

MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

TURKEY

Republic of Turkey
(Turkiye Cumhuriyeti)

Basic Facts

Name:

Republic of Turkey (Turkiye Cumhuriyeti)

Population:

Total Population stands at 66,590,940 (Operation World 2000). The population density is 85 people per sq. km., with an annual growth rate of +1.24%. The age structure within the country is 0-14 -- 28.42%; 15-64 – 65.45%; 65 and over – 6.13%. The birth and death rates are 18.31/1000 and 5.95/1000 respectively. Net migration in Turkey is 0/1000. From birth to age 65 the male/female ratio is slightly skewed toward the males, but in the over 65 category the males decline greatly to 85% of females. The infant mortality rate is somewhat high at 47.34 deaths/1000 live births. The fertility rate is 2.12 children/woman.

Land:

The area of Turkey, 814,578 sq. km., is slightly larger than Texas. Turkey's strategic location between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea has given the nation great importance throughout history. It spans two continents-- 3% of its area in Europe and 97% in Asia. The part of Turkey that is considered to be a part of Europe, known as the Thrace, is the land west of the Bosphorus Strait.

Turkey is divided into seven geographical regions (see map):

Black Sea Region - This region, which totals about 1/6 of the country, runs east to west along the coast of the Black Sea.

Aegean Region – This diverse region both geographically and socio-economically extends from the coastline of the Aegean Sea to the inner parts of western Anatolia.

Mediterranean Region – The Taurus Mountains that rise just behind the Mediterranean coastline makes up the bulk of this region. The Amanos Mountains are also a part of this region.

Central Anatolia Region – This region is less mountainous and is located in the center of the country.

East Anatolia Region – This is the largest and highest region in the country due to its mountains and mountain ranges, including Mount Agri (Ararat).

Southeast Anatolia Region – This region is the one part of the country that is most notable for its even landscaping.

Marmara Region – The area that surrounds the Sea of Marmara, including all of the land that is considered to be a part of Europe is included in this region.

Within the country of Turkey the land area that arcs from the Sea of Marmara to the Lake of Van and is considered to be one of the most earthquake-prone areas in the world.

Turkey has 382,059 km. of roads throughout the country, only 28% of which are paved. They have a total of 121 airports (86 paved) that serve most of their neighboring countries as well as most of Turkey.

Economy:

Turkey's economy is based in large part on tourism, industry, and agriculture. Agriculture, in which Turkey has become self-sufficient, accounts for about 40% of employment. Setbacks in the economy came with inflation in 1990 and 2001, as well as the 1999 earthquake. Turkey has the distinction of being one of Europe's poorest nations; yet, it is within the top six of Asia's richest Turkic nations. Turkey is working diligently toward modernization due to it being considered for entrance into the European Union.

The government still has much control in industry, banking, transport, and communications. The private sector, however, is rapidly growing. This growing private sector is almost solely responsible for the largest export and most important industry in the country, textiles and clothing.

The average income per person is \$3,130 (about 10% of the US). Only a negligible percentage of the Turkish people live below the poverty line. Those that fall into the lower 10% category make up 2.3% of the population, while 32.3% fall into the upper 10% category. The inflation rate for Turkey is 39%. Even though this inflation rate is high it is the lowest since 1987.

The official currency is the Turkish lira (TRL). The exchange rates have increased dramatically from an already high 81,405 TRL per \$1US in 1996 to 677,621 TRL per \$1US in 2000.

Government:

The Republican Parliamentary Democracy type of government currently works in Turkey

The capital of Turkey is Ankara, which has 3.25 million people. Some other major cities include Istanbul with 10.1 million, Izmir with 2.4 million, Bursa with 1.3 million, and Adana with 1.1 million. The country is divided into 80 administrative provinces.

The Turkish Ottoman Empire was vast, stretching across North Africa, Arabia, Western Asia and Southeast Europe. It fell in 1923 when a man by the name of Ataturk, or father Turk, sought to end the revolution caused by World War I, and formed a republic. October 29, 1923 is celebrated as Turkey's Independence Day. There have been periods of social disorder due to the military rule, causing a democratic form of government to be restored in 1983, even though there is still a good amount of military influence within the government. That democratic form of government followed the November 7, 1982 passage of a constitution.

