

# MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

## Africa

### Libya

#### Snapshot

**Name:** Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, *Al Jumahiriyah al Arabiyah al Libiyah ash Shabiyah al Ishtirakiyah al Uzma*, Libya

**Founded:** 1951

**Population:** 5,900,754 includes 166,510 non-nationals (July 2006 )

**Religion:** Over 96.5 % Sunni Islam 5,408,557  
Christian (including Catholic, Orthodox, Marginal) 3% 168,142  
Buddhist 0.30% 16,814  
Non religious 0.20 % 11,209

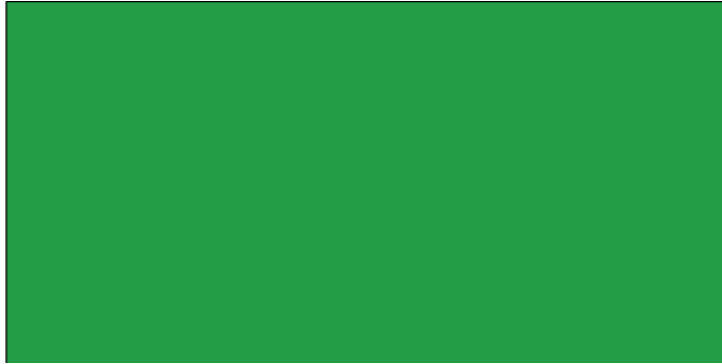
**Government and Religion:** Local peoples restricted from religion other than Islam. Some freedom for expatriots but secret police cause strain even among foreign peoples

**Government:** Jamahiriya (a state of the masses) in theory, governed by the populace through local councils; in fact, a military dictatorship

**Geography:** Located in North Africa along Mediterranean Sea, neighboring Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Algeria, and Tunisia.



**Flag:** A plain Green flag. Green is the Arabic color



## Libya Country Profile

### Basic Facts

**Name:** Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, *Al Jumahiriyah al Arabiyah al Libiyah ash Shabiyah al Ishtirakiyah al Uzma*, Libya

**Founded:** 1951

**Population:** 5,900,754 includes 166,510 non-nationals (July 2006 )

### Demographics:

Libyan population is 5,900,754 and is increasing by around 6% per year, partly due to the general improvement in health conditions which has led to a decrease in both the infant mortality rate and the death rate.

More than 90% of the population identifies itself as Arab, with most of the remaining minority being composed of Berbers and black Africans. Approximately 76% of the population now lives in urban areas concentrated along the coast.

The number of Italians was as high as 70,000 during the period of colonial rule. In 1964 there were 30,000. Most left after their land and property were nationalized in 1970.

There were 30,000 Jews in Libya in 1948, but because of the Arab-Israeli conflict the community had virtually disappeared by 1973.

In 1984 there were officially 263,100 non-Libyans in the country, of whom more than 40% were Egyptians and 15% were Tunisians. The CIA Factbook numbers the foreign populations as 166,510. They came from a variety of other countries in Africa, the Mideast, and elsewhere. This figure was less than half the 569,000 foreigners in 1983, before new restrictions were placed on remittances abroad. In 1992, the foreign population was estimated at 2 million, half of them Egyptian, and 600,000 from South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. This higher figure probably reflects illegal immigration. About 100,000 Libyans were in exile in the mid-1980s.

As of July 1998, there were nearly 10,000 refugees of concern to the UNHCR, including 4,200 Palestinians, 3,543 Somalis, and smaller groups of Eritreans, Sudanese, and Ethiopians. An estimated 30,000 Palestinians are longtime residents of Libya, many for more than 20 years.

Source: *WORLD MARK Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life* Volume 1; *WORLD MARK Encyclopedia of the Nations: Africa*, tenth edition, *Operation World*, *CIA Factbook*

**Language:**

The official language recognized by the Libyan government is Arabic. English is considered to be the second language spoken by Libyans and is taught in their schools.

Although the Italians occupied Libya for some time, Italian never caught on as the main language unlike French in countries like Algeria and Tunisia.

Berber is also spoken by small communities especially in Tripolitania. Native Berber speakers constitute about 5% of the population.

