

WHOEVER DRINKS FROM THE WATER
that I will give him
WILL NEVER BE THIRSTY AGAIN.
Indeed, the water I give
him will become in him
A FOUNT OF WATER SPRINGING UP
to eternal life.

JOHN 4:14

LAÂYOUNE

POPULATION

CITY: 232,000
REGION: 3-600,000



LANGUAGES

HASANIYA ARABIC, SPANISH
MOROCCAN ARABIC



99.9%
MUSLIM



MAGHREB
NORTH AFRICA
is "the west"
in Arabic.

A SLEEPY TOWN - THE JEWEL OF THE DESERT

"The Springs" or El-Aaiún (Laâyoune) is the regional capital, on the edge of the Sahara, near the Atlantic Ocean.

Constant wind sweeps the paved streets of Laâyoune, carrying plastic bags past coral-colored buildings in the otherwise clean and orderly town. Men sip coffee, lingering in sidewalk cafes. The women are colorfully wrapped in one long, thin piece of fabric. Having waded in the ocean of modernity with contemporary architecture, Laâyoune is still quintessentially Saharan, and locals see the desert as merely an extension of the city. Just 20 km west is the Atlantic Ocean where the local resort hosts surfers and snorkelers when the water is clear. 19 km deeper into the desert is a palmed Oasis home to natural springs and an annual camel race, a nod to the nomadic heritage of their people.

Spanish occupiers were ousted by the Moroccan military in 1975, a robust, ongoing presence that sustains Morocco's claim on the land. The Saharawi people share ethnolinguistic ties with Mauritians, a blend of African and Arabic cultures. Their language, *Hassaniyya*, resembles the Arabic of the Arabian Peninsula instead of Moroccan Darija. Because of previous rule, Spanish is the second language, not French like most of North Africa.



PRAY FOR: For Moroccan believers to catch a vision to multiply, to accept government incentives to move here, bringing news of the much needed living water.



"STREAMS
OF LIVING
WATER
WILL
FLOW
THROUGH
HIM."

-JESUS

PRAY
with us



**1/4 million
SAHARAWI**

live in camps in
Algeria's Sahara

*"They shall not hunger or thirst,
neither scorching wind
nor sun shall strike them,
for he who has mercy on them
will lead them,
and by springs of water
will refresh them."*

ISAIAH 49:10

POLITICAL TENSIONS

Although known as a sleepy city, Laayoune has known little rest due to political turmoil for half a century. Development of Laayoune is at a standstill and the people suffer from scarcity. Revolutionary efforts have resulted in tighter cultural restrictions by the Moroccan authorities, increasing hostility. For example, until 2011, the local resort beaches just outside the city hosted thousands of Saharawi families vacationing in tents like their ancestors. But when some Saharawi set up a protest camp just 7km into the desert from the city, Morocco violently shut it down. They outlawed all tents, even at the beach - deepening scars of hatred and a yearning for dignity. The dispute over this territory has even had rippling effects across North Africa. Algeria welcomed Saharawi refugees to live in its southwestern desert regions (there are recruiting teams there) and sides with the Saharawi's rights to social and economic self-determination. Morocco and Algeria have closed off all trade and partnership with each other over this dispute, to the economic detriment of both countries.

MOVEMENTS *and challenges*

This is a strategic base for nomadic peoples and those living in villages, but faith movements are challenged by complicated politics, poverty & scarcity, and few gospel resources in *Hassaniya*. Praise God for a new translation of the NT and the Hebrew scriptures are underway. Breakthrough here would also impact those living as refugees in Algeria because, although official travel is forbidden, people maintain strong cross-border ties with each other.

Morocco's government is offering financial incentives for Moroccans to move south, opening doors for Moroccan believers to go. Sadly, the cultural and linguistic differences have frustrated some who gave up and returned north, declaring "these people are NOT Moroccan!" Otherwise, there are just a few internationals living here and across the border to share the love of Jesus.

POSSIBILITIES

Resilient and relational people, willing to live simply, can find creative solutions. Work may be imaginable in:

- wind engineering
- water engineering
- English teaching (Univ)
- Surf/Skate shops
- pray!

Ways to Pray

- GOD'S PROTECTION OVER ALL SIDES DURING INCREASED POLITICAL TENSION.
- PLEASE PRAY THAT MOROCCAN BELIEVERS WILL RESPOND WITH OPEN HEARTS TO THE CHALLENGES AND THE JOYS THAT AWAIT THEM IN LAAYOUNE, EVEN TO GO CROSS-CULTURALLY.
- FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESSES TO HAVE FAVOR TO ACCESS THE AREA AND REMAIN TO BRING BLESSING TO THE PEOPLE.

The Saharawi love to express their ancestral customs. Although Moroccan authorities have outlawed some traditions, practices like henna, ritual tea, and their Afro-Arabic style music bring people together.

