

## Libya

Estimated population 5.8 million

Following decades as an Italian colony and post-war Franco-British occupation, Libya became an independent kingdom in 1951 and as a result of a coup d'état in 1969 a republic was declared by Colonel Muammar Gadhafi whose eccentric rule continues to this day. The country's official title is the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya with 2,700 representatives from local "popular councils" forming the General People's Council. Human rights are severely restricted and at present five Bulgarian nurses are charged with infecting children with HIV as part of a western plot. Despite its totalitarian regime and because of its extensive petroleum resources Libya has the second highest GDP per capita in Africa standing at \$7,120 in 2004 and is ranked 64th in the Human Development Index, the best in mainland Africa. Libyan woman can expect to live until they are 79 and men to 74.

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