Sources: Worldmark: Encyclopedia of cultures and Daily Life, Volume 1  
Worldmark: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Africa

## **Society/Culture**

Despite the hardships that face Libyans everyday, they continue to be hospitable people. Hospitality is central to the Arab culture. One must always show consideration to their guests and treat them with the utmost of respect. A typical Libyan would offer coffee or tea and food to eat. Even if they do not like you, they will always treat you kindly to your face. Open criticism is almost unheard of in Libyan society, which is very typical of Arab culture.

Respect of elders is another key in Libyan culture and society. Children are taught to respect their parents and authority. In many instances elderly parents will live with the eldest boy or eldest girl, if a son was not conceived. Family is held very high to Libyans. It is rare that children move out of their homes before they are married. You might find grown men still living with their parents. As long as the children remain unmarried, they will usually stay with their parents.

Islam is central to the Libyan way of life, and this fact is reflected in their social customs and even in their language. The day revolves around the five daily prayers that Muslims are obligated to perform and recite. Men typically go to the mosque and pray, while women will pray at their home or at the back of the mosque. Friday is Libya's holy day, and the noon prayer is almost always attended at the local mosque.

### Holidays:

Eid Al-Fitr: occurs at the end of the month of Ramadan and is celebrated for three days.

Eid Al-Adha: commemorates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son. It is customary for each able family to sacrifice a sheep.

Islamic New Year

Prophet Mohammad's Birthday

Independence Day (December 24)

Army Day (August 9)

U.S. withdrawal from Wheeling Air force base in Libya (June 11, 1970)

Evacuation Day (June 11)

Proclamation Day (November 21)

Source: WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life Volume 1- Africa,  
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761570705\\_8/Libya.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761570705_8/Libya.html)

## **Government:**

The Libyan Arab Republic was established on September 1, 1969 after it was taken over by a military coup led by *Mummar al-Qadhafi*, and a new constitution was declared by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) on December 11, 1969. The constitution, which has been effectively superseded by the principles of Qadhafi's "Green Book," proclaimed Libya to be an Arab state, democratic, and free Republic which seeks to promote Arab unity.

Supreme authority rested with the 12-member RCC, which appointed both the prime minister and cabinet. Qadhafi declared himself as the head of state and the military forces. In March 1977, the nation's name was changed to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and the "authority of the people" was proclaimed by a newly convened General People's Congress (GPC).

The people theoretically exercise their authority through a system of people's congresses and committees. In 1979, Qadhafi stepped down as the leader of the GPC and became a private citizen. As "Leader of the Revolution," however, he remains the head of state. He also remains the commander of the armed forces and all power rests in him and his close advisers. There have been several assassination attempts made on Qadhafi by Islamic groups and military groups. Also, there has been several attempts made to overthrow the Qadhafi regime, but none have worked. He is not very tolerant of any opposition and any disrespect shown towards the government is severely treated. In March 1997 the GPC adopted the 'Charter of Honor,' imposing collective punishment on Libyans convicted of crimes of disorder such as sabotage, drug and arms trafficking. The charter is clearly aimed at opponents of the regime.

The Proclamation of People's Authority designates the Holy Quran as the law of society. All cases relating to personal status are dealt with according to Muslim law. Minor civil and commercial cases may be heard in summary courts by a sitting judge in each village and town. Other cases of the first instance are heard by courts of first instance, and appeals may be taken to provincial courts of appeal. There is also a Supreme Court, consisting of a president and judges appointed by the General People's Congress. It may deal with constitutional and legislative questions referred to it and may hear administrative cases. There are also special people's and military courts that try purported crimes against the state. The 1994 Purge Law provides for the confiscation of private assets above a certain amount. The law requires that the confiscation property should be given to the poor.

Sources: Worldmark: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Africa,  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics\\_of\\_Libya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Libya)

## **Economy:**

Overall, Libya has been an agricultural country, although this was only apparent in the coastal regions of the country since the rest of Libya is occupied by the Sahara Desert. Libya also relies on its livestock. The Libyan economy was almost destroyed during the Italian

occupation and the North African campaigns of World War II. During the Italian colonial period in the first half of the 20th century and during the North African campaigns of World War II.

