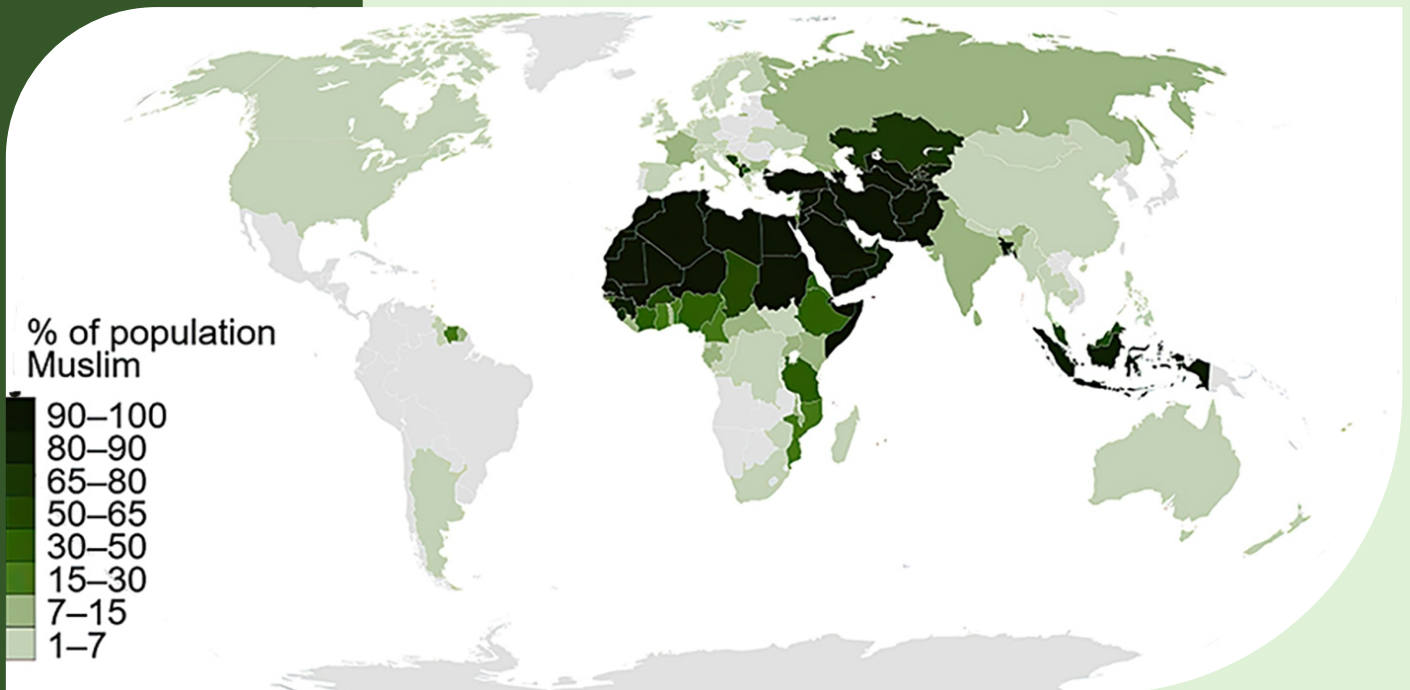


MAPPING MUSLIMS IN AFRICA



Ismail Vadi

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ISMAIL VADI

DISCLAIMER

The information in this booklet has been compiled using open-source research and social media platforms. It does not profess to be comprehensive and inclusive of all historical, political and social movements and individuals in African history and contemporary life. It offers no value judgement on the information provided herein. It does not in any way reflect the views of the compiler or the Centre for Islamic Research - Africa (CIRA).

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Preface

We begin by praising Allah, the most Merciful, the Beneficent, and send salutations to His beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his descendants.

There are about two million Muslim South Africans, constituting an estimated two percent of the total population of South Africa. Their ancestral roots can be traced to the Indian sub-continent and to Southeast Asia. Their arrival in South Africa was a consequence of Dutch and British colonial conquest and rule. There is also a growing indigenous Muslim segment located across the country.

In the post-apartheid era, there has been an influx of Muslims from foreign lands as part of globalisation and civil wars in Africa and elsewhere. These Muslims have come mainly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, Palestine, Malawi and Mozambique, and a sprinkling from other parts of the world.

Muslim South Africans are from diverse socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. There is an influential middle and upper middle class in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, and a sizeable working class, notably in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces. Cape Town has an influential Muslim middle class as well.

The African continent has an estimated population of 1.5 billion people. Muslims constitute about 49 percent of the total African population, estimated to be at 500 million. The derived fact is that the two million Muslim South Africans constitute a mere 0.4 percent of the total Muslim population in Africa.

Generally, Muslim South Africans know little or nothing at all about their fellow religionists in 54 sovereign African countries. Due to our ancestral past, we have appropriately learnt something about Islam in the Indian sub-continent and in Southeast Asia. For most of us, however, our understanding of Muslims and Islam in Africa is limited.

We should correct this intellectual and spiritual imbalance in our lives. This booklet is a concise effort to begin the process of learning about Muslims on the African continent. It is a small step. But then every journey begins with the first, small step forward.

This is the mission of the Centre for Islamic Research - Africa (CIRA). It aims to research and analyse political, economic, social, cultural and religious trends in Africa in advocacy of change underpinned by Islamic values and principles. It will provide a platform for information, education and awareness of Muslims on the continent.

Muslims should narrow the intellectual and spiritual gap within our fraternity on the African continent. For whatever reason, continued ignorance of our diverse Islamic history, legacy, traditions and traits is intolerable. In doing so, we are acutely aware that the other half of the African population is predominantly Christian.

The Centre for Islamic Research - Africa (CIRA) is a new research institution based in Johannesburg, South Africa. It will work with partner Muslim organisations and communities nationally and on the African continent to enhance our understanding of Muslims and Islam in Africa using a variety of platforms. It will do so within an Islamic paradigm.

As stated earlier, the information in this booklet is gleaned from open-source research and social media platforms. It does not profess to be comprehensive and inclusive of all historical, political and social movements and individuals in African history and contemporary African life. It offers no value judgement on the information provided herein and it does not in any way reflect the views of the compiler or the Centre for Islamic Research - Africa (CIRA).

We hope it will benefit Muslims in South Africa, the African continent and elsewhere.

Dr Ismail Vadi
March 2026

1. African Demographics

In December 2025, the total population of Africa was estimated at approximately **1.56 billion** people. This represents about **18.8 percent** of the total world population, ranking Africa as the second-most populous continent after Asia.

Key Population Statistics (2025)

- **Total Population:** 1566 503 000
- **Annual Growth Rate:** Approximately **2.3 percent**, the highest of any continent
- **Median Age:** **19.3 years**, reflecting a very young demographic.
- **Urban Population:** Approximately **45 percent** (roughly 698 million people).
- **Population Density:** 52 people per square kilometre (135 per square mile).

Top 10 Most Populous African Countries (2025 Estimates)

Nigeria remains the most populous nation on the continent, accounting for over 15 percent of Africa's total inhabitants.

Rank	Country	Estimated Population (2025)
1	Nigeria	237 528 000
2	Ethiopia	135 472 000
3	Egypt	118 366 000
4	DR Congo	112 832 000
5	Tanzania	70 546 000
6	South Africa	64 747 000
7	Kenya	57 532 000
8	Sudan	51 662 000
9	Uganda	51 385 000
10	Algeria	47 435 000

Regional Breakdown

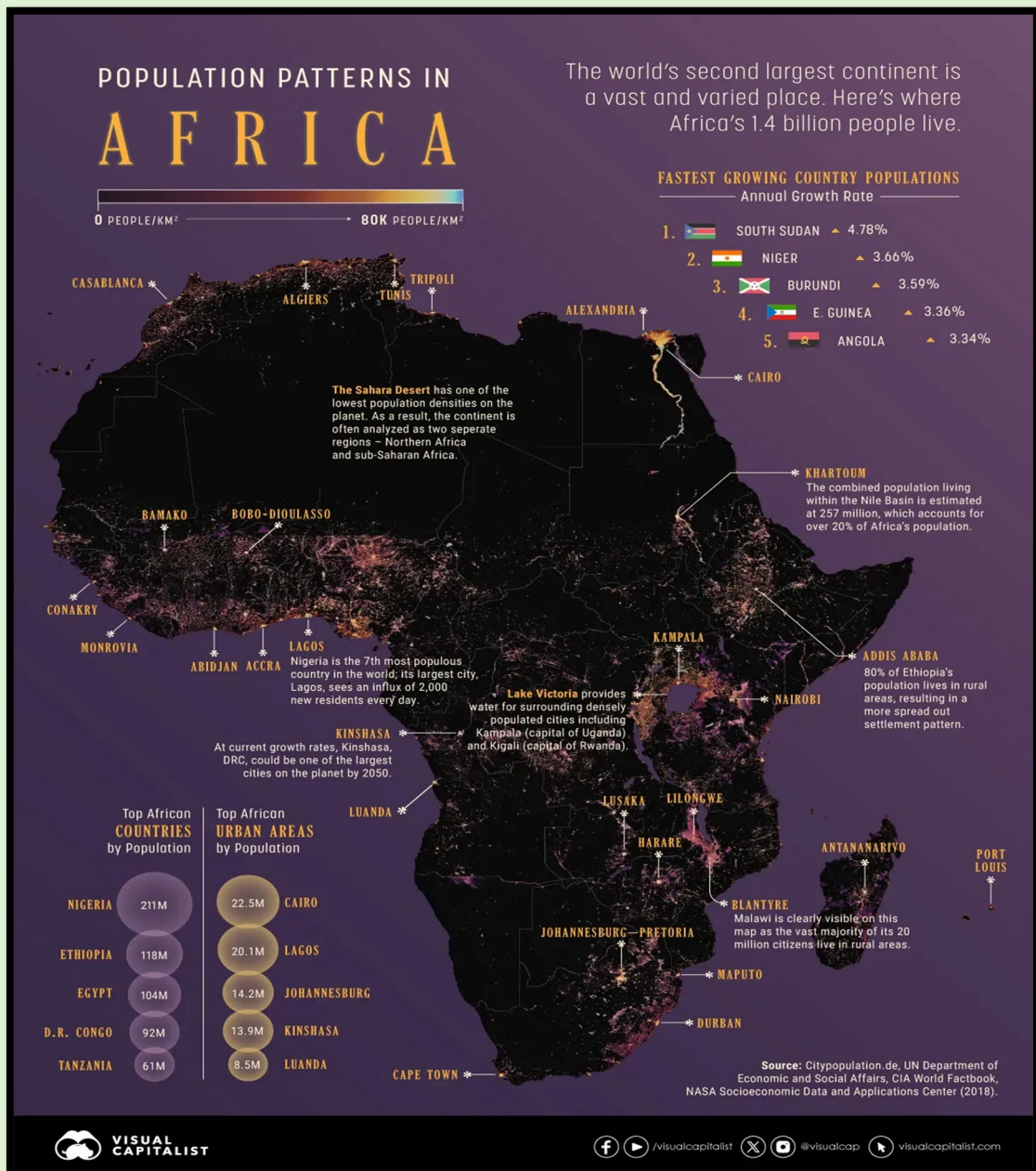
The population is distributed across five main subregions:

- **Eastern Africa:** 513.5 million
- **Western Africa:** 466.5 million
- **Northern Africa:** 276.3 million
- **Middle Africa:** 219.5 million
- **Southern Africa:** 74.0 million

Future Projections

Africa's population is expected to grow significantly due to high fertility rates in several regions.

- **2050:** Projected to reach **2.4 billion**.
- **2100:** Projected to exceed **3.8 to 4.1 billion**, potentially accounting for over 30 percent of the world's population.
- Africa Population 2025: Africa is the second largest and second-most populous continent on Earth.



2. Muslim Population in Africa

In 2025, approximately **45-50 percent** of Africa's total population identified itself as Muslim. While specific continent-wide totals vary by source, current estimates place the number of Muslims in Africa at roughly **450 to 550 million** people.



Countries with largest Muslim Populations (2025 Estimates)

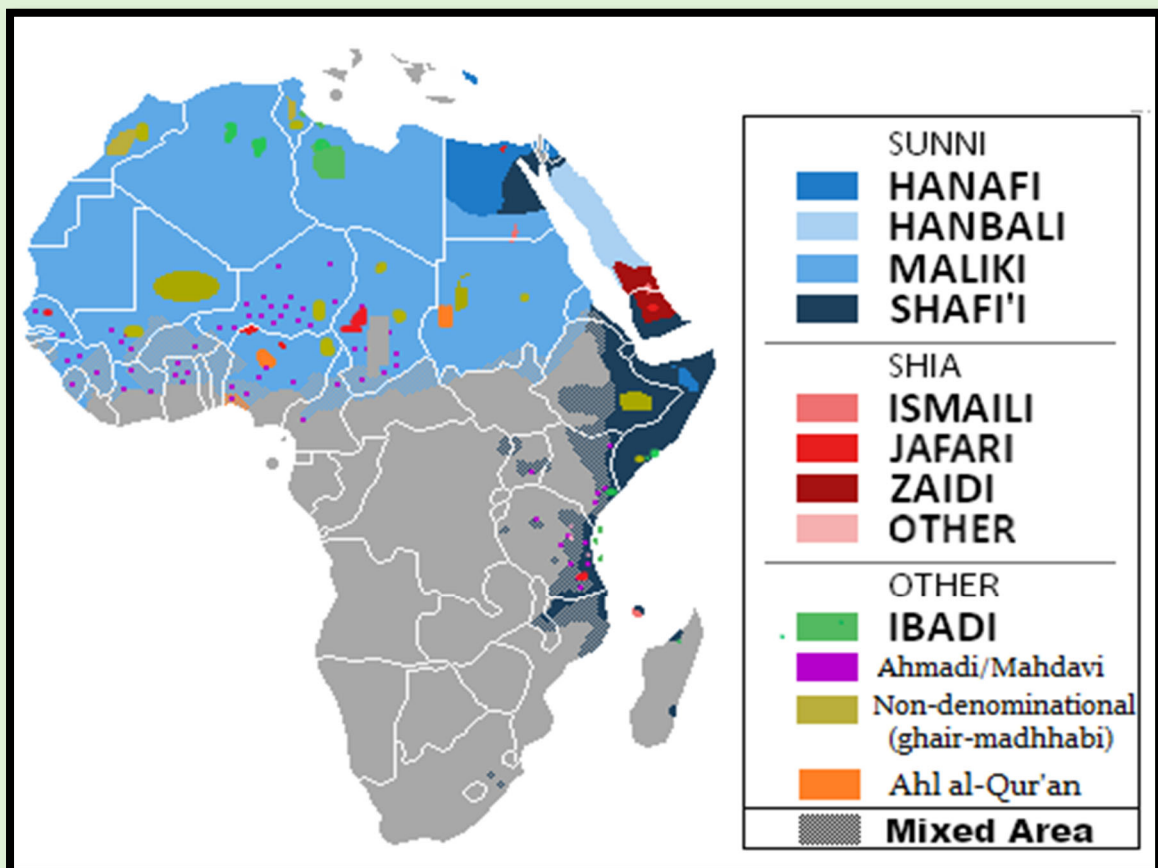
(<https://www.guideoftheworld.com/muslim-population-map-in-africa.html>)

Based on the latest demographic projections and census updates, the following countries have the largest Muslim populations in Africa:

Rank	Country	Estimated Muslim Population (2025)	% of National Population
1	Nigeria	97 000 000 – 124 000 000	50.8
2	Egypt	90 000 000 – 90 400 000	88.9 – 95
3	Algeria	43 700 000 – 46 700 000	98.0 - 99.7
4	Sudan	38 400 000 – 38 600 000	90.7 – 97
5	Morocco	35 500 000 – 36 400 000	99.0
6	Ethiopia	34 700 000 – 39 600 000	31.3 - 34.6
7	Niger	21 100 000 – 21 700 000	98.3 - 98.4
8	Tanzania	15 800 000 – 19 400 000	35.2 – 50
9	Mali	14 500 000 – 19 600 000	94.4
10	Senegal	15 500 000 – 17 400 000	96.4

Key Regional Trends

- **Northern Africa:** This region remains the most concentrated hub, where Islam is practiced by over 90 percent of the population in nearly every country.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** This region is home to over **369 million** Muslims as of 2025, accounting for roughly one-third of its total residents.
- **Growth:** Africa is one of the world's fastest-growing regions for the Muslim faith, driven by high fertility rates and ongoing religious shifts.
- **South Africa:** In the southern tip of the continent, Muslims remain a significant minority, estimated at **1.15 to 2.0 million** people (roughly 2 percent of the national population).



