

Source Sheet Companion

Explainer: Druze Citizens of Israel

This companion lists the sources utilized in the infographics, offers resources for further learning, and shares additional information. We hope you take advantage of these sources to learn more about Druze citizens of Israel and to support your efforts to educate others.

Who are the Druze?

1. The Druze faith, a monotheistic religion with influences from Islam, Hinduism, and Greek philosophy, maintains a closed community since the 11th century. Adherents marry within the community, emphasizing the religious (Ok'al) and secular (Jo'hal) distinction in attire and lifestyle. Led by a religious sage, the community prohibits polygamy, ensures religious equality between genders, and grants women equal roles and inheritance rights.

Theodorou, Angelina E. ["5 Facts about Israeli Druze, a Unique Religious and Ethnic Group."](#) *Pew Research Center*, 21 Mar. 2016.

Faraj Falah, Janan. ["The Development of the Status of Druze Women in the 21st Century."](#) *Frontiers*, 10 Aug. 2023.

2. Estimates of the Druze population range from 0.8 million to 1 million, depending on the source. These include adjacent communities of about 250,000 in Lebanon and 600,000 in Syria, 150,000 in Israel, Jordan and the United States.

Zeedan, Rami. ["The Druze Community in Israel."](#) *Oxford Bibliographies*, 24 Apr. 2023.

Kaplan Sommer, Allison. ["The Druze Community in Israel, Explained."](#) *Haaretz*, 11 June 2023.

3. Loyalty to the country of residence among the Druze is based in a religious emphasis on the afterlife that limits aspirations for national independence in this life, a warrior tradition in which Druze generally serve and protect the state in which they are citizens, and a history of persecution that made these practices part of their own security.

Finer, Jonathan. ["For Druze, Loyalty Depends on Location."](#) *NBCUniversal News Group*, 25 July 2006.

Zaitoun, Ryan. ["Old Loyalties, New Opportunities: The Battle for Identity among the Golani Druze."](#) *Wilson Center*, 21 Dec. 2021.

4. Halabi, R. (2014). ["Invention of a Nation: The Druze in Israel."](#) *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 49(3), June 2014, P. 267-281.

5. 90% report a strong sense of belonging to their community. Most see it as a combination of ancestry, culture, and religion 72% also place high importance on their religious identity. They maintain strong connections with Druze communities outside of Israel and express concerns for the safety of Druze in war-torn regions in Syria and Lebanon.

Theodorou, Angelina E. ["5 Facts about Israeli Druze, a Unique Religious and Ethnic Group."](#) *Pew Research Center*, 21 Mar. 2016.

Zaitoun, Ryan. [“Old Loyalties, New Opportunities: The Battle for Identity among the Golan Druze.”](#) *Wilson Center*, 21 Dec. 2021.

6. 61 % of Israeli Druze individuals surveyed felt “very much” a “real Israeli”.

Zaitoun, Ryan. [“Old Loyalties, New Opportunities: The Battle for Identity among the Golan Druze.”](#) *Wilson Center*, 21 Dec. 2021.

7. Druze self-identification varies in the degree to which they see themselves as part of Israel’s Arab minority with a distinct religion, or entirely distinct from the Arab community ethnically and nationally. Within this context, some Druze leaders define themselves as fully Israeli and even Zionist, while others consider themselves Arab citizens of the state and reject the notion of a separate “Israeli Druze” identity.

Toukhy, Nermin et al. [“The Relationship Between Non-suicidal Self-injury, Identity Conflict, and Risky Behavior among Druze Adolescents.”](#) *Frontiers in Psychiatry* vol. 13 938825. 9 Nov. 2022.

8. Druze express a strong sense of belonging to Arab society through shared language and culture. The sense of belonging to the Palestinian people is weakest among Druze.

Haddad Haj-Yahya, Nasreen, et al. [“A Bridge to the Future: The Gap Year as a Path to Mobility among Arab Youth in Israel.”](#) *The Israel Democracy Institute*, The Israel Democracy Institute, Dec. 2022

9. The total population of the Druze in Israel is about 150,000 people including 24,000 who live in the Golan Heights. 20% of the Golan Druze possess Israeli citizenship, while the rest have residency status. following the 1981 law annexing the region.

Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. [“The Druze Population of Israel on the Occasion of the Nabi Shu’ayb Festival 2023.”](#) 23 Apr. 2023. P.1.

Amun, Fadi. [“As Ties to Syria Fade, Golan Druze Increasingly Turning to Israel for Citizenship.”](#) Edited by Shomrim, *Times of Israel*, 3 Sept. 2022.

