



Libya



Background Berbers have inhabited central north Africa since ancient times, but Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Persians, Egyptians, Romans, and Vandals have all settled and ruled the region. In the 7th century, Islam spread through the area. In the mid-16th century, Ottoman rule began; the Italians supplanted the Ottoman Turks in the area around Tripoli in 1911 and held it until 1943, when they were defeated in World War II. Libya then came under UN administration and achieved independence in 1951. Col. Muammar al-QADHAFI assumed leadership with a military coup in 1969 and began to espouse a political system that combined socialism and Islam. During the 1970s, QADHAFI used oil revenues to promote his ideology outside Libya, supporting subversive and terrorist activities that included the downing of two airliners -- one over Scotland and another in Northern Africa -- and a discotheque bombing in Berlin. UN sanctions in 1992 isolated QADHAFI politically and economically; the sanctions were lifted in 2003 when Libya accepted responsibility for the bombings and agreed to claimant compensation. QADHAFI also agreed to end Libya's program to develop weapons of mass destruction, and he made significant strides in normalizing relations with Western nations. Unrest that began in several Middle Eastern and North African countries in 2010 erupted in Libyan cities in 2011. QADHAFI's brutal crackdown on protesters spawned an eight-month civil war that saw the emergence of a National Transitional Council (NTC), UN authorization of air and naval intervention by the international community, and the toppling of the QADHAFI regime. In 2012, the NTC handed power to an elected parliament, the General National Congress (GNC), which was replaced two years later with the House of Representatives (HoR). In 2015, the UN brokered the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) among a broad array of political parties and social groups, establishing an interim executive body. However, hardliners continued to oppose and hamper the LPA implementation, leaving Libya with eastern and western-based rival governments. In 2018, the international community supported a recalibrated plan that aimed to break the political deadlock with a National Conference in 2019. These plans, however, were derailed when the eastern-based, self-described Libyan National Army (LNA) launched an offensive to seize Tripoli. The LNA offensive collapsed in 2020, and a subsequent UN-sponsored cease-fire helped formalize the pause in fighting between rival camps.

In 2021, the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Dialogue Forum selected a new prime minister for an interim government -- the Government of National Unity (GNU) -- and a new presidential council charged with preparing for elections and uniting the country's state institutions. The HoR approved the GNU and its cabinet the same year, providing Libya with its first unified government since 2014, but the parliament then postponed the planned presidential election to an undetermined date in the future. In 2022, the HoR voted to replace GNU interim Prime Minister, Abdul Hamid DUBAYBAH, with another government led by Fathi BASHAGHA. GNU allegations of an illegitimate HoR vote allowed DUBAYBAH to remain in office and rebuff BASHAGHA's attempts to seat his government in Tripoli. In 2023, the HoR voted to replace BASHAGHA with Osma HAMAD. Special Representative of the UN Security-General for Libya, Abdoulaye BATHILY, is leading international efforts to persuade key Libyan political actors to resolve the core issues impeding elections.

Capital	name: Tripoli (Tarabulus)
Government type	in transition
Area	total : 1,759,540 sq km land: 1,759,540 sq km water: 0 sq km
Climate	Mediterranean along coast; dry, extreme desert interior
Natural resources	petroleum, natural gas, gypsum
Population	total: 7,361,263 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	1.44% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Amazigh and Arab 97%, other 3% (includes Egyptian, Greek, Indian, Italian, Maltese, Pakistani, Tunisian, and Turkish)
Religions	Muslim (official; virtually all Sunni) 96.6%, Christian 2.7%, Buddhist <1%, Hindu <1%, Jewish <1%, folk religion <1%, other <1%, unaffiliated <1% (2020 est.)
Languages	Arabic (official), Italian, English (all widely understood in the major cities); Tamazight (Nafusi, Ghadamis, Suknah, Awjilah, Tamasheq)
Executive branch	chief of state: President, Presidential Council, Mohammed al-MANFI (since 5 February 2021) head of government: GNU Interim Prime Minister Abd-al-Hamid DUBAYBAH (since 5 February 2021)
Legislative branch	legislative structure: unicameral
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Chargé d'Affaires Fadil S M OMAR (since 17 July 2023)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Chargé d'Affaires Jeremy BERNDT (since 14 October 2023)
Economic overview	upper middle-income, fossil fuel-based North African economy; 31% economic contraction due to COVID-19 and 2020 oil blockade; reduced government spending; central bank had to devalue currency; public wages are over 60% of expenditures
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$90.609 billion (2024 est.) \$91.161 billion (2023 est.) \$82.756 billion (2022 est.)

Real GDP per capita	\$12,300 (2024 est.) \$12,500 (2023 est.) \$11,500 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$37.753 billion (2023 est.) \$39.831 billion (2022 est.) \$32.38 billion (2021 est.)
Exports - partners	Italy 23%, Germany 15%, Spain 9%, France 7%, China 6% (2023)
Exports - commodities	crude petroleum, natural gas, refined petroleum, gold, scrap iron (2023)
Imports	\$33.284 billion (2023 est.) \$27.872 billion (2022 est.) \$25.406 billion (2021 est.)
Imports - partners	China 17%, Turkey 15%, Italy 8%, UAE 8%, Egypt 8% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, broadcasting equipment, tobacco, garments, cars (2023)

Population Pyramid

