

Geography

Location: Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip

Map references: Africa

Area:

total area: 1,001,450 sq km

land area: 995,450 sq km

comparative area: slightly more than three times the size of New Mexico

Land boundaries: total 2,689 km, Gaza Strip 11 km, Israel 255 km, Libya 1,150 km, Sudan 1,273 km

Coastline: 2,450 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

International disputes: administrative boundary with Sudan does not coincide with international boundary creating the “Hala’ib Triangle,” a barren area of 20,580 sq km, tensions over this disputed area began to escalate in 1992 and remain high

Climate: desert; hot, dry summers with moderate winters

Terrain: vast desert plateau interrupted by Nile valley and delta

Natural resources: petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, zinc

Land use:

arable land: 3%

permanent crops: 2%

meadows and pastures: 0%

forest and woodland: 0%

other: 95%

Irrigated land: 25,850 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: agricultural land being lost to urbanization and windblown sands; increasing soil salinization below Aswan High Dam; desertification; oil pollution threatening coral reefs, beaches, and marine habitats; other water pollution from agricultural pesticides, raw sewage, and industrial effluents; very limited natural fresh water resources away from the Nile which is the only perennial water source; rapid growth in population overstraining natural resources

natural hazards: periodic droughts; frequent earthquakes, flash floods, landslides, volcanic activity; hot, driving windstorm called khamsin occurs in spring; duststorms, sandstorms

international agreements: party to - Biodiversity, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Wetlands; signed, but not ratified - Desertification, Tropical Timber 94

Note: controls Sinai Peninsula, only land bridge between Africa and remainder of Eastern Hemisphere; controls Suez Canal, shortest sea link between Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea; size, and juxtaposition to Israel, establish its major role in Middle Eastern geopolitics