At independence in 1951, Libya was one of the poorest countries in the world. No more than 10 percent of its people could read or write, and there were only a handful of college graduates. The per capita annual income was about \$30 a year and the country's principal export was scrap metal collected from World War II battlefields. However, with the discovery of petroleum in the 1950s changed the Libyan economy from nothing to putting them on the global map.

Since 1969 the domestic economy of Libya has reflected the economic philosophy of the country's leader, Muammar al-Qaddafi. In 1978 the second volume of Qaddafi's guiding treatise, *The Green Book*, was published. In it he declared opposition to private retail trade, wages, and rent—all of which he deemed forms of exploitation. Workers were required to participate in self-management committees, and companies were forced to distribute a set percentage of profits to their workers. Several years later, all individual bank accounts were seized in an effort to ensure equal assets for all Libyans.

The government nationalized most economic activities and discouraged foreign investment in all fields except for the petroleum industry. These economic upheavals disrupted the development of domestic trade and industry. During the 1990s the government began to allow privately owned retail shops, and it authorized the privatization of some state-owned industries. It also allowed foreign investment. The government has been generous and egalitarian in the distribution of its oil revenues, however, resulting in dramatic improvements in the education, health, and housing of virtually all Libyans.

The United Nations imposed economic sanctions on Libya for its ties and support of terrorism around the world in 1992. Those sanctions were lifted in 1999, opening the way for foreign investment. In 2004 the United States lifted its economic sanctions, and U.S. companies began seeking investment opportunities in Libya.

Source: [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761570705\\_4\\_11/Libya.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761570705_4_11/Libya.html), Worldmark: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Africa, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5425.htm>

### **Literacy:**

Before World War II (1939-45), few schools existed in Libya, resulting in a literacy rate of less than 10%. After the discovery of oil in 1959, Libya invested in new schools, vocational training centers, and universities. Another education boom took place in the 1970s, following the new regime's inception in 1969.

Libya adopted a Western-style system that includes six years of primary school, three years of preparatory school, and three years of secondary school. Schooling is mandatory for both boys and girls up until the age of 15. After the completion of secondary school, Libyans may attend either vocational schools or universities.

Libya's first university was established in 1955 in Benghazi. This was followed by universities in Tripoli, Mersa Brega, and Sabha. All schooling, including that at the university level, is free. This includes books, school supplies, uniforms, and meals. As a result of the educational

programs, the literacy rate in Libya has risen from an abysmal 10% during the Italian occupation to more than 70% as of the early 1990s. According to the *CIA World Fact book* that last updated its data on Libya since 2003, females are at 72% and males are at 92%.

Problems facing the educational system stem from a lack of qualified teachers. As a result, the vast majority of teachers in Libya are expatriates. Also, some confusion resulted when the government tried to integrate secular and religious schooling. Military training is a mandatory part of education in the school system, for both men and women, from the secondary through the university level.

Sources: Worldmark: Encyclopedia of cultures and Daily Life, Volume 1- Africa

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ly.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761570705\\_3/Libya.html#p10](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761570705_3/Libya.html#p10)

### **Land/Geography:**

Libya is found along the beautiful coast of the Mediterranean Sea in the northern part of Africa. It is surrounded by a sea, Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Algerian, and Tunisia. It is considered to be the fourth largest country in Africa, slightly larger than the state of Alaska.

Libya has an area of 1,760,000 sq km (679,536 sq mi) and a coastline of 1,800 km (1,119 mi), making it the 15<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world. There are some fertile highlands in the north, but no true mountain ranges except in the largely empty southern desert.

In all, more than 80% of Libya is covered by the Sahara desert. The primary plant is the deadly carrot (*Thapsia garganica*). The other plants that are popular in Libya include various cultivated fruit trees, date palms, junipers, and mastic trees. In 1986 there were approximately 3 million productive date palm trees and 3.4 million olive trees. In the northern part of the country, goats and cattle can be found. However, in the south, one can find a plethora of sheep and camels.

## **History**

### **Early colonization**

For most of their history, the peoples of Libya have been subjected to varying degrees of foreign control. The Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Vandals, and Byzantines ruled all or parts of Libya. Although the Greeks and Romans left impressive ruins at Cyrene, Leptis Magna, and Sabratha, little else remains today to testify to the presence of these ancient cultures.

