

Monday 27th January

Tunisia **Pop: 11.7 million** **Muslim: 99%**

You can watch a short video about Tunisia: <https://vimeo.com/50721388>

Before the birth of Islam, Tunisia was largely a Christian country. The Romans invaded in 146 BC and occupied Tunisia for the next eight hundred years, introducing Christianity in the first couple of centuries AD. The Muslims conquered the whole of Tunisia by 697 and introduced Islam.



In 2010 a fruit vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire to protest against his lack of opportunity in this repressive nation divided into 24 police states. This began the Jasmine Revolution which led to the wider Arab Spring uprisings and protests in 2011 across North Africa and the Middle East. This revolution resulted in the demise of the authoritarian president. In October 2011, the first free election was held and the Islamic party Ennahda came to power. This has made many uneasy, as the role of Islam in public life is becoming more prominent.

The Tunisian economy plummeted with the political turmoil that followed. It has been further affected by the 2015 terrorist attacks in Tunis and

Sousse, which had a major effect on tourism. According to the OECD, general unemployment rates are 15% and as high as 30% in some regions. High levels of unemployment leave young people in particular vulnerable to being groomed by extremist groups. Around 36% of under-24s are unemployed.

The new president, Kais Saied, who was elected in October 2019, is popular with young people who he said had led his election campaign. They see him as being against corruption and representing their interests. Mr Saied says he wants to build a new Tunisia.

- Pray for President Saied, that he will be wise and humble and will bring hope and transformation to this country, especially amongst young people.
- Pray that entrepreneurs would be encouraged and inspired, so that more jobs would be created, allowing people to use their God-given talents.
- Ask for more believers, for people to hear the word and choose Jesus and want to share their faith with their families!

Source of some material: <https://www.prayercast.com/tunisia.html>

Tuesday 28th January

Tunis Pop: 2.7 million

Tunis has been inhabited since at least the fourth century BC. Originally a Berber settlement, it has survived conquests and occupations and has grown to become a cultural hub for the country. Today,



as the capital city, it is large and growing - about 2.7 million people live in the greater metropolitan area. It is a magnet for people from the countryside looking for work. When you ask the average 'big-city' dweller where they are from, it is common to hear that they or their parents came to the capital from a smaller town looking for work. It is the most important social, political and economic city in the country and has significant influence in the Arab World as a whole.

Walking the streets of Tunis, you could be forgiven for believing you're somewhere in Europe. There is a distinct French vibe to the architecture as well as the layout. It feels very Parisian! It even has a tram system! The wide, tree-lined Avenue Habib Bourguiba has numerous cafes as well as important buildings including the Ministry of Interior where the Arab Spring protests started. It is also home to the Bardo Museum where gunmen attacked and killed 20 civilians, most of them foreigners, in March 2015.

- Pray the Lord would be lifted high in this city and "so shine before others, that they may see [its] good works and glorify [its] Father in heaven." Matt 5:16
- Pray for Tunis and other cities which serve as influential economic centres in their countries.
- Pray that Tunis will be filled with followers of Christ whose influence spreads far and wide throughout this country.

Source: <https://www.arabworldmedia.org/prayer-guides/tunis/>

Wednesday 29th January

Outreach

As a result of the 2011 revolution, there is now much greater press freedom and media channels are not as tightly controlled. Sharing information through the media - Facebook, Twitter, TV, journalism, YouTube - has become extremely powerful and the information is widely believed to be true. Many people's most trusted news source is Facebook. There are still various influential opposing voices which attempt to silence these channels of information.

As a result of this new press freedom, Christian media have been blossoming. Followers of Christ can now use these media channels to run campaigns to share the gospel and encourage messaging and chat sessions with interested Muslims. There seem to be plenty of seekers but the challenge is finding those who will persevere in the face of hardship. Those who are seeking the truth face opposition from family and friends if their intentions are discovered. There are few safe places for

seekers and believers to meet discreetly. Every faithful new believer represents twenty or more who were interested, but who for one reason or another have fallen away. Believers can live far from one another so it is difficult to meet together.

Another way to reach Tunisian Muslims is through Christian literature made available in their own language. Praise God, that after years of praying and waiting, the Epistles and Psalms have been published in a version of Arabic understandable to the majority. Work is continuing on translating and publishing a large part of the Old Testament that is hoped will also be available as an app on smartphones.

- Pray that seekers would be able to meet with local believers safely and in places where they can talk freely.
- Pray that through the powerful tool of media, Tunisians will have access to the Good News and freedom to share it within their network of friends and family.
- Pray for those people working on media applications whose desire is to see Muslims having greater access to the Word.

