi · Leselidze · Miusera</i>	
Autonomous Republic of Adjara	Batumi · Kobuleti · <i>Makhinjauri · Chakvi · Ochkhauri · Keda · Khelvachauri · Shuakhevi · Khulo</i>	
Guria	Ozurgeti · Lanchkhuti · <i>Chokhatauri · Kveda Nasakirali · Laituri · Naruja · Ureki</i>	
Imereti	Kutaisi · Chiatura · Baghdati · Khoni · Sachkhere · Samtredia · Terjola · Tkibuli · Tsqaltubo · Vani · Zestaponi · <i>Kharagauli · Kulashi · Shorapani</i>	
Kakheti	Telavi · Akhmeta · Dedoplistsqaro · Gurjaani · Lagodekhi · Sagarejo · Signaghi · Kvareli · Tsnori · <i>Mirzaani</i>	
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Mtskheta · Dusheti · Akhalgori · Sioni · Stepantsminda · Tianeti · Zhinvali	

Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	Zugdidi · Abasha · Anaklia · Jvari · Khobi · Martvili · Poti · Senaki · Tsalenjikha · <i>Chkhorotsqu</i> · <i>Mestia</i> · <i>Ushguli</i>
Samtskhe-Javakheti	Akhalsikhe · Akhalkalaki · Borjomi · Ninotsminda · Vale · <i>Abastumani</i> · <i>Adigeni</i> · <i>Akhaldaba</i> · <i>Aspindza</i> · <i>Bakuriani</i> · <i>Bakurianis Andeziti</i> · <i>Tsagveri</i>
Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti	Ambrolauri · Oni · Tsageri · <i>Kharistvala</i> · <i>Kvaisa</i> · <i>Lentekhi</i>
Kvemo Kartli	Rustavi · Bolnisi · Gardabani · Dmanisi · Tetritskaro · Marneuli · Tsalka · <i>Bediani</i> · <i>Kazreti</i> · <i>Manglisi</i> · <i>Shaumiani</i> · <i>Tamarisi</i> · <i>Trialeti</i>
Shida Kartli	Gori · Kaspi · Kareli · Tskhinvali · Khashuri · <i>Agara</i> · <i>Java</i> · <i>Surami</i> · <i>Kornisi</i>
Cities with local government	Tbilisi · Batumi · Kutaisi · Rustavi · Gori · Zugdidi · Poti · Telavi · Akhalsikhe · Ozurgeti · Mtskheta · Ambrolauri
Capital city	Tbilisi

Capitals of Asia				
Dependent territories and states with limited recognition are in <i>italics</i>				
North and Central Asia	South Asia	Southeast Asia	West and Southwest Asia	
Ashgabat , Turkmenistan	Kabul , Afghanistan	Bandar Seri Begawan , Brunei	Abu Dhabi , United Arab Emirates	Sana'a , Yemen
Astana , Kazakhstan *	Dhaka , Bangladesh	Bangkok , Thailand	Amman , Jordan	Stepanakert , Nagorno-Karabakh *
Bishkek , Kyrgyzstan	Diego Garcia , BIOT (UK)	Dili , East Timor	Ankara , Turkey *	Sukhumi , Abkhazia *
Dushanbe , Tajikistan	Islamabad , Pakistan	Flying Fish Cove , Christmas Island (Australia)	Baghdad , Iraq	Tbilisi , Georgia *
Moscow , Russia *	Kathmandu , Nepal	Hanoi , Vietnam	Baku , Azerbaijan *	Tehran , Iran
Tashkent , Uzbekistan	Kotte , Sri Lanka	Jakarta , Indonesia *	Beirut , Lebanon	Tskhinvali , South Ossetia *
East Asia	Malé , Maldives	Kuala Lumpur , Malaysia	Cairo , Egypt *	Yerevan , Armenia *
Beijing , China	New Delhi , India	Manila , Philippines		
Hong Kong , Hong Kong (China)	Thimphu , Bhutan	Naypyidaw , Myanmar		
Macau , Macau (China)		Phnom Penh , Cambodia		
Pyongyang , North Korea		Central Area , Singapore		
Seoul , South Korea		Vientiane , Laos		
Taipei , Taiwan (ROC)		West Island , Cocos (Keeling) Islands (Australia)		
Tokyo , Japan				
Ulaanbaatar , Mongolia				
* Transcontinental country .				
† See: Positions on Jerusalem . Both Israel and Palestinians claim Jerusalem as capital. Jerusalem contains the Israeli parliament and almost all Israeli government ministries. Tel Aviv contains most foreign embassies in Israel; Ramallah is the administrative seat of the Palestinian Authority.				
Greek colonies of the Black Sea coast				
North	Borysthènes · Charax · Chersonesus · Dioscurias · Eupatoria · Gorgippia · Hermonassa · Kepoi · Kimmerikon · Myrmekion · Nikonion · Nymphaion · Olbia · Panticapaion · Phanagoria · Pityus · Tanais · Theodosia · Tyras · Tyritake			
South	Amisos · Heraclea Pontica · Kerasous · Trapezous			