The Phoenicians first came to Libya in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century BC and established a trading colony along the coast of Tripolitania. The Carthaginians then came and took over during the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC. The Greeks then entered Libya and contributed positively. The land was mentioned in the ancient writings of Herodotus. Carthage fell under the rule of Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC and soon all of North Africa fell under Roman rule for approximately 600 years.

After the Roman Empire fell into decline, the Vandals conquered the area and its mark in AD455. The Byzantine Empire took over the area for some time until the Arabs came in the Seventh Century AD.

In the following centuries, most of the indigenous peoples adopted Islam and the Arabic language and culture. The Ottoman Turks conquered the country in the mid-16th century. Libya remained part of their empire--although at times virtually autonomous--until Italy invaded in 1911 and, in the face of years of resistance, made Libya a colony.

### **Rise and fall of Italian occupation**

As a result of the Italian-Turkish War which started in 1911, Italy's annexed Libya which then becoming an Italian colony in 1934. Italy adopted the name "Libya" as the country's official name. The name Libya was formerly used by the Greeks for all of North Africa excluding the country of Egypt. Turkey renounced its interests in Libya in 1912, but fierce resistance to the Italians continued from the Sanusi sect, a strongly nationalistic group of Suni Muslims.

The Sanusis were sent into exile because of heavy resistance to the Italian occupation. As the World War started, the Sanusis joined the Allied troops in Libya to defeat the Italian and German forces. By the year 1943, the Germans and Italians were driven out and control of Libya was handed over to France and Britain.

On November 21, 1949, the United Nations passed a resolution that said Libya would become independent before 1952. Libya was declared independent on December 24, 1951 and was ruled by King Idris I. Libya was to be a constitutional and hereditary monarchy. At that time, Libya was the first country to gain its independence with the help of the United Nations and one of the first former European possessions in Africa to gain their independence.

### **Instability and the rise of Qaddafi**

The country began to experience political strife in the late 1960s as anti-western feelings grew within the people. The path of Libya's history was radically altered in 1969 by a military coup which successfully overthrew the monarchy. Led by a group of young army officers under Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi, the country was re-established as a republic and became known as the Libyan Arab Republic.

The country welcomed Colonel Qaddafi as a strong nationalist leader. He immediately embarked on a bold series of programs designed to establish himself as the focus of a united Arab world. Alcohol was banned from Libya, all foreign languages were vetoed in official business, banks were nationalized, and all private sector economic activities were abolished. Oil resources were also nationalized, and trade embargoes were encouraged against those nations which supported Israel. Qaddafi wrote a book based on his thoughts on how government and countries should be run and operated and its title is *The Green Book*. He set out his own ideas on Arab socialism and that democracy simply cannot work.



Libyan relations with the United States deteriorated in the early 1980s. By the early 1980s, Libya was a country embroiled in controversy. Libyan ventures in Chad and elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East had earned a good deal of opprobrium for Qadhafi, who often pursued his goal of Arab and Islamic unity and extended Libyan influence at what seemed any price. Indeed, suspicion if not hostility were the usual response to Qadhafi's initiatives in the Arab and Western world.

In 1981 two Libyan fighter planes were shot down by U.S. Navy jets over the Gulf of *Sidra*, which Libya claimed as territorial waters. In 1982 the United States imposed an embargo on Libyan oil imports. Another encounter in the Gulf of *Sidra* in March 1986 resulted in the destruction of two Libyan ships by U.S. Navy ships. In April, responding to heightened terrorism in Europe apparently directed by Libya against Americans, the United States bombed sites in Libya alleged by President Ronald Reagan to be “terrorist centers.”

*Qaddafi's* home at one of the barracks was damaged and his infant daughter was killed. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Libya urged moderation, opposing both Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent use of force against Iraq. Ties with Egypt were strengthened during 1991, but those with the United States worsened, especially in 1992 when it was charged that Libya was manufacturing chemical weapons.

