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Salem Press Announces the Seventh Volume in the Brand-New Series *Countries, Peoples & Cultures: Western & Central Africa*

Countries, Peoples & Cultures: Western & Central Africa is the seventh volume of a new nine-volume series from Salem Press. *Countries, Peoples & Cultures* offers valuable insight into the social, cultural, economic, historical, and religious practices and beliefs of nearly every country around the globe. With nine comprehensive, up-to-date volumes spanning every major world region, this in-depth reference source is one of the most thorough compilations of its kind on the market today.

This title examines 25 nations from Western and Central Africa. Western Africa is made up of the following 16 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The second region, Central Africa, consists of the following 9 countries: Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé & Príncipe. The western and central regions are predominantly tropical, although the northern portions of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad belong to the Sahara Desert.

Generally in Africa, much of the environment is unfavorable to agriculture. Moreover, because of population growth, drought, environmental degradation, and political corruption, food shortages and outright famine have occurred frequently. The worst famines in recent times have been associated with wars in addition to one or more of these other conditions. There are no fewer than 1,000 different and mutually unintelligible languages spoken in Africa, perhaps as many as half of them spoken in the eastern and southern regions. This situation has hindered communication between the various African peoples, since people living relatively close to one another may speak an entirely separate language. One such language was Swahili, centered in the Great Lakes region of East Africa. In Western and Central Africa, the picture is more complicated and no one language has achieved the status that Swahili has in the east. Traditional Africa is composed primarily of rural dwellers situated in small villages or dispersed hamlets and of semi-nomadic peoples. Interestingly, two parts of West Africa have histories of urban settlements. The central and western part of Africa both contain such people who established efficient market and trading systems, marked by the use of controlled currencies, and evolved comparatively elaborate trade and labor specializations.

About the Series

Every volume in the *Countries, Peoples & Cultures* series contains **Country Profiles** that explore each nation's background, practices, beliefs, laws, peoples, and more, ensuring users receive a complete, three-dimensional understanding of the countries they research. Every profile

contains a picture of the country's flag and two large colored maps—one highlighting the country's location in its region of the world and the other detailing the capital, major cities, and major natural landmarks. An Introduction provides general information about each country, such as its Population, Official Language(s), Physical Size, Climate, Currency, and National Motto/Anthem. Subsequent sections dive deep into a diverse array of topics, including: Environment & Geography (Topography, Plants & Animals); Customs & Courtesies (Greetings, Gestures & Etiquette, Eating/Meals, Visiting); Lifestyle (Family, Housing, Food, Life's Milestones); Cultural History (Art, Architecture, Music, Drama, Literature); Culture (Arts & Entertainment, Cultural Sites & Landmarks, Libraries & Museums, Holidays, Youth Culture); Society (Transportation, Transportation Infrastructure, Media & Communications); Social Development (Standard of Living, Water Consumption, Education, Women's Rights, Health Care); Government (Structure, Political Parties, Local Government, Judicial System, Taxation, Armed Forces, Foreign Policy, Dependencies, Human Rights Profile); and Economy (Industry, Labor, Energy/Power/Natural Resources, Fishing, Forestry, Mining/Metals, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Tourism). Each profile also includes full color photographs, valuable tables of information—such as “Do You Know?” facts—and a comprehensive Bibliography.

Additionally, two helpful appendixes are included. Appendix One contains information about **World Governments**, focusing on 21 different types of governments found around the world today, from Commonwealth to Treaty System. Every profile includes sections detailing the government's Guiding Premise, Typical Structure, Role of the Citizen, and Modern-Day Examples. Appendix Two profiles **World Religions**, concentrating on 10 of the world's major religions, from African Religious Traditions to Sikhism. Each profile in this appendix includes information on the religion's Number of Adherents, Basic Tenets, Major Deities, Sacred Texts, Major Figures, Major Holy Sites, Major Rites & Celebrations, Origins, and more.

Finally, a scholarly **Introduction** by the Editor and an alphabetical **Index** are also provided for the reader's convenience.

The following titles make up the entire *Countries, Peoples & Cultures* series:

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| • <i>Central & South America</i> | • <i>East & Southern Africa</i> |
| • <i>Central & Southeast Asia</i> | • <i>West & Central Africa</i> |
| • <i>Western Europe</i> | • <i>North America & the Caribbean</i> |
| • <i>Eastern Europe</i> | • <i>East Asia & the Pacific</i> |
| • <i>Middle East & North Africa</i> | |

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