

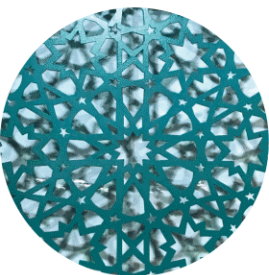
Are you ready to be a voice crying out in the wilderness to make a way for the Lord?

Iraqi Shia Arabs

Who are the Shia Arabs of Iraq?

Shia Muslims make up almost 70% of Iraq's 39.65 million people. Iraq is a special place to Shia Muslims as it is home to two holy pilgrimage cities: Najaf and Karbala. These two cities are pilgrimage destinations for around 25 million Shia Muslims every year.

On the tenth day of the first month of the Islamic calendar (Ashura), Shia Muslims mourn the death of one of their most important figures. Imam Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Mohammed was killed along with his family and close followers in the Iraqi city of Karbala. Each year, Shia Muslims gather in the streets and beat themselves in remembrance of the suffering of their people. In the 40 days following Ashura, Shia come from many nations to join in the Arba'een Pilgrimage. Many walk across Iraq, some as much as 310 miles towards the tomb of Imam Hussein in Karbala. The streets are flooded with walking pilgrims who sleep in tents along the road and eat at special pilgrim food stands provided for free by Shia donors.



It has been said that Shia Muslims are in a constant state of mourning, as this theology runs deep in their religious culture. Of course, for Iraqi Shia this state of mourning has been compounded by suffering from decades of war and oppression. Many struggle with a sense of hopelessness and despair.

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

— Isaiah 43:19 —



26 million
Yet to be reached



~4 million
Iraqis currently displaced



Quick Facts

Population- 26,599,000

Progress-Engaged yet
Unreached

Language- Mesopotamian
Arabic

Bible Translation, Gospel
Recordings, and Radio
Broadcast- Available

A voice cries out in the wilderness,
"Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness;
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God...
And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed."
— Isaiah 40:3,5 —

Pray

- Ask the LORD of the Harvest to send out workers into this ready harvest field.
- Ask the LORD to raise up team leaders with a heart for these people.
- Pray for deep healing of these traumatized people through Jesus the Messiah.
- Pray for the few Iraqi cultural Christians who live in the area, that the Lord would give them strength, forgiveness, deep healing and would ignite a fire in them to reach their neighbors with the good news.



Engage

The earliest civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia were located between the two rivers of the Euphrates and the Tigris in modern-day Iraq. Though it was once known as the 'cradle of civilization' and the birthplace of writing and literature, today Iraq's culturally rich history is often forgotten by the outside world. It is now known as a war-torn country that has struggled to find peace. It has had little respite from war since 1914, and still today there continues to be sectarian violence.

After decades of war, the people seem beaten down and with little hope for a peaceful future. There is a sense of weariness and despair in the country and yet so many seem hungry for the gospel. The current laborers are unable to follow up on all the responses from media outreach as well as from their personal relationships. The need for more laborers is great. There are less than 20 workers to reach the 38.5 million Arab Sunni and Shia in Iraq. The handful of workers in the area are all saying the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. The country is in a period of growth and rebuilding and there are many opportunities for visas with NGOs in teaching English, trauma care, business development, and even archeologists.

Is God calling you to live among the Muslim peoples of the Middle East? Contact us.
We would love to help you get there!



The Shia Pilgrims on their walk towards Karbala, the 40 days after Ashura.