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BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR INNERES  
SEKTION III-RECHT



REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA  
FEDERAL OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM



The "Atlas Syria/Iraq" can be accessed via: [http://www.ecoi.net/atlas\\_syria\\_iraq.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/atlas_syria_iraq.pdf).

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# 1. Syria – Religious and Sectarian Groups

## 1.1. Comments

There are few official figures concerning religious groups in Syria. According to CIA-Factbook the official figure of the Muslim population is 87 percent of the total Syrian population. These 87 percent include Sunnis, Alawites, Ismailis and Shiites. According to CIA-Factbook there are 74 percent Sunni, the remaining 13 percent include Alawites, Ismailis and Shiites. Christians amount to 10 percent and Druzes to 3 percent. According to Fritz Edlinger/Tyma Kraitt (2013) the Alawites amount to 10-13 percent, the Druzes to 2 percent and the Ismailis to 1 percent. Germany's Auswärtiges Amt states slightly different figures: 71 percent Sunnites, 12 percent Alawites, 10 percent Christians, 4 percent Druzes, 2 percent Shiite Muslims, 1 percent Ismaili and some Jews.

The Syrian population is very heterogeneously in terms of religious and sectarian diversity. Due to this and because of the partly inconsistent sources this map shows only approximately where main settlement areas of religious groups are, respectively used to be prior to March 2011. Especially in urban centers the religious composition may differ significantly from the religious composition in rural surroundings and it is not possible to show this heterogeneity on this type of map.

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## 2. Syria – Ethnic / Linguistic Groups:

### 2.1. Comments



There are no official figures concerning ethnic groups in Syria. According to CIA-Factbook 90.3 percent of the Syrian population are ethnic Arabs. The remaining 9.7 percent are mainly Kurds and Armenians. Michael Martens estimates that about 10 percent of the Syrian population is Kurdish. According to Michael Izady 8.9 percent of the Syrian population are Kurds, 1.9 percent are Armenians, 0.7 percent are Turkmen and 0.5 percent are Circassians. It follows from this source that about 89 percent are ethnic Arabs. Furthermore, there are Aramaic, and Assyrian groups as well as Palestinian refugees.

The Syrian population is very heterogeneously in terms of ethnic and linguistic diversity. Due to this and because of partly inconsistent sources this map shows only approximately where main settlement areas of ethnic / linguistic groups are, respectively used to be prior to March 2011. Especially in urban centers the ethnic / linguistic composition may differ significantly from the rural surroundings and it is not possible to show this heterogeneity on this type of map.

Arabic is the only official language in Syria. In part, the various minorities have adapted linguistically and are speaking Arabic as a second language.

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## 2.7. Circassians:

Worldmap Harvard, Layer „Narodov\_Mira\_GREG“: <http://worldmap.harvard.edu/>

This ethnicity dataset (GREG) is a digital version of the paper Soviet Narodov Mira atlas created in 1964. In 2010 the GREG (Geo-referencing of ethnic groups) project, used maps and data drawn from the Narodov Mira atlas to create a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) version of the atlas. This article describes the creation of the GIS version: <http://www.icr.ethz.ch/research/greg/weidmann10greg.pdf> This page is the source of the download for this data layer: <http://www.icr.ethz.ch/data/other/greg>

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## 3. Kurds in Syria:

### 3.1. Comments

There are no official figures concerning ethnic groups in Syria. According to CIA-Factbook 90.3 percent of the Syrian population are ethnic Arabs. The remaining 9.7 percent are mainly Kurds and Armenians. Michael Martens estimates that about 10 percent of the Syrian population is Kurdish.

The Syrian population is very heterogeneously in terms of ethnic diversity. Due to this and because of partly inconsistent sources this map shows only approximately where main settlement areas of Kurds are, respectively used to be prior to March 2011. Especially in urban centers the ethnic composition may differ significantly from the rural surroundings and it is not possible to show this heterogeneity on this type of map.

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## 4. Asylum applications of Syrian citizens 2015

### 4.1. Comments

The map includes only those countries of the EU 28, Switzerland and Norway in which more than hundred asylum applications of Syrian citizens were received in 2015.

### 4.2. Sources

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## 5. Syrian citizens and Syrian-born population 2015

### 5.1. Comments

The map only includes those countries of the EU 28, Switzerland and Norway in which the number of Syrians or Syrian-born population exceeds 1,000. No data was available for Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, and Poland. In the cases of Germany and Portugal data was available on Syrian citizens but not on the Syrian-born population. For the UK, available data refers to 2014.

### 5.2. Sources

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## 6. Camps for Syrian Refugees and IDPs 2016

### 6.1. Comments

According to the UNHCR Emergency Handbook, “camps are a form of settlement in which refugees or IDPs reside and receive centralised protection, humanitarian assistance, and other services from host governments and humanitarian actors.” Such a “planned camp” is to be distinguished from “informal settlements” (also called spontaneous settlements or self-established camps) or “collective centres” (find a brief description of the differences between these settlements in the Guidelines for the CCCM Cluster DTM, or the CCCM Cluster ISIMM March 2016).

