IRAQ

Assyrians

Activity: 1968-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- Assyrian claims for an independent state were rejected after World War One. Assyrian nationalism re-emerged in the latter half of the 20th century. By then, many Assyrians had fled the Middle East, and separatist mobilization was concentrated among the Assyrian diaspora; however, while the evidence is limited, we did find indications for local mobilization as well (e.g., Minahan 2016: 37). We peg the movement's start date to 1968, which is when Assyrian nationalists formed the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) in France as a global organization to work for an Assyrian homeland with a degree of autonomy (DeKelaita n.d.; Minahan 2002: 209).
- In 1976, the Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party (BNDP) was formed in the U.S., which sought the creation of an autonomous or even independent Assyrian state in their ancient homeland (Minahan 2002: 209).
- In 1979, the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) was formed in Iraq, which among other things demands autonomy for the Assyrians within the context of a federal Iraq (DeKelaita n.d.). ADM has established offices in Syria as well as Iran (DeKelaita n.d.).
- In 2005, the Assyrians formed the Assyrian General Conference (AGC), which aims to establish an Assyrian region in Iraq. The AGC continues to operate as of 2012.
- In 2014, the ADM formed the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU), an Assyrian militia formed to fight against Da'esh (Eleftheriadou 2015:16). In 2015, the Nineveh Plain Forces (NPF) were formed by Assyrian civillians with the support of the Peshmerga and is affiliated with the Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party which (Hussein 2016).
- According to Roth (2015: 225), the Assyrians continued to make claims for both autonomy and an independent state.
- Since most Assyrians live in Iraq and Syria (when excluding the diaspora in the U.S. etc.), the countries that encompass the state of Assyrian, we list the Assyrian self-determination movement under both Iraq and Syria, though it should be noted that Assyrian claims for autonomy seem more prominent in Iraq. [start date: 1968; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- There have been both claims made for an independent Assyrian state and internal autonomy, but overall the latter claim seems dominant (cf. Minahan 2002: 209; Minahan 2016: 37; DeKelaita n.d.; Roth 2015: 225). The majority of organised Assyrian groups including the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA), the Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party, and the Assyrian Democratic Movement all advocate for autonomy. [1968-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- All calls for independence of Assyrians come from diaspora groups, such as the AUA and the International Confederation of the Assyrian Nation (Minahan 2002: 209; Roth 2015: 225).

Therefore there are no politically significant claims for independence within Iraq itself. [no independence claims]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- Iraqi Assyrian claims mainly concern the Nineveh province, with Mosul as its capital, although some groups have also claimed the smaller Nineveh plains region within the province (Roth 2015: 225). We code the former claim, which seems to be the dominant one, based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- Although Assyrians in Iraq have participated in Kurdish uprisings, we found no evidence that they have engaged in secessionist violence. The above-mentioned Assyrian militias act as civil defence forces and we found no evidence for separatist violence and so code the entire movement as NVIOLSD. The Assyrians have, however, been the victims of one-sided violence: in 1988, over 2,000 Assyrians died when the Iraqi military, also shelling Kurdish villages, bombarded 5 Assyrian villages with chemical weapons. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Assyrians claim direct descent from the inhabitants of the ancient Assyrian empire (2500-612 B.C.). Assyrians were among the first converts to Christianity. The Christian population in the Middle East dwindled from the 7th century due to forced conversions to Islam. The Assyrian language, formerly the region's lingua franca, became supplanted by Arabic around 900 (Minahan 2002: 206f).
- In the 19th century, the Assyrian Christians suffered from persecution by the Ottomon authorities in response to European overtures to Christians in the Middle East. In an 1895 massacre, a large number of Assyrians were killed (Minahan 2002: 207f).
- A cultural and national revival began in the mid-19th century, which ultimately supplanted the ancient dialects with a modern literary Assyrian language and united the disparate peoples and sects as one nation (Minahan 2002: 208).
- Assyrians developed a national movement and protested against Turkish rule in the early 20th century. During WWI, Assyrians supported enemies of Turkey and by the end of the war in 1918, many Assyrians perished in Turkish reprisals and massacres, and many also fled the region. Contrary to earlier promises by European powers, the Assyrians were not given an independent state in Versailles. However, Assyrians in the Jhezeira/Jazira District of Syria, controlled by France, were given a measure of autonomy (Minahan 2002: 208).
- The Mosul Commission appointed by the League of Nations recommended in 1924 that Assyrian refugees be resettled in the Mosul district with a large measure of autonomy; however, this was rejected by Turkey and Iraq. Iraq was awarded the Mosul area in 1925, wich led to years of severe repression (Minahan 2002: 209).

- Iraq became independent in 1932, initially as a monarchy. There was some guarantee of ethnic minority rights under the new regime, but the situation deteriorated after WWII (Minahan 2002: 1930f).
- Tensions between Assyrians and the Iraqi government led to a massacra in which ca. 3,000 unarmed Assyrians were killed in 1933. The massacre led to further emigration (Minahan (2002: 209).
- In 1942, the Jazira district became an integral part of Syria, suggesting that Assyrian autonomy in Syria became more limited (MRGI).
- We found no concessions or restrictions in the ten years before the start date.

Concessions and restrictions

- According to Laing-Marshall (2001: 99), the Iraqi government increased the language rights of Assyrians in 1972 when, in a move parallel to an agreement reached around the same time with the Kurds, Syriac was officially recognized as one of the languages to be used for primary school instruction in areas where the majority of students were Syriac-speaking. Laing-Marshall further explains that the Iraqi government around the same time allowed the Syriac-speaking community to "establish cultural clubs and organizations, radio programs and magazines, and the state itself established an academy for the preservation and academic study of the Syriac language." Similarly, the UNPO suggests that the new Baathist government issued Presidential decree #251 in 1972, which granted cultural rights to Assyrians. DeKelaita (2001) also confirms the 1972 concession, but suggests that "these acts were more rhetoric than substance", making this an ambiguous case. [1972: cultural rights concession]
- In 1974, the Iraqi government embarked on an Arabization campaign focused mostly on Kurds (Human Rights Watch; Metz 1988). The Arabization reached its peak between 1986-89 when, in the midst of the Iran-Iraq War, Hussein carried out the genocidal Anfal campaign against Iraq's Kurds, culminating in a chemical attack on the civilian population of Halabja in 1988. We found evidence that also the Assyrians' ethnic rights were affected. Specifically:
    - Laing-Marshall (2001: 100) reports that the cultural privileges of the Assyrians were once again restricted after 1975 (Laing-Marshall 2001: 100). [1975: cultural rights restriction]
    - According to MRGI, "The 1987 and 1997 national censuses obliged all Assyrians to choose between an Arab or Kurdish identity; those who insisted on identifying as Assyrian were struck off the list or arbitrarily registered as Arab or Kurd." We code a single restriction in 1987. [1987: cultural rights restriction]
    - According to Human Rights Watch, after 1991 the Iraqi government focused its Arabization efforts on the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, when Kurds, Turkomans, and Assyrians came under constant pressure to sign "ethnic identity correction" forms relinquishing their ethnicity and registering officially as Arabs. "Non-Arabs were also required to become members of the Ba`th Party, and to serve in "volunteer" militias such as Jaysh al-Quds (Jerusalem Army) or the Fida'iyyi Saddam (Saddam's Martyrs, often referred to in Western media as the Fedayeen). Families that refused to comply were issued formal expulsion orders requiring them to leave their homes and move to Kurdish-controlled areas. The government of Iraq displaced approximately 120,000 persons from Kirkuk and other areas under government control from 1991 to 2000 in furtherance of its Arabization campaign." [1992: cultural rights restriction]
- According to MRGI, the Arabization campaign came to an end after the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. With the 2005 constitution, Iraq became a federal parliamentary republic and the constitution also recognized minority rights. Article 4 of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution recognizes "Turkomen" as an official minority language in the "administrative units in which they constitute density of population" (along with Syriac). Minority rights had already been guaranteed under the 2004 Transitional Adminisrative Law (TAL) (Natali 2005: 66f). [2004: cultural rights concession]
- On 21 January 2014 the Iraq Council of Ministers approved a plan to establish three new provinces in Iraq. One province would be in Fallujah, a second would be in north Iraq, in Tuz Khormato and the third in the Nineveh Plain where Assyrians made up 40% of the population prior to invasion by

Da'esh. This governate would have served as a safe haven for minorities while remaining under the control of the Iraqi government (BetBasoo and Kino 2014; Hanna and Barber 2017: 14).

- On 4 October 2021, Iraqi Kurdistan's Prime Minister Masrour Barzani announced that Ankawa, an Assyrian Christian-majority suburb, would become a separate, autonomous district from Erbil (Kranz 2021). This could be seen as an autonomy concession (though this is at the sub-municipal level), but is after 2020, the last year we cover.

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

Movement	Assyrians
Scenario	No match/1:1
EPR group(s)	Assyrians
Gwgroupid(s)	64504000

Power access

- EPR codes the Assyrians as discriminated against between 1980-2003 and as powerless thereafter. EPR does not include the Assyrians between 1968-1979, but it codes the Sunni Arabs with "Monopoly", suggesting that only Sunni Arabs were represented at the time. We found no evidence for government representation in Minahan (2002) and MRGI, either. [1968-1979: powerless; 1980-2003: discriminated; 2004-2020: powerless]

Group size

- Group size estimates for the Assyrians vary widely. EPR suggests an estimate of 0.1%, or ca 50,000 Assyrians, which seems too low. Shoup (2011: 30) suggests a population of approx. 1 million, or 3% of Iraq's population, which seems high, while Minahan (2002: 205) suggests a similarly large population. As Bohac (2009) explains, the large variation emerges because census data is unreliable and because Assyrian churches tend to exaggerate the number of their members. We draw here on Bohac (2009), who suggests that there were ca. 600,000 Assyrians in the north of Iraq as well as Baghdad and Mosul in 2009 (as well as ca. 120,000 Assyrians in Syria's al-Jazeera district; 50,000 Assyrians in Iran's Urmiya region and in large cities; and 20,000 Assyrians in Turkey). According to the World Bank, Iraq's population was approx. 29 million in 2009. [0.0207]

Regional concentration

- EPR codes regional concentration, but EPR applies a lower bar and does not require that a majority of group members live in a regional base. Minahan (2002: 205) does not provide any concrete figures, but the narrative suggests that the Assyrian population is relatively dispersed. Additional evidence comes from Metz (1988), who states that "The Assyrians live mainly in the major cities and in the rural areas of northeastern Iraq where they tend to be professionals and businessmen or independent farmers." Another source suggests that "Assyrians live today as minorities in some Syrian and Iraqi areas" (Enab Baladi 2018). Yet another source suggests that "Those Assyrians who chose to remain in Iraq were dispersed among various settlements, and some migrated to large urban centres" (Laing-Marshall 2001: 97). Overall, based on the limited available evidence, it seems unlikely that the criteria for regional concentration are met. [not regionally concentrated]

Kin

- There has been significant Assyrian emigration and there are significantly sized communities in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and South America (Minahan 2002: 205). Furthermore, several sources suggest numerically significant transborder ethnic kin in Syria, including Bohac (2009) who estimates that there are ca. 120,000 Assyrians in Syria. [kin in adjacent state]

Sources

Assyrian General Conference. http://assyriangc.com/ [December 12, 2013].

