

## **Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Libya**

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In this day and age, in the country of Libya, indigenous groups live in relative peace. However in the past, some of these indigenous groups have been oppressed. An example of one of these groups would be the Amazigh. These people are a non-Arab minority group and also known as Libyan-Berbers.

The Amazigh people were heavily oppressed during the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. During the regime, the group was prohibited from practicing their culture. This was due to the regime declaring itself part of the Arab nation. These people had been oppressed through many means. Even small things like speaking the Amazigh language could be punishable by death. The lingering effects of the oppression still lingers even after the end of the Gaddafi regime. The Libyan government has not done much to give any substantial rights to the Amazigh.

The problem of oppression for the Amazigh has seen a slow change in recent years. In July 2012, the Libyan General National Congress (GNC) elected a small amount of Amazigh to serve in their congress. The GNC drafted a new constitution for Libya that is obligated, under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), to provide rights for not only the Amazigh, but all minority groups that inhabit Libya.

The rights of the Amazigh people have yet to be followed through. Even if the United Nations cannot force a country to adopt a new constitution, there is at least a congress in that country that is trying to do so for the betterment of indigenous people. If these groups were to stay in the dark as just minorities, their culture would eventually die out. Spreading awareness about these people can help them be remembered for them and their culture. People can spread awareness through many means. In this generation, the use of social media and the internet has been rooted into its culture. Using these tools to spread awareness will be a good and beneficial act. There is still a light of hope for these people that may flicker at times but it has not been put out yet.