

Iraqi Arab



Quick Facts

Population: 18,000,000

Iraq: 16,000,000

Jordan: 850,000

Kuwait: 130,000

Syria: 75,000

Religion: Islam (Shia, Sunni)

Believers: 0.006%

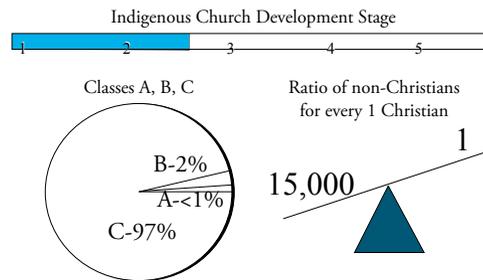
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

Church Status: 2

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 30+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Iraqi Arabs are a cluster of around 150 Arabic tribes, most of which migrated from the Arabian peninsula after the Islamic conquest of the Sasanian empire in 638 A.D. The original inhabitants of Iraq (the name refers to the region between the Tigris and Euphrates), were gradually absorbed, forming a new ethno-linguistic group that is now quite distinct.

Lifestyle: About 70% of Iraqi Arabs are urbanized, and of these, about 40% are unemployed. Most of the population lives at a mere subsistence level. The economy is held up by oil exports, which account for over 80% of GDP. Most of the oil revenue is used for buying food from surrounding countries. In rural areas, Arab tribes raise sheep and cattle, and grow dates, which are world famous.

Customs: For many centuries, Iraqi Arab tribes have been led by strong leaders called *Sheikhs*, which are

elected by the tribal elders to act as a mediator, judge, and representative. When Saddam Hussein came to power he attempted to subvert and suppress tribalism in Iraq by appointing his own Sheikhs throughout the country. Today, tribal confederations called *Qabila* are becoming a major political force in modern democratic Iraq, elevating the power of Sheikhs to a national level.

Religion: The Iraqi Arabs are 70% Shiite Muslim and 30% Sunni Muslim. Under Saddam's rule, the Shiites were brutally suppressed by the Sunnis. Today, in democratic Iraq, the Shiites now have the power by virtue of their voting capacity. The realization of this by the Sunnis has fueled a movement among them to destabilize Iraq, though there are no clear objectives about what they seek to achieve beyond a civil war.

Christian Outreach: There was a short window of opportunity for expatriate ministry in 2003, and much good work

was accomplished. Presently, the unstable situation in most Arab communities has discouraged most long term ministry. Even so, tens of thousands of Bibles have been imported, and a training center in Jordan is preparing a handful of Iraqi Arabs for future ministry.

How to Pray:

✞ Pray for an end to the sectarian violence which has killed thousands of Iraqi Arabs. At the same time, pray that God might use this situation to cause Iraqi Arabs to question a belief system which fosters violence.

✞ Over 600,000 of Iraq's Assyrian Christians have fled the country since 2003, following widespread persecution against them and church bombings. Pray that the new Iraqi Arab believers will stay in their communities despite the dangers.

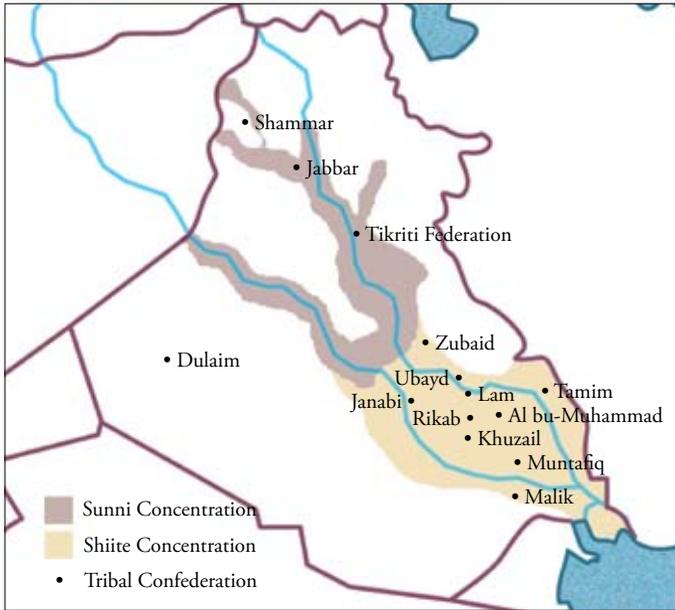
✞ Two Muslim Iraqi Arab clerics, who had simultaneous visions of Jesus, have become believers and are now leading an underground movement. Intercede for their protection, and strengthening in Christ.