Thursday 30th January

Layia's story

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." 1 Pet 3:3-4

The following account is a true story of a Muslim woman living in Tunisia. She responded to a short animation about key events in the Bible on Arab World Media's website, an online resource. You can read her full story here: <https://www.arabworldmedia.org/articles/celebrating-international-womens-day-2019/>

Layia is a wife and mother in her thirties. She got in touch with Arab World Media when she was ready to become a believer. Although her husband was a devout Muslim, she did all of this with his knowledge and blessing. Layia was soon invited to meet with a local believer, who learned that Layia's interest in the Christian faith began when she was young and had a copy of the New Testament. Her mother discovered it and took it away, telling her that she was forbidden to read it. When Layia's father recently died, she had a dream that he was with God. Then she had another dream about a man coming to her with a cross. This reignited her interest in the gospel.

She has now been baptised. Her family and some of her friends now know that Layia is a follower of Christ. Her husband is getting close to faith in Jesus. The person who has been following up with Layia listened to her share with him how Jesus is the solution for God's justice and mercy, and how we must with every breath share this message with others. God is certainly working in and through this woman's life!

- Muslim background believers face persecution from family and friends and following Jesus risks their jobs, social stature and brings pressure from authorities. Please pray for Layia and other local believers to have endurance as they live by faith.

- Persecution has increased since the revolution and several church leaders have had to leave due to threats. Without these leaders, evangelism and discipleship are becoming increasingly difficult. Pray for the government to officially recognise the Tunisian church and show tolerance towards the Christian faith.
- Pray for The Lord of the harvest to raise up workers for the millions of unreached in Tunisia. Unprecedented access to the gospel has produced a great need for more workers, nationals and foreigners alike, to meet with those who are seeking to know more about Jesus.

Source: <https://www.arabworldmedia.org/articles/celebrating-international-womens-day-2019/>

Friday 31st January

Amazigh people

Pop: 33,000

Muslim: 100%

Of the 23 people groups in Tunisia, 9 remain unengaged and unreached. Few are actively working to plant churches among them. Pray4Tunisia has a vision to reach all these groups by the end of this year. You can learn more from their website: <https://pray4tunisia.com/en/vision2020/>

Of these 9 unreached and unengaged groups, 6 include the Amazigh people. You can learn more about them by watching a video on the website link above or visiting the Joshua Project at: <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/TS>

The Amazigh, also known as Berbers, are the original people of North Africa. The church was established among them in the early centuries of Christianity. When Islam swept through North Africa in the 7th century, many kept their Christian faith a secret. Although outwardly submitting to Islamic rule, symbols of crosses were used in everyday life as a sign of their secret belief. Some of these symbols are still incorporated in architecture and artwork today, but most Amazigh have little understanding of their meaning. The Bible was not translated into their local language.



Today the 6 Amazigh people groups are separated by harsh geographical terrain from each other and from their Arab neighbours. When Tunisia gained independence in the 1950s, President Habib Bourguiba (1957) worked hard to unify the country's people groups. He offered incentives to the Amazigh to abandon their cultural identity. He built cities in the plains to draw the Amazigh out of their mountain fortifications. When they refused, their books were burned, their language was removed from schools and much of the culture was erased.

The 2011 revolution sparked a renewal of the Amazigh identity and an acknowledgement of their Christian heritage. For hundreds of years they have had no access to the gospel message. Now is the time to reach them with the Good News.

- As the Amazigh search for their identity and heritage, pray they will find their true identity in Christ alone.

- Let's pray for many intercessors to be raised up over the coming year, so that all 6 of the Amazigh people groups will have a witness for Christ amongst them.
- Let's ask God to mobilise more workers to go to these people, bringing them the gospel message and explaining the meaning of the Christian symbols in their everyday life.

Saturday 1st February

Challenges for prayer

Let's finish our week of prayer for Tunisia, targeting three specific topics:

Youth

Tunisia has a large youth population that is highly educated. As some are preparing to graduate from university, they wonder what the future holds for them. Finding a profitable job in their field seems almost impossible. In a small number of the nation's young people, this lack of hope and purpose feeds into extreme mindsets.

- Cry out for young people and their families to come to know the One who gives "*peace that passes all understanding*" and "*life... more abundantly*".
- Pray that the students and wider youth of Tunisia and North Africa would be empowered as the next generation of leaders and that God would impart to them His heart for justice and hope in this country.

Religious scholars

Locals view the Bible as being corrupted and therefore not trustworthy as the Word of God. As field workers invest in relationships, they have seen this thinking begin to change as trust and honour in God's Word grows. It seems an increasing awareness is growing among the nation's religious scholars that all God's books need to be considered, not just the Quran. There are reports of religious scholars seeking out believers so they may ask questions, better understand God's word and apply it to their specific areas of study.

- What starts as an intellectual question can lead religious scholars to a revelation of the truth. We know the Word is sharp and powerful. Let's pray that as they read, they discover Jesus.
"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1: 14
- May their voice of influence embolden others in this land and throughout the region to engage with the Bible and find the truth.

Language centre

A language centre run by our workers helps to equip new arrivals to the field in the local language and dialects as they begin life in this region and explore options for longer term involvement.

- Ask that God's light would shine brightly through our workers into the lives of the local language teachers and the centre would be run well for His glory.