Minority Communities in the Kurdistan Region: A Comprehensive Overview

1. Introduction: Defining Kurdistan and its Minority Landscape

1.1. The Geo-Cultural Concept of Kurdistan

Kurdistan is broadly understood as a geo-cultural region in West Asia where Kurdish people constitute a prominent majority, and Kurdish culture, languages, and national identity have historically been rooted.[1] This territory, often referred to as "Greater Kurdistan," generally encompasses four primary areas: southeastern Turkey (Northern Kurdistan), northern Iraq (Southern Kurdistan), northwestern Iran (Eastern Kurdistan), and northern Syria (Western Kurdistan).[1] Some definitions also extend to parts of southern Transcaucasia.[1] Geographically, Kurdistan covers the northwestern Zagros and eastern Taurus mountain ranges.[1] The total area is estimated at approximately 392,000 square kilometers, with a Kurdish population estimated to be between 25 to 30 million [1], although other sources suggest a global Kurdish population of 30 to 45 million.[3] This discrepancy highlights the challenges in obtaining precise demographic figures for a stateless people dispersed across several nations.

The term "Kurdistan," meaning "land of the Kurds," is first historically attested in 11th-century Seljuk chronicles.[1] Parts of this region were known in antiquity as Corduene.[1] Throughout history, various Kurdish dynasties, emirates, and principalities existed from the 8th to 19th centuries.[1] The 20th century saw short-lived attempts at Kurdish statehood or autonomous areas, such as the Kingdom of Kurdistan (1921–1924) and the Republic of Mahabad (1946).[1]

The concept of "Kurdistan" is not universally defined or politically recognized, and its geographical boundaries are often disputed and vary significantly depending on the source.[1] This lack of a fixed political entity is central to understanding the region. Kurdish nationalist aspirations range from seeking an independent nation-state comprising some or all of these areas to campaigning for greater autonomy within existing national borders.[1] The current political reality sees differing levels of Kurdish self-governance: the Kurdistan Region in Iraq enjoys constitutional federal status [1], while the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) operates as a *de facto* autonomous region.[1] In contrast, Kurdish areas in Turkey and Iran are under direct state control without formal autonomy.[1] This inherent ambiguity and the varied political statuses across the four parts of Kurdistan significantly influence how minorities *within* these areas are defined, their relationships with dominant Kurdish populations, and their interactions with the respective nation-states. Consequently, a discussion of minorities in Kurdistan requires a nuanced approach, addressing each region distinctly while identifying common themes.

1.2. Overview of Minority Diversity Across the Region

The Kurdistan region, in its broadest geo-cultural sense, is not solely inhabited by Kurds. It is, and historically has been, home to a diverse array of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minority groups. These communities often predate or have coexisted with Kurdish populations for centuries. Among these groups are Assyrians (including Chaldeans and Syriacs), Yazidis, Turkmen, Armenians, Shabak, Kaka'is (also known as Yarsan or Ahl-e Haqq), Alevis (including Kurdish Alevis), Arabs (residing in Kurdish-majority areas or areas with significant Kurdish populations), Roma (including Dom and Lom peoples), Circassians, Jews, Baha'is, and Sabean-Mandaeans.[5]

The presence, demographic weight, and socio-political status of these minorities vary considerably across Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Kurdistan. These differences are shaped by the distinct historical trajectories, state policies of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, regional conflicts, and the local power dynamics involving Kurdish political actors and communities. Many of these minority groups experience a complex "minority within a minority" status. For instance, an Assyrian in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) is a minority relative to the Kurdish majority there, while the Kurds of the KRI are themselves a minority within the larger Iraqi state. This layered identity can create unique vulnerabilities and intricate political allegiances, as groups may align with either the central state or regional Kurdish authorities based on perceived threats, benefits, or historical relationships. Therefore, an examination of "minority rights" in Kurdistan must consider both the policies and practices of the nation-states and those of any Kurdish regional administrations.

1.3. Note on Data and Terminology

Obtaining precise demographic data for minority groups across Kurdistan is fraught with challenges. Population figures are often estimates, vary widely between sources, and can be politically sensitive.[7] National censuses in the region frequently do not collect detailed data on ethnic or religious affiliation, or, in some cases, have historically compelled minorities to identify with dominant national or ethnic categories.[7] For example, official Iraqi statistics have sometimes considered Assyrians as Arabs [14], and Turkish state policy historically referred to Kurds as "Mountain Turks".[8] This politicization of numbers and nomenclature is often a deliberate state strategy aimed at assimilation or minimizing the visibility and claims of minority groups. Estimates provided by community organizations themselves may differ from those of independent researchers, reflecting advocacy efforts or varying criteria for community membership.

Self-identification is a critical principle in discussing these communities. Terminology can be complex and contested. For example, the terms "Assyrian," "Chaldean," and "Syriac" are used by different segments of the Aramaic-speaking Christian communities, sometimes interchangeably and sometimes to denote distinct church affiliations or identities, though they share a common heritage.[14] Similarly, the relationship between Yazidi identity and Kurdish identity is a subject of internal and external debate, with some Yazidis identifying as ethnically Kurdish and others asserting a distinct ethno-religious identity.[16] This report will endeavor to

use terminology that reflects common scholarly usage and self-identification where possible, acknowledging these complexities and citing sources for demographic claims. The critical engagement with population figures and the names used to describe these groups is essential, as these are not neutral data points but are often imbued with political meaning.

Table 1: Overview of Selected Minority Groups in Kurdistan by Region

Region (Dominant State)	Minority Group	Estimated Population Range (Source, Year)	Primary Religion(s)	Primary Language(s)	Official Recognition by State/Regional Authority
Northern Kurdistan (Turkey)	Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs	25,000-29,000 in Turkey, ~3,000 in SE [7]	Christianity (various denominations)	Neo-Aramaic dialects, Turkish	Not officially recognized as a distinct minority group under Lausanne Treaty interpretation [7]
	Yazidis (Ezidis)	A few hundred in Turkey; several thousand Iraqi Yazidi refugees [7]	Yazidism	Kurmanji Kurdish, Turkish	Not officially recognized [7]
	Armenians	40,000-70,000 in Turkey (mostly Istanbul); small presence in SE [21]	Christianity (Armenian Apostolic)	Armenian, Turkish	Officially recognized under Lausanne Treaty [7]
	Alevis (incl. Kurdish Alevis)	10-25 million Alevis in Turkey; ~5 million Kurdish Alevis [7]	Alevism (heterodox Islam)	Turkish, Kurdish (Kurmanji, Zaza)	Not officially recognized as a distinct religious group; cemevis face recognition issues [7]
	Roma (Dom/Lom)	2-5 million Roma & similar groups in Turkey; Dom in	Islam (Sunni, Alevi), some Christianity	Turkish, Domari, Lomavren, Romani,	Not officially recognized [7]

		SE [7]		Kurdish (for Dom in SE)	
	Circassians	2-4 million in Turkey [27]	Sunni Islam	Circassian languages, Turkish	Not officially recognized as distinct ethnic/linguistic minority [7]
Southern Kurdistan (KRI, Iraq)	Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs	~92,000 Assyrians in Iraq [29]; Chaldeans largest Christian group [15]	Christianity (various denominations)	Neo-Aramaic dialects, Arabic, Kurdish	Recognized as national components by KRG [9]
	Yazidis	500,000-700,000 in Iraq (pre-ISIS); many displaced [30]	Yazidism	Kurmanji Kurdish, Arabic (Bashiqa/Bahzani)	Recognized as a religious group by KRG [9]
	Turkmen	600,000-3 million in Iraq; 100,000-400,000 in KRI [32]	Sunni & Shia Islam	Turkmen (Turkish dialect), Arabic, Kurdish	Recognized as a national component by KRG [9]
	Armenians	10,000-20,000 in Iraq; ~3,000-5,000 in KRI [35]	Christianity (Armenian Apostolic)	Armenian, Kurdish, Arabic	Recognized as a national component by KRG [9]
	Shabak	250,000-400,000 in Iraq [38]	Shia & Sunni Islam, local beliefs	Shabaki, Arabic, Kurdish	Recognized as a religious/sectarian group by KRG [9]
	Kaka'is (Yarsan)	110,000-200,000 in Iraq [41]	Yarsanism	Kurdish (Macho/Gorani), Arabic	Recognized as a religious group by KRG [9]
	Arabs	Significant IDP/resident population in KRI; e.g. ~90,000 families [42]	Sunni & Shia Islam	Arabic	Iraqi citizens; not a "minority" in KRI in the same sense as others

	Sabean-Mandaeans	<5,000 in Iraq; small numbers in KRI [44]	Mandaeism (Gnosticism)	Mandaic, Arabic	Recognized by Iraqi constitution & KRG [9]
	Baha'is	<2,000 in Iraq; ~100 families in KRI [46]	Baha'i Faith	Arabic, Kurdish	Recognized as a religious minority by KRG [47]
	Jews	Very small; 70-80 families in KRI [48], other estimates ~500 families [169]	Judaism	Kurdish, Hebrew, Aramaic dialects (historically)	Recognized as a religious minority by KRG (2015) [48]
Eastern Kurdistan (Iran)	Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs	Estimates vary: ~20,000 [183] to 117,000 [184] in Iran; concentrated in West Azerbaijan	Christianity	Neo-Aramaic dialects, Persian	Recognized Christian minority (limited rights) [49]
	Armenians	Estimates vary: 70,000-500,000 in Iran; historical presence in Kurdish areas [50]	Christianity (Armenian Apostolic)	Armenian, Persian	Recognized Christian minority (limited rights) [49]
	Yarsanis (Kaka'i/Ahl-e Haqq)	1-3 million in Iran; in Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Ilam provinces [52]	Yarsanism	Kurdish dialects, Persian	Not officially recognized; often pressured to identify as Shia Muslim [49]
	Jews	~8,500-9,800 in Iran; historical presence in Kurdish areas [55]	Judaism	Persian, Hebrew (historically Judeo-Iranian dialects)	Recognized religious minority (limited rights) [49]
	Azeris (in	In West	Shia Islam	Azerbaijani,	Not a religious

	Kurdish areas)	Azerbaijan province and parts of Kurdistan province [12]	(predominantly)	Persian	minority if Shia; ethnic minority facing language restrictions [58]
Western Kurdistan (AANES, Syria)	Arabs	Major demographic component, majority in some AANES areas (Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor) [6]	Sunni Islam (predominantly)	Arabic	Official language; co-governance partner (theoretically) [6]
	Assyrians/Syriacs	Significant presence in Jazira, Khabur Valley [6]	Christianity	Neo-Aramaic dialects, Arabic, Kurdish	Syriac an official language in Jazira; political participation in AANES [6]
	Yazidis	Communities in Jazira, Kurd-Dagh (Afrin - Turkish occupied) [6]	Yazidism	Kurmanji Kurdish	Recognized within AANES framework [65]
	Armenians	Smaller communities in Qamishli, Hasakah, etc. [6]	Christianity (Armenian Apostolic)	Armenian, Arabic, Kurdish	Recognized as a component of AANES [6]
	Turkmen	Smaller communities in northern Syria [6]	Sunni Islam	Turkmen, Arabic, Kurdish	Recognized as a component of AANES [6]
	Circassians	Smaller communities [6]	Sunni Islam	Circassian languages, Arabic	Recognized as a component of AANES [6]

Note: Population estimates are often contested and subject to change. "Recognized" status varies in meaning and practical implication by state/region.

2. Minorities in Northern Kurdistan (Turkey)

Northern Kurdistan, encompassing southeastern Turkey, is a region of immense ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. However, the policies of the Turkish state have historically shaped the experiences and rights of minority communities in profound ways, often leading to

marginalization and assimilation.

2.1. Overview of State Policies Towards Minorities in Turkey

The foundational legal framework governing minorities in Turkey is the Treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923.[7] The Turkish state has consistently interpreted this treaty narrowly, officially recognizing only three non-Muslim religious groups as minorities: Armenian Orthodox Christians, Rum (Greek) Orthodox Christians, and Jews.[7] This interpretation deliberately excludes a vast array of other ethnic and religious communities, such as Kurds (the largest minority), Alevis (the largest religious minority after Sunni Muslims), Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs, Yazidis, Roma, Circassians, Laz, and others, from official minority status and the specific rights that such status might confer under international norms.[7] Even for the recognized minorities, the protections afforded by the Lausanne Treaty are often considered outdated by contemporary international human rights standards and are subject to restrictive application by the state.[7]

A significant challenge in assessing the situation of minorities is the absence of official state data on ethnicity or religion in national censuses since 1965.[7] This lack of data makes it difficult to ascertain precise demographic figures for unrecognized groups and is often seen as part of a broader policy of downplaying or denying ethnic and religious diversity. Consequently, population estimates for these communities largely rely on self-reporting by the groups themselves or on academic and NGO research, leading to varied figures.[7]

Throughout the history of the Turkish Republic, state policies have frequently aimed at fostering a homogenous Turkish national identity. This has involved assimilationist measures, particularly targeting linguistic diversity. Campaigns such as "Citizen, speak Turkish!" were common, and there were historical prohibitions or severe restrictions on the use of non-Turkish languages (notably Kurdish) in public life, education, and media.[7] The naming of children with non-Turkish names and the use of non-Turkish place names were also restricted or banned.[7] These policies have had a detrimental impact on the preservation of distinct cultural and linguistic heritages.

The protracted armed conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) since 1984 has had a devastating impact on all inhabitants of southeastern Turkey, which constitutes a significant part of Northern Kurdistan.[7] Non-Kurdish minorities residing in these regions, such as Assyrians and Yazidis, have been caught in the crossfire, subjected to violence and pressure from both state security forces and non-state armed groups. This conflict has led to widespread displacement, the destruction of villages, and profound socio-economic disruption, further exacerbating the vulnerabilities of these minority communities.[69] The Turkish government's counterterrorism operations have often resulted in civilian casualties and large-scale displacement, disproportionately affecting the Kurdish population but also impacting other co-resident minorities.[69]

The state's adherence to the Lausanne Treaty's narrow definition of minorities remains a cornerstone of its policy, creating a fundamental cleavage between "recognized" non-Muslim groups and a multitude of "unrecognized" ethnic, linguistic, and heterodox Muslim communities. This legal framework directly contributes to the denial of specific cultural rights,

such as mother-tongue education for many, and limits the political space for these groups to advocate for their distinct identities and collective rights. For instance, the Kurdish struggle for cultural and political rights is framed very differently by the state compared to the rights of Armenians, despite both being significant historical communities within Turkish territory.

2.2. Key Minority Groups in Turkish Kurdistan

2.2.1. Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs

Assyrians, also referred to as Syriacs or Chaldeans depending on church affiliation and self-identification, are an ancient Christian people indigenous to Mesopotamia, with a historical heartland in southeastern Turkey, particularly in the provinces of Mardin and Hakkari.[7] Their presence in Turkey has dramatically diminished from historical numbers due to centuries of persecution, massacres (such as those in Diyarbekir in 1895 [71] and the broader Assyrian Genocide during World War I [18]), forced displacement, and emigration.[7] Current estimates place the total Assyrian population in Turkey at around 25,000 to 29,000 [7], with the majority now residing in Istanbul. However, a resilient community of approximately 3,000 individuals remains in their ancestral areas in the southeast.[7]

These communities adhere to various Eastern Christian denominations, including the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Chaldean Catholic Church, and the Assyrian Church of the East.[7] They speak Neo-Aramaic dialects (often referred to as Assyrian, Syriac, or Sureth), languages that are themselves endangered.[7]

Legally, Assyrians are not officially recognized as a distinct minority group under Turkey's interpretation of the Lausanne Treaty.[7] This lack of recognition has historically translated into severe restrictions on their cultural and educational rights, most notably the prohibition of mother-tongue education in their own schools for much of the Republic's history.[18] While some positive developments have occurred in recent years, such as the permission granted in 2013 for Assyrians to open their first mother-tongue primary school since 1928 [75] and the return of some confiscated church properties [75], significant challenges persist. Land confiscation and ongoing property disputes, particularly concerning ancient and historically significant monasteries like Mor Gabriel in Mardin, remain critical issues threatening their heritage and communal viability.[18] The Assyrian Universal Alliance has highlighted the lack of constitutional recognition as indigenous people and flawed electoral mechanisms as core issues affecting Assyrians in the broader region, which has implications for their standing in Turkey as well.[78]

The human rights situation for Assyrians in southeastern Turkey is precarious. They face societal discrimination, political marginalization, and continuous threats to their cultural and religious heritage.[18] The Turkish-Kurdish conflict has profoundly exacerbated their vulnerability, often catching them between state forces and Kurdish militants, leading to further displacement, violence, and the destruction of their villages.[69] Reports from 2023-2024, including those by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacting to US human rights reports, and general human rights reports on Turkey, indicate ongoing concerns

regarding the treatment of minorities, although specific recent details on Assyrians in the southeast are sometimes sparse in broader reports.[79] The cumulative effect of historical persecution, assimilationist state policies, and protracted regional conflict has resulted in a near-total demographic collapse and the endangerment of an ancient indigenous culture in its ancestral lands. The struggle over land, exemplified by the Mor Gabriel monastery case, is not merely about property; it is intrinsically linked to the survival of their heritage and continuous presence in the region. The small remaining Assyrian communities in the southeast operate under immense pressure, with their ability to maintain their language, practice their religion freely, and protect their cultural sites constantly challenged.

