

MISSION ATLAS PROJECT
MIDDLE EAST
KUWAIT
Snapshot Section

Country Name: State of Kuwait or *Dawlat al Kuwait*

Country Founded: June 19, 1961 (independence from UK)

Population: 2,505,559 including 1,291,354 non-nationals (July 2007 est.)

Government Type: Constitutional emirate

Geography/location in the world: Middle East, on the Persian Gulf between Iraq and Saudi Arabia

Number of people groups: 30

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot:

Major Religion and % of population: Sunni Islam, 59.5% (Islam total, 85%)

All religions and % for each: Shi'a Islam, 25.5%; Catholic 7.4%; Orthodox 0.3%, Christian 2.8%; Hindu 2.5%, Non-religious 1%; and Baha'i, Buddhist, and Sikh combine for 1%.

Government interaction with religion: Kuwait is an Islamic state that utilizes Shariah law as one of its sources of legislation. The state guarantees religious liberty, but proselytization of Muslims is prohibited.

Kuwait Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name:

State of Kuwait or *Dawlat al Kuwait*; informally, Kuwait or *al Kuwait*.

Demographics:

Kuwait has a population of 2,505,559 that includes 1,291,354 non-nationals. Nearly all of Kuwait's population is urban, living in Kuwait city or its suburbs.

Divided by age groups, 26.7% of the population is aged 0-14 years, 70.5% of the population is 15-64 years, and 2.8% of the population is over 65 years of age; males outnumber females in every age group.

The population of Kuwait grows at a rate of 3.561%, with 21.95 births and 2.39 deaths per 1000 people. Life expectancy at birth is 76.25 years for males and 78.52 years for females. An average of 2.86 children is born per woman.

The net migration rate is 16.05 per 1000 people.

Ethnically, 45% of the population is Kuwaiti Arab, 35% is Arab of a different origin (such as Egyptian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Jordanian, etc.), 9% is South Asian, 4% is Iranian, and 7% is of other various ethnic origins. Nearly all who hold citizenship in Kuwait are Arab; being Muslim is a requirement for citizenship.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)

Language:

Arabic is the official language of Kuwait. The Arabic language exists in several forms, including Classical Qur'anic Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and local dialects of Arabic. Classical Arabic is viewed as the purest form of the language, that which was handed down from heaven and today is known primarily to scholars.

Modern Standard Arabic is the language of literature and certain types of television and formal, official speeches; it is intelligible to the speakers of most Arabic dialects, but only the well educated speak it. Local spoken dialects vary across the Arab and Islamic world. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and even grammar may have nuanced or stark differences. Kuwaitis speak a dialect of Arabic, Gulf Arabic, that is common to Iraq, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Arabic, in general, is a poetic language and, because it is associated with the Quran, and subsequently viewed by Muslims as the language of the word of God, Arabic speakers are proud of and profoundly connected to their language.

English is also widely understood in Kuwait; it is taught in schools as a second language and is used in some businesses and by foreign residents and students. Farsi (the national language of Iran) and Urdu (the national language of Pakistan, also widely spoken in India) are spoken among non-national residents of Kuwait.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia and Oceania, 10th edition, 306.

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/kuwait-country-profile.html>

Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, volume 3: Asia and Oceania, pg 418-423.

Society/Culture:

Islam is the official religion of all citizens in Kuwait and is a culturally dominant force in the country. Islamic holidays and feasts are celebrated based on a lunar calendar and therefore cycle throughout the Gregorian calendar over time. These holidays include Eid al Fitr, which concludes the Ramadan fast, Eid al Adha, which follows the time of annual pilgrimage (Hajj), the first of Muharram (Islamic New Year's Day), and the night of Mohammed's ascension to heaven (Eid al Isra' wa al Miraj). Friday is the Muslim day of rest and businesses and schools close that day. Aspects of folk Islam, which include superstitious fear of evil spirits and curses and use of charms and amulets, are present in Kuwait, but they are tempered by the Wahhabi influence that stresses more orthodox Islamic beliefs. Kuwaitis differentiate between the culturally cosmopolitan and liberal residents of "inner" Kuwait and the culturally conservative and tribal residents of "outer" Kuwait.

Births and weddings are causes for great celebration and feasting in Kuwait. Families arrange most marriages and women typically marry between the ages of 20 and 25. Married women in Kuwait retain their maiden names out of respect for their family heritage. The birth of sons is especially relished; male babies are circumcised seven days after birth. Family life is very important to Kuwaitis and extended families often live in the same home with, or at least near by, other relatives.

Arab culture, with its emphasis on generous hospitality, is prevalent in Kuwait. Interactions between men and women who are not relatives is limited, but within families greetings are warm and include kisses on the cheek. At the beginning of an encounter, it is common to exchange a long series of questions about health, family, work, and other interests as an expression of concern and intimacy. Arabs are known for their loud, spirited conversations, which are filled with hand gestures; touching and sitting or standing close to others while talking is also common. Socializing among families and in homes is the major leisure activity of Kuwaitis. Homes often have an external structure designed for receiving and entertaining guests. Recreational activities include team sports, such as soccer, and sea-sports, such as fishing, yachting, and sailing. Kuwaiti hosts commonly offer tea and coffee to guests. Teas are often flavored with saffron or mint and coffee is spiced with cardamom. A wide variety of food is available in Kuwait through imports and the cuisines of many other countries are enjoyed. Traditional Kuwaiti dishes often include mutton, chicken, or fish served spiced over rice. Consumption of dates and yoghurt reflects the Bedouin ancestry of many Kuwaitis.

Kuwaiti men wear a modernized form of their traditional gown, called a *dishdasha*; on their heads is a traditional Arab headdress. Women wear a wide variety of clothing types, from typical western wear to loose gowns and headscarves. Both men and women wear perfumes habitually.

More than half of Kuwait's population does not hold Kuwaiti citizenship. These immigrants came to Kuwait for employment. The majority of the workers come from other Arab countries, but significant numbers of others come from Iran, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. There is also a citizenship-less population within Kuwait who are known as *bidun*; they claim that they should be rightful citizens of Kuwait because their families have lived in Kuwait for generations, but the government denies the factuality of their assertion and considers them only immigrants. Social distinctions between citizens and non-citizens produce substantial strain between the classes. Foreign workers often feel discriminated against and looked down upon despite the services that they provide. Kuwaiti nationals often view foreigners with suspicion and are concerned about their country's security in light of the mass of foreigners present. The government has restrictions in place to limit the marriage of Kuwait citizens to foreigners. Oil wealth precipitated the division of labor within Kuwait; financial resources have allowed Kuwaitis to improve the education of their citizens dramatically, therefore Kuwaitis have been able to fill the highest-level positions on the job market. Success in these high-paying occupations has led to less need for additional family members to work lower paying jobs or perform tasks of a menial status. These preferences left a bulk of lower status jobs open for foreigners who were willing to fill them, often taking the jobs and remitting their salaries to their families in their home countries.

