
Egypt

**Total area:**

1,002,450 km²

Population:

93,663,000 (2017)

Literacy:

61%

Official languages:

Arabic

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$12,560 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

73 years

Religions:

90% Muslim, 9% Coptic Orthodox Christian, 1% other Christian

Prayer points

Egypt - Arab Vision

Across the Arab World, speaking openly about doubts and questions on religious issues is strongly discouraged. Sadly, there is a discernible trend of young people from Christian families declaring themselves to be atheists. They have real doubts about their faith but many parents are not equipped to engage with their children. To address this challenge, Arab Vision is producing a 13 part series: Help, my child claims to be an atheist to be broadcast on satellite channels across the Middle East. The programmes will help parents to be open about their faith with their children. Counsellors in our Follow Up Team will be available through social media as well as telephone, text, and email to respond to viewers' questions. Pray that the series will meet the needs of families and their children. (Arab Vision - December 2019)

Community projects among Egypt's poorest people

On the very edge of Cairo is a crowded slum area where a Christian community called the Zabaleen scrape a living by collecting rubbish. Within these difficult conditions, Embrace's partner, the Salaam Centre, provides a medical clinic, a school, legal advice and programmes tackling a range of social issues such as domestic violence, addiction and hepatitis C prevention. Pray for community projects among Egypt's poorest people. (Embrace the Middle East - April 2019)

Attack on Coptic Christians

At least seven people were killed and eleven injured in a terrorist attack on 2 November 2018, when attackers opened fire on a bus taking Christians to visit a monastery in Minya, Upper Egypt. The

Coptic community has been the target of numerous attacks in recent years. Pray for God's hand of protection and blessing over them. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide - April 2019)

Hope for Egyptian visually impaired women

From isolation to independence: Embrace's partner BLESS, which is part of the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church, is changing the lives of visually impaired women by nurturing their independence. Their programme offers training in daily living skills, technology, social skills and leadership, transforming the lives of women who have spent most of their lives in isolation. The project also involves sighted women as volunteer mentors to befriend the participants and promote their inclusion in the community. Please pray for Egyptian women broadening their horizons. (Embrace the Middle East - December 2018)

Mobile Mammogram Clinic

Embrace's Christian partner the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS) runs health and development projects for poor Egyptian communities. They are tackling major health issues, including breast cancer. Teams from CEOSS take mobile clinics to remote, rural villages where healthcare services are sparse, if indeed present at all. They bring information and education as well as diagnostic services; the healthcare team can also refer people for treatment should it be necessary. The mobile clinic has a mammogram and each day they bring care and support to 30-40 women who otherwise would simply not get this kind of basic service we all take for granted. Please pray for all whom they serve. (Embrace the Middle East - January 2018)

Bomb Attacks

At least 47 people were killed and over 100 injured in the recent bombings that hit two churches north of Cairo during Palm Sunday services. One bomb went off in Tanta in the Nile Delta region and another in Alexandria. Please pray that God will comfort his people in Egypt. The first bomb exploded inside St George's Church in Tanta, killing at least 29 people, according to a Release partner; 75 others were injured. In the second attack, a suicide bomber detonated his device outside St Mark's Cathedral, killing at least 16 people and injuring 33. A Release partner said afterwards: "May God have mercy on our country and may the prayers of the church beyond our borders be a source of strength to the Egyptian church, which has stood strong against persecution for 14 centuries." (Release International - May 2017)

Praying Against Violence

Following the bombing of St Mark's Cathedral in Cairo and an attack on believers in Upper Egypt, concerns were raised that there might be a return to the anti-Christian violence of 2013, which followed the military's overthrow of President Mohammed Morsi. At least 25 people, mostly women and children, were killed in the explosion in the capital in December 2016 and dozens more were injured. Two weeks before, Christians in the Upper Egypt village of Al-Nagameesh in Sohag governorate were targeted by a mob that went on the rampage, destroying homes and businesses. Pray for protection for our fellow believers in Egypt. (Release International - March 2017)