BetBasoo, Peter and Kino, Nuri (2014). 'Will a province for Assyrians stop their exodus from Iraq?', *Assyrian International News Agency*, 22 January. http://www.aina.org/releases/20140122133822.htm. [04 August 2022].

Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party. http://wordpress.betnahrain.org/modules/mrbs/week.php?year=2013&month=09&day=15 [December 13, 2013].

Bohac, Artur (2009). "Assyrian Ethnic Identity in a Globalizing World." *Beyond Globalisation – International Conference, Ostrava, 2009*, pp. 67-72. https://globalization.osu.cz/publ/beyond_globalisation.pdf [March 9, 2022]

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min (2010). "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel: New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.

Costa-Roberts, Daniel (2015). '8 things you didn't know about Assyrian Christians', PBS, 21 March. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/8-things-didnt-know-assyrian-christians. [04 August 2022].

DeKelaita, Robert (n.d.). "The Origins and Development of Assyrian Nationalism." MA Thesis, University of Chicago.

Eleftheriadou, Marina (2015). 'Christian militias in Syria and Iraq: beyond the neutrality/passivity debate'. *The Middle East Bulletin*. 28, pp. 13-19.

Enab Baladi (2018). "Assyrians in Syria … An Ethnic Minority Group Resisting War." https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/04/assyrians-in-syria-an-ethnic-minority-group-resisting-war/ [March 9, 2022].

GADM (2019). Database of Global Administrative Boundaries, Version 3.6. https://gadm.org/ [November 19, 2021].

Hanish, Shak (2011). "Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in Iraq: The Chaldo-Assyrian Case." *Digest of Middle East Studies 20*(2): 161-177.

Hanna, Reine and Barber, Matthew (2017). 'Erasing Assyrians: How the KRG abuses human rights, undermines democracy, and conquers minority homelands', Assyrian Confederation of Europe

(ACE). https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/4ec518_18285c91d7924250aa1c52b0b4c7da9f.pdf. [04 August 2022].

Human Rights Watch (2004). "Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq." https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/iraq0804.pdf [March 10, 2022].

Hussein, Rikar (2016) 'Christian Iraqi forces join fight against IS', *VOA News,* 08 February. https://www.voanews.com/a/christian-iraqi-forces-join-fight-against-is/3181940.html. [04 August 2022].

Keesing's Record of World Events. http://www.keesings.com [April 3, 2002].

Kranz, Michal (2021). 'Safe haven: What will Ankawa's new autonomy mean for Kurdistan's Christians?' *The New Arab.* 04 November. https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/what-will-autonomy-mean-iraqs-largest-christian-town. [01 August 2022].

Laing-Marshall, Andrea I. (2001). *Modern Assyrian Identity and the Church of the East.* MA Thesis, University of Toronto.

Metz, Helen Chapin (ed.) (1988). *Iraq: A Country Study.* Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress.

Minahan, James (1996). *Nations without States: A Historical Dictionary of Contemporary National Movements.* London: Greenwood Press, pp. 47-50.

Minahan, James (2002). *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 205-210.

Minahan, James (2016). *Encyclopedia of Stateless Nations. Second Edition.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, pp. 36f.

Minorities at Risk Project (MAR) (2009). College Park, MD: University of Maryland.

Minority Rights Group International. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Groups*. http://minorityrights.org/directory/ [November 9, 2021].

Natali, Denise (2005). *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Roth, Christopher F. (2015). *Let's Split! A Complete Guide to Separatist Movements and Aspirant Nations, from Abkhazia to Zanzibar.* Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books.

Shoup, John A. (2011). *Ethnic Groups of Africa and the Middle East. An Encyclopedia.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

UNPO. "Assyria." https://unpo.org/members/7859 [March 9, 2022].

Vogt, Manuel, Nils-Christian Bormann, Seraina Rüegger, Lars-Erik Cederman, Philipp Hunziker, and Luc Girardin (2015). "Integrating Data on Ethnicity, Geography, and Conflict: The Ethnic Power Relations Data Set Family." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(7): 1327-1342.

Basrawis

Activity: 2008-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The Basrawis mobilized for a separate autonomous or even independent state in the 1920s (Visser 2007).
- Basrawi separatism re-emerged after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. The earliest evidence for separatist mobilization we could find is in 2008, when "thousands of protesters in Iraq's southern oil city of Basra demanded their own federal region" according to Reuters. The 2008 demonstration occurred in the context of a large-scale petition drive for a referendum on autonomy in Basra (Jansen 2008). The petition was signed by 34,800 people, but was nevertheless rejected.
- The movement is ongoing. In 2010, 16 members of the Basra Governate Council submitted another request for an autonomy referendum, which was again rejected (Al-Jafffal & Khalaf 2020).
- Minahan (2016: 71) reports further autonomy demands made in 2011 and 2014. 2014 saw another mobilization aimed at an autonomy referendum, but again the federal government refused to agree to a referendum.
- Al-Jafffal & Khalaf (2020) report further efforts in 2018 and 2019.
- According to a 2019 survey, a large majority of Basrawis favor some sort of autonomy (Al-Jafffal & Khalaf 2020). Petroleum is the leading industry of Basra and a key demand of the movement has been greater control over natural resources and oil revenues. [start date: 2008; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- Claims are focused on an autonomous status within Iraq for the Basra region and, in particular, control over natural resources, including oil (cf. Al-Jafffal & Khalaf 2020; Jansen 2008; Minahan 2016: 71). [2008-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

NA

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- Minahan (2016: 70) suggests that the Basrawi homeland includes four governates in Iraq: Basra, Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Wasit. However, the much more detailed account by Al-Jafffal & Khalaf (2020) suggests that autonomy claims were focused on Basra Governate (or Basra Province). We code the claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- We found no evidence for separatist violence and so code the entire movement as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Basra came under Turkish Ottoman rule in 1534, with Basra forming the center of a new administrative district in 1547. Conquered by Persians in 1775–79, the Basrawis were mostly converted to Shi'a Islam (Minahan 2016: 71).
- Iraq was carved out of the Ottoman Empire after WWI. Initially a British mandate, Iraq became independent in 1932. The Basrawis had mobilized for a separate autonomous or even independent state in the 1920s (Al-Jafffal & Khalaf 2020; Visser 2007).
- Although historically Basra had been a multiethnic city, today Basra is mostly Shia Arab (Encyclopedia.com; Minahan 2016: 71).
- Between 1968 and 2003, Iraq was governed by the Baath party initially under the presidency of Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr, followed by Saddam Hussein from 1979 onwards. Under Baath rule and especially under Saddam Hussein, Shiites (Shia Arabs) were discriminated against and excluded from power (EPR, MRGI). Repression was mostly of a political nature, but also involved the closure of Shiite religious centers and the utting of restrictions on their activities and publications (Noorbaksh 2008). In a 2002 report, the U.S. State Department noted that "the [Baathist] Government severely limits freedom of religion in practice, represses the Shi'a religious leadership […], desecrated Shi'a mosques and holy sites, interfered with Shi'a religious education, and prevented Shi'a adherents from performing their religious rite."
- The situation improved for Shiites after the 2003 invasion. The 2004 Transitional Adminisrative Law (TAL) and the 2005 constitution guaranteed religious freedom (U.S. State Department 2007). Shiites assumed high-ranking government positions. [2004: cultural rights concession]

Concessions and restrictions

- Iraq's 2005 constitution defined Iraq as a federal state; however, no meaningful decentralization has taken place beyond the ad-hoc arrangements with Iraqi Kurdistan (Alkadiri 2020). We do not code a concession.
- In 2008, there was a large-scale petition drive for an autonomy referendum (Jansen 2008). The petition was signed by 34,800 people, but was rejected. 2014 saw another mobilization aimed at an autonomy referendum, but again the federal government refused to agree to a referendum. We do not code concessions.
- In July 2018, the Basra Government Council submitted a direct request to establish a region and in 2019 it decided in a special session to transform the governorate into a region, aiming to hold a referendum later in the same year but the government suppressed the movement and rejected calls for a referendum (al-Jaffal and Khalaf 2020). We do not code a concession.

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

Movement	Basrawis
Scenario	n:1
EPR group(s)	Shi'a Arabs
Gwgroupid(s)	64502000

Power access

- Shia Arabs have been in a leading role in all governments since the 2003 invasion, occupying a majority of cabinet posts (EPR). We could not find specific evidence for Basrawi representation in the government; however, while many sources discuss tendencies to marginalize Sunni Arabs, we found no reports that specific Shia Arab regions would have been left out from the government (cf. eg. Katzman & Humud 2015). On this basis, we apply a junior partner code. This coding is ambiguous and would profit from more research. [2008-2020: junior partner]

Group size

- Minahan (2016: 70) suggests a population of 4.5-6 million. This seems high, given that Basra Governate's population was estimated as 2.9 million in 2018. We use 2.9 million as our estimate and combine it with the World Bank's 38.43 million estimate of Iraq's population in 2018. [0.0755]

Regional concentration

- Encyclopedia.com and Minahan (2016: 71) suggest that Basrawis (Shia Arabs from Basra) make up the predominant part of the local population. We found no precise data on self-identified Basrawis outside of Basra, but the regional character of this movement makes regional concentration highly likely. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- While there are ties to Shia and esp. Shia Arab groups in other countries such as Iran, we do not code transborder ethnic kin because the same ethnic ties apply to all Shia Arabs in Iraq and not just the Basrawis. [no kin]

Sources

Al-Jaffal, Omar, and Safaa Khalaf (2020). "A New Region, or Independence? Basra's Demands Amidst a Local Government Crisis." LSE Blog. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2020/10/21/a-new-region-or-independence-basras-demands-amidst-a-local-government-crisis/ [08 August 2022].

Alkadiri, Raad (2020). "Federalism and Iraq's Constitutional Stalemate." Chatham House. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/11/federalism-and-iraqs-constitutional-stalemate [November 19, 2021].

