
Iraq

**Total area:**

438,317 km²

Population:

38,146,025 (2016)

Literacy:

58%

Official languages:

Arabic, Kurdish

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$16,551 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

68 years

Religions:

97% Muslim, 3% Christian, <1% other religions

Prayer points

Discipleship of Kurdish believers

As Kurdish background believers grow into church leadership roles, pray for their discipleship and training, as well as their ability to teach younger believers clearly, so that church grows in depth and numbers. Pray especially for their families to grow in Christ and rejoice in his provision of their needs, including their safety, day by day. Praise God also for the safe arrival of the Sorani Kurdish Bibles and New Testaments after an expensive customs delay of eight months. Pray for this stock to be widely available, with several bookshops willing to stock them, and for God to give people a hunger for scripture. (Serving In Mission - May 2018)

"In Kurdish?"

Hussein, a Kurdish believer, reports that whenever he shares his testimony with other Kurds, he includes the part of his journey where he heard the voice of Jesus saying, '*Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.*' Every time, the response is, '*ba Kurdi?*' ("in Kurdish?"). Hussein's hearers don't have a problem with the possibility of modern-day people having dreams and visions from God, or with Jesus' words, or even with forgiveness. But they need to know if God will really speak to people in Kurdish! Pray for the 35 million Kurds to discover that God knows them as individuals and wants speak to them personally. (WEC International - March 2018)

Trapped in Mosul

As fighting in Mosul continues, pray for the people there who are either fleeing for their lives or feeling trapped and helpless. Aid workers are preparing for a huge humanitarian crisis in Mosul during winter with temperatures near to freezing. Please pray for the people needing support and basic

necessities. Please also pray for displaced Christians willing to return there to minister in the situation. (Arab World Ministry of Pioneers - January 2017)

I believe, but...

Many Christians in the Arabian peninsula, especially those who have converted from Islam, have to keep their faith a secret. They face seemingly insurmountable questions, such as, 'I have more than one wife, what do I do?' or 'How can I support myself without my family?' The I believe, but... project is designed to support those Christians who can't necessarily go to a church or find others to talk to about their faith in safety. This project is an online video series designed to answer these questions where meeting in person is not an option. It will give otherwise-unreachable new Christians an outlet for their struggles, answers to their questions and practical advice. Pray for the strengthening of the viewership audience., for them to find Biblical answers and help in an incredibly pressurised cultural climate. Pray also for the funding to come through to bring the project to completion. (Middle East Media - November 2016)

Healing from Trauma

In the last two years many Assyrian Christians have been losing hope with the havoc wreaked by ISIS. One lady named Rajiya, whose name means 'hope' says "my body was still intact, but internally I was torn apart' due to the kidnappings and killings she'd experienced in her community. Please join us in thanking God for the impact of the recent trauma healing workshops and for the restoration of hope for so many traumatised by recent events. Pray for the follow up healing workshops to be held later this year. Ask God that they will inspire hope and healing for many so that more can say 'I am once again becoming Rajiya, my hope is returning'. (Wycliffe Bible Translators - November 2016)

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Safe outlets

It's not everyday that you hear a strong declaration of faith in Christ from someone raised in a Muslim majority country. But Hosni contacted the media team via WhatsApp with this urgent request for spiritual support: "I believe that Jesus is God... I need to know more about Jesus and the Bible." Pray that social media will continue to be a safe outlet for Muslims to seek Jesus. (Arab World Ministry of Pioneers - May 2016)

Yazidi refugees in Iraq

Please continue to pray for Yazidi refugees who have come to Kurdish cities in Iraq in their tens of thousands. They need help. Many are hungry and face little compassion from those around them. Pray for local Iraqi churches as they reach out and make Christ known to Yazidis. Ask for opportunities to bring basic relief where needed. Pray the Lord would keep these doors open. And pray for those who have the chance to build friendships and to share God's Word among Yazidis. Ask that God would bless His Word and bring many to Him. Pray for a strong, indigenous Yazidi church to be established. That would be amazing and only God can do it! (AsiaLink - March 2016)

Yazidi families

As a Yazidi, 21-year-old Araz* had to flee her village to escape IS. "We just ran, we were so afraid. Some women left their babies, as they couldn't carry them. They killed our men, took our children,

everything," she says. Tearfund is helping Yazidi families by giving them money for basic needs but with so many people displaced and no end in sight to their suffering, the need is great. Pray for God's blessing and protection over the work of those sharing his love practically among Yazidi communities and please pray for real and permanent peace in the Middle East. *Name changed (Tearfund - July 2015)

