



## The Maures of Northwest Africa

The Maures are a people predominantly inhabiting the southwest Sahara region of Mauritania. In addition to Mauritania, the Maures' homeland extends up into Western Sahara and Morocco southeast into Senegal, Mali, and Niger.

The name of their language is Hassaniyya which is a variety of Arabic. However, they do not understand modern standard or classical Arabic except through schooling in Quranic schools.

They are traditionally nomadic herdsman although many have now settled in agricultural communities or in urban centers. Farming is also practiced by the sedentary populations. The nomadic Maures live in large tents, while those in urban centers rent rooms in cement houses.

The Maures have a long and eventful history with many competing to control the region. The society was largely Islamized by the mid-11th century and is known as being 100% Muslim. However, most people practice folk Islam with animistic undertones.

Their culture has seen rapid changes in the past few decades. The drought of recent years has reduced the amount of grazing land, and the only fertile area is along the Senegal River Valley. Preventative health education is a great need as people adapt to urban, sedentary life.

**Primary Religion:**

Islam

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

0%

**Churches:**

0

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

None

**Population (date):**

2,300,000 (1992)



## The Maures of Northwest Africa

Item Name	Item Note
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>	
Call Themselves Christian (%)	0%
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	0%
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	100%
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%
Believe Jesus Is A Myth (%)	0%
Number Of Pastors	0
Response To The Gospel	Antagonism
Comment (Number Communities)	Unknown, but 60% of population is urban.
Number Of Churches	0
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No
Translation Medium	None
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Christian literature is forbidden. Therefore tracts are not a useful means of witness. Bridges need to be built from Islam using the common ideas of the Bible and Quran. In the past there have been people posing as Christians who have turned out to be informants. This has led to mutual suspicion and a fear of meeting together.
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Gospel Recordings has made audio cassettes in Hassaniya
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Physical presence and contextualization is very important. People have been won to Christ by genuine love expressed through friendships.

### Profile Summary

### Population All Countries

World Population For This People	2,300,000
World Population (Date)	1992
World Population (Urban Percent)	60%

### Group Description

### Countries Where People Group Lives

Country Name	Mauritania
Country Name	Morocco
Country Name	Senegal
Country Name	Niger
Country Name	Western Sahara
Country Name	Mali

### Group Description

### Geography & Environment

Location	Southwestern Sahara region
Country	Morocco
Country	Senegal
Country	Niger
Country	Mauritania
Country	Mali
Country	Western Sahara
Ecosystem Type	Desert
Geological Type	Coastal
Geological Type	Mountain, Mesa
Geological Type	Plains
Elevation	0-500 Meters
Climate	Rains July-August (most of the region does not receive much of the rain. Average min: 60F. Average max: 115F.

### Group Description

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Item Name	Item Note	Group Description
<b>Language &amp; Linguistics</b>		
Primary Language	ARABIC, HASSANIYA	
Alternate Language Names	MOOR	
Alternate Language Names	HASANYA	
Alternate Language Names	MAURI	
Alternate Language Names	SULAKA	
Alternate Language Names	HASSANI	
Second Languages	Arabic and French	
Comment (Second Language)	30% of population speaks these languages.	
Comments (Related Languages)	Classical Arabic and other spoken Arabic dialects, but none of these should use same literature.	
Neighboring Languages	SONINKE	
Neighboring Languages	WOLOF	
Neighboring Languages	BAMBARA	
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	Also Pulaar. It is clear that none of these should use same literature.	
Corrections To Ethnologue Entry	Population in Senegal is much less due to border hostilities, estimated at 5,000.	
<b>Literacy</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Adult Literacy Percentage	15%	
Active Literacy Program	No	
<b>Economics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Subsistence Type	Fishers	
Subsistence Type	Pastoralists	
Occupation	Traditionally, nomadic pastoralists, herding camels, sheep, goats and cows. Now, due to desertification, large numbers have become sedentary, although as many as 20% of the male population may be away at any one time either herding or trading. Fishing is important in coastal regions, and farming of millet, sorghum, and vegetables along the Senegal River. Iron ore mining, and merchant traders. Teachers, city workers, drivers of public transportation.	
Income Sources	camels, trading, jewelry, salt, dates, employment in cities, iron ore	
Products / Crafts	salt, dates, jewelry, leather goods, iron ore, household articles, carpets	
Trade Partners	general population, boutiques in other countries, iron ore trading with Europe, coastal regions rented to foreign countries for fishing	
Modernization / Utilities	iron ore mining and fishing, government is trying to modernize crafts	
Comment (Economy)	Maure culture is divided into traditional and modern sectors. The traditional sector includes animal husbandry and agriculture; the modern sector includes fishing, mining and government jobs. Animals are raised for export, milk, meat, transportation, and the continuation of the traditional lifestyle. Farming of millet, sorghum, rice and vegetables is practiced by the sedentary population. Export of iron ore, fish, salt and gum Arabic is important, although the general population see little benefit of this.	
Comment (Economy)	They are also miners and merchants.	
<b>Community Development</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Health Care)	Traditional medicine, also clinics in urban areas are staffed by French doctors and Mauritanian trained assistants, hospitals in Mauritania. Medicines are available in cities, but very expensive.	
Diet (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Diet)	couscous with meat sauce, tea, milk, cereals, local dishes, rice and fish in coastal regions, bread, dates (seasonal)	
Water (Quality)	Fair	

