



**Capital:** Cairo

**Languages:** Arabic although English and French are widely understood

**Religions:** Sunni Muslim 90%, Coptic 9%, other Christian 1%

**Population:** 83,688,164

**Refugees:** 7,936

**Asylees:** 2,477

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** 0

Egypt is a North African country with a long and storied history that extends across six millennia. Slightly larger than three times the size of New Mexico, Egypt is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Gaza Strip and Israel to the northeast, the Red Sea to the east, Sudan to the south, and Libya to the west. Geopolitically Egypt holds a strategic position as a bridge between Africa and Asia. Its topography is mainly a vast desert plateau that is only interrupted by the lush Nile River Valley that provides the only arable land.

Many different governments have ruled Egypt and include the pharaoh kingdoms of ancient times, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire onto the African continent, and British colonization in the 19th and 20th centuries. Egypt achieved independence from the United Kingdom in 1952. During the next several decades the Egyptian population soared, straining resources and fueling unrest among the people, particularly those living in cramped, poverty-stricken urban areas. Large-scale protests began in early 2011 and continued until the current president resigned from power and a new government was formed.

Egypt has a long record of human rights violations that include arbitrary detentions, torture, and the religious persecution of Coptic Christians, a large, well-established minority who face minimal representation in government and suffer discriminatory laws. Egypt is internationally known as a country of asylum for thousands of refugees, but because of the events of the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011, many Egyptians, particularly Coptic Christians have sought asylum in other countries such as the United States.