

Source Sheet Companion

Fact Sheet: Exploring the Topics of Arab Citizens and Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel

This source sheet companion lists the sources utilized in the Fact Sheet, offers resources for further learning, and shares additional information. We hope you take advantage of these sources to learn more about Arab citizens of Israel and to support your efforts to educate others.

It is important to share some notes on the numbers and sources we used to create the Fact Sheet. Most of the statistics come from [the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics](#). The Central Bureau of Statistics does not offer a clear description of which people are included in its “Arab” category in reports. In many instances, in addition to Arab citizens of Israel, it likely includes Druze Golan Heights Residents and East Jerusalem Residents. For more information on these distinctions, please see the Basic Distinctions Between Legal Statuses of Arabic Speaking Populations in Israel and the Palestinian Territories resource. Due to these discrepancies, and the broad challenges to quality data collection and analyses related to Arab society in Israel, the numbers in the resource should be taken as approximations. It is possible you will see another resource from a reputable source with different numbers. These issues on their own are revealing of the challenges related to planning effectively for Israel’s Arab minority and understanding the complexities of Arab citizens’ experiences.

SECTION 1: KEY TERMS

A. Population size

1. Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. “[Population of Israel on the Eve of 2022](#)”. 30 December 2021.
2. There is no consensus or official numbers on the number of people holding East Jerusalem. The numbers provided in the fact sheet are IATF approximations from our research and discussions with partners in the field. For example [the most recent Central Bureau of Statistics Report states](#) there are 366,797 Arabs living in Jerusalem. It’s [2020 Media Release](#) on Muslims states 354,000 Muslims live in Jerusalem. In 2019, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel [estimated this number](#) to be 341,453. A 2020 [Reuters article](#) estimated that there are 340,000 Palestinian East Jerusalem Residents.

o In addition to East Jerusalem residents, the 1.5 million number for Arab society in Israel also includes 24,000 Druze residents of the Golan Heights. Like East Jerusalem residents, this population, which lives on land annexed into Israel following 1967, have residency status rather than citizenship. For more information on these distinctions, please see the Basic Distinctions Between Legal Statuses of Arabic Speaking Populations in Israel and the Palestinian Territories resource.

B. Religious and cultural diversity within Arab society

3. **Muslim:** Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. “[The Moslem Population in Israel: Data on the Occasion of Eid al-Adha \(The Feast of the Sacrifice\)](#)”. 15 July 2021.
 - o At the end of 2020, 1.69 million Muslims lived in Israel, nearly all of whom are Arab, comprising 18% of Israeli society. Muslim Arabs: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics.
 - o The above report offers lots of additional data in English for further learning.

4. **Christian:** Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. "[Christmas 2021 — Christians in Israel](#)". 21 December 2021. (Hebrew).
 - o Christian Arabs comprise about 1.5% of Israel's population and 7% of the Arab population within Israel. Nazareth and Haifa have the largest Christian Arab populations in Israel.
 - o Further learning in English: This [Times of Israel article](#) summarizes the December 2021 report linked above and offers additional perspectives. Additionally, you can see the 2020 version of the annual Christmas report from the Central Bureau of Statistics [here](#).
5. **Druze:** Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. "[The Druze Population of Israel On the Occasion of the Nabi Shu'ayb Festival](#)." 22 April 2021.
 - o Druze comprise 7.6% of Israel's Arab population, with the largest Druze population centers being Yarka and Daliyat ak-Karmel.
 - o While the vast majority of Druze hold Israeli citizenship, 24,000 who live in the Golan Heights have residency status. For more information on these distinctions, please see the Basic Distinctions Between Legal Statuses of Arabic Speaking Populations in Israel and the Palestinian Territories resource.
 - o The above report offers lots of additional data in English for further learning. To learn more, see IATF's Fact Sheet on Israel's Druze Population [here](#).
6. **Bedouin:** There are not reliable or consistent data on the Negev Bedouin population. You can read more about this challenge in a [Haaretz article](#) here. IATF uses a 300,000 estimate based on our consultations with experts and the field.
 - o To learn more about Israel's Bedouin population, you can explore IATF's resource on the Bedouin community [here](#).

SECTION 2: GEOGRAPHY

7. **Triangle Region:** TOI Staff. "[Report: Netanyahu suggested to US that Arab Israeli towns be placed in Palestine](#)." Times of Israel. 4 February 2020.
 - o This region borders the West Bank. It has a predominately Muslim population and is traditionally an agricultural region. Umm Al Fahm is the biggest city in the region and the second biggest Arab city in Israel.
8. **Negev:** See footnote 6 for our note about our estimation for the Bedouin population in the Negev.
 - o Rahat, Israel's only Bedouin city is located in the Negev and is the second-largest Arab city in Israel.
9. **North and Galilee:** Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. "[Population by District and Religion 2020](#)". 31 March 2021.
 - o More than half of Arab citizens live in this region, which includes Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel.
10. **Mixed Cities:** Ilan Amit and Liron Shoham. "[Arab Communities and Arab-Jewish Relations in Israeli Mixed Cities](#)." Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues. 13 October 2021.