In April 1992, United Nations sanctions were imposed against Libya for its refusal to extradite the two men suspected of involvement in the 1988 bombing of Pan American Flight (103) over Lockerbie, Scotland. In the later 1990s, QADHAFI also began to rebuild his relationships with Europe. UN sanctions were suspended in April 1999 and finally lifted in September 2003 after Libya resolved the Lockerbie case by agreeing to hand over the two suspects in the 1988 bombing over Lockerbie to stand trial in The Netherlands under Scottish law. Upon delivery of the suspects for transport to The Netherlands, the United Nations suspended sanctions against Libya. Since its sanctions were lifted, Libya has improved its relations with the United States and other countries in the West.

In December 2003, Libya announced that it had agreed to reveal and end its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction, and Qadhafi made significant strides in normalizing relations with western nations since then. He has received various Western European leaders as well as many working-level and commercial delegations, and made his first trip to Western Europe in 15 years when he traveled to Brussels in April 2004. Qadhafi also finally resolved in 2004 several outstanding cases against his government for terrorist activities in the 1980s by compensating the families of victims of the disco bombings. The US resorted full diplomatic relations with Libya in May 2006 and removed them from the list of designated state sponsors of terrorism in June  
Source: <http://www.arab.net/libya/>, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5425.htm>

## **Christian History**

Christianity seems to have appeared in this area around the second century. It was introduced to the Jewish community living in the region and then spread to the Berber people. The Christian faith spread to the cities and to the villages, to the rich and to the poor.

From an early date, however, the churches in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica developed distinct characteristics that reflected their differing cultural orientations. The region of Tripolitania came under the authority of the Latin patriarch, the bishop of Rome. However, the region of Cyrenaica fell under the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. Because of their differences the regions came under division and there was disunity among the churches that were present at that time. These divisions led revolts amongst the people at a time when the economy was at a low and a time of political decline.

Source: [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ly0017\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ly0017))

## Religions

### Non-Christian

#### *Sunni Islam*

Most of all the Libyans in the country belong to the Sunni branch of Islam. Over 96.50% of the people are Islamic. The number of Muslims is estimated at over 5, 410,000. The Islamic community is increasing at a rate of + 2.4% annually.

Islam has become a personal guide for individuals and part of government affairs. It stresses a unification of religion and government, rather than a separation of the two. Islam is a religion founded by an Arabian named Mohammad. He received visions from God and he believed that he was to restore the ancient faiths of Christianity and Judaism. He wanted to clear the pagan beliefs that had infiltrated the Arabian region and reinstitute monotheism.

The basic five pillars of Islam are as follows: praying five times a day, the fast of Ramadan, giving of alms, pilgrimage to Mecca once in someone's lifetime, and the *Shahadah* (the Islamic proclamation that there is only one God but Allah and Mohammad is his prophet).

Some Libyans have ceased to believe in Islam, but still retain Islamic habits and tendencies. Since the 1969 coup, the Qadhafi regime has explicitly endeavored to reaffirm Islamic values, enhance appreciation of Islamic culture, elevate the status of Quranic law, and to emphasize Quranic practice in everyday life.

#### *Folk Islam*

Folk Islam is seen as a blending of ancient pre-Islamic beliefs and the practices and beliefs of orthodox Islam. These pre-Islamic practices stemmed from the Berbers, the original inhabitants of the region. These beliefs range from beliefs of evil spirits, to good or bad fortune, to special amulets that can protect from evil or bad luck.

Another aspect of folk Islam is its veneration of the dead. They make shrines of some people and make them into saints. In turn people will come from various parts to ask for prayer for different things such as better health or even for conception.

The educated of the cities and towns served as the primary bearers and guardians of the traditional and orthodox form of Islam.

An important element of North African Islam for centuries has been a belief in the coalescence of special spiritual power in particular living human beings. This is known as *baraka*, a transferable quality of personal blessedness and spiritual force said to lodge in certain individuals. Those whose claim to possess *baraka* can perform apparent miracles or are related to someone who claimed possession of *baraka*. The individuals who have *baraka* and then die, attain the status of sainthood.

### *Orthodox*

Four groups of Orthodox Churches live in Libya and together number as many as 89,000 or 1.58% of the population. The largest of these groups is the Coptic Orthodox with some 34,000 adherents. The Greek Orthodox Church boasts 3 congregations and slightly over 500 members.