Furthermore, the UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps states that well-established “refugee camps” can be phased out into “refugee settlements” which are self-sustained, linked to the local economy and require only limited humanitarian support.

This map only depicts planned camps for Syrian refugees and IDPs and does not make reference to any other of the types of settlements mentioned above. Camp names are indicated when population is more than 5,000 refugees or IDPs.

Note that Lebanon – although a major host country for Syrian refugees – has refused to erect camps for Syrian refugees for economic, social and political reasons. For a thorough review of the Lebanese policy on Syrian refugees, see Yassin et al. (2015).

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## 7. Syrian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

### Comments

Refugee populations are included if the number was 1,000 or more at the end of 2015.

### 7.1. Sources

UNHCR Global Trends Report 2015, Annex Tables 1 & 5; <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends/2015-GlobalTrends-annex-tables.zip>, accessed 20 June 2016

## 8. Iraq – Religious and Sectarian Groups:



## 8.1. Comments

The Iraqi population is very heterogeneous in terms of religious and sectarian affiliation. Due to this and because of partly inconsistent sources this map shows only approximately where main settlement areas of religious groups are, respectively used to be prior to spring 2014. Especially in urban centers the religious composition may differ significantly from the religious composition of the rural surroundings and it is not possible to show this heterogeneity on this type of map.

Due to the advance of extremist Islamist groups such as the “Islamic State” in summer 2014 and the subsequent armed conflict, the religious and sectarian composition of the Iraqi society has been subject to drastic changes at the time of creating this map. But even prior to summer 2014 the figures of various sources concerning the religious and sectarian makeup of Iraq differ significantly. This is due to the shifts in the religious and sectarian composition of various Iraqi regions since 2003 (accelerating since 2006). E.g. according to CIA-Factbook the official figure of the Muslim population (as of year 2010) is 99 percent of the total Iraqi population – Shia Muslims: 60-65 percent, Sunni Muslims (including Kurdish Sunnis): 32-37 percent. According to CIA-Factbook there are only 0.8 percent Christians, whereas according to Izady's figures (from 2014) there are around 4 percent Christians in Iraq. Following Izady's figures there are about 2 percent Yezidis, Shabak and Kaka'is (shown as one group in the map for better overview), the rest (around 94 percent) are Muslims – 61 percent Shia Muslims, 33 percent Sunni Muslims. Due to the methodological challenges posed by the dispersion of Christian communities in Northern Iraq (highly dispersed with concentrations in cities), not all of the main Christian settlements could be shown in this map.

Identification by religious or ethnic affiliation might vary within a group and external attributions of religious or ethnic affiliation might differ from self-perception, too. For example, external perception might regard Yezidi religion as “heretic” sect of Islam while Yezidis regard themselves as members of a religion in its own right - not as former Islamic sect. Moreover, members of the Yezidi community regard themselves either as Kurds or just as distinct ethno-religious minority and some might regard themselves as Arabs as there is a small Arabic speaking Yezidi community.

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## 9. Iraq – Ethnic / Linguistic Groups:

### 9.1. Comments

*The Iraqi population is very diverse in terms of ethnicity and language and both have been politicized for decades. At times during the past few decades various minorities have been facing pressure or even force to adopt a certain ethnic label. Due to this and because of the partly inconsistent sources this map shows only approximately where main settlement areas of ethnic / linguistic groups are, respectively used to be prior to Spring 2014. Especially in urban centers the ethnic / linguistic composition may differ significantly from composition in rural surroundings and it is not possible to show this heterogeneity on this type of map.*

*Due to the advance of radical Islamist groups like the “Islamic State” in summer 2014 and the subsequent armed conflict, the ethnic / linguistic composition of the Iraqi society is subject to drastic changes at the time of creating this map. But even prior to summer 2014 the figures of various sources concerning the religious and sectarian makeup of Iraq differ significantly. This is due to the shifts in the religious and sectarian composition of various Iraqi regions since 2003 (accelerating since 2006). Moreover, during Baath rule an Arabisation campaign and later the notorious Anfal campaign changed the ethnic set-up of Northern Iraq. Later there have been Kurdish efforts to roll back Baathist settlement policies and strengthen their claim on territory.*

*According to CIA-Factbook the official figure of the Arab population is 75-80 percent of the total Iraqi population, Kurds amount to 15-20 percent and all other ethnic groups together to 5 percent. According to Izady there are/were 73.5 percent Arabs, 21 percent Kurds, 3.1 percent Assyrians, Armenians, Chaldeans and other Christian groups, 2 percent Turkmens and 0.6 percent others (e.g. Lurs, Circassians, Alawites, Baha'is, etc.). The Christian groups, as well as the Yezidis, Shabak and Kaka'is (also Yarsans or Ahl-e Haqq) are shown in the map of religious and sectarian groups, as well as in the ethnic/linguistic map because these groups might be regarded as ethno-religious groups. Due to the methodological challenges posed by the dispersion of Assyrians, Armenians, Chaldeans and other Christian groups in Northern Iraq not all of their main settlements could be shown in this map. While a considerable number of them lives in cities, smaller communities live in rural areas. The Yezidis, Shabak and Kaka'is are shown as one group in the map for better overview. The Yezidis and Kaka'is/Yarsanis/Ahl-e Haqq are mostly speaking Kurdish dialects, whereas the Shabaks are speaking various languages/dialects like Shabaki, Arabic and Kurdish dialects. The so called “Black Iraqis”, descendants of sailors, traders and slaves (approximately 1.5-2 million people) are mainly living in southern Iraq, particularly in the city of Basra. They are predominantly Arabic speaking Muslims. It was not possible to include this group into this map as the ethnic and religious makeup of cities cannot be shown on this type of map.*