A Spirit of Forgiveness

Egypt's Christian community are in mourning after 27 Christians died and over 60 more were injured in a bomb attack on a church in Cairo. "This sent shock waves across the Christian community all over Egypt" said an Open Doors partner. "Is this the beginning of another wave of violence against Christians in Egypt?" Discrimination and violence against Egypt's Christian minorities goes back a long way and blasphemy cases are frequent. "Please pray that the spirit of fear would not find a foothold in the Christian community" he said, and that Christians "would receive the spirit of forgiveness and be able to express this openly in the name of Christ." Pray for peace and protection for Egypt's Christian community. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - January 2017)

Places of Worship

In September the Egyptian parliament approved a controversial new law covering the building and renovation of churches. While it's good that the law addresses the issue of building churches (which could previously only be approved by the president), this new law is very vague and could still be quite restrictive. Please pray that it would be amended, so it truly protects the right to construct places of worship. Sadly, a rumour that a new church is being built can still spark a mob attack. 2016 saw a spike in these incidents, particularly in Upper Egypt. Please pray for Christian communities to be protected from such attacks, and the hatred behind them. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide - January 2017)

A City of Refuge

The Egyptian coastal city of Alexandria has become home to thousands of Syrian refugees. These frightened, desperate people face high rents, low employment and limited access to healthcare. This makes pregnant women particularly vulnerable as they struggle to obtain medical care during their pregnancies. Embrace the Middle East's partners at Refuge Egypt have been responding to this need by providing antenatal and maternity services at Alexandria's Victoria Hospital, specifically for refugees arriving from Syria. As well as medical care the women receive food parcels and iron supplements and can attend classes on child development, nutrition and breastfeeding. Pray for the thousands of women across the Middle East who are pregnant or with very young babies who are cut off from their homes and families by the Syrian war. Pray for Refuge Egypt as they seek to serve those who have lost everything and are trying to rebuild their shattered lives in a strange land. (Embrace the Middle East - September 2016)

Kidnapped Copts

Pray for the Coptic Christian community as they face daily harassment and intimidation, that God would watch over them and use their present suffering to strengthen their faith. Pray that Christian communities whose churches were destroyed would find safe places to worship, and for kidnapped Copts to be returned safely to their homes. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide - January 2016)

Sudanese refugees

SAT-7 ARABIC women's magazine Needle and Thread ventured into new grounds last month when it dedicated an episode to discuss the problems facing Sudanese refugees in Egypt, especially discrimination, exploitation, and racism. Sudanese refugees said they experience discrimination in many forms, ranging from a mere joke to physical assault. This episode helped uncover unacknowledged attitudes, making a step towards building a healthier Egyptian society. Pray that the Sudanese in Egypt will know the presence of the Lord and that He would bring peace and unity to the people. (SAT-7 - September 2015)

Advocating for change

The devastating practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is widespread in Egypt. The practice frequently leaves girls and women traumatised and suffering from a range of physical difficulties, and can even lead to death. Staff from a Tearfund partner in Egypt are working hard to educate people about the dangers of FGM and to empower them to make healthier choices. They are running awareness-raising workshops, training counsellors to work with sexual abuse survivors, and advocating decision-makers for positive change. Ask God to pour out his comfort and healing on all those who are still experiencing the painful effects of FGM. Pray that governments and communities around the world will come to see FGM as a violation of human rights, and that the practice will soon be stopped. (Tearfund - July 2015)

Good News concert in Egypt

Christ's offer of new life and a fresh start was the theme of a special concert organised by SAT-7 in Egypt. Almost 3,000 people attended with thousands more watching on TV and online. Farid Samir Garas, Executive Director of SAT-7 Egypt said; "Non-Christians have many questions regarding the Holy Week and Easter. This is an opportune time to spread the Good News to all... We hope that we

could provide answers to some of the questions people have and also trigger new questions in their minds to make them interested to know more." Pray that people will continue to explore for truth. Pray that God's presence will enter the hearts of all who witnessed this message of new life. (SAT-7 - May 2015)