Doctrinal Affiliation of Muslims in Africa
(Facebook)

3. African Countries with Muslim Minorities

Numerous African countries have sizeable Muslim minority populations. These populations vary widely in size, from substantial minorities (over a third of the population) to very small communities. African countries with notable Muslim minority populations:

- **Ethiopia**

Muslims make up approximately 34.6 percent of the population, with Christians forming the majority overall.

- **Tanzania**

Around 35.2 percent of the population is Muslim.

- **Eritrea**

Muslims constitute a significant minority, estimated at around 36.6 percent of the population.

- **Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)**

The Muslim population is a large minority, estimated at 42.5 percent.

- **Guinea-Bissau**

Muslims are close to half of the population at 45.1 percent but are a minority to other religions combined.

- **Ghana**

Muslims account for approximately 15.8 percent of the population.

- **Uganda**

The Muslim population is around 11.5 percent.

- **Cameroon**

Muslims represent approximately 18.3 percent of the population.

- **Mozambique**

The Muslim population is about 18 percent.

- **Kenya**

Muslims make up a smaller minority, approximately 9.7 percent of the total population.

- **Gabon**

Muslims represent around 11.2 percent of the population.

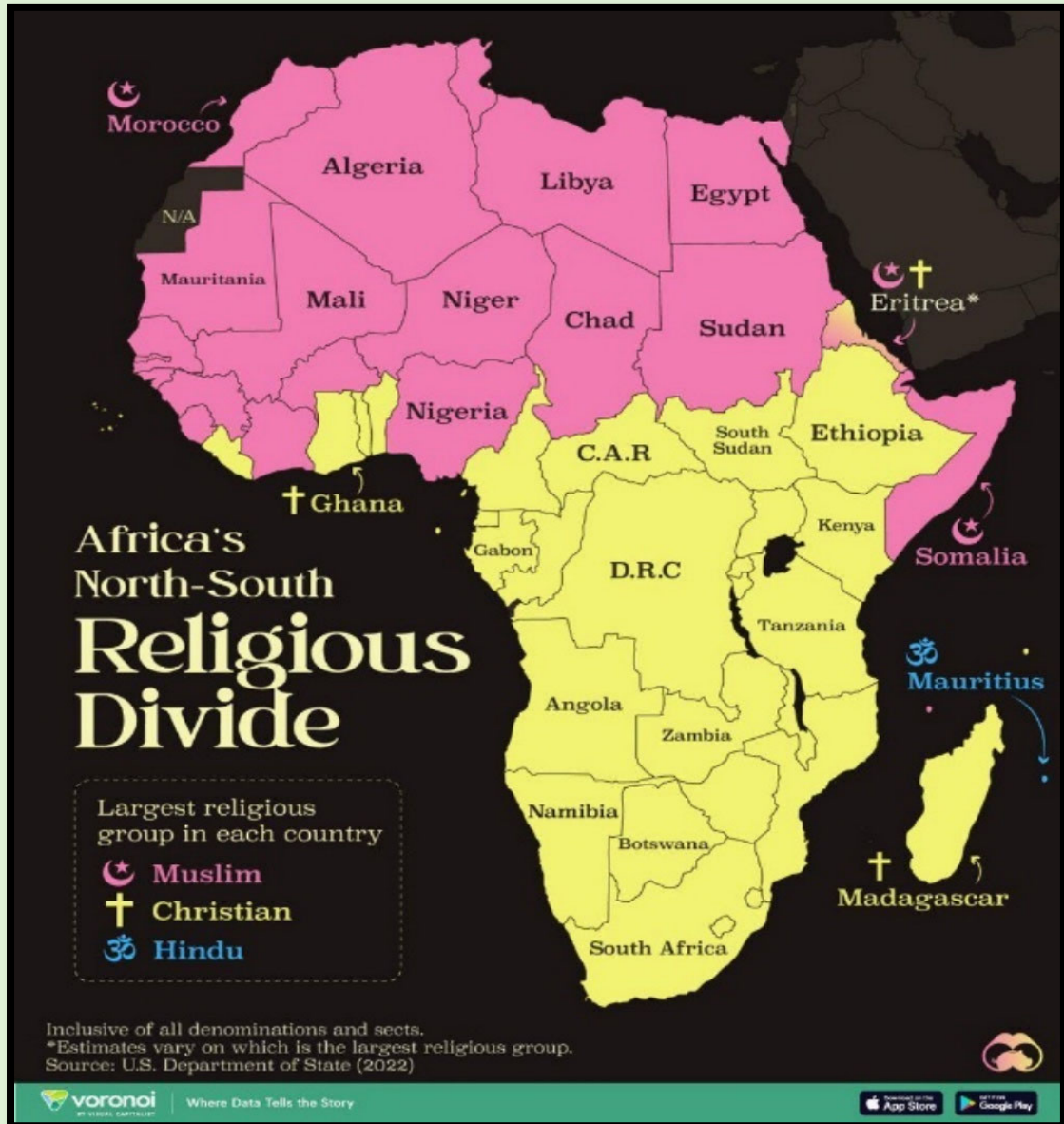
- **Liberia**

Muslims account for approximately 12 percent of the population.

- **South Africa**

Muslims are a small minority, making up about 2 percent of the population.

In contrast, other African countries, particularly in North Africa and the Sahel region, have overwhelming Muslim majorities. Like the vast majority (90 percent) of Muslims in the world, most Muslims in Africa are Sunni Muslims.



(<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/africas-north-south-religious-divide/>)

4. Languages of Muslims in Africa

The linguistic landscape of Muslims in Africa is extremely diverse, spanning over 2000 languages. While Arabic serves as a universal liturgical language, millions of Muslims speak indigenous African languages as their primary means of communication.

The breakdown by major linguistic regions and groups as of 2025 is as follows:

1. Arabic (North and East Africa)

- **Total Speakers:** Arabic is the most widely spoken native language in Africa, with over **213 million** first-language speakers.
- **Distribution:** It is the dominant language for Muslims in North Africa (Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya) and major parts of the Sahel and Horn of Africa (Sudan, Mauritania, Chad, Djibouti, Somalia).
- **Dialects:** Notable varieties include **Egyptian Arabic**, **Maghrebi** (Moroccan, Algerian) and **Sudanese Arabic**. Mauritanian and Mali dialects are closer to Fusha or Modern Standard Arabic.

2. Swahili (East and Central Africa)

- **Usage:** Swahili is the most widely spoken *lingua franca* on the continent, with over **230 million** total speakers.
- **Muslim Context:** It originated as a trade language among Muslim communities along the East African coast. It is a primary language for Muslims in Tanzania, Kenya and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

3. Hausa (West Africa and Sahel)

- **Total Speakers:** Up to **70 - 80 million** speakers.
- **Distribution:** Hausa is the primary language of the Hausa people and serves as a major trade language for Muslims across Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Cameroon and Chad.

4. Other Major Indigenous Languages

Many large Muslim populations speak local languages belonging to the **Niger-Congo** or **Afroasiatic** families:

- **Yoruba:** Spoken by roughly **40 - 45 million** people in Nigeria and Benin, where Muslims constitute a significant portion of the population.
- **Berber (Amazigh):** Spoken by approximately **5 percent of Africans**, primarily in Morocco and Algeria, where it is an official language alongside Arabic.
- **Somali:** The primary language for nearly all Muslims in Somalia, Djibouti and parts of Ethiopia and Kenya.

- **Fula (Fulani):** A widely dispersed language spoken by Muslim pastoralist communities across West and Central Africa, from Senegal to Sudan.
- **Amharic and Oromo:** Significant languages for Muslim minorities in Ethiopia.

5. Colonial and Hybrid Languages

- **French, English and Portuguese:** Often used as official or secondary languages in Muslim-majority countries like Senegal (French), Nigeria (English) and Mozambique (Portuguese).
- **Afrikaans:** Used by the **Cape Malay** Muslim community in South Africa.



5. African States Where Muslims Experience Conflict

In 2025, Muslims across various African regions experienced conflict ranging from insurgencies by extremist groups to inter-communal violence and state-led discrimination. The following countries are currently experiencing significant conflict involving Muslim populations:

West Africa and The Sahel

This region remains the global epicentre of violent internal conflicts.

- **Mali:** Since the 2012 rebellion, Mali has faced a persistent insurgency from al-Qaeda-linked groups like Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) and the Islamic State. Conflict often manifests as clashes between these groups, state forces and ethnic militias.
- **Burkina Faso:** Dealing with a spillover from Mali, the country faces frequent attacks from Islamist insurgents, particularly in its northern and eastern regions.
- **Niger:** Niger experiences conflict on two fronts: the Western border (Liptako-Gourma) with al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and the Southeastern border (Lake Chad Basin) with Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).
- **Nigeria:** The northeast continues to battle Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). Additionally, northern Nigeria sees sectarian tensions relating to Shi'a minorities, who face government discrimination and crackdowns.

East Africa and The Horn

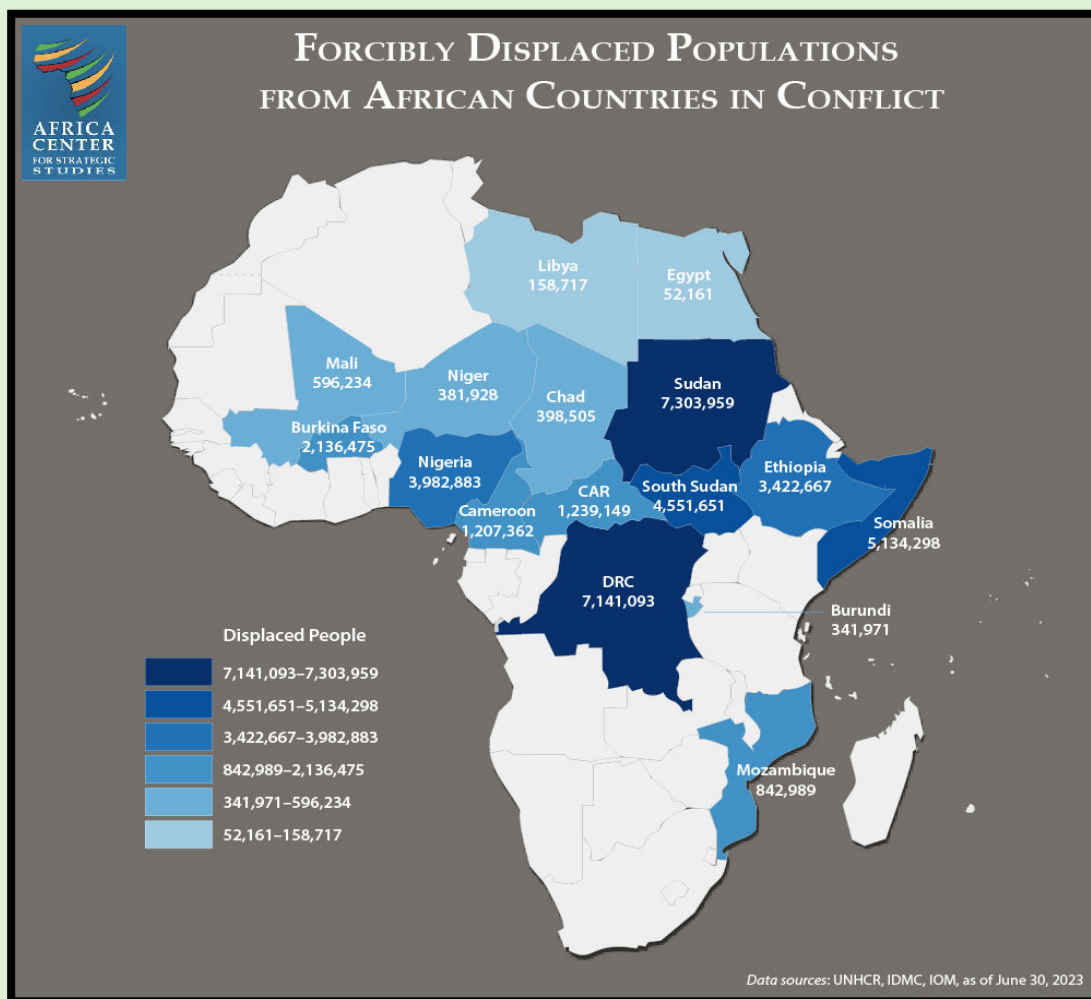
- **Somalia:** The central government, supported by African Union forces, has been in a decades-long war against al-Shabaab, which controls significant rural territory.
- **Sudan:** Currently in a major civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), leading to massive displacement of its predominantly Muslim population.
- **Ethiopia:** While much of the recent conflict is ethnic (Tigray, Amhara), tensions between the Orthodox Christian majority and Muslim minority have occasionally led to the burning of mosques and targeting of Muslim-owned businesses.
- **Kenya and Tanzania:** Both countries face localised threats from al-Shabaab and radicalised cells, particularly in coastal regions like Mombasa and Zanzibar, where Muslims sometimes report socio-economic marginalisation.