The government is comprised of a president, who is chief of state; a prime minister, who is head of government; and a unicameral Grand National Assembly. Presidential elections are held every seven years, while the Assembly members serve five-year terms.

Turkey has an ongoing dispute with neighbor Greece over territorial rights in the Aegean Sea and division of Cyprus, yet both countries are members of NATO.

A long bitter war with the Kurdish separatists within Turkey has lasted for most of the decade of the 1990's. Over 30,000 lives have been lost and the southeast part of the country ravaged. Tensions seem to be reducing now.

Currently, tensions remain between Turkey and almost all of their neighbors due to their strategic geographic location. Turkey has economic links to Europe, cultural links to Central Asia, and geographic proximity to conflicts in Iraq, the Balkans and the Caucasus.

Society:

Health - AIDS is almost nonexistent in Turkey; however, other health threats stem from poor sewage systems in some urban areas as well as poor water supplies in some villages.

The Family – Up until the time of the republic, the rules that people followed for marriage, divorce, inheritance, and personal status came from Islamic law. After the establishment of the republic and its ideals two distinct societies emerged within the country, one that incorporated the political elite and held staunchly the ideas of the new republic and another one that combined ideas of Islam and the republic.

Turkey made many changes concerning marriage after the formation of the republic. Marriages performed by a member of the religious community were no longer considered valid and thereby any children resulting from such unions were illegitimate. Marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man, previously illegal, became legal. Divorce became obtainable for women. Under civil law either party is free to apply for a divorce, but the government reviews the case and decides whether or not to grant it.

Despite governmental protest, some customs still remain in marriage such as the bride price. When a man and woman desire to be married the respective families meet and negotiate a bride price. The groom's family pays this price to the bride's family. It is based on the assets of the family and is generally less when the two families are related.

The Extended Family – While most households just include the nuclear family, the extended family plays a major role in the lives of Turkish citizens. This extended family gives support to each member of the family during major crisis and important events. Members of the “family” will sometimes even go into business together. They support each other on all levels such as emotional, physical and financial.

The extended family of the husband plays the biggest role. Usually the mother-in-law will diligently teach the new bride how to take care of her new husband. This new bride will only gain acceptance and security within the family when she produces a son.

Women – The status and rights of women has increased in contemporary Turkey as the culture seeks to distance itself from strict Islamic influences. Although legally a woman is equal to a man, women play more traditional roles in Turkey. Boy babies are considered more important than girl babies; therefore, there is a great amount of pressure on women to produce boys. Young girls are taught to be quiet and submissive. According to Islamic law, unfaithfulness in marriage is considered a serious offense especially for women. Even though it is not legal, it is still known to happen that a husband will kill his adulterous wife to restore honor to his family. The status of a woman increases, however, after she has had several children, has reached an older age, and works outside of the home. When a woman's children are almost grown she will not expect to be harassed by her mother-in-law anymore.

Literacy:

The literacy rate in Turkey is at 85%, with 94% of men being literate compared with only 77% of women.

Education is made up of a compulsory five-year primary school, a compulsory three-year middle school, high school, and twenty-seven public universities. Almost 40% of students drop out of school after the compulsory middle school. Also, through the Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education, an informal education is provided to those seeking vocational training and lacking the proper education, such as dropouts.

Language:

The official language is Turkish. However, there are 36 languages in use within Turkey. The most commonly used languages are Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Armenian, and Greek.

Urbanization:

Approximately 65% of the population lives within cities in Turkey. Three distinct groups of urban dwellers make up the urban population of Turkey:

Urban Upper Class – This class of business elites are made up of government officials, industrialists, financiers, real-estate developers and more. This class makes up about 10% of the urban population. Gaining entrance into this class requires education and political power.

Urban Middle Class – This class is made of primarily of administrators, mid-level bureaucrats, public employees, engineers lacking advanced college degrees, journalists, managers, and more. This class makes up about 20-25% of the total urban population. The percentage is higher in more prosperous cities, and lower in economically depressed areas. A college degree is one of the requirements to obtain this status.

