

Kurdistan



Kurdistan is defined as a geographic region populated mainly by 'Kurds'. It consists of highlands and mountain areas spread over large parts of what are now eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, and western Iran and smaller parts of northern Syria and Armenia.

The 'Kurds' make up the fourth largest ethnic group in the middle east with between 25 to 35 million people but is not classified as an independent nation state. The most widely practiced Kurdish religion is Islam.

Language

There are various languages spoken in the Kurdish region. Three of the main forms of dialect include Northern Kurdish, Central Kurdish and Southern Kurdish.

Northern Kurdish dialects are the most common and is referred to as Kurmanji and is spoken by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population. Northern Kurdish is spoken predominantly in Turkey and Syria.

Central Kurdish dialect known as Sorani is largely spoken in Iraq and Iran. Sorani uses the spelling of numerous words from Arabic and is written using the Arabic script itself, although the pronunciation varies. Sorani is also spoken by less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of all Kurds.

The last group of dialect belongs to Southern Kurds also known as Pahlawani or Xwarîn and likewise is spoken in parts of Iran and Iraq and speakers account for around 3 million.

The Care System

Conflict and inequality are two of the standing features that remain to this day in Kurdistan. Numerous children receive no support from the government and even though wars have decreased, many children still suffer and live with extreme violence. Children and families have suffered from targeted violence as well as indiscriminate attacks. The communities they had built and enjoyed are destroyed and many flee in hopes for a new life and better opportunities.

As the pandemic continues to deprive families of work and therefore the ability to earn their livelihoods, we are seeing growing poverty, which means greater risks for vulnerable children and adolescents to be sent out to work to provide for their families.

The impact of having to work at a young age for a child can be devastating and long-lasting; the child risks losing out on her/his education, being deprived of basic health care and exposed to dangers and hazardous practices.

Just over half of poor children complete their primary education and less than a quarter complete secondary, many flee their country due to this reason as education is so limited and often many children are working as labourers for long hours and little to no pay to provide for their families. Kurdistan faces several political challenges including rising unemployment. In order for them to cater to the population they would need to create at least 357,000 jobs.

The recent economy has come under the hardships of financial crisis therefore many Kurdistan citizens face the tough decision to leave their homes for greater prospects and circumstances.



Clothing

Traditional clothing for women is often bright and embodies vivid colours usually a long dress or gown, over which a jacket or vest is worn. Typically shoes for Kurdish women are also colourful, and may be embroidered with beads and sequins. Today, clothing has changed and what is worn is more muted in colour and tone within the elder generation possibly due to religion and modesty.

Baggy colourful trousers or more commonly muted earth tone trousers are traditional clothes worn by Kurdish men. Men also generally wear plain shirts with vests or jackets over them and their outfits are completed by a large belt or sash tied around the waist. Turbans are also included in 'Kurd' men's traditional wear.

In today's society Kurds are known to be welcoming of Western dress and culture and traditional clothing is progressively disappearing in modern culture. In Iran, Kurdish women dress in traditional Islamic dress, which involves a hijab covering the hair and a material known as a jilbab covering the body.

Food

Mealtimes usually take place on the floor and food is served on a large material typically a cloth. Traditionally, all dishes are served at the same time including hot, cold and sweet vessels. Common foods include dolma (vegetables stuffed in grape leaves), kofta (spiced meatballs), flatbreads, honey and black tea. Lamb and chicken are primary meats in a typical Kurdish diet and are made with a tomato and yogurt based sauce and usually served with rice or flatbread. Flatbreads are also routinely ate for breakfast alongside cheese, honey and sheep or cow yogurt.



For more information:

<https://www.unicef.org/iraq/what-we-do/education>

https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/6506/file/Iraq%20Country%20Report%20on%20OOSC%20Summary_EN.pdf%20.pdf

<http://iraqcr.com/details.aspx?=hewal&jmare=1028&jor=2>