

# Libya

## *Ethnicity in Libya*

### *Group selection*

Throughout its political history, Libya has been marked by its complex ethnic and tribal divisions. Only politically relevant ethnic groups are coded for here, although these groups may be further divided by tribal distinctions and respective grievances. A recent consultancy estimates that Libya has up to 140 tribes, of which only around 30 have "particular significance" (<sup>1813</sup>).

<sup>1813</sup> [Apps, 2011]

### *Power relations*

*1951 - 1969:* The end of the Allied Occupation of Libya and the beginning of Libyan independence was achieved with the formation of the federal United Libyan Kingdom by December 1951 with Idris as King. Under the new federal government and constitution, the Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan states were declared to have autonomy (coded Arabs: dominant).

Jews: An estimated 31,000 Libyan Jews migrated to Israel amid violent anti-Jewish discrimination between 1948 and 1951 (coded: discriminated), leaving an estimated 7,000 remaining in the country (< 0.001) (<sup>1814</sup>). With the establishment of Libya's 1951 independence, Jews were officially granted "guarantees of protection" under King Idris' inclusive policy (Arabs coded: dominant; Berbers, Tu-areg, Toubou: irrelevant) (<sup>1815</sup>). However, Arab nationalist pressure following independence led to the gradual imposition of further legal restrictions on Jewish legal status, voting rights, public service, "commerce, licenses and holding of property", in addition to further anti-Jewish propaganda and violence which came to a peak around the time of the 1967 Six-Day War.

<sup>1814</sup> [Gruen, 1988]

<sup>1815</sup> [Gruen, 1988]

In 1969, Idris' monarchy was overthrown under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi, and the Libyan Arab Republic was proclaimed. Under the rule of Colonel Qadhafi and his discriminatory state policies against non-Arab minorities, anti-Jewish sentiment was further propagated (<sup>1816</sup>). Libya's constitutional declaration of 1969 defines Libya as an Arab state, and the government denies the existence of minority groups (coded: Arab Monopoly) (<sup>1817</sup>). By 1970, virtually all remaining Jews emigrated from Libya (coded: irrelevance post-1970).

<sup>1816</sup> [Gruen, 1988]

<sup>1817</sup> [Minority Rights Group, 2011]

*1970 - 2011:* Toubou: The Toubou (Tebou/Tibu/...) are an ethnic minority primarily located in the south of Libya. The Toubou are reportedly darker in appearance than the majority of Libyan Arabs and have experienced a history of social, economic and political discrimination, especially under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi. The Library of Congress Study on Libya (<sup>1818</sup>) reports : "In Libya as a whole, dark-skinned people are looked down upon, the degree of discrimination increasing with the darkness of the skin."

<sup>1818</sup> [Library of Congress, 1987]

The literature contained on source which claimed the Toubou make up an estimated 0.2 of the population (<sup>1819</sup>), but the previous coding derives the proportion of the population of the Toubous from the Joshua Project homepage and found similar values (38,000 or 0.006) at other sources (Wikipedia citing Encarta, LoC). The nomadic nature of the Toubou and the porous borders of the Saharan region make it difficult to accurately nationally identify them, and to identify the precise time period when their settlement in Libya began. Martin and Weber (<sup>1820</sup>) report that an estimated "several thousand" Toubou refugees fled from Chad and settled in southern Libya between 1974 and 1995, which is consistent with reports of intensifying persecution of this and other non-Arab minorities under the Gaddafi regime's 'Arabisation' policies. Although further information on political discrimination before 2007 was not found, various sources report their long history of discrimination, particularly given their inability to obtain citizenship identification and assert respective rights under the Gaddafi regime. Therefore the political relevance of this group is coded beginning with the year 1970.

<sup>1819</sup> [Martin Weber, 2012]

<sup>1820</sup> [Martin Weber, 2012]

While most US publications on Libya report that there are no major ethnic cleavages, and Libya's regime has even promoted a pan-African state, offering Chad an official union in 1971, multiple sources report that discrimination against the black-African Toubou, an ethnic minority in South-Eastern Libya has worsened since 2007 (no new period is introduced in the coding). Measures taken by the regime included orders not to issue passports or IDs to newborn Toubous, not to treat Toubous at hospitals, and not to let Toubou children enter educational facilities. In 2008 Libyan officials and police started to demolish houses and settlements of the Toubou, arrest those who protested the destruction of their property, and in November of 2008 kill two Toubous and injure several others during a violent putdown of protests against the discriminatory actions. Moreover, Libya has started to expel other black Africans from its territory. Citizens from Mali who had been expelled, reported massive abuse bordering torture by Libyan police forces. The development does not seem to be entirely new given past history of discrimination, although the scale and intensity of discrimination certainly seems to have reached a different quality.

Political representation: In 2007, a group defending the rights of the Toubou people in Libya, The Toubou Front for the Salvation of Libya, was founded to call for more autonomy. The group disbanded

in 2011 with the fall of Tripoli, but revitalized in 2012, reportedly in response to insecurity over Toubou ethnic cleansing and to seek political recognition.