Geography

10. Druze men typically have the encounter during the IDF service, while Druze women connect with their Jewish peers within academia.

11. 81 % of Druze live in the Northern District, 19% - in the Haifa District.

12. The Knesset. [“Data on Druze Local Authorities.”](#) [Hebrew]. 20 June 2023.

13. 13 of the municipalities have Druze populations comprising 95% or more of the total population. In 8 of these, the entire population is Druze. Villages- Peki’in, Usfiya (Isifiya) on Mount Carmel, Julis, Yark, Hurfeish, Mukhraka (Maghar), Beit Jann, Shfaram, Sajur, Rama, Ein el-Asad, Kafr Sumei’, Kisra, Yanuah, Abu Sinan, Jat.

Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. [“The Druze Population of Israel on the Occasion of the Nabi Shu’ayb Festival 2023.”](#) 23 Apr. 2023. P.4.

14. The largest Druze population centers are Daliyat al-Carmel (17,500 residents) and Yarka (17,300 residents).

Key Events in State-Minority Relations

15. Himeles, Sara. ["Why a Druze is the Jewish Agency's Next Emissary."](#) Unpacked, 27 June 2022.
16. Chacar, Henriette. ["What Spurred Israel's Druze to Demand Equality Now?"](#) +972 Magazine, 27 Oct. 2019. Zaitoun, Ryan. ["Old Loyalties, New Opportunities: The Battle for Identity among the Golan Druze."](#) Wilson Center, 21 Dec. 2021.
17. Derfner, Larry. ["Covenant of Blood."](#) The Jerusalem Post, 15 Jan. 2009.
Avivi, Shimon. ["The Druze and Israel: Evolution of a Blood Covenant."](#) [Hebrew]. Mida, 28 Apr. 2016.
18. Greenger, Nurit. ["Israeli Jews, Israeli Druze and the Nation-State Basic Law."](#) The Jerusalem Post, 4 Sep. 2018.
19. Ibid.
20. Compared to 46% among the Muslim, 25 % among the Bedouin women.
Haddad Haj-Yahya, Nasreen, et al. ["A Bridge to the Future: The Gap Year as a Path to Mobility among Arab Youth in Israel."](#) The Israel Democracy Institute, Dec. 2022. P. 95
21. Halabi, R. (2014). ["Invention of a Nation: The Druze in Israel. Journal of Asian and African Studies."](#) Sage Journals, 49(3), June 2014, P. 267-281.
22. On December 14, 1981, the Knesset approved the Golan Heights Law.
Harkov, Lahav. ["Applying Israeli Law to the Golan in 1981 and the West Bank in 2020."](#) The Jerusalem Post, 2 June 2020.
23. The Druze population in Golan currently 23-27, 000. Numbers vary depending on the source.
Amun, Fadi. ["The Changing Face of the Golan: Record Number of Druze Requesting Israeli Citizenship."](#) Shomrim, 4 Sept. 2022.
["Druze in the Golan Heights."](#) Coalition for the Israeli Golan, 13 Nov. 2018.
24. This development led to ongoing tensions and resistance within the Druze community, which traditionally maintained strong ties with Syria, against Israel's authority. Presently, approximately 20% of Golan Druze hold Israeli citizenship. The ongoing Syrian civil war and the events of October 07 have resulted in an uptick in citizenship applications and collaboration with Israeli security institutions.
Hashmonai, Adi. ["Since the Hamas Massacre, Golan Heights Druze Speed Toward 'Israelization.'"](#) Haaretz, 22 Nov. 2023.
25. ["Salah Tarif."](#) Wikipedia, 2 Nov. 2023.

26. While the government usually includes Druze Knesset members, only three have attained ministerial roles. In March 2009, following warnings from Druze leaders of the growing unrest in the Druze community, Ayoob Kara, a Druze MK, was appointed Deputy Minister of the Development of the Negev and Galilee, later he also served as Minister of Communications.

["About Ayoob Kara."](#) Economic Peace Center.

27. The bill is an amendment to the Planning and Building Law; legislation gave the government increased enforcement powers including demolition and eviction orders, and substantially increased the use of financial penalties against offenders.

Lis, Jonathan. ["Israel Passes Law Meant to Crack Down on Illegal Building in Arab Communities."](#) Haaretz, 5 Apr. 2017.

The crisis is primarily affecting the younger generation: getting married without owning a home is not accepted practice in Druze society and the alternative of moving to Jewish or mixed Jewish-Arab cities threatens Druze identity in the long term.

Eilat, Omri. ["The Druze Protest in the Summer of 2023."](#) Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies." 23 Aug. 2023.