2.2.2. Yazidis (Ezidis)

Yazidis, or Ezidis, are an ancient ethno-religious group with a unique, non-monotheistic faith originating in the Middle East.[7] Historically, they were concentrated in parts of eastern, southern, and southeastern Turkey.[7] Their population in Turkey has seen a catastrophic decline, from an estimated 60,000 in the early 1980s to merely a few hundred individuals today.[7] This dramatic reduction is primarily due to sustained persecution, discrimination, and emigration, particularly from the mid-1980s onwards, as they were caught in the crossfire of the armed conflict between Turkish armed forces and the PKK.[7] In recent years, Turkey has also become a host to several thousand Iraqi Yazidi refugees fleeing the genocide perpetrated by ISIS in Sinjar, Iraq.[7]

Yazidis speak the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish and emphasize their distinct religious identity, although some also identify ethnically as Kurds while others view themselves as a separate ethnic group.[7] Their religion blends ancient beliefs with elements that have drawn comparisons to Zoroastrianism, Sufism, Christianity, and Judaism, though it is distinctly its own.[16] Key tenets include the worship of a single God and the veneration of Tawûsî Melek (the Peacock Angel).[81]

In Turkey, Yazidis are not officially recognized as a minority group.[7] They have faced long-standing discrimination and prejudice due to misconceptions about their faith, often being pejoratively labeled.[16] The Turkish-Kurdish conflict led to mass displacement of Yazidis from their villages in southeastern Turkey, and they suffered from inadequate compensation and delayed rights to return.[20] The few remaining indigenous Yazidis and the newly arrived Iraqi Yazidi refugees continue to face discrimination, with refugees experiencing compounded vulnerability due to their faith and status.[7]

Recent human rights reports from 2023-2024 indicate ongoing issues for religious minorities in Turkey, including Yazidis. Hate crimes, vandalism of religious sites (including cemeteries), and inadequate protection of religious properties are persistent concerns.[83] While a member of parliament of Yazidi heritage was elected in 2015 for the first time, this does not signify a broad resolution of the community's marginalization.[20] Access to justice for past abuses remains a significant challenge.[86] The UN OHCHR has highlighted the general need to combat intolerance based on religion or belief, a call pertinent to the Yazidi situation.[88] The Yazidi community in Turkey is doubly vulnerable: their distinct religious identity makes them targets

of specific prejudices, and their historical concentration in the conflict-ridden southeast has led to their near disappearance from the region. This represents a profound cultural loss, and the security and religious freedom of the remaining few, along with refugees, are precarious.

2.2.3. Armenians

Armenians are one of the ancient peoples of Anatolia, with a history in the region spanning millennia.[7] Prior to 1914-1921, their population in the Ottoman Empire, including significant communities in what is now southeastern Turkey (Northern Kurdistan), numbered over 2 million.[7] The Armenian Genocide led to a drastic reduction in their numbers and the near-total destruction of their presence in much of their historical homeland.[69] Today, the estimated Armenian population in Turkey is between 40,000 and 70,000, with the vast majority residing in Istanbul.[21] However, a small number of Armenians, including "Crypto-Armenians" (those who hide their identity), may still reside in or have connections to southeastern regions like Diyarbakir, Mardin, and Van.[21]

The majority of Armenians in Turkey belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, with smaller Catholic and Protestant communities.[7] They speak the Western dialect of the Armenian language.[21] The region of Northern Kurdistan is historically rich in Armenian cultural and religious heritage, including churches and monasteries, much of which has been destroyed, allowed to decay, or repurposed over the past century.[4]

Under the Treaty of Lausanne, Armenians are one of the three officially recognized non-Muslim minorities in Turkey.[7] This status grants them certain rights, such as the ability to run private schools providing primary and secondary education in their mother tongue.[7] Despite this official recognition, the Armenian community faces ongoing limitations and societal discrimination.[7] The historical trauma of the Genocide profoundly shapes their collective identity and relations with the state and broader society.[69] The destruction and neglect of their cultural heritage in their ancestral lands, including in southeastern Turkey, remain a major concern.[4] Attacks on Armenian religious properties, such as churches and cemeteries, continue to occur, as highlighted in reports on threats to religious sites.[92] U.S. State Department reports on religious freedom consistently note the challenges faced by recognized minorities, including Armenians.[90]

The situation of Armenians in Turkey illustrates a paradox: official recognition does not equate to full equality or freedom from vulnerability. The legacy of the Genocide, demographic fragility, and persistent societal and institutional pressures define their experience. For any Armenian presence remaining in the Kurdish-majority regions of southeastern Turkey, the ability to maintain their identity and heritage is extremely constrained, overshadowed by historical loss and current insecurities.

2.2.4. Alevis (including Kurdish Alevis)

Alevis represent the largest religious minority in Turkey after Sunni Muslims, with population estimates ranging widely from 10 to 25 million, or 10 to 25 percent of the total population.[7] Kurdish Alevis form a substantial segment of this community, estimated at around five million,

and are primarily concentrated in the eastern and central provinces of Turkey, areas that overlap with Northern Kurdistan.[24] They speak Turkish, as well as Kurmanji and Zaza dialects of Kurdish.[7]

Alevism is a heterodox tradition within Islam, with beliefs and practices distinct from mainstream Sunni Islam, and also differing from Twelver Shi'ism as practiced in Iran.[7] Alevi practices include communal worship (cem) in cemevis rather than mosques, veneration of Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Twelve Imams, and reverence for mystical figures such as Haji Bektash Veli and the 16th-century poet Pir Sultan Abdal, who is a particularly important symbol for Kurdish Alevis.[23] Kurdish Alevi communities often exhibit unique rituals, a stronger emphasis on nature veneration, and a hereditary socio-religious leadership structure involving sacred lineages (ocax) and roles like *raywer* (guide), *pîr* (spiritual elder), and *murşîd* (highest authority).[93]

Despite their significant numbers, Alevis are not officially recognized by the Turkish state as a distinct religious group with unique needs.[7] Cemevis have historically lacked legal status as official places of worship, and the community has faced difficulties in constructing and maintaining them, though some recent legal and administrative changes have been initiated by the government, such as the establishment of an "Alevi-Bektashi Culture and Cemevi Presidency".[25] A major and persistent grievance is the compulsory religious education in public schools, which is overwhelmingly Sunni-centric and which Alevi children are generally not exempt from, despite ECHR rulings finding this a violation of religious freedom.[25]

Alevis have a long history of persecution and discrimination in Turkey, stemming from their theological differences with the Sunni majority and their historical association with political dissent.[25] They have been victims of massacres, such as in Maras (1978) and Sivas (1993).[25] Kurdish Alevis often face what has been termed "double discrimination"—marginalized for both their Alevi faith and their Kurdish ethnicity.[24] This intersectional identity has historically placed them at odds with both state assimilationist policies targeting Kurds and religious pressures from the Sunni majority. They remain politically marginalized, with limited representation in official positions.[25] Attacks on Alevi homes and cemevis, often involving hateful graffiti, continue to be reported.[25] Human rights reports from 2020-2025 confirm ongoing human rights issues, discrimination, and the problematic status of religious education.[72] The Council of Europe has acknowledged some measures taken by Turkish authorities but notes that significant challenges remain.[95] The USCIRF has also highlighted that Alevis have suffered the most attacks on religious properties in Turkey over the past two decades.[92]

The Alevi Kurdish identity exists at a complex juncture. The Turkish state, while constitutionally secular, has historically privileged Sunni Islam through state institutions like the Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs).[84] Alevism, with its distinct practices, challenges this Sunni-centric approach. For Kurdish Alevis, this religious marginalization is compounded by the state's policies towards Kurdish language and culture. Their historical involvement in leftist political movements and Kurdish rights activism has also made them targets of state repression.[94] Thus, their struggle for recognition of cemevis and for a non-discriminatory

education system is intertwined with broader demands for democratic rights and cultural pluralism.

2.2.5. Roma (Dom and Lom)

The Roma population in Turkey, including groups such as Dom, Lom, and Rom, is estimated to be between 2 and 5 million, though precise figures are unavailable due to lack of official ethnic data collection.[7] These communities are found across Turkey, with the Dom group predominantly residing in southeastern Anatolia (part of Turkish Kurdistan), the Lom in northeastern Anatolia, and the Rom in western Anatolia.[7] The Abdal are also considered a community with a similar lifestyle.[26] Dom communities in Kurdish-majority areas are often bilingual, speaking Kurdish in addition to their own language (Domari) or Turkish.[7]

These groups have distinct languages such as Romani (Indo-European), Domari (Indo-Aryan), and Lomavren, although Turkish is increasingly becoming the dominant mother tongue for many, leading to the endangerment of these traditional languages.[7] Religiously, the vast majority are Muslim (both Sunni and Alevi), with a small number of Orthodox and Protestant Christians.[7] Traditional occupations include music, entertainment, metalworking, sieve-making, and seasonal agricultural work.[102]

Roma, Dom, and Lom are not officially recognized as minorities in Turkey.[7] They face severe and entrenched socio-economic exclusion, widespread discrimination in access to education, employment, housing, and healthcare, and pervasive negative stereotypes often reinforced by media and public officials.[7] Reports indicate low literacy rates and high school dropout rates among Roma children.[26] They are frequently subjected to forced evictions due to urban regeneration projects, hate speech, and outbreaks of violence, with inadequate state protection or redress.[7] Syrian Dom and Abdal refugees in Turkey face compounded discrimination due to both their ethnicity and refugee status.[26]

The situation of Roma, Dom, and Lom communities, including those in southeastern Turkey, is characterized by deep-seated marginalization that is often overlooked in broader discussions of minority rights, which tend to focus on larger or more politically mobilized groups. The internal diversity within these communities (Dom, Lom, Rom, Abdal) is also frequently collapsed under a single, often pejorative, label (e.g., "Çingene"), obscuring their distinct linguistic, cultural, and historical specificities.[7] The Dom in southeastern Turkey, for instance, interact with a predominantly Kurdish socio-linguistic environment, presenting unique challenges and dynamics compared to Rom groups in western Turkey. Their extreme marginalization makes them highly vulnerable to a wide spectrum of human rights abuses, often with little recourse to justice or state protection.[26] While there have been some governmental initiatives like the "Romani Opening," their impact on alleviating systemic discrimination remains limited.[108]

2.2.6. Circassians (and other Caucasians)

The term "Caucasians" in Turkey encompasses various peoples whose ancestors immigrated from the North Caucasus, primarily Russia, in the mid-to-late 19th century following the

Russo-Circassian War and subsequent Russian expansion.[7] This diverse group includes Circassians (Adyghe, the largest component), Abkhazians, Chechens, Daghistanis, and Ossetians.[7] Estimates for the total Caucasian population in Turkey range from 2 to 4 million.[27] They are settled across various provinces, including some in or adjacent to Turkish Kurdistan, such as Kahramanmaras, Sivas, and Kayseri.[8] There are numerous Circassian villages, particularly in regions like Samsun on the Black Sea coast, which has a high concentration.[27] Religiously, Caucasians in Turkey are predominantly Sunni Muslim, adhering to the Hanafi school, with some Chechens and Daghistanis following the Shafi'i school.[7] They have distinct languages belonging to different language families: Abkhaz-Adyghe (Northwest Caucasian), Nakh-Daghestanian, and Ossetian (Indo-European, Iranian branch).[7] Circassians, in particular, maintain strong cultural traditions, such as the Adyghe Xabze, an unwritten code of conduct and ethics that governs social life.[111]

Legally, Circassians and other Caucasian ethnic groups are not officially recognized as distinct ethnic or linguistic minorities by the Turkish state.[7] Like other unrecognized groups, they face significant challenges in preserving their native languages and distinct cultural practices due to decades of assimilationist state policies that have promoted a singular Turkish national identity and language.[27] Access to mother-tongue education is severely limited, with Circassian language courses being offered only recently as electives in some schools or through community initiatives.[115]

The primary human rights concerns for Circassians revolve around cultural and linguistic rights, and the recognition of their history, particularly the traumatic events of their expulsion from the Caucasus, which many Circassians term a genocide.[113] Activism within the community often focuses on language revitalization, cultural preservation through associations (like KAFDER, KAFFED) [110], and raising awareness about their historical narrative. While generally integrated into Turkish society, and with members having achieved prominence in various fields [115], the underlying challenge for Circassians is the maintenance of their distinct identity in a state framework that has historically de-emphasized ethnic diversity. Their relationship with Kurdish communities in the southeast, where their settlements sometimes overlap or are nearby, is an area that warrants further specific research beyond the general information available in the provided sources.

2.2.7. Arabs

Arabs are present in various parts of Turkey, including regions within or adjacent to Turkish Kurdistan, though specific demographic data for this particular area is scarce in the provided materials.[8] The general reference from Minority Rights Group mentions "Arabs (Alevi, Sunni and Christian)" as one of the "various other ethnic minorities living in small and undetermined numbers around the country".[7] Their presence in southeastern Turkey, particularly in provinces like Mardin, Sanliurfa, and Hatay (bordering Syria), is historically established. These Arab communities are diverse in their religious affiliations, including Sunni Muslims, Alevi Muslims, and Christians of various denominations (e.g., Antiochian Orthodox).[7] They are Arabic-speaking.

As a group, Muslim Arabs are not officially recognized as a distinct ethnic minority in Turkey if they are Turkish citizens. Their rights are generally framed within the context of Turkish citizenship, and religious rights depend on their specific faith (e.g., Christian Arabs would fall under the general challenges faced by Christian communities). Alevi Arabs would face the same non-recognition issues as other Alevis. The primary concerns for Arabic-speaking communities would likely revolve around the preservation of their language and distinct cultural practices in the face of Turkification policies, similar to other non-Turkish ethnic groups. The influx of Syrian Arab refugees since 2011 has significantly increased the Arabic-speaking population in Turkey, including in southeastern provinces, creating new social dynamics and challenges, but these refugees have a different legal status than Turkish citizens of Arab ethnicity.

2.2.8. Jews

The Jewish community in Turkey is one of the three officially recognized non-Muslim minorities under the Lausanne Treaty.[7] Historically, there were Jewish communities present in Turkish Kurdistan, with one source noting 11 such communities.[8] However, the vast majority of Turkey's Jewish population, estimated at less than 20,000, now resides in Istanbul, with a smaller community in Izmir.[7] Any remaining Jewish presence in the southeastern Kurdish-majority regions would be extremely small. While officially recognized, the community faces broader societal issues such as antisemitism, which has been reported in Turkey.[92]

2.2.9. Turkmen

Identifying Turkmen as a distinct ethnic *minority* within Turkish Kurdistan is complex. The modern Turkish national identity is itself built upon a foundation of Turkic heritage, and various Oghuz Turkic tribes, historically referred to as Turkmen, were central to the peopling of Anatolia.[116] While there are diverse Turkic groups within Turkey, including those who may maintain specific tribal or regional Turkmen identities (sometimes referred to as Yörüks in Anatolia) [116], the Turkish state generally does not categorize Turkish-speaking Sunni Muslims as an ethnic minority. The provided sources discuss Turkmen as significant minorities in Iraq [32] and Syria [59], where they form distinct ethno-linguistic groups often with political grievances. In Turkey, the term "Turkmen" is more often associated with the historical ethnogenesis of the Turkish nation or with recent refugee populations from countries like Syria or Iraq. Some Turkic groups are mentioned within the "Caucasian" category if they migrated from the Caucasus.[7] There is no indication in the provided snippets of a distinct, recognized Turkmen *minority* group within Turkish Kurdistan facing issues analogous to those of non-Turkic or non-Muslim minorities. Their situation is more one of internal Turkish diversity rather than a minority-majority dynamic in the context of this report.

3. Minorities in Southern Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan Region - KRI)

Southern Kurdistan, largely corresponding to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), presents a

different legal and political landscape for minorities compared to Turkey and Iran. The KRI possesses a degree of autonomy that has allowed for the formal recognition of several minority groups and the establishment of specific mechanisms for their representation, though challenges and complexities persist.

