



PEOPLE GROUP: THE BEJA OF ERITREA, SUDAN, AND EGYPT

The Beja people are nomads who have occupied their homelands across the Sudan, Eritrea and Egypt for more than 4,000 years. Some scholars believe they are related to the ancient Egyptians. In the course of their history, they accepted Islam and are 99 per cent Muslim. They practice folk Islam and believe in the evil eye and jinnis (spirits). They try to appease the jinnis and draw power from them by using charms and amulets.

The Beja are, for the most part, a marginalized and poor people group. Numbering about 4 million, most have little or no education and are therefore considered lower class and backward by their countrymen. Their nomadic environment is shrinking and, as a result, many are moving to the cities, where they can only find manual, low-paying jobs. A non-Beja will always be preferred over a Beja when hiring for jobs. Arab-speaking peoples regard the Beja language as “gibberish”

since it is not widely written.

One reason they are completely unreached is that most of them live in difficult-to-reach places, far from towns. In order to reach them, a missionary will have to live in harsh conditions.

In Sudan, Egypt and Eritrea, Christians are beginning to realize that the Beja need Jesus, and are feeling drawn to reach them. One young man has moved into a remote place to share the Gospel. Others in the cities have been pondering what they can do and have begun offering cool water or juice to Beja people who pass their church. Some have started taking meals to Beja prisoners.

The Beja are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the Islamic governments who are trying to erase their culture and language, forcing them to renounce their tribal culture.

In some places, they are asking for Christian schools for their children and asking missionaries to come speak to them.

AT A GLANCE

- The geographer, Abu Nasr Mutahhar al-Maqdisi, wrote in the tenth century that the Beja were at that time Christians.
- The Beja practice marriages among cousins.
- Only portions of Scripture are in their language, Bedawiyet.

PRAY FOR

- More Scriptures and resources to be translated and recorded into Bedawiyet.
- Local Christians to hear the Holy Spirit's urging and find creative ways to reach out in love to the Beja.
- The Beja to find Jesus and begin a movement among their people.

Sources: <http://bejafriends.org/> • https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10766 • <https://omniglot.com/writing/beja.htm>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beja_people



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