Central and Southern Africa

- Mozambique: The northern province of Cabo Delgado has been the site of a violent insurgency by an ISIS-affiliated group (Ansar al-Sunna) since 2017, targeting both the government and local civilians.
- Chad: Experiences spillover from the Lake Chad Basin insurgency and has faced internal rebellions rooted in long-standing north-south religious and ethnic divisions.
- Central African Republic (CAR): While the conflict is often political, it has frequently taken on a religious dimension, with clashes between the mainly Muslim Seleka rebels and Christian anti-balaka militias.

North Africa

- Libya: Remains fragmented following years of civil war, with various armed groups and remnants of extremist organisations vying for control.
- Algeria and Egypt: Authorities in these countries have been reported for harassing and prosecuting religious minorities within Islam such as Ahmadis and Shi'a Muslims, often on blasphemy charges.



6. Muslim Political Movements in Africa

In 2025, Muslim political movements in Africa encompass a wide spectrum of ideologies, from moderate parliamentary parties and social reformists to militant insurgencies. These movements are shaped by regional contexts in North, West and East Africa.

Parliamentary and Reformist Movements

These groups primarily engage in the formal political process, advocating for Islamic principles through democratic means or social activism.

- **Ennahda (Tunisia):** Historically one of the most prominent “Muslim Democrat” parties in the region, it moved from a traditional Islamist platform to a post-Islamist model focused on democratic governance. Currently, it is facing severe repression in Tunisia, with its leader Shaykh Rached Ghannouchi and numerous other political leaders and activists being imprisoned.
- **Justice and Development Party (PJD, Morocco):** A moderate Islamist party that governed Morocco from 2011 to 2021. As of 2025, it remains active, leveraging digital platforms like Discord and TikTok to support youth movements such as the *GenZ 212* protests for economic reform.
- **The Muslim Brotherhood:** Originating in Egypt, it has evolved into various national branches across the continent. While banned and suppressed in Egypt as a “terrorist organisation”, its ideological influence remains significant in the Horn of Africa and the Maghreb.
- **Al Jama-ah (South Africa):** A minor political party in South Africa that advocates for Muslim rights and social justice. In 2023 - 2024, it gained some attention by holding the mayoral office in Johannesburg through coalition agreements with the African National Congress (ANC).

Regional and Nationalist Movements

These movements focus on regional identity, often blending religious affiliation with nationalist or secessionist goals.

- **Uamsho (Zanzibar, Tanzania):** An influential movement in Zanzibar that mobilises for greater autonomy or independence from mainland Tanzania, framing its struggle as a defence of Zanzibar’s Islamic identity.
- **Sanusi Order (Libya):** Historically a Sufi movement that led resistance against colonial rule, its influence persists in Libya’s social and political fabric even in the post-Gaddafi era.

Militant and Insurgent Movements

These groups reject formal political systems, seeking instead to overthrow existing states to establish rule under a strict interpretation of Sharia law.

- **Al-Shabaab (Somalia):** Operates primarily in East Africa, aiming to establish an Islamic state in Somalia and conducting operations across the Horn of Africa.
- **Boko Haram (Nigeria):** Active in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin, it seeks the total implementation of Sharia law and opposes “Western education”.
- **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine:** Militant groups active across the Sahel (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso) that aim to establish a caliphate and have targeted Sufi cultural sites.

Traditional and Sufi Orders

While often non-political in a partisan sense, Sufi orders exert immense political influence through their large memberships and social networks.

- **Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya:** These orders are central to religious and social life in West Africa, especially Senegal and Nigeria. Their leaders (Khalifas) often serve as key intermediaries between the state and the population.

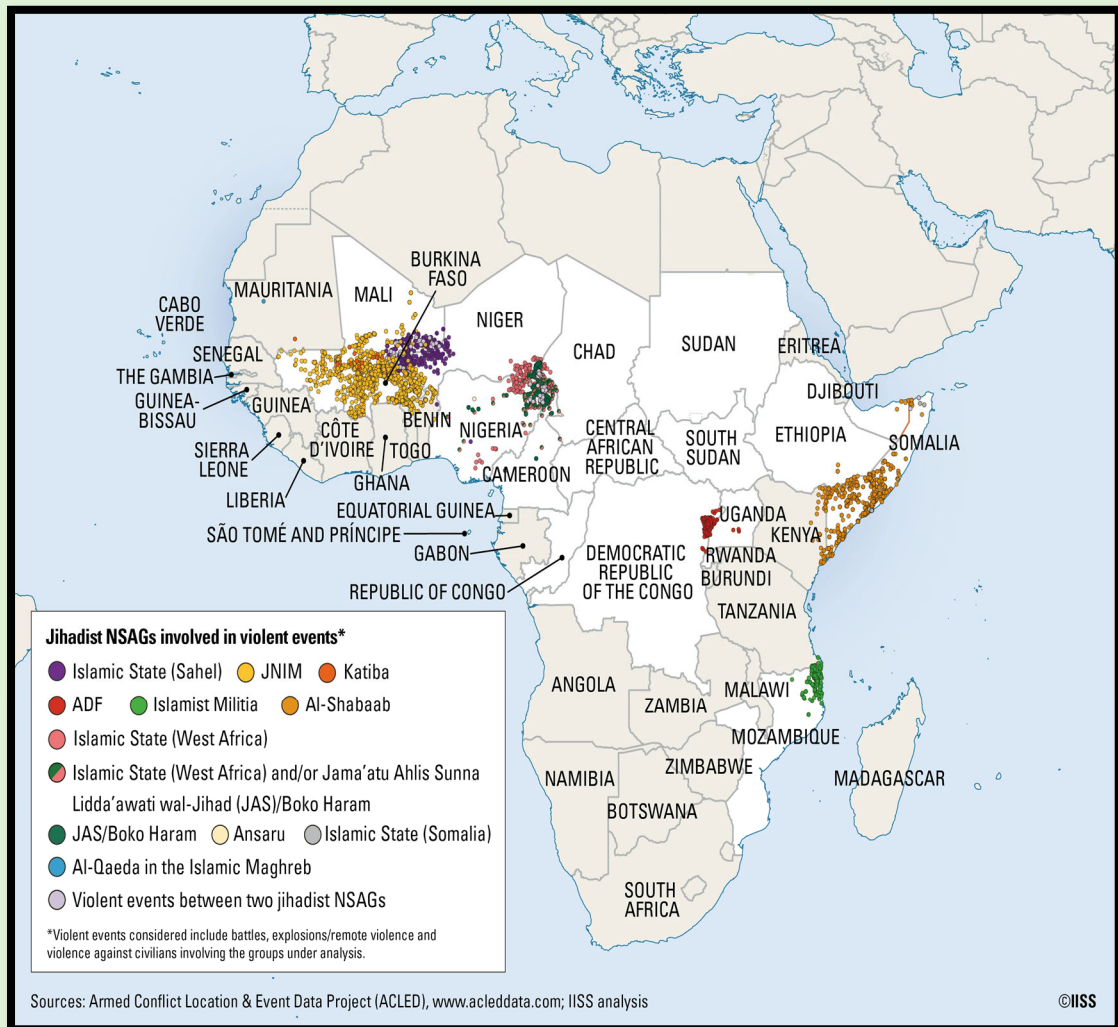
Designated Muslim Terrorist Groups

As of 2025, several militant Islamist groups designated as terrorist organisations by the United Nations, United States and other international bodies remain highly active across Africa. Their activity is concentrated in five primary regional "theatres".

Regional Distribution of Major Groups (2025)

- **The Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger):** This region is currently the most active epicentre of violence.
 - **Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM):** An al-Qaeda-affiliated coalition responsible for 85 percent of violent events in the Sahel in 2024.
 - **Islamic State in the Sahel (IS-Sahel):** Formerly ISGS, this group operates primarily in the border regions of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso.
- **Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger):**
 - **Boko Haram:** Longstanding group primarily active in northeast Nigeria.
 - **Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP):** An ISIS offshoot that has largely surpassed Boko Haram in operational capacity within the region.
- **East Africa (Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia):**
 - **Al-Shabaab:** An al-Qaeda affiliate that controls significant territory in rural Somalia and conducts frequent cross-border attacks into Kenya.

- **Islamic State in Somalia (ISS):** A smaller ISIS-affiliated branch operating mainly in the Puntland region.
- **Central Africa (DRC, Uganda):**
- **ISIS-Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC):** Also known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), it operates in eastern DRC and has recently expanded attacks into Uganda.
- **Southern Africa (Mozambique):**
- **ISIS-Mozambique (Ansar al-Sunna):** Active in the northern Cabo Delgado province, though it has faced pressure from regional military interventions.



Individuals Designated as Terrorists or Extremists in Africa

Several individuals and leaders associated with Islamist groups in Africa have been designated as terrorists by international bodies and national governments, particularly for their roles in violent campaigns across the Sahel, Nigeria, Somalia and Libya

Key designated individuals include:

Sahel and West Africa

- **Iyad Ag Ghali:** Leader of Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), an al-Qaeda-affiliated group operating in Mali and the broader Sahel. He was designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist by the US in 2013.
- **Djamel Okacha (also known as Yahia Abou el Hamame):** A senior leader within JNIM.
- **Amadou Koufa:** Leader of the Katiba Macina, a group affiliated with JNIM.
- **Mokhtar Belmokhtar:** Longtime commander of al-Murabitoun and former AQIM operative, involved in transnational smuggling and terror attacks in North and West Africa, believed to have been killed in 2016.
- **Abubakar Shekau:** Former leader of Boko Haram in Nigeria, noted for violent campaigns including the 2014 kidnapping of 300 female students.
- **Libya and North Africa**
- **Mohammed Ali al-Zahawi:** Leader of Ansar al-Sharia-Benghazi (AAS-B), which has been involved in attacks against security officials.
- **Ahmed Abu Khattala:** A senior leader of AAS-B, charged with a significant role in the 2012 attack on the US diplomatic compound in Benghazi.
- **Abu Anas al-Libi:** An al-Qaeda operative captured by US forces in Libya.

East Africa

- **Al-Shabaab Leaders:** While specific high-level individual designations shift, the group itself is designated, and its leadership is involved in efforts to create an Islamic caliphate across Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti.
- **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**
- **Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) Leaders:** Fighters in this group are linked to the Islamic State and have carried out numerous attacks in the DRC.

Southern Africa

Southern Africa, particularly South Africa and Mozambique, has faced increased international scrutiny for its role as a financial and operational hub for designated groups like **ISIS** and **Al-Shabaab**.

Key Individuals Designated as Terrorists (Southern Africa)

Several South African-based individuals have been sanctioned by the US Department of the Treasury for their roles as financial facilitators and cell leaders:

- **Farhad Hooper:** A Durban-based businessman designated in 2022 as a senior ISIS cell leader. In July 2025, South Africa's Electoral Commission rejected an application by Hooper to register a political party named the "Islamic State of Africa".
- **Abubakar Swalleh:** A South African and Zambian-based ISIS operative designated in 2024 for moving funds from South Africa to the DRC and facilitating the movement of ISIS-affiliated individuals.
- **Zayd Gangat:** A South Africa-based facilitator and trainer for ISIS, sanctioned in mid-2024.
- **Siraj Miller and Abdella Hussein Abadigga:** Designated in 2022 for providing financial and material support to ISIS.
- **Nufael and Yunus Akbar:** Brothers and associates of Farhad Hooper designated for providing technical and financial support to ISIS through front companies.
- **Abu Yasir Hassan:** The former leader of **ISIS-Mozambique** (also known as *Al-Sunna wa Jama'a*), designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

Designated Groups in Southern Africa

- **ISIS-Mozambique (Ahlu Sunna Wal Jammah - ASWJ):** Operates primarily in the northern Cabo Delgado province, it was designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the US in 2021.
- **ISIS-DRC (Allied Democratic Forces - ADF):** While centred in Central Africa, it maintains deep financial and recruitment links through South Africa and Zambia.

Status and Trends in 2025

- **Financial Hub Status:** International monitors like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have historically "grey-listed" South Africa and Mozambique due to deficiencies in monitoring terrorist financing. South Africa's status was reviewed by the FATF in October 2025.
- **Anti-Terrorism Legislation:** South Africa operates under the Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorist and Related Activities Act, (No.23 of 2022) to prosecute and manage these threats.
- **Mozambique Rehabilitation:** As of March 2025, Mozambique has implemented new rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for individuals convicted of terrorism-related charges to manage the insurgent threat in Cabo Delgado.

7. Influential Muslim Business Groups in Africa

Leading Muslim business groups and conglomerates in Africa as of 2025 include major industrial players, chambers of commerce and financial institutions that operate across the continent.

Leading Business Conglomerates

- **Dangote Group (Nigeria):** Led by Aliko Dangote, this is Africa's largest conglomerate. Its operations span 10 African countries, with a dominant presence in cement production (48.6 million metric tons annually), sugar, salt and flour. The group recently launched the \$20 billion Dangote Refinery, the largest in Africa.
- **BUA Group (Nigeria):** A major industrial conglomerate founded by Abdulsamad Rabiu, focusing on foods, mining and manufacturing. It is a leading producer of cement and sugar in West Africa.
- **Cevital (Algeria):** Founded by Issad Rebrab, it is Algeria's largest private conglomerate. It has significant interests in food processing, steel and electronics, with operations extending into Europe and other parts of Africa.
- **MIDROC Investment Group (Ethiopia/Pan-African):** Owned by Mohammed Al Amoudi, this group has massive investments in Ethiopian gold mines, agriculture, energy (Preem) and construction across the continent.
- **MeTL Group (Tanzania):** Mohammed Gulam Abbas Dewji leads the commodities trading business founded by his grandmother, with investments in 11 countries in manufacturing, agriculture, finance, mobile telephony, insurance, real estate, transport and logistics and food and beverages.

Business Chambers and Networking Bodies

- **African Islamic Chamber for Trade and Commerce (AICTC):** An organisation dedicated to promoting trade and economic development based on Islamic principles across the global Muslim community, with a focus on African growth.
- **Minara Chamber of Commerce (South Africa):** A formally constituted organisation that represents and assists Muslim businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals. It serves as a "beacon" for ethical business conduct and provides networking platforms for trade missions.
- **Islamic Council of South Africa (ICSA):** Originally established as an umbrella body to provide a central platform for the Muslim business community and other organisations.

Financial Institutions and Development Groups

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), consisting of 57 member states, is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1969, with its headquarters in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). It has several affiliated agencies working in Africa, notably, the Islamic Centre for Development (Casablanca, Morocco), the Islamic University in Niger (Say, Niger), the Islamic University in Uganda (Mbale, Uganda), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) in Rabat (Morocco) and the Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC) in Benghazi (Libya).
- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB): A multilateral development finance institution that funds sustainable socio-economic growth in 57 member countries, including many in Africa such as Egypt, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire.
- Al Baraka Banking Group: A leading international Islamic financial group with a presence in 13 countries as of late 2024, including substantial operations in South Africa and North Africa.
- Standard Bank Shari'ah Banking: Recognised in 2025 as the best Islamic bank for SMEs in South Africa, reflecting the growth of Shari'ah-compliant corporate services.