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min (2010). "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel: New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.

Encyclopedia.com. "Basra." https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/asia/iraq-political-geography/basra [March 11, 2022].

GADM (2019). Database of Global Administrative Boundaries, Version 3.6. https://gadm.org/ [November 19, 2021].

IRI (2020) *Living in the Shadows: The Enduring Marginalization of Black Iraqis*. International Republican Institute. https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/basra-series2-report-4-bleed.pdf [07 August 2022].

Jansen, Michael (2008). Shias in Basra Calling for Referendum on Autonomy." The Irish Times, December 15. https://www.irishtimes.com/news/shias-in-basra-calling-for-referendum-on-autonomy-1.923933 [March 11, 2022].

Katzman, Kenneth, and Carla E. Humud (2015). "Iraq: Politics and Governance." Congressional Research Service. http://goodtimesweb.org/diplomacy/2015/RS21968.pdf [March 11, 2022].

Minahan, James (2016). *Encyclopedia of Stateless Nations. Second Edition.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, pp. 70f.

Minority Rights Group International. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Groups*. http://minorityrights.org/directory/ [06 August 2022].

Mohammed, Aref (2008). "Thousands Demand Separate Region for Iraq's Basra." December 27. https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-basra-sb-idUKTRE4BQ1FP20081227 [March 11, 2022].

Noorbaksh, Mehdi (2008). "Shiism and Ethnic Politics in Iraq." *Middle East Policy 15*(2): 53-65.

Salloum, Saad. (2020) 'The killing of George Floyd sparks controversy over African-Iraqi rights', *Al-Monitor*, 04 June. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/06/iraq-minorities-afropiraqis-us-protests-george-floyd.html. [06 August 2022].

Sattar, Omar. (2019) 'Iraq's Basra province seeks upgrade to federal region', *Al-Monitor,* 26 April. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/04/iraq-basra-region-federalism.html. [06 August 2022].

Visser, Reidar (2007). "Ethnicity, Federalism and the Idea of Sectarian Citizenship in Iraq: A Critique." *International Review of the Red Cross* 89(868): 809-822.

Vogt, Manuel, Nils-Christian Bormann, Seraina Rüegger, Lars-Erik Cederman, Philipp Hunziker, and Luc Girardin (2015). "Integrating Data on Ethnicity, Geography, and Conflict: The Ethnic Power Relations Data Set Family." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(7): 1327-1342.

Kurds

Activity: 1945-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- Nagel (1978: 22) explains that the first 20th century bid for Kurdish autonomy began in May 1919, when Shaykh Mahmoud of the Barzani tribe drove out the small British force there and declared independence. Shaykh Mahmoud was routed by a British division a few months later and fled to Iran; however, he was to repeat his 1919 actions several times during the next 25 years, "always seizing a town, declaring independence from Iraq and being driven or exiled to Iran" (Nagel 1978: 22). 1919 is coded as the start date.
- Roth (2015: 219) reports that an independent Kingdom of Kurdistan was proclaimed in northern Iraq in 1922. The short-term kingdom was crushed by Britain in 1924 (Roth 2015: 219).
- Nagel (1978: 23) explains that the Barzani tribe emerged as the main force in the struggle for Kurdish autonomy in 1927, a struggle she describes as ongoing at the time of her writing.
- The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) was formed in Iran in 1946. It held its first congress in Baghdad in August 1946. The party demanded autonomy for Iraqi Kurdistan (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 163). We code the movement from 1945, the first year we cover in the data, while noting prior nonviolent activity as we found no evidence for separatist violence in 1944.
- In 1964, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) split from the KDP. While KDP was willing to accept some form of autonomy within Iraq, PUK was more nationalist (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 163).
- After the Gulf War, the Kurds in Iraq created a de facto autonomous state in northern Iraq, which became official after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion (Minahan 2002: 1060; UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia).
- The movement is ongoing (MRGI; Roth 2015: 223). [start date: 1919; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- Prior to 1945, Kurds declared independence several time, frequently over relatively small territories (Nagel 1978: 22; Roth 2015: 219). However, Nagel explains that from 1927, the main force in the struggle for Kurdish self-determination was the Barzani tribe, and she describes the movement as one for autonomy. In 1946, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) was formed in Iran in 1946. It held its first congress in Baghdad in August 1946. The party was a main vehicle for the Kurdish movement in Iraq and demanded autonomy (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 163; McDowall 2004: 242).
- The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), established in 1974, later emerged as another influential party in Iraqi Kurdistan. Hewitt & Cheetham (2000: 163) describe the PUK as more nationalist; however, the PUK is nonetheless described as autonomist (Wanche 2006: 190). The autonomist KDP remained the dominant Kurdish party in Iraq (McDowall 2004: 242).
- In 1991, Kurdistan became de-facto independent. Officially, however, federalism remained the dominant goal of the Kurdish leadership.
    - In 1992, the Kurdistan National Assembly gave a unanimous commitment "to determine its fate and define its legal relationship with the central authority at this stage of history on the basis of a federation within a democratic parliamentary Iraq" (Bengio 2006: 178).
    - Furthermore, the leaders of both the KDP and the PUK promoted the concept of a federal Iraq (Galbraith 2006: 270) and both PUK and KDP "have repeatedly denied any suggestions that their aim is to establish an independent Kurdistan" (Wanche 2006: 190).

- However, despite official demands for autonomy within a federal Iraq, the "longing for an independent state persists among Kurds, and many Kurds insist on independence as a distant possibility or long-term goal" (Wanche 2006: 190).
    - This divergence between public opinion and the official position of the KDP and the PUK also continued after the US-led invasion and the overthrow of the Hussein regime in 2003. In 2004, a referendum movement collected 1,700,000 signatures demanding an independent Kurdistan (Galbraith 2005) and in an unofficial referendum in 2005, 98% of the voters voted in favor of independence (Rogg and Rimscha 2007: 833).
    - While being aware that "an independent state is not a realistic option", for the PUK and the KDP this referendum was "welcome insofar as it demonstrated to their partners in Baghdad what direction things could take if the federalism scheme fails" (Rogg and Rimscha 2007: 833).
    - Far-reaching autonomy was also the Kurdish goal during the drafting of the permanent Iraqi Constitution in 2005, when the Kurdish leaders sought to consolidate Kurdistan's autonomous institutions and powers within a federal Iraq. The powers of the federal government should be limited to foreign policy, defense, monetary policy, and customs (Galbraith 2006: 272). According to Ala Jabar (2013: 132), "the economic dependency of Kurdistan on Iraq has restrained Kurds from secession" and has made them demand federation with the rest of Iraq.
- Despite the fact that independence has been the obvious long-term goal of a majority of the Kurds in Iraq, autonomy is coded as the dominant claim until 2017 on this basis.
- Iraqi Kurdistan held an unofficial independence referendum in September 2017. Both the PUK and the KDP (and many other parties) recommended a 'Yes' vote (Aydogan 2020; O'Driscoll and Baser: 653). Based on this, we code independence as the dominant claim from 2017 onward. We already reflect this change in 2017, in contravention of the January 1 rule, because the independence claim and subsequent referendu led to violence. [1945-2016: autonomy claim; 2017-2020: independence claim]

Independence claims

- Between 1919 - 1926 Kurds declared independence several times, but this claim was pushed aside by a more dominant autonomy claim from 1927 (Nagel 1978: 22; Roth 2015: 219).
- As noted above, for a long time there had been a divergence between the "official" claim (autonomy) and public support for outright independence (Wanche 2006: 190). In 2004, public support for independence resulted in an independence movement, which collected 1,700,000 signatures demanding an independent Kurdistan (Galbraith 2005). In an unofficial referendum in 2005, 98% of the voters voted in favor of independence (Rogg and Rimscha 2007: 833). There was another independence referendum in 2017, with major actors like the PUK and KDP recommending a yes vote (Aydogan 2020; O'Driscoll and Baser: 653).
- While there had clearly been secessionist sentiment before 2004, we could not find evidence for an organized independence movement pre-2004. Therefore, we code the start date in 2004. [start date: 2004; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Kurds is the Kurdish populated area (the Kurdistan Region) in northern Iraq, which includes the Kurdistan Autonomous Region (also named South Kurdistan) with the provinces Dohuk, Arbil, and Sulaimaniyah being officially under Kurdish administration (Roth 2015: 223f). We code this claim based on the map in Roth (2015: 198).

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- The MAR 5-year rebellion score is 4 in 1945-1949, suggesting "small-scale guerilla activity". MAR's coding notes give no clearer indication, but Nagel (1978: 23) reports that the only revolt of any proportion occurred in 1945 and was led by Mullah Mustafa Barzani. However, Nagel also writes that between 1941 and 1953, "the Kurds refrained from rebellion since they were generally ignored by a central government beset by continual coups and personnel changes." We could not find more precise casualty estimates, but this qualitative account makes it unlikely that the 25 deaths threshold was met.
- Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl (2019) code a civil war over Kurdistan in 1961-1970 and 1974-1975. Thus, these years are coded with HVIOLSD.
- UCDP/PRIO codes armed conflict in 1973, thus a LVIOLSD code.
    - 1971-1972 is coded as NVIOLSD. There was a peace agreement in 1970 and the UCDP/PRIO coding notes suggest a short de-escalation.
- The 1976-1984 LVIOLSD code follows UCDP/PRIO.
- The conflict again reaches the HVIOLSD threshold in 1985-1996 based on Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl (2019).
- MAR's rebellion score is 4 in 1997-2000, suggesting "small-scale guerilla activity". However, no other source would suggest separatist violence. According to SSW, after 1996, "almost all violence has been between Kurdish factions." We stop coding separatist violence in 1996 accordingly.
- MAR codes a rebellion score of six in 2003 (indicating "large-scale guerilla activity") and EPR code the Kurds as involved in armed conflict in 2004-2007 and in 2011. The EPR codes are due to the involvement of ethnic Kurds in a rebellion by an organization called Ansar al-Islam (Supporters of Islam). The rebellion began in 2003, which likely explains MAR's coding as well. We do not code separatist violence because this insurgency relates to ideology/control over the central government.
- In 2017, Kurds held an independence referendum, which led to clashes between Kurdistan and the Iraqi government. UCDP/PRIO suggests that "More than 25 people (the UCDP threshold for inclusion) were killed in the clashes between the Iraqi army (supported by the Popular Mobilization Forces) and the Peshmerga forces. The violence could, however, not be included in UCDP data due to a lack of a stated goal of incompatibility in the dyad Government of Iraq - KRG." According to the International Crisis Group (2020), the clashes were "triggered by a Kurdish independence referendum staged the previous month, which raised Baghdad's concerns that the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil would declare Kurdish statehood and annex Kirkuk, other disputed territories and their petroleum riches." In other words, the clashes were motivated by a dispute over territory, which counts as separatist violence. The Kurds had to retreat from 20% of the territory they occupied after the clashes, including Kirkuk.
- [1945-1960: NVIOLSD; 1961-1970: HVIOLSD; 1971-1972: NVIOLSD; 1973: LVIOLSD; 1974-1975: HVIOLSD; 1976-1984: LVIOLSD; 1985-1996: HVIOLSD; 1997-2000: LVIOLSD; 2001-2016: NVIOLSD; 2017: LVIOLSD; 2018-2020: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Kurdish territory was split between the Safavid and Ottoman empires after the Persian defeat in the battle of Chaldiran in 1514. In the Ottoman Empire, the Kurdish territory was ruled as a separate principality with considerable autonomy. This autonomy was ended in the 19th century, when the decaying empire centralized its administration and abolished minority self-rule. The end of autonomy sparked several Kurdish revolts against the Ottoman Empire (Minahan 2002: 1058).