Though official censorship has decreased since 1992, freedom of press is not a guarantee in Kuwait. Criticism of the emir is prohibited and remarks against policy and ministers must remain impersonal and be carefully measured. Non-nationals have far fewer rights and privileges in this regard than Kuwaiti citizens do.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/kuwait-country-profile.html> cultural and etiquette info

Library of Congress Country Studies: Kuwait <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, volume 3: Asia and Oceania, pg 418-423.

Government:

Kuwait's official English name is "State of Kuwait," which in Arabic is *Dawlat al Kuwayt*. The government is a constitutional emirate, in which the position of emir is hereditary. The constitution has been in effect since November 11, 1962. Civil law forms the basis of the legal system and Islamic law dictates legal code regarding personal matters. Adults who have been citizens for longer than 20 years are eligible to vote, excepting police and military personnel. Women received the right to vote in 2005. Popular involvement in government has increased significantly in recent years.

The chief of state is Emir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, who came to power on January 29, 2006. Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah is the Crown Prince. All emirs must come from the ancestral line of Mubarak al-Sabah, who founded Kuwait. The Prime Minister, appointed by the

emir, is Nasir Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah. Jabir Mubarak al-Hamad al-Sabah is the First Deputy Prime Minister; Muhammad al-Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah and Faysal al-Hajji serve as Deputy Prime Ministers. The Prime Minister appoints the Council of Ministers with the approval of the Emir. It is customary that the most important cabinet positions are given to members of the al-Sabah family. There are no elected officials in the Executive branch of government.

The Legislative branch of government is the National Assembly or *Majlis al-Umma*. Voters elect the 50 members of the National Assembly by popular vote to 4-year terms of service. Creation of laws is exclusively under the purview of the National Assembly. Though not technically illegal, the formation of political parties is not permitted; however, there are legislative blocs within the National Assembly that function much the way political parties would. Of the 50 member seats, the Sunni Islamic Bloc holds 17 seats, the Popular Bloc has 9, the liberal National Action Bloc has 8, and independents hold the remaining 16 seats. Members of the Council of Ministers also vote alongside members of the National Assembly.

The High Court of Appeal, also known as the Supreme Court heads the judicial branch of government. The primary and appellate courts are the other two main courts of Kuwait. Islamic law dictates matters of personal concern, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, but the cases are handled through the regular court processes. Other laws are based on European legal systems. Specialized courts handle cases involving the constitution, military, and administrative issues.

The capital city is the city of Kuwait. Kuwait is divided into 6 governorates: Al Ahmadi, Al 'Asimah, Al Farwaniyah, Al Jahra', Hawalli, and Mubarak Al Kabir. The largest cities in Kuwait are Kuwait City, As Salimiyah (pop. 130,215), Jalibash Shuyukh (pop. 102,178), Hawalli (pop. 82,238), Al Wafrah, and Safat.

Kuwaitis celebrate the anniversary of their independence from the United Kingdom, which occurred June 19, 1961. February 25 is commemorated as National Day (since 1950) and February 26th is Liberation Day; however, neither day is "celebrated" in deference to Kuwaitis who are missing and presumably still being held captive in Iraq since of time of Iraqi occupation.

The Kuwaiti Military has 4 branches: the Land Forces, the Kuwaiti Navy, the Kuwaiti Air Force, and the National Guard. Kuwait has 737,292 males and 405,207 females fit for military service. Compulsory and volunteer military service for males begins at age 18.

Kuwait is a member in a number of international organizations. Among the more notable of these is its participation in the United Nations, the Arab League, and Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Kuwaiti flag was designed in 1961 to resemble of the Arab Revolt flag of World War I. The design consists of three horizontal bands of green, white, and red; on the hoist side is a black trapezoid.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

<http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/co/?id=kuwait>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437.

Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, volume 3: Asia and Oceania, pg 418-423.

Economy:

Though geographically small, Kuwait possesses great wealth due to its vast reserves of crude oil (10% of the worldwide supply). Prior to the discovery of oil in the 1930s, sea trade and pearl exports supported the economy. Currently, ninety-five percent of its export profits and 80% of its government revenue are generated by the sale of oil. Oil revenues are frequently used to earn a profit themselves in foreign investment markets. Kuwaiti law mandates that 10% of oil revenues are deposited in a trust that will assist Kuwait when its oil reserves one day dry up; at current production levels, that day will come in approximately 250 years.

Agriculturally, Kuwait produces almost nothing besides fish; virtually all other foods must be imported. Fresh water is such a scarce commodity that 75% of the supply must be distilled or imported. Kuwait's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$55.91 billion in 2006 and increased at a rate 12.6%. The per capita GDP is \$23,100.

The country's labor force is 1.136 million people, 80% of which are non-Kuwaiti. Kuwait's unemployment rate is a low 2.2%. Kuwait's budget consists of \$59.58 billion in revenues and \$33.62 billion in expenditures.

The country's primary industries are petroleum, petrochemicals, cement, shipbuilding and repair, water desalination, food processing, and construction materials. All of Kuwait's energy production is from fossil fuels. Oil is produced at a rate of 2.418 million barrels per day, 335,000 of which are consumed nationally and 1.97 million of which are exported. The oil reserve is estimated at 96.5 billion barrels.

Kuwait produces and consumed 9.7 billion cubic meters of natural gas yearly and has 1.572 trillion cubic meters of natural gas in reserves. Exports of Kuwait include oil and refined products and fertilizer; these products go primarily to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, the U.S, the Netherlands, and China. Imports to Kuwait primarily include food, construction materials, vehicles and parts, and clothing; these products come from the U.S., Japan, Germany, Saudi Arabia, China, the U.K., and Italy.

The currency of Kuwait is the Kuwaiti dinar (KD) which exchanges with the U.S. dollar at a rate of 0.29 KD per dollar.

The Kuwaiti government provides free health care to all residents of the country. Housing subsidies are also available for Kuwaitis. While these benefits are substantial, the result is an unusual economic dependence on government.

Human trafficking is a serious humanitarian issue in which Kuwait is involved. Some foreign workers from South and Southeast Asia who enter the country legally as domestic laborers have been forced into servitude and physically and sexually abused. In some cases, the workers' passports are taken from them and their wages are withheld, leaving them with no recourse against their employers. Other reports indicate that foreign workers taken into police custody have disappeared or died.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)
World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The Word By Countries, p 437.
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/middle-east/kuwait>

Literacy:

Kuwait's population is 93.3% literate. Public education is free for children between the ages of 6 and 13. Kuwait University may be attended at no cost and the government sponsors many students to study in universities abroad. Kuwait's public educational system is well funded because of the country's oil wealth.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)
<http://www.kuwait-info.com>

Land/Geography:

Kuwait is a Middle Eastern country strategically located at the northwest tip of the Persian Gulf along a 499km coastline. Several islands offshore are also part of Kuwait, though only one, Faylakah, is inhabited. Kuwait's total area is 17,820 square kilometers. Comparatively speaking, it is slightly smaller than the U.S. state of New Jersey. Kuwait's neighboring countries are Iraq to the north and west (240km shared border) and Saudi Arabia to the south and west (222km shared border). Directly across the Persian Gulf, Kuwait faces Iran. With a dry desert climate, Kuwait's summers, which last from May to October, are scorching, reaching average temperatures of over 113°F (45°C); in August and September, winds from the Gulf raise humidity levels to 90%. The months between November and April are the most pleasant of the year. Kuwait's cool winters, averaging 56°F (13.5°C) in January, are brief and nighttime temperatures occasionally reach freezing point.

Kuwait's terrain is mostly flat, though its gravely desert sand dunes roll up and down. Its shoreline rests at sea level and its highest point of elevation is a mere 306 meters. Only 0.84% of Kuwait's land is arable and 130 sq km of land are irrigated; annual rainfall is a mere 5 inches. Kuwait city is located on Kuwait Bay, which is the only deepwater harbor on the Persian Gulf's west coast, making the location strategic and prosperous for the Kuwait. The country's natural resources include petroleum, fish, shrimp, and natural gas. Because fresh water resources are so limited, Kuwait has developed desalination facilities, which are among the best in the world. Weather related hazards include heavy rains from October to April that can be damaging to roads and houses built on sandy soil and sandstorms, which are common from March to August. Pollution of air and water and desertification are among Kuwait's most serious environmental issues. The Iraqi war caused extensive damage to the Kuwaiti environment, some of which may be irreparable.

The animals that are native to Kuwait are those common to desert areas of Arabia; these include foxes, jackals, badgers, wild and sand cats, gerbils, jerboas (jumping desert rodents), hedgehogs, and hares, as well as lizards, geckos, snakes, fish and migratory birds. Vegetation is scarce, excepting thorns and shrubs; however, when rainfall comes sufficiently, many desert grasses and flowers grow in great variety.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.
Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia & Oceania, 10th ed., p 305.
<http://www.alsarhan.net/Animals/index.htm>

History

The lands surrounding the Persian Gulf have a long history of interaction and trade with foreign cultures and peoples; trade itself was the impetus for establishing settlements in what is now Kuwait. A Bronze Age civilization existed on the island of Faylakah off the Kuwaiti coast as early as 2800 B.C. The civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia, in what is modern-day Iraq, were able to produce surpluses of food to trade for the lumber and mineral resources that their lands lacked.

Trade by sea with Oman and India became a very profitable endeavor during ancient times for many ports established around the Persian Gulf; the 6th century B.C. was a high point of this trade activity. The domestication of camels and the development of inland trade routes brought greater interaction between those native to the Gulf coast and Arabs from the interior and thus the Arabization of the Gulf began. In the 4th century B.C., Greeks under Alexander's rule built a fort on the island of Faylakah, the remains of which still stand today; however, Greek presence in the Gulf ended by 250 B.C. The Parthian and Sassanian Empires of Persia held successive interests in the Gulf for the following 800 years. The 7th century A.D. brought great change to Arabia, including Kuwait, as Islamic rule swiftly spread and decisively took control of the region.

In the 17th century, the Khalid family ruled much of eastern Arabia including an area at the top of the Persian Gulf, known as al-Qurain, where the reigning sheik built a fort as a summer home. "Kuwait," a derivative of the Arabic word for fort, became the name of this region after Arab settlers from the Najd of the Arabian interior migrated to the region in the early 18th century. These settlers were from the al-Aniza tribe and Bani Utub clan. Although it was little more than a tent-village in the beginning, Kuwait's population and trading industry, with camels and sailing vessels for pearling and trade, grew quickly. By 1756, the settlers chose the al-Sabah family to lead them, and thus, the al-Sabah dynasty, which continues to rule Kuwait today, began under the leadership of Sheik Sabah 'Abd ar-Rahim.

The al-Sabah dynasty was firmly established; however, they existed in the ominous shadow of the expansive Ottoman Empire. Although the Ottoman Turks claimed that Kuwait was included in their Basra territory, it seems that direct rule by the Ottomans did not actually have much influence over Kuwait. By the end of the 19th century, however, the threat to Kuwaiti sovereignty was real as the Arab tribes of ar-Rashid (backed by the Ottoman Empire) and as-Saud jockeyed for political control of the region. Kuwaiti Sheik Mubarak al-Sabah requested protection from the British, who accepted Kuwait as an autonomous British protectorate in 1899 in order to keep Kuwait out of the control of the Turks, Germans, and Russians, who all had designs on Kuwait's strategic location and coal resources; Britain also sought to protect their own interests in the Middle East. World War I saw the end of the Ottoman Empire but did not settle territorial disputes in the area. The 1920s brought continuing conflict with the as-Saud, in

the Nejd, and Iraq over borders, sovereignty and gulf access; Kuwait relied on the British to mediate these issues and to assist them economically as their pearling and fishing industries were collapsing. Established borders became even more economically important by the end of the 1930s when oil was first discovered in Kuwait. Following World War II, the oil industry in Kuwait began large-scale drilling and exporting, which completely transformed the economy and prosperity of the small country. Kuwait remained a protectorate until June 19, 1961 when Britain granted them full independence.

Following independence, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia peaceably renegotiated their borders concerning a neutral zone, which they divided between them. However, border disagreements were not settled so easily and definitively with Iraq. From 1961 and onwards, Iraq alternately claimed sovereignty over Kuwait and then signed agreements recognizing Kuwait's autonomy. This waffling continued until Iraq militarily invaded and occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Iraq asserted their right to annex Kuwait on arguments of historic control and as means of retribution for alleged economic attacks on Iraq by Kuwait.

Iraq claimed that Kuwait had stolen oil located in reserves that straddled their borders and that Kuwait had glutted the oil market by over producing oil, which led to a drop in market prices. Kuwait's royal family, as well as many of her citizens, fled to Saudi Arabia for protection. By February 26, 1991, a U.S.-led coalition of forces removed the Iraqi military from Kuwait; unfortunately, Iraqi forces destroyed, burned, polluted, and looted much of Kuwait as they withdrew. Kuwait was restored to the al-Sabah government and a new National Assembly was elected; extensive rebuilding and cleanup efforts were undertaken to restore Kuwait to its pre-war status.

In recent years, elections have demonstrated tensions within the country between the al-Sabah government and opposition Islamic and Liberal political groups. In 2003, Kuwait allowed the U.S. military and their allies to gather on the Kuwait-Iraq border to begin war efforts aimed at removing Saddam Hussein from power. That same year, the government officially separated the roles of Prime Minister and Crown Prince.

In 2005, the Kuwaiti parliament legalized suffrage for women and the first female cabinet minister was elected; women were first able to exercise their votes in the 2006 elections. Early in 2006 Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah died and was succeeded by Crown Prince Sheik Saad al-Abdullah al-Salim al-Sabah; however, the government declared Sheik Saad unfit to rule after only nine days as emir because of his ill-health and Prime Minister Sheik Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah became the new emir.

Traditionally, the position of emir has alternated between members of two branches of the al-Sabah family, those descended from Mubarak's son Jaber and those descended from his son Salim. However, the current emir, Sheik Sabah, caused tension among the branches by naming his brother crown prince and his nephew prime minister, placing all top positions in the hands of the al-Jaber branch of the family.

Library of Congress Country Studies: Kuwait

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6930285.stm>

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia & Oceania, 10th ed., p 307-08.S

<http://www.kuwait-info.org/cphistory.html>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/791053.stm

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Sabah>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaiza>

Christian History

In ancient times, the residents of Kuwait, and Arabia in general, were pantheistic. Arab and Mesopotamian Christians migrating to Kuwait first brought Christianity to the area. By the 7th century, the Kuwaiti population was almost exclusively Muslim and Kuwait remains an Islamic state today.

Foreign workers comprise much of the membership of the various churches present in Kuwait. When the Iraqi War began in the early 90s, many foreign Christians fled the country, leaving behind a very sparse population. Since that time, Christian foreign workers have returned, and most of the predicted growth of Christianity in Kuwait is thought to come from this group, rather than from indigenous Kuwaitis. Researchers predict that it is more likely that the numbers of Kuwait Muslims will decrease because people become non-religious than for Muslim numbers to decrease because they are converting to Christianity.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, volume 3: Asia and Oceania, pg 418-423.

Library of Congress Country Studies: Kuwait

Religion

Non-Christian

Islam

By the 7th century, the Kuwaiti population was almost exclusively Muslim and Kuwait remains an Islamic state today.

Sunni Muslim—Malikite rite, Wahhabi influenced: (59.5%) The largest religious group in Kuwait adheres to the Sunni branch of Islam.

Following the death of Mohammad, Prophet of Islam, his followers debated who the rightful successor and leader of Islam was to be. The majority group, those who would become known as Sunni Muslims, supported Abu Bakr, Mohammad's father-in-law, in becoming the first Caliph; conversely, Shi'a Muslims believed that the Caliphate should follow Mohammad's bloodline and they proposed Mohammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as the Prophet's successor.

Sunnis represent an estimated 85% percent of the Muslim world, and in Kuwait, they represent 59.5% of the population; when only Kuwaiti citizens are considered, 70% are Sunni Muslim. Among Sunni Muslims, there are four schools of interpretation for religious law: Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali. Sunni Muslims in Kuwait belong to

the third largest school, Maliki, named for its founder, Imam Malik. The Maliki school bases its interpretations of Islamic law on five sources.

The first four sources are common to all Islamic schools of interpretation, but the last is unique to the Maliki rite. These sources are the Qur'an, the Sunna (example) of the Prophet, the consensus of traditional Muslim scholars (ijma'), analogical reasoning (qiyas) which applies principles of established laws to new situations in which a ruling is needed, and the practice of the people of Medina. This school emphasizes the example of the people of Medina over and above the sayings recorded in the hadith, because Medina was the city where Mohammed lived and died and where most of Mohammed's closest companions lived out the teachings of Islam. Imam Malik's select collection of sayings from Medina carries the title "Al-Muwatta'," which means "The Approved."

Like all Sunni Muslims, Kuwaiti Sunnis practice the Five Pillars of Islam (consisting of the proclamation of faith, prayer, alms giving, fasting, and pilgrimage) and uphold the six articles of belief (aqidah) given by Mohammad (belief in Allah, his angels, his books, his prophets, Judgment Day, and fate). Members of the Maliki rite perform slightly different movement and rituals during prayer, such as: leaving their hands at their sides rather than overlapped in front of them, looking out toward the Kaaba during prayer, encouraging the reciting of the Bismillah before praying the Fatihah, additional hand movements when sitting, and limiting the number of greetings after prayer. Islam is a comprehensive religion, directing both the private and public lives of its followers and making no distinction between secular and sacred.

Kuwaiti Muslims are influenced by Wahhabism, which is considered a reform movement, by some, and a sect of Islam, by others; it is based on the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab. The crux of Wahhabism is that Muslims should study and adhere to the teachings of the Qur'an and hadith rather than unthinkingly follow scholars and tradition. They disdain many "un-Islamic" and "polytheistic" practices which are common to many Muslims, such as praying at the tombs of saints, listening to hymns which praise Mohammed and celebrating his birthday, describing God with primarily non-literal images, and use of innovative aspects of worship.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maliki>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism>

Shi'a Muslims: (25.5%) The Shi'a branch of Islam makes up approximately 15% of Muslims worldwide and in Kuwait they are 25.5% of the total population. Of Kuwaiti citizens, 30% are Shi'a.

The majority of foreign Muslims in Kuwait are Shi'a Muslims. Shi'as maintain a different Islamic tradition than Sunnis that translates into varied beliefs and practices. Shi'as uphold practices in addition to the Five Pillars which include paying a tax to the imam, the struggle to please Allah (jihad), commanding what is good, forbidding what is evil, loving the family of Mohammed and dissociating from the enemies of Mohammed's house.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shi%27a>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahl_al-Bayt

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 436-37.

Other: Members of Kuwait's foreign communities represent numerous religious groups indigenous to their home countries. From South Asia come religious adherents who are *Hindu* (2.5% of total Kuwaiti population), *Muslim* (included in statistics above), *Sikh* (0.2%), *Parsi/Zoroastrian* (statistic unavailable), *Baha'i* (0.5%) and *Buddhist* (0.3%). Baha'is in Kuwait may also come from Iran. The numbers associated with these religions in Kuwait rise and fall as foreign workers come and go; they are not solidly established, nor are they native (excepting Islam).

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 436-37.

Jehovah's Witnesses: (<0.01%)

The Jehovah's Witness movement began in late 1870s in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania under the name of Bible Students, their current name was adopted in 1931. They are known for the literature produced by their Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, such as the magazines, *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* and their translation of the Bible, called the *New World Translation*.

They believe that it is necessary to worship God using the name "Jehovah," that Jesus was created by Jehovah and is the mediator for the 144,000 souls who will inhabit heaven under the "new covenant." They deny the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Jehovah's witnesses concentrate their teachings on the subject of eschatology, believing that Armageddon is coming soon; past leaders have made many predictions about the exact dates of end time events, the passing of these dates without incident led to many leaving the religion.

The Witnesses do not believe in "hell" as a place of torment, and preach about a paradise on earth in which those who survive Armageddon and those who are resurrected will live. The Witnesses are morally conservative and are distinct in their rejection of nationalism, their rejection of blood transfusions, and their stance against the celebration of birthdays, national holidays, and Christmas.

They focus their evangelistic efforts on house-to-house preaching and literature production. They believe that the original church became apostate after the death of the Apostle John and that the Jehovah's Witnesses are the sole proprietors of truth to the world. Because of their unorthodox beliefs about God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well as their teachings about hell, salvation, the soul and the return of Jesus, mainstream Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, consider the Jehovah's Witnesses to be a heretical cult.

The Jehovah's Witnesses began disseminating their beliefs in the country of Kuwait as early as 1956. There was 1 congregation of 30 adult members present in Kuwait as of 2001.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovahs_witness

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Jehovah%27s_Witnesses

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 438.

Catholic Church, Apostolic Vicariate of Kuwait:

This Latin-rite church contains a compilation of different Catholic-rite congregants: 58% of members are themselves Latin-rite, while others are Melkite, Maronite, Chaldean, and other). This church has 4 congregations of 70,000 adult adherents in Kuwait, making Catholics the largest Christian denomination in Kuwait.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Ancient Church of the East:

This church of 95 adult adherents is part of the Assyrian or Nestorian Church. These titles refer to the Nestorian controversy and the schism that formed the church following the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. The Nestorian controversy involved a belief that in Christ's one person two unmingled natures existed; in effect, this meant that the human person of Jesus could experience things which the divine nature of Jesus did not, such as suffering and being born of a woman.

The Nestorian church of today holds to a belief on this doctrine that was modified by Babai the Great and is much closer to the Catholic and Orthodox Christology. The name "Nestorian" persists to distinguish the church from other Orthodox churches. The patriarch of the Ancient Church of the East is in the United States, but this congregation is led by a deacon who is resident in Kuwait.

<http://www.nestorian.org/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorianism>

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38

Armenian Apostolic Church, Vicariate of Kuwait:

This church, also known as the Gregorian Church, is one of the oldest Christian denominations, begun in the 1st century by the Apostles, Bartholomew and Jude; St. Gregory was the first official head of the church. The church established itself in Kuwait in 1958 with its own priest, under the patriarchate of Cilicia, Lebanon. There is 1 congregation of this church in Kuwait, consisting of 1280 adult members. They are the second largest orthodox denomination in Kuwait and operate a school with 600 students.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Coptic Orthodox Church:

This church of Egyptian residents and workers has 2 congregations of 1890 adult adherents and belongs to the patriarchate of Alexandria. The church began in Egypt in the 1st century, planted by the Apostle Mark, and became distinct from the Catholic Church in 451, following the Council of Chalcedon; its congregations are present worldwide. The church has a resident priest and a Coptic Papal representative in Kuwait.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Greek Orthodox Church, Patriarchate of Antioch:

This is Kuwait's largest Orthodox church; it has 2 congregations of 384 adherents. Since the 1962 the church has a resident priest and though a well-established body, they choose to meet in

buildings belonging to protestant churches in the cities of Kuwait and Ahmadi. The Greek Orthodox Church operates a school with 700 students.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Orthodox Syrian Church of India:

This church of 496 adult adherents consists of Malayalis from the Indian state of Kerala. The church has a resident priest and meets in the building of the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Christian or Evangelical

Anglican Church, Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf:

This congregation of 60 members is two-thirds British and one-third Arab. The church was developed of mixed Anglican traditions.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Assemblies (Jehova Shammah):

This congregation of 20 members is comprised of Indian missionaries from Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India. They are an independent Christian Brethren group who are fundamentalist, dispensationalist, and maintain open fellowship. The church (established in 1941 in Madras, Tamil Nadu, India) arose out of an indigenous, Indian church movement associated with the ministry of Indian evangelist Bakht Singh. The name "Jehova Shammah" comes from a Hebrew, Old Testament name meaning "The Lord is There."

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Christian Brethren:

This 50% Arab and 50% Indian congregation has 2 congregations and 80 adult adherents. They are independent, fundamentalist, dispensationalist, and maintain open fellowship.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Isolated Radio Churches:

This church is made up of isolated believers whose contact with the gospel has come over the Arab Radio Network. There are 2,200 congregations and 30,000 adherents, who are primarily students.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

Mar Thoma Syrian Church. Diocese Bahya Kerala:

This congregation of 310 adult adherents is a reformed orthodox church of Malayali, South Indians. They belong to the diocese of outside Kerala.

World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.

National Evangelical Church in Kuwait:

This reformed or Presbyterian church consists of Arab, English, and Indian congregations. Established in 1903 and associated with the work of missionary Samuel Zwemer, the first Arabic services of this church began in 1926. Each distinct type of congregation has a resident minister. *World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.*

Pentecostal Churches:

There are 2 Arab Pentecostal congregations in Kuwait, which are comprised of 325 adult adherents. Many in this group are indigenous Arab evangelists. *World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.*

Other Protestant Churches:

There are about 4 other protestant churches in Kuwait that do not fall into a grouping with any of the other churches listed above. These churches contain 69 adult adherents. *World Christian Encyclopedia, second edition, Vol. 1: The World By Countries, p 437-38.*

People Groups

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The American (4466—Joshua Project) population in Kuwait is from the United States of America and speaks English. There is very little specific information available regarding this population. Americans are likely in Kuwait for business or military purposes; a small number of Americans may be married to Kuwaiti citizens.

Approximately 10% of Americans are evangelical, 65% are Catholic or Orthodox, and the remaining are non-religious or part of another religious minority. It is likely that some of the non-Christian Americans in Kuwait are Muslim and of these, some probably converted to Islam in order to marry a Kuwaiti Muslim.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=110448&rog3=KU>

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The Arabized Black (35,731—Joshua Project) of Kuwait are Gulf Arabic speakers. Ninety-five percent of this population is Sunni Muslim. At least 2.5% are evangelical Christians and the remaining population (<2.5%) is Catholic or Orthodox. The distinguishing trait of this Arab group is that they have some African ethnic heritage. Very little specific information is available on the Arabized Black of Kuwait.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=100433&rog3=KU>

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The Armenians (222,322—Joshua Project) of Kuwait are a primarily Orthodox Christian group of Armenian speakers. Evangelical Christians comprise at least 5% of this population and their numbers have been increasing. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire expelled large numbers of Armenians from their homeland, Armenia, which is east of Turkey and north of Iran. The Armenian population that survived the expulsion was scattered across the Middle East and many of these remained there even after the establishment of the Republic of Armenia. Little specific information is available about Armenians in Kuwait, but they are likely present as foreign workers.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=100516&rog3=KU>

11794

The Assyrian (6700) population of Kuwait speaks the languages of Assyrian Neo-Aramaic and/or Turoyo. Assyrians are native to the Middle East, coming primarily from Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. Many Assyrians belong to the Ancient Church of the Near East, also known as the Nestorian Church; others participate in the Jacobite Church, also known as the Syrian Orthodox Church. Orthodox affiliation significantly colors the culture of the people. Many Assyrians have Christian names, celebrate Easter and Christmas, and are proud of their religious and national heritage. At least 5% of the Assyrian population is evangelical, and this percentage is growing as evangelical church planting movements multiply among the population. Under the Ottoman empire in the early 1900s and recently in Iraq, the Assyrians have faced heavy persecution, which has caused them to scatter across the Middle East and also into Western countries; the Assyrian population of Kuwait may be part of this Assyrian diaspora.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=100574&rog3=KU>

<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txh/orientor.htm>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/SimpleSearch.aspx?SearchTxt=>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=aii

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tru

42753

The Bedouin (214,930) are descended from nomadic, desert herders indigenous to Arabia; their tribes have traded, traveled, and resided in the Arabian deserts while maintaining ancient cultural traditions for times long surpassing written history. The Bedouin value hospitality, honor, and tribal loyalty. There is a sometimes romanticized and idealized culture among Arabs; however, among many modern and westernized Kuwaitis, Bedouin may be viewed as fundamental, traditional, and backward. For those who continue to maintain it, the Bedouin lifestyle is strenuous, requiring much labor just to ensure survival. In Arabic their name, Bedu, means “desert dwellers.” The language of this Bedouin group is Gulf Arabic. Today many Bedouin have augmented their desert traversing with modern technology, such as trucks, cell phones, and satellites; many others have settled in recent years and begun to pursue education, business, and careers.

The Bedouin are Sunni Muslims; Islam has been intimately linked with Bedouin culture from its inception. There is little specific information available about Gulf Arabic speaking Bedouin in Kuwait. Among the same group in neighboring Saudi Arabia, there are a few known Christian

believers, but no church planting is currently taking place; it may be assumed that their status in Kuwait is similar.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=114491&rog3=SA>
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=afb

00000

The British (7291—Joshua Project) in Kuwait are likely there for business or diplomatic purposes related to the oil industry or government. Britons are English speakers. Some Britons may be married to Kuwaiti citizens. Before Kuwait became fully independent in 1961, it was a protectorate of the British government; amicable ties between the citizens, businesspersons, and governments of both countries remain today. Little specific information is available on Britons in Kuwait. The British population is an estimated 10% evangelical, with the majority of Britons (87%) belonging to churches of some kind, be they the Church of England, Church of Scotland, a variety of other Protestant churches or the Roman Catholic Church. Sizable minority populations representing all other major world religions exist in the United Kingdom. The exact religious makeup of Britons in Kuwait is unknown. Evangelical Britons, who already have established business or personal ties to Kuwait, could make excellent partners in ministry and witness to the Kuwaiti people.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=102927&rog3=KU>

11796

The Egyptian Arabs (28516) resident in Kuwait have come as skilled and unskilled laborers, taking advantage of the availability of jobs in Kuwait. The population of Egyptians in Kuwait rotates continually as workers come for a few years and then return home; new workers are constantly coming to replace those that leave. The language spoken by this group is Egyptian Arabic. Egyptians, like other foreign workers filling lower status jobs in Kuwait, are not always fairly treated and may be subjected to harsh and degrading mistreatment. Recent news articles report such abuses as police officers pouring acid on Egyptian workers they suspected of falsifying work permits. If the Egyptians in Kuwait mirror the Egyptian population as a whole, about three quarters of them adhere to Sunni Islam. Much of the remaining group belongs to Orthodox Christianity, specifically of the Coptic variety. Less than two percent of Egyptian Arabs are evangelical Christians. (Tie in church info). There are currently no mission agencies engaging the Egyptian Arabs of Kuwait.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2007/August/middleeast_Au
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=102879&rog3=KU>
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=arz

46407

The Filipinos (63,411) of Kuwait are part of the foreign laborer population and are Tagalog-speaking citizens of the Philippines. Filipinos typically work as domestic servants and other types of laborers. There have been a number of international reports regarding the mistreatment of Filipino foreign workers in Kuwait. The majority of Filipinos are Catholic or Orthodox (85%). Filipinos are 5% evangelical with a growing evangelical movement at work among them. Evangelical Filipinos could be mobilized as Christian witnesses to the people of Kuwait.

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=46407>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109692&rog3=KU>
<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/08/12/africa/ME-GEN-Kuwait-Iraq-US-Embassy.php>

00000

The French (4466—Joshua Project) in Kuwait are French-speaking citizens of France. Their presence in Kuwait is likely related to the French embassy or to business. The French are an estimated 2-5% evangelical, with the largest majority of French people (76%) belonging, at least nominally, to Catholic or Orthodox religious groups.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=103059&rog3=KU>

00000

The Greek (900—Joshua Project) in Kuwait are Greek-speaking citizens of Greece. They are in Kuwait on business, as embassy workers, clergy in the Greek Orthodox Church, or as archeologists working on the island of Faylakah. Ninety percent of Greeks in Kuwait are Orthodox Christians. Less than 5% of this population is evangelical, but there are growing evangelical churches among them.

11792

Gulf Arabs (716,431), and specifically Kuwaiti Arabs, have faced great changes in many aspects of society and culture since the discovery of oil in their country in the 1930s. Their society has moved quickly toward industrialization, urbanization, and wealth. These changes, as well as greater education and interaction with the West, have caused conflict at times with their traditional Arab and Islamic culture. Although oil wealth has served to repair physical and material damage that resulted from the Iraqi occupation of the early 1990s, emotional scarring from the death, disappearance, and injury of large numbers of Kuwaitis remains in the psyche of the people. Kuwaiti Arabs speak Gulf Arabic; this language is also common in Iraq, Bahrain, Iran, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The majority of Kuwaiti Arabs (over 92%) are Sunni Muslims. Orthodox and Catholic believers comprise 6.8% of the population, while a handful of evangelical believers comprise less than 1% of the total population. No church planting is currently taking place among Kuwaiti Arabs.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=114491&rog3=KU>
<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11792>

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The Han Chinese (3379—Joshua Project) of Kuwait are likely engaged in business, as is common for Han who settle all over the world. The Han who live outside of China tend to settle in urban settings; they are a people who are proud of their culture, language, traditions and ethnicity. This people group speaks Mandarin Chinese. The Han are more than 96% non-religious, but 3.33% are evangelical Christians.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=103686&rog3=KU>

11798

Iraqi Arabs (156,420) in Kuwait speak a dialect of Arabic known as Mesopotamian Arabic. Kuwaiti Arabs are suspicious of Iraqi Arabs and hostile toward them as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1991. Iraqis present in Kuwait are likely there as foreign skilled and unskilled laborers. The majority of Iraqis in Kuwait are Shi'a Muslims. There is one known church among Iraqis in Kuwait, but the population of Iraqi Christians is less than 1%.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=acm

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104056&rog3=KU>

42754

Jordanian Arab (344,028) have also been known as "Transjordanians," which describes the Muslim and Christian Arabs who are the native population east of the Jordan River from the Dead Sea in the north to the Gulf of Aqaba in the South. In general, "Jordanian" refers to both settled village and city dwellers and the native Bedouin population, but in this case, Jordanians who have come to Kuwait as foreign workers are more likely to have come from settled populations. Jordanians speak South Levantine Arabic, which is also common in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. The majority of Jordanians are Sunni Muslims but there are minority Christian Churches, mostly non-evangelical orthodox, that date back to the 1st century church. Between 2% and 5% of the population is evangelical.

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/jordan/jo_glos.html#Transjordanian

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=ajp

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109662&rog3=KU>

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The Khoja (2253—Joshua Project) are a Gujarati-speaking, Sunni Muslim people group from the Indian state of Gujarat. The Khoja are in Kuwait as foreign laborers. There are no known evangelicals among them and no mission organization is currently engaging them.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=guj

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=112531&rog3=KU>

11800

The Kurd (181,070) are a people group of Turkish and Iranian descent; their cultural homeland geographically overlaps Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. They speak Southern Kurdish, also known as Kurdi, a language that is also spoken in Iraq and Iran. Kurdi is written in an Arabic script. In neighboring Iraq, Kurds faced severe persecution resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths throughout the end of the 20th century; many Kurds fled Iraq as a result. Today, partly because of the influence of the U.S. military in Iraq since 2003, the Kurds now have political power in their own region of Iraq. Kurds have faced discrimination because of a push toward Arabization throughout the Middle East. They deeply value family ties and tradition and adhere strongly to their Sunni Muslim faith. Kurds present in Kuwait are foreign laborers who fled persecution in Iraq. Less than 1% of Kurds are evangelical Christian believers.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurd>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=105452&rog3=KU>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=sdh

<http://www.peoplesgroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11800>

11801

The Kurmanji (98,880) are a people group of Turkish and Iranian descent; their cultural homeland geographically overlaps Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. They speak Northern Kurdish, also known as Kurmanji, a language that is also spoken in countries across Asia, Europe, and around the world. Kurmanji is written in a Roman script. In neighboring Iraq, Kurds, including Kurmanji, faced severe persecution resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths throughout the end of the 20th century; many Kurds fled Iraq as a result. Today, partly because of the influence of the U.S. military in Iraq since 2003, the Kurds now have political power in their own region of Iraq. Kurds have faced discrimination because of a push toward Arabization throughout the Middle East. Kurds deeply value family ties and tradition and adhere strongly to their Sunni Muslim faith. In Kuwait, the Kurmanji are foreign laborers, likely having fled from persecution in Iraq. There are no known Christian believers among the Kurmanji of Kuwait.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurd>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=105458&rog3=KU>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=kmr

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11801>

42755

The Lebanese Arabs (90,876) of Kuwait are foreign laborers from Lebanon, who speak North Levantine Arabic. The majority of Lebanese Arabs, approximately 88%, are Sunni Muslims. Around 10% of the population is Catholic or Orthodox in faith. The remaining 2%, or less, are evangelical Christians. No church planting is currently taking place among the Lebanese Arabs in Kuwait.

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=42755>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=apc

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=105688&rog3=KU>

11802

The Mahra (5042) are a people group who originate in Yemen and Oman and speak the Mehri language. They are present in Kuwait as foreign laborers. The Mahra are Sunni Muslim and there are no known believers, or Christian missionaries, among them.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=gdq

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=106046&rog3=KU>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11802>

11803

The Malayali (44,198) are foreign workers in Kuwait, speaking Malayalam, the native language of the South Indian, western, coastal state of Kerala. The majority of Malayali are Hindu, but there is a large Catholic/Orthodox minority that represents as much as 41% of the population. Other Malayali minority groups are evangelical Christian (2-5%), Muslim and Jewish.

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11803>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=mal

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=106160&rog3=KU>

42756

The Omani Arabs (14,758) present in Kuwait began migrating there in the 1800s. As Kuwait has become more modernized and urban as a result of oil wealth, the Omani have had to adapt from their traditional, rural desert ways of living. Omanis live in close contact with their extended families and their society is structured by patriarchal authority. They speak Omani Arabic, a dialect that is unique because of its mixture with original South Arabian languages. Their culture is tied closely to the religion of Islam; most Omani Arabs are Ibadi Muslims; others may belong to other Muslim sects. There are very few known Christian believers among the Omani of Kuwait.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=100431&rog3=KU>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=42756>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=acx

11793

Palestinian Arabs (121,188) are the Muslim or Christian Arabs who are native to the region west of the Jordan River between Lebanon and Sinai. Palestinians speak South Levantine Arabic, which is also common in Jordan, Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. Since 1948 the Palestinian people have been embroiled in a political power-struggle for their homeland west of the Jordan River; many Palestinians fled to Jordan because of this on-going conflict, especially in 1948 and again in 1967. A large population of Palestinians has come to Kuwait as foreign laborers, or perhaps as refugees. The majority of Palestinians are Sunni Muslims; however, about 15% of Palestinians belong to churches, which are mostly non-evangelical orthodox, that date back to the 1st century church. Approximately 2% of the population is evangelical Christian. Though there are multiple missionary agencies engaging the Palestinians with the gospel, there is currently no active church planting taking place among them.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=ajp

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11793>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=107785&rog3=KU>

11804

The Persians (122,988) of Kuwait are Farsi speakers from Iran. They are Shi'a Muslims and have no known evangelical Christian population among them. Culturally, their societies are patriarchal and family ties are very strong. In Kuwait, Persians are foreign laborers, working especially in the oil industry.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=107987&rog3=KU>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11804>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=pes

11805

Punjabi (9979) are part of the foreign workforce in Kuwait. They speak Punjabi and are native to the Punjab state in Northern India, or perhaps from a related population in Pakistan. In South Asia, the religions of this people group are Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism, but the majority of Punjabis abroad are Sikh (a religion that combines elements of both Hinduism and Islam). Punjabis are known for their success in running small, family businesses; Sikh Punjabi men are

recognized for the turbans they commonly wear wrapped around their long, uncut hair. There is a very small evangelical Christian presence among them, but it represents less than 1% of the population. No mission agencies are currently committed to working among Punjabis in Kuwait.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=108182&rog3=KU>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=pan

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11805>

42757

The Saudi Arab (225,101) in Kuwait speak Najdi Arabic. Many maintain the Bedouin traditions of their ancestors while others have adapted to a settled life in pursuit of education and business. (Refer to the Bedouin people group above for more cultural information.) There are a few evangelical Christian believers among the Saudi Arabs in Kuwait, but the remainder of them are Sunni Muslims. No mission agencies are currently active among them.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=101196&rog3=SA>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=42757>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=ars

42758

Syrian Arabs (12,299) of Kuwait are Levantine Arabs. They speak North Levantine Arabic, which is most common in Syria and Lebanon. Their cultural identity is both Arab and Islamic. The majority of Syrian Arabs are Sunni Muslims and consider Islam an integral part of their cultural identity; however, 7.3% of Syrian Arabs are from Orthodox Christian backgrounds (evangelical percentage unknown). One mission agency is committed to working among Syrian Arabs, but no church planting is active among them.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109662&rog3=KU>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=42758>

11807

The Tamil (285) of Kuwait are foreign laborers from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu or the neighboring country of Sri Lanka. In India and Sri Lanka, the majority religion for this group is Hinduism, but it is likely that many of the Tamil present in Kuwait are of the Muslim minority; less than 12% are either Catholic or Orthodox and there are few, if any, evangelical believers among them. Church planting movements are active among the Tamil in South Asia, and thus may eventually effect this population as well.

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11807>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109788&rog3=KU>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tam

11808

The Telugu (571) of Kuwait are foreign laborers from the south-central Indian state of Andhra Pradesh; their language is Telugu. In India, the majority religion for this group is Hinduism, but it is likely that many of the Telugu present in Kuwait are of the Muslim minority; less than 9%

are either Catholic or Orthodox and there are few, if any, evangelical believers among them. No mission agencies are currently engaging the Telugu of Kuwait.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tel

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109930&rog3=KU>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11808>

11809

Urdu (3278) of Kuwait are foreign workers from Pakistan and India. They are Muslim but otherwise represent a heterogeneous mix of ethnic groups from a large geographical area; the ancestry of many Urdu people traces back to Arab merchants and soldiers who brought Islam with them to the sub-continent. Urdu is a language intelligible to Hindi speakers; however, it borrows from Farsi and Arabic and is written in a script similar to Arabic. There are no known believers among the Urdu of Kuwait and no mission organizations working among them.

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=11809>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=110423&rog3=KU>

42759

Yemeni Arabs (6491) of Kuwait are part of only a small number of Yemeni who have left their homeland and are likely in Kuwait as laborers. Yemeni Arabs speak a dialect of Arabic known as Taizzi-Adeni. They are almost exclusively Sunni Muslims. Christian believers among the Yemeni of Kuwait represent less than 1% of the population; the percentage of evangelical presence is unknown. No mission agencies are currently engaging this group.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109729&rog3=KU>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=42759>

Missiological Implications

1. There is a secularization occurring among wealthy, educated Kuwaitis that may be weakening Islam's centuries-old grip on this Arab population. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to engage this group with the gospel while they are open to change, but before their hearts are hardened toward spiritual matters.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should pray for an increase in spiritual hunger among Kuwaitis, whether they are committed Muslims or becoming secularized. The material wealth of Kuwait is likely working to engender complacency, rather than an awareness of spiritual need; only the Holy Spirit can prepare the hearts of Kuwaitis to see their need for Christ.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should recognize the opportunity to minister to foreign populations in Kuwait. These laborers are often separated from their families and communities and are working in a society that often views them with contempt. Christians have opportunities to share the gospel while ministering to the felt needs of these diverse populations.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should take advantage of the opportunity to mobilize Christians who are entering Kuwait as laborers. Arab, Filipino, and South Asian evangelical Christians could be trained to evangelize Kuwaitis under whom they work and among whom they live.
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to evangelize Kuwaitis where they travel and recreate, especially when they are outside of the Muslim world. Kuwaitis who study abroad among Christians in Western cultures are also more available to receive Christian witness.

Pictures –Links –. Please keep a list of any interesting country specific links you might find. This will also be included on the new website.

<http://www.kuwait-info.org/>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/kwtoc.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/middle-east/kuwait>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/791053.stm

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_\(country\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563200/Kuwait_(country).html)

<http://www.kuwaitmission.com/>

<http://www.solarnavigator.net/geography/kuwait.htm>

<http://www.kuwait-info.com/index.asp>