

Ethnic groups in Africa

Ethnic groups in Africa number in the hundreds, each generally having its own language (or dialect of a language) and culture.

Many ethnic groups and nations of Sub-Saharan Africa qualify, although some groups are of a size larger than a tribal society. These mostly originate with the Sahelian kingdoms of the medieval period, such as that of the Igbo of Nigeria, deriving from the Kingdom of Nri (11th century).^[1]

Overview

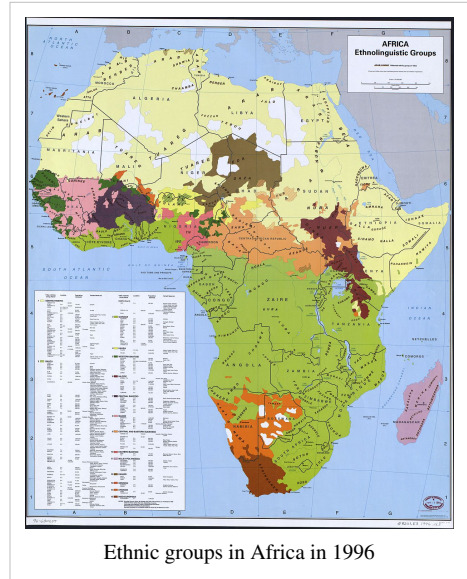
The following ethnic groups number 10 million people or more:

- Arabic, speaking groups: ca. 180 million. See also Ethnic groups of the Middle East
 - Arab, up to ca. 100 million, see Demographics of the Arab League
 - Berber ca. 65 million
- Hausa in Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Chad, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and Sudan (ca. 30 million)
- Yoruba in Nigeria and Benin (ca. 30 million)
- Oromo in Ethiopia and Kenya (ca. 30 million)
- Igbo in Nigeria and Cameroon (ca. 30 million)^[2]
- Akan in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (ca. 20 million)
- Amhara in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti (ca. 20 million)
- Somali in Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya (ca. 15-17 million)
- Ijaw in Nigeria (ca. 14 million)
- Kongo in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Republic of the Congo (ca. 10 million)
- Fula in Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Chad, Sudan, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire (ca. 10 million)
- Shona in Zimbabwe and Mozambique (ca. 10 million)
- Zulu in South Africa (ca. 10 million)

The official population count of the various ethnic groups in Africa has, in some instances, been controversial because certain groups believe populations are fixed to give other ethnicities numerical superiority, such as in the case of Nigeria and the Igbo people.^{[3] [4] [5]}

List

Central Africa



Name	Phylum	Language	Region	Country	Population (million)	Notes
Aka	Nilo-Saharan, Pygmy	Aka	Central/Northern	Western Central African Republic, Northwest Congo		The Aka are one of three groups of pygmies, collectively called BaMbuti, of the Ituri Rainforest
Baka	Pygmy	Baka	Central/Northern	Western Equatoria in Southern Sudan	0.25	There is also another ethnic group called Baka living across West Africa.
Chewa	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Chichewa	Central/Southern	Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	9	
Chokwe	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Chokwe	Central	Angola, Congo (Kinshasa), Zambia	1.1	
Efé	Nilo-Saharan, Pygmy	Efe	Central/Northern	Ituri Rainforest of Congo		The Efe are one of three groups of pygmies, collectively called BaMbuti, of the Ituri Rainforest
Kongo	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Kongo	Central	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Republic of the Congo	10	
Lingala	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Lingala	Central	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Angola, Central African Republic		
Luba	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Luba-Kasai, Luba-Katanga	Central	Democratic Republic of the Congo	2	
Mbundu	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Kimbundu	Central	Angola	2.4	
Zande	Niger-Congo, Ubangian	Zande	Central/Northern	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Central African Republic	1-4	
Ovimbundu	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Umbundu	Central	Angola	4.6	
Sua	Nilo-Saharan, Pygmy	Sua	Central/Northern	Ituri Rainforest of Congo		The Sua are one of three groups of pygmies, collectively called BaMbuti, of the Ituri Rainforest