3.1. Administrative Status of the KRI and Official Minority Recognition

The KRI is a constitutionally recognized federal region within Iraq, having achieved *de facto* autonomy in 1992 and formal recognition under the 2005 Iraqi constitution.[1] It comprises the governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Duhok, and Halabja.[5] The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has its own parliament and executive.[5]

A significant aspect of the KRI's legal framework is the official recognition of various minority groups. Kurdistan Region Law No. 5 of 2015, "On the Protection of the Rights of Components in Kurdistan Region – Iraq," explicitly acknowledges several "national components" and "religious and sectarian groups".[9] The recognized national components include Turkmen, Chaldeans, Syrians, Assyrians, and Armenians. Recognized religious and sectarian groups include Christians, Yazidis, Sabean-Mandaeans, Kaka'i, Shabaks, Faili Kurds, and Zoroastrians.[9]

This recognition translates into reserved seats (quotas) for some minorities in the 111-seat KRI Parliament. Traditionally, five seats were allocated for Christians (often understood to encompass Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs), five for Turkmen, and one for Armenians.[120] However, this system has been subject to political contention and legal challenges. In February 2024, the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court issued a ruling that, among other changes to the KRI election law, abolished these 11 quota seats and reduced the parliament to 100 seats.[121] This decision was met with significant opposition from minority groups and some Kurdish parties. Subsequently, following appeals and political negotiations, the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council's elections branch ordered the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to allocate five of the 100 seats to minorities: three for Christians (specified as two Assyrian and one Armenian in one source [121], though another suggests one each in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk for Christians generally [122]) and two for Turkmen.[121]

The establishment and modification of these minority quotas appear to be influenced not only by a commitment to minority rights but also by the internal political dynamics between the major Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and the KRG's efforts to project an inclusive image internationally.[122] The KRI's autonomy, while substantial, remains subject to the overarching federal framework of Iraq and the judiciary in Baghdad, making the political status and representation of minorities susceptible to these intergovernmental tensions. This dynamic suggests that minority rights can, at times, be instrumentalized within larger power struggles, rendering the long-term stability of these representational mechanisms somewhat precarious.

3.2. Key Minority Groups in KRI

3.2.1. Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs (Christians)

These indigenous Christian communities, often collectively referred to as Chaldo-Assyrians or Syriacs, represent a significant minority in Iraq, with a substantial historical and contemporary presence in the KRI and the adjacent Nineveh Plains.[14] Key population centers include Erbil (particularly the Ankawa suburb), Duhok, Zakho, and numerous towns and villages in the Nineveh Plains, some of which are disputed territories between the KRG and the federal Iraqi government.[5] While precise population figures are debated, the Joshua Project estimated 92,000 Assyrians in Iraq in 2023.[29] Chaldeans are considered the largest Christian group in Iraq, comprising approximately 80% of Iraqi Christians.[15] Many members of these communities were displaced by the ISIS offensive in 2014, with a significant number seeking refuge in the KRI.[14]

Culturally, these groups are inheritors of ancient Mesopotamian civilization and speak various modern Neo-Aramaic dialects (such as Chaldean, Assyrian Sureth, and Turoyo).[15] They adhere to diverse Eastern Christian traditions, including the Chaldean Catholic Church (in communion with Rome), the Assyrian Church of the East, the Syriac Orthodox Church, and the Syriac Catholic Church.[14] Their religious and cultural practices are ancient and form a core part of their identity.[125]

Legally, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syrians are recognized as distinct "national components" in the KRI under Law No. 5 of 2015.[9] They have had reserved seats in the KRI Parliament, though the exact number and allocation have been subject to recent legal and political revisions.[120] Political parties like the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) have been active in advocating for their rights.[14]

The human rights situation for these Christian communities has been fraught with challenges. They suffered under Saddam Hussein's regime, including during the Anfal campaign.[14] The post-2003 instability and sectarian violence disproportionately affected them.[14] The ISIS genocide in 2014 led to mass killings, abductions, sexual slavery, forced displacement, and the systematic destruction of their religious and cultural heritage in areas like the Nineveh Plains.[14] While the KRI provided refuge for many displaced Christians, their relationship with Kurdish authorities is complex. Reports from various human rights organizations and community representatives indicate ongoing issues within the KRI and disputed territories, including illegal land confiscation and encroachment on Assyrian-owned lands by Kurdish individuals and entities, sometimes allegedly with the acquiescence or involvement of KRG officials or dominant Kurdish parties.[14] There are also accusations of pressure on Christians to support the dominant Kurdish political parties and limitations on their independent political activities.[14] The return of displaced Christians to their homes in the Nineveh Plains is hindered by persistent insecurity due to the presence of various militias, lack of reconstruction, inadequate basic services, and unresolved political disputes over the governance of these areas.[124] This situation creates a security dilemma for Christian minorities: while relying on KRG Peshmerga for protection in some areas, they also report abuses and lack of accountability from these same authorities. The failure of Kurdish forces to protect them during the initial ISIS onslaught in some areas has further eroded trust. Their long-term security and ability to reclaim ancestral lands depend not only on defeating extremist groups

but also on achieving a just power-sharing arrangement and effective property restitution mechanisms with both the KRG and federal authorities, which remains an ongoing struggle.

3.2.2. Yazidis

The Yazidis are an ancient, indigenous ethno-religious group, primarily Kurmanji Kurdish-speaking, with deep roots in the Kurdistan region.[16] Their main population centers in Iraq are the Sinjar (Shingal) district in Nineveh Governorate and the Shekhan district in Duhok Governorate (KRI).[16] Before the 2014 ISIS genocide, the Yazidi population in Iraq was estimated to be between 300,000 and 700,000.[30] The ISIS attacks led to the mass displacement of an estimated 360,000 Yazidis [132], with hundreds of thousands still living in IDP camps in the KRI, predominantly in Duhok, as of 2023-2024.[31]

Yazidism is a unique monotheistic faith with ancient origins, incorporating pre-Zoroastrian Iranic beliefs and distinct theological tenets, including the veneration of Tawûsî Melek (the Peacock Angel) and seven holy angels.[16] Their most sacred site is the Lalish temple, located in the Shekhan district of the KRI.[81] Yazidi society is traditionally structured with distinct religious castes (Sheikhs, Pirs, and Murids) and practices strict endogamy.[16] There is an ongoing debate about their ethnic identity: while the KRG and many Yazidis consider themselves ethnically Kurdish (often referring to Yazidism as the "original Kurdish religion") [16], some Yazidis assert a distinct ethno-religious identity separate from Kurds.[16]

In the KRI, Yazidis are officially recognized as a religious group under Law No. 5 of 2015.[9] They have had reserved representation in the Iraqi Parliament (one seat) [120] and previously in the KRI Parliament, though this is subject to the recent electoral law changes.[120]

The Yazidi community has endured a long history of persecution, culminating in the 2014 genocide by ISIS. This involved mass killings, particularly of men and older women, the abduction and enslavement of thousands of women and girls for sexual violence, the forced recruitment of boys as child soldiers, forced conversions, and the destruction of religious sites.[16] As of 2024, thousands of Yazidis remain missing, presumed to be in captivity or killed.[133]

The return of Yazidis to their ancestral homeland in Sinjar is severely hampered by a complex array of challenges. These include pervasive insecurity due to the presence of multiple armed actors (including PKK-affiliated groups like the YBS, various Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) units, and the Iraqi army, with Turkish military operations also targeting the area).[133] The 2020 Sinjar Agreement between Baghdad and Erbil, aimed at normalizing the security and administrative situation, remains largely unimplemented.[138] Destroyed infrastructure, lack of basic services, insufficient reconstruction efforts, and ongoing political disputes between the KRG and the federal government over control of Sinjar further deter returns.[133] Yazidis also face societal discrimination and distrust from some neighboring Arab communities, stemming from perceived associations during the ISIS conflict.[133] Within the KRI, while finding relative safety, displaced Yazidis have reported instances of pressure from Kurdish authorities to identify as Kurds or to support KRG political agendas.[138] The unresolved status of Sinjar, a disputed territory, has effectively made it a focal point for competing regional and local

interests, with the Yazidi community caught in the crossfire. Their security, governance, and access to resources in their homeland are contingent on resolving these larger geopolitical and inter-governmental conflicts, a prospect that remains distant. This situation perpetuates Yazidi displacement and suffering, highlighting how minority communities often bear the brunt of unresolved power struggles.

3.2.3. Turkmen

Iraqi Turkmen constitute the third largest ethnic group in Iraq [117] and have a significant presence in the KRI and disputed territories. They traditionally inhabit a band of territory stretching from Tal Afar in the northwest, through Mosul, Erbil, Altun Kopru, to Kirkuk, Tuz Khurmatu, Kifri, and Khaniqin in the east and southeast.[32] Population estimates for Turkmen in Iraq vary widely, from 600,000 to 3 million.[32] Within the KRI, the majority are reported to live in Erbil, with regional population estimates ranging from 100,000 to 400,000.[34]

Iraqi Turkmen speak a Turkic dialect closely related to Azerbaijani and Turkish.[32] They are descendants of various waves of Turkic settlement in Mesopotamia, dating back to the Seljuk era and continuing through the Ottoman period, when they often served as garrisons and administrators.[32] Religiously, the Turkmen community is divided, with approximately 60% being Sunni Muslim and the remainder predominantly Shia Muslim, who tend to live in the southern parts of the Turkmeneli (Land of the Turkmen) region.[32]

In the KRI, Turkmen are recognized as a "national component" [9] and have been allocated reserved seats in the KRI Parliament, though this has been subject to recent revisions by the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court.[120] The Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) is their main political party, often advocating for Turkmen rights and cultural preservation, and historically receiving support from Turkey.[33]

Historically, Turkmen faced assimilationist policies and denial of rights under the Ba'ath regime, particularly the "Arabization" of Kirkuk, which involved the forced displacement of Turkmen and Kurds and their replacement with Arabs.[32] Post-2003, Turkmen relations with Kurdish authorities have often been tense, primarily centered on the status of Kirkuk, a multi-ethnic and oil-rich province that Turkmen consider historically significant to their identity.[33] The KRG also lays claim to Kirkuk. This has led to political competition and, at times, clashes or accusations of intimidation and displacement.[33] UN reports in 2006 indicated instances of Kurdish security forces illegally policing Kirkuk and abducting Turkmen and Arabs.[33]

The rise of ISIS also severely impacted the Turkmen community, especially Shia Turkmen who were targeted for killings, abductions, and displacement.[33] Sunni Turkmen have also reportedly faced abuses from Iraqi security forces in some contexts.[33] After ISIS was pushed out of Kirkuk in 2014, the KRG took *de facto* control of the city until 2017, when Iraqi federal forces reasserted authority following the KRI's independence referendum.[33] During and after these periods, Turkmen have reported pressure and displacement by various actors. Land disputes in Kirkuk remain a critical issue. A new Property Restitution Law was enacted by the Iraqi Parliament in early 2025, aiming to address historical injustices from Baathist-era land

confiscations affecting Kurdish and Turkmen farmers.[146] However, the implementation of this law is complex and has already sparked tensions.[146] The security and rights of the Turkmen community in Kirkuk and other disputed areas are thus deeply intertwined with the unresolved territorial and resource conflicts involving Baghdad, the KRG, and various local ethnic communities, as well as the influence of neighboring Turkey.

3.2.4. Armenians

The Armenian community in Iraq, including the KRI, is a historic Christian minority. Current population estimates in Iraq range from 10,000 to 20,000 [35], with a significant portion, around 3,000 to 5,000, residing in the KRI, particularly in Duhok, Zakho, and Erbil.[35] Many Iraqi Armenians are descendants of survivors of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire, who found refuge in Iraq.[42] More recently, instability and violence in other parts of Iraq, especially after 2003 and the rise of ISIS, led to further internal displacement of Armenians towards the comparatively safer KRI.[36]

Armenians in Iraq predominantly belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, with smaller Catholic and Evangelical communities.[35] They speak the Armenian language and have actively worked to maintain their cultural and religious institutions, including churches and schools, within the KRI.[37]

In the KRI, Armenians are officially recognized as a "national component" [9] and have been allocated one reserved seat in the KRI Parliament.[120] However, securing consistent political representation in the federal Iraqi parliament has been a challenge, often due to their smaller numbers compared to other Christian groups like Chaldeans and Assyrians who dominate the Christian quota seats.[150]

The human rights situation for Armenians in the KRI is generally considered better and more secure than in other parts of Iraq.[150] Their primary concerns revolve around the preservation of their cultural heritage, language education for their children, and maintaining their communal institutions.[37] There have been active efforts to rebuild and restore Armenian churches in the KRI, sometimes with support from the KRG, the Hungarian government, and diaspora contributions.[37] The Armenian consulate in Erbil also supports cultural preservation efforts.[37] Recent initiatives include micro-grants for Armenian cultural projects, though these may be based in Armenia with international reach rather than KRI-specific.[151] A recent concern for the community was the potential impact of the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court's ruling on minority quotas in the KRI parliament, which initially abolished all quota seats before some were reinstated.[122] The Armenian community in the KRI demonstrates notable cultural resilience, actively working to sustain its identity. Their historical experience, particularly the legacy of the Armenian Genocide, makes the preservation of their heritage especially significant. While the KRG's environment is relatively tolerant, their small numbers and reliance on community efforts and some external support make them susceptible to broader regional instabilities or shifts in KRG policy.

3.2.5. Shabak

The Shabak are an ethnic and linguistic minority residing primarily in a cluster of villages east of Mosul in the Nineveh Plains, an area characterized by its diverse population and disputed administrative status between Baghdad and Erbil.[38] Population estimates for the Shabak in Iraq range from approximately 250,000 to 400,000.[38]

Culturally, most Shabak consider themselves a distinct ethnic group, neither Arab nor Kurdish, though some may identify with Kurdish ethnicity.[38] They speak Shabaki, a distinct Northwestern Iranian language of the Zaza-Gorani branch, which incorporates influences from Turkish, Persian, Kurdish, and Arabic.[38] Religiously, the Shabak community is predominantly Muslim, with about 70% identifying as Shia and the remainder as Sunni.[38] Their religious practices often blend elements of orthodox Islam with local Sufi-influenced beliefs and traditions.[38]

In the KRI, Shabak are recognized as a religious and sectarian group under the 2015 law.[9] In federal Iraq, they have one reserved seat in the Council of Representatives, allocated to Nineveh Governorate.[38] However, neither the Iraqi nor the KRI constitutions explicitly mention the Shabak as a distinct *ethnic* group, which has implications for cultural rights, particularly language.[38]

The Shabak have faced significant human rights challenges. Historically, they were subjected to Arabization policies under the Ba'ath regime.[38] Following 2003, they experienced harassment and pressure from some Kurdish political factions aiming to assimilate them or claim their areas as Kurdish.[38] As a majority-Shia group, they were heavily targeted by Sunni extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda and later ISIS, which resulted in numerous killings, abductions, and mass displacement from their villages in the Nineveh Plains during the 2014 ISIS offensive.[38] Many Shabak villages were destroyed or occupied by ISIS.[38]

The Shabak community is caught in the complex political and territorial disputes over the Nineveh Plains. Their loyalties are divided, with some aligning with the KRG and others with the federal government or Shia PMF groups that now exert significant influence in parts of Nineveh.[38] This internal division is often along sectarian lines (Shia Shabak being more aligned with PMF/Baghdad, Sunni Shabak historically more with KRG/KDP) and differing views on ethnic identity.[155] In KRG-controlled areas or disputed territories where Kurdish influence is strong, Shabak have reported pressure to support Kurdish political aims.[38] A critical issue is the status of the Shabaki language, which is not taught in KRG schools due to the lack of recognition of Shabak as a distinct ethnicity, placing the language at risk of extinction.[38] The security situation in their areas remains fragile, with the presence of multiple armed groups and ongoing tensions.[157] The contestation over Shabak identity—whether they are Arab, Kurd, or a unique ethnicity—has profound implications for their collective rights, political cohesion, and vulnerability to manipulation by larger political forces in the disputed territories.