### *Roman Catholic*

The Roman Catholic Church has only 2 congregations but claims 27,970 members.

### **Evangelical Christianity**

Evangelical Christians number around 7000 in Libya divided among 5 denominations. Independent Churches report only 0.01% of the population but are growing at a rate of + 85% annually.

Qadhafi has stressed the universal applicability of Islam, but he has also reaffirmed the special status assigned by the Prophet to Christians. He has, however, likened them to misguided Muslims who have strayed from the correct path. Furthermore, he has assumed leadership of a drive to free Africa of Christianity, as well as, of the colonialism with which it has been associated.

The last visible missionary presence in Libya was shut down in 1960. The indigenous population of Libya is considered to be unreached by the Gospel. The foreign population that is present in Libya is free to worship as they please, but one cannot evangelize the Libyan people. Approaches to them are potentially dangerous to both parties. A number of expatriate workers are seeking to reach Libyans, but are hindered by the elaborate secret police networks.

The number of Libyan believers are few and keep their faith in secret because of the potential hardships that they would face for practicing a religion that is not Islam.

Christians among the expatriate population are largely nominal; few find opportunity for public worship, and most congregations lack personal care. Some active Protestant, Catholic, and Coptic Orthodox congregations, and several informal groups of believers of various nationalities from Asia, Africa, and Europe minister in Libya

## People Groups

42762

### Arabized Black

In the seventh and eleventh centuries, the Arabs invaded northern Africa and brought with them their culture and beliefs. Many of the peoples that lived throughout northern Africa assimilated into the Arab lifestyle and that included the black Africans of Libya. They live in the southern provinces of Fazzan, a series of oases in the southwestern desert of Libya, but can also be found in the northern part of country in the cities. They speak Fazzani, one of the many dialects of Arabic. They are mostly an agricultural people. The concept of family and marriage are so important to them. The birth of boys are celebrated and the first word that a baby hears is the word Allah whispered in their ears. The Arabized Black of Libya are entirely Muslim, much like the rest of the country. There are some Christian resources available to them, but they are currently not evangelized and there no active churches among them.

11828

### Berber

The territory of northern Africa was once dominated by Berbers, a non-Arab people who were at one time mostly Christians. The Berbers successfully withstood numerous invasions before finally being overrun by the Arabs in the seventh century. Many Berbers embraced the Arab language, culture, and even mixed in with them through marriage. They also embraced the religion that the Arabs brought with them, which was Islam. There are Christian resources available to them which includes the Jesus film and Bible translations, but they remain less than 2% evangelical.

11830

### Bulgar

The Bulgar are in Libya seeking employment opportunities. They have the Jesus Film, Gospel recordings, Christian radio broadcasts, and Bible translations available to them, but they remain less than 2% evangelical. A group of Bulgarians adhere to Islam after Islam came through Bulgaria in the 1370s.

42763

### Cyrenaican Arab

They are an unengaged people group with no known believers. They adhere to Sunni Islam. There are some Christian resources available to them, but are less than 2% evangelical. There are no known churches among them.

11842

### Deaf

There is no known information on these people. Muslims tend to look at any form of handicap as a curse by Allah and are therefore looked down upon by many people.

11838

#### Domari

The Domari are a gypsy group who originated in India, but then dispersed and went to Persia, Romania, the Middle East, and other countries. Their language, Domari, contains many Arabic words. They are known as wanderers, but also some settle in Gypsy communities. They have adopted the Muslim religion, but assimilated some folk beliefs such as the belief in luck and curses. There are no resources available to them, and many do not desire to contact them since they have a reputation of deceit and thievery.

11833

#### Egyptian Arab

There are several Christian resources available in their language that includes the Bible and the Jesus Film. They are predominately in Libya seeking employment. They are less than 2% evangelical.

42764

#### Fezzan Bedouin

They originally come from the Middle East, but have migrated to the desert of Libya. They are almost 99% Malikite Muslim. They currently have the Jesus Film in their language, which is a dialect of Arabic called Fezzani or Maghribi. They do have Christian broadcasts in their language and the Bible translated in their own tongue also. There are no missionary agencies currently working with them.