Authority control	GND : 4257217-4
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Kabul

For other places with the same name, see Kabul (disambiguation).

Kabul (Pashto / Dari : کابل , *Kābol* , pronounced [ˈkʰɒːbul] ; English : / ˈ k ɑː b ʊ l /) is the capital of Afghanistan as well as its largest city , located in the eastern section of the country. According to latest estimates, the population of the city is about 4.6 million, ^[1] which includes all the major ethnic groups . ^[2] Rapid urbanization had made Kabul the world's 64th largest city ^[3] and the fifth fastest-growing city in the world. ^[4]



Kabul is said to be over 3,500 years old, mentioned since at least the time of the Achaemenid Empire . The city is at a strategic location along the trade routes of South and Central Asia , and a key location of the ancient Silk Road . It has been part of the Achaemenids , Seleucids , Mauryans , Kushans , Kabul Shahis , Saffarids , Ghaznavids , and Ghurids .^[5] Later, it was controlled by the Mughal Empire until finally becoming part of the Durrani Empire in 1747.^[6] The city is located high up in a narrow valley between the Hindu Kush mountains.

Kabul became the capital of Afghanistan during the reign of Timur Shah Durrani (reigned 1772–1793). In the early 19th century, the British occupied the city but were compelled to abandon it. Relations between Afghanistan and Great Britain were later established. The city was occupied by the Soviets in 1979 but they too abandoned it after the 1988 Geneva Accords were signed. A civil war in the 1990s between various rebel groups destroyed much of the city, resulting in many casualties.^[7]

Since the removal of the Taliban from power in late 2001, the city gradually began rebuilding itself with assistance by the international community. Despite the many terrorist attacks by anti-state elements, the city is growing and developing. The city is divided into about 18 districts .

Kابل کابل

Metropolis



Toponymy

Kabul (/ˈkɑːbəl, ˈkɑːbuːl/; Pashto : کابل *Kābəl* , IPA: [kɑˈbəl] ; Persian : کابل *Kābol* , IPA: [kɒˈbɒl]),^[8] also spelled **Cabool** , **Caubul** , **Kabol** , or **Cabul** .

History

See also: History of Kabul and Timeline of Kabul

Antiquity

The word "*Kubhā*" is mentioned in the Rigveda (circa 1500–1200 BCE), one of the four canonical sacred texts (śruti) of Hinduism, and the Avesta , the primary collection of sacred texts of Zoroastrianism , refers to the Kabul River .^[9] The Rigveda praises it as an ideal city, a vision of paradise set in the mountains.^[10] The area in which the Kabul valley sits was ruled by the Medes before falling to the Achaemenids . There is a reference to a settlement called *Kabura* by the rulers of the Achaemenid Empire.^[9] It became a center of Zoroastrianism followed by Buddhism and Hinduism . Alexander the Great explored the Kabul valley after his conquest of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 BC but no record has been made of Kabul, which may have been only a small town and not worth writing about.^[5] The region became part of the Seleucid Empire but was later given to the Indian Maurya Empire .

