

# MISSIONARY MAPING PROJECT

## AFRICA

### Tunisia

#### Snapshots Section

**Country Name:** Tunisian Republic, Tunisia

**Country Founded in:** Independence from France, 20 March, 1956

**Population:** 10,175,014 (July 2006 est.)

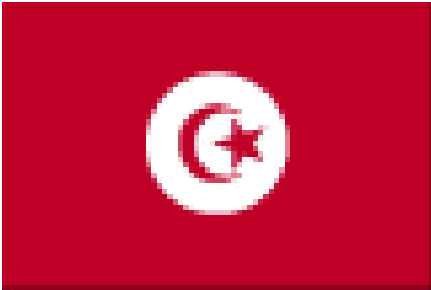
**Government Type:** republic

**Geography/location in the world:** Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Algeria and Libya

#### Map:



**Picture of flag:**



**Number of people groups:** 27

**Religion Snapshot:**

**Major Religions and % of population:**

Muslim 98.9%

**All religions and % for each:**

Christian 0.5%

Nonreligious 0.4%

Jews 0.0% (3,796)

Atheists 0.0% (3,729)

Baha'is 0.0% (1,917)

Barrett, David B. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, University Press: Oxford, 2001.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ts.html>; *Operation World*

**Mission Atlas Project  
Country Profile**

**Name:** Tunisian Republic, Tunisia

**Demographics**

Population stood at 10,175,014 (July 2006 est.)

Age structure breakdown is 25.3% of the population is 0-14 years, 68.1% of the population is 15-64 years, and 6.6% of the population is 65 years and over. Tunisia's infant mortality rate is 24.77 deaths/1,000 live births.

Life expectancy at birth is 74.89 years in general, 73.2 years for males, and 76.71 years for females (2005 est.) The breakdown of ethnic groups in the country is as follows: Arab 98%, European 1%, Jewish and other 1%.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ts.html>

### **Language:**

Arabic is the official and one of the languages of commerce; French is also widely spoken and is a language of commerce

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ts.html>

### **Society/Culture:**

Tunisian culture, like other North African countries, is permeated with the influence of Islam. This largely effects the segregation of the sexes. Men and women do not socialize together. Religion is also the cause for celebrating major holidays such as Eid al-Fitr which takes place at the close of the fasting month of Ramadan. Eid al-Adha is another Islamic holiday celebrated, and it commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son (Ishmael) in obedience to God. This holiday comes at the end of pilgrimage to Mecca, hajj, and in memory of Abraham's faithfulness a goat or other animal is sacrificed.

Hospitality and generosity are highly valued within society and during holidays food will often be shared with the poor. Large meals with numerous family members and friends are always a part of such festivities and can last for several days.

Modesty is very important for Muslim women. The traditional dress of Tunisia worn by women is called Sifsari, which is a long outer covering over the head and body. Some village women wear a mellia, a large head covering that drapes over the shoulders. Men traditionally wear a kind of fez had called a chehia and that is brown. Today, however, many people in Tunisia wear western style clothing, men and women living in urban settings are especially likely to prefer a western style of dress.

Folklore and story telling has preserved numerous legends of Crusaders, colonialists, prophets, and marabouts, or holy men. Oral forms of communication such as this are entertaining and the most common form among a largely illiterate community. The marabouts are saint like figures whom are believed to have acquired baraka, blessings for miraculous works. Their tombs are seen as shrines and are visited by prayers seeking such baraka. The prayers are offered on behalf of the sick, barren women, those seeking a job, etc.

The French have had their influence as well, as Tunisia was a French colony for nearly seventy years. French is widely spoken in cities. French food, pastries, architecture, and fashion all are present. Nuclear families and western dress are more common in cities as well.

Soccer, or football as they call it, is the national sport. Beaches along the Mediterranean are frequented during vacations. Pottery, rugs, embroidery, and jewelry are handcrafts of the area. Typical greetings include a hand shake for a person with whom one is not well acquainted or for someone of the opposite sex. Kisses on each cheek are common for close friends of the same sex and family members.

Other holidays and times for celebration are secular holidays such as May Day or Labor Day which falls on May 1. Independence Day is June 1, and Women's Day is August 13. Martyr's Day is held in commemoration of 122 Tunisians who were killed by the French in 1938.

Gall, Timothy L. *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life- Volume 1 Africa*. Gale Publishing: New York, New York, 1998.

## **Government**

Tunisia's government is a multiparty republic. Independence from France was gained on March 20, 1956. The constitution was presented on June 1, 1959; and amended in 1988 and 2002.

The executive branch includes the chief of state, President Zine El Abidine BenAli who has been in office since November 7, 1987, and the head of government:, Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi , in office since November 17, 1999.

The executive branch also includes a cabinet, the Council of Ministers who are appointed by the president. The president is elected by popular vote for a five-year term, and the prime minister is appointed by the president.

The legislative branch has an unicameral Chamber of Deputies or Majlis al-Nuwaab with 189 seats. Members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. Tunis is the capital of Tunisia.

The administrative divisions include 24 governorates; Ariana (Aryanah), Beja (Bajah), Ben Arous (Bin 'Arus), Bizerte (Banzart), Gabes (Qabis), Gafsa (Qafsah), Jendouba (Jundubah), Kairouan (Al Qayrawan), Kasserine (Al Qasrayn), Kebili (Qibili), Kef (Al Kaf), Mahdia (Al Mahdiyah), Manouba (Manubah), Medenine (Madanin), Monastir (Al Munastir), Nabeul (Nabul), Sfax (Safaqis), Sidi Bou Zid (Sidi Bu Zayd), Siliana (Silyanah), Sousse (Susah), Tataouine (Tatawin), Tozeur (Tawzar), Tunis, Zaghuan (Zaghwan).

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ts.html>

## **Economy**

Tunisia has a diverse economy, with important agricultural, mining, energy, tourism, and manufacturing sectors. Governmental control of economic affairs while still heavy has

gradually lessened over the past decade with increasing privatization, simplification of the tax structure, and a prudent approach to debt. Progressive social policies also have helped raise living conditions in Tunisia relative to the region.