11836

#### Ghadames

They are a berber group who converted to Islam when the Arab invasion came through the Libyan area. They are considered to be unevangelized and unreached. There are currently no known Christian workers among them. They live near the Tunisian and Algerian borders in the desert.

42766

#### Jalo Berber

The Berbers of North Africa are considered to be the original inhabitants of North Africa. They adhere to Islam, but also mix in folk beliefs such as the belief in spiritual powers, curses, luck, and magic. There are very believers among this group and are considered to be unreached.

42767

#### Jofra Berber

They are located in the northern part of Libya in the Saharan desert. They are an Islamic group who accepted Islam when the Arabs came through North Africa in the seventh century. Each berber tribe has their own language, although many speak Arabic. There are very few believers among this group and are considered to be unreached.

42765

#### Kufra Berber

They are another berber group found in Libya. They adhere to the Islamic faith, but mix in their own superstitious beliefs. There are very few believers among this berber group and are considered unreached.

11841

Libyan Arab

There are very few believers among the Libyan Arabs. Islam replaced Christianity in 624 A.D. Prostylization is illegal in Libya and there are secret police watching and monitoring any suspicious behavior making sharing the Gospel difficult.

11843

Maltese

Many Maltese who live in Libya are there seeking employment. Malta was ruled by the Arabs until the early 1000's. They adhere to Catholicism, but merely by tradition. They have many Christian resources available to them in their language, but there is currently no church planting movement among them.

11844

Nefusa Berber

This group lives in the Jebel Nefusa Plateau which can be found southwest of Tripoli found on the border of Tunisia. Their villages are often difficult to reach and there is little industrial activity in their towns. They are an agricultural group with their homes built underground. They are part of a small Islamic sect called Ibadaya. It found its roots during the seventh century when disputes arose concerning how religious leaders should be chosen. They adhere to many orthodox Islamic practices, but some of their practices do not align with mainstream Islam such as their mosques do not face east in the direction of Mecca. There are no known Christians among this group of berbers.

42768

Palestinian Arab

There are many Palestinian refugees founding Libya. They are mainly Sunni Muslim, but some adhere to the Catholic faith and even fewer adhere to Protestantism. They have the Jesus Film in their language and the Bible in Arabic.

11845

Panjabi, Western

They are a Pakistani group seeking employment in Libya. They adhere to Sunni Islam with very few known evangelical Christians among this group. They have the Jesus Film, the Bible, and a Christian radio broadcast available to them.

42769

Riyah Bedouin

Almost 100% of the Riyah Bedouin in Libya are Sunni Muslim of the Malakite school. There are very few believers, if any, among this group of Bedouin.

42770

#### Sanusi Bedouin

They have been influenced by both the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Bedouin and the religious teachings of a prophet known as Sayyid Muhammad ibn' Ali as-Sanusi. This particular Muslim influence has made them gentler of the Bedouin tribes. They are almost 100% Muslim and no known Christians among them.

11846

#### Sawknah

They are a berber group found in Tripolitania region of Libya. They are unevangelized and currently have no Christian materials geared to them.

42771

#### Sirtican Bedouin

They are a nomadic people, but have also settled and set up villages to work and provide for their families. They are highly unreached like many of the Bedouin groups in Libya.

11847

#### Sudanese Arab

They are group that come from Sudan and is a land of war and turmoil between various ethnic groups. They are in Libya seeking employment and send their earnings back home to their families. There are Christian resources available to them such as the Bible and the Jesus Film, but are not considered to be evangelized. There are some believers among them, but are predominately Muslim.

11837

#### Tamachek

This a nomadic people group from the Hoggar Mountains found in southern Algeria. They can also be found in Niger and Mali. They are also known as the Tuareg. They speak Tamahag. They are considered to be an unengaged people group, but have some bible translations available to them. They are a Sunni Muslim group, but have tribal religious rituals they also adhere to.

11848

#### Teda

This is a nomadic people from the Sahara desert that can also be found in Chad. They speak Tedaga. There are Gospel recordings available in their language. They are an Islamic people, with very few, if any, known Christians among them.