"Kābul was formerly governed by princes of Turk lineage. It is said that they were originally from Tibet . The first of them was named Barhūgīn ... and the kingdom continued with his children for sixty generations. ... The last of them was a Katormān, and his minister was Kalar, a Brāhman . This minister was favored by fortune, and he found in the earth treasures which augmented his power. Fortune at the same time turned her back upon his master. The Katormān's thoughts and actions were evil, so that many complaints reached the minister, who loaded him with chains, and imprisoned him for his correction. In the end the minister yielded to the temptation of becoming sole master, and he had wealth sufficient to remove all obstacles. So he established himself on the throne. After him reigned the Brāhman(s) Samand, then Kamlūa, then Bhīm, then Jaipāl , then Anandpāl , then Narda-janpāl, who was killed in A.H. 412. His son, Bhimpāl, succeeded him, after the lapse of five years, and under him the sovereignty of Hind became extinct, and no descendant remained to light a fire on the hearth. These princes, notwithstanding the extent of their dominions, were endowed with excellent qualities, faithful to their engagements, and gracious towards their inferiors..."^[19]

— Abu Rayhan Biruni , 978–1048 AD

The Kabul rulers built a long defensive wall around the city to protect it from enemy raids. This historical wall has survived until today. It was briefly held by Tibetan Empire between 801 and 815.

Islamization and Mongol invasion

Further information: Islamic conquest of Afghanistan

"Kābul has a castle celebrated for its strength, accessible only by one road. In it there are Musulmāns , and it has a town, in which are infidels from Hind ." ^[21]

— Istahkrī , 921 AD

Over the following centuries, the city was successively controlled by the Samanids , Ghaznavids , Ghurids , Khwarazmshahs , Qarlughids , and Khiljis . In the 13th century, the Mongol horde passed through and massively destroyed the area. Report of a massacre in the close by Bamiyan is recorded around this period, where the entire population of the valley was annihilated by the Mongol troops as a revenge for the death of Genghis Khan's grandson. During the Mongol invasion, many natives of Afghanistan fled to India where some established dynasties in Delhi . It was also ruled by Chagatai Khanate and Kartids , were vassals of Ilkhanate till dissolution of latter in 1335.

Following the era of the Khilji dynasty in 1333, the famous Moroccan scholar Ibn Battuta was visiting Kabul and wrote:

"In the country of Kābul there are many and various tribes. In the city and the greater part of the villages, the population consists of Tājiks (called " Sarts " by Babur). Many other of the villages and districts are occupied by Pashāis , Parāchis , Tājiks, Berekis, and Afghans . In the hill-country to the west, reside the Hazāras and Nukderis. Among the Hazāra and Nukderi tribes, there are some who speak the Moghul language. In the hill-country to the north-east lies Kaferistān , such as Kattor and Gebrek. To the south is Afghanistān ... There are eleven or twelve different languages spoken in Kābul: Arabic , Persian , Tūrki , Moghuli, Hindi , Afghani , Pashāi , Parāchi, Geberi, Bereki, and Lamghāni..."^[23]

— Babumama , 1525

Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat , a poet from Hindustan who visited at the time wrote: *"Dine and drink in Kabul: it is mountain, desert, city, river and all else."* It was from here that Babur began his 1526 conquest of Hindustan, which was ruled by the Afghan Lodi dynasty and began east of the Indus River in what is present-day Pakistan. Babur loved Kabul due to the fact that he lived in it for 20 years and the people were loyal to him, including its weather that he was used to. His wish to be buried in Kabul was finally granted. The inscription on his tomb contains the famous Persian couplet , which states: اگر فردوس روی زمین است همین است و همین است و همین است (If there is a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this!)^[24]

Durrani Empire

Further information: Durrani dynasty and Barakzai dynasty

Nine years after Nader Shah and his forces invaded and occupied the city as part of the more easternmost parts of his Empire, he was assassinated by his own officers, causing the rapid disintegration of it. Ahmad Shah Durrani , commander of 4,000 Abdali Afghans , asserted Pashtun rule in 1747 and further expanded his new Afghan Empire . His ascension to power marked the beginning of Afghanistan. His son Timur Shah Durrani , after inheriting power, transferred the capital of Afghanistan from Kandahar to Kabul in



