

Egyptians

Profile

There are no up-to-date figures for the numbers of Egyptians (Jevgits or Jevgs) in Albania. The Union of the Egyptians of Albania claims to represent 200,000–250,000 Egyptians – a figure officially disputed. The government denies the existence of Egyptians as a separate group – claiming they are completely integrated with the mainstream Albanian society.

History

The substantial Egyptian community see themselves as distinct from the Roma community. According to some narratives, the Egyptians were descendants of Coptic migrants who came from Egypt in the fourth century. Other accounts say they are descended from Egyptian slaves who arrived in Albania in the nineteenth century.

Current issues

Many Egyptians consider themselves to be a national minority distinct from both the Roma community and the Albanian community, defining themselves by their ethnic background, their stated historical roots as descendants of persons from Egypt, their traditions and their cultural heritage. However, the authorities have not provided minority status to the Egyptians thereby denying them constitutional protections against discrimination available to other members of minority groups. To qualify for minority status under Albanian law, a group of individuals must share the same language (other than Albanian), have documentation to prove its distinct ethnic origin or national identity, and have distinct customs and traditions or a link to a kinship state outside of the country. The government maintains that the Egyptians did not meet some criteria, such as a distinct language and traditions, and instead considered them a community – rather than a distinct minority. This means that the Egyptians do not qualify for any special measures available to the [Roma](#) – even though they too have suffered greatly since the collapse of communism.

[top](#)