Trusting in Jesus

When was the last time you got up in church and sang 'We have not learned fear from ISIS or any terrorists, we will trust in Jesus'. These powerful and important words to declare are from a new song heard recently at a church service in Iraq. Please pray for protection of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are facing so much persecution. (3P Ministries - January 2015)

Brutally targeted

A senior Christian cleric in Iraq says that militants have been seen tagging Christian houses with the letter 'N' for Nassarah, a term used for Christians in the Koran. Other religious minorities have also been brutally targeted by Isis. People have fled from towns in north Iraq into exposed rural and mountainous areas, causing an humanitarian emergency and action from the international community. Please pray urgently for the safety of Christians who fled or who, by choice or otherwise, stayed to face this threat. Pray that the light of Christ will overcome this present situation in a region where the Church has been present for centuries and still witnesses today. (WorldShare - November 2014)

Terrible atrocities

You will have seen the terrible atrocities being committed against the Christian and Kurdish Yezidi peoples of northern Iraq. Thousands are suffering, and our hearts ache to stand with them and provide emergency services, supplies, prayers, and love for those in need. Working through our long-established local partner the Iraq Evangelical Church, aid supplies of food, water, medicines and blankets have already been channelled to refugees in cities such as Erbil. Please pray for the thousands who sought refuge in schools, building sites and other places where they can escape the heat. One Yezidi official fought back tears while expressing gratitude to Christians who have helped his people. (WorldShare - September 2014)

Worsening violence

Canon Andrew White, known as the 'Vicar of Baghdad', has asked for urgent prayer for the church in Iraq amid intense violence. With frequent bombings and shootings in cities such as Baghdad and Mosul, monthly death tolls have soared recently. January's toll of 1,000 dead was the highest for almost six years. "Hundreds of our people have left the church because they have left the country," he says. "The hundreds left are those who cannot afford to leave, so the poverty and needs seem greater than ever. I honestly cannot tell you how terrible things are. We are in more than a desperate crisis. We need your prayers." Ask God to protect and sustain Iraqi Christians amid the worsening violence. Pray for an end to the bloodshed in Iraq and an end to the fighting, which is mainly between Sunni militants and the Shia-dominated government. (Release International - March 2014)

Suicide attack

On 3rd February suicide bombers and gunmen dressed as police, stormed the Kirkuk police station, detonating what some say was the biggest explosion they'd ever seen. The car used in the bombing was said to be painted like a police car, and the gunmen who charged the building after the explosion were reportedly dressed as policemen. Many bystanders were injured and killed during the blast, and although no militant group has claimed responsibility for the act, the attack comes as the Prime Minister is involved in a political crisis with his former government partners and with provincial elections taking place in less than three months. Pray with us for the nation of Iraq. Pray for peace and joy for the people there, as well as for a revelation of Jesus Christ. (AsiaLink - March 2013)

Mistreatment of refugees

Mohsen Al, a 22 year old former student at the University of Arak, was recently denied citizenship to Iran, his home country and place of birth. Born to an Iranian mother and exiled father from Iraq, Mohsen was denied a birth certificate by Iranian officials and has been told he must report 'back' to Iraq, although he's never lived anywhere other than Iran. As a result, his marriage is now null and void and he has no opportunity for appeal. In his desperate attempt to find a solution he came across Luke 6:29 and found salvation through this lesson of love. Mohsen now blogs on Christian persecution and the rising problem and mistreatment of refugees in the Middle East. He asks for prayer for fellow Christians who are mistreated and persecuted for their faith in Christ. He also asks for prayer to support misplaced refugees who are denied a right to the only life they've ever known. (AsiaLink - July 2011)

The Kurds

Kurds make up around 17% of Iraq's population, forming the majority in at least three provinces in northern Iraq which are together known as Iraqi Kurdistan. There is a Kurdish saying that says "The Kurd has no friends" and this has summed up their experience in recent years. The Kurds have fought for survival and a national identity for over 70 years. Nation after nation has made promises to them and they are all broken. Since 1985 nearly 4,000 villages and towns have been destroyed, countless fields mined, 500,000 have been deported to distant camps and up to 250,000 killed. Following the fall of Saddam Hussein the situation has improved and Kurdish people were formally recognised in Iraq's new constitution, ratified in 2005. Pray for the future of the Kurdish people in Iraq and the work of Christian organisations seeking to witness to them. (World in Need International - November 2010)

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