

LIBYA

ONGOING STRUGGLE FOR WEALTH AND POWER



6.4 million people



250,000 camels



97% Sunni Muslim



90% desert

90% of the people live in 10% of the country - mainly along the coast



Largest oil reserves in Africa, 4th-largest in world

Pre-war production levels = 1.6 million barrels a day
Current production = 300,000 a day



RECENT HISTORY



- 1942** WWII Allies oust Italians and divide country between France and Britain
- 1951** Libya becomes independent under King Idris al-Sanusi
- 1969** Col. Muammar Gaddafi (aged 27) deposes the king in a bloodless military coup
- 1992** UN imposes sanctions on Libya after 1988 bombing of PanAm airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland
- 2011** Foreign intervention (mainly American) after Arab Spring protests boiled over into civil war, Col. Gaddafi is ousted and killed
- 2016** Following years of conflict, a new UN-backed "unity" government is installed in a naval base in Tripoli - faces opposition from rival governments and militias



ISLAMIC STATE (IS)

Libyan branch established on 13 November 2014



2,000 - 7,000 fighters

- 3 sub-branches

- Cyrenaica (east)
- Fezzan (desert south)
- Tripolitania (west)



15 February 2015 Beheaded 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians
19 April 2015 Killed 30 Ethiopian Christians



1 August 2016

US launched airstrikes against Sirte, IS stronghold in Libya - first direct US involvement in Libyan fight against IS
Pentagon says Libyan government requested air support for local ground forces

MIGRANTS / REFUGEES



Libya = primary migration gateway from Africa to Europe, via the Mediterranean Sea

700,000

Estimated no. of migrants/refugees in Libya, from various points of origin throughout Africa



"People smuggling" is a lucrative and cruel business in Libya - survivors of sea crossings tell of horror at the hands of smugglers and say they would rather die at sea than return to Libya



Before Col. Gaddafi's ousting, the EU cut deals (worth millions) with the dictator in exchange for a tight control on the coastal border - since 2013, migration from Libya to Europe has quadrupled

46,700+

have made the perilous central Mediterranean crossing in 2016 thus far



2,200+

drowned or went missing while attempting the crossing in 2016 thus far