3.2.6. Kaka'is (Yarsan/Ahl-e Haqq)

The Kaka'i community in Iraq, also known as Yarsan or Ahl-e Haqq, is an ethno-religious minority with population estimates ranging from 110,000 to 200,000.[41] They primarily reside in areas southeast of Kirkuk (especially Daquq district), parts of the Nineveh Plains near

Hamdaniya, and in Diyala, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah governorates.[41]
The Kaka'i religion is a syncretic faith that emerged in western Iran in the 14th century, incorporating elements from Zoroastrianism, Shia Islam, and other ancient regional beliefs.[41] They have their own distinct religious literature, primarily oral but also including texts like the *Kalâm-e Saranjâm*, and sacred practices, such as the *jam* ceremony and reverence for the *tambur* (a stringed instrument).[52] Key beliefs include successive divine manifestations (*mazhariyyat*) and the transmigration of the soul (*dunaduni*).[52] Ethnically, Kaka'is in Iraq are generally considered to be Kurdish and predominantly speak a Gorani dialect known as Macho, though some communities are Arabic-speaking.[41] Kaka'i men are often recognizable by their distinctive prominent moustaches, which they do not trim.[41] Their social structure includes hereditary religious leaders known as Sayyeds.[160]
In the KRI, the Kaka'i religion was officially recognized by the KRG's Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs in 2015 [9], and they have a reserved seat on the Halabja provincial council.[41] However, the Kaka'i faith is not mentioned in the Iraqi federal constitution, and members are often officially registered as Muslims on their national identity documents.[41] Some Kaka'is prefer this ambiguity as it can offer a degree of protection from discrimination by the wider Muslim majority, given that their faith is often misunderstood and has historically led to persecution, forcing them to practice their religion with secrecy.[41]
Kaka'is have faced significant human rights challenges. During the Ba'ath era, they were subjected to Arabization policies, forced displacement from their lands, and destruction of villages, particularly along the Iranian border.[41] Hundreds were exiled from Kirkuk to Iran.[41] The rise of ISIS in 2014 posed an existential threat, as their religious identity made them a clear target for the extremist group.[41] ISIS issued death threats if they did not convert, took over several Kaka'i villages, and destroyed Kaka'i shrines in the al-Hamdaniya district of the Nineveh Plains.[41] Many Kaka'is fled to Erbil and other safer areas, and some formed armed units, with one contingent joining the Kurdish Peshmerga.[41]
Currently, Kaka'is continue to face discrimination, threats, kidnappings, and assassinations due to their poorly understood religious identity.[41] Their distinctive appearance can make them more vulnerable to harassment.[41] Internal divisions within the community regarding their relationship to Islam have also impacted their political influence.[41] The security of their communities and religious sites, particularly in contested areas like Kirkuk and parts of Nineveh and Diyala, remains a concern, influenced by the presence of various armed groups including PMF and the dynamics between the KRG and federal authorities.[41] The Kaka'i community thus navigates a complex path, balancing the need for secrecy for protection against the desire for recognition and rights. While KRG recognition is a positive step, the lack of federal acknowledgment and persistent societal prejudice leave them vulnerable.

3.2.7. Arabs

While Arabs constitute the majority population in Iraq as a whole (estimated at 75-80% [9]), they are a demographic minority within the three core governorates of the KRI (Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah). However, the Arab population in the KRI has increased significantly,

particularly since 2003 and more dramatically after the ISIS crisis began in 2014, due to the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees seeking safety and economic opportunities.[5] Official KRI statistics from 2022 indicated approximately 55,000 Arab families residing in Erbil Governorate, 25,412 families in Sulaymaniyah, and 7,721 families in Duhok Governorate, totaling over 88,000 families, which would represent a substantial population.[43] One source suggests the KRI is home to approximately one million Iraqi citizens of Arab descent.[43] Additionally, the KRG estimated in 2024 that it hosted around 665,000 to 680,000 IDPs, a large proportion of whom are Arabs from other parts of Iraq.[43]

These Arab communities are predominantly Muslim (both Sunni and Shia) and Arabic-speaking. As Iraqi citizens, they possess full legal rights within the KRI, although they are not designated as a "minority component" in the same way as the KRI's ethno-religious minorities. Their presence, particularly that of IDPs, significantly impacts local demographics, resource allocation, and the socio-economic fabric of KRI cities.[43] Many Arabs have integrated into the KRI's economy, contributing to sectors like real estate and commerce, and some have learned Kurdish.[43]

The primary human rights concerns for Arabs in the KRI often relate to the conditions faced by IDPs in camps, including access to adequate services, dignified living conditions, and pathways to durable solutions such as safe return to their areas of origin or local integration.[43] Tensions can occasionally arise between IDP communities and host communities over resources, employment, or perceived cultural differences. In the disputed territories, such as Kirkuk, Arabs are a major demographic group with a long history, and their presence is also linked to past Ba'athist Arabization policies, creating complex inter-communal dynamics with Kurds and Turkmen regarding land ownership, political power, and historical grievances.[33] The substantial influx of Arab IDPs into the KRI has shifted demographic balances in urban centers, presenting both opportunities for economic interaction and challenges for social cohesion and service provision. The long-term status of these displaced populations is a critical issue for both the KRG and the Iraqi federal government.

3.2.8. Sabean-Mandaeans

The Sabean-Mandaeans are an ancient Gnostic ethno-religious minority indigenous to Mesopotamia, with their historical heartland in the marshlands and riverine areas of southern Iraq (Basra, Dhi Qar, Missan).[44] Their numbers in Iraq have dwindled dramatically due to persecution and emigration, with current estimates suggesting fewer than 5,000 remain in the entire country.[44] A small number of Sabean-Mandaeans also reside in Baghdad and, more recently, some have sought refuge or live in the KRI.[45]

Their religion, Mandaeism, involves complex Gnostic beliefs, reverence for John the Baptist as a key prophet, and essential rituals of repeated baptism (masbuta) in flowing fresh water (Yardena).[44] They speak Mandaic, a Southeastern Aramaic dialect, which is critically endangered.[44] Traditionally, many Sabean-Mandaeans were skilled artisans, particularly as goldsmiths, silversmiths, and boat builders.[44] Their faith prohibits violence and the carrying of weapons.[44]

Sabean-Mandaeans are recognized in the Iraqi constitution and by KRG law as a distinct religious group.[9] They have one reserved seat in the Iraqi Council of Representatives.[120] This community has faced severe persecution, particularly since 2003. Extremist Islamist groups have targeted them for killings, abductions, torture, and extortion, often mischaracterizing their faith.[44] They also experience societal discrimination, negative stereotyping (including accusations of witchcraft), and vulnerability to land seizures.[44] The ban on alcohol in many parts of Iraq has also affected their businesses.[45] For those Sabean-Mandaeans who have fled to the KRI, they may encounter language barriers (as they are primarily Arabic speakers) and some instances of discrimination or verbal abuse from the Kurdish majority, although the overall risk of persecution is generally considered lower in the KRI compared to federal Iraq.[45] The Sabean-Mandaean community faces an existential threat in Iraq. Their dwindling numbers, the loss of religious leaders, and the scattering of their population endanger their ancient language, unique culture, and religious traditions.[44] Their situation underscores the profound vulnerability of very small, distinct minorities in regions plagued by conflict and religious extremism.

3.2.9. Baha'is

The Baha'i community in Iraq is small, with estimates suggesting fewer than 2,000 adherents across the country, including approximately 100 families residing in the KRI.[46] The Baha'i Faith is a monotheistic religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in the 19th century.[164]

The legal status of Baha'is in Iraq is complex. The Baha'i Faith was banned under the Ba'athist regime by Law No. 105 of 1970, and while this law is reportedly not actively enforced in federal Iraq, it has not been formally repealed.[47] This historical prohibition denied Baha'is basic civil rights, including access to official registration for births and marriages, employment, and property ownership.[47] In contrast, the KRG officially recognizes the Baha'i Faith as a religious minority.[9]

A significant human rights concern for Baha'is throughout Iraq, including the KRI, is their inability to register their faith on national identity documents. Application processes for new national ID cards require citizens to state their religion, but Baha'ism is not an option for federal documents. Consequently, Baha'is are often forced to list themselves as "Muslim" or another recognized religion to obtain essential documentation.[47] This lack of proper identification can lead to difficulties accessing services, education, and employment, and carries a risk of statelessness, particularly for children born from marriages not officially registered.[47]

Within the KRI, Baha'is generally experience greater freedom to practice their faith, observe religious holidays, and hold festivals without interference or intimidation from KRG authorities.[159] Interactions with KRG officials are typically focused on maintaining this recognition and facilitating community activities.[167] The discrepancy between federal non-recognition (and historical prohibition) and regional KRG recognition creates a somewhat precarious legal standing for Baha'is. While the KRI offers a more tolerant environment, the unresolved federal status continues to pose challenges to their full enjoyment of citizenship

rights across Iraq.

3.2.10. Jews

The Jewish community in Iraq, including its Kurdish regions, boasts an ancient history, with traditions linking their presence to the Babylonian exile.[55] Historically, Kurdistan hosted numerous Jewish communities; prior to their mass exodus in 1950-51, an estimated 146 communities were in Iraqi Kurdistan, 19 in Iranian Kurdistan, and 11 in Turkish Kurdistan.[55] They spoke distinct Judeo-Aramaic dialects (such as Lishan Didan, Lishana Deni) as well as Kurdish.[55]

Today, the Jewish population in Iraq is extremely small. Following the establishment of Israel and subsequent pressures, the vast majority of Iraqi Jews, including Kurdish Jews, emigrated, mainly between 1948 and 1951 in operations like "Ezra and Nehemiah".[55] Current estimates for those remaining in Iraq vary: some sources suggest fewer than six adult members in the Baghdad Jewish community [48], while in the KRI, estimates range from 70-80 Jewish families [48] to around 500 families.[169] Many Kurdish Jews and their descendants now live in Israel, with a population estimated around 200,000, maintaining cultural connections to Kurdistan.[169]

In a significant development, the KRG passed laws in May 2015 that included official recognition of Judaism as a religious minority within the Kurdistan Region.[9] This recognition is a positive step towards acknowledging the historical Jewish presence and protecting the rights of the remaining community members. However, due to past persecution and ongoing regional sensitivities, some Jews in the KRI may still practice their faith discreetly or be hesitant to publicly acknowledge their religious identity for fear of repercussions.[48] The primary concerns for this fragile community are likely security, the freedom to practice their religion openly, the preservation of their remaining heritage sites, and maintaining connections with the broader Jewish diaspora. Their re-emergence, however tentative, is highly dependent on the KRG's continued commitment to religious tolerance and security.

4. Minorities in Eastern Kurdistan (Iran)

Eastern Kurdistan, situated within the northwestern provinces of Iran (primarily Kurdistan, Kermanshah, West Azerbaijan, and Ilam provinces [10]), is home to a diverse array of ethnic and religious minorities who exist within the broader Kurdish-majority population and under the overarching legal and political framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran. State policies in Iran significantly impact the rights and freedoms of these groups.

4.1. Overview of State Policies Towards Minorities in Iran

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran establishes Twelver Ja'afari Shia Islam as the official state religion, and all laws and regulations must conform to "Islamic criteria" and an official interpretation of sharia.[49] This constitutional framework creates a hierarchical system for religious minorities. Only Zoroastrians, Jews, and specific Christian denominations (namely Armenian and Assyrian Christians whose presence predates Islam or who can prove pre-revolutionary Christian ancestry) are officially recognized as religious minorities.[49] These

recognized groups are granted limited rights to practice their religion and form religious societies "within the limits of the law," and have reserved seats in the Majlis (parliament).[49] However, this recognition does not equate to equality. Non-Muslims are barred from holding senior government, judicial, or military positions.[49] Furthermore, religious conversion from Islam is considered apostasy and is punishable by death, though not explicitly codified in the penal code for this specific outcome, it is applied based on Sharia interpretations.[49] Proselytizing to Muslims is strictly prohibited and can lead to severe penalties, including imprisonment.[49]

Ethnic minorities, including Kurds (who are predominantly Sunni Muslim in Iran, forming a religious minority as well), Azeris, Baluchis, Arabs, and Turkmen, face systemic discrimination and the suppression of their cultural and linguistic rights.[13] Education in minority languages is largely prohibited or severely restricted, with Persian being the compulsory language of instruction and administration.[58] Cultural expressions and activism related to ethnic identity are often viewed with suspicion by the state and can be branded as separatism or threats to national security, leading to repression.[54]

Religious minorities not recognized by the constitution, such as Baha'is, Yarsanis (Ahl-e Haqq/Kaka'i), Sabean-Mandaeans, and Christian converts (especially from Muslim backgrounds), face severe and systematic persecution.[49] This includes arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, execution, denial of access to higher education and public sector employment, confiscation of property, and destruction of religious sites.[54]

The Kurdish-inhabited provinces of western and northwestern Iran are characterized by significant human rights violations, economic neglect, underdevelopment, and heavy militarization due to the state's security concerns regarding Kurdish political aspirations.[54] The intelligence and security apparatus frequently intimidates and arrests members of minority groups, and the judiciary often issues harsh sentences.[54] This systemic discrimination is not merely societal but is deeply embedded within the legal and security structures of the state, creating a hierarchy where ethnic and religious minorities in Iranian Kurdistan endure multi-layered discrimination, severely limiting their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

4.2. Key Minority Groups in Iranian Kurdistan

4.2.1. Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs (Christians)

Assyrian and Chaldean Christians have an ancient presence in Iran, particularly in the northwestern regions, including West Azerbaijan province, with Urmia historically being a significant center.[13] Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, their population significantly declined due to emigration.[183] Current population estimates for all Assyrians/Chaldeans in Iran vary; Wikipedia cites around 20,000 (combining Assyrian Church of the East and Chaldean Catholics) [183], while the Joshua Project suggests a figure of 117,000 for Assyrians.[184] They belong mainly to the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church and speak Neo-Aramaic dialects alongside Persian.[183]

As recognized Christian minorities, Assyrians and Chaldeans are jointly allocated one seat in the Iranian Majlis.[49] This recognized status, however, comes with significant restrictions. They are permitted to practice their faith within their own communities but are strictly forbidden from evangelizing Muslims.[49] Any activity perceived as proselytizing can lead to severe repercussions. Christian converts from Islam face particularly harsh persecution, often charged with apostasy or "acting against national security".[49] Assyrians, like other recognized minorities, also face discrimination in employment, particularly in the public sector, and in accessing higher education if they do not conform to state-imposed religious declarations.[49] Their situation is one of tolerated existence within tightly controlled boundaries, where their religious freedom is circumscribed by the state's imperative to maintain Shia Islamic dominance and prevent any perceived challenge to it.

4.2.2. Armenians (Christians)

Armenians also constitute one of Iran's officially recognized Christian minorities, with a deep historical presence, particularly in Iranian Azerbaijan (areas near and including parts of West Azerbaijan province), Isfahan (New Julfa), and Tehran.[50] In 1911, Malachia Ormanian estimated that around 7,000 Armenians lived in the regions of Kurdistan and Lorestan.[50] Current population estimates for Armenians in all of Iran range widely, from 70,000 to as high as 500,000 in some sources.[50] The majority belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church and speak Armenian.[50]

Like Assyrians and Chaldeans, Armenians are allocated reserved seats in the Majlis (two seats).[49] They are permitted to maintain their own schools (with government oversight on curriculum) and cultural institutions to a certain extent.[49] However, they face similar restrictions on religious practice as other recognized Christians, especially concerning any interaction that could be construed as proselytizing to Muslims.[49] They also encounter discrimination in employment and other societal spheres.[49] The general human rights reports concerning religious minorities in Iran apply to their situation.[54] Their recognized status provides a framework for communal life but is heavily conditioned by the state's overarching religious and security policies.

4.2.3. Yarsanis (Kaka'i/Ahl-e Haqq)

The Yarsan community, also known as Ahl-e Haqq or Kaka'i in Iraq, is a significant syncretic religious minority in Iran, with adherents predominantly of Kurdish ethnicity.[52] They are concentrated in the western provinces of Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Lorestan, and Ilam, as well as other areas.[10] Population estimates in Iran vary, with some sources suggesting between one to three million followers.[52]

Yarsanism has unique rituals, beliefs, and a distinct religious literature (such as the *Kalâm-e Saranjâm*), often transmitted orally.[52] Key tenets include belief in successive divine manifestations and the transmigration of the soul.[52] The *tambur* is a sacred musical instrument used in their ceremonies.[52] Due to a long history of persecution, Yarsanis have often practiced their faith with a degree of secrecy.[52] Their leadership structure involves

hereditary figures known as Sayyeds.[160]
The Iranian state does not officially recognize Yarsanism as a distinct religion.[49] Adherents are often categorized by the government as Shia Muslims or are pressured to identify as such to access basic rights and services.[49] This lack of recognition leads to severe discrimination in law and practice, affecting their access to education, employment (especially in the public sector), and political office.[49] Yarsanis are subjected to arbitrary detention, harassment, and pressure to conform to orthodox Shia Islam.[49] Yarsani activists who advocate for their community's rights or raise awareness about discrimination face persecution by security forces.[49] Reports from human rights organizations covering 2023-2024 confirm the ongoing discrimination and repression faced by the Yarsan community.[178] The forced religious assimilation or "camouflage" not only denies Yarsanis their fundamental right to freedom of religion and belief and self-identification but also actively works to erode their unique cultural and religious heritage, rendering them invisible in official state structures and support systems.

