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After Saudi initiative to print copies in Amazigh language Algeria's Berbers get first Quran in local language



In the past, the community only had access to local translations of just three parts of the Quran

DUBAI (Al Arabiya)

For the first time in Algeria, the Berber population has access to the Quran in their own language after the Saudi embassy started an initiative to print copies of Islam's Holy Book in the Amazigh language, press reports said Thursday.

The embassy in Algiers distributed hundreds of paper and audio copies of the Quran amongst Berber tribes, which will allow thousands of non-Arabic speaking Berbers to understand the Quran.

In the past, the community only had access to local translations of only three parts of the Quran, the London-based Asharq Alawsat reported.

The translation to Amazigh was done by the King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran in the western city of Medina, said Sami bin Abdullah al-Saleh, the ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Algiers.

"The translation was done under the supervision of the Algerian Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments," he told the paper. "The ministry formed a delegation that revised the translation and the printed material."

The King Fahd Complex, which prints the Quran in 100 languages, gave the copies to the Saudi embassy and the ministry took charge of distributing them in regions with Berber majority, particularly the provinces of Tizi Ouzou, 100 kilometers east of the capital, and Béjaïa, 250 kilometers east of the capital.

"The reaction was very positive," Saleh added. "Many Berbers contacted the Saudi embassy via phone and email to praise the initiative."

Most Berbers in the area where the copies were distributed do not speak Arabic and many of them are illiterate and that is why audio copies were produced, Saleh concluded.

(Translated from Arabic by Sonia Farid)