Islamic Banking in Africa

Islamic banking in Africa is a rapidly growing sector that offers ethical, interest-free financial solutions to a diverse clientele, including both Muslims and persons of other faiths. The industry is present across the continent, particularly in North, West and East Africa, and is driven by increasing demand for Shari'ah-compliant products, financial inclusion needs and growing government support.

Key Principles of Islamic Banking

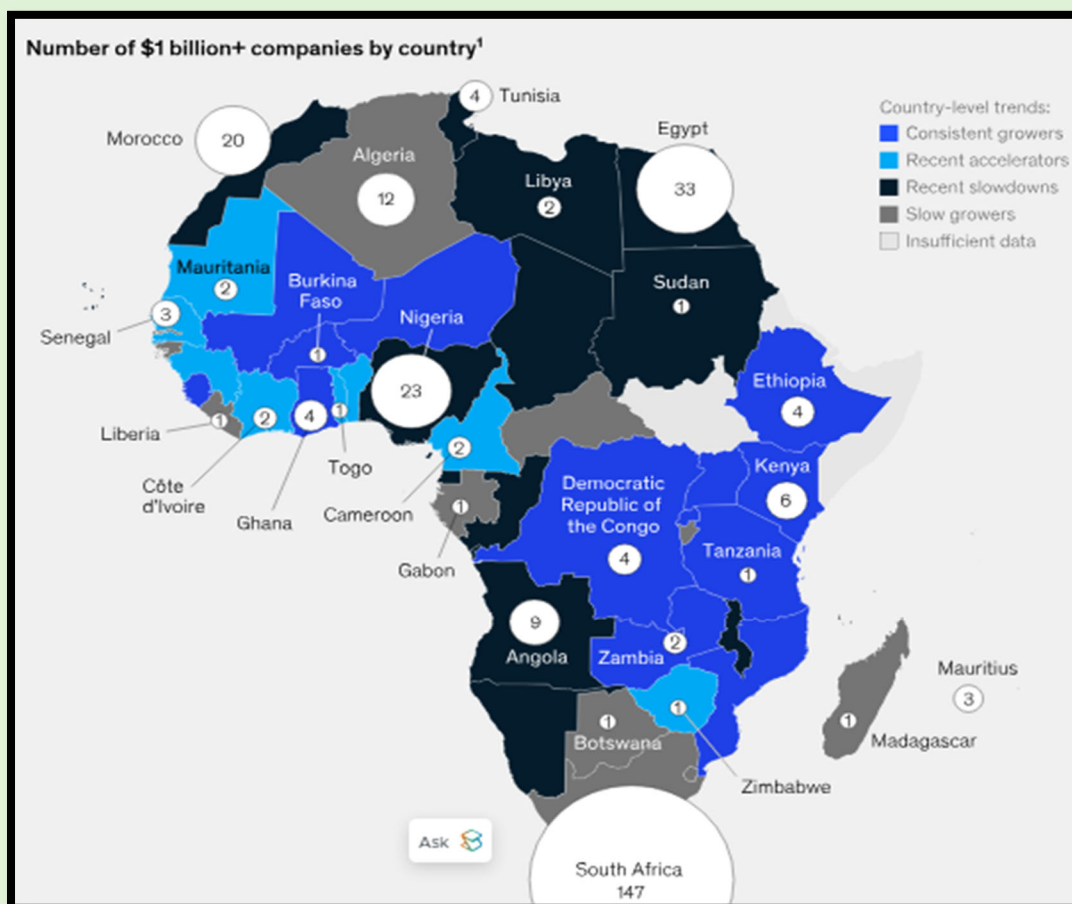
Islamic banking operates on core principles derived from Shari'ah law that differentiate it from conventional banking:

- **Prohibition of Riba (Interest):** The charging or receiving of interest on loans and investments is strictly forbidden.
- **Risk-Sharing:** Instead of interest, the bank and the client share in the profits and losses of an enterprise, aligning financial returns with actual economic performance.
- **Ethical Investment:** Investments are prohibited in industries considered unethical or unlawful, such as those dealing with alcohol, gambling or pornography.
- **Asset-Backed Financing:** Transactions must be linked to tangible assets or services, ensuring that financial activities reflect real economic value.

Growth and Market Penetration

The African Islamic finance sector is experiencing significant growth with opportunities for expansion across various regions.

- **Major Markets:** Countries with active Islamic banking operations include Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, South Africa, Morocco and Tunisia.
- **Operating Models:** Both fully-fledged Islamic banks (e.g. **Albaraka Bank** in South Africa) and "Islamic windows" (separate, Shari'ah-compliant divisions within conventional banks like First National Bank and Standard Bank in South Africa) are prevalent.
- **Infrastructure Funding:** Sukuk (Islamic bonds) have been used by countries like Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa to finance large-scale infrastructure and development projects, helping to bridge the continent's funding gap. Policymakers and financial institutions are working to address challenges by developing tailored regulatory frameworks and promoting education to unlock the sector's full potential for sustainable economic development in Africa.



https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/14kooa4/number_of_1billion_companies_by_country_in_africa/

8. Sufi Movements in Africa

Sufism plays a substantial role in African religious and social life, with millions of adherents following various brotherhoods (tariqas). Below are the leading Sufi groups in Africa:

Tijaniyya

The Tijaniyya is one of the most widespread and influential Sufi order in Africa, particularly in West Africa.

- Origin: Founded by Ahmad al-Tijani in 18th century Algeria and Morocco.
- Presence: Dominant in Senegal, Nigeria, Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, Niger and Chad.
- Notable Leaders: Shaykh Ibrahim Niassé (Senegal) is largely responsible for its massive 20th-century expansion.

Qadiriyya

The Qadiriyya is the oldest and one of the largest Sufi orders across the continent.

- Origin: Named after the 12th-century scholar Abd al-Qadir Jilani of Baghdad.
- Presence: Significant influence in Nigeria (Sokoto Caliphate), Sudan, Somalia and East Africa.
- Notable Leaders: Usman dan Fodio, founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, was a Qadiri shaykh.

Mouridiyya (Muridism)

The Mouridiyya is a powerful, indigenous Sufi order central to the social and economic life of Senegal.

- Origin: Founded by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Mbàcke in the late 19th century as a non-violent resistance movement to French colonialism.
- Presence: Centred in the city of Touba in Senegal, with a large global diaspora.
- Key Feature: Strong emphasis on the "sanctity of work" and agricultural and trade networks.

Shadhiliyya

The Shadhiliyya is particularly prominent in North Africa and parts of East Africa.

- Origin: Founded by Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili in the 13th century.
- Presence: Strongest in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya, with significant branches in the Comoros Islands and Kenya.

Ba'Alawiyya

The Ba'Alawiyya Tariqa is a Sufi order, founded by al-Faqih Muqaddam as-Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali Ba'Alawi al-Husaini (d.1232), centred in Hadhramaut Province in Yemen. It is linked to Madyaniyya Sufi order established by the renowned Shaykh Shuayb Abu Madyan, and has a presence in North and West Africa.

Senussi (Sanusiyya)

The Senussi order is historically significant for its political and military role in North Africa.

- Origin: Founded by Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi in the mid-19th century.
- Presence: Primarily in Libya and Chad.
- History: Led the resistance against Italian colonisation; its leader, Idris I, became the first King of Libya.

Other Notable Orders

- **Ahmadiyya/Salihinyya**: Influential in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, where they historically led anti-colonial movements.
- **Khatmiyya**: A major Sufi order in Sudan and Eritrea, playing a key role in Sudanese politics.
- **Chishti**: While more common in South Asia, it has a notable presence in South Africa (e.g. the Chishti Nizami Habibi order).

9. Contemporary Islamic Reform Movements in Africa

Contemporary Islamic reform movements in Africa are diverse, ranging from puritanical efforts to "purify" the faith to intellectual revivals and militant insurgencies. These movements often negotiate between global Islamic ideologies such as Salafism and local socio-political realities.

Key Types of Reform Movements

- Salafi Movements: These emphasise a return to the "pure" Islam of the *salaf* (pious ancestors) and often criticise local Sufi practices as un-Islamic innovations (*bid'a*).
- Izala (Nigeria): Formally known as *Jama'atul Izalatzul Bid'a wa Ikamatis Sunna*, it was established in 1978 to fight "innovations" and promote the Sunnah.
- Quietist Salafism: Groups that focus on personal piety, education and morality rather than direct political action, seen in countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria.
- Sufi Reformist Movements: While often targeted by Salafis, Sufi orders like the Tijaniyya and Muridiyya (Senegal) have their own reform traditions, adapting to modernity while maintaining spiritual traditions.
- Tablighi Jama'at: A global trans-local movement that gained prominence in countries like Ethiopia and South Africa, focusing on individual spiritual rejuvenation and proselytization (*da'wa*) while explicitly avoiding political agendas.
- Intellectualist and Progressive Movements: These seek to bridge the gap between traditional Islamic scholarship and modern education. In Ethiopia, "Intellectualist revivalists" emerged post-1991 to reconfigure religious identity in a secular state.
- Militant Reformist (Jihadi) Groups: A minority of movements use violence to enforce religious and political norms.
- Boko Haram (Nigeria/Sahel): Originated as a reformist group focused on education before radicalising into a militant insurgency.
- Al-Shabaab (Somalia): A militant group in the Horn of Africa that grew out of broader reformist and political dynamics.

Regional Trends

- West Africa (Nigeria, Senegal, Mali): Dominated by the tension between long-standing Sufi orders and rising Salafi groups like Izala.
- Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia): Post-1991 Ethiopia saw a proliferation of reform groups due to increased religious freedom, while Somalia has faced significant challenges from militant reformists.
- South Africa: Features varied reformist groupings such as Deobandi-aligned institutions, the Tablighi Jama'at and Salafist trends interacting within localised multi-cultural contexts.

Drivers of Reform

- Geopolitical Influence: The "soft power" competition between Saudi Arabia (promoting Salafism) and Iran (promoting Shi'ism) has introduced international students and media into African communities.
- Decolonisation and Modernity: Modern reformist thought often responds to Westernization, seeking to define an authentic Islamic identity in the face of secular state structures.
- Urbanization and Youth: Growing urban populations and a "youth bulge" have led to new forms of religious expression, including digital Salafism and youth-led social movements.

10. Top 10 Muslim Figures in African History

Muslims have played a central role in African history for over 1 400 years, shaping empires, trade routes and intellectual traditions across the continent. Below are ten of the most significant Muslim figures in African history, based on their influence on politics, religion and culture

1. Bilal ibn Rabah (RA) [d. 640]: A companion of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and an emancipated Ethiopian slave, Bilal was the first *muezzin* (caller to prayer) in Islam. He is highly revered for his unwavering faith and is considered a symbol of racial equality within the religion.
2. Mansa Musa (r.1312–1337): The tenth emperor of the Mali Empire, he is renowned for his immense wealth - often considered one of the richest individuals in history. His 1324 pilgrimage to Mecca highlighted West Africa's gold wealth and brought architects and scholars who helped establish Timbuktu as a centre of Islamic learning.
3. Uthman Dan Fodio (1754–1817): A Fulani scholar, social reformer and mystic, who founded the Sokoto Caliphate in modern-day Nigeria. He initiated a major jihad to purify Islamic practices and fought against corruption, establishing a significant administrative state.
4. Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti (1556–1627): A renowned scholar, jurist and author from Timbuktu. He wrote over 40 books on law, theology and grammar and was a leading figure in the intellectual life of the Songhai Empire.
5. Askia Mohammad I (1493–1528): Emperor of the Songhai Empire who expanded the state to its greatest extent. He promoted education, aligned with Islamic scholars in Timbuktu and established Islamic law as a cornerstone of his governance.
6. Idris Aloom (1564–1596): A ruler of the Bornu-Kanem Empire in Central Africa known for his piety, legal reforms based on Islamic law and modernisation of the army using Ottoman firearms.
7. Nana Asma'u (1793–1864): The daughter of Uthman Dan Fodio; she was a poet, historian and educator. She played a crucial role in the intellectual development of West Africa and was a dedicated advocate for women's education.
8. Abd Allah ibn Yasin (d.1059): A theologian and jurist who founded the Almoravid movement, which Islamised many Berber tribes and established a dynasty spanning North Africa and Spain.
9. Amadou Bamba Mbàcke (1853–1927): A Senegalese Sufi leader and founder of the Mouride brotherhood. He is revered for his non-violent resistance against French colonial rule and his emphasis on hard work, study and piety.
10. Ibn Battuta (1304–1369): A Moroccan scholar and explorer who travelled over 117 000 km across the Islamic world, including extensive travels through North, West and East Africa, providing detailed accounts of these regions.

Other Notable Figures

- Sumayya bint Khayyat (RA) [d.615]: The first martyr in Islam, who was tortured alongside her family.
- Abu al-Misk Kafur (d.968): A former slave who became the effective ruler of the Ikhshidid dynasty in Egypt and surrounding regions.
- Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi (1844–1885): A Sudanese leader who led a successful rebellion against British and Egyptian rule.

11. Muslim Intellectuals in Africa

Africa has a rich history of Muslim intellectualism spanning from medieval scholarship in Timbuktu to modern-day reformists and global figures.

Contemporary Intellectuals and Scholars

- Abdalhakim Murad (Timothy Winter): While British, his work is deeply tied to African Islamic heritage, and he often engages with African scholarly traditions through the Cambridge Muslim College.
- Sheikh Abdallah Bin Bayyah (Mauritania): A world-renowned expert in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) and a leading advocate for peace and religious tolerance.
- Sheikh Osmanu Nuhu Sharubutu (Ghana): The National Chief Imam of Ghana and a prominent member of the National Peace Council, known for promoting interfaith dialogue.
- Ibrahim Saleh al-Husaini (Nigeria): A major Tijjani Sufi leader and prolific author of over 600 works on subjects ranging from astronomy to Islamic law.

Historical Intellectual Leaders

- Ahmed Baba al-Timbukti (1556–1627): One of Timbuktu's greatest scholars, he wrote over 40 books on jurisprudence and grammar and famously argued against the racialisation of slavery.
- Shehu Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817): Founder of the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria, he was a philosopher and revolutionary whose writings on social justice and governance still influence West African thought.
- Nana Asma'u (1793–1864): Daughter of Usman dan Fodio; she was a prolific poet and educator who established the *Yan Taru* movement to educate women in the Sokoto Caliphate.
- Amadou Bamba Mbàcke (1853–1927): Founder of the Mouride brotherhood in Senegal, he led a non-violent resistance against French colonial rule through spiritual discipline and labour.
- Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905): An Egyptian jurist and reformer considered the founder of "Islamic Modernism", who sought to reconcile traditional Islamic principles with modern values.
- (Sayyid) Muhammad Rashid Rida al-Hussaini (1865-1935): An Egyptian scholar and reformer, who condemned the rising currents of secularism and nationalism following the abolition of the Ottoman sultanate and espoused a Salafi-oriented outlook.

