



Fact Sheet

The Christian Community in Israel

In 2012, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported 158,000 Christians living in Israel, up from 154,100 in 2011 and representing some 2 percent of the total population.

According to the report, approximately 80% of Christians in Israel are Arabs with the remainder mostly immigrants from the former Soviet Union who came to the country under the Law of Return, which provides for Israeli citizenship if a person has a Jewish grandparent.

Most Christian Arabs live in northern Israel. Cities with the largest Christian populations are Nazareth, with 22,400; Haifa with 14,400; Jerusalem with 11,700; and Shfaram with 9,400. The Christian population is also growing, albeit at a slower rate than all other sectors. Christian population growth stands at 1.3%, compared to 1.8% for Jews and 2.5% for Muslims.

The level of Christian education is significantly high, with 64% of Christian high school students earning a high school diploma, compared to 59% for Jewish Israelis and 48% for Muslims. The CBS report noted that 10.2% of Arab Christians study for degrees in medical fields, compared to 4.6% of the general student population, while Arab Christians also had a higher rate of students studying for a medical degree than the rest of the population.

In terms of age, 30.1% of all Christians in Israel are 19 and under – similar to the 33.5% of Jews, but significantly lower than the 48.7% for Muslims. The average number of children for a Christian woman is 2.2, the lowest in the country among the different population sectors. The average number of children for a Muslim woman is 3.5, the highest, and 3 for Jewish women.

The employment rate for Christians stands at 54% – 63.8% for men and 45.3% for women. The national average is 75% and 66% respectively. Among Christian Arabs, the rates are 48% – with men at 59.5% and women at 37.7%.

Israel is one of the only countries where the Christian population is growing due to natural increase and no state persecution. This is in bleak contrast to the entire Middle East, where Christianity is and has been rapidly on the decline. Christian leaders and community members are pointing to Muslim violence as a threat to their way of life in Arab majority cities and towns. This is true among Christians in West Bank towns of the Palestinian Authority as well.

http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/People/Pages/Christians_in_Israel-Christmas_2011.aspxhttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Israel<http://www.jpost.com/National-News/CBS-report-Christian-population-in-Israel-growing>

This information is current as of 2014.