**Amazigh/Berber:** The Berber population of Libya is another of the three major ethnic minorities (Toubou, Amazigh, Tuareg) and call themselves the “Amazigh” (coded: Berbers). Making up an estimated 0.04 - 0.1 (coded: 0.1) of the Libyan population, the Amazighs speak their own language and “celebrate a cultural heritage that pre-dates Arab expansion by thousands of years... (which is) distinct from the Arab identity” (<sup>1821</sup>). Along with the Toubou and other non-Arab minorities, the Amazigh were culturally and politically repressed under the Gaddafi regime (coded: Discriminated)

<sup>1821</sup> [Antoniskis, 2012]

Political representation: represented by the Libyan Amazigh congress and Amazigh Supreme Council

**Tuareg:** The Tuareg population of Libya makes up an estimated 0.02-0.05 (coded 0.05) of the Libyan population, and is among the three major ethnic groups which were similarly repressed under Gaddafi leadership (coded: Discriminated in 1970) (<sup>1822</sup>). They are traditionally nomadic, and closely related with the Berber people. Little information was found on the Tuareg people besides reports that many were employed as fighters in the military by Gaddafi.

<sup>1822</sup> [IRIN News, 2012]

*2012 – 2013:* Arab: The Libyan Revolution of 2011 saw an end to the Gaddafi government, replaced by the National Transitional Council. Although there is a major power shift in the tribal composition of political access, (Gaddafi’s government, for example, favored the employment of members of his own tribe for public service), the ethnic group composition in government has not changed much. Arabs are now dominant in political power at the national level with token inclusion of other group members (coded: Dominance). In the wake of the conflict and the absence of a legitimate central authority, ethnic tensions have broken out at varying intensities across the country in serious disagreement over the nature of the Libyan state. Tensions between minorities and the Arabs are still high given the long history of Arab oppression.

It is unclear if further conflict between tribes during and as a consequence of the upheaval is political or more concerned with economic control over trade routes and oil reserves. For example, Toubou militias mobilized to provide security and to consolidate control over key economic resources in the region, particularly illicit smuggling routes across the south of Libya in contest with the Zwai group (<sup>1823</sup>).

<sup>1823</sup> [Martin Weber, 2012]

**Toubou/Berber/Tuareg:** The Toubous are united in their calls for autonomy with the Berber (represented by the Libyan Amazigh congress and Amazigh Supreme Council) and Tuareg (represented by the Supreme Tuareg Council). Several sources suggest that in the wake of the Libyan civil war, the three main ethnic minorities (Toubou, Tuareg, Berber/Amazigh) are using the opportunity to seek equal rights with the majority and fairer political and social

representation. Most notably, the councils representing the three groups have sought to have their say recognized in the new constitution or otherwise boycott the elections, or in the case of the Toubou, seek separation and autonomy.

Both the Toubou and Amazigh played crucial roles in toppling the Gaddafi regime during the conflict. However, the Amazigh were not offered ministry positions within the National Transitional Council or substantive rights, although token Amazigh members were elected to serve in the Libyan General National Congress (coded: Arab dominance) <sup>(1824)</sup>

<sup>1824</sup> [Antoniskis, 2012]

Ongoing political marginalization and lack of access to full citizenship rights and public services by ethnic minorities contributes to Toubou grievances and their reluctance to disarm <sup>(1825)</sup>. “The 2011 revolution instigated a shift in the balance of power between minority groups and the centre, creating incentives to employ more radical demands as Toubou elites seek to leverage political concessions and a favorable distribution of resources” <sup>(1826)</sup>.

<sup>1825</sup> [Martin Weber, 2012]

<sup>1826</sup> [Martin Weber, 2012]

By 2013, political representatives of the Toubou, Berbers, and Tuaregs have quit parliament after no agreement could be reached on Libya’s new constitution (coded: Powerless) <sup>(1827)</sup>.

<sup>1827</sup> [Stocker, 2013]

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## *Political status of ethnic groups in Libya*

*From 1951 until 1969*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Arabs	0.843	DOMINANT
Berbers	0.1	IRRELEVANT
Tuareg	0.05	IRRELEVANT
Toubou	0.006	IRRELEVANT
Jews	0.001	DISCRIMINATED

*From 1970 until 2011*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Arabs	0.844	MONOPOLY
Berbers	0.1	DISCRIMINATED
Tuareg	0.05	DISCRIMINATED
Toubou	0.006	DISCRIMINATED

*From 2012 until 2013*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Arabs	0.844	DOMINANT
Berbers	0.1	POWERLESS
Tuareg	0.05	POWERLESS
Toubou	0.006	POWERLESS

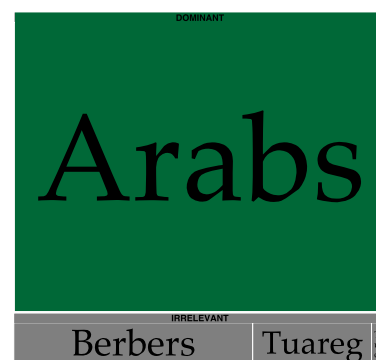


Figure 448: Political status of ethnic groups in Libya during 1951-1969.