Centres of Intellectual Influence

- Al-Azhar University (Egypt): One of the world's oldest and most prestigious centres of Islamic learning.
- Sankore Madrasah (Mali): The historic centre of learning in Timbuktu that housed one of the largest libraries in the world during the medieval era.

12. Muslim Female Leaders in Africa

Presently, several Muslim women hold high-profile leadership positions in Africa, spanning heads of state, international diplomats and influential social activists.

Current Heads of State and Government

- Samia Suluhu Hassan (Tanzania): As of November 2025, she serves as the 6th President of Tanzania. Originally sworn in as Muslim woman president in 2021, she secured a second five-year term in the 2025 general election.
- Najla Bouden (Tunisia): Historically recognised as the first female Prime Minister in the Arab world, she has been a prominent political figure in North Africa.

International and National Political Leaders

- Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (Mauritius): A world-renowned biodiversity scientist who served as the first female President of Mauritius (2015–2018) and remains an influential voice in global science and policy.
- Mame Madior Boye (Senegal): Served as the first female Prime Minister of Senegal (2001–2002) and continues to be a respected figure in legal and human rights circles.
- Aminata Touré (Senegal): A former Prime Minister of Senegal (2013–2014) who has held high-ranking positions within the United Nations and continues to lead political movements in West Africa.
- Mbarka Bouaida (Morocco): Elected as the first female regional leader in Morocco (Guelmim-Oued Noun) in 2019, she is a key figure in Moroccan governance.
- Dr Naledi Pandor (South Africa): South African politician and academic, who served as the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation from 2019 until 2024. She currently serves as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg.

Influential Social and Economic Leaders

- Jaha Dukureh (Gambia): A Nobel Peace Prize nominee and UN Women's first Goodwill Ambassador for Africa, she is a leading advocate for ending female genital mutilation and forced child marriage.
- Hauwa Ojeifo (Nigeria): Founder of *She Writes Woman*, she is a globally recognised mental health advocate named as one of Africa's top female change-makers in 2025.
- Dickel Dia (Mauritania): Founder of AFPHY, an organisation that has impacted over 14 000 people by promoting gender equality and financial independence for women through ecological farming and pottery.

- Yasmina Francke (South Africa): CEO of the South African National Zakah Fund (SANZAF), she was recognized as one of the most influential women in Islamic business and finance.

Historic Trailblazers

- Fatima al-Fihri (Morocco): Founded the University of al-Qarawiyyin in 859, recognised by UNESCO as the oldest continuously operating university in the world.
- Queen Amina of Zaria (Nigeria): A 16th-century Hausa warrior queen, who expanded her kingdom through military strategy and engineering.

13. Recognised Muslim Scientists in Africa

Throughout history, Africa has produced numerous leading Muslim scientists and polymaths who have made foundational contributions to fields ranging from sociology and chemistry to modern femto-chemistry and biomedical engineering.

Historical Figures (Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)

- Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406): Born in Tunis, he is widely regarded as the father of sociology, historiography and economics. His masterpiece, the *Muqaddimah*, established theories on social cohesion (*asabiyyah*) and the rise and fall of civilizations.
- Ahmed Baba al-Timbukti (1556–1627): Timbuktu's greatest scholar, he was a prolific writer and chancellor of the Sankore Madrasa. He authored over 40 books on jurisprudence, history and theology.
- Mohammed Bagayogo (1523–1593): An influential scholar from Mali who taught at the University of Timbuktu. His expertise spanned medicine, law and astronomy, and he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Al-Azhar University.
- Fatima al-Fihri (d.880): In 859, she founded the University of Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco, which is recognized by UNESCO and Guinness World Records as the oldest continuously operating, degree-granting educational institution in the world.

Modern and Contemporary Leaders

- Ahmed Zewail (1946–2016): An Egyptian/American chemist known as the "father of femto-chemistry". He was awarded the 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his work in ultra-fast spectroscopy, allowing for the observation of atoms in motion during chemical reactions.
- Sameera Moussa (1917–1952): An Egyptian nuclear physicist who was the first woman to hold a faculty position at Cairo University. She specialised in medical applications of nuclear technology and aimed to make nuclear treatment as accessible as aspirin.
- Abdon Atangana: A prominent Cameroonian mathematician based in South Africa, known for his work in fractional calculus and its applications to real-world problems like groundwater modelling.
- Mohamed HA Hassan: A Sudanese mathematician and physicist who has served as the President of the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) and the African Academy of Sciences.
- Oumar Gaye: A leading Senegalese professor of parasitology and director of the MARCAD Consortium, specialising in the fight against malaria in Africa.

- Nashwa Eassa: A Sudanese nano-particle physicist and founder of the Sudanese Women in Science organisation, focused on utilising nanotechnology for environmental solutions.
- Abdigani Diriye: A Somali computer scientist and research scientist at IBM Research – Africa, recognised for his work in human-computer interaction and financial technology.

14. Muslim Political Analysts in Africa

Several Muslim political analysts and scholars across Africa are recognised for their expertise in regional geopolitics, political Islam and socio-economic development.

Leading Analysts and Scholars

- Mahmood Mamdani (Uganda): A globally renowned political scientist, Mamdani's work often examines the intersection of Political Islam, colonialism and the roots of terrorism. He has served in senior roles at the Makerere Institute of Social Research and Columbia University.
- Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (Sudan): A leading scholar on Islamic law and human rights, An-Na'im is recognized for his analysis of African Muslims' engagement with political life and the compatibility of Shari'ah with modern constitutionalism.
- Adeel Malik (Nigeria/Global): An Oxford-based development macroeconomist who focuses on the political economy of Muslim societies, specifically looking at economic history and long-run development in Africa and the Middle East.
- Benjamin F Soares (West Africa focus): A researcher who has extensively documented the diversity of Muslim politics in West Africa, challenging conventional assumptions about Islam's role in the region's political arena.
- Issa Gulamhussein Shivji (Tanzania): A Tanzanian academic focussing on constitutional law and economic development and reforms, who presently occupies the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Research Chair in Pan-African Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Institutional and Media Analysts

- Zohran Mamdani: A younger voice in political analysis and activism whose perspectives on justice and grassroots power are frequently featured in publications like *Muslim Views*. He was elected in 2026 as the 112th mayor of New York City.

15. Recognised Muslim Historians in Africa

Leading Muslim historians in Africa include foundational figures of world historiography and specialised scholars of regional African empires.

Classical and Early Modern Historians

Key Historical Figures

- **Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406):** Born in Tunis, he is widely regarded as one of the greatest historians and the father of modern sociology and historiography. His masterpiece, the *Muqaddimah*, provides an early nonreligious philosophy of history and a definitive record of Muslim North Africa.
- **Ahmed Baba (1556–1627):** A pre-eminent scholar and historian from Timbuktu, he served as the Chancellor of the Sankore Madrasa. He wrote 40 books covering diverse topics and is considered one of the greatest 16th-century scholars.
- **Ibn Battuta (1304–1368/69):** A Moroccan explorer and scholar who travelled extensively throughout Africa, including the Mali Empire and East African coast. His travelogue, the *Rihla*, is a vital historical record of medieval African cultures and societies.
- **Al-Maqrizi (1364–1442):** A leading Egyptian historian who specialised in the topography and history of Egypt. His work *Kitab al-Khitat* is a primary source for the archaeology and history of Cairo.
- **Mohammed Bagayogo (1523–1593):** A scholar from Djenne who taught at the University of Sankore in Timbuktu. He authored works on history, law and medicine.
- **Nana Asma'u (1793–1864):** Daughter of Usman dan Fodio, she was a prolific writer and historian of the Sokoto Caliphate, documenting religious wars and promoting education for women.
- **Al-Sa'di (1594–c. 1655):** Author of the *Tarikh al-Sudan*, an authoritative chronicle of the history of the Mali and Songhai Empires through the 15th and 16th centuries.
- **Cheikh Anta Diop (1923–1986):** A Senegalese historian and anthropologist who challenged Eurocentric views of history. His work, *The African Origin of Civilization*, argued for the African roots of Egyptian civilization.
- **Abdullahi Smith (1920–1984):** A scholar who founded the History Department at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria (Nigeria) and significantly advanced the study of the history of the Central Sudan.

Contemporary Specialists

- **Dr Abdullah Hakim Quick:** A modern historian and religious leader of African descent who specialises in the history of Timbuktu and Islamic legacy across Africa.
- **Professor Ousmane Kane:** A professor at Harvard Divinity School known for his intellectual history of Muslim West Africa, specifically documented in his book, *Beyond Timbuktu*.
- **Professor Muhammed Haron:** A senior researcher and editor who focuses on the history and experiences of Muslims in Southern Africa.

Muslim historians in Africa have played a critical role in documenting the continent's social, political and religious evolution from the medieval era to the present.

- **Professor Goolam Vahed:** A modern South African historian who specialises in the history of Indian Muslims in South Africa.
- **Mohammed Artan:** A contemporary historian translating classical Arabic texts related to the history of Muslim kingdoms in Northeast Africa and the Horn of Africa.
- **Dr Shafiq Morton:** An editor and historian in the history of Islam in Southern Africa and the legacies of Muslim leaders in Cape Town.
- **Professor Ali Mazrui (1933–2014):** A Kenyan-born academic and public intellectual, who became one of the most prominent voices in 20th-century African and Islamic studies
- **Associate Professor Shamil Jeppe:** A senior lecturer in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town, who has worked on aspects of social history in South African cities and the history of West Africa and founded the Tombouctou Manuscripts Project.

16. Leading Muslim Social Analysts in Africa

Leading Muslim social analysts and scholars in Africa focus on the intersection of Islamic theology, gender ethics, political reform and social justice. Their work often addresses the role of Islam in post-colonial states and democratic transitions.

Prominent Analysts and Academics

- **Professor Sa'diyya Shaikh** (South Africa): An Associate Professor at the University of Cape Town, she is a leading voice in Islamic feminism and gender ethics. Her work, including *The Women's Khutbah Book* (2022), explores Muslim women's religious authority and social justice.
- **Professor Abdulkader Tayob** (South Africa): Based at the University of Cape Town, Tayob is a scholar of religion and public life. He analyses the history of Islamic institutions, political Islam and the role of Muslims in democratic societies.
- **Dr Abdurrahman M Abdullahi "Baadiyow"** (Somalia): A prominent social analyst and leader within the Islah Movement, he focuses on political Islam and its role in state-building and peace-making in the Horn of Africa.
- **Professor Suleman Dangor** (South Africa): A retired professor of Islamic Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, he analyses the socio-political struggles and achievements of Muslim communities in Southern Africa.
- **Professor Ebrahim Moosa** (South Africa/USA): Though based in the US, his extensive research on Islamic law in Africa examines its impact on post-colonial nation-states and political mobilisation.
- **Dr Tahir Fuzile Sitoto**: Lecturer at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), who focusses on Black African Muslim subjectivities and Islam.

Influential Religious and Community Leaders

- **Sultan Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III** (Nigeria): As the Sultan of Sokoto, he is the spiritual leader of Nigeria's Muslims and a critical voice on social development, interfaith relations and religious authority in West Africa.
- **Amir Mohammed Gadimang** (South Africa): Leader of the Gauteng Muslim Shurah Council (GMSC), he represents an emerging movement of indigenous Black Muslims advocating for social and economic empowerment.
- **(Maulana) Yusuf Patel** (South Africa): As Secretary General of the United Ulama Council of South Africa (UUCSA), Patel provides public commentary on the intersection of religious values and national and international political issues.

Institutional Analysis

Key organisations also produce significant social analysis through their directors and research fellows:

- Awqaf SA: Focuses on the socio-economic contribution of Muslims to poverty alleviation and civilizational development in Southern Africa.

17. Prominent Muslim Jurists in Africa

The leading Muslim jurists in Africa include a mix of state-appointed Grand Muftis, influential Sufi leaders and academic specialists in Sharia (Islamic law). These figures often play dual roles as spiritual guides and legal authorities who issue legal rulings to resolve social and religious issues.

Prominent Contemporary Jurists

- **Sheikh Ibrahim Ibn Saleh al-Hussaini (Nigeria):** The Grand Mufti of Nigeria, he is a member of the Muslim Council of Elders and has authored over 600 works on jurisprudence and hadith.
- **Sheikh Shawki Ibrahim Abdel-Karim Allam (Egypt):** The Grand Mufti of Egypt, elected by the Council of Senior Scholars of Al-Azhar. He is a leading specialist in Islamic jurisprudence.
- **Sheikh Osmanu Nuhu Sharubutu (Ghana):** The National Chief Imam of Ghana and a prominent Tijanniyah Sufi leader. He is highly influential in promoting interfaith dialogue and religious education.
- **Sheikh Chérif Ousmane Madani Haïdara (Mali):** Chairman of the High Islamic Council of Mali, serving as a central authority for the country's Muslim population.
- **(Mufti) Ismail Musa Menk (Zimbabwe):** He serves as the Mufti of Zimbabwe and is a globally recognised public speaker on Islamic ethics and personal law.

Historical Juristic Giants

African Islamic history is defined by several foundational jurists whose works still influence modern legal thought:

- **Ahmed Baba al-Timbukti (1556–1627, Mali):** A leading Maliki jurist and scholar of the Sankore Madrasa in Timbuktu. He is famous for his legal treatise against racialised slavery.
- **Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817, Nigeria):** Founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, he was a prolific Maliki jurist and reformer, who focussed on social justice and female education.
- **Nana Asma'u (1793–1864, Nigeria):** Daughter of Usman dan Fodio, she was a Maliki jurist, poet and educator who pioneered organized women's education in West Africa.
- **Ahmed Bamba (1853–1927, Senegal):** Founder of the Mouride brotherhood, his legal and spiritual teachings focused on non-violent resistance and ethical reform.

Leading Constitutional Judges

Leading Muslim constitutional jurists in Africa include prominent figures from South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt, who influence both national constitutional law and the integration of Sharia with secular legal frameworks.

Constitutional Jurists

- **Justice Ismail Mahomed (South Africa, deceased):** Historically one of Africa's most iconic jurists, he was the first black Chief Justice of South Africa and concurrently served as Chief Justice of Namibia. He authored landmark constitutional judgments, including the abolition of the death penalty.
- **Professor Muneer Abduroaf (South Africa):** An Associate Professor at the University of the Western Cape specialising in constitutional theory and Sharia law. He serves as a CRL Rights Commissioner, a "Chapter 9" constitutional post in South Africa.

Specialised Experts in Legal Integration

- **Professor Waheeda Amien (South Africa):** A scholar at the University of Cape Town specialising in Muslim Personal Law and its compatibility with constitutional human rights.
- **Professor Najma Moosa (South Africa):** A senior academic at the University of the Western Cape whose research significantly influences the constitutional recognition of religious minority rights.