East Africa

Name	Phylum	Language	Region	Country	Population (million)	Notes
Alur	Nilotic, Luo	Alur	East/Central	Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo		
Ganda	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Luganda	East, Great Lakes	Uganda	3	
Hutu	Niger Congo, Bantu	Rwanda-Rundi	East, Great Lakes	Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo	16	
Kamba	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Kamba	East	Kenya		
Kalenjin	Highland Nilotes	Kalenjin	East	Kenya	3	
Kikuyu	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Gikuyu	East	Kenya	5.3	
Kwama	Nilo-Saharan	Komuz	East/Northern	Ethiopia, Sudan		
Luo	River-Lake Nilotes	Luo	East	Kenya		
Luhya	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Luhya	East	Kenya	5.4	
Maasai	Plains Nilotes	Maasai	East	Kenya, Tanzania	0.9	
Makonde	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Makonde	East/Southern	Tanzania, Mozambique	1.3	
Ameru	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Meru	East	Kenya		
Tutsi	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Rwanda-Rundi	East Africa, Great Lakes	Rwanda, Burundi, Congo,	3	
Twa (Batwa)	Pygmy	Rwanda-Rundi, Kiga	Great Lakes	Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Eastern Congo	0.8	

Horn of Africa

Name	Phylum	Language	Region	Country	Population (million)	Notes
Afar	Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic	Afar	Horn of Africa	Eritrea, Ethiopia	1.5	
Agaw	Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic	Agaw	Horn of Africa	Ethiopia, Eritrea	1	
Amhara	Afro-Asiatic, Semitic	Amharic	Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	20	
Beja	Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic	Beja	Horn of Africa	Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt	2	
Gurage	Afro-Asiatic, Semitic	Gurage	Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	1.9	
Oromo	Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic	Oromo	Horn of Africa	Ethiopia, Kenya	30	
Saho	Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic	Saho	Horn of Africa	Eritrea, Ethiopia	0.2	
Sidama	Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic	Sidamo	Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	3	
Somali	Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic	Somali	Horn of Africa	Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya	20	
Tigray	Afro-Asiatic, Semitic	Tigrinya	Horn of Africa	Eritrea, Ethiopia	6.7	
Tigre	Afro-Asiatic, Semitic	Tigre	Horn of Africa	Eritrea, Sudan	1.5	

North Africa

Name	Phylum	Language	Region	Country	Population (million)	Notes
Egyptians, Arabs	Afro-Asiatic, Semitic	Egyptian Arabic (Masri)	North Africa	Egypt	83	
Berbers, Arabs	Afro-Asiatic, Berber	Berber, Arabic languages	Maghreb	Morocco, Algeria , Libya	75	
Dinka	Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic	Dinka language	Southern Sudan	Sudan	5	
Nubians	Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic	Nobiin	Northeast Africa	Sudan, Egypt	0.5	

Southern Africa

Name	Phylum	Language	Region	Country	Population (million)	Notes
Afrikaner	Indo-European	Afrikaans	South	South Africa, Namibia	3.0	descendants of early northwestern European settlers
San (Bushmen)	Khoisan	Khoisan	South	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Angola	0.09	
Ambo (Ovambo, Owambo)	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Ovambo	South	Namibia	0.9	
Bemba	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Bemba language	South	Zambia	0.2	
Herero	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Herero	South	Namibia, Botswana, Angola	0.2	
Himba	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Otjihimbo (Herero dialect)	South	Namibia	0.05	
Khoikhoi	Khoisan	Khoekhoegowab	South		-	
Makua	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Makua	South/East	Mozambique, Tanzania	1.1	
North Ndebele	Bantu, Nguni	Sindebele	South	Zimbabwe	1.5	
South Ndebele	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Southern Ndebele	South	South Africa	.7	
Shona	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Shona	South/East	Mozambique, Zimbabwe	10.6	
Swazi	Bantu, Nguni	Swazi	South	Swaziland, South Africa, Mozambique	3.5	
Venda	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Venda	South	South Africa, Zimbabwe	1	
Xhosa	Bantu, Nguni	Xhosa	South	South Africa	7.9	
Zulu	Bantu, Nguni	Zulu	South	South Africa	10.6	

