

## Morocco



**Capital City:** Rabat.

**Background:** In 788, about a century after the Arab conquest of North Africa, successive Moorish dynasties began to rule in Morocco. Foreign invaders in the 16th century were repelled and a golden age was inaugurated. In 1860 Spain occupied northern Morocco and in 1912 the French imposed a protectorate over the country. A protracted independence struggle with France ended successfully in 1956. The city of Tangier and most Spanish possessions were turned over to the new country that same year. Parliamentary elections were held for the second time in September 2002 and municipal elections were held in September 2003.

### Geography:

- **Location:** Northern Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, between Algeria and Western Sahara.
- **Area comparative:** More than 6 times the size of Ireland.
- **Climate:** Mediterranean, becoming more extreme in the interior.
- **Natural resources:** Phosphates, iron ore, manganese, lead, zinc, fish, salt.
- **Natural hazards:** Earthquakes; periodic droughts.
- **Environment issues:** Land degradation and desertification; water supplies contaminated by raw sewage; siltation of reservoirs; oil pollution of coastal waters.

**Religion:** Muslim 98.7%, Christian 1.1%, Jewish 0.2%

### People:

- **Population:** 33,241,259
- **Birth rate:** 21.98 births per 1,000.
- **Infant mortality:** 40.24 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- **Life expectancy:** *Total population:* 70.94 years, *male:* 68.62 years, *female:* 73.37 years.



### Government:

- **Type of government:** Constitutional monarchy.
- **Administrative divisions:** 15 regions; *note:* Morocco claims the territory of Western Sahara.
- **Independence:** 2 March 1956.
- **National holiday:** Throne Day ,30 July (1999).

### Economy:

- **Unemployment:** 11%
- **Population below the poverty line:** 19%
- **Agricultural products:** Barley, wheat, citrus, wine, vegetables, olives, livestock.
- **Industries:** Phosphate rock mining and processing, food processing, leather goods, textiles, construction, tourism.

### Education:

- **Literacy:** *Definition:* age 15 and over can read and write. *Total population:* 51.7%, *male:* 64.1%, *female:* 39.4%.
- **Language:** Arabic (official), Berber dialects, French often the language of business, government and diplomacy.

### Communication:

- **Telephone lines:** Landlines: 1,341,200, Mobile lines: 9,336,900.
- **TV stations:** 35
- **Internet users:** 2,538

**Asylum:** According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics in 2005 there was less than 100 asylum claims in Ireland by Moroccan nationals.

**Internally Displaced Persons:** The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre at the end of November 2006 did not record an internally displaced population in Morocco.

**Migration:** In the first ten months of 2006 the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment issued 96 work permits to Moroccan nationals.

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### Sources:

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