Urban Lower Class – This class contributes the largest percentage, approximately 60%, to the urban population. The growth in this class has come from a mass migration to the cities in search of work. They were unable to find affordable housing so they build temporary shelters on undeveloped land. These temporary settlements, also called *gecekondu*s, became permanent dwellings that lacked any amenities. The people making up this class try to find work in the factories and industries where there is continual employment and wages such as crafts, automotive repair, machine shop, dockyard work, street cleaning, street vending, and more.

Religion:

That Islam is the prevailing religion in Turkey should not be surprising because under the Ottoman Empire, Moslems were the guardians of the holy places of Islam. Since the establishment of the republic, Turkey has officially been a secular state, but instances of discrimination and harassment of religious minorities are not unknown. Turkey ranks 39th in the world rankings of Christian persecution.

Historical Aspects

Turkey boasts a long and notable history much of which impacts the religious and Christian situation today.

Ancient Anatolia

Modern day Turkey is a “new country in an old land.” Some of the civilizations dating back to 3000 BC include the *Hittite*, *Thracian*, *Hellenistic*, and *Byzantine* civilizations. The Turkish people conquered the *Byzantine Empire* to gain control over the land on which they now

live. This region was called *Anatolia* before any of these civilizations came into being, and still uses that name today.

The *Hittites* came from the east and crossed the Caucasus Mountains and conquered the people living in the land in about 3000 B.C. and instituted a completely new way of life for the peoples of the land. The Hittite empire ruled until about 1200 B.C. when the *Phrygians* rose up and burned the capital city *Hattusas*.

In western Anatolia, between the *Dardanelles* and the *Gulf of Edremit* the place historically known as *Troas* has been determined to be the ancient city of Troy referred to in Homer's *Iliad*. It has been recognized as existing between 1300 and 1150 B.C.

The period from 1200 to 900 B.C. can essentially be referred to as a dark ages of Anatolia. The region suffered from cities being burned and ransacked by "sea peoples" coming from the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. It was during this same time that the *Assyrian Empire* in Mesopotamia came to power and the *Dorians* invaded Greece.

Some peace finally came around 900 B.C. when the *Phrygians* again rose up giving some opportunity to rebuild the cities and establish a ruling government. The Phrygians lasted for two hundred years, until the *Cimmerians*, who came from the east across the Caucasus Mountains, conquered them. Order was again restored to the country when the *Lydians* came to power only to be defeated by the *Persians* in 546 B.C.

Since the so-called "dark ages" of Anatolia, Greece had slowly started to take control over some parts of Anatolia. Finally, in 334 B.C., what started as defending one city turned into a four-year campaign and *Alexander the Great* defeated the Persians. *Pergamum*, which it was later named by one of the generals of the late Alexander the Great, was bequeathed to the Roman Empire in 138 B.C. by the last king from the *Attalid Dynasty*. However, during the Attalid Dynasty the region was renowned for a medical school and library second only to Alexandria.

Once Rome gained control, the Romans began integrating the region into its imperial system of government by setting up local councils, provincial assemblies, and governors. The language and culture of this region was all together Greek, but its governmental control was Roman. *Roman Emperor Augustus*, who ruled from 27 B.C. to A.D.14, played an integral part in the integration of the imperial system. *Jesus'* earthly ministry came during this era of history as He walked the earth just south of the region of Anatolia. Shortly after this period, the *Apostle Paul* introduced Christianity to the region of Anatolia through the ancient cities of *Antioch*, *Iconium*, *Lystra*, *Smyrna*, *Troas*, and many more. According to tradition, The Apostle Andrew preached in Byzantium as early as AD 38 and ordained Stachys as Bishop.

Many early ecumenical councils important to shaping the major doctrines of Christianity were held in what is present-day Turkey. Some of the Roman Emperors, including *Diocletian* and *Constantine*, helped make the Anatolia region a strong part of the Roman Empire. Slowly, however, this Roman-controlled *Byzantine Empire* began to loose certain territories to Muslim control. Constantinople achieved a new status in AD 330 when its patriarch, *Constantine*, moved the capital of the Roman Empire to Rome. This split between Western and Eastern

Churches led eventually to the Schism of AD 1054. Eastern Orthodox Christianity was weakened by Muslim invasions and by the adverse results of the Crusades. Finally, after many centuries, the Romans lost the region of Anatolia to the *Ottoman Empire*.