Real growth slowed to a 15-year low of 1.9% in 2002 because of agricultural drought and lackluster tourism. Better rains in 2003 and 2004, however, helped push GDP growth above 5% for these years. Tourism also recovered after the end of combat operations in Iraq. Tunisia is gradually removing barriers to trade with the European Union. Broader privatization, further liberalization of the investment code to increase foreign investment, improvements in government efficiency, and reduction of the trade deficit are among the challenges ahead.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ts.html>

### **Literacy:**

Percentage of the population age 15 and over can read and write is 74.3%, 83.4% males and 65.3% females (2004 est.).

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ts.html>

### **Land/Geography:**

Tunisia is located in Northern Africa between Algeria and Libya along the Mediterranean Sea. The terrain is mountains in north; hot, dry central plain; semiarid south merges into the Sahara. The climate is temperate in north with mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers; desert in south. Tunisia's natural resources include petroleum, phosphates, iron ore, lead, zinc, and salt. Environmental issues include toxic and hazardous waste disposal is ineffective and poses health risks; water pollution from raw sewage; limited natural fresh water resources; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; and desertification. Due to their strategic locations in central Mediterranean; Malta and Tunisia are discussing the commercial exploitation of the continental shelf between their countries, particularly for oil exploration.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ts.html>

<http://www.lexicorient.com/algeria/mzab.htm>

## **Religion**

### **Non-Christian**

#### *Sunni Islam*

98.9% of the people in Tunisia are Sunni Moslem.

Sunni Islam which follows the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad is the largest religion in Tunisia. The Five Pillars of Islam are: the confession of faith or Shahada which declares that there is only one God, Allah, and that Mohammad is his prophet; secondly

there is Prayer or Salat which is to be done five times a day facing Mecca and once proper washings have been done; next is Almsgiving or *Zakat* which teaches that all Muslims are to give 2.5% of their wealth to the poor; fourthly is fasting or *Sawm* and it is to be done from sun up to sun down during the month of Ramadan each year; finally all Muslims who are able to by means of health and finances should take a Pilgrimage or *Hajj* to Mecca where they circumvent the Kaabah shrine seven times.

Mixed with traditional Islamic teachings are numerous folk Islamic practices. These practices include a belief in evil spirits or *jinn* and attempts to ward off curses such as the evil eye. Those desperate to protect themselves or their family from such oppression may wear amulets, offer prayer at a saints tomb, consult local witch doctors, and use Qur'an verses in a magical way such as dissolving passages of text in a potion to drink. Often women consult spirits and witchdoctors in order to obtain power. Such animistic practices are common through out the Maghreb, North Africa.

### *Non-Religious*

Around 0.4% of the people report they are non-religious. Other resources report only 0.1% in the non religious group. If the lower figure is accepted, it would still account for almost 10,000 people and the non religious group is increasing at + 1.4% a percentage increase that equals Muslim advance is significantly higher than Christian growth that is + 0.5%.

Michael Chute, *The Commission*, Summer 2005.

Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World, Paternoster Lifestyle*: Waynesboro, GA, 1974, 66-69.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-kharijite.htm>

<http://www.chris-kutschera.com/A/Mzab.htm>

<http://www.lexicorient.com/algeria/mzab.htm>

### **Christian Cults and Sects-**

*Jehovah's Witnesses*- one congregations

### **Catholic/Orthodox Churches-**

Catholic Church of Tunisia- reports some 14 congregations with a little over 11,000 members.

Greek Orthodox Church of Carthage- 1 congregation

Russian Orthodox Church – one congregation

### **Protestant/Evangelical/Pentecostals-**

Most of Christians in Tunisia are nominal, expatriate, and isolated.

Arab World Ministries- 3 congregations

Christian Brethren- 1 congregation

Episcopal Church of Egypt- 1 congregation

Methodist Church in North Africa- 1 congregation  
Pentecostal Church- 1 congregation  
Reformed Church of Tunisia- 1 congregation  
Seventh Day Adventists- 1 congregation  
Other Protestant denominations- 10 congregations  
Other indigenous congregations- 2 congregations

Isolated radio believers- 300 congregations

Some response has been seen among the people in Tunisia and some indigenous groups are coming into being.

Only around 200 indigenous believers are known to be in the county.

Barrett, David B. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, University Press: Oxford, 2001.

## **History**

### **Earliest History**

Modern day Tunisia's finds the origin of its name with the Phoenician capital Tunis. The city remains the capital, as it has been for 13 centuries. Phoenician traders came into the area in 900 BC and established the city of Carthage in 800 BC. Berbers, the native people of North Africa, made up the majority of the Phoenician slave army and thus revolted against the leadership. Numerous Berber Kingdoms followed.

### **The Romans**

The Roman rule brought brutality for the Berbers peoples who resisted their governance. Primarily coastal areas and cities came under Roman control. The regime greatly profited from North Africa's natural resources such as fruits, figs, and olive oil. Christianity and Judaism were introduced into the area during this time. Some Berber people groups converted to Christianity while others converted to Judaism. The Romans first called Tunisia Africa before using the term to refer to the continent as a whole.

### **The Vandals and Byzantines**

In the earlier part of the fifth century, the Vandals invaded Northern Africa from Spain. Led by King Gaiseric, troops defeated the Roman stronghold in the area, allowing Berbers to resume their lands. Nearly one hundred years later emperor Justinian of the Byzantine Empire fled the area conquering the Germanic kingdom.

### **The Arab Conquest**

The most significant invasion of North Africa happened in the mid seventh century when Arabs swept across the northern half of the continent. Mass groups of Berbers converted

in Islam under the forceful influence of the Arabs. All non Arab peoples were seen as inferior. While the leaders of the Umayyad dynasty enforced the superiority of Arabs, the Kharijite sect sought equality for all Muslim peoples. As they gained support, the Kharijites overthrew the dynasty and established numerous kingdoms. By 751 the Abbasid dynasty moved into the area. Mystical Islam (a Shi'a form of Sufism) grew and converted numerous Berber tribes which led to a rebellion against the dynasty forming the Fatimid Dynasty in the early tenth century. Berber forces resisted the new dynasty. Massive numbers of Arabs immigrating eventually led to the arabization of Algeria and the rest of North Africa. Various smaller Arab kingdoms followed. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brought North African pirates to the seas as well as the slavery of European and American peoples. In 1815 numerous European countries and the U.S. joined forces to fight the Barbary pirates.

### **French Colonialism**

Colonization of Tunisia began in 1881, when France sent 40,000 troops to capture Tunis. The take over of Tunisia was a more paced out strategy than that of Algeria. The French took over the best lands and businesses, leaving the lower wage jobs to the local people. Tunisia's educated class of leaders began pleading for equality with the European settlers, while not protesting French occupation.

Over 60,000 Tunisians fought in the French army during World War I. Many Tunisians expected improved rights following the war for their participation; disappointed a nationalist group formed in protest. April 9, 1938 122 Tunisians were killed by French military during riots. The Tunisians joined French forces again during World War II, fighting with Vichy forces after the German takeover. Many battles during the war were fought in Tunisia. Tunisians were hopeful that independence would be granted following the war, and again disappointment followed. Many nationalists were imprisoned and in the early 1950's violence broke out leaving both French and Tunisians dead. With most of their focus going towards Algeria, the French granted Tunisian independence in 1956.

### **After Independence**

A one-part socialist state emerged following independence led by President Bourguiba and a constitution was formed. Western laws emerged outlawing polygamy and improving social rights for women.

Gall, Timothy L. *Worldmark Encyclopedia*

### **Christian History**

Tunisia's Christian history is rich dating back to the first century, ironic when considering the Christian population of the country today is a meager 0.29%. Church father Tertullian lived out his service to Christ there, and though the church did not survive their teachings remained to influence Christian theology to this day.



## **Roman Rule and the Early Church**

During the first and second century, North Africa was under Roman rule. As the gospel began to spread with the missionary journeys of the apostles, those being entrusted with the good news were equally as faithful to take the message to new areas and peoples. Numerous ports existed along the North African Mediterranean coast which frequently received trade ships from the Middle East and Egypt. Along with merchandise, these cargo ships brought passengers traveling to the North African cities. Christians seeking to further the gospel were among those on board.

It is believed that while Christianity was spreading from the east in this manner it was also spreading southward from Rome and that within fifty years after Christ's death all of the primary port cities of North Africa had received word of the good news. By 200 A.D. reports show that there were firm, growing, and thriving churches in Algeria. The gospel message spread with rapidity and receptivity throughout North Africa.

By 198 A.D. the churches had established leaders and were tending to orphans and widows, and by the mid 300's Christians were a majority in North Africa. The church had even spread out to people groups outside of the Roman areas and large numbers of Berber peoples came to know Christ. Christians in North Africa suffered greatly under the Roman Empire including vast numbers of martyrs, until the time of Constantine.

Daniel, Robin: *This Holy Seed*, Tamarisk Publications: Harpenden, Herts, 1992.

Groves, G.P., *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Vol. I and III, Lutterworth Press: London, 1955.

Rockness, Miriam Huffman, *A Passion for the Impossible*, Discovery House Publishers: Grand Rapids, MI, 1999.

## **Under Arab rule**

The seventh century brought with it the Arab invasion. Forced conversions to Islam nearly eradicated the Christian faith in North Africa. Berber people groups resisted for some time. Some small Christian communities were able to survive until the twelfth century, as the Arabs took advantage of them by taxation. Eventually all were converted to Islam. Those cities whom had been the strongest early on were the first to give way during the Invasion.

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/Intros/StAugustine.php>

<http://www.africanfront.com/conflict6.php>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761554128\\_7/Algeria.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761554128_7/Algeria.html)

<http://www.bethanypc.org/corybriefna.html>

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0859770.html>

[http://www.ewtn.com/new\\_evangelization/africa/history/countries1.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/new_evangelization/africa/history/countries1.htm)

<http://www.historyofjihad.org/africa.html>

Daniel, Robin: *This Holy Seed*, Tamarisk Publications: Harpenden, Herts, 1992.

Groves, G.P., *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Vol. I and III, Lutterworth Press: London, 1955.

Rockness, Miriam Huffman, *A Passion for the Impossible*, Discovery House Publishers: Grand Rapids, MI, 1999

## **Barbary Slave States**

Records show that as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, beginning with Moorish rule, and continuing until the 20<sup>th</sup> century people were being captured and taken as slaves in North Africa. Among those being forced into slavery were black Africans as well as large numbers of white Christian Europeans, and later on Canadian and American Christians.

The practice of slavery in North Africa was a result of the Barbary pirates who dominated the Mediterranean Sea with brutality as well as the Atlantic Ocean. Ships of pirates overtook cargo and passenger ships bringing all on board back as slaves. The Muslim Barbary States included Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Tripoli. Coastal cities in southern Europe were paralyzed in fear as ships often came ashore to capture and pillage villages.

Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century the southern Italian and coastline was nearly depopulated as a result. Over these centuries it is estimated that between 1 and 1.2 million slaves existed in North Africa. Over 20,000 white Christian slaves were being held in Algiers alone by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Slaves captured due to religion, ethnicity, or race were used in labor and rowing. Though the majority of slaves were male, female slaves were taken as concubines for pirates.

The children Crusaders who left France in 122A.D. were captured by a pirate ship and taken as slaves to Bougie, modern day Bejaia, in Algeria. Christian slaves from more wealthy nations were seen as valuable as they often were ransomed for large sums of money. Due to inadequate living and poor nourishment, the slaves often fell ill. Nearly 8,000 new slaves need to be captured every year to replace those who were sick and dying. Out of compassion for their suffering, Spanish Catholic priests established a hospital in Algeria to care for the dying slaves.

A French monk named Felix and a young French doctor named John de Matha, joined together in the 12<sup>th</sup> century with a mutual desire to confront the evils of slavery. A new monastic order was thus formed known as the Most Holy Trinity with this purpose intended. The monks sought to raise funds to ransom slaves. They became famous and when traveling to local villages would put on plays starring the newly set free captive in order to raise ransom money. They were successful and most joyfully received. It was not uncommon for monks to offer themselves as slaves in place of those they sought to set free. The Most Holy Trinity is credited with having rescued nearly 90,000 slaves.

[http://www.faithfreedom.org/Articles/SStephan/islamic\\_slavery.htm](http://www.faithfreedom.org/Articles/SStephan/islamic_slavery.htm)

<http://am.novopress.info/index.php?p=386>

[http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc\\_view.cfm?recnum=6147](http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=6147)

<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/briefs/20040322/slave.html>

Daniel, Robin: *This Holy Seed*, Tamarisk Publications: Harpenden, Herts, 1992.

## **People Groups**

## **Arab, Algerian (240,808)**

Alternate names for this people group are Arabized Berber, Arabized Tuareg, Bedouin Arab, and Jazir or Jaziri. Nearly one million have migrated to France seeking better education and employment. The Algerian dialect of Arabic is their heart language. Nomadic dialects differ somewhat and are largely of Bedouin origin. About 60% speak French as a second language, and the adult literacy rate was 61.5% in 1995.

They are unreached with the gospel having less than 2% evangelical Christians among them. Sunni Islam is the primary religion, though folk Islam is practiced. While the five pillars of Islam are followed, traditional beliefs are mixed with animistic practices. Prayers are offered to saints called marabouts and their tombs have been made into shrines for pilgrimages of those seeking aide with bareness, illness, marital problems, etc. Evil spirits, or jinn as they are called, are feared as are curses such as the evil eye. Amulets, like the hand of Fatima, may be worn for protection and the Qur'an is often used as a magical source of protection as well. Witchdoctors make potions of all kinds for those seeking to cast spells or gain powers. Fear is a primary element those following folk Islam face every day. Though few witnesses of the gospel are present in Algeria, the time of civil war has left many disillusioned with Islam. Through radio broadcasts and television programs as well as visions and dreams many have been coming to Christ in recent years. Scripture portions, the Jesus Film, and Christian audio recordings are available in Algerian Arabic. The complete Bible is available in standard Arabic and French.

Algerian Arabs trace their ancestry to the Arabian Desert and to those who moved into North Africa during the Arab invasion of seventh century, however, most have a mixture of Arab and Berber ancestry. Two distinct groups of Arabs are those who live in cities verses those who live in rural areas. Those in cities claim identity with the nation of Algeria, while the nomadic desert dwelling Arabs find greater identity in their tribe. Among the rural communities class differentiations also exist and are nobles, large landowners, peasants, and farmers. Agriculture is a primary means of living for many. Barley, wheat, and cereals, are common crops. Tomatoes, olives, grapes, potatoes, beans, and other fruits are also plentiful. Oases are filled with hundreds of date bearing palm trees. Chickens, goats, and sheep are primary livestock, and camels are a significant resource for nomads and also are a sign of wealth.

In villages, men do most of the agricultural work, though women participate in milking animals and making butter. Most of women's work is confined to taking care of the home and children. Women in cities may work outside of the home, but it is most often discouraged. Family loyalty is strong and the reputation of the family is very important. The modesty and purity of female members of each family is directly related to reputation and is therefore guarded very carefully. Mothers are commonly the one's to find a bride for their son. Marriages are arranged, and most are monogamous though polygamy is allowed. Relationships with family and friends are of great importance within Algerian society. Muslims who convert to Christianity face persecution from family members and the community.

Rural towns are surrounded by walls and large gates. Nomads build homes that are portable and suitable for their migratory lifestyle. The traditional dress of Algerian women is the haik, a long white dress that covers the hair and body. In cities some women have chosen a western style of dress, though they may be targets of brutality for Islamic fundamentalists who see women's dress as an important sign of one's faithfulness to their religion. Skirts and head scarfs are still worn by others. Men wear cotton burnouses, a cloak with a hood, and turbans. Men living in cities are often spend time at cafes drinking tea and coffee.

Festivals and holidays are important aspects of Algerian Arab culture. Elaborate parties and ceremonies surround births, deaths, male children's first haircut and circumcision, and especially weddings. Wedding celebrations often last from several days to one week. Muslim holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha are opportunities for celebration as well. Hospitality is an integral part of their society. The Algerian people are warm, kind, and generous, and are always glad to make new friends. Folk music, dancing, and folk lore are also important aspects of community and are common pass times. Algerians are known for their poetry and for their food. Cous cous is a national dish, and hot mint tea is a part of daily cuisine. Relationships with the Kabyle Berbers have always been tense as the Berbers desire to become their own nation and to preserve their own language and culture. Great resentment has grown between the two groups.

<http://www.gosahara.org/aa.html>

<http://www.country-studies.com/algeria/ethnic-groups-and-languages.html>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopetry.php?rop3=100226&rogs3=AG>

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### **Arab, Levantine (208,604)**

Levantine Arabs living in Tunisia may be known by numerous different names such as Baggara, Anglolan Arab, Bedouin Arab, Bosnian Muslims, Coast Arab, Hemet, Iraqi Arab, Lebanese Arab, Nawar, Palestinian Arab, Saudi Arab, Syrian Arab, and Syro-Lebanese Arab. The Levantine Arabs, thus, are a group of various Arabs who have immigrated to the Maghreb, Northern Africa, from the Levant area of the Middle East. Modern Standard Arabic is their spoken language. The Bible, Jesus Film, God's Story Video, Father's Love Letters, Christian radio broadcasts, Christian audio recordings, and other Christian written literature are available in their language. They are Sunni Muslims. About 9% are Christian, from the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

Today there are about 200 million Arabs spread across 22 nation's world wide. They hold in common the Arabic language and pride in being Arab. Nearly 40% of all Arabs live in urban settings. This change has lessened ties to tribal clans and a stronger national identity is held. Those living in cities have greater access to education and a variety of employment options. Women have a greater sense of freedom to work outside of their homes. Names have significant meaning in Arab culture representing, family, tribe, and religion. Male children are circumcised at age seven as a rite of passage. These Diaspora Arabs represent a new middle class as they have greater access to employment.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=100425&rog3=MO>  
<http://www.peoplesgroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=42783>

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**Arab, Tunisian (10,406,040)**

Tunisian Arabs today live in Tunisia, Libya, and France. Tunisian Arabic is their heart language. The dialect of Arabic varies from one part of the country to another. The Bible, Jesus Film, a satellite program, and Christian audio recordings are available in their language. French is spoken as a second language by more than 25% of the population. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Tunisian Arabs are listed among the least reached peoples of the world.

Tunisian Arabs are a mixture of different peoples including Arab, Roman, Greek, Sicilian, French and Berber. A French colony from 1870 to 1956, French culture can readily be seen in language, food, architecture, and other elements of culture.

Characteristically, Tunisians have a large middle class, a large young population, and their own unique dialect of Arabic. Tunisia is a modern and progressive country located in the Atlas Mountains to the north and the Sahara Desert to the south.

Over 60% of the population lives in cities. Agriculture, however, is a common means of earning ones living; nearly 80% support themselves by this means. Common crops include wheat, vegetables, olives, almonds, and dates, as well as dairy products provided from live stock.

Education is has a greater emphasis in Tunisia than do other North African countries, with nearly 100% attendance of all boys and girls in primary school. Adult literacy rate is 67%.

Arabic is the language of instruction for the first two years of primary school; a mixture of French and Arabic is used during lecture for the remaining years. There are universities in Tunisia containing 162,000 students in all; many Tunisian students chose to continue their education abroad.

Greater freedom exists in Tunisia for interaction between the sexes especially for students and those living in cities. Segregation remains stronger in the countryside.

They are friendly and hospitable people. Cous cous and hot mint tea are readily served to guests. Loyalty to family and strong commitment to Islam are characteristic of Tunisians. European style clothing is common today, though traditional dress is also worn. Women are not obligated to wear veils. Older women wear sifsari, a long white fabric that covers the head and body. Women in the country side prefer brightly colored clothing and headscarves. Men wear red Fez hats and a wool clock haled a djellaba.

Crafts noted for the area are ceramics, rugs, jewelry, and leather products. They are also known for traditional music and dancing.

Persecution from the government is light, however, among families and community's persecution is greater. A rich Christian heritage is attributed to Tunisian including the Church father Tertullian who was Tunisian. Unfortunately today due to family and social pressure there are only around 100 believers in the entire country. Many fellowships of believers were begun, however, following the 1999 year of prayer focus for Tunisia.

[www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)  
[www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org)  
<http://www.gosahara.org/tna.html>

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### **Bedouin, Arad (45,000)**

The Arad speak Hassaniyya. The Jesus Film and Christian audio recordings are available in their language, while the Bible is not. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs. There are no known believers among them.

The word Bedouin finds its origin from an Arabic word for desert dweller. Originally from the Arabian Desert, they migrated westward through Egypt during the seventh century. Today they are nomadic or semi-nomadic and both herd animals and practice farming. Times of migration are determined by water supply. Livestock are the basis for their economy, and due to desert life and lack of food sources many experience periods of hunger during their life. They are further divided into tribes. Bedouins are not allowed to marry outside of their own tribe.

Desert life is difficult. Light weight and lightly colored clothing is loosely worn in the baking heat. The clothing covers everything except ones hands, feet, and face. Their temporary homes are tents made of goat or camel hair and are black in color. A divider is placed in the middle, gata, which separates women, children, cooking dishes, on one side, and men and guests on the other. Tents of more wealthy families are evident by their length. Tent curtains are rolled up to provide cooler breezes, and are tightly closed during sand or rain storms The Bedouin diet is largely milk products: yogurt, milk, and butter. Rice and unleavened bread is used occasionally. Dates found at desert Oasis are eaten for desert.

Meat is only eaten when there is a time of celebration such as a wedding or when guests are present. Hospitality is highly valued. Guests are also given a sweet mint tea or a strong black coffee. Oral poetry is also part of their culture and stories of practicing hospitality to guests are known.

[http://www.thinkwow.com/surgeup/what\\_do\\_muslims\\_believe.htm](http://www.thinkwow.com/surgeup/what_do_muslims_believe.htm)  
<http://www.global-prayer-digest.org/monthdetails/2000/md-November-2000.asp>  
<http://www.globalchristianity.org/gd/wcrlist.htm>  
<http://www.josto.net/tuareg/tuareg.html>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>  
<http://missionfrontiers.org/2002/01/PDF/16-18Johnson.pdf>  
<http://www.khaleejtimes.co.ae/ktarchive/100302/uae.htm>

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### **Bedouin, Gafsa (31,000)**

The Gafsa live in central Tunisia near Gafsa city and just north of the Shatt al-Ghand body of water. They speak Southern Levantine Arabic. Scripture portions and Christian audio recordings are available in their language. The Gafsa are 100% Sunni Muslims. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs.

The word Bedouin finds its origin from an Arabic word for desert dweller. Originally from the Arabian Desert, the Gafsa, migrated westward through Egypt during the seventh century. Today they are semi-nomadic and both herd animals and farm. Times of migration are determined by water supply. Livestock are the basis for their economy, and due to desert life and lack of food sources many experience periods of hunger during their life. Bedouins are not allowed to marry outside of their own tribe.

Desert life is difficult. Light weight and lightly colored clothing is loosely worn in the baking heat. The clothing covers everything except ones hands, feet, and face. Their temporary homes are tents made of goat or camel hair and are black in color. A divider is placed in the middle, gata, which separates women, children, cooking dishes, on one side, and men and guests on the other. Tents of more wealthy families are evident by their length. Tent curtains are rolled up to provide cooler breezes, and are tightly closed during sand or rain storms The Bedouin diet is largely milk products: yogurt, milk, and butter. Rice and unleavened bread is used occasionally. Dates found at desert Oasis are eaten for desert.

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<http://www.global-prayer-digest.org/monthdetails/2000/md-November-2000.asp>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=102751&rog3=AG>  
<http://www.prayway.com/unreached/peoplegroups1/1931.html>

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### **Bedouin, Hamama (326,000)**

This unreached people group speaks an Algerian Saharan dialect of Arabic. The Jesus Film and Christian audio recordings are available in this language. The Hamama make

up 3.5% of Tunisia's total population. The Hamama are 100% Sunni Muslims. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs.

The word Bedouin finds its origin from an Arabic word for desert dweller. Originally from the Arabian Desert, the Hamama, migrated westward through Egypt during the seventh century. Today they are semi-nomadic and both herd animals and farm. Times of migration are determined by water supply. Livestock are the basis for their economy, and due to desert life and lack of food sources many experience periods of hunger during their life. Bedouins are not allowed to marry outside of their own tribe.

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<http://www.global-prayer-digest.org/monthdetails/2000/md-November-2000.asp>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=102751&rog3=AG>  
<http://www.prayway.com/unreached/peoplegroups1/1931.html>

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### **Bedouin, Jerid (82,000)**

This groups name may also be spelled Djerid. An Algerian Saharan dialect of Arabic is their heart language. The Jesus Film and Christian audio recordings are available in this language. The Jerid are 100% Sunni Muslims. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs.

The word Bedouin finds its origin from an Arabic word for desert dweller. Originally from the Arabian Desert, the Jerid, migrated westward through Egypt during the seventh century. Today they are semi-nomadic and both herd animals and farm. Times of migration are determined by water supply. Livestock are the basis for their economy, and due to desert life and lack of food sources many experience periods of hunger during their life. Bedouins are not allowed to marry outside of their own tribe.



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<http://www.global-prayer-digest.org/monthdetails/2000/md-November-2000.asp>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=102751&rog3=AG>  
<http://www.prayway.com/unreached/peoplegroups1/1931.html>

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### **Bedouin, Sahel (2,158,000)**

Also known as Saadi Bedouin, the Sahel live along the Tunisian coast line and in the southern most part of the country. Badawi is their heart language and Tunisian Arabic is also spoken by them. The Bible, Jesus Film, and Christian audio recordings are available in Tunisian Arabic.

The Sahel comprise 21.4% of Tunisia's total population. They are 99.9% Sunni Muslim. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs. There are around 190 Sahel Christians.

The word Bedouin finds its origin from an Arabic word for desert dweller. Originally from the Arabian Desert, the Bedouin, migrated westward through Egypt during the seventh century. Today they are semi-nomadic and both herd animals and farm. Times of migration are determined by water supply. Livestock are the basis for their economy, and due to desert life and lack of food sources many experience periods of hunger during their life. Bedouins are not allowed to marry outside of their own tribe.

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<http://www.global-prayer-digest.org/monthdetails/2000/md-November-2000.asp>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=102751&rog3=AG>  
<http://www.prayway.com/unreached/peoplegroups1/1931.html>  
[http://kcm.co.kr/bethany\\_eng/p\\_code1/54.html](http://kcm.co.kr/bethany_eng/p_code1/54.html)  
<http://www.cmmequip.org/intercede/2004-11-intercede.pdf>  
[http://arabworld.nitle.org/texts.php?module\\_id=1&reading\\_id=113&sequence=5](http://arabworld.nitle.org/texts.php?module_id=1&reading_id=113&sequence=5)

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### **British (90)**

This people group may also be referred to as Angol-Pakistani, Anglophone, Euronesian, Scot, Scottish, and White. English is their primary language and they are 71% Christian, the Church of England. The Bible, Jesus Film, Christian audio recordings, Christian radio broadcasts, and numerous other Christian resources are available as well. British immigrants to Tunisia have come there largely through their work. British Embassy and other government personnel make up some of the population, though the oil and gas sector is the largest area of British investment, i.e. British Petroleum. Some are recruited to be teachers of English as a second language.

<http://www.itcilo.it/english/actrav/telearn/global/ilo/frame/eneprfil.htm>  
[http://www.onestopenglish.com/ProfessionalSupport/Travellog/teaching\\_english\\_algeria.htm](http://www.onestopenglish.com/ProfessionalSupport/Travellog/teaching_english_algeria.htm)  
<http://www.worldreport-ind.com/algeria/introduction.htm>

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### **Byelorussian (90)**

This group is known by the name Belarussian as well. They are descended from the Rus people, as are the Ukrainians and Russians. They speak the Belarusan language which has a northeastern and a southwestern dialect. Despite hardships over the Belarussian history they have been able to maintain language and culture.

As early as the 12<sup>th</sup> Century the Belorussians were developing a cultural identity, customs, and language. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century though, the Lithuanians were asserting themselves over them, but the Belarussians retained their sense of identity. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Roman Catholicism spread into the northwest but most retained an Orthodox faith. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Poland was divided and Belarussian lands. Over their history the Belarussian's were invaded by the Russians, Poles, Germans, Swedes, Danes, French and Ukrainians. They have struggled as a people to maintain their populace through war, and the last tragedy, radiation from Chernobyl.

The Belarussians are well educated and tolerant people that enjoy nature. They are also known to be very generous and hospitable. The Bible was first printed in Belarusian in 1517-19. They have Gospel audio recordings, Christian Radio Broadcasting and the Jesus Film as well. They are 25% non-religious. There are 70% Russian Orthodox or Roman Catholic. An emerging evangelical church is reported that may be nearing 5%.

<http://www.peopleteams.org/teambelarus/default.com>  
<http://www.russiatoday.ru/en/profile/people/nat/897.html>  
[http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Belarusian\\_language](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Belarusian_language)  
<http://www.belarus.org.uk/history.htm>  
<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Belarusians>

12223

### **Deaf (unknown)**

The heart language of this Muslim people group is Tunisian Sign Language. While Tunisian Sign Language is a distinct language it has a mixture of French and Italian Sign Language influences. There are no Christian resources available in Tunisian Sign Language.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=tse](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tse)  
<http://www.theinterpretersfriend.com/indj/dcoew/tunisia.html>

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### **Duwinna (3,700)**

The Duwinna are a Berber people group that lives in southeast Tunisia on the islands of Jerba. Some may be found living in Tunis, and in the southern Tunisian village Tamezret. Nafusi is their mother tongue and there are no Christian resources available in this language. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs. There are no known believers among them.

Berber peoples inhabited the Maghreb of North Africa, the area where Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, are located, before the seventh century Arab invasion. The word Berber is Latin in origin and means barbarian and was first coined by the Romans during the third century. Despite Arabization which has taken place over centuries, most Berbers have maintained their own language and aspects of culture. They call themselves Imazighen or noble men.

As a semi-nomadic people, farming and cattle breeding are the basis for Berber economy. Goats and sheep are herded. Dairy products, wool and hides are benefits provided by domestic animals. Some are winter nomads bringing their flocks to graze in valleys during winter months, while others are spring nomads, bringing their flocks into the mountains during the summer. Berbers are known for their pottery, rugs, and other crafts. They live in black goat hair tents. Monogamous marriages are most commonly practiced, though polygamy exists in rare cases. Areas of need among this people include community development assessment and projects.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show\\_language.asp?code=TZM](http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=TZM)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=tzm](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tzm)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=103014&rog3=AG>

<http://www.classicjourneys.co.uk/dynamic/content.php?id=35>

Phillips, David J. *Peoples on the Move*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001, 232.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=jbn](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=jbn)

[http://www.galenfrysinger.com/ghadames\\_libya.htm](http://www.galenfrysinger.com/ghadames_libya.htm)

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### **French (11,000)**

Alternate names for this people group include Metropolitan and Mauritian Mulattoo. French is their heart language. The Bible, Jesus Film, God's Story Video, the Father's Love Letters, Christian audio recordings, and Christian radio broadcasts are available in this language. Christianity is the primary religion, particularly Roman Catholicism. Though most French are only nominally Catholic. Only .40% are evangelical.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=103059&rog3=AG>

12212

### **Ghadames (2,749)**

This people group's name may also be spelled Gadames. They are a Berber people group and located in a small oasis at the border of Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Ghadames is their heart language. There are no Christian resources in this language. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs. There are no known believers among them.

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[http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show\\_language.asp?code=TZM](http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=TZM)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=tzm](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tzm)

<http://www.joshuaoproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=103014&rog3=AG>

<http://www.classicjourneys.co.uk/dynamic/content.php?id=35>

Phillips, David J. *Peoples on the Move*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001, 232.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=gha](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=gha)

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### **Greek (300)**

They may also go by Romeos, Dimotiki, Greek Cypriot, Hellenic, Romei, or Urum. The Black Sea area was a place of trade between the Byzantine Empire and its neighbors for centuries. As power changed hands the Black Sea has remained a place of importance in trade relations. The spread of religion also occurred throughout the Black Sea region. Greek Orthodox and missionaries have carried their Christianity to the Slavs, Khazars, and Alans.

The Russians raided the Black Sea during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries but later traded with them. During the era of the Golden Horde, Greeks immigrated to the Russian lands and contributed much to their culture. After the fall of Byzantium, trade with the Ottomans and Russians made use of the Greeks. Conditions for the Greeks changed drastically from the Tsarist years to the Bolsheviks revolution. The Greeks fought against the Bolsheviks and many were deported to remote areas of Russia.

Churches and schools of the Greek Orthodoxy were closed. More hardship came during World War II under the Nazis. The Greeks were caught in the Crimean War conflict and some were deported to Khazakstand with the Crimean Tatars. After Stalin died, many Greeks were allowed to return to the Black Sea region. Many immigrated to Greece as well.

They are 90% Greek Orthodox. They have the Bible, Gospel audio recordings, and the Jesus film in Greek.

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Greek](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk_b.exe?Greek)

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### **Italian (10,000)**

These people are settlers from Italy. Christianity makes up 84% of the people. There is a widespread disciplined church. The Bible, God Story Video, Jesus Film, audio recordings, web, and Christian broadcasting have been translated into their language.

12215

### **Jerba (27,876)**

Gerba is an alternate spelling for this people group's name. The Jerba live on the Island of Jerba just off the south eastern coast of the Tunisian mainland in the Gulf of Gabes. Nafusi is their heart language.

There are no Christian resources available in this language. Arabic is spoken as a second language by 50% of the population. The Jerba are 99% Sunni Muslim of the strict Wahhabi sect. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs. There are no known believers among them.

The Jerba Berbers have lived on the island for thousands of years maintaining their own distinct language and culture. Over the centuries they have been conquered by the Romans, Carthaginians, Arabs, Byzantines, European Crusaders, Turks, and the French. The last century has brought settlers to the Island from the mainland, yet in recent years many are moving back as lack of water supply has caused economic depression.

The Island has a plateau reaching 150 feet in elevation. Due to the scarcity of fresh water on the Island, Jerban's collect rain water in tanks and cisterns for use. Farming is isolated to particular areas within the Island only. Staple crops include vegetables, olives, and cereals. Fishing is another industry for the Islanders. Families often own land on the mainland and hire workers to tend to them.

Most income is earned through partnerships formed between families. One man will go to the mainland to work for nine months, sending back his earnings to his family and the partnership, at the end of the nine months, another man in the partnership will go to the mainland and do the same. Jerban homes are gathered into homesteads rather than villages and cities; this scattered method of housing was originally designed to guard against invaders attack many families at once.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104234&rog3=TS>  
<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=12215>

12217

### **Jew, Tunisian (1,560)**

Also known as the Judeo-Tunisian Arabs and the Maghreb Jews, they speak a Judeo-Tunisian dialect of Arabic. Scripture portions are the only Christian resource available in this language. Jews believe in a Supreme creator God. Outside of this fundamental belief, Jewish religious practices can greatly vary. Four most prevalent groups of the Jewish faith are the Orthodox, the ultra-Orthodox, the Conservative, and the Reform. It is the most ancient monotheistic religion in the world.

Jews have been present in Tunisia since before the destruction of the First Temple in the sixth century B.C. according to their tradition. Jews were also present during the Roman era. Persecution of the Jewish people living in the area of modern day Tunisia surfaced over the centuries and under the leadership of numerous rulers.

Following the Second World War, the Jewish population in Tunisia numbered near 105,000. By 1967 many Jews had immigrated to France or Israel depleting the population in Tunisia to approximately 20,000. The population continued to dwindle,

and today only 1,500 remain. During World War II, Tunisia was the only North African country to be occupied by Germany. Forced labor and executions took place during the occupation. Tunisia's 1956 Independence did little to provide hope for the Jewish communities, as Jewish parts of the cities were destroyed in order to make more modern improvements. This destruction to Jewish areas and the riots attacking Jews in 1967, led to the mass migrations to Europe, (7,000) and to Israel (40,000).

Today a small remnant remains, mostly in Tunis and on the Island of Jerba. It is believed that the sight of a 19<sup>th</sup> Synagogue on the Island of Jerba has been the location of Jewish synagogues for over 1,900 years. Pilgrimages are made to this location each year during the holiday of Lag Ba'Omer, the date marking the death of a mystic teacher of Kabbalah, Rabbi Shim bar Yochai. Primary and secondary schools as well as rabbinic schools may be found among the Jewish communities.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Tunisia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Tunisia)  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

12218

### **Maltese (7,843)**

Maltese is the heart language of this people group. The Bible, Jesus Film, Christian audio recordings, and Christian radio broadcasts are available in this language. Second generation immigrants speak French outside the home and Maltese with their families. Immigrants beyond the second generation speak French and know a limited number of prayers, etc. in Maltese. The Maltese are 90% Protestant Christian.

Malta is the largest of five separate islands in the Mediterranean just south of Sicily. The earliest record of Malta is recorded in the biblical story of Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27:27-28:10. Tunisia is located 194 miles to the west of Malta. Mass immigration to North Africa began at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the French expansion which provided opportunity for employment and good living for European settlers. In 1900 the Maltese population in Tunisia numbered 7,000. Immigrations, however, may date back as early as 1429 with forced and voluntary relocation.

<http://www.allmalta.com/mcm/convtion.html>  
<http://encyclopedias.families.com/malta-1400-1407-ctc>  
<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=12218>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=106188&rog3=TS>

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### **Matmata (3,100)**

Nafusi is the mother tongue of the Matmata. There are no Christian resources in this language. The Matmata are a Berber people group who are followers of Sunni Islam. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village

witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs. There are no known believers among them.

Matmata, located only 40 km from the Mediterranean Sea and 400 meters above sea level, is a famous area in Tunisia (most well known for the Star Wars filming which took place there). These hard working people fled Arabs during the invasion to live in unique cave dwellings. The landscape appears lunar with large craters that each serves as a house. The homes entrance is a tunnel which leads to rooms, a courtyard and storage areas. The granaries located in the upper rooms may only be accessed by rope. Figs, olives, barley, and palms grow in the area. The location of the Matmata provides pure and dry air causing them to be known for their good health and long life span.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>  
<http://www.world66.com/africa/tunisia/matmata>

12219

### **Sened (5,965)**

Sened is their language. It is believed to be extinct or only spoken partially by some elderly. Others believe it to be the same as the Zenati language spoken in Tunisia. There are no Christian resources available in the Sened language. This Berber people group lives in Southern Tunisia. They are Sunni Muslims and are less than 1% Christian. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Daily life is infiltrated with Islamic beliefs.

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=12219>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>  
<http://www.waac.info/library/Demography/tunisia/languages.html>

12220

### **Shawiya (43,081)**

Berber peoples inhabited the Maghreb of North Africa, the area where Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, are located, before the seventh century Arab invasion. The word Berber is Latin in origin and means barbarian and was first coined by the Romans during the third century. Despite Arabization which has taken place over centuries, most Berbers have maintained their own language and aspects of culture. They call themselves Imazighen or noble men.

The Shawiya live in the Aures Mountains, part of the Atlas Mountains, in northern Algeria. Chaouia, or Tachawit as it is also called, is their heart language. Scripture portions and the Jesus Film are available in their language. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. There are no known believers among this people group. They are 100% Muslim.



Farming and cattle breeding are the basis for Berber economy. Dairy products, wool and hides are benefits provided by domestic animals. Berbers are known for their pottery, rugs, and other crafts. Monogamous marriages are most commonly practiced, though polygamy exists in rare cases. The Shawiya sought refuge in the mountains with the introduction of Arab culture into Algeria.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show\\_language.asp?code=TZM](http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=TZM)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=tzm](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tzm)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=103014&rog3=AG>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11273>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=108925&rog3=AG>

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### **Tamezret (3,100)**

Nafusi is the heart language of the Tamezret. There are no Christian resources available in this language. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. There are no known believers among this people group. They are 100% Muslim.

Tamezret is located only 13 km west of Matmata. Their homes, however, are built above ground and out of stone. Women wear brightly colored shawls died with henna and often have tattoos on their faces.

<http://homepage.mac.com/melissaenderle/tunisia/matmataregion.html>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

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### **Taoujjout, Nafusi (1,000)**

The Taoujjout are Nafusi speakers. There are no Christian resources available in this language. This people group inhabits southern Tunisia south of Gabes. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. There are no known believers among this people group. They are 100% Muslim.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=jbn](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=jbn)

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### **Tmagourt (6,577)**

This Berber people group formerly spoke Sened, which is believed to currently extinct as only the elderly spoke this language in 1968, and currently speaks Tunisian Arabic. Scripture portions, the Jesus Film, and Christian audio recordings are available in

Tunisian Arabic. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village witchdoctors. Less than 2% of the Tmagourt are Christian.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show\\_language.asp?code=SDS](http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=SDS)

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=42879>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

<http://www.masterliness.com/a/Sened.htm>

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### **Zawa (6,200)**

Zaoua is an alternate spelling and Nafusi is the heart language of this people group. There are no Christian resources available in this language. They are located in southern Tunisia. Sunni Islam is the practiced religion. Folk Islam, a belief in the spirit world, is mixed with traditional Islamic teachings, and is common among Berbers. Holy men known as Marabouts operate as village shamen. There are no known believers among this people group. They are 100% Muslim.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=111159&rog3=TS>

### **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelical Christians and Churches should learn from the Christian experience in Tunisia. In earlier periods, This area had widespread Christian presence. Schism, heresy, and even more detrimental, the failure to make Christianity local and indigenous led to a massive falling away from the Christian faith. The Muslim invasion profited from this situation and the people of the area swiftly turned to Islam. The Christian population is now one-fifteenth of its size in 1956. (*Operation World*)
2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should be encouraged by the response to the prayer movement in 1999. Help should be given to these believers many who are serving in small groups and house churches.
3. Evangelical Christians and Churches should recognize the challenge of the Berber communities and seek means of introducing the Gospel. Tunisia is one of the more open of such societies in the world. The Island of Djerba (Gerba or Jerba) has 65000 population (other reports number only 28,000) and few Christians. The gospel might make in roads into this unique cultural setting.
4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seize the opportunity of winning some of the many Tunisians who are living outside Tunisia. Thousands are in France, Germany, Belgium and other countries. Should these be won to Christ, they might someday influence the people in their homeland.
5. Evangelical Christians and Churches should increase efforts to use the Jesus film that is available in both standard Arabic and Tunisian Arabic. Christian radio can have some impact. Christian literature is available and should be used.
6. Evangelical Christians and Churches should constantly pray that opening for the gospel will be a reality in countries such as Tunisia

Story telling is a beneficial method to use when sharing the gospel with Algerian people as their culture is oral in nature. The Jesus Film and other audio or visual aides will equally be useful as many are illiterate. Redemptive analogies may be drawn during the time of the big Eid when Muslims sacrifice a goat, lamb, or cow in honor of the sacrifice Abraham made. Sharing the Passover story flows naturally into conversation during that time of year. Weddings are another celebration in which transition to the gospel can easily happen. There are several parallels in how Tunisian weddings are performed and Revelation 19, when the bride of Christ is made ready. Tunisians are very relational people; therefore, establishing trusting friendships that lead into a sharing of the gospel and the Christians life are more likely to be well received rather than an upfront confrontational method of sharing Christ.

**Links-**

For information about the land, people, and sights:

<http://name.imb.org/Tunisia.htm>

<http://www.tunisiaguide.com/welcome/people.html>