Tourism plummeting

Egypt has around 90 million inhabitants, but the vast majority are crammed into less than 6% of the country's area. Vast swathes of land are uninhabitable desert, with a small fertile strip along the Nile. This results in major crowding in the cities. The people of Egypt have been through so much over the years. Revolution has followed revolution, first in 2011 and then again in 2013. As a result, tourism - once a major economic prop in Egypt - has plummeted. Tearfund's partner organisation has been working in a village in Minya for several years, providing the residents with vocational training, loans to start their own small businesses, water supplies and toilets in their homes, a health clinic and medication, and spiritual and emotional support. Pray that the village and its people will soon experience a new period of stability and security in every area of their lives. (Tearfund - January 2015)

Reaching a digital generation

Using the power of media, believers from Muslim backgrounds are effectively sharing Christ across the Arab world. Today, more than 125 million individuals use the internet in the Arab world providing a platform for both men and women, with otherwise limited access to Christian resources, to study God's Word. As a result, our media follow-up network encourages seekers to explore the gospel online and mentors believers through interactive Bible courses. (Arab World Ministry of Pioneers - September 2014)

Drug abuse

Drug abuse is a big social issue facing Egypt. In Cairo, around 5% of the population are addicted to some form of drugs, equating to about a million people. Changing social structures in post-revolutionary society, urbanisation, and massive unemployment are all seen as factors. The porousness of Egypt's borders and the security vacuum since the revolution have also contributed to the illicit drugs trade. The need for care and treatment of addicts is considerable, particularly as provision was recently described in one Egyptian news report as 'woefully inadequate'. That's bad news in a country where there are 34 million people aged between ten and 30, creating a big market for drugs and attracting the interests of cartels (according to the UN). Pray for the work of Christian ministries seeking to help Egyptians to break their addictions. (Tearfund - July 2014)

Scapegoats

Pray God's peace over Christians in Egypt. They have been treated as scapegoats by supporters of the Morsi presidency, and have been attacked with apparent impunity. Pray for an end to the violence and political turmoil. Thank God that pastors whose churches have been attacked are working for reconciliation with their Muslim neighbours. Pray that God will bless these efforts and pray that other Christians too will have the courage to seek reconciliation, not retaliation. (Release International - March 2014)

Hidden casualties

There is an African proverb which says, "When elephants fight it's the grass that suffers the most". Where there is conflict it is always the most vulnerable, defenceless and innocent who suffer - often that means children. The on-going conflict in the Middle East and North Africa may no longer be taking centre stage in our news, but from Tunisia to Bahrain uprisings and political unrest continue to severely affect people's everyday lives. In many of these countries, children were already struggling to get access to food, healthcare and education. The unrest is turning many children's daily lives into a fight for their very survival. Pray that God would move powerfully to bring about peaceful resolutions to these conflicts and for Christians in the affected countries, and throughout the world, to speak out on behalf of the children who are suffering. (Viva - March 2014)

Searching for truth

Every month, hundreds of Bibles and thousands of evangelistic resources are downloaded by Arab Muslims exploring the Christian faith. The online ministry maarifa.org sees several thousand Arabs exposed to the truth about Jesus every week. Last year, media workers received over 600 emails in just three months from Arabs searching and wrestling with the truth. The team follows up every message personally. Pray that millions of Arab Muslims will continue to be drawn to the website and have hearts open to the Spirit of God. (Arab World Ministry of Pioneers - March 2014)

Held back by fear

Many seekers in the Arab world are hungry for the truth of Christ but are held back by fear. The potential backlash from their family and society can keep them from taking concrete steps of faith. However, a combination of media outreach and face-to-face contact has helped to provide a safe place for those exploring the call of Christ. Hamdi's* desire for fellowship and knowledge won over his fear, and he filled in the contact form on our Arabic ministry website. An Arab Christian volunteer - who used to be a Muslim himself - was given the responsibility to meet up with Hamdi. He had never met anyone with so much hunger to know everything about walking with Christ. He was so encouraged and began meeting regularly to study the Bible together. *Name changed (Arab World Ministry of Pioneers - January 2014)