- After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the Kurdish were promised independence in the Treaty of Sèvres that partitioned the Ottoman Empire. However, the treaty was abandoned after the Kemalist victory in the Turkish War of Independence and the formation of a modern Turkish state. The treaty of Lausanne signed by Turkey and the allies in 1923 partitioned Kurdistan between Turkey, Iran, and the British and French administrations of Iraq and Syria (Minahan 2002: 1058).
- Iraq became independent in 1932, initially as a monarchy. There was some guarantee of ethnic minority rights under the new regime, but the situation deteriorated after WWII (Minahan 2002: 1930f).
- We found no concessions or restrictions in the ten years before the movement start date.

Concessions and restrictions

- In 1958 a group of nationalist and anti-imperialist army officers overthrew the monarchy and declared Iraq a republic (MRGI). Initially the new military dictator, Qasim, made some overturmes towards the Kurds; however, as Natali (2005) explains after 1959 Qasim imposed martial law, closed down Kurdish organizations, arrested Kurdish leaders, and started bombing rural areas. In addition, Natali (2005: 52) explains that Qasim engaged in an assimilation/Arabization campaign and, among other things, Arabized the names of Kurdish localities. The Arabization of Iraqi identity continued under the rule of Qasim's successors (Natali 2005: 52f). [1959: cultural rights restriction]
- President Abdul Rahman Arif, who assumed power in 1966, promised the Kurds autonomy and there were negotiations with Kurdish elites; however, ultimately the plans went nowhere due to opposition by conservative military Arab groups. Instead Arif proceeded to arrest Kurdish nationalists and prohibiting Kurdish nationalist organizations (Natali 2005: 53; Metz 1988).
- Between 1968 and 2003, Iraq was governed by the Baath Party, initially under Al-Bakr and from 1979 under Saddam Hussein (MRGI). Baathists initially tried to appease the Kurds and in March 1970 the government offered Kurds an autonomy agreement. The arrangement was almost identical to the earlier (unsuccessful) settlement from the mid-1960s (Metz 1988). The government implemented parts of the plan, creating a Kurdish administration in the North and another Kurdish province called Dihuk (Natali 2005: 57; MRGI). This led to the end of the 1961-1970 civil war (Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl 2019). [1970: autonomy concession]
- However, in 1972, the government stopped implementing key parts of the agreement (Natali 2005: 58-60). The restriction is confirmed by Metz (1988), who suggests that "The 1970 agreement unraveled throughout the early 1970s." [1972: autonomy restriction]
- Metz (1988) reports a combination of conciliatory and repressive policies in 1974-1976, including a new autonomy plan that would give Kurds control over all local affairs except defense and foreign affairs. According to Human Rights Watch, the autonomous region was unilaterally proclaimed in 1974 by the Iraqi government and covered the northern governorates of Arbil, Sulaimaniyya, and Dohuk. Further, HRW explains that "The area comprised some 14,000 square miles but included only half of the land area claimed by Iraq's Kurds, and excluded the oil-rich lands around the city of Kirkuk." However, we found no evidence to suggest that the autonomy plan was meaningfully implemented and MRGI explains that by time, it had become clear "that Saddam intended to rob the term autonomy of its meaning." We do not code a concession.
- In the wake of the 1974 autonomy decree, the Iraqi government embarked on an Arabization campaign of "the oil-producing areas around Khanaqin, evicting Kurdish farmers and replacing them with Arab tribal families from southern Iraq. Tens of thousands of villagers from the Barzani tribe were also forcibly removed from their homes following the collapse in 1975 of the Kurdish revolt, led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani. The villagers were relocated to barren sites in the southern deserts, where they had to rebuild their lives from scratch. By the late 1970s, the Iraqi government had forcibly evacuated as least a quarter of a million Kurdish men, women, and children from areas bordering Iran and Turkey (Human Rights Watch). Metz (1988) confirms the Arabization campaign. According to Human Rights Watch, the Arabization campaign in Northern Iraq continued throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. [1975: autonomy restriction]

    - The Arabization reached its peak between 1986-89 when, in the midst of the Iran-Iraq War, Hussein carried out the genocidal Anfal campaign against Iraq's Kurds, culminating in a chemical attack on the civilian population of Halabja in 1988.
- After the Gulf War of 1991, the Kurds of northern Iraq created an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq under the protection of foreign military units (Minahan 2002: 1060). We do not code a concession because autonomous state was of a de facto nature and not the result of a concession by Iraq's central government (Natali 2005).
- According to Human Rights Watch, after 1991 the Iraqi government focused its Arabization efforts on the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, when Kurds, Turkomans, and Assyrians came under constant pressure to sign "ethnic identity correction" forms relinquishing their ethnicity and registering officially as Arabs. "Non-Arabs were also required to become members of the Ba`th Party, and to serve in "volunteer" militias such as Jaysh al-Quds (Jerusalem Army) or the Fida'iyyi Saddam (Saddam's Martyrs, often referred to in Western media as the Fedayeen). Families that refused to comply were issued formal expulsion orders requiring them to leave their homes and move to Kurdish-controlled areas. The government of Iraq displaced approximately 120,000 persons from Kirkuk and other areas under government control from 1991 to 2000 in furtherance of its Arabization campaign." [1992: cultural rights restriction]
- According to Natali (2005: 65), the political and cultural opportunities opened further after the 2003 invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein. With the 2005 constitution, Iraq became a federal parliamentary republic and the constitution also recognized minority rights. The autonomous Kurdistan region was officially recognized under the 2005 constituion (MRGI); however, the autonomous region was officially recognized already in 2004 in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). The TAL also gave Kurds veto power over federal laws (Natali 2005: 66f). [2004: cultural rights concession; autonomy concession]
- MRGI: "Kurds used their position in the government elected in January 2005 to secure a process that would reverse the Hussein-era process of Arabization in Kirkuk, moving toward its eventual formal inclusion in the Kurdish region by a referendum due by the end of 2007." [2005: autonomy concession]
- However, the referendum on the status of Kirkuk planned for 2007 was never held (Saeed 2017). [2007: autonomy restriction]
- A non-binding referendum was held on 25 September 2017 for independence of the KRI. 92.7% of the 3.3 million voted in favour of independence with a 72% turnout (O'Driscoll and Baser: 653). The Iraqi Supreme Court ruled that the referendum was unconstitutional (BBC 2017). We do not code this as a restriction because the referendum was unilateral. Iraq re-conquered 20% of the territory held by Kurds after the referendum, including Kirkuk. We do not code a restriction because the territories were never officially part of Iraqi Kurdistan (International Crisis Group 2020).

Regional autonomy

- There were some moves toward autonomy in the early 1970s; however, implementation was partial and does not warrant an autonomy code (see above).
- After the Gulf War of 1991, the Kurds of northern Iraq created an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq under the protection of foreign military units (Minahan 2002: 1060). The autonomy was initially of a de facto nature but became officially recognized after the 2003 invasion (see above). [1992-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

- The above narrative suggests de facto independence between 1991 (1992 with 1st of January rule) and 2004. Note: EPR instead suggests a de facto independence code in 1992-2003; however, Kurdish autonomy was only officially recognized in 2004 (see above). Caspersen (2012: 12) also suggests that de facto independence lasted until 2004. Florea (2014) suggests that de facto independence was ongoing in 2011, which is clearly wrong. [1992-2004: de facto independence]

- EPR also codes de facto independence in 1959-1979. In agreement with EPR, we found several indications that Kurdish rebels controlled variable swathes of territory during that period (e.g., Metz 1988; Nahili 2005); however, the evidence we found does not suggest that rebel control was sufficient to warrant a de facto independence code. Lists of de facto states in the post-WWII only include Iraqi Kurdistan as a de facto state from 1991 onwards (see Caspersen 2012; Florea (2014).

Major territorial changes

- [1991: start of de facto state]
- [2004: end of de facto state]
- [2004: start of regional autonomy]

EPR2SDM

Movement	Kurds
Scenario	No match/1:1
EPR group(s)	Kurds
Gwgroupid(s)	64501000

Power access

- We adopt data from EPR, which codes the Kurds as powerless between 1946-1978, self-excluded in 1959-1979 (which in our coding scheme becomes "powerless"), discriminated against in 1980-1991, then again self-excluded in 1992-2003 (which in our coding scheme becomes "powerless"), and then finally as junior partner in 2004-2020. We apply the 1946 code also to 1945 as we found no evidence for substantial changes. [1945-1979: powerless; 1980-1991: discriminated; 1992-2003: powerless; 2004-2020: junior partner]

Group size

- We use EPR's population estimates. [1945-2018: 0.17; 2019-2020: 0.16]

Regional concentration

- EPR codes regional concentration. MAR does so too, suggesting that the Kurds make up a predominant share of the population in their regional base and that >75% of Kurds in Iraq live in their regional base. Minahan (2002: 1055) suggests that the Kurds make up 70% of their regional base, though he also includes territories in Turkey, Iran, and Syria. [regional concentration]

Kin

- There are millions of Kurds living in Turkey, Iran, and Syria; and smaller communities among others in Lebanon, Armenia, and Azerbaijan (Minahan 2002: 1055). This coding matches EPR's and MAR's. [kin in adjacent country]

Sources

Ala Jabar, Mohammed (2013). "The Politics of Iraqi Kurdistan: Towards Federalism or Secession?" PhD Thesis University of Canberra. http://www.canberra.edu.au/researchrepository/file/3bee44d0-f162-8598-ad64-033aa44dd1e3/1/full_text.pdf [August 25, 2017].