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Item Name	Item Note
Comment (Water)	River water is used in the south, there are some natural springs which pipe water to cities, this water is also bottled and sold, smaller villages have wells (though these are slowly drying up), nomads drink mostly milk.
Shelter Description	Traditionally tents, in cities they live in cement houses with flat roofs. Houses comprise of several small rooms opening onto a courtyard, surrounded by a wall. Several families may rent one compound. There are some shanty towns outside the larger cities where the rural communities have moved to find employment.
Electricity	Fair
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Energy)	Charcoal in diminishing supply, bottled gas, electricity in towns, but very expensive.
Clothing	Women - a long veil covers everything except face, hands and feet, wear Western clothes underneath; men - long robe (boubou) with knee-length baggy trousers and Western shirt, and turbans; children wear Western clothes, girls wear the veil at puberty.
Infant Mortality Rate	High.
Comment (Community Development)	Living conditions are very hard for most people, no amenities, awareness of the risks of poor hygiene is minimal, standards which were adequate for nomadic lifestyle are posing health risks in the cities.

### Society & Culture

### Group Description

Family Structures	One man with one wife live together, women have a lot more freedom than in many Islamic States -- emancipated.
Neighbor Relations	The Maures are very sociable, spending a large amount of time socializing with their neighbors.
Authority / Rule	Military government, local and national government is elected, Marabouts (men and women who have studied the Quran) have great authority in the community.
Social Habits/Groupings	There is a caste system which is slowly dissolving, but generally it is still upheld: 1.) noble castes, the religious leaders and the warriors (who no longer do the fighting) 2.) worker caste, serving in the nobility's fields and homes 3.) craftsmen caste 4.) the musician caste (who carry on the oral tradition) 5.) the slave caste. The more "white" blood (Arabic/Berber) in their family ancestry, the more noble they are; the more "black" blood (African) in their family ancestry, the lower down they are in the caste system
Cultural Change Pace	Rapid
Identification With National Culture	Distinct
Self Image	Prestigious
Judicial / Punishment System	Search without warrant, harassment, prison conditions are very bad, torture is common, modified Islamic law, different laws for expatriates.
Celebrations	Naming ceremony at eight days, rites of passage, Muslim festivals, "coming out" party for woman six weeks after birth of her child, marriages, circumcision of boys at 8-10 years.
Recreations	Socializing and drinking tea, men smoke tobacco, women take snuff, singing, dancing, TV, playing cards, local games.
Art Forms	Dying hands and feet with henna, jewelry, silverware, music, dance, carpets.
Media	Most have radios and cassette players, can receive Morocco and Senegal Radio, National media is censored by the government, many have TV, weekly newspapers in Arabic and French, cinemas in towns often showing violent/sexual films from the West, many Arabic videos from Egypt.
Local Language Broadcasting	> 1 hour daily
Attitude To Change	Very resistant
History Of People Group	B.C. the Bafour people occupied the Mauritanian Sahara. 200-400 AD Berber groups from the north conquered the Bafour. In the 10th century Islam was carried along the caravan trade routes and by the mid-11th century most professed Islam. Arabs pushed southward into Mauritania through several centuries and the mixing of these societies began to form the Moorish society. 1300 Mali gained control of Mauritania. 1500 the Songhai Empire had replaced Mali in power. 1600 Morocco defeated the Songhai. 1644-74 the Mauritanian War was the Berber's last, and unsuccessful attempt to throw off Arab domination. 1856 French control of Mauritania and Senegal established, the two becoming separate at the turn of the century. 1960 independence from France. 1980 the abolishment of slavery. 1989-91 border conflicts with Senegal and Mali.