From top left to right: Overview of a section of the city; Presidential Palace ; Square; Abdul Rahman Mosque ; Gardens of Babur ; Wazir Akbar Khan ; Serena Hotel



Coordinates: 34°32′N 69°10′E

Country	 Afghanistan
Province	Kabul
No. of districts	22
Government	
 • Mayor	Abdullah Habibzai
Area	
 • Metropolis	275 km ² (106 sq mi)
 • Metro	425 km ² (164 sq mi)
Elevation	1,791 m (5,876 ft)
Population (2015)	
 • Metropolis	4.6 million
 • Demonym	Kabuli ^[1]
Time zone	Afghanistan Standard Time (UTC+4:30)
Area code(s)	(+93) 20

1776,^[25] and used Peshawar in what is today Pakistan as the winter capital. Timur Shah died in 1793 and was succeeded by his son Zaman Shah Durrani . Kabul's first visitor from Europe was Englishman George Forster , who described 18th-century Kabul as "the best and cleanest city in South Asia".^[10]

In 1826, the kingdom was claimed by Dost Mohammad Khan but in 1839 Shujah Shah Durrani was re-installed with the help of British India during the First Anglo-Afghan War . In 1841 a local uprising resulted in the killing of the British resident and loss of mission in Kabul and the 1842 retreat from Kabul to Jalalabad . In 1842 the British returned to Kabul, plundering Bala Hissar in revenge before fleeing back to British India (now Pakistan). Akbar Khan took to the throne from 1842 to 1845 and was followed by Dost Mohammad Khan.

The British-led Indian forces invaded in 1879 when Kabul was under Sher Ali Khan 's rule, as the Afghan king initially refused to accept British diplomatic mission and later the British residents were again massacred. The British partially destroyed Bala Hissar fortress before retreating to British India.

20th century Kabul

In the early 20th century King Amanullah Khan rose to power. His reforms included electricity for the city and schooling for girls. He drove a Rolls-Royce , and lived in the famous Darul Aman Palace . In 1919, after the Third Anglo-Afghan War , Amanullah announced Afghanistan's independence from foreign affairs at Eidgah Mosque . In 1929 King Ammanullah left Kabul due to a local uprising orchestrated by Habibullah Kalakani . After nine months rule, Kalakani was imprisoned and executed by King Nader Khan . Three years later, in 1933, the new king was assassinated by a Hazara student Abdul Khaliq during an award ceremony inside a school in Kabul. The throne was left to his 19-year-old son, Zahir Shah , who became the last King of Afghanistan .

During the inter-war period France and Germany worked to help develop the country and maintained high schools and lycees in the capital, providing education for the children of the city's elite families.^[26] Kabul University opened in 1932 and by the 1960s western educated Afghans made up the majority of teachers.^[27] By the 1960s the majority of instructors at the university had degrees from Western universities.^[27]

When Zahir Shah took power in 1933 Kabul had the only 10 kilometers (6 miles) of rail in the country and the country had few internal telegraphs, phone lines or roads. Zahir turned to the Japanese, Germans and Italians for help developing a modern transportation and communication network.^[28] A radio tower built by the Germans in 1937 in Kabul allowing instant communication with outlying villages.^[29] A national bank and state cartels were organized to allow for economic modernization.^[30] Textile mills, power plants, carpet and furniture factories were also built in Kabul, providing much needed manufacturing and infrastructure.^[30]

In 1955, the Soviet Union forwarded \$100 million in credit to Afghanistan, which financed public transportation, airports, a cement factory, mechanized bakery, a five-lane highway from Kabul to the Soviet border and dams.^[31]