Al-Ansary, Khalid (2011). "Two Killed, 47 Hurt in Iraq Protest Violence." *Reuters*. February 17. http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/17/us-iraq-protests-idUSTRE71G6PF20110217 [June 20, 2014].

Aydogan, Bekir (2020). "The Iraqi Kurds' Destructive Infighting: Causes and Consequences." https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2020/04/15/the-iraqi-kurds-destructive-infighting-causes-and-consequences/ [August 29, 2022].

BBC (2017) 'Iraq Supreme Court rules Kurdish referendum unconstitutional', BBC, 20 November. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-42053283 [08 August 2022].

Bengio, Ofra (2005). "Autonomy in Kurdistan in historical perspective." In: Brendan O'Leary, John McGarry and Khaled Salih (eds.), *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq.* Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Caspersen, Nina (2012). *Unrecognized States.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min (2010). "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel: New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.

Degenhardt, Henry W. (ed.) (1988). *Revolutionary and Dissident Movements.* London: Longman Publishers, p. 173.

Florea, Adrian (2014). "De Facto States in International Politics (1945–2011): A New Dataset." *International Interactions* 40(5): 788-811.

Galbraith, Perter W. (2006). "Kurdistan in a federal Iraq." In: Brendan O'Leary, John McGarry and Khaled Salih (eds.), *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq.* Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Girardin, Luc (2021). *EPR Atlas*. ETH Zurich.

Gleditsch, Nils Petter, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand (2002). "Armed Conflict 1946-2001: A New Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 39(5): 615-637.

Hewitt, Christopher, and Tom Cheetham (2000). *Encyclopedia of Modern Separatist Movements.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, pp. 132-133, 161-163.

Human Rights Watch (2004). "Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq." https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/iraq0804.pdf [March 10, 2022].

International Crisis Group (2020). "Iraq. Fixing Security in Kirkuk." *Middle East Report No. 215.* https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/215-iraq-fixing-security-in-kirkuk.pdf [August 28, 2022].

Jaff, Warzer, and Richard A. Oppel Jr. (2005). "60 Kurds Killed by Suicide Bomb in Northern Iraq." *The New York Times*. May 5, sec. International / Middle East. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/05/international/middleeast/05iraq.html [June 20, 2014].

Keesing's Record of World Events. http://www.keesings.com [April 7, 2002].

Marshall, Monty G., and Ted R. Gurr (2003). *Peace and Conflict 2003: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements and Democracy.* College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management.

McDowall, David (2004). A Modern History of the Kurds. Third Edition. London: I.B. Tauris.

Metz, Helen Chapin (ed.) (1988). *Iraq: A Country Study.* Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress.

Minahan, James (2002). *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 1055-1062.

Minorities at Risk Project (2009). College Park, MD: University of Maryland [June 22, 2003].

Minority Rights Group International. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Groups*.

http://minorityrights.org/directory/ [November 9, 2021].

Murphy, Dan (2004). “Iraq Bombs Hit Kurdish Leaders.” *Christian Science Monitor.* February 2. http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0202/p01s03-woiq.html [June 20, 2014].

Nagel, Joanne (1978). “The Conditions of Ethnic Separatism: The Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.” Paper presented at Seventy-Third Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (San Francisco, California, September 4-8, 1978. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED161813.pdf

Natali, Denise (2005). *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

O’Driscoll, Dylan and Baser, Bahar (2020). ‘Referendums as a political party gamble: A critical analysis of the Kurdish referendum for independence’, *International Political Science Review*, 41(5), pp. 652–666. [08 August 2022].

Petersson, Therese, Shawn Davis, Amber Deniz, Garoun Engström, Nanar Hawach, Stina Högbladh, Margareta Sollenberg, and Magnus Öberg (2021). “Organized Violence 1989-2020, with a Special Emphasis on Syria.” *Journal of Peace Research* 58(4): 809-825.

Rogg, Inga and Hans Rimscha (2007). “The Kurds as parties to and victims of conflicts in Iraq.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 89(868): 823-842.

Roth, Christopher F. (2015). *Let's Split! A Complete Guide to Separatist Movements and Aspirant Nations, from Abkhazia to Zanzibar.* Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books.

Saeed, Nahwi (2017). “The Kurdish Referendum on the Status of Kirkuk.” *Washington Institute.* https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kurdish-referendum-and-status-kirkuk [March 10, 2022].

Sambanis, Nicholas, & Schulhofer-Wohl, Jonas (2019). “Sovereignty Rupture as a Central Concept in Quantitative Measures of Civil War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(6): 1542–1578.

UNPO (2004). “Kurdistan: Iraqi Kurds press UN for independence referendum.” https://www.unpo.org/article/1689 [March 18, 2023].

Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). *Conflict Encyclopedia.* https://ucdp.uu.se/?id=1&id=1 [November 9, 2021].

Vogt, Manuel, Nils-Christian Bormann, Seraina Rüegger, Lars-Erik Cederman, Philipp Hunziker, and Luc Girardin (2015). “Integrating Data on Ethnicity, Geography, and Conflict: The Ethnic Power Relations Data Set Family.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(7): 1327-1342.

Wanche, Sophia (2006). “Awaiting Liberation: Kurdish Perspectives on a Post-Saddam Iraq.” In: Brendan O'Leary, John McGarry and Khaled Salih (eds.), *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq.* Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Shiites

Activity: 2005-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- Shia separatist sentiment emerged after the US-led invasion in 2003, when Abdul Aziz al-Hakim and the hard-core electorate of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI, formerly the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, SCIRI) brought the separation of the Shiite-majority provinces or the establishment of a single Shiite federal entity on the agenda. This little known demand for a Shia state in Sothern Iraq and a decentralized federal government differs from the aims of other Shia political factions (Isakhan 2015: 139).
- While the ISCI was formed in 1982, the separatist claim emerged only after the 2003 U.S. invasion. According to a report by the ICRC the claim first appeared in the summer of 2005. In line with this, Minorities at Risk indicates an active separatist movement in its 2004-2006 version but not in previous versions. Other sources also provide evidence for an onset in 2005 (Iraq and Gulf Analysis 2011; Visser 2007, 2011; Hewitt et al. 2008). Thus 2005 is coded as the start date.
- The SCIRI leadership initially demanded an autonomous three-province southern region and later modified its demand to extend to all nine of Iraq's central and southern Shia-dominated governates to create 'The Region of the Centre and the South' (Isakhan 2015: 144).
- In 2007, the SCIRI changed its name to the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and its leadership stepped up its campaign for autonomy by appearing on several media platforms throughout 2007 to advocate for Shia autonomy (Isakhan 2015:146).
- In 2009, the ISCI's position was weakened in the south as a result of the 2009 elections and when Ammar al-Hakim became leader of the ISCI he stated his party had abandoned its plan of a nine-province Shia autonomous zone and began to distance itself from a separatist agenda in subsequent elections (Isakhan 2015: 147-148). Despite this, Isakhan (2015: 149) reports that ISCI's agenda continued to involve the establishmet of an independent or autonomous Shia state in southern Iraq, but that the prospects of achieving this are low.
- Renewed separatist claims were made after the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014. According to Viser (2014): "[…] following the rise to prominence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014, Iraqi Shiite discourse on the Iraqi state appears to have changed quite dramatically – in the direction of separatist solutions. It is true that some of the talk of a separate Shiite entity, often referred to as the "Sumer" project in a reference to one of the ancient civilizations of Iraq, may have gained extra prominence because of the proliferation of social media, meaning that a wider array of Iraqi Shiite voices are accessible to outside analysts than at any point in history. However, it is noteworthy that also more established political parties among the Iraqi Shiites appear to be warming up to ideas that were considered a taboo just a few years ago. A case in point is the State of Law alliance of former PM Nuri al-Maliki and current PM Haydar al-Abadi. In a first, during Ramadan, a key website supportive of Maliki accorded much prominence to an article that openly hinted at the possible secession of the Shiite areas from the rest of Iraq. Also, changes in the regional environment contribute to a greater push towards separatist solutions. Iran, in particular, has altered its approach to Iraq in a dramatic way since the emergence of ISIS. In unprecedented ways, it is openly acknowledging and even propagandizing its military support for the Iraqi government through the presence of Iranian advisors among Iraqi military forces deployed on the frontlines against ISIS. The confirmation by the Iraq parliament of an interior minister with a background in the Iran-sponsored Badr brigades arguably gives Tehran more direct influence in Iraq's security forces than they had under Maliki."

- The ISCI remains a prominent Shia political party in Iraq as of 2020, but we did not find evidence for further separatist claims being made after 2014. We still code the movement as ongoing based on the 10-years rule. [start date: 2005; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- The beginning of separatist activity is coded in 2005, when the idea of a single Shiite federal entity (Visser 2007: 813) or a separate Shiite state (Sarhan and Knickmeyer 2005) was brought back on the agenda and found support among the hard-core electorate of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). The support for separatist ideas was rather small and it could not be identified which of the two claims was dominant. In line with the coding instructions, the more extreme claim is coded (independence). [2005-2020: independence claim]

Independence claims

- In line with the above coding, the 10-year rule is applied after the last evidence for separatist claims were made in 2014 (see above). [start date: 2005; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The dominant territory claimed by the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) consists of nine provinces in Southern Iraq (Basra, Maysan, Dhi Qar, Al-Muthanna, Wasit, Babil, Najaf, Karbala, Qadisivvah), although the proposals for a Shia state sometimes vary (Roth 2015: 226). A map can be found in Roth (2015: 206). We code this claim using data on admin units from the Global Administrative Areas Database for polygon definition.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- The Shiites' MAR rebellion score is 6 in 2005 and 2006, but we could not find an indication that this violence was over separatism. Hewitt et al. (2008) also indicate that the movement was non-violent. Hence the entire movement is coded as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Iraq was carved out of the Ottoman Empire after WWI. Initially a British mandate, Iraq became independent in 1932. Between 1968 and 2003, Iraq was governed by the Baath party initially under the presidency of Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr, followed by Saddam Hussein from 1979 onwards. Under Baath rule and especially under Saddam Hussein, Shiites (Shia Arabs) were discriminated against and excluded from power (EPR, MRGI). Repression was mostly of a political nature, but also involved the closure of Shiite religious centers and the utting of restrictions on their activities and publications (Noorbaksh 2008). In a 2002 report, the U.S. State

Department noted that "the [Baathist] Government severely limits freedom of religion in practice, represses the Shi'a religious leadership […], desecrated Shi'a mosques and holy sites, interfered with Shi'a religious education, and prevented Shi'a adherents from performing their religious rite."