✞ Pray that all 150 Iraqi Arab tribes might have powerful disciple-making

**Every year 160,000
 Iraqi Arabs
 die without Christ.**

Iraqi Arab (cont.)

MAJOR ARAB TRIBAL CONFEDERATIONS OF IRAQ



| Confederation | Population | T/C* |
|-----------------------|-------------|------|
| 1. Muntafiq | 2,000,000 | 17 |
| 2. Tikriti Federation | 2,000,000 | 9 |
| 3. Shammar | 1-2 million | 16 |
| 4. Jabbar | 1-2 million | 18 |
| 5. Ubayd | 1-2 million | 31 |
| 6. Malik | 1-2 million | 22 |
| 7. Al bu-Muhammad | 1-2 million | 11 |
| 8. Dulaim | 1,000,000 | 33 |
| 9. Janabi | 1,000,000 | 14 |
| 10. Lam | 1,000,000 | 10 |
| 11. Tamim | 1,000,000 | 18 |
| 12. Zubaid | 1,000,000 | 25 |
| 13. Khuzail | 1,000,000 | 30 |
| 14. Rikab | 500,000 | 8 |

* T/C=Tribes and major clans (some may belong to more than one confederation, and may have both Sunni and Shia components)

SHAMMAR

The Shammar are one of the largest and most influential Arab tribes in the Middle East, numbering around six million and stretching from Saudi Arabia to northwest Iraq. They are also in Syria, Jordan and southwest Turkey. They have an ancient history, descending from the Tayy tribe of Yemen. In Iraq they number 1.5 million, and are considered a significant factor in the unification of the country as the tribe comprises both Sunni and Shiite clans. In the late 1950s the Shammar helped to bring the Baathist party to power in Iraq. However, due to the rivalry between Saddam Hussein and Saudi Arabia, and the close connection the Iraqi Shammar had with their tribesmen in Saudi (who had become incredibly wealthy and influential), the Shammar confederation lost favor with the Baathist-led Iraqi government. After Saddam's downfall a Shammar leader became Iraq's interim president.

DULAIM

The Dulaim confederation numbers around 750,000 in Iraq and includes 15 major tribes. Traditionally, they have been nomadic pastoralists, occupying the vast majority of what is now west-central Iraq (Anbar province). In the last thirty years they have become increasingly urbanized, with significant populations in the cities of Haditha, Fullujah, Rutbah and Hit. In the early years of the Baath regime they held important positions in the Republican Guard as well as in the government's intelligence services. However, between 1992 and 1995 they began a rebellion against the government, and even attempted a coup to bring down Saddam. Following his downfall, the Dulaim have been one of the largest supporters of the insurgency against the U.S. "occupation."

TAMIM

The Tamim are one of the largest Arab tribes in the Arabian peninsula region, with many millions tracing their descent through one of its various lineages. In Saudi Arabia they are located primarily in the Najd region (central part of the country). In Iraq they number around one million, and are predominately Shiite. In neighboring Iran, they are one of the major Arab tribes occupying Khuzestan. The word Tamim means strong and solid in Arabic, and it was said of them by Muhammad that they would lead the charge in fighting against the coming Dajjal (an "antichrist" figure in Muslim eschatology). The tribe is named after its progenitor, Tamim ibn Murr, who lived in the first century A.D., and is said to have been evangelized by one of Christ's disciples. They were one of the earliest tribes to convert to Islam, in the eighth year after the Hijra (migration of Muhammad to Medina in 622 A.D.).