- o The term “mixed cities” is often used to refer only to the cities that historically have had a large percentage of Jewish and Arab citizens. Today, however, other cities in Israel have significant Arab populations and have come to be treated by the Israeli government and civil society organization as mixed cities. See the above report for more details on this term and its use.
 - The “traditional” mixed cities are: Jerusalem (even though the majority of Arabic-speakers do not hold Israeli citizenship), Haifa, Lod, Ramle, Akko, Tel Aviv-Jaffa.
 - Additional mixed cities are: Nof HaGalil, Ma’alot-Tarshisha, and Beer Sheva is sometimes included as well.
 - Mixed cities were flashpoints of intracommunal violence in May 2021, making headlines. The resource linked above offers a much more detailed examination of the topic of mixed cities in the context of these events.

SECTION 3: JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS

11. **Shared Society:** the number of NGOs is an IATF estimate from ongoing research.
12. **Language Barriers:** Both Jewish and Arab citizens are often far from fluent in each other’s languages when they graduate from high school, with very few Jews in Israel speaking much Arabic at all. This barrier contributes to the limited interactions between these population groups. We chose to focus on Arabic-speakers limited Hebrew abilities because this is a major obstacle to finding employment in a primarily Hebrew-speaking economy, exacerbating socioeconomic gaps.
13. **Survey on Tensions:** David Rosenberg. “[‘There Are Tensions Every Day’: Jewish-Arab Relations, Five Months After Riots Rocked Israel](#)”. Haaretz. 20 October 2021.

SECTION 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

14. **Local Economy:** Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. “[List of Municipal Authorities by District and Socioeconomic Cluster](#)”. 2017.
 - o This stat means that out of 10 possible rankings of socioeconomic strength, 95% of Arab municipalities fall in the 4 lowest categories.
 - o Although this resource is from 2017, the information is by and large up to date in 2022. Confirmed through a conversation with Enya Bana from the Arab Center for Alternative planning in April 2022.
 - o There are 78 Arab local authorities in Israel. This includes 134 Arab towns and villages. Confirmed through a conversation with Enya Bana from the Arab Center for Alternative planning in April 2022.
 - o For a detailed examination of urban planning issues in Arab Society, see IATF’s 2020 report on the topic [here](#).
- 15–16. **Employment Rates and Poverty Rates:** Daphna Aviram-Nitzan and Nasreen Haddad Haj-Yahya. “[Arabs in the Labor Market and COVID-19](#)”. Israeli Democracy Institute. 9 March 2021.

- o This source has other useful status on the economic challenges faced by Arab families and the impact of COVID-19.
- o Employment Diversity is also an important issue for socioeconomic development in Arab society. As larger portions of Arab society complete higher education, the number of Arab employees in influential or high-earning industries has increased; however, gaps remain and representation is uneven:

Underrepresented:

- 12.2% of government employees are Arab after a decade of intensive efforts to increase representation. However, this representation is disproportionately in the Ministry of Health (where 2/3 of Arab civil servants are employed). Source: [“Government of Israel as a Diverse Employer: The Civil Service Commission 2019 Diversity Report.”](#) Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues. 27 August 2020.
- In 2019, approximately 4% of Israel's high-tech workforce was Arab, up from less than 1% in 2009.

Overrepresented:

- 25% of Israel's physicians, 24% of its nurses and 47% of its pharmacists are Arab. Arab medical professionals were publicly on the front lines fighting COVID-19. Source: Yaron, Lee. [“Arab Israelis Fight Coronavirus as First-class Doctors but Second-class Citizens.”](#) Haaretz. 17 May 2020.
- Teachers: More Arab citizens, particularly women, are choosing to study education than there are needed jobs in the sector.

17. **COVID-19:** Bank of Israel. [“Bank of Israel 2020 Report”](#). 6 April 2021. (Hebrew).

- o For an English-language summary of the above resource, see [here](#).

18. **Employment rates and salaries:** Israeli Knesset Research and Information Center. [“Data on employment and wages in Arab society, with an emphasis on the high-tech industry.”](#) 20 September 2020.

19. **Socioeconomic Development:** To learn more about Resolution 550, see this IATF resource [here](#).

SECTION 5: EDUCATION

20. **Number of students:** Calculations came from adding data from Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. Schools, Classes and Students in Primary and Secondary Education. 10 October 2021 [here](#) and [here](#).

21. **Higher education gaps:** Council for Higher Education. [“Accessibility of higher education in the Arab Sector”](#). 10 October 2020.

22. **Matriculation certificate:** Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. [“Matriculation Examinees by Entitlement to a Certificate and Select Characteristics”](#). 28 October 2021.

SECTION 6: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

23. These numbers are accurate as of July 19, 2021. [Click here](#) for the most current list of all Knesset members by political party. There will be new Israeli elections on November 1, 2022.
24. To learn more about these trends and the 2021 election results, see these [IATF resources](#).
25. The Israeli Knesset dissolved on June 30, 2022 with new elections called for November 1, 2022. To read more about how Jewish-Arab relations shaped, and is shaped by, the Knesset dissolution, you can see an IATF analysis [here](#).