- The situation improved for Shiites after the 2003 invasion. The 2004 Transitional Adminisrative Law (TAL) and the 2005 constitution guaranteed religious freedom (U.S. State Department 2007). Shiites assumed high-ranking government positions. [2004: cultural rights concession]

Concessions and restrictions

- Iraq's 2005 constitution defined Iraq as a federal state; however, no meaningful decentralization has taken place beyond the ad-hoc arrangements with Iraqi Kurdistan (Alkadiri 2020). We do not code a concession.

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

Movement	Shiites
Scenario	1:1
EPR group(s)	Shi'a Arabs
Gwgroupid(s)	64502000

Power access

- Shia have been in a leading role in all governments since the 2003 invasion, occupying a majority of cabinet posts (EPR). [2005-2020: senior partner]

Group size

- We rely on EPR (62.5%). [0.625]

Regional concentration

- According to EPR, Shia Arabs are concentrated in the country's south-east. MAR suggests that >75% of Shia Arabs live in their regional base, where they make up the predominant proportion of the local population. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- We code ethnic ties to Shia groups in Iran (esp. Arabs). There are also ties to Shia Muslims (Shia Arabs) in other countries including Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Kuwait. This is consistent with MAR and EPR. [kin in adjacent country]

Sources

Alkadiri, Raad (2020). "Federalism and Iraq's Constitutional Stalemate." Chatham House. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/11/federalism-and-iraqs-constitutional-stalemate [November 19, 2021].

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min (2010). "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel: New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.

GADM (2019). Database of Global Administrative Boundaries, Version 3.6. https://gadm.org/ [November 19, 2021].

Hewitt, Joseph J., Jonathan Wilkenfeld, and Ted R. Gurr (eds.) (2008). *Peace and Conflict 2008.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Ibrahim, Arwa (2019). 'Muhasasa, the political system reviled by Iraqi protesters', *Al Jazeera*, 04 December. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/4/muhasasa-the-political-system-reviled-by-iraqi-protesters. [11 August 2022].

Iraq and Gulf Analysis (2011). "Nujayfi's Separatist Threat and the Reactions." June 28. https://gulfanalysis.wordpress.com/2011/06/28/nujayfi-separatist-threat-and-the-reactions/ [February 16, 2015].

Isakhan, Benjamin (2015). Succeeding and Seceding in Iraq: The Case for a Shiite State. In Kingsbury, D., & Laoutides, C. (Eds.) Territorial Separatism in Global Politics: Causes, Outcomes and Resolution (p. 139-152). London: Routledge. [05 September 2022].

Isakhan, Benjamin and Mulherin, Peter E. (2018). 'Basra's Bid for Autonomy: Peaceful Progress toward a Decentralized Iraq', *Middle East Journal*, 72(2), pp. 267–285. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26932954. [12 August 2022].

Minorities at Risk Project (2009). College Park, MD: University of Maryland.

Minority Rights Group International. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Groups*. http://minorityrights.org/directory/ [November 9, 2021].

Noorbaksh, Mehdi (2008). "Shiism and Ethnic Politics in Iraq." *Middle East Policy 15*(2): 53-65.

Robin, Benedict (2018) 'The Sadrist-Communist Alliance: Implications for Iraq's Secular Politics', LSE, 06 June. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/06/06/the-sadrist-communist-alliance-implications-for-iraqs-secular-politics/. [11 August 2022].

Roth, Christopher F. (2015). *Let's Split! A Complete Guide to Separatist Movements and Aspirant Nations, from Abkhazia to Zanzibar.* Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books.

Sarhan, Saad and Ellen Knickmeyer (2005). "Shiites Call for Own State in South." http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/11/AR2005081101791.html [July 28, 2017].

U.S. State Department (2002). "U.S. Department of State Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 2002 – Iraq." https://www.refworld.org/docid/3da3f08524.html [March 11, 2022].

U.S. State Department (2007). "2007 Report on International Religious Freedom – Iraq." https://www.refworld.org/docid/46ee679667.html [March 11, 2022].

Visser, Reidar (2007). "Ethnicity, Federalism and the Idea of Sectarian Citizenship in Iraq: A Critique." *International Review of the Red Cross* 89(868): 809-822.

Visser, Reidar (2014). "Will Iraq's Shiites Secede?" http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2014/10/31/will-iraqs-shiites-secede/3/ [July 28, 2017].

Vogt, Manuel, Nils-Christian Bormann, Seraina Rüegger, Lars-Erik Cederman, Philipp Hunziker, and Luc Girardin (2015). "Integrating Data on Ethnicity, Geography, and Conflict: The Ethnic Power Relations Data Set Family." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(7): 1327-1342.

Turkmen

Activity: 1988-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- Minahan (2002: 1931) notes separatist sentiment among Turkmen in Iraq at least since the late 1970s. However, the earliest evidence for organized separatist activity we found is the foundation of the Iraqi National Turkmen Party (INTP) in 1988. The founder of the party represents the Iraqi Turkmens at the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). Thus, we peg the start date to 1988.
- In 1995, the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) was founded, a Turkic organization representing the interests of Turkmen in Iraq and advocating territorial autonomy, if not independence, for Turks.
- Minahan (2016: 431f) suggests that Turkmen nationalists published a plan for an independent Turkmeneli which occupies territory from central Iraq to northeastern Syria, forming districts in both countries.
- In 2016, calls for the creation of a separate Turkmen province in the Tal Afar district (west of Mosul) emerged prior to the battle to retake Mosul from Da'esh (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; ISIL) (Bassem 2016).
- According to Minority Rights Group International, the Turkmen remain in conflict with both Kurds and Arabs over the status of areas in the north of Iraq. A board member for the Iraqi Turkmen Front has reported that Iraqi Turmens who lived in villages in Sinjar prior to Da'esh's occupation have been unable to return due to the PKK's control there (Daily Sabah 2021). Further, there have been reports of Kurdish security forces expelling Turkmen internally displaced persons (IDPs) from disputed areas such as Kirkuk (Human Rights Watch 2017). [start date: 1988; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- The Iraqi National Turkmen Party (INTP) was founded in 1988, and this is the first clear evidence of an organization, which demands autonomy for the Turkmen in Iraq. The 1995 founded Iraqi Turkoman Front (ITF) also advocates the interests of Turkmen in Iraq, and calls for territorial autonomy or even independence for Turks.
- Arshad al-Salihi, the leader of the Iraqi Turkmen Front since 2011, has called for the establishment of an autonomous zone following the retaking of Turkmen regions around Mosul from Da'esh (Shams 2017). Overall, claims for autonomy seem clearly dominant. [1988-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- In 1995 the Iraqi Turkman Front (ITF) was established, which according to Minahan contained a faction seeking a seperate national state (2002: 1932). We could not find supporting evidence for this claim, however.
- There was a plan presented in 2014 for an independent Turkmeneli, emerging in reaction to the conflict with ISIS as well as clashes with both Kurds and Arabs (Minahan 2016: 431). This is confirmed by several sources, including Roth (2015: 224) and MRGI. This event indicates an independence claim, and is coded as ongoing based on the ten-year rule. [start date: 2014; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The Turkmen in Iraq have demanded greater autonomy within their traditional homeland Turkmenelia, a long stretch of territory that roughly overlaps with 5 provinces just south of the Kurdistan autonomous region (Roth 2015; Minahan 2002; UNPO 2015). We code this territory based on a map by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO 2015).

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- News archives indicate that there has been violence associated with the ITF, but casualties do not reach LVIOLSD levels. Further, it seems that a significant portion of the violence stems from Arab and Kurdish attacks on the Turkmen civilian population, and thus does not count as SD violence. Based on this, we code the entire movement as NVIOLSD. The Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) took part in armed fighting against Daʿesh and an Iraqi Turkmen militia formed in 2014 as part of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF, or al-Hashd ash-Shaʿbi) a state-sponsored group composed of 50 plus militias (Mistefa 2014). However, this violence does not qualify as separatist. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Mesopotamia region became part of the Ottoman Empire in 16th and 17th centuries. Turkic tribal groups were settled in the region by the Ottomans to repel tribal raids along important trade routes and around military garrisons, which led to strained relations with the Kurds (Minahan 2002: 1930).
- After WWI, most of the Turkmen areas became part of the League of Nations-mandated territory of Iraq. Mosul was contested by Turkey, but Iraq was awarded the Mosul area in 1925 (Minahan 2002: 209, 1930).
- Under the terms of the 1925 constitution, the non-Arabic minorities had the right to use their own language in schools and government offies. In 1932 Iraq became an independent monarchy, and the new Iraqi kingdom recognized the religious, linguistic, and cultural rights of the non-Arab national groups, including the Turkmen. Turkoman was made an official language in the Kirkuk region (Minahan 2002: 1930f).
- In 1970 the Turkmen were granted increased cultural rights; however, soon thereafter the government banned education in the Turkoman language and banned Turkmen media (Minahan 2002: 1931; UNPO).
- In 1979 Saddam Hussein became president. The regime banned all public use of the Turkoman language and pressed Arabization in the early 1980s. Furthermore, the Hussein regime initiated relocation programs that moved thousands of Arab families to Turkoman and Kurdish areas in the 1980s. Turkoman village names were Arabized (Minahan 2002: 1931). [1980: cultural rights restriction]
- While targeted mainly against Kurds, Turkmen were also affected by Saddam Hussein's genocidal Anfal-campaign (MRGI). We do not code a restriction because one-sided violence does not constitute a restriction as defined here.

- Minahan (2002: 1933) suggests that those who would register as Turkmen in the 1997 would be deprived of all rights and deported. MRGI suggests that the same already applied in the 1987 census. [1987: cultural rights restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

- According to Human Rights Watch, after 1991 the Iraqi government focused its Arabization efforts on the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, when Kurds, Turkomans, and Assyrians came under constant pressure to sign "ethnic identity correction" forms relinquishing their ethnicity and registering officially as Arabs. "Non-Arabs were also required to become members of the Ba`th Party, and to serve in "volunteer" militias such as Jaysh al-Quds (Jerusalem Army) or the Fida'iyyi Saddam (Saddam's Martyrs, often referred to in Western media as the Fedayeen). Families that refused to comply were issued formal expulsion orders requiring them to leave their homes and move to Kurdish-controlled areas. The government of Iraq displaced approximately 120,000 persons from Kirkuk and other areas under government control from 1991 to 2000 in furtherance of its Arabization campaign." The relocation campaign is confirmed by Minahan (2002: 1932). [1992: cultural rights restriction]
- According to MRGI, the Arabization campaign came to an end after the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. With the 2005 constitution, Iraq became a federal parliamentary republic and the constitution also recognized minority rights. Article 4 of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution recognizes "Turkomen" as an official minority language in the "administrative units in which they constitute density of population" (along with Syriac). Minority rights had already been guaranteed under the 2004 Transitional Adminisrative Law (TAL) (Natali 2005: 66f). [2004: cultural rights concession]

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

Movement	Turkmen
Scenario	No match/1:1
EPR group(s)	Turkmen
Gwgroupid(s)	64505000

Power access

- EPR codes the Turkmen as discriminated against between 1992-2003, and as powerless in 2004-2020. EPR does not code 1988-1991, but its coding notes suggest that the Sunni Arabs monopolized power during this time while all other groups were discriminated against.