## The Maures of Northwest Africa

Item Name	Item Note
Comment (Culture)	They consider themselves THE national society.
Comment (Culture)	Those who are moving into the cities tend to move around frequently.
Youth	
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Help the parents with their business as well as attending school, boys help with public transportation, herding of animals, gardening, selling small items of confectionery etc; girls do all household chores, care for younger siblings, black Moors will hire themselves out as domestic help.
Youth Problems (Teens)	Divorce and remarriage is the norm, the man deciding who keeps the children, girls can marry very young. The government is very unstable and trying to put down any movements. Race problem is severe - society is stratified at all levels. High level of promiscuity leads to great distrust between partners.
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	education in preventative health care and nutrition, education
Education	
Primary School Enrollment	30-45%
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	1:40 (for primary grades 1-3)
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Hassaniyya
Language Of Instruction Early Years	French
Comment (Education)	French system, goes through to university, some financial help available, Qu'ranic schools.
Church Growth	
Reached Status	Reported
Lay Leaders	None
Bible Schools	None
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	None
Christian Literacy Centers	None
Religion & Response	
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Religious practices are taught by the Marabouts, only those who have been to Koranic schools know parts of the Koran, Five Pillars of Islam, all the forms of Islam but with animistic undertones (magic, fetishes).
Attitude To Christianity	Very resistant
Attitude To Religious Change	Very resistant
Resistance / Receptivity	They consider Christianity as second best, the last step on the way to Islam.
Religious Analogies & Bridges	monotheistic, common Judeao-Christian heritage, sacrificial analogies (Tabaski festival)
Spiritual Climate And Openness	Very closed, older people tend to be hostile, they are very "evangelistic".
Comment (Religion)	They believe that the Bible has been altered and does not contain truth any longer, also that Christianity is second best, the last step on the path to Islam. It is also illegal to change from Islam.
Recommended Approaches	Christian literature is forbidden, therefore tracts are not a useful means of witness. Bridges need to be built from Islam using the common ideas of the Bible and Quran. They are open to friendship evangelism, Christian radio, power encounters. Christian radio has reached one or two. Physical presence and contextualization is very important. People have been won to Christ by genuine love expressed through friendships.
Current Needs	1.) Scripture is needed for the few Christians. There have been people posing as Christians who have turned out to be informants. This has led to mutual suspicion and a fear of meeting together. 2.) The transition from nomadic to sedentary lifestyle means that new forms of employment are needed, and new ways to survive. Desertification is making life increasingly more difficult, and people do not seem to take seriously their responsibility in the management of natural resources. Health care and education are also needed.

### Group Description

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### Status of Christianity

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### Item Name

Items For Prayer

### Item Note

- 1.) Need for information is great, the people have been so prejudiced against the Gospel. Censorship and non-Christian Western example has removed all truth from Christianity.
- 2.) Christians need to find new ways to live among the Maures - many had to leave due to the Gulf War.
- 3.) For the small number of believers who are unable to meet together and suspicious of each other. Some have been imprisoned and later released for their faith.

### Scripture

### Status of Christianity

Translation Status	In Progress
Available Scripture	None
Form Of Scripture Available	Audio
Uncertain Need Explained	None
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	Gospel recordings.
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	No