4.2.4. Jews

Iran is home to one of the oldest Jewish diasporas in the world. Historically, Jewish communities were present in various parts of Iran, including 19 communities in the Kurdish regions.[55] However, similar to Iraq, the majority of Kurdish Jews emigrated, primarily to Israel, especially after 1948.[169] The current Jewish population in all of Iran is estimated to be between 8,500 and 9,800.[56] Any remaining Jewish presence specifically within the Kurdish-majority provinces of Iran would be exceptionally small.
Judaism is one of the three non-Muslim religions officially recognized in the Iranian constitution, and the Jewish community is allocated one reserved seat in the Majlis.[49] Despite this recognition, Iranian Jews face significant challenges, including state-sponsored antisemitism, discrimination, and restrictions on their religious practices and communal activities.[49] The Iranian government's overtly hostile relationship with Israel creates a particularly precarious situation for Iranian Jews, who may be subject to heightened suspicion and accusations of disloyalty.[49] This geopolitical context adds a layer of vulnerability for the community beyond the general restrictions faced by other recognized non-Muslim minorities.

4.2.5. Azeris (in Kurdish-inhabited areas)

Iranian Azerbaijanis are the largest ethnic minority in Iran and are primarily concentrated in the northwestern provinces of East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, Ardabil, and Zanjan.[57] Significant Azeri populations also reside in areas that overlap with or are adjacent to Kurdish-inhabited regions, notably in West Azerbaijan province (which is ethnically mixed, with substantial Kurdish and Azeri populations) and in villages around Qorveh in Kurdistan province.[12] Iranian Azerbaijanis are predominantly Shia Muslims and speak Azerbaijani, a Turkic language.[57]
As Shia Muslims, Azeris in these areas do not face the religious discrimination directed at non-Muslims or Sunni Muslims. However, as a distinct ethno-linguistic group, they experience

restrictions on mother-tongue education and cultural expression, similar to those faced by Kurds and other non-Persian ethnic groups.[58] Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution, which notionally permits the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching their literature in schools, has not been effectively implemented for Azeris or other minorities.[58] Independent schools and language institutions are generally prohibited from offering instruction in languages other than Persian.[58] In ethnically mixed provinces like West Azerbaijan, which includes the city of Urmia, there can be local-level tensions between Azeri and Kurdish communities over issues of regional identity, political influence, and resources, distinct from their respective relationships with the central Iranian state.[58] This highlights that state policies in Iran aim not only for religious homogeneity (around Shia Islam) but also for Persian linguistic and cultural dominance, affecting even Shia non-Persian groups like the Azeris.

4.2.6. Turkmen

Iranian Turkmens are another Turkic-speaking ethnic group, living mainly in the northern and northeastern regions of Iran, in an area known as Turkmen Sahra, which includes substantial parts of Golestan Province.[189] While their primary areas of concentration are not within the core Kurdish-majority provinces, some Turkic groups are generally noted in Iranian Azerbaijan [13], and historical migrations mean smaller communities might exist elsewhere.[191] Iranian Turkmens are predominantly Sunni Muslims and speak the Turkmen language.[189]
As Sunni Muslims, Turkmen face religious discrimination in Shia-dominated Iran.[49] As an ethnic minority, they also encounter cultural and linguistic restrictions similar to other non-Persian groups.[171] Their human rights concerns thus stem from both their ethnic identity and their adherence to Sunni Islam, leading to limitations on religious practice, cultural expression, and socio-economic opportunities.[171]

4.2.7. Yazidis

Historically, Yazidi communities were present in western Iran, particularly in areas near Lake Urmia. Sheref Khan Bitlisi's *Sheref-nameh* (1597) mentions the Dunbeli tribe, located west of Lake Urmia, as being Yazidi.[16] However, there are no reliable recent population estimates for Yazidis specifically within Iranian Kurdistan in the provided sources. It is likely that any remaining Yazidi presence is extremely small, possibly assimilated, or not openly declared due to the lack of religious recognition in Iran. Yazidism is not a recognized religion in Iran, and its adherents would face severe restrictions on their religious freedom and likely be pressured to identify as Muslim, similar to the Yarsanis.[16]

4.2.8. Baha'is

The Baha'i Faith is the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, but it is not recognized by the state and its followers face severe and systematic persecution throughout the country.[49] While specific demographic data for Baha'is within the Kurdish provinces of Iran are not provided in the snippets, they are known to reside across Iran. The persecution they face is nationwide and includes arbitrary detention, torture, execution, denial of higher education

and employment, property confiscation, destruction of cemeteries, and a constant state-sponsored hate campaign.[49] Their situation represents one of the most severe cases of religious persecution in Iran.

5. Minorities in Western Kurdistan (Syria - Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria - AANES)

Western Kurdistan, primarily comprising the territories governed by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), also known as Rojava, presents a distinct and evolving environment for minority communities. Established *de facto* in 2012 during the Syrian Civil War, AANES has sought to implement a model of governance based on democratic confederalism, decentralization, and inclusivity for the region's diverse ethnic and religious groups.[6]

5.1. Administrative Status of AANES (Rojava) and Minority Rights Framework

AANES controls roughly one-third of Syrian territory, primarily in the northeast, encompassing areas such as Jazira, Euphrates, Raqqa, Tabqa, and Deir ez-Zor.[6] It is a polyethnic region, home to significant Arab, Kurdish, and Assyrian/Syriac populations, as well as smaller communities of Turkmen, Armenians, Circassians, and Yazidis.[6] The AANES is not officially recognized as autonomous by the Syrian central government (historically the Ba'athist regime, and now the transitional government post-December 2024) or by most international actors, with the notable exception of the Catalan Parliament.[6]

The governance of AANES is guided by its "Charter of the Social Contract" (its constitution), first ratified in 2014 and updated in December 2023.[6] This charter enshrines principles of direct democracy, gender equality (including co-presidency systems where leadership positions are shared by a man and a woman), religious freedom, and cultural pluralism.[6] It aims for equal political representation for all ethno-religious groups and provides for the use of multiple official languages, including Arabic, Kurdish (Kurmanji), and Syriac (in the Jazira Region).[6] Education in mother tongues is a key policy, representing a significant departure from the Arab-centric policies of the former Ba'athist regime.[194]

Despite these progressive ideals, the AANES has operated under immense pressure. It has faced existential threats from ISIS, ongoing hostility and military incursions from Turkey and its allied Syrian National Army (SNA) factions [2], and a complex, often tense relationship with the former Syrian government.[199] The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 has introduced new uncertainties and dynamics, with AANES engaging in negotiations with the new Syrian transitional authorities regarding its future status and the integration of its institutions.[200]

The implementation of AANES's inclusive vision has faced challenges. Criticisms have included accusations of authoritarian tendencies, Kurdification (particularly in Arab-majority

areas or in relation to minority school curricula), media censorship, and difficulties in ensuring full and equitable power-sharing across all communities, especially in regions like Deir ez-Zor with strong Arab tribal structures.[6] The AANES project thus represents a unique and ambitious experiment in multi-ethnic, decentralized governance, born out of conflict and striving for democratic ideals amidst wartime realities and significant external pressures. Its success in genuinely protecting and integrating minorities is crucial for its legitimacy and long-term viability.

5.2. Key Minority Groups in AANES

5.2.1. Arabs

Arabs constitute a major demographic component, and likely the overall majority, within the territories administered by AANES, particularly in the governorates of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor, and significant parts of Hasakah.[6] Prior to the Syrian civil war, Arabs comprised 80-90% of Syria's total population.[209] While precise ethnic breakdowns for AANES territories are contested, it is clear that Arabs are numerically dominant in many areas under AANES control.[6] They are predominantly Sunni Muslims, and tribal affiliations and leadership play a significant socio-political role, especially in eastern Syria.[59]

Under the AANES framework, Arabs are officially considered partners in the co-governance model, with provisions for their representation in local councils, administrative bodies, and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).[11] Arabic is an official language of the AANES and is used in administration and education.[6]

However, relations between Arab communities, particularly tribal groups in Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa, and the Kurdish-led AANES leadership have been complex and, at times, fraught with tension. Grievances voiced by some Arab communities include perceptions of Kurdish dominance within the administration and security forces, inequitable distribution of resources (especially oil revenues from Arab-majority areas), disputes over conscription policies, and concerns about governance and service provision.[199] These tensions culminated in significant clashes in Deir ez-Zor in August-September 2023 between the SDF and Arab tribal fighters following the arrest of a prominent Arab commander of the Deir ez-Zor Military Council.[208] The SDF eventually reasserted control, and AANES leadership acknowledged flaws and pledged reforms to civil councils to ensure better Arab representation and address grievances.[208] The former Syrian Ba'athist government was also reported to have armed some Arab tribes to counter the SDF.[199] The stability and legitimacy of AANES heavily depend on achieving genuine power-sharing and addressing the concerns of its large Arab constituency. Superficial representation is insufficient; meaningful Arab participation in decision-making, equitable resource management, and security arrangements perceived as legitimate by local Arab communities are vital for the long-term viability of the AANES project, especially in the context of negotiations with a new central Syrian government.

5.2.2. Assyrians/Syriacs (Christians)

Assyrians and Syriacs are indigenous Christian peoples with a deep historical presence in

northeastern Syria, particularly in the Jazira Region (governorate of Hasakah), including cities like Qamishli and Hasakah, and historically along the Khabur River valley.[6] Population estimates for Assyrians/Syriacs in Syria vary; the Joshua Project listed 210,000 Assyrians in Syria (pre-dating some of the major displacements).[61] They speak Neo-Aramaic dialects (Syriac, Sureth, Turoyo) and adhere to various Eastern Christian churches, including the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, and the Syriac Catholic Church.[126]

Under AANES, the Syriac language is recognized as an official language in the Jazira Region.[6] Assyrian/Syriac political parties, notably the Syriac Union Party, are active participants in the AANES governance structures and the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC).[62] The community also has its own security forces, such as the Syriac Military Council (MFS) and the Sutoro police force, which operate in coordination with the SDF and Asayish (AANES internal security).[6] This level of political and cultural recognition, including language rights and self-administered security, is unprecedented compared to the assimilationist policies of the Ba'athist regime, which suppressed non-Arab identities.[207]

Despite these advancements, the Assyrian/Syriac community faces significant challenges. They were targeted by ISIS, particularly in the Khabur Valley in 2015, leading to displacement and attacks.[6] Turkish military incursions into northern Syria pose an ongoing threat to their communities and cultural heritage sites near the border.[196] Some Assyrian groups have expressed concerns about perceived Kurdish dominance within AANES, instances of Kurdification, disputes over school curricula (with some preferring the Syrian government curriculum over the AANES one for accreditation reasons), and land issues.[71] The security situation in mixed cities like Qamishli and Hasakah, where the former Syrian government maintained a limited presence alongside AANES, has also been a source of tension and occasional clashes, impacting civilian life.[217] For AANES to maintain the trust and cooperation of the Assyrian/Syriac community, it must ensure that its policies genuinely empower their self-administration, address their specific security needs (particularly against external threats), protect their cultural and religious heritage, and ensure that educational policies respect their distinct identity without imposing a singular narrative.

5.2.3. Yazidis

Yazidi communities in Syria have historically resided in the Kurd-Dagh (Jabal al-Akrad) region around Afrin and in parts of the Jazira region.[6] Pre-war population estimates for Syrian Yazidis ranged from 10,000 to 50,000.[63] They speak Kurmanji Kurdish and share the same religious beliefs and practices as Yazidis in Iraq and Turkey.

Within AANES-controlled territories, Yazidis have been recognized as a distinct community, and the Yazidi Union of Syria participates in political alliances like the Peoples' and Women's Alliance for Freedom, which was formed for local elections.[65] Under AANES, Yazidis experienced greater freedom to practice their religion and express their cultural identity compared to the Ba'athist era, which often officially registered them as Muslims.[64]

However, the Yazidi community in Syria has been catastrophically affected by Turkish military

operations and the actions of allied SNA militias. The 2018 Turkish offensive in Afrin ("Operation Olive Branch") and the 2019 offensive in Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê and Tel Abyad ("Operation Peace Spring") led to the mass displacement of Yazidis from these areas.[64] In Turkish-occupied Afrin, numerous reports from human rights organizations and Yazidi sources indicate the systematic destruction and desecration of Yazidi shrines and religious sites, looting of property, kidnappings, forced conversions, and an environment where Yazidis cannot safely live or openly practice their faith.[64] These actions have been described as attempts at demographic change and cultural erasure.

For Yazidis, the primary existential threat in Syria in recent years has stemmed from this external aggression and occupation. While AANES may offer a more tolerant internal environment in the areas it securely controls, its inability to defend all its territories, particularly Afrin, has had devastating consequences for the Yazidi minority there. Their security and the survival of their ancient heritage in Syria are deeply imperiled by the ongoing conflict and Turkish occupation policies. Many Syrian Yazidis who fled these areas now live as IDPs in other AANES-controlled regions or have become refugees.

5.2.4. Armenians

Armenian communities in Syria have a long history, augmented by survivors of the Armenian Genocide who settled in various Syrian cities and towns, including Qamishli, Hasakah, Tel Abyad, and Raqqa, which are now within or adjacent to AANES-controlled territories.[6] Pre-war estimates for the total Armenian population in Syria were around 100,000, with the majority in Aleppo; the numbers within AANES areas are smaller but form distinct communities.[66] They are predominantly Armenian Apostolic Christians and speak Armenian.

Armenians are recognized as a constituent community within the AANES framework and participate in its governance structures.[6] They have their own cultural associations and churches. Like other Christian minorities in the region, they have been impacted by the general instability of the Syrian civil war and the threat from extremist groups. Turkish military operations in northern Syria also pose a threat to Armenian communities and their cultural heritage located near the border or in areas targeted by these operations.[196] Their concerns largely align with those of the Assyrian/Syriac community regarding security, the preservation of cultural and religious identity, and the impact of regional conflicts on their small and vulnerable populations. Political participation within AANES offers a degree of empowerment previously unavailable under the centralized Ba'athist state.

5.2.5. Turkmen

Syrian Turkmen are citizens of Turkish origin, with a presence in various parts of northern Syria, including areas that fall under AANES administration, such as near Tel Abyad and Manbij.[6] Population estimates for Turkmen in all of Syria vary widely, from around 250,000 to potentially 1 million or more, including those who are Arabic-speaking but of Turkmen descent.[67] They are predominantly Sunni Muslims and traditionally Turkish-speaking, though many also speak Arabic.[67]

Turkmen are recognized as a component of AANES and are included in its multi-ethnic

governance model.[6] However, the Turkmen community in Syria is politically diverse. Some Turkmen groups and political parties are aligned with the Syrian opposition backed by Turkey and are hostile to AANES. Turkey actively supports Syrian Turkmen groups, viewing them as kin and as a strategic asset in northern Syria.[67] This creates a complex situation for Turkmen living within AANES territories, who may face divided loyalties or be viewed with suspicion by some. Conversely, Turkmen in Turkish-occupied zones of northern Syria may receive preferential treatment from Turkish authorities, but this can lead to tensions with other local communities, particularly Kurds, and contribute to accusations of demographic engineering.[196] The AANES must navigate this geopolitical complexity to ensure that Turkmen within its jurisdiction feel secure and genuinely included, distinct from the political agendas of external actors.

5.2.6. Circassians

Circassians in Syria are descendants of those who migrated from the Caucasus in the 19th century after the Russo-Circassian War.[68] They established communities in various parts of Syria, including some in areas now part of or near AANES territories, such as Manbij and Khanasir, and historically in the Golan Heights (many displaced from there in 1967).[6] Pre-civil war estimates for Syria's Circassian population ranged from 40,000 to 100,000.[68] They are predominantly Sunni Muslims and have historically maintained their Circassian languages (Adyghe, Kabardian) alongside Arabic, as well as their strong cultural traditions, notably the Adyghe Xabze (customary laws and social etiquette).[68]

Circassians are recognized as a constituent community within AANES [6] and participate in its structures. Their primary concerns, similar to Circassians in Turkey, revolve around the preservation of their distinct language, culture, and traditions in the face of assimilation pressures and the disruptions of conflict.[218] The AANES's stated commitment to multilingualism and multiculturalism could, in principle, provide a supportive environment for Circassian cultural maintenance, provided it is effectively implemented and resources are allocated for cultural and linguistic programs. Like other smaller minorities, their security is tied to the overall stability of the region and AANES's ability to protect its diverse populations.

6. Cross-Cutting Issues and Comparative Analysis

Across the diverse territories of Kurdistan, minority communities face a range of shared challenges, despite the differing political and social contexts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Two of the most prominent cross-cutting issues are conflict-induced displacement and the struggle for cultural and linguistic survival.

6.1. Displacement and Refugee Situations Affecting Minorities

Minority groups throughout Kurdistan have been disproportionately affected by waves of conflict, leading to widespread internal and external displacement. In Iraq and Syria, the ISIS onslaught from 2014 onwards caused catastrophic displacement for Yazidis, Christians (Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs), Shabak, Kaka'is, and others, many of whom fled to the KRI or

AANES-controlled areas for safety.[14] In Turkey, the decades-long conflict between the state and the PKK has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands, primarily Kurds, but also significantly impacting Assyrians and Yazidis in the southeast.[7] Similarly, the Syrian civil war and subsequent Turkish military incursions into northern Syria have displaced vast numbers of people, including Kurds, Arabs, Yazidis, Armenians, and Assyrians/Syriacs.[64]
Many of these displaced individuals live as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) within their own countries, often in camps or informal settlements with inadequate access to basic services, housing, and livelihoods.[124] Others have become refugees in neighboring countries; for example, many Syrian refugees, including ethnic and religious minorities, are hosted in the KRI [42], Turkey [7], and Lebanon.[220] The economic crises in host countries like Lebanon further exacerbate the vulnerabilities of these refugee populations.[220]
For many minority communities, displacement is not a singular event but a recurring trauma, often layered upon historical persecutions and previous displacements. This compounded vulnerability means that when displaced, they face not only the general hardships common to all IDPs and refugees but also specific challenges linked to their minority status. These can include the loss of vital community support structures, heightened security risks in mixed displacement settings, difficulties in accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate aid, and the acute danger that their abandoned ancestral lands and properties will be occupied, confiscated, or destroyed, thereby hindering any prospect of future return and reconstituting their communal life. Humanitarian responses and efforts towards durable solutions—be it return, local integration, or resettlement—must therefore be acutely sensitive to these specific minority contexts. This requires ensuring their meaningful participation in the planning and implementation of such programs, addressing their unique protection needs (such as specialized support for Yazidi survivors of sexual violence and enslavement), and robustly tackling complex issues like property restitution, security guarantees in areas of origin, and transitional justice for past atrocities.

6.2. Challenges to Cultural Heritage and Language Preservation

The rich cultural and linguistic heritage of minority communities across Kurdistan is under severe threat from multiple directions. Deliberate destruction of religious and cultural sites has been a tactic employed by extremist groups like ISIS, who targeted Yazidi shrines (including those in Sinjar), Christian churches and monasteries in Iraq and Syria, and Kaka'i religious sites.[14] Turkish military operations in northern Syria and Iraq have also reportedly led to the damage or destruction of cultural heritage sites, including those belonging to Yazidi and Assyrian communities.[64] The February 2023 earthquake in Turkey and Syria further damaged historical sites, compounding existing vulnerabilities.[222]
Beyond physical destruction, state policies in Turkey and Iran have historically imposed severe restrictions on the use and teaching of minority languages. Languages such as Kurdish (in both countries), Assyrian/Syriac, Shabaki, and Domari have faced prohibitions or lack of support in educational systems, leading to language shift and endangerment.[7] These assimilationist pressures contribute to the erosion of traditional practices and intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge.

In contrast, the autonomous administrations in Iraqi Kurdistan (KRG) and northeastern Syria (AANES) have, to varying degrees, implemented policies aimed at recognizing and promoting minority languages and cultures. The KRG recognizes several minority languages for educational and administrative purposes, and AANES has made mother-tongue education a cornerstone of its policy, with Kurdish, Arabic, and Syriac used as languages of instruction.[9] Community-led initiatives, often supported by diaspora groups or international organizations, also play a crucial role in cultural and linguistic revitalization efforts, including the establishment of community schools, cultural centers, and media outlets.[37] International bodies like UNESCO are involved in efforts to protect and document cultural heritage, but access to sites in conflict zones or politically sensitive areas can be severely limited, hampering effective intervention.[222]

Cultural heritage for these minorities is not merely a collection of artifacts or historical sites; it is intrinsically linked to their identity, collective memory, and sense of belonging. The destruction of this heritage is often a deliberate strategy by perpetrators to demoralize communities, erase their historical narratives, and sever their connection to their ancestral lands. Conversely, efforts to preserve and revive languages, traditions, and sacred sites are powerful acts of resilience and affirmations of identity. The struggle to maintain cultural heritage in Kurdistan is thus both a consequence of conflict and repressive policies and a vital component of minority communities' efforts to secure their future.

7. Conclusion

The diverse minority communities residing across the transnational Kurdistan region face a complex and often precarious existence, shaped by the interplay of state policies, regional conflicts, the political aspirations of Kurdish majorities, and their own internal dynamics. While the specific circumstances vary significantly between Northern (Turkey), Southern (Iraqi KRI), Eastern (Iran), and Western (Syrian AANES) Kurdistan, several overarching themes emerge from this analysis.

The legal and political status of minorities is a critical determinant of their rights and well-being. In Turkey and Iran, restrictive state ideologies and narrow definitions of nationhood have led to the non-recognition or marginalization of many ethnic and religious groups. This often translates into the suppression of linguistic and cultural rights, limited political participation, and, for some, severe persecution. The legacy of the Lausanne Treaty in Turkey continues to define a restrictive framework for non-Muslim minorities, leaving many other groups in a state of legal limbo. In Iran, the constitutional privileging of Shia Islam and Persian identity systematically disadvantages other ethnic and religious communities, particularly those not officially "recognized."

In contrast, the autonomous or semi-autonomous Kurdish-led administrations in Iraqi Kurdistan (KRI) and northeastern Syria (AANES) have adopted frameworks that formally recognize a wider range of minority groups and provide for their political representation and cultural rights, including mother-tongue education. However, the implementation of these inclusive policies is often challenged by limited resources, ongoing conflicts, internal political divisions within Kurdish leadership, and the complex power dynamics with central state

authorities (Baghdad and Damascus, respectively). Minorities in these regions, while often enjoying greater freedoms than their counterparts in Turkey and Iran, can find themselves caught in disputes between Kurdish authorities and central governments, or subject to pressures from dominant Kurdish political parties. Land disputes, security concerns in contested territories, and the equitable distribution of resources remain significant challenges.

Conflict and displacement have had a devastating and often disproportionate impact on minorities across all parts of Kurdistan. From the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the Syrian civil war to the genocidal campaign by ISIS against Yazidis and other minorities in Iraq and Syria, these communities have frequently been targeted, uprooted, and have suffered immense loss of life and cultural heritage. The long-term consequences of this displacement, including the challenges of return, restitution, justice for atrocities, and the preservation of identity in diaspora or IDP camps, are profound and will require sustained international and local efforts to address.

The preservation of distinct languages, religions, and cultural practices is a central concern for nearly all minority groups. Assimilationist pressures, whether from state policies or dominant societal norms, threaten the intergenerational transmission of heritage. Efforts to revive and sustain minority cultures are vital acts of resilience but often depend on fragile community resources and the political will of governing authorities.

Ultimately, the future of minority communities in Kurdistan hinges on the establishment of genuine security, the consistent application of the rule of law, meaningful political participation and power-sharing, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, and accountability for past and present human rights violations. Addressing the deeply rooted historical grievances and contemporary challenges requires a commitment from all actors—state governments, regional authorities, majority populations, and the international community—to uphold the rights and ensure the dignity of every group that calls this complex and historically rich region home.

8. Works Cited

1. [1] Wikipedia. "Kurdistan."
2. [2] Britannica. "Kurd."
3. [7] Minority Rights Group International. "Turkey."
4. [8] Wikipedia. "Turkish Kurdistan."
5. [9] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Religious and ethnic minorities, and stateless persons." (2021)
6. [5] Wikipedia. "Kurdistan Region."
7. [10] Newsweek. "Iran Kurds Seek US Help Overthrow Government."
8. [226] Wikipedia. "Kurds in Iran."
9. [11] We All. "Rojava."
10. [6] Wikipedia. "Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria."
11. [15] U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). "Brief Summary on

Iraqi Christians." (March 2019)
12. [14] Minority Rights Group International. "Assyrians."
13. [16] Wikipedia. "Yazidis."
14. [81] Britannica. "Yazīdī."
15. [3] Wikipedia. "Kurds."
16. [227] The Kurdish Project. "Kurdistan Religion."
17. [228] Wikipedia. "Kurds in Armenia."
18. [4] Wikipedia. "Armenian–Kurdish relations."
19. [154] Minority Rights Group International. "Shabak." (Short version)
20. [38] Minority Rights Group International. "Shabak." (Detailed version)
21. [52] Wikipedia. "Yarsanism."
22. [41] Minority Rights Group International. "Kaka'i."
23. [118] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)." (2021)
24. [119] Kurdistan Regional Government. "Facts and Figures."
25. [229] Simple Wikipedia. "Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria."
26. [6] Wikipedia. "Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria." (Detailed version)
27. [12] Middle East Forum. "Are Iran's Azeris Really Separatists?"
28. [13] Wikipedia. "Ethnicities in Iran."
29. [230] Joshua Project. "Kurds in Turkmenistan." (Provides context on Kurdish diaspora, not directly Turkmen in Turkish Kurdistan)
30. [32] Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). "Turkmens in Iraq: Between Identity and Integration." (2021)
31. [117] Wikipedia. "Iraqi Turkmen."
32. [32] Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). "Turkmens in Iraq: Between Identity and Integration." [32]
33. [59] Atlantic Council. "Syria Northeast: Kurds and Arabs."
34. [67] Wikipedia. "Syrian Turkmen."
35. [17] Joshua Project. "Assyrian in Türkiye (Turkey)."
36. [29] Joshua Project. "Assyrian in Iraq."
37. [184] Joshua Project. "Assyrian in Iran."
38. [183] Wikipedia. "Assyrians in Iran."
39. [61] Joshua Project. "Assyrian, Suret in Syria."
40. [19] Joshua Project. "Yazidi (Global Data Table)."
41. [30] Wikipedia. "Yazidism in Iraq."
42. [30] Wikipedia. "Yazidism in Iraq." [30]
43. [63] Wikipedia. "Yazidism in Syria."
44. [21] Wikipedia. "Armenians in Turkey."
45. [22] Quora. "What is the estimated number of Turkish-speaking Armenians living in

Turkey?"
46. [35] Wikipedia. "Iraqi Armenians."
47. [36] AGBU. "The Forgotten Armenians of Iraqi Kurdistan."
48. [50] Wikipedia. "Iranian Armenians."
49. [51] ODVV. "Armenians in Iran." (PDF)
50. [231] Armenian Weekly. "Aleppo's Armenians in a Changing Syria."
51. [66] Wikipedia. "Armenians in Syria."
52. [39] Joshua Project. "Shabak in Iraq."
53. [41] Minority Rights Group International. "Kaka'i." [41]
54. [53] Medya News. "Yarsan community celebrate Khavandan amid marginalisation in Iran."
55. [23] Wikipedia. "Alevism."
56. [24] University of Westminster. "Westminster sociologists edit first special issue of Kurdish Studies on Alevi Kurds."
57. [26] Minority Rights Group International. "Roma in Türkiye."
58. [104] Joshua Project. "Domari Romani in Türkiye (Turkey)."
59. [27] Minority Rights Group International (Oral, Y.). "Field Report: Circassians in Samsun, Turkey." (PDF)
60. [232] Britannica. "Circassian."
61. [44] Minority Rights Group International. "Sabean-Mandaeans."
62. [45] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Sabean-Mandaeans." (2022)
63. [46] U.S. Department of State. "2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iraq."
64. [47] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Baha'i." (2021)
65. [55] Jewish Virtual Library. "Kurdistan."
66. [169] University of Washington, Stroum Center for Jewish Studies. "The Jews of Kurdistan: How Kurdish Jews became Israeli."
67. [192] Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Religion. "Yazidis."
68. [190] Wikipedia. "Turkmens." (General, not specific to Turkish Kurdistan minorities)
69. [189] Wikipedia. "Iranian Turkmens."
70. [190] Wikipedia. "Turkmens." [190]
71. [42] Young Pioneer Tours. "Ethnicities in Kurdistan." (Blog, use with caution, verify against academic/NGO sources)
72. [162] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance Iraq 2022: Minorities Overview."
73. [6] Wikipedia. "Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria." (Population section)
74. [209] Wikipedia. "Syria." (Demographics section)
75. [109] Wikipedia. "Circassian diaspora."
76. [28] Wikipedia. "Circassians in Turkey."
77. [6] Wikipedia. "Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria."

(Background section on ethnic groups)
78. [210] Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ). "STJ's Contribution to the Call for Inputs: What are Minority Issues?"
79. [56] Wikipedia. "Iranian Jews."
80. [170] Joshua Project. "Jewish, Kurdistani in Israel." (Context for diaspora)
81. [48] Jewish Virtual Library. "Jews of Iraq."
82. [169] University of Washington, Stroum Center for Jewish Studies. "The Jews of Kurdistan: How Kurdish Jews became Israeli." [169]
83. [71] Wikipedia. "Assyrian–Kurdish conflict."
84. [73] Fred Aprim. "Assyria or Kurdistan?" (PDF)
85. [125] EBSCO Research Starters. "Chaldean Catholic Church."
86. [127] Britannica. "Chaldean Catholic Church."
87. [128] Wikipedia. "Syriac Orthodox Church."
88. [126] Wikipedia. "Syriac Christianity."
89. [82] Young Pioneer Tours. "The Yazidis: Faith, Sacred Lands, and Persecution." (Blog, use with caution)
90. [33] Minority Rights Group International. "Turkmen (Iraq)."
91. [143] Wikipedia. "Iraqi Turkmen Front."
92. [186] Wikipedia. "Armenian Apostolic Church."
93. [89] Wikipedia. "Surb Karapet Monastery." (Historical Armenian site in Turkey)
94. [40] Struan Stevenson website. "Oppression of Minorities in Iraq." (Focus on Shabak)
95. [38] Minority Rights Group International. "Shabak." [38]
96. [52] Wikipedia. "Yarsanism." (Beliefs and practices)
97. [94] Wikipedia. "Kurdish Alevism."
98. [93] Dressler, Markus. "Writing History as a Way of Making History: The Case of the Alevi Kurds in Turkey." (Accessed via d-nb.info)
99. [102] Matras, Yaron. "A new grammar of Domari, the language of the Dom of the Middle East." (Accessed via Dartmouth Journals)
100. [103] Wikipedia. "Dom people."
101. [111] Wikipedia. "Adyghe Xabze."
102. [112] Circassian World. "Circassian Customs and Traditions." (PDF)
103. [45] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Sabean-Mandaeans." [45]
104. [44] Minority Rights Group International. "Sabean-Mandaeans." [44]
105. [164] Bahai Library. "Baha'u'llah's Seclusion in Kurdistan."
106. [165] Wikipedia. "Bahá'í Faith in Asia."
107. [31] EISMena. "The Yezidis in Iraq: Demographic Islamisation, Internal Divisions, and Drivers of Perpetual Genocide." (June 2024)
108. [233] Joshua Project. "Türkiye (Turkey) Country Page." (General ethnic data)

109. [57] Wikipedia. "Iranian Azerbaijanis."
110. [13] Wikipedia. "Ethnicities in Iran." [13]
111. [78] Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). "Assyria: A People at the Margins of Recognition."
112. [96] UN Human Rights Council. "The Treaty of Lausanne: A Century of Violations and Impunity." (NGO submission, A_HRC_57_NGO_129)
113. [72] U.S. Department of State. "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Turkey." (PDF)
114. [97] U.S. Department of Justice, EOIR. "Turkey: Country Conditions Information." (Various reports listed)
115. [106] European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). "We Are Here! Discriminatory Exclusion and Struggle for Rights of Roma in Turkey." (PDF)
116. [26] Minority Rights Group International. "Roma in Türkiye." [26]
117. [90] U.S. Department of State. "2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Turkey."
118. [91] U.S. Department of State. "2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Turkey."
119. [69] Minority Rights Group International. "Kurds (Turkey)."
120. [70] Wikipedia. "Christianity in Turkey."
121. [120] Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2023: Iraq."
122. [138] Brandeis University, Crown Center. "The Yazidi Predicament in Post-ISIS Iraq." (MEB 151, PDF)
123. [153] KirkukNow. "Armenians Appeal for Minority Quota in Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament." (May 2024)
124. [122] Amwaj.media. "How Iraq's minorities became political pawns for both Kurds and Arabs." (Feb 2024)
125. [45] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Sabean-Mandaeans." [45]
126. [47] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Baha'i." [47]
127. [166] U.S. Department of Justice. "Iraq: Report on Religious Freedom." (2012, older but provides some legal context)
128. [234] Minority Rights Group International. "From Crisis to Catastrophe: The situation of minorities in Iraq." (2014 PDF)
129. [145] SIPRI. "Iraq 2023: Challenges and prospects for peace and human security."
130. [124] SIPRI. "Restoring livelihoods and rebuilding communities in post-Islamic State Nineveh." (PDF, 2022)
131. [159] UK Home Office. "Country Policy and Information Note: Religious minorities, Iraq." (Sept 2024)
132. [71] Wikipedia. "Assyrian–Kurdish conflict." [71]
133. [178] Amnesty International. "Iran 2024 (Annual Report)."

134. [54] Cambridge University Press (Core Reader). "Iran's Religious and Ethnic Minorities in the Eyes of the Judiciary and the Security Apparatus."
135. [179] U.S. Department of State. "2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran."
136. [175] IranWire. "'I Went to Prison for Teaching Kurdish': Iran's War on Language Diversity." (March 2025)
137. [172] Minority Rights Group International. "Kurds (Iran)."
138. [200] Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA). "New Syria and the Kurdish Dilemma: A New Chapter or the Same Old Story?" (March 2025)
139. [235] Channel8. "AANES Rejects New Syrian Government, Emphasizes Need for Diverse Political Representation." (March 2025)
140. [199] Wikipedia. "AANES–Ba'athist Syria relations."
141. [207] Wikipedia. "Human rights in the DAANES."
142. [6] Wikipedia. "Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria." [6]
143. [200] Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA). "New Syria and the Kurdish Dilemma." [200]
144. [201] Shafaq News. "Damascus, Kurdish authorities to resume talks on power-sharing." (May 2025)
145. [203] U.S. Library of Congress, CRS. "Syria: Overview of the Humanitarian Response." (Jan 2025)
146. [196] Human Rights Watch. "'Everything is a Weapon Against Us': Abuses and Impunity in Turkish-Occupied Northern Syria." (Feb 2024)
147. [132] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Yazidi." (2021)
148. [16] Wikipedia. "Yazidis." [16]
149. [233] Joshua Project. "Türkiye (Turkey) Country Page." [233]
150. [236] Geo-Ref.net. "Turkey - Population density according to the administrative structure." (Oct 2024)
151. [9] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). "Country Guidance: Iraq - Religious and ethnic minorities, and stateless persons." [9]
152. [163] Kurdistan Chronicle. "The Iraqi Census and the Kurdistan Region." (Dec 2024)
153. [210] Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ). "STJ's Contribution to the Call for Inputs: What are Minority Issues?" [210]
154. [237] Wikipedia. "Demographics of Syria."
155. [238] Amnesty International. "Syria 2024 (Annual Report)."
156. [239] Amnesty International. "Syria (Country Page)." (Lists various reports)
157. [196] Human Rights Watch. "'Everything is a Weapon Against Us'." [196]
158. [[240]

Works cited

1. Kurdistan - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan
2. Kurd | Syria, Language, Map, Women, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, History, & Culture | Britannica, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Kurd
3. Kurds - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds
4. Armenian–Kurdish relations - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian%E2%80%93Kurdish_relations
5. Kurdistan Region - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan_Region
6. Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Autonomous_Administration_of_North_and_East_Syria
7. Türkiye - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/country/turkey/
8. Turkish Kurdistan - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_Kurdistan
9. 2.15. Religious and ethnic minorities, and stateless persons, accessed June 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-iraq-2021/215-religious-and-ethnic-minorities-and-stateless-persons
10. Iran's Dissident Kurds Seek US Help to Pave Way for Government's 'Collapse' - Newsweek, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.newsweek.com/iran-kurds-seek-us-help-overthrow-government-2078279
11. Rojava - Wellbeing Economy Alliance, accessed June 4, 2025, https://weall.org/resource/rojava
12. Are Iran's Azeris Really Separatists? - Middle East Forum, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.meforum.org/mef-observer/are-irans-azeris-really-separatists
13. Ethnicities in Iran - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnicities_in_Iran
14. Assyrians in Iraq - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/assyrians-2/
15. Iraqi Christians consist of Chaldeans, Syriacs, Armenians, Assyrians, and Arab Christians, wi, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/Brief%20Summary%20on%20Iraqi%20Christians%20_%20March%202019.pdf
16. Yazidis - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidis
17. Assyrian in Türkiye (Turkey) people group profile - Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10464/TU
18. Assyrians in Türkiye - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/assyrians/

19. Yazidi people group in all countries | Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/20455
20. Yezidis (Ezidis) in Türkiye - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/yezidis-ezidis/
21. Armenians in Turkey - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenians_in_Turkey
22. What is the estimated number of Turkish-speaking Armenians living in Turkey? - Quora, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-estimated-number-of-Turkish-speaking-Armenians-living-in-Turkey
23. Alevism - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alevism
24. Westminster Sociologists edit first Special Issue of Kurdish Studies on Alevi-Kurds, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.westminster.ac.uk/news/westminster-sociologists-edit-first-special-issue-of-kurdish-studies-on-alevi-kurds
25. Alevis in Türkiye - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/alevis/
26. Roma in Türkiye - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/roma-17/
27. CIRCASSIAN MINORITY IN TURKEY: THE SAMSUN CASE Dr. Yasemin Oral 1. Introduction Although Turkey's cultural and linguistic div, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/app/uploads/2024/01/yasemin-oral-field-report-eng.pdf
28. Circassians in Turkey - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circassians_in_Turkey
29. Assyrian in Iraq people group profile | Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10464/IZ
30. Yazidism in Iraq - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidism_in_Iraq
31. Yezidis in Iraq: Demographic Islamisation, Internal Divisions, and Drivers of Perpetual Genocide - eismena.com, accessed June 4, 2025, https://eismena.com/en/article/the-yezidis-in-iraq-demographic-islamisation-internal-divisions-and-drivers-of-perpetual-genocide-2024-06-19
32. Iraqi Turkmen: The Controversy of Identity and Affiliation, accessed June 4, 2025, https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/18225.pdf
33. Turkmen in Iraq - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/turkmen/
34. Turkmen Split on Upcoming Iraqi Court Decision for KRG Parliament Turkmen Quotas | The Washington Institute, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/turkmen-split-upcoming-iraqi-court-decision-krg-parliament-turkmen-quotas
35. Iraqi Armenians - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_Armenians
36. The Forgotten Armenians of Iraqi Kurdistan | AGBU, accessed June 4, 2025, https://agbu.org/changing-landscape-middle-east/forgotten-armenians-iraqi-kur

distan
37. Armenians Rebuild Centuries-Old Church - Kurdistan Chronicle, accessed June 4, 2025, https://kurdistanchronicle.com/babat/2862
38. Shabak in Iraq - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/shabak/
39. Shabak in Iraq people group profile | Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/19500
40. The Oppression of Minorities in Iraq ⋆ Scottish Conservatives European Parliament, accessed June 4, 2025, https://struanstevenson.com/news-and-views/speeches/oppression-minorities-iraq/
41. Kaka'i in Iraq - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/kakai/
42. Ethnicities in Kurdistan - Who Lives In Iraqi Kurdistan in 2025? - Young Pioneer Tours, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.youngpioneertours.com/ethnicities-in-kurdistan/
43. Why Iraqi Arabs flock to Kurdistan: Security, freedom, and services - The New Region, accessed June 4, 2025, https://thenewregion.com/posts/528/why-iraqi-arabs-flock-to-kurdistan-security-freedom-and-services
44. Sabian Mandaeans in Iraq - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/sabian-mandaeans/
45. 3.10.4. Sabean-Mandaeans | European Union Agency for Asylum - EUAA, accessed June 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/fr/node/24506
46. 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iraq - State Department, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iraq/
47. 2.15.7. Baha'i | European Union Agency for Asylum - EUAA, accessed June 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-iraq-2021/2157-bahai
48. Jews of Iraq - Jewish Virtual Library, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jews-of-iraq
49. 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iran - State Department, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iran/
50. Iranian Armenians - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Armenians
51. Armenians in Iran: A Brief History, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.odvv.org/resources/attachment/1565084694_1134e13344c64d1154a3fa6443dba054.pdf
52. Yarsanism - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yarsanism
53. Yarsan community celebrate Khavandan amid marginalisation in Iran - Medya News, accessed June 4, 2025,

https://medyanews.net/yarsan-community-celebrate-khavandan-amid-marginalisation-in-iran/
54. Iran's Religious and Ethnic Minorities in the Eyes of the Judiciary and the Security Apparatus (Chapter 10) - The Rule of Law in the Islamic Republic of Iran - Cambridge University Press & Assessment, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/rule-of-law-in-the-islamic-republic-of-iran/irans-religious-and-ethnic-minorities-in-the-eyes-of-the-judiciary-and-the-security-apparatus/2D82801C977956431AAE1DB719112C61/core-reader
55. Kurdistan - Jewish Virtual Library, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/kurdistan
56. Iranian Jews - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Jews
57. Iranian Azerbaijanis - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Azerbaijanis
58. Urmia Protests Expose Iran's Failing Ethnic Policies, accessed June 4, 2025, https://intpolicydigest.org/the-platform/urmia-protests-expose-iran-s-failing-ethnic-policies/
59. To help build the new Syria, the US needs to better understand the Kurds and Arabs of the northeast - Atlantic Council, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/syria-northeast-kurds-and-arabs/
60. Fact Sheet - Syrian Democratic Council, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.syriandemocraticcouncil.us/fact-sheet/
61. Assyrian, Suret in Syria people group profile - Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10464/SY
62. Syrian Democratic Council - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Democratic_Council
63. Yazidism in Syria - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidism_in_Syria
64. Syrian Yezidis under Four Regimes: - Wilson Center, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/Syrian%20Yezidis%20under%20Four%20Regimes.pdf
65. 2024 Rojava local elections - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Rojava_local_elections
66. Armenians in Syria - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenians_in_Syria
67. Syrian Turkmen - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Turkmen
68. Circassians in Syria - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circassians_in_Syria
69. Kurds in Türkiye - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/kurds-2/
70. Christianity in Turkey - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Turkey
71. Assyrian–Kurdish conflict - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrian%E2%80%93Kurdish_conflict
72. TURKEY 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT - State Department, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/TURKEY-2020-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf
73. Assyria or Kurdistan - Fred Aprim, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.fredaprim.com/pdfs/2003/Assyria%20or%20Kurdistan.pdf
74. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Turkey : Assyrians - Refworld, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749c9837.html
75. Assyrians in Turkey - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrians_in_Turkey
76. Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Şırnak Field Observation and Documentation and Report - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/app/uploads/2024/01/katia-arslan-monitoring-documentation-report-eng.pdf
77. UN Commission on Human Rights - ohchr, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Minorities/WG/11/Assyrian_3a.doc
78. Assyria: People at the Margins of Recognition -, accessed June 4, 2025, https://unpo.org/assyria-a-people-at-the-margins-of-recognition/
79. No: 69, 24 April 2024, Regarding 2023 Human Rights Report of the US Department of State, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-69_-abd-disisleri-bakanliginca-yayimlanan-2023-insan-haklari-raporu-hk.en.mfa
80. World Report 2024: Türkiye | Human Rights Watch, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/turkey
81. Yazidi | History, Culture, & Religion | Britannica, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yazidi
82. The Yazidis: Faith, Sacred Lands, and Persecution - Young Pioneer Tours, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.youngpioneertours.com/the-yazidis-faith-sacred-lands-and-persecution/
83. New publication: Summary findings of the “Hate Crimes Motivated by Bias against Religion, Belief, or Non-Belief in Türkiye 2023 Report”, accessed June 4, 2025, https://inancozgurlugugirisimi.org/en/new-publication-summary-findings-of-the-hate-crimes-motivated-by-bias-against-religion-belief-or-non-belief-in-turkiye-2023-report/
84. TURKEY (TÜRKIYE) 2023 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT - U.S. Department of State, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/547499-TU%CC%88RKIYE-2023-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf
85. COUNTRY UPDATE: TURKEY (Türkiye) - US Commission on International Religious Freedom, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/2024%20Turkey%20Country%2

0Update.pdf
86. ARTICLE A DECADE OF IMPUNITY: FINDING JUSTICE FOR THE YAZIDI WOMEN VICTIMS OF THE ISLAMIC STATE, accessed June 4, 2025, https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2884&context=ilj
87. Turkey : access to justice for human rights violations remains illusory | ICJ, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.icj.org/turkey-access-to-justice-for-human-rights-violations-remains-illusory/
88. A/HRC/55/74 - General Assembly - the United Nations, accessed June 4, 2025, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/55/74
89. Surb Karapet Monastery - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surb_Karapet_Monastery
90. Turkey (Türkiye) - United States Department of State, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/turkey/
91. 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Turkey (Türkiye) - State Department, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/turkey/
92. Alevis suffered most attacks on religious properties in last 20 years: USCIRF report, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.turkishminute.com/2023/11/15/alevi-suffered-most-attack-on-religious-properties-last-20-years-uscirf-report/
93. Kurdish Alevism, accessed June 4, 2025, https://d-nb.info/1245373986/34
94. Kurdish Alevism - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_Alevism
95. Türkiye: the Committee of Ministers welcomes practical impact on the Alevi community of the authorities' measures - Department for the Execution of Judgments
of the European Court of Human Rights - The Council of Europe, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.coe.int/en/web/execution/-/t%C3%BCrkiye-the-committee-of-ministers-welcomes-practical-impact-on-the-alevi-community-of-the-authorities-measures
96. A/HRC/57/NGO/129 General Assembly - United Nations Digital Library System, accessed June 4, 2025, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4078720/files/A_HRC_57_NGO_129-EN.pdf
97. Executive Office for Immigration Review | Republic of Turkey - Department of Justice, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.justice.gov/eoir/country/turkey-contents
98. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Turkey (Türkiye) - State Department, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/
99. Turkey: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report, accessed June 4, 2025,

https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2025
100. Türkiye - Country work - Commissioner for Human Rights, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/country-monitoring/turkey
101. REPORT on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Türkiye | A10-0067/2025, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-10-2025-0067_EN.html
102. The Domari Language of Aleppo (Syria) - Dartmouth College Library Publishing Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://journals.dartmouth.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Journals.woa/1/xmlpage/1/article/412?htmlAlways=yes
103. Dom people - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dom_people
104. Romani, Domari in Türkiye (Turkey) people group profile - Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11597/TU
105. The Access to Rights of the Roma: Views of a Neglected Community in Türkiye - DergiPark, accessed June 4, 2025, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/4263882
106. we-are-here!-discriminatory-exclusion-and-struggle-for-rights-of-roma-in-turkey.pdf, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.errc.org/uploads/upload_en/file/we-are-here!-discriminatory-exclusion-and-struggle-for-rights-of-roma-in-turkey.pdf
107. EDUCATION PATHWAYS IN ROMA SETTLEMENTS: - UNICEF Data, accessed June 4, 2025, https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UNICEF-2022-Education-pathways-in-Roma-settlements.pdf
108. (PDF) Two decades of research on Roma in Türkiye: Socio-economic exclusion, identity, and state policies - ResearchGate, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386290516_Two_decades_of_research_on_Roma_in_Turkiye_Socio-economic_exclusion_identity_and_state_policies
109. Circassian diaspora - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circassian_diaspora
110. The Circassian Diaspora in Turkey, accessed June 4, 2025, https://api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9781317910046_A23916551/preview-9781317910046_A23916551.pdf
111. Adyghe Xabze - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adyghe_Xabze
112. Circassian Customs & Traditions, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.circassianworld.com/pdf/Circassian_Customs_and_Traditions.pdf
113. Circassian nationalism - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circassian_nationalism
114. Calls grow to recognise Circassian Genocide after 161 years - Medya News, accessed June 4, 2025, https://medyanews.net/calls-grow-to-recognise-circassian-genocide-after-161-years/
115. Turkey: Circassians commemorate anniversary of mass killings by Tsarist

Russia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-circassians-demand-justice-anniversary-mass-killings-russia
116. What is the origin of the Turkmens and why do they not identify as part of the Turkish nation? - Quora, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-origin-of-the-Turkmens-and-why-do-they-not-identify-as-part-of-the-Turkish-nation
117. Iraqi Turkmen - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_Turkmen
118. Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) - European Union Agency for Asylum, accessed June 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-iraq-2021/kurdistan-regional-government-krg
119. Region | Facts & Figures - GOV.KRD, accessed June 4, 2025, https://gov.krd/boi-en/why-kurdistan/region/facts-figures/
120. Iraq: Freedom in the World 2023 Country Report, accessed June 4, 2025, https://freedomhouse.org/country/iraq/freedom-world/2023
121. 2024 Kurdistan Region parliamentary election - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Kurdistan_Region_parliamentary_election
122. How Iraq's minorities became political pawns for both Kurds and Arabs - Amwaj.media, accessed June 4, 2025, https://amwaj.media/article/how-iraq-s-minorities-became-political-pawns-for-both-kurds-and-arabs
123. A Stalemate in Kurdistan | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed June 4, 2025, https://carnegieendowment.org/middle-east/diwan/2024/10/a-stalemate-in-kurdistan?lang=en
124. Post-conflict Reconstruction in the Nineveh Plains of Iraq: Agriculture, Cultural Practices and Social Cohesion - SIPRI, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/laser_nineveh_0.pdf
125. Chaldean Catholic Church | EBSCO Research Starters, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/religion-and-philosophy/chaldean-catholic-church
126. Syriac Christianity - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac_Christianity
127. Chaldean Catholic Church | Chaldean, Iraq, Middle East - Britannica, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chaldean-Catholic-Church
128. Syriac Orthodox Church - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac_Orthodox_Church
129. USCIRF Releases Report on Religious Freedom Challenges in Iraq 10 Years After ISIS's Genocide, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscirf-releases-report-religious-freedom-challenges-iraq-10-years
130. a) Security situation in Iraq: recent events | European Union Agency for Asylum