18. Muslim Research Institutes in Africa

Africa hosts a diverse array of Muslim research institutes and organisations, ranging from historic theological universities to modern policy think tanks and developmental NGOs.

Research Institutes and Academic Hubs

These centres focus on the study of Islamic thought, history and contemporary Muslim societies in Africa.

- **Centre for Contemporary Islam** (South Africa): Located at the University of Cape Town, it focuses on the study of Islam and Muslim communities in Africa, covering themes like ethics, gender and decolonial research.
- **Al-Azhar University** (Egypt): One of the oldest and most influential Islamic institutions in the world, serving as a global centre for Islamic learning and scholarship.
- **International University of Africa (IUA)** (Sudan): A major hub for Islamic studies, featuring dedicated faculties for Shariah, Quranic studies and an African Islamic Centre.
- **Auwal Socio-Economic Research Institute (ASRI)** (South Africa): A public policy institute that applies values of justice and equality to contemporary social and economic challenges.

Socio-Religious and Educational Organisations

These organisations provide leadership in Islamic law, education and social coordination.

- **Muslim Judicial Council** (South Africa): Founded in 1945, it is a key authority on Islamic law, education and community leadership in the Western and Eastern Cape provinces in South Africa.
- **Jamiatul Ulama South Africa (JUSA)**: Based in Johannesburg, a council of Islamic scholars established in 1923, providing religious guidance, Islamic juridical rulings, welfare services and educational oversight.
- **Jamiatul Ulama KZN** (South Africa): Founded in 1955, it provides similar services as JUSA. It, together with the Muslim Judicial Council and the Jamiatul Ulama South Africa, is affiliated to the United Ulama Council of South Africa (UUCSA).
- **Association of Muslim Private Schools**: An organisation that advises and develops private, Muslim primary and secondary schools across South Africa.

Development and Humanitarian Organisations

Focus on social welfare, poverty alleviation and interfaith relations.

- **Islamic Dawah Movement:** Engages in dawah (outreach), research and building community centres and mosques across Southern Africa.
- **Munazzamat al Dawa al Islamiya (Sudan/International):** An organisation involved in humanitarian aid, health and primary education across various African countries.
- **Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA):** A pan-African organisation that promotes peaceful coexistence and research on relations between the two faiths.

Secular Institutions and Journals

- **Think Tank for the Research of Islam and Muslims in Africa (RIMA):** An Israel-based research institute founded by Dr Moshe Terdiman that provides analysis on Sufism, women's status and climate change, including radical Islamic groups on the continent. In 2018, RIMA collaborated with the University of the Free State and the University of Haifa to publish a collection of research papers entitled, *Research on Islam and Muslims in Africa: Collected Papers 2013-2018*.
- **Islamic Africa Journal (Northwestern University/ISITA):** A multidisciplinary journal focusing on the history, literature and practices of African Muslims.
- **African Studies Centre Leiden (ASC):** Focuses on contemporary Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa, including bibliographies.
- **University of Bayreuth Archive:** Holds archival material on Sufism, religious practices, family and law.
- **The *Journal of African Studies*** carries regular articles on Islam in Africa versus African Islam.
- **Islam West Africa Collection (IWAC):** This is an open-access database with over 12 500 items, including archival documents, audio-video material and publications.

19. Muslim Cultural Organisations in Africa

Muslim cultural and religious organisations in Africa range from pan-African networks and humanitarian agencies to localised theological councils. As of 2025, several prominent organisations lead efforts in education, social welfare and the preservation of Islamic heritage.

Pan-African and Regional Organisations

- **Africa Muslims Agency (AMA) / Direct Aid:** One of the most widespread organisations on the continent, AMA has built thousands of schools, water wells, and hospitals across more than 35 African countries over the last four decades.
- **Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA):** A long-standing pan-African body (founded in 1959) that operates in 20 countries to foster peaceful co-existence and constructive dialogue between faiths.
- **United Ulama Council of South Africa (UUCSA):** Formed in 1994 and led by (Maulana) Abdul Khaliq Allie (President) and (Maulana) Yusuf Patel (Secretary), it is an umbrella body of several theological formations representing over 1 500 Muslim scholars in the country. It hosts a biennial conference of Muslim scholars in Southern Africa.
- **International Centre for Islamic Culture and Education (ICICE):** Based in Nigeria, ICICE focuses on Islamic and cultural education, innovative finance for development and charitable programmes.
- **Young Muslim Association (YMA) – Kenya:** A leading organisation in East Africa that established critical child-care and educational facilities, such as the Garissa Boys' Town, to support Muslim children.

Museums

Africa boasts significant Islamic museums. West Africa, particularly Mali's historic city of Djenné, holds Islamic heritage sites with libraries and learning centres, showcasing Islamic art and history across the continent.

North Africa and Egypt

- **Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (Egypt): (Egypt):** The world's largest museum dedicated to Islamic art, with over 100 000 artifacts spanning Islamic history.
- **National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Art (Algeria):** Africa's oldest museum, housing rich collections from pre-Islamic to Ottoman periods, with dedicated Islamic art galleries.
- **Bardo Museum, Tunis (Tunisia):** Known for its extensive Islamic art and artifacts, reflecting North Africa's rich history.

Sub-Saharan Africa

- **Nizamiye Mosque Complex (Midrand) and the Darul Uloom Zakariyya Museum, Lenasia (South Africa):** Features replicas of items from the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), models of the Prophet's Mosque and other interactive displays.
- **Iziko Bo-Kaap Museum (South Africa):** Highlights local Islamic culture and heritage in Cape Town's historic Muslim quarter. It is a key site for showcasing Cape Malay Islamic culture and the history of freed slaves.
- **Virtual Muslim Heritage Museum (South Africa):** A digital initiative documenting 350 years of Muslim history in South Africa, with a broader focus on African Muslim history.
- **Deen Arts Foundation South Africa:** A specialised non-profit group dedicated to reviving and preserving traditional Islamic sacred arts through workshops and apprenticeship models.

Sculptors

Leading Muslim sculptors in Africa often blend traditional Islamic art with contemporary themes, with figures like Ghana's Ibrahim Mahama, known for large-scale installations using jute sacks exploring trade and colonialism, and Nigeria/Ghana's El Anatsui, famous for monumental bottle-top sculptures reflecting history, standing out, alongside artists like Sudan's Ibrahim El-Salahi, a modernist exploring African and Islamic motifs. While sculpture can be less documented than painting in Islamic art, these contemporary figures are prominent, alongside calligraphers like Mohammed Mandi who sculpt with words.

- **Ibrahim Mahama (Ghana):** Creates massive sculptures and installations from everyday materials (like cocoa sacks) to discuss labour, migration and colonial legacies, often with profound socio-political commentary.
- **El Anatsui (Ghana/Nigeria):** Renowned for transforming discarded bottle caps into shimmering, large-scale metal tapestries, symbolising cultural fluidity and history.
- **Ibrahim El-Salahi (Sudan):** A pioneer of African modernism, his work, though often drawing, also uses sculptural elements and deeply explores African and Arab identity, with strong Islamic undertones.

Artists Working with Islamic Themes/Calligraphy (often sculptural):

- **Rachid Koraïchi (Algeria):** Works with repetition of signs, linking contemporary art with mystical Islamic knowledge, creating visually intricate pieces.
- **Mohammed Mandi (UAE):** A calligrapher known for designing the calligraphy on UAE banknotes and passports, effectively sculpting with Arabic script.

Key Movements and Context

- **Contemporary African Art:** Many Muslim artists contribute to the broader African art scene, using sculpture to address post-colonial issues, globalisation and cultural heritage, often subtly referencing Islamic aesthetics or faith.
- **Islamic Art and Calligraphy:** The tradition of using calligraphy as a primary art form in Islamic cultures often blurs the line into sculptural relief and form, with artists creating intricate designs that function as both text and art.

These artists showcase how sculpture in Africa, by Muslim practitioners, is a powerful medium for cultural expression, historical reflection and modern artistic innovation.

African Muslim painters

African Muslim painters have significantly shaped contemporary art by blending cultural heritage with modern techniques. These artists often explore themes of identity, spirituality and social justice.

- **Ibrahim El-Salahi (Sudan):** A pioneer of African Modernism and a founding member of the Khartoum School. His work is celebrated for integrating Arabic calligraphy with African motifs and was the first African artist to receive a full retrospective at the Tate Modern.
- **Ghada Amer (Egypt):** Renowned for her "embroidered paintings" that challenge traditional views on femininity and sexuality within both Western and Islamic contexts.
- **Kader Attia (Algeria/France):** A multi-disciplinary artist whose work often addresses "repair" and the legacy of colonialism, utilising both painting and large-scale installations.
- **Ebrahim Badsha (South Africa):** A key figure in the 20th-century South African art scene, known for incorporating Arabic calligraphy and African design into wood engravings and silkscreens.
- **Amina Agueznay (Morocco):** While working across jewellery and architecture, her visual art often incorporates traditional Moroccan craftsmanship and has been featured in major exhibitions.

Contemporary Visual and Multimedia Artists

- **Safaa Mazirh (Morocco):** Known for her reclamation of traditional tattoos and post-colonial identity through her art.
- **Shukry Adams (South Africa):** A Cape Town-based artist whose collage work has been featured in exhibitions specifically highlighting Muslim voices in the arts.

20. Humanitarian and Aid Organisations in Africa

Numerous Muslim humanitarian and relief organisations operate extensively across Africa, providing aid for emergencies, healthcare, education and poverty alleviation.

Pan-African and International Organisations

- **Africa Muslims Agency (Direct Aid International):** One of the largest aid organisations on the continent, operating in 29 African countries since 1987. Key focus areas include building wells, schools, hospitals and mosques, with a major presence in Niger, Sierra Leone, Mali and Mozambique.
- **Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW):** A global network providing emergency aid and sustainable development projects guided by Islamic values with a significant footprint in Africa, including active offices and projects in South Africa, Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi and the Central African Republic. In 2026, they continue to scale up responses for the Sudan Emergency and other regional crises.
- **Muslim Aid:** Operates relief and development programmes in countries such as Somalia, Sudan and Sierra Leone. Its work focuses on emergency response, provision of clean water and skills training.
- **Muslim Hands:** Active in over 50 countries globally, including multiple African nations, providing schooling, healthcare clinics and clean drinking water.
- **Muslim World League (MWL):** Conducts large-scale relief programmes such as food distributions in South Africa and blindness prevention projects in Zimbabwe.
- **Gift of the Givers Foundation:** Based in South Africa, this is a prominent disaster response NGO known for its rapid deployment of medical and rescue teams across the continent, including development programmes in education and agriculture.
- **Al-Imdaad Foundation:** A South African-based international aid agency that provides disaster relief and sustainable community development projects.
- **Ashraful Aid:** International organisation headquartered in South Africa, currently focused on a 2026 Sudan Food Appeal and water well projects across various regions.

Regional and Specialised Organisations

- **Ethar Relief:** Specialises in supporting refugees in the Horn of Africa, particularly those from Eritrea, and provides aid in East Africa and Yemen.
- **South African Muslim Charitable Trust (SAMCT):** Focuses on providing funding, healthcare and educational resources to vulnerable communities within South Africa.
- **Mustadafin Foundation:** A South African organisation dedicated to community upliftment, social welfare and disaster relief in the Western Cape.

- **Orphans in Need:** Provides targeted medical and educational support to orphaned children in countries like Mali and Sierra Leone.
- **Darul Ihsan (South Africa):** A South African organisation dedicated to Islamic education, research, community upliftment, social welfare and disaster relief in KwaZulu-Natal.
- **Salaam Foundation (South Africa):** Focusses on food security, emergency relief aid, search and rescue operations and basic Islamic education.
- **Islamic Relief South Africa:** Part of a global network, this NGO provides humanitarian aid and disaster relief based on Islamic values.

21. Muslim Media Platforms in Africa

Influential Muslim media platforms in Africa range from established terrestrial radio and TV stations to digital-first social media networks and pan-African news outlets. These platforms often serve as critical tools for religious education, community advocacy and providing a Muslim-centric perspective on global and local news.

Television and Satellite Networks

- **Al-Jazeera (Pan-African):** While not exclusively African, its Arabic and English channels are among the most influential media networks across the continent, particularly for its coverage of regional issues like Gaza and the Sahel.
- **INX Prime:** A South African-based channel that combines lifestyle and Islamic content, airing on DSTv (Channel 345) and other regional platforms.
- **Hilaal TV (South Africa):** An Islamic channel available on the DSTv satellite platform (Channel 347) broadcasting news, educational content and spiritual programming across the continent.

Radio Stations

Radio remains a dominant medium for Muslim communities, particularly in West, East and South Africa.

- **Radio Islam International (Johannesburg):** One of the most recognised global Muslim radio brands, providing live streaming, news and podcasts across Africa.
- **Channel Islam International (CII):** Based in Johannesburg focussing on global Muslim news and community-oriented content.
- **Voice of the Cape (VOC) (Cape Town):** A high-reach community station known for its deep roots in the Cape Muslim community and its reporting on social and religious affairs.
- **Radio 786 (Cape Town):** Known for its investigative journalism and focus on community development and news.
- **Radio Al Ansaar (Durban):** An established Muslim radio station in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, focussing on community news and current affairs.
- **Radio Rahma & Radio Salaam (Kenya):** Leading Islamic radio stations in coastal Kenya that serve as major platforms for religious discourse and female Muslim preachers.
- **Radio Islam (Malawi):** A primary Islamic radio station in Malawi, established in 2000 to promote Islamic teachings and socio-economic development.
- **Africa 7 (Senegal):** A Quranic live radio station that has gained popularity in Senegal.

- **Radio Coran (Algeria):** A dedicated Islamic radio station in Algeria.
- **Abdulbasit Abdulsamad WARSH Radio (Morocco):** A specialised radio station based in Tangier focussing on Quranic recitations.

Print and Online News Platforms

- **Muslim Views (South Africa):** One of the oldest Muslim newspapers in the country, now featuring a robust digital presence that covers faith, practice and social justice.
- **Al Qalam (South Africa):** Originally established as a newspaper of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa, now providing community news and critical reflections on Muslims in the country and globally.
- **Salaamedia (Online/Social Media):** A fast-growing digital platform focusing on humanitarian journalism and "media for good", often broadcasting via Facebook and YouTube.
- **Zeteo Media:** A new digital platform disrupting mainstream narratives with a focus on education and journalistic integrity within the Muslim community.
- **Debrief Network (Johannesburg):** Founded recently, the Debrief Network provides sharp explainers, thoughtful reflection and human centred stories covering socio-economic and political issues, especially in South Africa and Africa more broadly.
- **Social and Advocacy Networks**
- **SAMNET (South African Muslim Network):** An advocacy organisation that uses social media training and digital campaigns to counter negative media portrayals of Muslims and mobilise the community.
- **Al-Shabaab and IS Regional Media (East/West Africa):** Though extremist, these groups operate sophisticated digital news networks on platforms like Facebook and encrypted messaging apps to influence local populations in Somalia and the Sahel.