From Empire to Republic to Democracy

The Ottoman Empire, beginning in the 11th century, wielded great power and authority throughout the Middle East over many centuries as this government sought to act as the Muslim leader and defender of the world. Islamic influence increased during the time of the Ottoman Empire. Non-Turkish peoples began to seek independence in the 1820s with Greece gaining freedom in 1829. The group known as *Tanzimat*, first controlled by Mahmud II (1808-1839) sought to modernize Turkey. Efforts began to overturn the *Capitulations* that were agreements to allow Europeans freedoms of commerce that had existed since the 16th Century. The Young Turks, an organization committed to a Constitution, gain power in 1908 and instituted some reforms until 1918. In World War I Turkey sided with Germany and after the war Allied forces occupied the country.

This empire and all of its ideals came to an end during World War I, when the Allied Powers defeated them. During the same time, Germany also fell. At the beginning of World War I, Christians made up over 20% of the population of Turkey. In 1914, Roman Catholics had 4 Archdioceses, 16 dioceses, 2 vicariates, and 2 missions *sui juris*. Between 1915 and 1917 Turks massacred over 600,000 Armenians and many Chaldeans and some 600,000 other Armenians were deported. Many more emigrated to other countries after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 called for the forced exchange of 1.5 million Greek Orthodox from Anatolia in Turkey for Turkish Muslims in Greece. Steady emigration since that time has resulted in the reduction of the Christian community in Turkey to a small minority. The Greco-Turkish War of 1922 and recent anti-Greek riots of September 1955 further weakened the Orthodox Church in Turkey

The Turkish War for Independence eventuated in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 giving Turkey a measure of independence and leading to the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk assumed leadership and led in establishing a more secular state. *Mustafa Kemal*, better known as *Kemal Atatürk* emerged as a hero and new leader. Atatürk, whose middle name, Kemal, means “perfection,” wanted to take the country into a whole new direction. He wanted to create a completely secular society--an utter about face from the earlier goals of the empire. Atatürk, a charismatic yet forceful leader, only accepted token opposition--however, he ruled the country successfully for fifteen years.

Determined to conform his country to be like those in Europe, Atatürk demanded secularism and tried to quash any form of public religion. He closed religious schools, banned their rituals and meetings, and shut down *Sufi brotherhoods*. The country replaced Islamic law, *the shariat*, with codes borrowed from European countries and abolished the Islamic calendar as well as the legal and religious functions of the Islamic scholars and lawyers. Atatürk went to great lengths to eradicate any hint of religion from everyday life. He discouraged or outlawed any traditional clothing of Islam such as the veil for women and the fez for men. He also made it illegal for anyone to write Turkish with Arabic script, because it is the language used in the Koran (Quran) and therefore the “language of God.” In 1922 the effort to create an

autocephalous Turkish Orthodox Church with the support of Mustafa Kemal expected 50,000 Karamanlis (Turkish speaking Orthodox) was frustrated when these people were deported to Greece in 1923.

This philosophy of government and society caused three major coups within the past century in 1960, 1971, and 1980. To understand what kind of effect this religious ban had on everyday life one must understand how the lives of Turkish people were intertwined with their religion. The Turks came from Central Asia in the 10th century and were converts to Islam. When they settled in modern day Turkey, they established their government, customs, and ideals by the tenets, precepts, and laws of Islam. In short, their whole lives revolved around their religion. They even started socio-religious institutions called Sufi brotherhoods.

By 1952 Turkey became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Tensions and chaos followed in the years after 1961. In 1974, Turkey occupied parts of Cyprus. In 1980, civilians clashed with the government to such a point that the country was going into civil war. The military stepped in and declared marshal law. They established the *National Security Council (NSC)*, which helped draft a new constitution and electoral laws. They then named the NSC chairman to be president for a six-year term and slowly returned the government to civilian rule after a parliamentary election in 1983. In the past, a prerequisite to entering politics has been a commitment to secularism; however, there have been a few short-lived attempts at Islamic political activism, and in more recent days its continued growth is a new threat to the ideas of secularism.

European powers denied Turkey admission to the European Union in 1977 due to the Turkish policy in Cyprus, the treatment of the Kurds, and other human rights violations. The land was devastated in 1999 by the Earthquake in Izmit. Contemporary Turkey continues to struggle economically and politically but some progress is evident.