In the 1960s the first Marks & Spencer store in Central Asia was built in the city. Kabul Zoo was inaugurated in 1967, which was maintained with the help of visiting German zoologists . Many foreigners began flocking to Kabul and the nation's tourism industry was starting to pick up speed. Kabul experimented with liberalization, dropping laws requiring women to wear burkas , restrictions on speech and assembly were loosened which led to student politics in the capital.^[32] Socialist, Maoist and liberal factions demonstrated daily in Kabul while more traditional Islamic leaders spoke out against the failure to aid the Afghan countryside.^[32] From the 1960s until the late 1970s, Kabul was a major stop on the famous Hippie trail .^[33]



Kabul in 1976

In 1969 a religious uprising at the Pul-e Khishti Mosque protested the Soviet Union's increasing influence over Afghan politics and religion . This protest ended in the arrest of many of its organizers, including Mawlana Faizani , a popular Islamic scholar. In the early 1970s Radio Kabul began to broadcast in other languages besides Pashto which helped to unify those minorities that often felt marginalized. However, this was put to a stop after Daoud Khan 's revolution in 1973.^[34] In July 1973, while King Zahir Shah was visiting Europe, his cousin Daoud Khan who served as Prime Minister launched a coup d'état and took over power. This was supported by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a pro-Soviet political party. Daoud named himself President and planned to institute reforms.^[35] The BBC has described the period before the April 1978 Revolution as an era when different ethnic groups of Afghanistan lived together harmoniously, intermarried and mixed socially.^[10]

By 1975, the young Ahmad Shah Massoud and his followers initiated an uprising in Panjshir but were forced to flee to neighboring Pakistan where they received recruitment from Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to create unrest in Afghanistan with the help of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence . It is claimed that Bhutto paved the way for the April 1978 Saur Revolution in Kabul by making

Daoud spread his armed forces to the countryside. "To launch this plan, Bhutto recruited and trained a group of Afghans in the Bala-Hesar of Peshawar , in Pakistan's North-west Frontier Province . Among these young men were Massoud, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar , and other members of Jawanan-e Musulman. Massoud's mission to Bhutto was to create unrest in northern Afghanistan. It served Massoud's interests, which were apparently opposition to the Soviets and independence for Afghanistan. Later, after Massoud and Hekmatyar had a terrible falling-out over Massoud's opposition to the terrorist tactics and methods, Massoud overthrew from Jawanan-e Musulman. He joined Rabani 's newly created Afghan political party, Jamiat-i-Islami , in exile in Pakistan."^[36]

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

Further information: Soviet war in Afghanistan

On April 28, 1978, President Daoud and his family along with many of his supporters were assassinated in Kabul. Pro-Soviet PDPA under Hafizullah Amin seized power and slowly began to institute reforms.^[37] Private businesses were nationalized in the Soviet manner.^[38] Education was modified into the Soviet model, with lessons focusing on teaching Russian, Leninism-Marxism and learning of other countries belonging to the Soviet bloc.^[38] Foreign-backed rebel groups and army deserters took up arms in the name of Islam.^[38]

In February 1979, U.S. Ambassador Adolph Dubs was murdered after Afghan security forces burst in on his kidnappers. In neighboring Pakistan, President Zulfikar Bhutto was executed in April 1979. In September 1979 Afghan President Nur Muhammad Taraki was assassinated by a team of Soviet Spetsnaz inside the Tajbeg Palace in Kabul.^[39] On December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and Kabul was heavily occupied by Soviet Armed Forces . Following this invasion, Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq



The Islamic conquest of Afghanistan began from Herat , which was one of the important cities of Khorasan , and made its way to Kabul in the late 600's.



Shujah Shah Durrani , the last Durrani King , sitting at his court inside the Bala Hissar .



Afghan men and women in the 1920s.



