

## Republic of Iraq



Area 438,317 sq.km. Population 37.1 million; Ethnicity Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkoman/Assyrian (other) 5% Languages – Arabic and Kurdish , Turkmen and Assyrian (local) Religion – Muslim 99%, Shia 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%, Other 1% Labor 8.9 million - Agriculture 22%, Industry 19%, Services 59% GDP US\$ 523 Billion, Per capita \$14,600, Growth -2.4% (2014) GDP by sector - Agriculture 3%, Industry 65%, Services 32% Exports US\$94 Billion – Crude Oil 84% - fuel, food, animals 16% Key partners China 24%, India 18%, USA 16%, Europe 10% Imports US\$62 Billion, food, medicine, manufactured goods Key partners – Turkey 24%, Syria 17%, China 17%, USA 5% (2014) Iraq encompasses the Mesopotamian Alluvial Plain, NW end of the Zargos Mountains, and the eastern part of the Syrian Desert

The region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, historically known as Mesopotamia, is most often referred to as humanity's cradle of civilization. It was here that mankind first began to read, write, create laws and live in cities under an organized government. Iraq's modern borders were mostly demarcated in 1920 by the League of Nations when the Ottoman Empire was divided by the Treaty of Sèvres. Iraq was placed under the authority of the United Kingdom as the British Mandate of Mesopotamia. A monarchy was established in 1921 and the Kingdom of Iraq gained independence from Britain in 1932. In 1958, the monarchy was overthrown and the Republic of Iraq was created. Iraq was controlled by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party from 1968 until 2003.

Territorial disputes with Iran led to an inconclusive and costly eight year war (1980-88). In August 1990, Iraq seized Kuwait, but was expelled by US-led UN coalition forces during the Gulf War of January-February 1991. Following Kuwait's liberation, the UN Security Council (UNSC) required Iraq to scrap all weapons of mass destruction and long range missiles and to allow UN verification inspections. Continued Iraqi noncompliance with UNSC resolution over a period of 12 years led to the US led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and the ouster of the Saddam Hussein regime. US forces remained in Iraq under a UNSC mandate through 2009 and under a bilateral security agreement thereafter, helping to provide security and to train and mentor Iraqi security forces in October 2005. Iraqi's approved a constitution in a national referendum and elected a 275 member Council of Representatives (COR) in December 2005. multi-party elections were held in 2005. The American presence in Iraq ended in 2011.

In January 2009 and April 2013 Iraq held elections for provincial councils in all governorates except for the three comprising the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Kirkuk Governorate. Iraq held a national legislative election in March 2010 – choosing 325 legislators in an expanded COR and after a nine month deadlock approved the government in December 2010. In April 2014, Iraq held a national legislative election and expanded the COR to 328 legislators. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki dropped his bid for a third term in office, enabling new Prime Minister Haydar al-Abadi, a shia from Baghdad, to win parliamentary approval of his new Cabinet in September 2014.

Since early 2015, Iraq has been engaged in a military campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to recapture territory lost in the western and northern portion of the country.