Turkish Controlled Cyprus

Citizens from both Greece and Turkey inhabit the island of Cyprus. In 1974, Greece threatened to unite the island with the country of Greece. This inspired Turkey to send 40,000 troops to the upper one-third of the island to protect the 120,000 Turkish Muslims. Both parties refused to move and the on-going struggle has placed tension between the two NATO nations.

People/People Groups

The Turkish people put strong social pressures on ethnic minorities to adopt Turkish culture and language. For this reason, it is very difficult to obtain accurate and objective figures. However, the main people groups obtained are as follows.

- Turks (76-80%) –came from central Asia and successfully conquered the indigenous people and absorbed them into their culture from about the 11th Century forward. Their culture is fairly homogenous even though their ethnicity is diverse. They have three main sub-groups of people:

- Azeri
 - Koruk (Gagauz)
 - Crimean Tatar
- Kurds (14-20%) (The Kurds claim 21-25%) This discrepancy probably results from counting a group of people in southeast Anatolia that are *Indo-Iranian*, most likely related to the ancient *Medes*. Their primary language is Turkish and they have two main language groups of peoples:
- Kurmanji
 - Kimli (Zaza)
- Arabs (1.8%) –live in south Anatolia where it adjoins Syria.
- Muslim minorities (1.8%) – These minorities include 7 different people groups:
- Gypsy (Turkish, Arlije, Domari)
 - Kabardian (Circassian)
 - Laz
 - Bulgarian Pomak
 - Albanian
 - Bosnian
 - Abkhazian
- Refugees (1.3%) – The refugees are divided into 3 distinct groups:
- Iranians
 - Bulgarian Turks
 - Central Asians
- Non-Muslim minorities (0.2%) – These non-Muslim minorities are divided into 4 groups, two of which have gone through a rapid decline within the past 100 years due to emigration:
- Armenian
 - Jews
 - Assyrian
 - Greek

Some 62 people groups can be listed by size along with their spoken language and religion.

Groups Over 100,000:

Turk – 42,992,230 – osmanli – 98% Muslim (83% Sunni, 15% Alawi Shias)

Northern Kurd (Kermanji) – 5,925,788 – Kurmanji – 95% Muslims (Sunni Muslim, some Alawi Shias in Cilicia, some Yezidis), 5% nonreligious

Turkish Kurd – 5,327,275 – osmanli – They are Kurds who now use Turkish as mother tongue. 100% Muslim (Shafi Sunnis)

Crimean Tatar – 4,661,366 – osmanli – They have been acculturated and assimilated into Turkish life. 100% Muslim (Hanafi Sunnis)

Levantine Arab – 1,213,793 – syro-palestinian – They are Syrians, Iraqis, Lebanese, and Egyptians. 92% Muslim (Sunnis, Shias)

Dimili Kurd (Southern Zaza) – 1,145,058 – dimili – They are related to but distinct from Kurdish. 99% Muslim (Alawi Shias, a few Sunnis)

Azerbaijani – 685,920 – south azeri – Turkish is used as their literary language. 99% Muslim (Shias, Hanafi Sunnis)

Yoruk (Anatolian Gagauzi) – 665,909 – osmanli – They are nomadic herders and livestock exporters, and they live in 88 tribes. 99% Muslim (Hanafi Sunnis)

Persian – 559,364 – standard farsi – They came from Iran and many are in Istanbul. 98% Muslim (Imami Shias/Ithna-Asharis), 2% Baha'is

Turkish Gypsy (Cingane) – 499,432 – Osmanli – They are scattered especially across western Turkey, and most also speak Domari (Romani). 100% Muslim

Balkan Gagauz Turk – 344,981 – gagauzi – 99% Muslim

Pomak Bulgar – 301,684 – bulgarski – 93% are bilinguals in Turkish. 94% Sunni Muslims (early Bulgarian converts from Orthodoxy, also arrivals and deportees since 1950)

Circassian – 277,897 – cherkes – 94% are bilingual in Turkish. 100% Muslim

East Circassian (Kabardian) – 266,364 – qaberdey – 99% Muslim (Sunnis)

Alevica Kurdish (Kirmandz) – 166,477 – kurmanjiki – 90% are monolinguals (distant variety of Kurdish). 99% Muslim (mostly Alawi)

