



accounts for 95% of export income, but little of this wealth trickles down to the masses. US-led sanctions significantly damaged the economy; with sanctions now lifted, the economy is accelerating. Attracting foreign investment, reducing a high rate of unemployment and increasing productivity through privatization are the main challenges.

HDI Rank 55th/182. **Public debt** 55% of GDP. **Income/person** \$14,479 (31% of USA).

Politics

Ruled by Italy 1911-1943. Full independence in 1951 as a monarchy. The military coup of 1969 led to a revolutionary republic under the leadership of Muammar Qaddafi. He has shifted from Islamic revolution to Arab nationalism to a more moderate stance in recent years, although the police and military still play a prominent role. Relationship with the EU is crucial to Libya, since it is inundated with migrants seeking illegal entry into Europe.

Libya

Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya Africa

Geography

Area 1,775,500 sq km. Mostly Saharan desert; only a coastal Mediterranean strip, 2% of its land area, is arable.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	6,545,619	2.02%
2020	7,698,742	1.47%
2030	8,518,558	0.90%

Capital Tripoli 1,107,556. **Other major city** Benghazi 1.3 million. **Urbanites** 77.9%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 30%. **Life expectancy** 73.8 yrs.

Peoples

Population data remains a difficult issue, since undocumented foreign migrants compose a sizeable but indeterminate percentage of Libya's population (possibly up to 25%). All figures are estimates.

Arab and related 95.9%.

Arab 76.4%. Libyan Arab 30.1%; Cyrenaican Arab 27%; Egyptian 7.7%.

Berber 5.8%. About half are Arabized, assimilation makes measuring Berber peoples difficult. 8 groups, largest: Nafusah; Jalo; Zuwarah; Jofrah; Ghadames.

Bedouin 13.7%. Sanusi 9.0%; Fezzan 3.2%.

Others 4.1%. Many labourers from surrounding lands. Predominantly Punjabi, Italian, Serbian, Gypsy, Croatian, Sinhalese. Many thousands of undocumented sub-Saharan Africans in transit to Europe are not included here.

Literacy 85.4%. **Official language** Arabic. **All languages** 32. **Indigenous languages** 9. **Languages with Scriptures** 1Bi 1por.

Economy

Transformed by discovery of oil in 1959. Oil

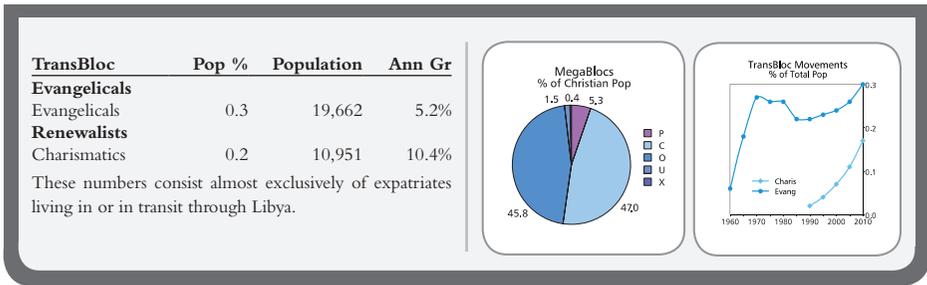
Religion

Sunni Islam is the state religion, and the government endorses a moderate form of Islam. Radical Islamist ideology is seen as a threat. Evangelism of Libyan citizens is illegal, but Christians are generally left alone unless families ask the state to intervene. All faiths are free to worship in their own homes; meetings of more than six people are illegal, though this law is not often enforced. Figures below are approximations.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	97.02	6,350,560	2.0%
Christian	2.64	172,804	2.8%
Non-religious	0.30	19,637	5.8%
Buddhist	0.03	1,964	2.0%
Hindu	0.01	655	2.0%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	10	0.14	9,000	2.8%
Independent	4	0.01	1,000	7.6%
Catholic	1	1.22	80,000	1.3%
Orthodox	4	1.19	78,000	4.3%
Unaffiliated		<0.01	3,000	8.5%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	6	44,444	80,000
Coptic Orthodox Ch	O	5	27,200	68,000
Coptic Evangelical Ch	P	2	2,700	6,750
Greek Orthodox Ch	O	2	871	2,900
Other Protestant groups	P	7	1,050	1,438
Other denominations[12]		16	6,057	9,164
Total Christians[21]		38	82,322	168,252



Answers to Prayer

1 **The spiritual climate in Libya has changed significantly.** God is doing a new work in this land (a response to the sustained and specific intercession of past years?). There is notable spiritual hunger among Libyans, but not enough Bibles for those seeking them. Increasing numbers of Libyans are coming to Christ (though still only a few), and expatriate Christians now enjoy greater spiritual liberty than in the past. Praise God for these developments and pray that they would continue.

Challenges for Prayer

1 **Libya's long isolation is ending.** Sanctions have ended, foreign investment and trade are increasing and the government is becoming more moderate. Libyan nationals have distinguished themselves as gracious and friendly; pray that they might be open to the gospel as it is shared sensitively. Pray also for Libya's future; its ruler will not live forever, and whoever succeeds him could shape the nation profoundly.

2 **Large numbers of migrants pass into Libya,** mostly from sub-Saharan Africa, looking for economic opportunities. Some find work in Libya, most are trying to get into Europe. Migration drains Libya's coffers and human resources and often ends in disillusionment or even tragedy for those braving the deserts and seas to find a new life. Pray that these tens or even hundreds of thousands would find salvation and not just earthly treasures. A significant portion are believers; pray that they might have a powerful spiritual impact on Libyans and fellow migrants.

3 **The Christian community is growing,** but is mostly foreign. Catholic and Orthodox groups dominate numerically, but Protestants and Independent groups are more active in faith and practice. The need for pastoral care is felt across almost all denominations. Pray for renewal in the churches; the opportunity is great for nominals to meet Christ, and for believers to impact others with the gospel.

4 **Libyan believers are increasing in numbers and faith** and enjoy surprising freedom as a Christian community, but they still face many obstacles to fellowship, including fear of infiltrators. Libyans remain off-limits for evangelism, and approaches to them are risky for all involved. Continued state surveillance and family/social pressures are strong disincentives. Pray for greater religious freedom so that more might hear the gospel and be able to follow Jesus openly. Pray also for Libyan believers to stand firm in their faith and to find spiritually edifying relationships – including suitable marriage partners in a society where marriage is typically arranged with extended family.

5 **Specific areas of ministry:**

a) **Broadcasting.** Radio and satellite television provide two of the very few ways to evangelize Libyans. Three different shortwave-radio stations broadcast programmes to Libya: IBRA (over Radio Moscow), **HCJB** and Adventist World Radio, but only 4.5 hours/week are in Arabic. The widespread use of satellite dishes (in the majority of households) enables **SAT-7** and other Christian satellite-television broadcasts to reach into homes. Pray for creative and effective

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programmes with the means to disciple responsive listeners, and pray for protection for those who respond.

- b) Scripture.** There is a great need for Bibles; there are far too few to go around. There are many materials in standard Arabic, but no Scriptures and almost no audio or video resources in Libyan Arabic. Pray that work on this may start so Libyans can read or hear the gospel in their heart language.
- c) Internet.** Access, though strictly censored in Libya, is becoming more available and open. Pray that Libyans may be drawn to Christian websites and attracted to the gospel. Many Christian-focused websites in Arabic are having a profound impact.
- d) *The visit of the OM ship*** built bridges between the global Christian community and Libya as well as provided much-needed books and literature for the Libyan public. Pray for further opportunities to connect Libya and her people to the wider Christian world.