Men and women entering a public transport bus in the 1950s.

chaired a meeting in Islamabad and was told by several cabinet members to refrain from interfering in Afghanistan, owing to the vastly superior military power of the Soviet Union. ^[40] However, Zia-ul-Haq, fearing that the Soviets may be advancing into Pakistan, particularly Balochistan, made no secret about his intentions of aiding the mujahideen rebel groups. During this meeting, Director-General of the ISI Akhtar Abdur Rahman advocated for the idea of covert operation in Afghanistan by arming the Islamic extremists. ^[40] General Rahman was heard loudly saying: " *Kabul must burn! Kabul must burn!* ", ^[41] and mastered the idea of proxy war in Afghanistan. ^[40] President Zia-ul-Haq authorised this operation under General Rahman, and it was later merged with Operation Cyclone, a programme funded by the United States.

The Soviets turned the city of Kabul into their command center during the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Kabul was considered moderately safe during that period, as fighting was mostly in the countryside and in other major cities. Kabul was still economically active and women made up 40% of the workforce. ^[42] However the city was not necessarily calm. Political crime, such as assassinations of PDPA party members and guerilla attacks on military and government targets were quite common. The Soviet Embassy, for example, was attacked 4 times with arms fire in the first five years of the war. In 1983, a report from *Izvestia* said that most public places such as hospitals and state banks had "people with guns in their hands", which was not the case before 1979. A Western correspondent revisiting Kabul in December 1983 after a year, said that the city was "converted into a fortress bristling with weapons", suggesting the increasing sight of guns. ^[43]

But the city's image wasn't negative in everyone's view. American diplomat Charles Dunbar said that the Soviet troops' presence was "surprisingly modest". He said in a July 1983 article that whilst Soviet troops are a common sight, they "do not give the impression of invaders who are enforcing their occupation at the point of a bayonet". Soviet men and women were very common in the city's shopping roads, with the large availability of Western products. ^[44]

An December 1983 article from *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, where the author stayed two weeks in the city, said that the Soviet soldiers had a friendly atmosphere in which they would greet friends and have a chat with the population. ^[45] Most Soviet civilians (numbering between 8,000 and 10,000) lived in the north eastern Makroyan (*microraion*) suburb, in an apartment housing complex. It was surrounded by barbed-wire and armed tanks, for their safety. The residents were often unsafe when walking through the streets, receiving verbal abuse, rude gestures and even kidnappings from anti-PDPA/anti-Soviet Afghan civilians. Life for PDPA politicians and their families were also insecure. ^[46] The city's population increased from around 500,000 in 1978 to 2 million in 1988, ^[47] due to rural refugees but also the return of Afghan refugees from neighboring Pakistan and Iran under President Najibullah, who came into power in 1985.

Civil war and Taliban regime

Main articles: Civil war in Afghanistan (1989–1992) and Civil war in Afghanistan (1992–1996)

After the fall of Najibullah's ^[36] Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in April 1992, leaders of the different mujahideen factions were unable to form a government. Despite the 1992 Peshawar Accords, fighting started as Hekmatyar's party refused to sign the accords and started shelling the city for power. This marked the start of a dark period of the city, in which over 50,000 civilians were killed. About 80 percent of the city was devastated and destroyed by 1996. ^[48]^[49]

The city suffered heavily under a bombardment campaign between rival militias. Its geographic location in a narrow valley made it an easy target from rockets fired by militias who based themselves in the surrounding mountains. Initially the factions in the city aligned to fight off Hekmatyar's forces, but diplomacy inside the capital quickly broke down. ^[50] For the following two years in particular, much of Kabul would be laid to waste, the majority of infrastructure destroyed, and a massive exodus of the population leaving to the countryside or abroad. In December 1992, the last of the 86 city trolley buses in Kabul came to a halt because of the conflict. A system of 800 public buses continued to provide transportation services to the city. By 1993 electricity and water in the city was completely out.

Additionally to the bombardment campaign conducted by Hekmatyar and Dostum, tension between the Shi'a Hazara forces of Abdul Ali Mazari and the Wahabi Ittihad-i Islami of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf soon escalated into a second violent conflict. The fighting between the two factions quickly took on aspects of "ethnic cleansing". ^[51] One such example was the Afshar Operation in 1993, in which many ethnic Hazara and Pashtun civilians were murdered.

