



## History

Iraq is situated in historically significant Mesopotamia, where the first known human civilization, the Sumerians, lived and farmed the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Under the control of the Ottoman Turks until 1920, Iraq was assigned to the British after World War I under the name Mandate of Mesopotamia. It gained independence in 1932 under the revived Hashemite monarchy, which was overthrown in a military coup in 1958 by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. 1. The party remained in power until 2003, with General Saddam Hussein as President from 1979 onwards.

## Government

Saddam Hussein was displaced as leader of Iraq following the US-led invasion of 2003. Jalal Talabani became Iraq's first elected president for more than 50 years in 2005.

## Social Issues

Iraq has a population of 29 million people, of which 75% are ethnically Arab, 20% Kurdish, and the remainder a mixture of Iraqi Turkmen or foreigners. 2. Unemployment stands at 15.4% with a quarter of the population living below the poverty line. 3. Following the invasion of 2003, the country has been unstable security-wise, as well as in the ability to provide its people with basic healthcare and public services.

## The Way TV Viewership

Data from a 2011 nationwide study in Iraq found that 97% of the population has access to satellite television and that 18.8%, or 5.3 million people, watch THE WAY TV . The study also found that 2.6 million are watching on a regular daily or weekly basis.

### Religion

Iraq is 55% Shiite Muslim, 20% Sunni Muslim, 20% Kurdish and 5% Christian, of which the largest denominations are the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches. The rapid emigration rate of Iraqi Christians, an estimated 3,000 per year, indicates that the Christian minority has come under much persecution in recent years. There have been numerous incidences of violent attacks, kidnappings and murders against Christians in recent years.

### Prayer Points

Continue to pray for greater stability and security for the people of Iraq.

Pray that our Christian brothers and sisters find the courage to remain in Iraq rather than emigrate.

Pray that the Lord watches over the families and friends of those lost to the turmoil and violence in recent years.

“I am from Iraq and due to the circumstances that we have every day, we cannot go out very much. The Way TV is the only source for our spiritual growth. I very much like the Christian songs because they are a source of joy and hope in the midst of the hardship we face.” A female viewer