Additional evidence for a discriminaton code comes from MRGI, which suggests that "Under Saddam Hussein the Turkmen were denied cultural, linguistic or political rights." [1988-2003: discriminated; 2004-2020: powerless]

Group size

- EPR suggests a group size of 1%; however, that seems low. Estimates of the Turkmen population in Iraq vary widely. We draw on the following conservative figure MRGI, which states that: "Before the American-led occupation of 2003, there were anything between 600,000 and 2 million Turkmen, the former figure being the conservative estimate of outside observers and the latter a Turkmen claim." In 2003, Iraq had a population of ca. 25 mio. [0.024]

Regional concentration

- EPR codes regional concentration; however, it is unclear whether the Turkmen make up an absolute majority in their regional base. We could not concrete figures; however, the account in Minahan (2002: 1928,1931) suggests that Turkmen are spread over a large area including parts of Iraqi Kurdistan and central Iraq and Turkmen form significant parts of the population (but not majorities) in major cities such as Erbil or Mosul. According to Roth (2015: 224), the Turkmen "have slivers of territory that would never make a viable state" and Turkmen areas overlay significantly with Iraqi Kurdistan. [not regionally concentrated]

Kin

- Numerically significant kin in Iran and Turkey (Minahan 2002: 1928). [kin in adjacent country]

Sources

Bassem, Wassim (2016). 'Iraq's Turkmens call for an independent province'. *Al-Monitor*, 14 October. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2016/10/turkmens-iraq-mosul-tal-afar.html. [09 September].

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min (2010). "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel: New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.

Chmaytelli, Maher and Jalabi, Raya. (2017)Iraqi forces complete Kirkuk province takeover after clashes with Kurds', Reuters, 20 October, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-clash-idUSKBN1CP0PT. [10 August 2022].

Daily Sabah (2021) 'Iraqi Turkmens can't return home due to PKK terrorists', *Daily Sabah*, 28 December, https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/iraqi-turkmens-cant-return-home-due-to-pkk-terrorists. [06 September 2022].

Human Rights Watch (2004). "Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq." https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/iraq0804.pdf [March 10, 2022].

Human Rights Watch (2017). 'Iraq: Kirkuk Security Forces Expel Displaced Turkmen', 07 May, https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/07/iraq-kirkuk-security-forces-expel-displaced-turkmen. [06 September 2022].

Metz, Helen Chapin (ed.) (1988). *Iraq: A Country Study.* Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress.

Minahan, James (2002). *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 1928-1934.

Minority Rights Group International. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Groups*. http://minorityrights.org/directory/ [November 9, 2021].

Minority Rights Group International. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Groups*. http://minorityrights.org/directory/ [10 August 2022].

Mistefa, Goveb (2014). 'Iraq's Turkmen call for arms to join anti-ISIS war', *Rudaw,* 10 December. https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/101220141. [09 September 2022].

Natali, Denise (2005). *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Roth, Christopher F. (2015). *Let's Split! A Complete Guide to Separatist Movements and Aspirant Nations, from Abkhazia to Zanzibar.* Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books.

Shams, Alex (2017). 'Iraq's Turkmen mobilise for a post-ISIL future', *Al Jazeera*, 13 February, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/2/13/iraqs-turkmen-mobilise-for-a-post-isil-future.[06 July 2022].

UNPO (2015). "Iraqi Turkmen: Member Profile." https://unpo.org/downloads/2360.pdf [November 23, 2021].

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). "Iraqi Turkmen." http://www.unpo.org/members/7878 [March 4, 2014].

Vogt, Manuel, Nils-Christian Bormann, Seraina Rüegger, Lars-Erik Cederman, Philipp Hunziker, and Luc Girardin (2015). "Integrating Data on Ethnicity, Geography, and Conflict: The Ethnic Power Relations Data Set Family." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(7): 1327-1342.

Yezidi

Activity: 2015-2020

General notes

- The Yezidis have been considered a subgroup of the Kurds but are a distinct ethnoreligious group indigenous to Kurdistan. They speak Kurmanji, which is a Kurdish dialect.

Movement start and end dates

- Minahan (2016: 466) reports that the Yezidi started to make demands for autonomy after the ISIS genocide in August 2014, when "Yezidi leaders proposed an autonomous Yezidi state, under United Nations protection, for the remnant of their ancient culture." MRGI confirms his account, suggesting that the demand first emerged in 2015. MRGI continues to explain that autonomy demands emerged as Yezidis became deeply distrustful of Kurdish authorities since they see the Peshmerga's withdrawal from Sinjar in 2014 as having paved the way for their genocide at the hands of ISIS. The movement is ongoing (Dawod 2021; Tezcür et al. n.d.). [start date: 2015; end date: ongoing]
    - Note: Minahan (2016: 466) suggests that the Yezidi "sought autonomy" already around 2003, but we could not find confirming evidence.

Dominant claim

- Various pieces of evidence suggest an autonomy claim:
    - In the spring of 2015, a meeting of Yezidis convened by the PKK in Sinjar and those present put forward their plans for Sinjar to become a 'canton' or self-ruled unit.
    - The idea of self-rule in Sinjar, or at least more autonomy in running the Yezidi community, is seen as desirable by most Yezidis. Even those who identify as Kurds and are members of the KDP express strong views that Sinjar should be run by Yezidis, both militarily and administratively (Spät 2018).
    - On 13 March 2021, 40 Yezidi community leaders from Sinjar signed a petition demanding self-rule in the Sinjar region of Northern Iraq, the inclusion of the Yezidi police forces, the Ezidxane Asayish (Security Forces of Ezidkhan) into the regular security forces, and other demands relating to services and jobs (Dawood 2021). [2015-2020: autonomy claim].

Independence claims

- Minahan cites a claim for a UN backed autonomous state (2016: 466), but this is a vague demand and no further information could be found , so no independence claim is coded. [no independence claims]

Irredentist claims

NA

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Claimed territory

- According to Minahan (2016: 465), the Yezidis proposed state of Ezidistan (Yezidistan/Êzidiya) occupies part of the Ninevah Plains and the Sinjar Mountains, forming districts in Nineveh and Dohuk governorates in Iraq. This claim overlaps with territory controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), an autonomous regional government in a federal Iraq, and disputed territories in northern Iraq including parts of the governate of Ninevah (Meier 2020). We code this claim based on a map showing areas of traditional Yezidi settlements from Wikipedia, which is the best concrete description we could find (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_Yezidi_areas_in_Iraq.PNG).

Separatist armed conflict

- In the wake of attacks in 2007, a Yezidi militia known as the Sinjar Resistance Units (YBŞ) formed to protect Yazidis from ongoing attacks.
- The Sinjar Resistance Resistance Units were reactivated in response to the Sinjar massacre by Da'esh (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; ISIL). They are aligned with the PKK- backed Kurdistan Communities Union (Koma Civakên Kurdistanê ; KCK) a Kurdish political party. Other Yezidi militias formed as self defense units, the largest of these militias being the Êzîdxan Protection Force by (HPÊ) and its Women units (YJÊ) led by Haydar Shesho. These groups formed the Sinjar Alliance and were both supported by the PKK and in 2017 the HPÊ formally joined the Peshmerga, the official armed forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government (Paraszczuk 2015).
- In May 2022, The Iraqi army launched a military operation against YBS and Ezidxane Security Forces to take extend control over Sinjar and surrounding areas, and weaken the control of Sinjar Resistance Units allied with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). This led to the displacement of 4,083 people from Sinjar (Menmy 2022; The National News 2022)
- Although there are Yezidi armed groups, they act as civil defence forces and we found no evidence for separatist violence and so code the entire movement as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The beginnings of the Yezidis as an organized religious community can be traced back to a twelfth century Sufi order, the al-Adawiya (Spät 2018).
- Under Ottoman rule in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Yezidis were subject to 72 genocidal massacres and in 2007, approximately 800 Yezidis were killed as a result of car bombings in northern Iraq (Jalabi 2014).
- The 2005 Iraqi constitution guaranteed religious freedoms to the Yezidis in Article 2 but the constitution has been criticized for the lack of specific legislation to protect the rights of minorities such as the Yezidis (Snell 2020). Minority rights had already been guaranteed under the 2004 Transitional Adminisrative Law (TAL) (Natali 2005: 66f).
- Since 2014, Sinjar, a Yezidi town in northern Iraq, has been de facto controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).
- The Yezidis were not considered Ahl al-Kitāb (People of the Book) and classified as infidels by Da'esh (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant; ISIL). They became targets of their violence beginning in 2014 when the group captured Sinjar, a Yezidi majority city and other neighboring towns during its Northern Iraq Offensive (Hay 2014).
- During the offensive, KDP fighters withdrew on 3 August 2014 and many Yezidis blame the Kurdish forces for their withdrawal which allowed Da'esh to perform a genocide against the

Yezidis (Paraszczuk 2015). An estimated 6,383 Yezidis were enslaved, 2,305 people are believed to have been abducted, women were sold into slavery or forced into marriage with Da'esh members, many were subjected to forced conversions, displaced and their population was decimated from approximately 700,000 to 500,000 (Human Rights Watch 2014; Otten 2017; Girardin 2021: 945).

- By 2016, an estimated 12,000 people were killed or abducted by Daesh, 360,000 Yezidis living in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iarq (KRI), while a further 90,000 have fled from Iraq since 2014. In 2016, there was around 1,800 Iraqi-Yezidis in Turkey, 1,500 in Syria and 1,000 in Greece (YAZDA 2016).
- Although Kurdish forces expelled Da'esh from Sinjar in 2015, nearly 300,000 people from Sinjar are still homeless and reconstruction has lagged (Cornish 2019)
- After these events they began to call for more political inclusion in the Iraqi federal government (in addition to autonomy, see above). Considered ethnic Kurds by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Kurdish constitution, Yezidis have no quota or mandatory minority seats in the Kurdish Parliament, unlike Christians and Turkomans.