In January 1994, Dostum joined an alliance with Hekmatyar and conducted bombardment of Kabul during that period, but were eventually repelled by Massoud's forces who also bombarded the city to gain control. ^[52] In late 1994, bombardment of the capital came to a temporary halt. ^[53]^[54]^[55] These forces took steps to restore law and order. Courts started to work again, convicting individuals inside government troops who had committed crimes. ^[56] Massoud tried to initiate a nationwide political process with the goal of national consolidation and democratic elections, also inviting the Taliban to join the process but the idea was rejected by them. ^[57] By 1995 the university opened its doors once again.

The Taliban started shelling Kabul in early 1995 but were repelled at first by Massoud's forces. ^[54] Amnesty International, referring to the Taliban offensive, wrote in a 1995 report that "This is the first time in several months that Kabul civilians have become the targets of rocket attacks and shelling aimed at residential areas in the city." ^[54]

On September 26, 1996, as the Taliban prepared for another major offensive, Massoud ordered a full retreat from Kabul and fled north. ^[58] The next day the Taliban seized Kabul and established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They imposed a strict form of Sharia (Islamic law), restricting women from work and education. ^[59] They also conducted amputations against common thieves. Their hit-squads from the infamous "Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice" watched the streets conducting public beatings of people. ^[59]

The al-Qaeda of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri became a state within the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, with bin Laden controlling Kabul and the eastern city of Jalalabad. ^[60]

During the hardline Taliban regime, Kabul became a ruined city, with most infrastructure already been destroyed, many residents had long left, poverty levels were high, there was little to no education or public services, and its strict laws meant there were no entertainment or other media allowed. The regime's lack of interest in development meant that the city remained barren for years. On a positive note the Taliban's rule, which would last for five years, made the city calm after years of war between different warlords.

21st century

Further information: Presidency of Hamid Karzai and List of terrorist attacks in Kabul since 2008



The day after the April 1978 Saur Revolution



Kabul in 1982 during the Soviet-Afghan War



A section of Kabul during the civil war in 1993.

In November 2001, the Northern Alliance captured Kabul after the Taliban had abandoned it. A month later a new government under President Hamid Karzai began to assemble. In the meantime, a NATO -led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was deployed in Afghanistan. The war-torn city began to see some positive development as many expatriate Afghans returned to the country. The city's population grew from about 500,000 in 2001 to over 3 million in recent years. Many foreign embassies re-opened.

As of 2014, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have been in charge of security in and around the city. Kabul is periodically the scene of deadly suicide bombings carried out by the Haqqani network , the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province , the Taliban's Quetta Shura , Hezbi Islami , al-Qaeda, and other anti-state groups.^{[61][62][63][64]} Government employees, soldiers and ordinary civilians have all been targets of attacks.^{[65][66][67][68][69]} The Afghan government called the actions of the terrorists war crimes .



An American soldier standing with ⁶⁵ children at *Freedom Circle* (2011)

Geography, climate and environment

Further information: Geography of Afghanistan

Kabul serves as the nation's cultural and learning center, situated 1,791 meters (5,876 feet) above sea level in a narrow valley, wedged between the Hindu Kush mountains along the Kabul River . It is linked with Kandahar , Herat and Mazar-e Sharif via the circular Highway 1 that stretches across Afghanistan. It is also the start of the main road to Jalalabad and further to Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa . The Kabul International Airport is located about 16 km (9.9 mi) from the center of the city, next to the Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood. Bagram Airfield is about 40 km (25 mi) northeast of Kabul.^[70]

Kabul has a cold semi-arid climate (Köppen climate classification *BSk*) with precipitation concentrated in the winter (almost exclusively falling as snow) and spring months. Temperatures are relatively cool compared to much of Southwest Asia, mainly due to the high elevation of the city. Summer has very low humidity , providing relief from the heat. Autumn features warm afternoons and sharply cooler evenings. Winters are cold, with a January daily average of −2.3 °C (27.9 °F) . Spring is the wettest time of the year, though temperatures are generally amiable. Sunny conditions dominate year-round. The annual mean temperature is 12.1 °C (53.8 °F) .