Violence in Egypt

The recent violence against the church in Egypt by those angry at the overthrow of President Morsi has been described by one Egyptian scholar as the worst since the 14th century. Although the turmoil has subsided, life for Christians is uncertain and there is a growing exodus of believers from the country. Thank God that few Christians were killed in the violence and pray that those who remain will be strong and make the most of opportunities to share the gospel. A partner told us in the summer: 'Egypt is at a turning point to Jesus and Christians here need spiritual support for this. We need your prayers.' Pray for peace and that God will protect and sustain his church as it reaches out with the gospel. (Release International - December 2013)

Violent clashes

So far many hundreds of people have been killed in violent clashes between security forces and the Muslim Brotherhood. Please pray for an end to the violence and the re-establishment of effective rule of law and order. Pray too that Egypt will be governed for the benefit of all its citizens, with people of different persuasions able to live alongside one another peaceably. Finally pray for Egyptian Christians to play an increasingly prominent and effective role in addressing the needs of all Egyptians and helping to bring healing and reconciliation in the country. (SAT-7 - September 2013)

Great instability

There is great instability in Egypt. Many people are feeling frustrated about the status quo. The economy is waning, fuel and power shortages abound, and religious and sectarian strife continues. Please pray for this situation to cause people to hunger for the One who truly satisfies. A book about women in the Bible is currently being produced to introduce Muslim women to God's Word. Pray for God to use this resource for His glory. (Arab World Ministry of Pioneers - July 2013)

Deadly riots

In April, four Christians and a Muslim were killed in a riot in Khosous, a suburb of Cairo, after a swastika graffitied onto the wall of an Islamic centre was mistaken for a cross, and local Christians were blamed. The violence was reignited at the funeral of the four Christians in Cairo's main cathedral. The BBC reported that mourners chanted slogans against Egypt's Islamist Prime Minister, Mohammed Morsi, as they carried the coffins into the cathedral. The mourners were then attacked as they left the building, their assailants hurling rocks and petrol bombs. Witnesses reported that the Christians retaliated and more than 89 people were injured and two killed before police were able to stem the violence. These incidents are part of a growing wave of violent clashes. Many feel that

freedoms are being threatened and curtailed under the ruling Muslim Brotherhood party. Pray for good and representational government that treats all citizens fairly and for God's healing and comfort for all those affected by the attacks. (Tearfund - May 2013)

Literacy for women

About 65 million adult Arabs are illiterate; two thirds of them are women. Over 40% of Egyptian women (aged over 15) are illiterate (for men the figure is 'only' 25%). This means that more than 11 million Egyptian women cannot read or write. A new drama addressing this issue was recently launched on SAT-7 ARABIC. The series is made especially for young Egyptian women with the aim of encouraging them to improve their literacy skills. The programme airs each Wednesday evening. Pray that women and other viewers will benefit from this series. (SAT-7 - March 2013)

Answer to prayer

An Egyptian pastor recently shared an amazing answer to prayer. In September, riots began in response to a YouTube video insulting Mohammed and a mob of 600 people, armed with guns and bombs, made their way through the centre of Cairo to the US embassy building. Unable to get near it, they headed for a nearby church and painted a slogan on the wall 'Kill the worshippers of the cross'. The pastor was inside praying with a number of the young people, assuming the destruction of the building was inevitable, but praying for a miracle that their lives would be spared. Out of the blue, one man started telling the crowd not to damage the church because when he was hurt during the 2011 revolution, the Christians in that church had come to his aid and tended his wounds. Another man told the crowd, that these were the Christians who had offered them water to wash with so they could say their Islamic prayers during Ramadan. Amazingly, the crowd became silent, turned around, and went on their way. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - January 2013)

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