Mingrelian (Laz, Zan) – 137,863 – laz cluster – 95% are bilingual in Turkish. 98% Muslim (Shafi Sunnis)

Western Georgian – 136,365 – imeruli - They have a western dialect of Georgian, but 95% are bilingual in Turkish. 95% Muslim (Sunnis)

Crimean Tatar – 133,182 - crimea-tatar – They are still retaining mother tongue and Tatar identity. 100% Muslim (Hanafi Sunnis)

Tahtaci – 110,000 – language unknown -

Armenian (Ermeni) – 104,894 – ashkharik – They are the remnant after the 1915 genocide and reside in Istanbul. 96% are bilingual in Turkish. 20% nonreligious, 5% Muslim

Tunisian Arab – 100,000 – Arabic -

Groups from 100,000-10,000:

Bosniac (Musselmani) – 91,409 – standard srpski – 33% have Serbo-Croatian as mother tongue, 95% bilingual in Turkish, Ethnic Muslims 100% (all Sunnis)

Tosk Albanian – 91,409 – tosk-anatolia – 96% bilingual in Turkish, 70% Muslims (63% Sunnis, 7% Shias), 20% nonreligious

Adyghe – 71,000 – adyghe -

Bulgar – 66,591 – bulgarski cluster – 32% nonreligious

Kara-Kalpak – 66,591 – karakalpak – 100% Muslim (Hanafi Sunnis)

Balkan Rom Gypsy – 59,945 – arlija – 95% Muslim (Sunnis)

Pathan – 53,273 – pashto – 100% Muslim (Sunnis)

Alawites – 50,000 – language unknown -

Han Chinese – 45,362 – kuo-yu – They are immigrants from China in business. 55% Buddhists, 35% Chinese folk-religionists, 8% nonreligious

Abkhazian (Abxazo, Ubyx) – 39,102 – osmanli – 96% bilingual in Turkish. 100% Muslim (Sunnis, who left Georgia in 1864, leaving Orthodox Abkhazians there)

Assyrian (Eastern Syriac) – 36,465 – aisor – 10% nonreligious

Herki Kurd – 33,295 – herki – 100% Muslim (Sunnis)

Ossetian (Western Ossete) – 33,295 – oseti cluster – 90% Muslim (Sunnis)

Serb – 33,295 – standard srpski – 28% nonreligious

Syrian Aramaic (Turoyo) – 28,634 – sur-oyo –

Middle East Gypsy – 28,428 – domari – 99% Muslim

Tatar (Tartar) – 23,287 – tatar – 99% Muslim (Hanafi Sunnis)

Romanian – 19,977 – limba romaneasca – 16% nonreligious

Russian – 19,977 – ruskiy – 35% nonreligious, 14% Athiests

Shikaki Kurd (Kurdish) – 19,977 – shikaki – 100% Muslim (Sunnis)

Urdu – 19,977 – standard urdu – 100% Muslim (Sunnis)

USA White – 13,318 – general american – expatriates from USA in business and at military bases, 16% nonreligious

Spanish Jew (Hakitia) – 11,986 – djudexmo-turkiye – bilingual in Turkish, practicing Sefardi Jews

Abazinian – 10,748 – abazin – bilingual in Turkish, 99% Muslim (Hanafi Sunnis)

Groups from 10,000-2,000:

Greek – 9,483 – dhimotiki – They are remnants after continuous emigration, and reside in Istanbul. 10% nonreligious

Jewish – 8,657 – osmanli – They are Sefardi Jews who are declining in numbers by emigration to Israel from a population of 38,267 in 1965

Italian – 7,325 – standard italiano - They are expatriates from Italy in business. Strong Catholics

Chechen (Shishan) – 6,659 – Chechen – They are from the Chechnya homeland in Russian Caucasus. 83% Muslim (strong Hanafi Sunnis), 17% nonreligious

German – 6,659 – standard hoch-deutsch - They are expatriates from Germany in business. 11% nonreligious

Hungarian – 6,659 – general Magyar – 19% nonreligious

French – 4,994 – general francais – They are expatriates from France in business. 13% nonreligious

British – 3,330 – standard English – They are expatriates from Britain in business. 13% nonreligious

Southern Uzbek – 2,817– south uzbek – They are refugees from Afghanistan. 99% Muslim (Sunnis)

Dutch – 2,664 – algemeen Netherlands – They are expatriates from Holland in business.

Groups Under 2,000:

Kirghiz – 1,618; **Kazakh (Qazaqi)** – 1,332; **Kumyk (Khaidak)** – 1,332; **Turkmen (Turkoman)** – 1,312; **Uighur** – 733; **Chaldean (Neo-Aramaic)** – 300; **Hertevin** - 250.

Non-Muslim Minorities

The Library of Congress estimates a large number of Christian adherents as compared to above because they include all forms of Catholic and Orthodox adherents.

1995 was the last census taken that included religious affiliation. The following numbers were taken from that census:

Syrian Orthodox (Jacobites) – 50,000
Armenian Orthodox (Gregorian) – 35,000
Greek Orthodox – 20,000
Other Catholics – 25,000
Jewish – 18,000-20,000

Religious Factors in Contemporary Turkey

Islam:

Muslims claim 99.64% of the population, with 66,351,213 adherents; Within the grouping of Muslims the sub-groups are: *Sunni Muslims* claim 72-80%, the *Alevi*, who are mostly but not limited to Kurds, claim 17-25%, and the *Shi'a* among the Azeri and Iranians, and the *Yezidis* are among the Kurds.

Judaism:

Judaism was present in Anatolia before the beginning of the Christian era as indicated by the presence of Jewish Synagogues and people in the communities visited by the Apostle Paul on the missionary journeys. A new influx of Jewish people came from Spain following the anti-Jewish edict of 1492. Turkish Jews, who mostly follow the *Sefardis* sect, numbered over 38,367 in 1965 but this number is shrinking due to emigration to Israel. The largest number of Jews did and continues to live in Istanbul. The total number of Jews in Turkey has fallen from as many as

80,000 in 1900 to less than 22,000 in 1975. Latest estimates show the Jews as only some 0.04% of the population with around 26,636 adherents.

Shamanism (Traditional Religion):

Traditional religious patterns, including Shamanism, prevail among some Turkish peoples who have resisted Islam and Christianity. In addition of ancestor veneration, these traditional peoples venerate an extensive pantheon of deities—headed by *Yulgen (Tengri)*, who they believe resides in the sky and an Evil god, *Erlık*, who opposes Yulgen.

Christianity:

Christians claim only 0.32% of Turkish population with some 213,091 adherents. Many of those counted Christian would not be considered evangelical. Within the grouping of “Christians” the largest group is orthodox with 138,000 adherents, the Catholics with 30,000, then Protestants and Independents with 19,000 and 14,000 respectively. An additional 2,000 people claim to be Anglican. The Marginal category totals 5,000.

It is very difficult to estimate the number of Christians living in Turkey because the societies’ treatment of them has been so harsh.

Estimated number of Christians

World Christian magazine writes that there are about 2,000 Christian believers in Turkey today.

Roger Maldsted, who has worked in Turkey since 1961, estimates about 600 Christians in 14 indigenous churches. He also estimates that there are between 1,000 and 3,000 Christians in underground churches across the country.

Adherents.com estimates that there are *maybe* 50,000 Christians living in Turkey today. That is less than 1% of the population.

These estimates probably indicate the actual situation in Turkey—making this nation the largest unreached nation in the world. Few of the over 66 million Muslims in Turkey have ever heard the Gospel.

Johnstone’s estimate in *Operation World* of 213,091 adherents (about 0.3% of population) to Christianity includes Orthodox, Catholic, and marginal communities. Making up about 3% of the population.

The Evangelical denominations in Turkey:

Armenian Orthodox – 19 congregations, 25,749 members, 43,000 affiliates

All foreign Protestants – 51 congregations, 5,594 members, 16,000 affiliates

Turkish Indigenous believers – 34 congregations, 2,000 members, 3,000 affiliates

All minority indigenous Protestants – 8 congregations, 600 members, 1,500 affiliates

Other denominations – 43 congregations, 58,400 members, 112,700 affiliates

The marginal Christian Groups in Turkey:

Roman Catholic – 50 congregations, 9,281 members, 15,500 affiliates

Catholic Eastern Rite – 56 congregations, 8,982 members, 15,000 affiliates

Jehovah's Witnesses – 23 congregations, 1,559 members, 2,600 affiliates

Greek Orthodox – 5 congregations, 2,098 members, 3,000 affiliates

Turkey falls within the 10/40 window, being one of the most unevangelized countries in the world.