11849

#### Tunisian Arab

Tunisia borders Libya, and many Tunisians that are found in Libya reside in urban towns such as Tripoli. There are Christians resources found for this group such as the Jesus Film and the Bible. They are mostly a Sunni Muslim group, but also believe in folk Islam. There are few Christians among them and there are Christian agencies that are working to evangelize this group, but there are few Christians among them.

11850

Wadshili

They are a Berber group located in Eastern Libya. There are no Christian resources available to them in their particular language. They are Muslim group, with less than 1% Christian.

11851

Zaghawa

They are known as Awlad Hassan and are called called the Beri people. They are scattered throughout Chad, Sudan, and Niger. They speak Zaghawa and belongs to the Saharan branch of the Nilo-Saharan language group. They are an ancient group that can trace themselves as far as the seventh century. They are an Islamic group, but can still find their ethnic religions mixed in with Islam. There are Gospel recordings made for them, but there are so few known believers among them.

11852

Zuara

They are Berber group found in the far northwest side of Libya, on the Mediterranean Sea. They found in an area called Jebal Nefusa, west of Tripoli. They speak Zuara and Arabic. There are no Christian resources available to them in their language, and few known believers among them. They mainly adhere to Islam, with a mixture of folk Islam.

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British

The British that are present in Libya are there for business purposes. They tend to live in areas where many foreigners reside. Many of the Christians that are present in Libya are of Western origin.

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Bulgarian

They are present in Libya seeking employment. They tend to be Catholic, but nominal at best.

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Croat

They are a group of Eastern Europeans who live in Libya seeking employment and a better life for themselves. They are Roman Catholic group, but are very nominal.

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French

They are in Libya for business purposes and tend to live where other foreigners live. They adhere to Roman Catholicism, but many are nominal or simply do not believe in God. Many adhere to the typical postmodern thought that they create their own destinies.

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Greek

They tend to live in Libya seeking employment. Many adhere to the Greek Orthodox tradition.

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Han Chinese, Mandarin

Many Chinese who live in Libya are seeking employment and are helping build the country. Many are atheists and communists. They also are Buddhist, but there is a growing number of Christians among them.

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Italian

There are not many Italians left after Libya gained its from the Italians. There are Italians present seeking employment or have family homes left behind from when Libya was a colony of Italy. They mostly adhere to Roman Catholicism.

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Korean

There are some Koreans in Libya seeking business opportunities. There is a large population of Koreans that adhere to the Christian faith.

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Serb

They come from a troublesome country that had been full of war and turmoil. Many have left their country and are seeking employment and a better life elsewhere. They have a growing population that is professing Christianity as part of their belief system.

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Sinhalese

They adhere to the Buddhist faith, and there are very few known believers among them. They are from south Asia.

### **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelical Christians and Churches should pray for the peoples of Libya and for greater freedom for believers to live and share their faith in this country. Libya is extremely hostile to the Gospel and forbids any form of evangelism to its people. This opposition makes it difficult for people to openly share their faith about Jesus Christ. The government limits Christian activities to one church per denomination in each city. There are no known missionaries currently in Libya, but there are expatriates who are legitimately working Libya, but are intentional about sharing their faith.
2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should emphasize efforts of evangelism among Libyans who live in various countries around the world. Evangelicals should share their faith and tell them the Good News of Jesus Christ since they are living in free countries such as England and France. Hopefully, some of these after becoming believers could return to Libya as evangelists.
3. Evangelical Christians and Churches should strive to support the Christians and Christian groups that do exist and serve in Libya. These groups are largely among the expatriates

and are reported to be highly nominal. A revival among these peoples could spill over into the population of Libya

4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should use the existing opportunities at proclamation through broadcasting, literature, the Jesus Film, and the internet
5. Evangelical Christians and Churches should continually pray for the country of Libya that its leadership would be softened towards the Gospel message.

**Pictures** – see folder

### **Links**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya>  
<http://www.libyaonline.com/>  
<http://www.arab.net/libya/index.html>  
<http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/lytoc.html>  
<http://www.libya-watanona.com/libya1/>  
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<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8744/mylinks1.htm>  
<http://www.libyadaily.com/>  
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<http://geoimages.berkeley.edu/libyajew/LibyanJews/thejews.html>  
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<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ly.html>  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/country\\_profiles/819291.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/819291.stm)  
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/africa/libya/>