West Africa

Name	Phylum	Language	Region	Country	Population (million)	Notes
Akan	Niger-Congo, Kwa	Akan	West	Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire	20+	a group of eight related sub-ethnicities
Aku	(Creole)	Aku	West	Gambia	0.01	
Ashanti	Niger-Congo, Kwa	Twi (Akan dialect)	West	Ghana	5	
Baka	Niger-Congo, Adamawa-Ubangi	Baka	West/Central	Southeastern Cameroon, Northern Congo, Northern Gabon	0.3-0.4	The Baka are also known as Bebayaka , Bebayaga , or Bibaya , or (along with the other Mbenga peoples) the derogatory Babinga .
Bambara	Niger-Congo, Mande	Bambara	West	Mali	3	
Basaa	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Basaa	West	Cameroon	0.2	
Bassa	Niger-Congo, Kru	Bassa	West	Liberia	0.3	
Edo (also called Bini or Benin)	Niger-Congo, Edo	Edo	West	Nigeria		
Efik	Niger-Congo, Cross River	Ibibio-Efik	West	Nigeria, Cameroon, Southern Cameroons		
Eket	Niger-Congo, Cross River	Eket (Ibibio dialect)	West Africa	Nigeria, Cameroon, Southern Cameroons		
Ewe	Niger-Congo, Gbe	Ewe	West	Ghana, Togo, Benin	6	
Beti-Pahuin	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Ewondo, Fang, Bulu	West	Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe	3.3	group of 20 sub-ethnicities
Fante	Niger-Congo, Kwa	Fante (Akan dialect)	West	Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire	3	
Fulani	Niger-Congo, Senegambian	Fula	West	Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Chad, Mauritania, Sudan, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire	27	
Ga	Niger-Congo, Kwa	Ga, Ga-Adangme	West	Ghana, Togo	2	
Gwari			West	Nigeria		
Hausa	Afro-Asiatic, Chadic	Hausa	West/Northern	Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Chad, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan	30-35	
Igbo (Ibo)	Niger-Congo, Volta-Niger	Igbo	West	Nigeria, Cameroon, Southern Cameroons	30 ^[2]	Includes various subgroups.
Esan	Niger-Congo, Kwa	Esan	West	Nigeria		

Ijaw	Niger-Congo, Ijoid	Ijaw	West	Nigeria	14 [6]	Sub-groups include Andoni, Ibani, Kalabari, Nembe, Ogbia and Okrika.
Jola	Niger-Congo, Senegambian	Jola, Kriol	West	Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau	.5	
Mandinka	Niger-Congo, Mande	Mandingo	West/Central	The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Mauritania, Chad	13	
Marka	Niger-Congo, Mande	Marka	West/Northern	Mali		
Meta <i>also Metta</i>	Widikum, Bantu, Semi-Bantu, Bantoid	Meta	West, Central	Cameroon, Southern Cameroons		
Mende	Niger-Congo, Mande	Mende	West	Sierra-Leone	2	
Songhai	Nilo-Saharan	Songhai	West	Mali	1.5	
Tiv	Niger-Congo, Bantu	Tiv	West	Nigeria, Cameroon	2	
Urhobo	Niger-Congo, Volta-Niger	Urhobo	West	Nigeria	1-1.5	
Wolof	Niger-Congo, Senegambian	Wolof	West	Senegal, The Gambia, Mauritania	4	
Yoruba	Niger-Congo, Volta-Niger	Yoruba	West	Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Togo	30+	

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- [1] Achebe, Chinua (2000). *Home and Exile* (http://books.google.com/books?id=BZc25_jgOhgC&printsec=frontcover&dq#PPA4,M1). Oxford University Press US. p. 4. ISBN 0-195-13506-7. . "...Igbo people would score very poorly indeed on the Oxford dictionary test for tribe... Now, to call them a nation... This may not be perfect for the Igbo, but it is close."
- [2] Sources vary widely about the population. Mushanga, p. 166, says "over 20 million"; Nzewi (quoted in Agawu), p. 31, says "about 15 million"; Okafor, p. 86, says "about twenty-five million"; Okpala, p. 21, says "around 30 million"; and Smith, p. 508, says "approximately 20 million".
- [3] Onuah, Felix (29 December 2006). "Nigeria gives census result, avoids risky details" (<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L29819278.htm>). Reuters. . Retrieved 2008-11-23.
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- [6] <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>

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