22. Muslim Social Media Influencers in Africa

Determining the "most influential" Muslim blogger in Africa depends on how influence is measured - whether by social media followers, religious authority or cultural impact. As of 2025, several individuals dominate the digital landscape across the continent.

Most Influential Digital Personalities

- **Mohammed Salah (Egypt):** Although primarily a footballer, his social media presence acts as a powerful "blog" for millions. He is the most-followed African on Instagram with roughly **64 million followers**, often sharing glimpses of his faith and family life.
- **Khaby Lame (Senegal/Italy):** With over **162 million followers**, he remains the most-followed person on TikTok globally. Though his content is comedic and "silent", his enormous reach and background as a practicing Muslim make him the most globally recognised digital influencer of African origin.
- **Mufti Menk (Zimbabwe):** While primarily a religious scholar, he is one of the world's most influential digital "bloggers" in the religious sphere. He has a massive cross-platform following, including over **13 million YouTube views** and millions of followers on Facebook and Instagram. He is consistently ranked in "The 500 Most Influential Muslims".
- **Qaanitah Hunter (South Africa):** A young, female Muslim print, television and social media political analyst in South Africa.

Prominent Lifestyle and Fashion Bloggers

- **Aqeelah Harron-Ally (South Africa):** Based in Cape Town, she is a leading fashion and lifestyle blogger known for her site, "Fashion Breed". She is widely cited as a pioneer for Muslim women's style in Southern Africa.
- **Hodan Ibrahim (Somalia/Global):** A serial entrepreneur and blogger who focuses on personal development and "UmmahVenture", a business consultancy for the global Muslim community.
- **Abir Ibrahim:** A prominent content creator focused on African history and innovations through her platform and book, *Stolen Genius*.

Regional Leaders in Digital Media

- **Sheikh Muhammad Nuru Khalid (Nigeria):** Known as the "Digital Imam", he has a massive following for his courageous commentary on social and political issues in Nigeria, leveraging various online platforms to reach millions.
- **Suleiman Shahbal (Kenya):** Frequently recognised as one of the most influential Muslims in East Africa, utilizing social media to drive civic and religious engagement.

- Several female Muslim bloggers and influencers from Africa have gained significant influence, particularly in fashion, travel and lifestyle, with key figures noted in North and South Africa. Based on search results, here are some of the most influential female Muslim bloggers and influencers in Africa:
- **Nour Brahimi (Algeria):** Regarded as Algeria's top travel blogger, she has broken cultural barriers to showcase the beauty of Algeria and other nations. She was named among the 100 Most Influential Young Africans by Africa Youth Awards in 2019 and serves as a European Union Goodwill Ambassador in Algeria.
- **Nabilah Kariem (South Africa):** A top fashion influencer with 130 000 Instagram followers, she is recognised as a trailblazer in modest fashion, having collaborated with brands like Coach, Adidas and Samsung, and appeared in *Vogue Arabia*.
- **Hafsah Mohammed (Nigeria):** A fashion creator who launched a blog and later her own modest fashion line, Elora Collection.
- **Khadija Mahmood (Kenya):** A Kenyan architect and fashion blogger who focuses on minimalist, modest and laid-back style.
- **Key Trends and Niches**
- **Modest Fashion:** Influencers like Kariem, Mahmood and Mohammed are actively redefining style by balancing cultural, religious and aesthetic values.
- **Travel:** Beyond Brahimi, other notable voices include Dineo Zonke Maduna and Katchie Nzama.
- **Community and Lifestyle:** "Modest Muse" is a South African mobi-site for Muslim women covering topics from beauty to parenting.

23. Celebrated Muslim Sportspeople in Africa

Muslim sportspeople in Africa have achieved global prominence, significantly influencing both their sports and the representation of Islam. As of 2025, several figures continue to lead in their respective fields:

Football (Soccer)

- Mohamed Salah (Egypt): Widely regarded as one of the world's best players, the Liverpool forward is a massive cultural icon in Africa and the Middle East. He is the star of Egypt's national team heading into the AFCON 2025/26 tournament.
- Sadio Mané (Senegal): A devout Muslim known for his philanthropy in his home village, Mané led Senegal to their first-ever AFCON title in 2021 and again in 2026.
- Asisat Oshoala (Nigeria): A record-breaking six-time African Women's Footballer of the Year, Oshoala is a trailblazer for Muslim women in professional soccer.
- Achraf Hakimi (Morocco): A key player for Paris Saint-Germain and the Moroccan national team, he was instrumental in Morocco's historic semi-final run at the 2022 World Cup.
- Riyad Mahrez (Algeria): The former Manchester City winger and Algerian captain is noted for his technical skill and open support for social causes.
- Gnégneri Yaya Touré (Ivory Coast): Earned 100 caps for the Ivory Coast between 2004 and 2015, representing the country in the 2006, 2010 and 2014 FIFA World Cup tournaments. He is currently an assistant coach for the Saudi Arabian national team.

Athletics

- Nawal El Moutawakel (Morocco): A historic figure who became the first Arab, African and Muslim woman to win an Olympic gold medal (400m hurdles in 1984).
- Hassiba Boulmerka (Algeria): An Olympic and World champion in the 1500m who famously overcame significant opposition to compete, paving the way for Algerian female athletes.
- Aya Medany (Egypt): A three-time Olympian in modern pentathlon and a prominent advocate for Muslim women's participation in sports.
- Hicham el Guerrouj (Morocco): A retired Moroccan middle-distance runner who holds the world record for the 1500 metres and the former world record holder in the 2000 metres race. He is the only man since Paavo Nurmi to win a gold medal in both the 1500 and 5000 metres at the same Olympic Games.

- Nouredine Morcelli (Algeria): Morcelli won three straight gold medals at the World Championships in Athletics, setting world records for the 1500m, 2000m and 3000m races.

Basketball

- Hakeem Olajuwon (Nigeria): An NBA legend nicknamed "The Dream", Olajuwon is celebrated for blending excellence on the court with his devout Islamic faith and connection to his Nigerian roots.

Rugby

- Salmaan Moerat (South Africa): In 2024, he made history as the first Muslim to captain the Springboks, South Africa's national rugby team.

Cricket

- Hashim Amla (South Africa): A legendary cricketer who was the first permanent non-White captain of South Africa's Test team and is renowned for his high scoring and sportsmanship.

Tennis

Ons Jabeur (Tunisia): She has a career-high singles ranking by the World Tennis Association of No.2, making her the highest ranked African and Arab tennis player in the WTA.

Boxing

- Imane Khelif (Algeria): A Muslim female boxer and Olympic gold medallist (Paris 2024), who broke barriers in a male dominated sport, becoming a national figure inspiring young women across the continent.

Table Tennis

Sameera Mall (South Africa): Mall represents South Africa in major table tennis competitions on the continent and maintained her position in the top eight in Africa, winning a bronze medal at the African Championships in Senegal.

24. Popular Muslim Musicians in Africa

Popular Muslim artists across Africa encompass a wide range of genres, from traditional nasheeds and Sufi-inspired music to modern hip-hop and Afrobeat.

Musicians

- **Zain Bhikha (South Africa):** A world-renowned nasheed artist who has been active since 1994. He is known for his traditional Islamic themes and has collaborated with global stars like Yusuf Islam.
- **Akon (Senegal):** The legendary singer and businessman was born into a Muslim family and has publicly discussed how his faith influences his intentions as a performer.
- **Cheikh Lô (Senegal):** A veteran musician of the **Baye Fall** Sufi tradition, often compared to jazz legends for his eclectic style that blends African and global influences.
- **Black Sherif (Ghana):** A rising global superstar who gained massive popularity with "Kwaku the Traveller". He is a prominent Muslim artist in the modern African hip-hop scene.
- **El Grande Toto (Morocco):** One of the most streamed artists in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, known for his unique blend of Darija (Moroccan Arabic), French and English in his rap.
- **French Montana (Morocco):** Born in Morocco, this world-famous rapper frequently highlights his Muslim identity and credits his faith for keeping him grounded.
- **Balti (Tunisia):** A founding father of Tunisian hip-hop and one of the most recognisable rappers in North Africa.
- **Magnito (Nigeria):** A major figure in West African rap, known for his storytelling and his use of native Hausa alongside Nigerian pidgin English.
- **Khaira Arby (Mali):** A defiant voice in Malian music, she used her platform to promote peace and social change through song.
- **Salif Keita (Mali):** A Malin singer and songwriter, referred to as the "Golden Voice of Africa". His album, *La Difference*, is dedicated to the struggle of the world albino community for which he has campaigned all his life.
- **Baaba Maal (Senegal):** A Senegalese singer and guitarist, who served as the UNDP Youth Emissary in 2003, advocating disease prevention and poverty relief in Africa.

Regional Genres and Influences

- **Nasheed:** South Africa is a hub for this genre with artists like Zain Bhikha and Qari Ziyaad Patel leading the way.
- **Hausa Rap:** Northern Nigeria has a thriving scene with artists like **Classiq** and **Magnito** rapping primarily in Hausa.
- **Maghreb Hip-Hop:** Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt have some of the continent's most popular trap and rap stars, including **Marwan Pablo** (Egypt) and **Don Bigg** (Morocco).

25. Conclusion

Islam is Africa's second most widely professed faith after Christianity. There are an estimated 500 million Muslims in Africa, who constitute almost half of the total African population (49 percent). Islam is the predominant religion of the northern half of Africa, mainly concentrated in North Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel as well as West Africa.

Africa was the first continent into which Islam spread from the Middle East during the early 7th century. Muslims crossed current-day Djibouti and Somalia to seek refuge in the Christian Kingdom of Aksum (Abyssinia). Twenty-three Muslims had migrated to Abyssinia, where they were protected by its king, Armah *An-Najashi*, who later accepted Islam. Subsequently, they were followed by another 101 Muslim refugees. While most of them returned to Medina in 628, some settled in neighbouring Zeila in Somalia.

This highlights a salient and an extremely important point. There are several eminent *Sahabah* (companions of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), and the *Tabi'un* (the generation of Muslims who followed the companions of the Prophet), whose places of origin were in Africa.¹ These are listed hereunder with pride of place and honour (may Allah be pleased with them):

Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Males		
Bilal ibn Rabah	Mughith	Shuqran al-Habashi
Usamah ibn Zayd	Dhu Mikhbar	Ayman ibn Ubayd
Salim Maula Abi Hodayfah	Julaybib	Mihja
Armah an Najashi	Aslam	Wahshi ibn Harb al-Habashi
Ammar ibn Yasir	Yasar	Abu Bakrah
Amir ibn Fuhayrah	Anjashah	Aswad al-Habashi
Companions: Females		
Umm Ayman	Umm Zafar al-	Sumayyah bint Khubbat
Barrah	Habashiyyah	
Tabiun		
Ata ibn Abi Rabah	Yazid ibn Abi Habib	Abdallah ibn Hazam al-Sulami
Mamtur Abu Sallam al-Habashi	Masruh ibn Saburah al-Nahshali	Rabah
Abu Laqit al-Habashi	Nabil al-Habashi	Kafur al-Habashi
Aslam al-Aswad	Asim al-Habashi	Khalid ibn al-Hawari al-Habashi
Dhu Mihdam	Dhu Dajan	Aslam
Midam	Dhu Manahib	Nabah

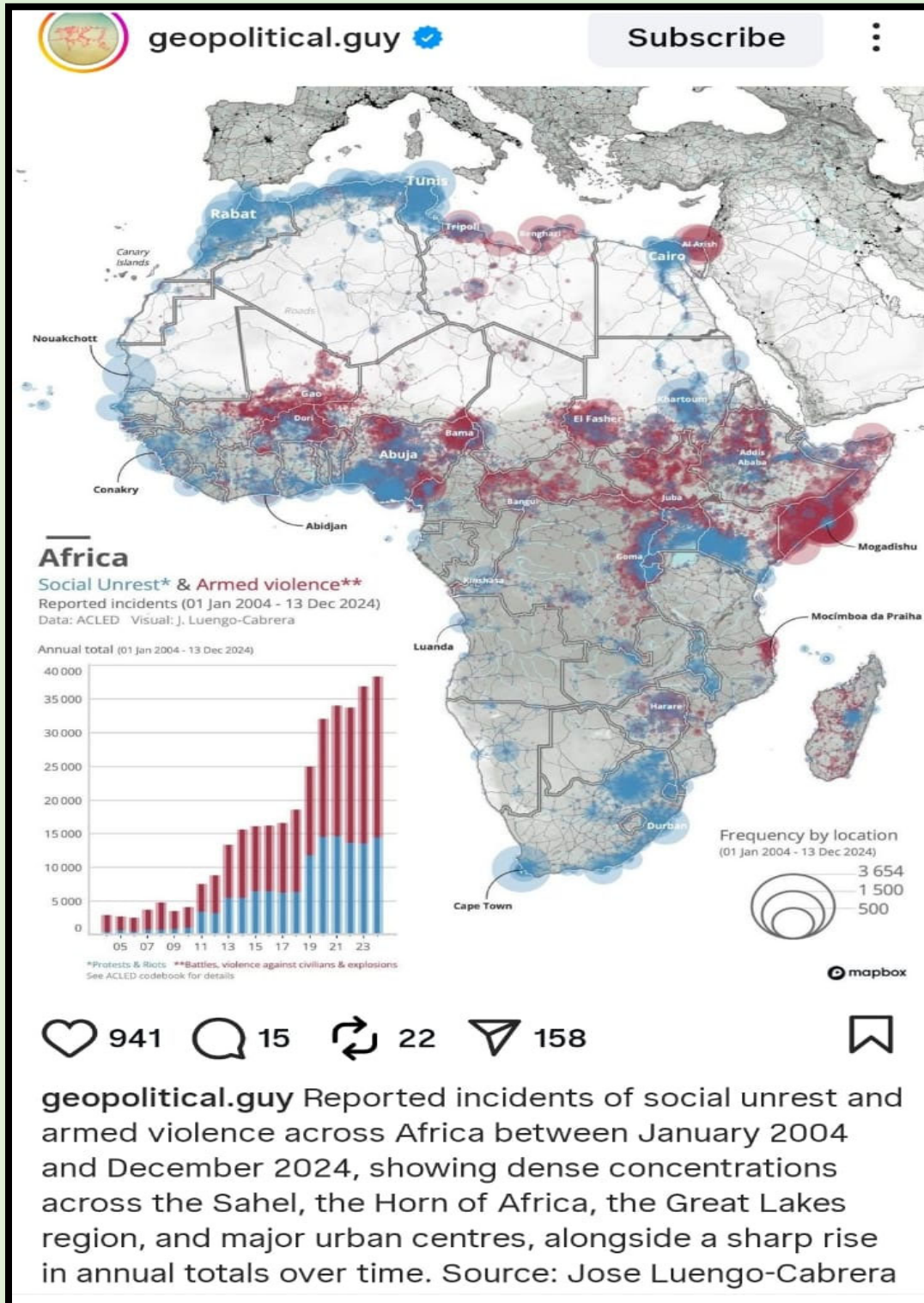
¹ See Rawat, E, *Eminent Sahabah of African Origin*, (Johannesburg, Jamiatul Ulama of South Africa, 2021).