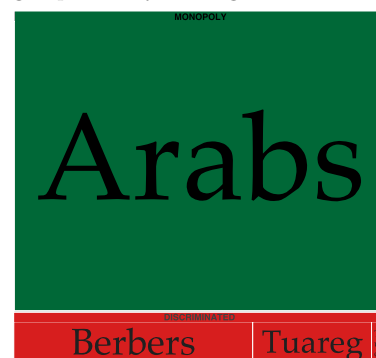


Figure 449: Political status of ethnic groups in Libya during 1970-2011.

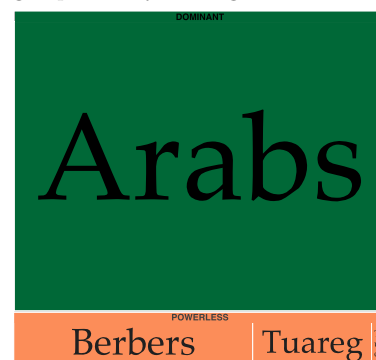


Figure 450: Political status of ethnic groups in Libya during 2012-2013.



## *Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Libya*

*From 1951 until 1969*

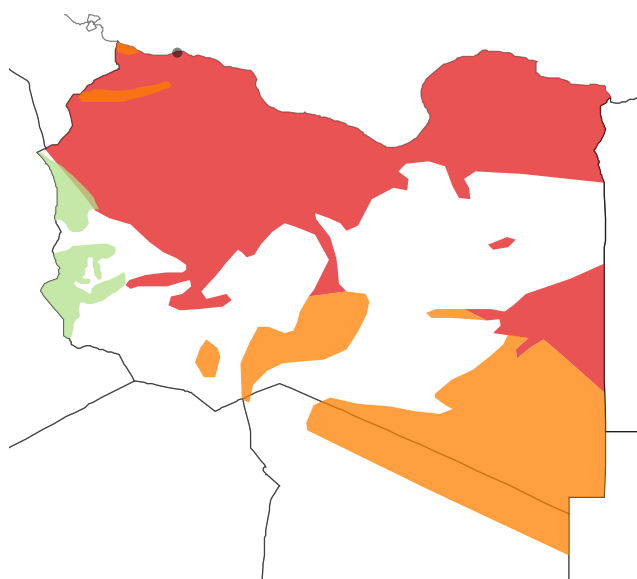


Figure 451: Map of ethnic groups in Libya during 2012-2013.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■ Arabs	655 463	Regional & urban
■ Toubou	386 773	Regionally based
■ Tuareg	47 151	Regionally based
■ Berbers	8531	Regional & urban
Jews		Urban

Table 135: List of ethnic groups in Libya during 1951-1969.

*From 1970 until 2013*

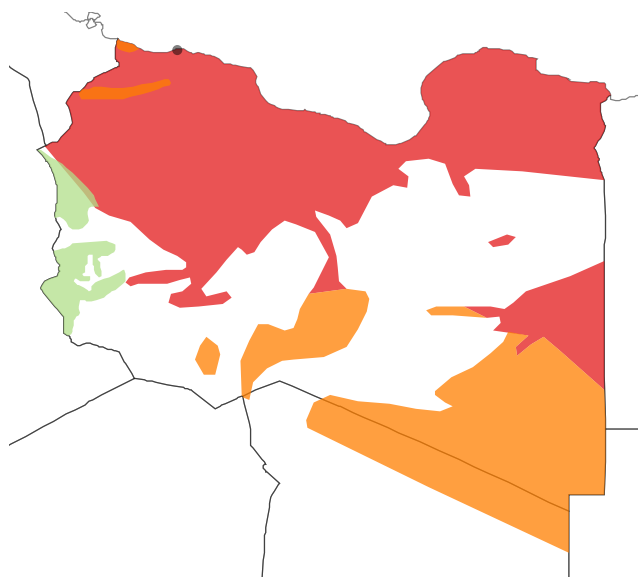


Figure 452: Map of ethnic groups in Libya during 2012-2013.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Arabs	655 463	Regional & urban
Toubou	386 773	Regionally based
Tuareg	47 151	Regionally based
Berbers	8531	Regional & urban

Table 136: List of ethnic groups in Libya during 1970-2013.

## *Conflicts in Libya*

*Starting on 1987-08-08*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Chad	Government of Libya		1987-08-08			

*Starting on 2011-02-28*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Libya	NTC	Arabs	2011-02-28	No	Yes, from EGIP	Split
Government of Libya	Forces of Muammar Gaddafi	Arabs	2011-08-23	No	Yes, from EGIP	Split