- EUAA, accessed June 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-iraq-2024/security-situation-iraq-recent-events
131. Iraq's - US Commission on International Religious Freedom, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/Iraq.pdf
132. 2.15.2. Yazidi | European Union Agency for Asylum - EUAA, accessed June 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-iraq-2021/2152-yazidi
133. COI QUERY - Ecoi.net, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2117691/2024_11_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q77_Iraq_Yazidis.pdf
134. Yezidis in Iraq - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/yezidis/
135. Return to Sinjar - Peace and Freedom Organization, accessed June 4, 2025, https://pfo-ku.org/images/2017/pdf/Yazydy.pdf
136. A/HRC/32/CRP.2 Advance Version - ohchr, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A_HRC_32_CRP.2_en.pdf
137. Issue Brief: Religious Freedom Challenges in Iraq 10 Years after ISIS's Genocide, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-09/2024%20Iraq%20Genocide%20Issue%20Brief.pdf
138. Navigating Dispute and Displacement: The Yazidi Experience in Post-ISIS Iraq - Brandeis University, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/middle-east-briefs/pdfs/101-200/meb151.pdf
139. Iraq: Stabilising the Contested District of Sinjar | International Crisis Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/iraq-stabilising-contested-district-sinjar
140. Iraq - United States Department of State, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iraq/
141. PKK expected to remain in Shingal despite dissolution: Yazidi commander - Rudaw, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/12052025
142. We are concerned about the failure to implement Sinjar (Shingal) agreement, US Ambassador to Iraq, accessed June 4, 2025, https://kirkuknow.com/en/news/70720
143. Iraqi Turkmen Front - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_Turkmen_Front
144. Full article: Everyday peace and conflict: (un)privileged interactions in Kirkuk, Iraq, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2021.1925104
145. Iraq in 2023: Challenges and prospects for peace and human security | SIPRI, accessed June 4, 2025,

https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2023/iraq-2023-challenges-and-prospects-peace-and-human-security
146. Multi-ethnic Kirkuk rocked by clashes as Kurdish farmers claim land ownership, accessed June 4, 2025, https://amwaj.media/media-monitor/multi-ethnic-kirkuk-rocked-by-clashes-as-kurdish-farmers-claim-land-ownership
147. Iraq Enacts Landmark Property Restitution Law as Tensions Rise in Kirkuk - Kurdistan24, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/825507/iraq-enacts-landmark-property-restitution-law-as-tensions-rise-in-kirkuk
148. Recommendations for Resolving the Remaining Land and Property Issues in the Province of Kirkuk - International Organization for Migration, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.iom.int/resources/recommendations-resolving-remaining-land-and-property-issues-kirkuk-iraq
149. The Preservation of the Heritage of the Armenian Community in Kurdistan, Iraq, Intergenerationally, accessed June 4, 2025, https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/ndownloader/files/48183985
150. Iraqi Armenians: Minority on the Brink of Extinction - Daraj, accessed June 4, 2025, https://daraj.media/en/iraqi-armenians-minority-on-the-brink-of-extinction/
151. The Armenia Project Launches Micro-Grants to Amplify Armenia's Voice on the Global Stage - Asbarez.com, accessed June 4, 2025, https://asbarez.com/the-armenia-project-launches-micro-grants-to-amplify-armenias-voice-on-the-global-stage/
152. Ten new projects to explore Armenian culture in Western Armenian - Western Armenia TV, accessed June 4, 2025, https://westernarmeniatv.com/en/culture_en/ten-new-projects-to-explore-armenian-culture-in-western-armenian/
153. Armenians Appeal for Minority Quota in Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.kirkuknow.com/en/news/70166
154. minorityrights.org, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/shabak/#:~:text=The%20Shabak%20are%20an%20ethnic,%2C%20Persian%2C%20Kurdish%20and%20Arabic.
155. The Shabaks - Middle East Research Institute, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.meri-k.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Shabak-Report.pdf
156. Shabaks - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shabaks
157. The Shabak in Iraq: Identity Shifts Amid Ethnic and Sectarian Divides - eismena.com, accessed June 4, 2025, https://eismena.com/en/article/the-shabak-in-iraq-identity-shifts-amid-ethnic-and-sectarian-divides-2023-09-20
158. THE SHABAK - Map of Displacement, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.mapofdisplacement.com/the-shabak/
159. Country policy and information note: religious minorities, Iraq, September

2024 (accessible), accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/iraq-country-policy-and-information-notes/country-policy-and-information-note-religious-minorities-iraq-september-2024-accessible
160. The Religious Textual Heritage of the Yārsān (Ahl-e Haqq) - Oral Tradition Journal, accessed June 4, 2025, https://oraltradition.org/the-religious-textual-heritage-of-the-yarsan-ahl-e-haqq/
161. The Kaka'is of Iraq, from US-Invasion to Confronting the ISIS Invasion - eismena.com, accessed June 4, 2025, https://eismena.com/en/article/the-kakai-of-iraq-from-us-invasion-to-confronting-the-isis-invasion-2023-06-08
162. Minorities overview | European Union Agency for Asylum - EUAA, accessed June 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-iraq-2022/minorities-overview
163. The Iraqi Census and the Kurdistan Region, accessed June 4, 2025, https://kurdistanchronicle.com/babat/3570
164. Baha'u'llah's Seclusion in Kurdistan - Bahá'í Library Online, accessed June 4, 2025, https://bahai-library.com/masumian_bahaullah_kurdistan
165. Bahá'í Faith in Asia - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%CA%BC%C3%AD_Faith_in_Asia
166. Institute on Religion and Public Policy Report - Department of Justice, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.justice.gov/file/289756/dl?inline=
167. www.ecoi.net, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2018421/Iraq_-_Religious_Minorities_-_CPIN_-_v2.0__October_2019__-_EXT.odt
168. Overcoming Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity in Public Institutions: A Baha'i Perspective | Bahá'í International Community, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.bic.org/statements/overcoming-corruption-and-safeguarding-integrity-public-institutions-bahai-perspective
169. The Jews of Kurdistan: How Kurdish Jews became Israeli - Stroum Center for Jewish Studies - University of Washington, accessed June 4, 2025, https://jewishstudies.washington.edu/global-judaism/kurdish-israeli-jews-kurdistan-saharane/
170. Jewish, Kurdistani in Israel Profile - Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/print/12148/IS
171. Rights Denied: Violations against ethnic and religious minorities in Iran, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/app/uploads/2023/12/rights-denied-violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-iran.pdf
172. Kurds in Iran - Minority Rights Group, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/communities/kurds-4/
173. Ethnic-based discrimination in Iran - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic-based_discrimination_in_Iran
174. Human rights in Iran - Amnesty International, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/i

ran/report-iran/
175. 'I Went to Prison for Teaching Kurdish': Iran's War on Language Diversity - IranWire, accessed June 4, 2025, https://iranwire.com/en/features/139748-i-went-to-prison-for-teaching-kurdish-irans-war-on-language-diversity/
176. The Forgotten Kurds of Iran: A Primer on Rojhelat - Washington Kurdish Institute, accessed June 4, 2025, https://dckurd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Iranian-Kurdistan-Paper.pdf
177. Iran's oppressive policies against largest minority group: Azerbaijani Turks | Caliber.Az, accessed June 4, 2025, https://caliber.az/en/post/iran-s-oppressive-policies-against-largest-minority-group-azerbaijani-turks
178. Human rights in Iran - Amnesty International, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/
179. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran - State Department, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/iran/
180. Joint statement by 42 human rights NGOs on human rights violations in Iran - ECPM, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.ecpm.org/en/joint-statement-by-42-human-rights-ngos-on-human-rights-violations-in-iran/
181. UN: Renew the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran's Mandate, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/18/un-renew-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-irans-mandate
182. UN: Renew the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran's Mandate, accessed June 4, 2025, https://reliefweb.int/report/iran-islamic-republic/un-renew-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-irans-mandate
183. Assyrians in Iran - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrians_in_Iran
184. Assyrian in Iran people group profile | Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10464/IR
185. Imprisonment of Christians Jumps Six-Fold in Iran as Persecution Intensifies, accessed June 4, 2025, https://iranhumanrights.org/2025/04/imprisonment-of-christians-jumps-six-fold-in-iran-as-persecution-intensifies/
186. Armenian Apostolic Church - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Apostolic_Church
187. Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran 2024, accessed June 4, 2025, https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7350/
188. Azerbaijanis - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azerbaijanis

189. Iranian Turkmens - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Turkmens
190. Turkmens - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkmens
191. Turkmen in Iran people group profile | Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/15654/IR
192. Yazidis | Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion, accessed June 4, 2025, https://oxfordre.com/religion/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-254?p=emailAcCENQs58unXw&d=/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-254
193. The Yazidis - Open Research Exeter (ORE), accessed June 4, 2025, https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/36072/ALLISONThe%20YazidisOxfordResearchEncyclopaediaofReligion%C2%A0.pdf?sequence=2
194. State-integration process in early stages, inclusive representation essential: Syrian Kurdish diplomat - Medya News, accessed June 4, 2025, https://medyanews.net/state-integration-process-in-early-stages-inclusive-representation-essential-syrian-kurdish-diplomat/
195. After years of revival, what is the Kurdish language's future in Syria?, accessed June 4, 2025, https://syriadirect.org/after-years-of-revival-what-is-the-kurdish-languages-future-in-syria/
196. “Everything is by the Power of the Weapon”: Abuses and Impunity in Turkish-Occupied Northern Syria - Human Rights Watch, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/02/29/everything-power-weapon/abuses-and-impunity-turkish-occupied-northern-syria
197. Rojava Under Pressure After the Fall of Dictator Al-Assad: Turkey and Islamist Allies Threaten the Kurdish Autonomous Region in Syria - PRIF BLOG, accessed June 4, 2025, https://blog.prif.org/2025/01/03/rojava-under-pressure-after-the-fall-of-dictator-al-assad-turkey-and-islamist-allies-threaten-the-kurdish-autonomous-region-in-syria/
198. Turkish occupation of northern Syria - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_occupation_of_northern_Syria
199. AANES–Ba'athist Syria relations - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AANES%E2%80%93Ba%27athist_Syria_relations
200. New Syria and the Kurdish Dilemma: A New Chapter or the Same Old Story? - IIEA, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.iiea.com/blog/new-syria-and-the-kurdish-dilemma-a-new-chapter-or-the-same-old-story
201. Damascus, Kurdish authorities to resume talks on power-sharing - Shafaq News, accessed June 4, 2025, https://shafaq.com/en/Middle-East/Damascus-Kurdish-authorities-to-resume-talks-on-power-sharing
202. International community urges inclusive Syrian transition with Kurdish representation, accessed June 4, 2025,

https://medyanews.net/international-community-urges-inclusive-syrian-transition-with-kurdish-representation/
203. Syria: Transition and U.S. Policy - Congress.gov, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33487
204. Damascus and the AANES: Complex negotiations at a pivotal moment - Syria Direct, accessed June 4, 2025, https://syriadirect.org/damascus-and-the-aanes-complex-negotiations-at-a-pivotal-moment/
205. Opinion – The Window Is Closing for a Federal Syria - E-International Relations, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.e-ir.info/2025/04/24/opinion-the-window-is-closing-for-a-federal-syria/
206. Syria's governance dilemma amid Turkey–Iran competition - Kalam - Chatham House, accessed June 4, 2025, https://kalam.chathamhouse.org/articles/syrias-governance-dilemma-amid-turkey-iran-competition/
207. Human rights in the DAANES - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_the_DAANES
208. Deir ez-Zor clashes (2023) - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deir_ez-Zor_clashes_(2023)
209. Syria - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria
210. STJ's Contribution to the Call for Inputs: What are Minority Issues?, accessed June 4, 2025, https://stj-sy.org/en/stjs-contribution-to-the-call-for-inputs-what-are-minority-issues/
211. U.S. Presents Key Demands to Syrian Transitional Government, Emphasizing Minority Protections, accessed June 4, 2025, https://npasyria.com/en/125744/
212. Fact Sheet: Education in Syria (January - June 2024) - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb, accessed June 4, 2025, https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/fact-sheet-education-syria-january-june-2024
213. Education and Post-Conflict Prospects in Syria: The Battle for Future Generations - Emirates Policy Center, accessed June 4, 2025, https://epc.ae/details/featured/education-and-post-conflict-prospects-in-syria-the-battle-for-future-generations
214. Syria - International Religious Freedom Reports: Custom Report Excerpts - United States Department of State, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.state.gov/report/custom/51c6b66a15/
215. Ethnic or political cleansing? Identity, cultural heritage and demographic engineering in the Turkish-occupied territories of, accessed June 4, 2025, https://ojs.unito.it/index.php/deeuropa/article/download/10572/9061/35628
216. Turkey's military operations in northern Iraq force evacuation of three more villages - Syriac Press, accessed June 4, 2025, https://syriacpress.com/blog/2025/02/10/turkeys-military-operations-in-northern-iraq-force-evacuation-of-three-more-villages/

217. PROTECTION LANDSCAPE IN SYRIA, accessed June 4, 2025, https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/250325_protection_landscape_in_syria_vfinal.pdf
218. The Circassian Heritage in Syria within the Context of Multiple Displacements, accessed June 4, 2025, http://ccnr.ceu.edu/article/2019-07-26/circassian-heritage-syria-within-context-multiple-displacements
219. Circassians of Syria: A History of Migration - Fanack, accessed June 4, 2025, https://fanack.com/syria/society-of-syria/circassians-of-syria-a-history-of-migration/
220. Syria Refugee Crisis Explained - USA for UNHCR, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/
221. The Importance of Marginalized Communities in Lebanon - CSIS, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.csis.org/analysis/importance-marginalized-communities-lebanon
222. State of Conservation (SOC 2024) Ancient Villages of Northern Syria (Syrian Arab Republic) - UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed June 4, 2025, https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/4553/
223. Experts push to restore Syria's war-torn heritage sites, including renowned Roman ruins at Palmyra | AP News, accessed June 4, 2025, https://apnews.com/article/syria-heritage-sites-war-palmyra-assad-tourism-dbdf67015d91c6eb1cc0d19db992bf0a
224. UNESCO Declaration on the Protection of Armenian Cultural Heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Karabakh.372/current_category.380/nagorno-karabakh_detail.html
225. Armenia - UNESCO World Heritage Convention, accessed June 4, 2025, https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/am
226. Kurds in Iran - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds_in_Iran
227. Learn About Kurdish Religion, accessed June 4, 2025, https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdistan-religion/
228. Kurds in Armenia - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds_in_Armenia
229. Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Autonomous_Administration_of_North_and_East_Syria
230. Kurd, Kurmanji in Turkmenistan people group profile - Joshua Project, accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/12877/TX
231. Aleppo's Armenians in a changing Syria, accessed June 4, 2025, https://armenianweekly.com/2025/03/28/aleppos-armenians-in-a-changing-syria/
232. Circassian | History & Description - Britannica, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Circassian
233. Türkiye (Turkey) people groups, languages and religions - Joshua Project,

accessed June 4, 2025, https://joshuaproject.net/countries/TU
234. From Crisis to Catastrophe: the situation of minorities in Iraq, accessed June 4, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/app/uploads/2024/01/download-1468-from-crisis-to-catastrophe-the-situation-of-minorities-in-iraq-english.pdf
235. AANES Rejects New Syrian Government, Emphasizes Need for Diverse Political Representation, accessed June 4, 2025, https://channel8.com/english/news/35134
236. Map Türkiye - Administrative division - Population density 2022 - Geo-ref.net, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.geo-ref.net/ph/tur.htm
237. Demographics of Syria - Wikipedia, accessed June 4, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Syria
238. Human rights in Syria - Amnesty International, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/syria/report-syria/
239. Human rights in Syria - Amnesty International, accessed June 4, 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/syria/
240.