Most Muslims in Africa (90 percent) are Sunni Muslims. Many African ethnicities, mainly in the northern half of the continent, consider Islam as their traditional religion. However, the complexity of Islam in Africa is revealed in the various schools of thought, traditions and voices in different African countries. The practice of Islam on the continent is not static and is constantly being reshaped by prevalent social, economic and political conditions. It is this complexity that needs to be understood by Muslims on the continent.

There are innumerable and remarkable achievements of Muslim Africans over centuries. The sad reality is that most Muslims on the continent remain ignorant of these accomplishments, largely because our educational institutions - both secular and religious - hardly ever teach anything at all about our continent. A simple fact to illustrate the point – five of the world's top male and female Qur'an reciters, namely, Abdurahmaan Sadien (South Africa), Noreen Muhammad Siddiq (late – Sudan), Muhammad Hady Toure (Senegal), Rabia Sayed (South Africa) and Hajara Ibrahim Dan'azumi (Nigeria), are African. The time has come to turn ignorance into awareness.

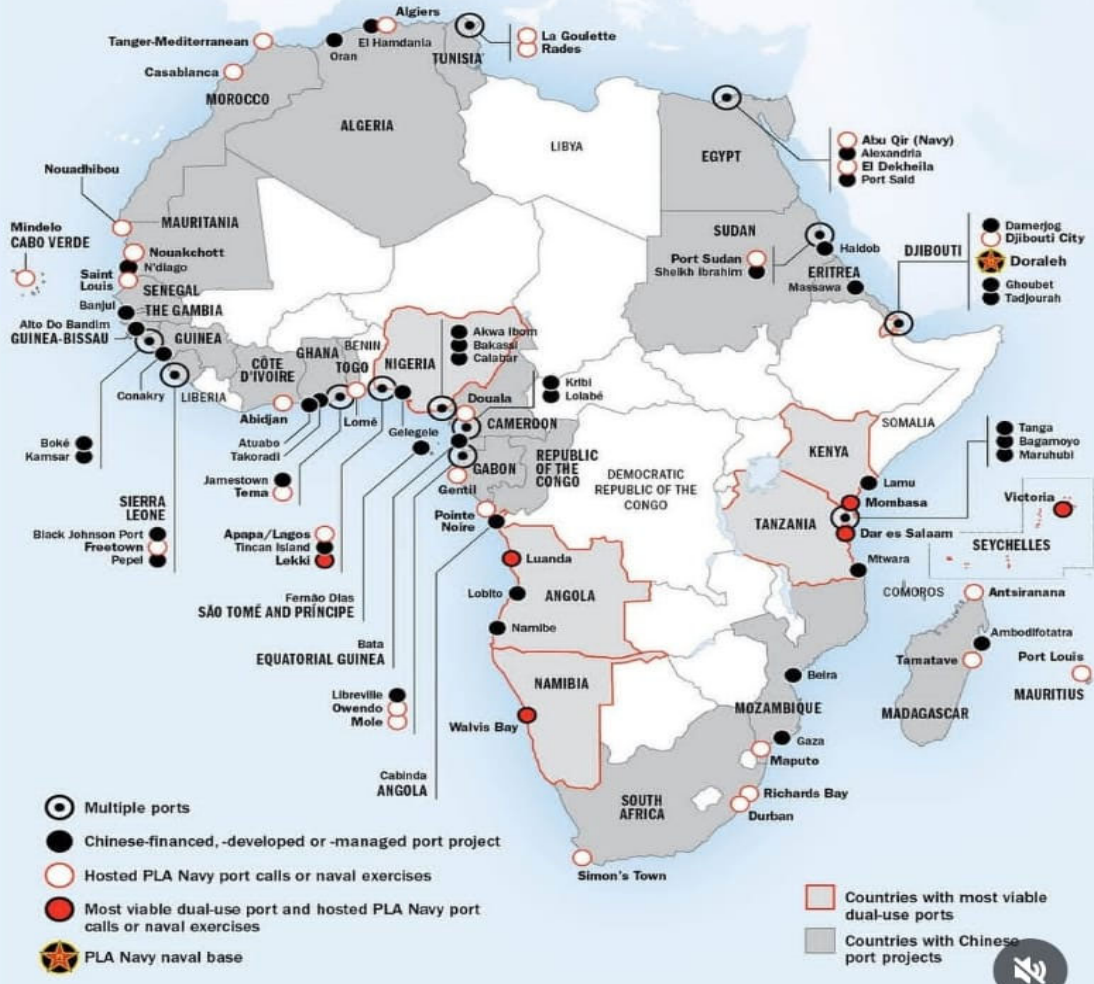
26. Some interesting maps

Below are some interesting maps on Africa. CIRA hopes to undertake further research on some of these aspects in subsequent papers.





Chinese Port Expansion in Africa



Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies

682
 30
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geopolitical.guy Beijing's dual-use potential...

Source:
<https://adf-magazine.com/2025/11/ports-of-influence/>



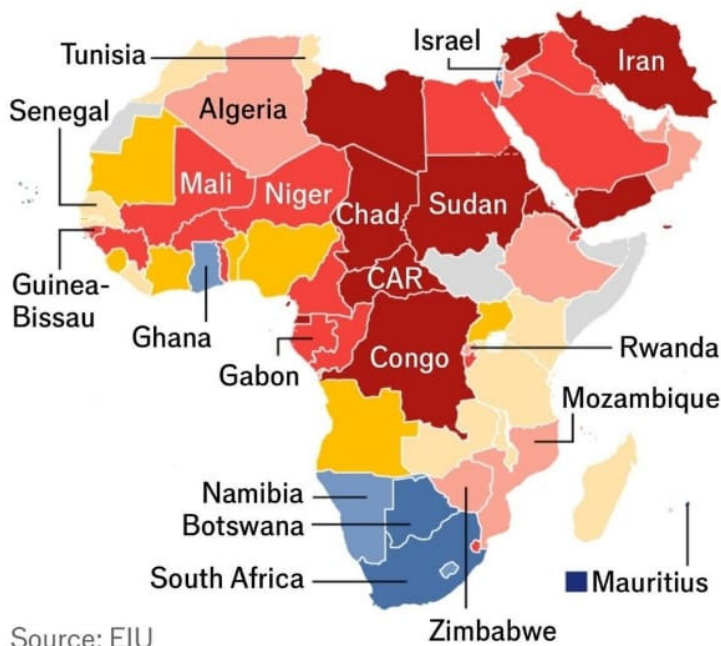
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Seeing red

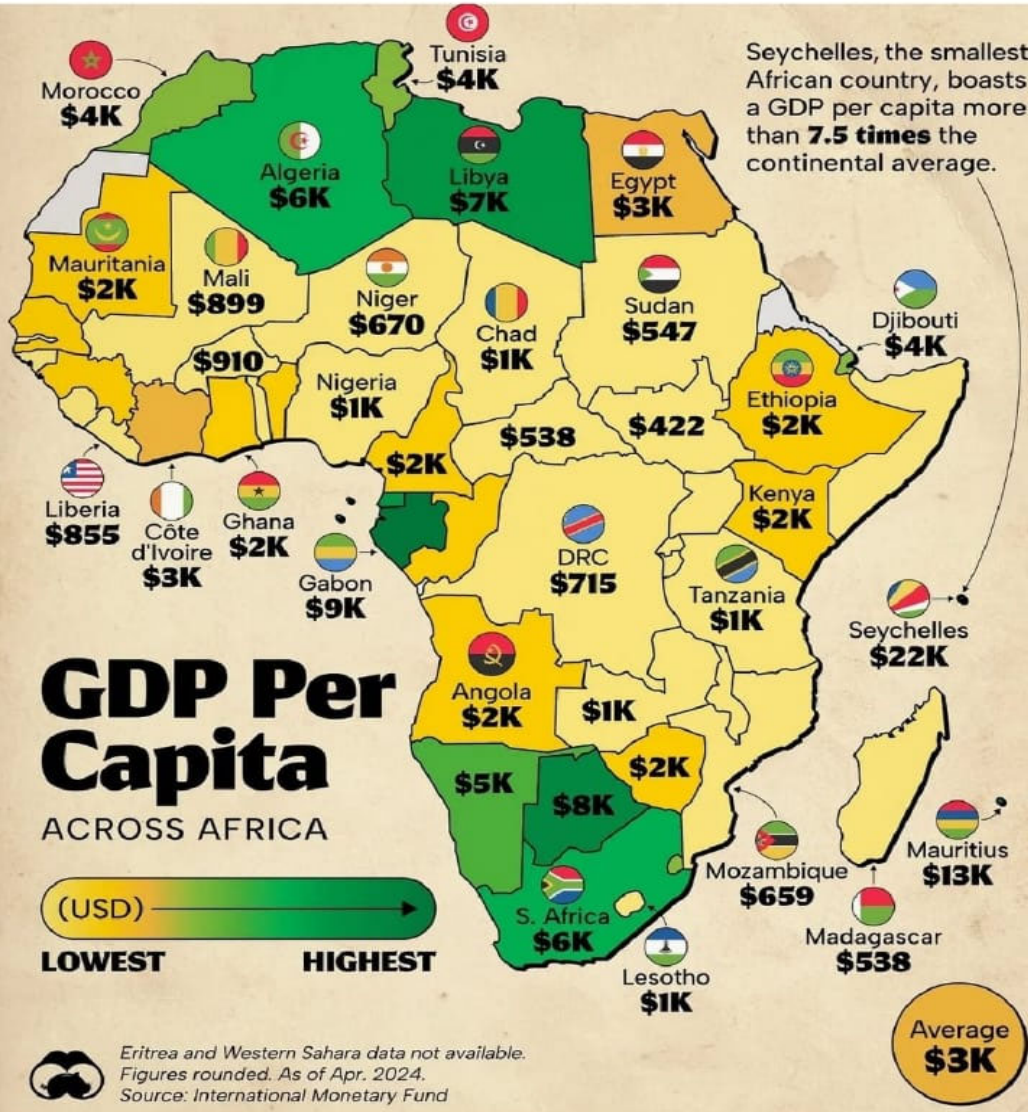
Africa and the Middle East, democracy index, 2023



Source: EIU

👍 1780 💬 295 ↻ 23 📍 308 📌

geopolitical.guy The latest EIU survey reveals Southern Africa as a stronghold for democracy, led by Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa. However, Central Africa struggles, with nations like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad ranking low. 2023 saw significant democratic backslides in the region, notably due to coups in Niger and Gabon.

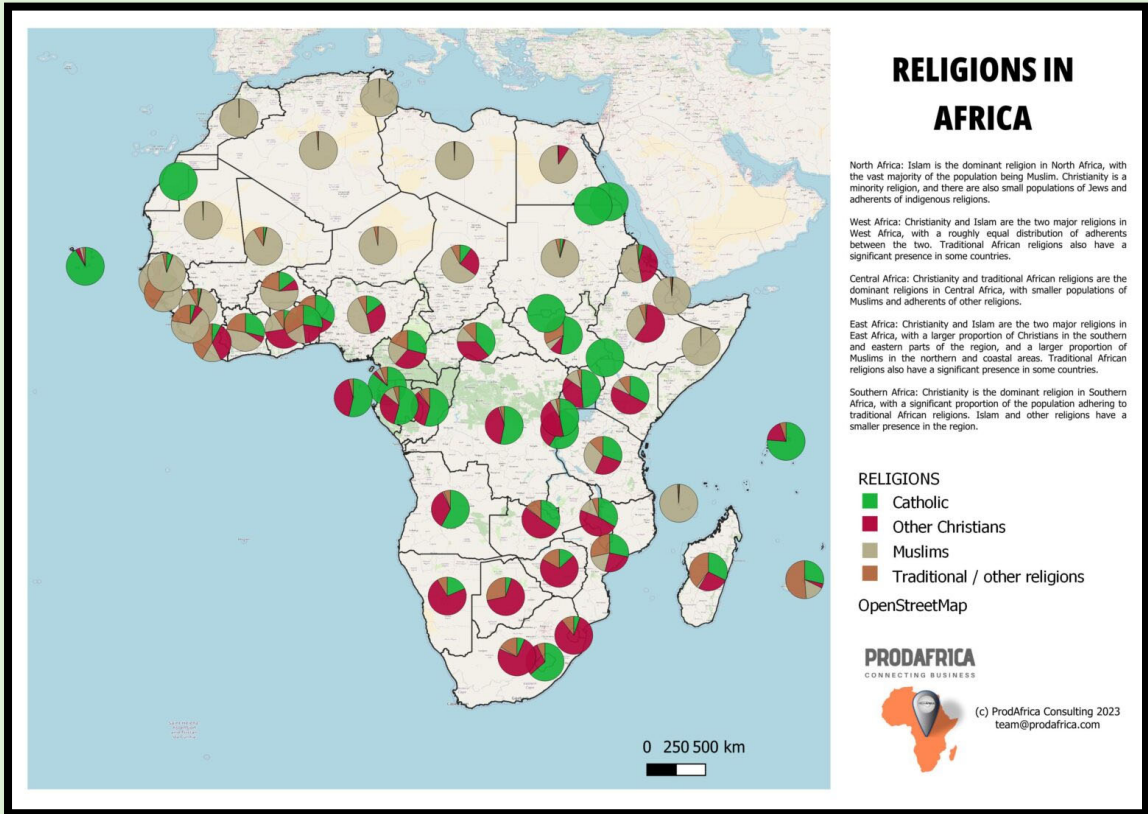


1306 59 27 331

geopolitical.guy Africa's GDP per capita map is less a continental story than a set of sharp contrasts...

Source: Visual Capitalist

<https://posts.voronoiaapp.com/economy/African-Countries-GDP-per-Capita-Mapped-1362>



CIRA MISSION

To research and analyse political, economic, social, cultural and religious trends in Africa to be used in advocacy for justice and change underpinned by Islamic values and principles.



Dr Ismail Vadi was elected as an ANC Member of Parliament in the first democratic elections held in April 1994 in South Africa. In 2010, he was appointed as the Member of the Executive Council for Roads and Transport in Gauteng Province, South Africa. He has lectured in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. Currently, he is a part-time lecturer at the Gordon Institute of Business Science at the University of Pretoria. He has published on Muslims, education, liberation history and security studies in South Africa.