Identification by religious or ethnic affiliation might vary within a group and external attributions of religious or ethnic affiliation might differ from self-perception, too. For example, external perception might regard Yezidi religion as “heretic” sect of Islam while Yezidis regard themselves as members of a religion in its own right - not as former Islamic sect. Moreover, members of the Yezidi community regard themselves either as Kurds or just as distinct ethno-religious minority and some might regard themselves as Arabs as there is a small Arabic speaking Yezidi community.

Arabic and Kurdish are the only official languages in Iraq. Some of the various minorities have adapted linguistically and are speaking Arabic as a second language.

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## 10. Asylum applications of Iraqi citizens 2015

### 10.1. Comments

The map includes only those countries of the EU 28, Switzerland and Norway in which more than hundred asylum applications of Iraqi citizens were received in 2015.

### 10.2. Sources

EUROSTAT: <http://ec.europa.eu/Eurostat>; online data code migr\_asyappctza (accessed: 18 March 2016) and Austrian Ministry of Interior, [www.bmi.gv.at](http://www.bmi.gv.at) (accessed: July 2016).

## 11. Iraqi citizens and Iraqi-born population 2015

### 11.1. Comments

The map only includes those countries of the EU 28, Switzerland and Norway in which the number of Iraqi or Iraqi-born population exceeds 1,000. No data was available for Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, and Poland. In the cases of Germany and Portugal data was available on Syrian citizens but not on the Syrian-born population. For the UK, available data refers to 2014.

### 11.2. Sources

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## 12. Camps for Iraqi Refugees and IDPs 2016

### 12.1. Comments

According to the UNHCR Emergency Handbook, “camps are a form of settlement in which refugees or IDPs reside and receive centralised protection, humanitarian assistance, and other services from host governments and humanitarian actors.” Such a “planned camp” is to be distinguished from “informal settlements” (also called spontaneous settlements or self-established camps) or “collective centres” (find a brief description of the differences between these settlements in the Guidelines for the CCCM Cluster DTM, or the CCCM Cluster ISIMM March 2016).

Furthermore, the UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps states that well-established “refugee camps” can be phased out into “refugee settlements” which are self-sustained, linked to the local economy and require only limited humanitarian support. As an example, such is the case for settlements of Iraqi Kurds in Iran, established during previous crises. Currently, Iran does not host refugee camps according to the UNHCR definition.

This map only depicts planned camps for Iraqi refugees and IDPs and does not make reference to any other of the types of settlements mentioned above. Camp names are indicated when population is more than 5,000 refugees or IDPs.

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## 13. Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

### 13.1. Comments

Refugee populations are included if the number was 1,000 or more at the end of 2015.

### 13.2. Sources

UNHCR Global Trends Report 2015, Annex Tables 1 & 5: <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends/2015-GlobalTrends-annex-tables.zip>, accessed 20 June 2016

## 14. Syria & Iraq: Control of territory January 2015

*Comment: Low/high refers to the level of territorial control.*

*Sources: ISW - Institute for the study of war, SOHR - Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, CENTCOM - US Central Command, Agathocle de Syracuse - Understanding modern conflicts, Pietervanostaeyen - Musings on Arabism, Islamicism, History and current affairs, Map&Feed Platform Middle East edition - Isis.Liveuamap, syria.liveuamap,mideast.liveuamap, BBC, Al-Monitor, newsdeeply, Soufangroup*

## 15. Syria & Iraq: Control of territory June 2016

*Comment: Low/high refers to the level of territorial control.*

*Sources: ISW - Institute for the study of war, SOHR - Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, CENTCOM - US Central Command, Agathocle de Syracuse - Understanding modern conflicts, Pietervanostaeyen - Musings on Arabism, Islamicism, History and current affairs, Map&Feed Platform Middle East edition - Isis.Liveuamap, syria.liveuamap,mideast.liveuamap, BBC, Al-Monitor, newsdeeply, Soufangroup*

## 16. Syria & Iraq: Major clashes January 2015 – June 2016

*Sources: ISW - Institute for the study of war, SOHR - Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, CENTCOM - US Central Command, Agathocle de Syracuse - Understanding modern conflicts, Pietervanostaeyen - Musings on*

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## **17.Syria & Iraq: Oil or gas fields**

*Sources: Geopolitical Atlas - Mapping World Phenomena, World Energy Outlook - International Energy Agency*