

Christian denominations in Iraq

Iraq hosts several ancient Christian communities but they now number only around 250,000 people, down from a population of some 1.5 million before the U.S.-led invasion in 2003



TURKEY

SYRIA

Mosul

Nineveh Plains

IRAQ

SAUDI ARABIA

Baghdad

Controlled by Kurdish forces

IRAN



Most Christians now live in Baghdad, Nineveh Plains and Kurdistan region

CHALDEANS

■ Descended from ancient Mesopotamians, Chaldeans are Eastern-rite Catholics who are autonomous from Rome but recognise authority of Pope

■ **Chaldean Church**, based in Baghdad, is headed by Patriarch **Louis Raphael Sako** (above)

SYRIACS

■ Trace ancestry to ancient Mesopotamia. Most are Catholics but some are also Orthodox. Majority live in Nineveh Plains

■ **Syriac Catholic Church** is based in Lebanon, **Syriac Orthodox Church** is based in Syria

ASSYRIANS

■ Descendants of ancient empires of Assyria and Babylonia. Embraced Christianity in 1st Century AD, with **Ancient Church of the East** – based in Baghdad – believed to be oldest such community in Iraq

■ Some fled to Iraq after massacres by Ottoman army in World War I



ARMENIANS

■ History of Armenians in Iraq dates to late Babylonian times. Many fled to Iraq following Armenian genocide of 1915 by Ottoman forces. Speak Armenian

■ Most are Orthodox, some are Catholic

OTHERS

■ Include Arab Christians and small communities of Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Protestants

■ **Some Chaldeans, Syriacs and Assyrians still speak form of Aramaic – language spoken by Jesus**

IRAQI CHRISTIANS

