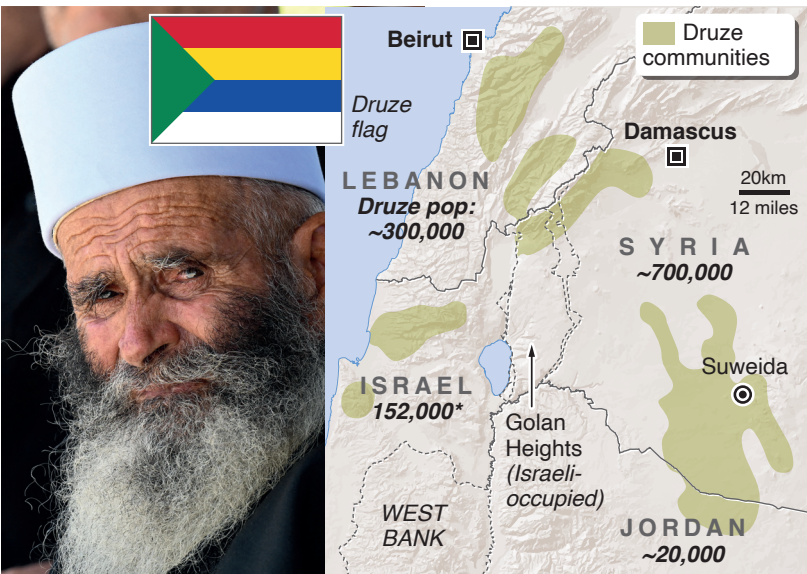


Who are the Middle East's Druze minority?

Sectarian clashes in Syria place the spotlight on a unique community that has lived in the region for over a thousand years and remains tightly connected despite being scattered across borders



- Arabic-speaking ethno-religious minority who primarily live in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and occupied Golan Heights

- Practise faith that emerged in 11th century and incorporates elements from Islam and other philosophies

- Druze in Syria make up about 3% of total population of 23.6 million

- Since fall of **Assad** in December, Druze have resisted state attempts to impose authority over them

- Despite government condemning recent attacks on Druze, its forces have been accused of “summary executions” of Druze people

- Israel has justified airstrikes on government forces in Suweida and Damascus by citing need to protect Syrian Druze

*In Israel and Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics

Sources: BBC, Encyclopedia Britannica, Druzestudies.org Picture: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS