

Monday 17th August

Kuwait

Pop: 4.8 million

Muslim: Approximately 76%

The political environment in Kuwait has in recent years been shaken by political unrest, protests and accusations of corruption. Today this country, as with its neighbours in the Arabian Peninsula, is being shaken by the consequences of falling oil prices worldwide and the coronavirus pandemic.



The discovery of oil brought economic prosperity and rapid growth of the population, both of expatriate workers as well as Kuwaiti citizens. The population is only 30% Kuwaiti, with the majority being composed of immigrant workers. These migrant workers are often taken advantage of and ill-treated. They have suffered greatly as the economy has suffered during the coronavirus pandemic. Not only have many lost their jobs and income, but many were stranded and

unable to return to their homelands as a result of lockdowns in Kuwait and elsewhere and because of travel restrictions. There have been reports of a surge in the number of suicides among migrants.

Sunni Islam is the official religion of Kuwait; 76% of the population are Muslim, made up of Sunnis and Shia Arabs, both of whom we will be praying for tomorrow. A large minority group of 'Bedoon', or stateless Arabs, has no known believers. We will be praying for them on Wednesday.

Christians make up 17% of the population and are almost entirely from other countries. They have freedom to worship and there is little direct persecution. The underground church is growing quickly in numbers and maturity. Believers are reaching out to the local population and there are reports of movements to Christ happening. Christian satellite TV, radio programmes and websites are effective tools that are reaching numerous Kuwaitis with the message of Christ.

Watch a video clip about Kuwait to inspire your prayers: <https://vimeo.com/405850522>

- Pray for the many migrant workers and the Kuwaitis who are suffering from the loss of their jobs and homes. Pray the government will work to help them.
- Pray for the leadership of Kuwait as they negotiate these turbulent economic times. Let's ask for wisdom and justice to prevail. Sabah Al Khalid Al Sabah is Prime Minister of Kuwait. Let's pray for his salvation and that of all the government leaders.
- Thank God for the beginnings of movements to Christ in Kuwait. Pray for the numerous expatriate believers in Kuwait to be fearless speakers of truth and life, especially as this time of great need and fear and where hope has been lost for so many. Pray that both the Emir and the government will be committed to ensuring that religious freedom applies to the entire country.

Sources: <https://www.pray-ap.info/kuwait.html> and <https://prayercast.com/kuwait.html>

Tuesday 18th August

Sunni and Shia Arabs – unreached people groups

Frontiers has named Kuwaiti Sunni and Shia Arabs as priority people groups, as they are seen as having least access to the gospel and in need of more workers to go to them if they are to hear the good news.

Watch a short 2-minute video about Kuwaiti Arabs:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=pYMrbAVr1UI&feature=emb_logo

The public view is that all Kuwaitis are Muslims. Sunni Islam is the official religion of Kuwait and 60 - 70% of ethnic Kuwaitis are Sunni Muslims. Approximately 25% of Kuwaiti Muslims are Shia. Unlike in some other Gulf states, Shia citizens are well integrated into Kuwaiti life. Government policy, both on paper and in practice, doesn't discriminate between citizens for religious reasons, meaning Shia Muslims are relatively well-treated by the government. The Shia community in Kuwait has contributed significantly to the general economic development of the country through business and commerce. The first female minister in Kuwait, Maasuma Al Mubarak, is a Shia Muslim.

Muslim background believers usually keep a low profile, because of fear of persecution, although it has been reported that there are approximately 200 Kuwaiti believers. In 1981, a law was passed that gives Kuwaiti nationality only to Muslims. Many Kuwaiti students who study abroad encounter Christian witnesses and become followers of Jesus.

You might like to watch this video of how one Kuwaiti family came to faith:

<https://vimeo.com/112480846>

- Let's ask God to send workers to Kuwait who have the necessary skills to work among and effectively reach and disciple the Kuwaiti Arabs.
- We long to see movements of Christ among the Kuwaiti Arabs. Pray for whole families to come to Jesus together and for movements to spread like wildfire along these natural family lines.
- Many Kuwaiti students study abroad and have met believers. Several have come to faith. Let's pray they will share the good news with family and friends on their return and be able to meet up with other believers.

Wednesday 19th August

The Bedoon

The Bedoon came into existence over fifty years ago when the British Empire gave the nations of the Arab Gulf independence. In Arabic, Bedoon means 'those without.' Then the fledgling governments required families to register in order to receive citizenship. The Bedoon say their forefathers, tribes of Arab nomads who couldn't read, didn't know they had to register with the government. Even after borders were drawn, they lived as they always had, moving their herds across the desert.

In Kuwait, the Bedoon make up 10% of the population. Many of them live in corrugated shacks with dirt floors in the shadow of modern apartment buildings. With no record of identity, the Bedoon can't own homes or property. They are banned from secondary education and lack the right to vote. The Bedoon cannot get healthcare and they have no access to the courts of law. They can't get jobs beyond the lowest paid. Because they never received identity cards, their children can't get them either. They have no nationality. On paper, they don't exist. Many feel that hope is out of reach.



Yet the Bedoon helped build the Gulf nations following independence. In Kuwait, many of them fought in the armed forces during the 1991 Gulf War. But after the war, the government began more strictly defining who could benefit from the nation's increasing oil profits. With free healthcare, education, and monthly income available, some government leaders claim that the Bedoon are simply nomads who drifted over from other countries in the last ten years. Meanwhile, there is a rising tide of protest from the Bedoon community.

Yet God has not forgotten or overlooked them. There are no known believers - they need Christ Jesus, because without His hope and the knowledge of their inheritance, the Bedoon will always feel lost.

- Pray that justice is done, wrongs are forgiven, and most of all that gospel workers will come and share the greatest hope with the Bedoon.
- Pray for Bedoon youth to find their hope and their future in Jesus Christ.
- The Bible says of Abraham, a desert nomad like the original Bedoon, "He was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The Bedoon are among the lost children of Abraham. Let's pray that Christ will build a church in Kuwait, a home for all peoples, including the Bedoon.

Thursday 20th August

Qatar

Pop: Approximately 2.8 million

Muslim: Approximately 80%

Bordering the Persian Gulf and Saudi Arabia, Qatar was part of the Turkish-Ottoman Empire until 1918, and then operated under British protection until 1971. It too has been hit hard by the collapse of oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic, having had one of the world's highest per capita numbers of confirmed cases. As in other Gulf states, Qatar saw Covid-19 spread among low-income migrant workers living in crowded quarters.

Of its roughly 2.8 million people, only about 12% are Qatari nationals. This nation is home to many South and Southeast Asians, Egyptians, Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians and Iranians, who make up the majority of Qatar's workforce.

In June 2017, several countries abruptly cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt. They accused Qatar of being a major funder of terrorist organisations and went as far as forcing Qatari citizens in their countries to leave.

Qatar had been continuing to develop quickly as it prepares to host the 2022 Football World Cup. This will be the first World Cup ever to be held in the Arab world and the first in a Muslim-majority country. Nearly 80% of the population is Muslim, and it is forbidden to criticise the ruling family or Islam or to share the gospel. Qatar is arguably the most unreached nation in the Arabian Peninsula with the fewest number of local believers. Like its Saudi neighbour, it follows the strict Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam, although there are also a small number of Shia Qataris. The influence of Wahhabism has led to Qatar having one of the most conservative societies in the world. While expatriates enjoy quite normal lifestyles, the Qatari society is far more restrictive, especially for the local women.

Qatari Arabs remain unreached with the good news. Due to past restrictions, Qataris have had very little exposure to Christian truth. Most Qataris have never met a Christian with whom they could communicate at a meaningful level. Many Qataris have no idea that Christians even worship in their land.

Watch a Prayercast video to inspire your prayers: <https://vimeo.com/405837451>

- Pray for the political situation in Qatar now it has been ostracised by its neighbours and the 'brotherhood' of the Arab Gulf countries has been weakened. Pray that the Lord would use these trying circumstances and the economic upheaval to shake up Qatar and its people. Pray that in these unstable times, the Qatari people would turn to Jesus to find their ultimate peace, stability, and hope for all of eternity.
- The Qatari people are extremely wealthy and this has become a stumbling block to the gospel. Pray Qataris would recognise their spiritual need amid such material wealth.
- Pray for open doors for Muslims to hear and receive the gospel.

Sources: <https://www.pray-ap.info/qatar.html> and <https://prayercast.com/qatar.html>

Friday 21st August

Believers in Qatar

Christianity has been tolerated in Qatar among the expatriates for some time and they are allowed to practise their faith, as long as they keep it to themselves. No 'formal' churches have been allowed to be built, but 'unofficially' they have existed for a long time. The government has granted permission and land for the first church complex to be shared by several churches. This represents a far more lenient and tolerant attitude by the Qatari government. Nevertheless, many expatriates have been forced to leave the country as a result of speaking about Christ.

Christians in Qatar are asking us to pray in the following areas:

- Pray that God would give birth to a local church and national leadership within Qatar. Pray that God would break the spiritual pride that Qataris have concerning Islam and prepare their hearts for the message of the gospel.
- Praise God that the Church Compound exists and is growing. Pray that God would mobilise the thousands of expatriate Christians here to pray for Qataris and to reach out to them. Pray for continued and greater unity amongst them so Qataris will see Christ's love through them.
- There are only a handful of known, local believers, most of whom are not spiritually mature. Pray that they would be strengthened, disciplined well, and used by God.
- Pray for perseverance for workers who are struggling to see fruit and finding it difficult to balance career, family, and ministry in an increasingly busy country. Pray that God would encourage them during times of discouragement.
- Pray for God to grant Christians greater favour with the Qataris. The Lord is opening up more opportunities for more workers from all over the world to come to Qatar, creating a new atmosphere in this strict Wahhabi Muslim country.
- Pray that the Bible and other resources would find its way into the hands of Qataris and that Christian media through the internet and satellite TV would have greater impact.

Sources: <https://www.pray-ap.info/qatar.html> and <https://prayercast.com/qatar.html>

Saturday 22nd August

Bahrain Pop: 1.7 million Muslim: 83%

Situated in the Gulf between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain is made up of over 35 islands, the major ones connected by causeways. Iranian rule of what is now modern Bahrain lasted for 180 years until they were expelled by the Al Kalifa family who took control in 1782. Bahrain was a British protectorate for more than 100 years before regaining its independence in 1971. Formerly a pearling and trading centre for the Arabian Gulf with a tradition of independence, it is diversifying from oil into banking, aluminium production and tourism. Bahrain was the site of the first oil well in the Arabian Gulf. Ironically, it will be the first Gulf country to run out of oil. Compared to its neighbouring countries, Bahrain is poorer with significant unemployment. It has been receiving financial aid from fellow Gulf Arab states and may now need more, but its wealthier neighbours could themselves be constrained by low oil prices and the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

With much exposure to other cultures' influences, the labour force is 59% foreign, Bahrain has become more ethnically and religiously diverse. Overall, Bahrain enjoys a greater openness to modernisation and westernisation than surrounding Gulf nations. Bahrain became a Kingdom in 2002 under the Al Kalifa family. Great tensions and even civil unrest have resulted from the conflict between the Sunni Muslim ruling family and Shia Muslim majority. King Hamad is overseeing a gradual transformation. Great numbers of Saudis and Kuwaitis flock to Bahrain every weekend because of greater personal freedom. While open evangelism is not allowed, Christian expatriates have found opportunities to worship and minister in Bahrain. However, local Christians still struggle to practise their faith freely, some worshipping in secret. But with religious freedom for expatriate believers, there are quite a few churches within these borders. With 83% of the population claiming to follow Islam and 9.8% claiming Christianity (predominantly foreigners), Bahrain still remains desperately in need of the gospel.

Watch the testimony of a believer from Bahrain. She persecuted Christians and later became one of the persecuted: <https://vimeo.com/63468966>

- Pray for the royal family, opposition leaders, and government officials, that political and economic differences could be worked out for the good of the people, resulting in less unrest, increased stability and improved employment opportunities and business.
- Pray for the isolated Bahraini believers who do not regularly attend church. May the Lord help these believers to see the importance of meeting together. Pray for courage for Bahraini believers to be lights in the darkness despite daily hostility.
- Pray for institutions to be founded in Bahrain that would show how Christians work together while drawing Muslims into fellowship with the Lord.

Source: <https://www.pray-ap.info/downloads/1englishcountry.pdf>