Missiological Implications:

1. *Evangelicals should seek ways to reach the Muslims for Christ. Christians should pray that God would open the eyes and soften the hearts of the Turkish Muslims.* Turkey is the largest unreached nation in the world. There are 66 million Muslims and most of them have never heard the gospel. Most of the Christians in Turkey are from non-Turkish backgrounds.
2. *Evangelicals should seek and pray for a lowering of the prejudice, hatred, and persecution of Christians (and other non-Muslims).* A part of these anti-Christian and anti-European feelings spring from the long association with Islam and the bitter wars with European powers that the Turks consider Christians. Christians should pray for a lowering of the resistance among Turkish people against all things “Christian.”
3. *Evangelicals should pray for and work toward a lowering of the persecution that is directed against Christians.* Turkey is divided between being a secular more European nation with religious freedom for all and being a Muslim nation. Through ambiguity in the law, Muslims continue to “get away” with persecuting Christians.
4. *Evangelicals need to pray for the attitudes of the Turkish Muslims.* In Turkish life to be a Turk is to be a Muslim. Social pressures from family, friends, and even the police urge people to follow the Muslim Religion. The media repeats and spreads lies about Christians so much so that it makes witnessing difficult and even dangerous. The media often associates Christians in general with Armenian terrorists, Jehovah Witnesses, and other undesirables.

5. *Evangelicals need to pray for and find ways to support the Turkish Protestant Church Council and individual Protestant Churches trying to gain legal recognition.* The council links all protestant fellowships and their leaders. A good fellowship between members and churches is vital since sometimes becoming a Christian means being disowned by your family. Gaining legal recognition would probably help to stop the personal harassment by police and lessen the disruptions of church services.
6. *Evangelicals need to pray for and actively engage in direct support of more Training Schools to train Turkish leaders.* Currently there are only two small Bible schools, Hall of Tyrannus near Ephesus and Bithynia Bible Institute in Istanbul. Several other training centers are planned. A Theological Education by Extension program is currently serving and should be expanded.
7. *Evangelicals should pray for and support the ministry to expatriates.* Expatriates in Turkey are persecuted because they are not Turkish, and because they are not Muslim.
8. *Evangelicals should pray for the continuing efforts in Bible translation.* Two Turkish New Testaments were finished in 1998/99 and were widely sold. The Christian movement plans to finish translation of the entire Bible in 2001.
9. *Evangelicals should intensify efforts to reach the Kurds for Christ.* Over 13 million Kurds live in Turkey. While the Kurds make up a majority of the population in eastern and southeastern Turkey, thousands are leaving due to continue war and persecution. The Kurds have lost over 30,000 of their people to persecution, have seen villages destroyed, and millions of their number displaced and impoverished. Only some 300 Kurds can be claimed as Christian. Translation of the Scriptures into the main Kurdish languages, the use of the Jesus Film, and other Christian literature in Kurdish languages helps those seeking to evangelize this people.
10. *Evangelicals should intensify efforts to reach Turks who live outside of Turkey.* Over three million Turks and Kurds live in Western Europe, 95,000 in Australia, perhaps as many as 1.2 million in Bulgaria, some 250000 in Macedonia and Serbia, 150000 in Romania, and 140000 in Greece. These peoples are often more accessible to Christian witness but also are often conservative in relation to religious matters. Christians should be thankful for the 12000 Turks and Turkish speaking Gypsies in the Balkans who have come to Jesus though a people movement since the late 1980s.
11. *Evangelicals should intensify the effort to reach Iranian refugees who have fled violence and Islamic extremism.* Over 560,000 Iranians now live in Turkey—mostly in Istanbul. A Persian-speaking congregation has been established in Istanbul and some response also seen in Ankara.

[http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html.](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html)

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html.](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html)

[http://www.turkey.org/artculture/index.html.](http://www.turkey.org/artculture/index.html)

[http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/cy.html.](http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/cy.html)

[http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/tr.html.](http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/tr.html)

[http://www.geocities.com/resats/maps.html.](http://www.geocities.com/resats/maps.html)