Concessions and restrictions

- The Iraqi Federal Supreme Court ruled in January 2018 that the Yezidi minority must have more seats in Iraq's parliament to reflect their population size. In the parliamentary elections held in October 2021, nine seats were reserved for minorities including Yezidis (Al Jazeera 2021). While a concession, this relates to political representation and is therefore not coded here.
    - Additional information: In February 2022, the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court ruled that the parliamentary representation of Yezidis, Shabak, and Fayali Kurds as "unconstitutional," with the minorities losing their quota seats and having to compete within other quotas. Their representatives now have to campaign within the Christian and Mandaean components, who can cast votes from all parts of Iraq (Bechocha 2022).
- In 2020, Iraqi government and and the KRG signed a deal,without including the Yezidis, designed to facilitate the return of around 400,000 members of the Yezidi community to Sinjar (Sagnier 2022) . According to the deal, only regular military personnel and police officers could patrol Sinjar and YBS forces should withdraw from the city, but the agreement has not been carried out since the Yezidis rejected the deal (Menmy 2022).

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

Movement	Yezidis
Scenario	No match/1:1
EPR group(s)	Yezidis
Gwgroupid(s)	64506000

Power access

- EPR codes the Yezidi as powerless from 2019-2021, but does not include them before that. We found no evidence for meaningful representation in 2015-2018. [2015-2020: powerless]
    - Additional information: Iraq's election laws were revisied prior to the 2010 election and included the introduction of eight minority seats reserved for Christians, Yezidis, Sabeans, and Shabeks (Stewart-Jolley 2021:8). The 2020 election law created district-based constituencies with a total of 329 seats in parliament (Stewart-Jolley 2021:21). The 2020 election law reserved nine seats for minorities and Yezidis were allocated only one seat as part of the quota system (Rudaw 2021). In the KRI, the number of reserved seats for non-Kurdish minority communities is 11 out of 111, reserved for Christians, Turkmen and Armenians, but Yezidis do not get any reserved seats (Van Zoonen and Wirya 2017:11). In 2022, the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court ruled that the parliamentary representation of Yezidis, Shabak, and Fayali Kurds as "unconstitutional," and the minorities should be equalized with the Christian and Mandaean components (Shafaq 2022).

Group size

- We draw on EPR. [0.01]

Regional concentration

- According to MRGI: "Prior to the ISIS advance, Iraq's Yezidis numbered approximately 500,000 and were concentrated in Sinjar 150 kilometres west of Mosul, with a smaller community in Shaikhan, the Kurdistan foothills east of Mosul, where their most holy shrine of Shaykh Adi is located. [Yet,] The advance of ISIS into Sinjar in August 2014 led to the displacement of almost the entire Yezidi community and the capture, killing and enslavement of thousands. The Kurdish Peshmerga forces, who had been protecting the area, withdrew without warning, leaving the local population defenceless. An estimated 200,000 Yezidi civilians fled for their lives, with at least 50,000 heading to Sinjar Mountain, where they were trapped in the scorching summer heat for days without food or water. Those unable to escape or who attempted to defend their villages from ISIS fighters were subsequently murdered or abducted, with large-scale massacres of Yezidi men and boys in the villages of Qiniyeh, Kocho and Jdali. Thousands of Yezidi women and girls were abducted for the purpose of forced marriage or sexual slavery. Large numbers of women were subsequently transported to Syria to be sold or forcibly married to ISIS fighters. ISIS' treatment of the Yezidi minority has been labeled as genocide by the United Nations and several other international organizations."
- Sinjar was retaken from ISIS control in November 2015, but according to MRGI, very few Yezidi civilians had returned to the area by November 2017. According to a UK government research briefing, more than 200,000 Yezidis remained displaced by 2021 (Walker & Loft 2022). [not concentrated]

Kin

- There are smaller Yezidi communities in Syria, Armenia, Georgia and south-east Turkey, though most Yezidis from Turkey have migrated to the West in the past decades (Malik 2018). However, these population estimates are much smaller and do not meet our criteria of a population of 100,000 for kin groups to be numerically significant (Allison 2004). [no kin]

Sources

Al Jazeera (2021). 'Iraq holds early voting ahead of parliamentary elections', 08 October. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/8/iraq-holds-early-voting-ahead-of-parliamentary-election. [27 July 2022].

Allison, Christine (2004). 'YAZIDIS i. GENERAL', Encyclopædia Iranica, 20 July, https://iranicaonline.org/articles/yazidis-i-general-1. [19 September 2022].

Bechocha, Julian (2022). 'Top Iraqi court revokes Yazidi parliamentary representation', Rûdaw, 22 February. https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/220220222.[31 July 2022].

Cheng, Amy and Francis, Ellen (2022) ' Biden said the killed ISIS leader persecuted Yazidis. Here's what to know about the religious minority', *The Washington Post*, 04 February. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/04/yazidi-religion-isis-genocide-syria/. [29 July 2022].

Cornish, Chloe (2019). 'Sinjar's exiled Yazidis are still a long way from returning home', *Financial Times*, 02 April. https://www.ft.com/content/71416a70-508c-11e9-9c76-bf4a0ce37d49. [28 July 2022].

Dawod, Saman (2021). 'Iraq's Yazidis call for autonomy as conflict flares between army, PKK affiliates' al-Monitor, 18 March. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/03/iraqs-yazidis-call-autonomy-conflict-flares-between-army-pkk-affiliates. [29 July 2022].

GADM (2019). Database of Global Administrative Boundaries, Version 3.6. https://gadm.org/ [November 19, 2021].

Hay, Mark (2014) 'Why Is the Islamic State Trying to Eradicate Iraq's Yazidi Minority?', *Vice*, 13 August. https://www.vice.com/en/article/bn5573/why-is-the-islamic-state-trying-to-eradicate-iraqs-yazidi-minority-813. [28 July 2022].

Henne, Peter and Hackett, Conrad (2014). 'Iaqi Yazidis: Hazy population numbers and a history of persecution', Pew Research Center, 12 August, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/12/iraqi-yazidis-hazy-population-numbers-and-a-history-of-persecution/. [19 September 2022].

Human Rights Watch (2014) 'Iraq: forced marriage and conversion for Yezidis', 11 October. https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/11/iraq-forced-marriage-conversion-yezidis. [30 July 2022].

Jalabi, Raya (2014). 'Who are the Yazidis and why is Isis hunting them?', *The Guardian*, 11 August. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/07/who-yazidi-isis-iraq-religion-ethnicity-mountains. [27 July 2022].

Malik, Nikita (2018) 'Surviving Islamic State: The Plight Of The Yazidi Community', *Forbes,* 18 September. https://www.forbes.com/sites/nikitamalik/2018/09/18/surviving-islamic-state-the-plight-of-the-yazidi-community/ [29 July 2022].

Meier, Daniel. (2020) 'Disputed territories' in northern Iraq: The frontiering of in-between spaces, Mediterranean Politics, 25(3), pp. 51-371. [15 September 2022].

Menmy, Dana Taib (2022). 'Heavy clashes between Iraqi army and YBS near Sinjar: sources', *The New Arab,* 02 May. https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/iraqi-army-attacks-ybs-forces-near-sinjar-sources [29 July].

Minahan, James (2016). *Encyclopedia of Stateless Nations. Second Edition.* Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press.

Natali, Denise (2005). *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Otten, Cathy (2017) ' Slaves of Isis: the long walk of the Yazidi women', *The Guardian*, 25 July. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/25/slaves-of-isis-the-long-walk-of-the-yazidi-women. [28 July 2022].

Paraszczuk, Joanna (2015). 'Yazidi Militias Fight IS In Iraq, Amid Kurdish Rivalries', Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 11 June. https://www.rferl.org/a/islamic-state-yazidi-militias-kurdish-region/27066780.html. [31 July 2022].

Rudaw (2021).'Christian candidate says minority seats in Iraqi parliament are being hijacked', *Rudaw*, 22 September, https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/220920214. [16 September 2022].

Sagnier, Pierre (2022) ' Haunted by genocide, displaced Yazidis demand justice', *FairPlanet,* 15 June. https://www.fairplanet.org/story/haunted-by-genocide-displaced-yazidis-demand-justice/. [28 July 2022].

Shafaq (2022) 'Federal Court's ruling on the minorities representation shall enter into force in the next election, MP says', *Shafaq News*, 23 February, https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq-News/Federal-Court-s-ruling-on-the-minorities-representation-shall-enter-into-force-in-the-next-election-MP-says. [16 September 2022].

Snell, Joe (2020). 'Iraqi constitution fails to provide security for Assyrians, Yazidis, study finds.' Medill News Service, 09 January. https://dc.medill.northwestern.edu/blog/2020/01/09/iraqi-constitution-fails-to-provide-security-for-assyrians-yazidis-study-finds/#sthash.opZze1my.dpbs. [15 September 2022].

Spät, Eszter (2018). 'Yezidi Identity Politics and Political Ambitions in the Wake of the ISIS Attack', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 20:5, pp. 420-438, DOI: 10.1080/19448953.2018.1406689 [28 July 2022].

Stewart-Jolley, Victoria (2021). *Iraq's electoral system: Why successive reforms fail to bring change*. Chatham House, October, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/2021-10-05-Iraq%27s-electroral-system-stewart-jolley-pdf.pdf. [15 September 2022].

Tezcür, Günes Murat, Zeynep Kaya, and Bayar Mustafa Sevdeen (n.d.). "Survival, Coexistence, and Autonomy: Yezidi Political Identity after Genocide." https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/32787/1/Yezidis%20and%20Identity_TezcurKayaSevdeen.pdf [July 1, 2022].

The National News (2022) 'Iraqi army and militias clash, forcing thousands of Yazidis to flee', The National News, 03 May. https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/2022/05/03/iraqi-army-and-militia-clashes-force-thousands-of-yazidis-to-flee/. [29 July 2022].

Van Zoonen, Dave and Wirya, Khogir (2017). *The Yazidis: Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict.* Middle East Research Institute. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Yazidis-Perceptions-of-Reconciliation-and-Conflict-Report.pdf. [16 September 2022].

Walker, Nigerl, and Philip Loft (2022). "Atrocities Against the Yazidi Religious Community." *UK Government Research Briefing.* https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2022-0027/ [September 26, 2022].

YAZDA (2016) *The Yazidi Refugee Crisis.* YAZDA. https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/CIMM/Brief/BR9342569/br-external/Yazda-e.pdf. [28 July 2022].