28. Wootliff, Raoul. ["Final Text of Jewish Nation-State Law, Approved by the Knesset Early on July 19."](#) The Times of Israel.

29. ["Nation-State Law: Arab, Druze, Government and Civil Society Responses."](#) IATF on Israeli Arab Issues, 9 Aug. 2018.

30. Rasgon, Adam. ["Druze Revolt: Why a Tiny, Loyal Community is so Infuriated by Nation-State Law."](#) Times of Israel, 8 Aug. 2018.

31. Eilat, Omri. ["The Druze Protest in the Summer of 2023."](#) Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies" 23 Aug. 2023.

32. The protests also highlighted the new dynamic, the Golan Druze "increasingly accept the reality of Israeli rule, for utilitarian and instrumental reasons." " This civic aspect of the protest confirms a growing trend of "instrumental integration" of the Golan Druze into Israel."

Hazran, Yusri. ["The Druze in Israel: A Silent Minority Begins to Speak Out."](#) The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune, 6 Sept. 2023.

33. Cashman, Greer Fay. ["Grapevine November 10, 2023: Recognizing Druze Inclusion and Sacrifice."](#) The Jerusalem Post, 10 Nov. 2023.

34. Druze leadership demands amendments including legalizing existing unregulated construction on private lands and allocating state lands for young families housing.

Assad, Amal. ["Israeli Druze Are Not Guests and the Nation-State Law Should Reflect That: Opinion."](#) Haaretz, 13 Nov. 2023.

While leaders of the opposition propose an amendment to include an equality clause for all citizens, the government instead plans to introduce a new Basic Law to recognize the special status of the Druze community only.

Hauser Tov, Michael. ["Israeli Opposition Party Proposes Amending Nation-State Law with 'Equality Clause.'" Haaretz.Com, Haaretz, 20 Nov. 2023.](#)

Education

35. In the 1970s, Druze leaders advocated for a separate education system separate from the general Arab schooling, leading to the establishment of the Division of Druze Education. The Ministry of Education and Culture implemented this decision in 1976, creating the Committee for Education and Culture for Druze to oversee Druze education independently. The Druze education system was tailored to reflect the community's heritage, with new textbooks, teacher training, and infrastructure development. The system aimed to instill a Druze-Israeli consciousness, emphasizing commonalities with Jews while distancing from Arab identity. Within five years, the Committee established a comprehensive independent education system. Nearly a 75% success rate in 2022.

Adv., Aml & Davidovitch, Nitza. (2020). ["The Case of Druze Society and its Integration in Higher Education in Israel."](#) International Education Studies. 13. 68.

36. Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel on the Occasion of the Nabi Shu'ayb Festival 2023."](#) 23 Apr. 2023. P.4.
37. Arlozorov, Meirav. ["Despite the Amazing Statistic: 150,000 Israelis 'that no one counts.'" The Marker Online, \[Hebrew\]. 29 July 2022.](#)
38. Haddad Haj-Yahya, Nasreen, et al. ["Change of Signs and Disparities: Society Arab in Education."](#) The Israel Democracy Institute, Feb. 2021.
39. Dvir, Noam. ["The Rates of Eligibility for High School Graduation Exams Based on Revealed Locations: Who Ranks Highest, and Who Ranks Lowest?"](#) [Hebrew]. Israel HaYom, 11 Sept. 2023,
40. Aaron Institute for Economic Policy. ["Learning in Hebrew in the Arabic-Speaking Community: Barriers to Language Acquisition and Strategies for Overcoming Them."](#) [Hebrew]. The Reichman University, September 2020.
41. In 2014, 13.6% of Druze population held an academic degree (19% for women and 8.2% for men). By 2022, the percentage of individuals holding a Ph.D. increased to 1.6%, with approximately 36% being male and 64% female.

The Knesset. ["Data on Druze in the Higher Education System in Israel."](#) [Hebrew]. 22 December 2021.

42. In 2013 Druze made up 1.2% of all university students. In 2022, 1.64%: 5,780 Druze student out of 351,500 total.

Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel."](#) 24 Apr. 2013. P.2.

Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel 2022."](#) 24 April 2022. P.2.

43. 39.8% of high school graduates went on to study for a B.A. within the first eight years after their graduation.

Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel on the Occasion of the Nabi Shu'ayb Festival 2023."](#) 23 Apr. 2023. P.1.

44. ["The Academia Gaps Haven't Been Closed."](#) [Hebrew]. The Portal for the Carmel and the North, 7 July 2020.

45. Druze women have to navigate restrictions on mobility for higher education within their communities, often attending teacher's colleges close to home as a compromise.

Zeedan, Rami, and Miles Luce. ["Druze Women and Gender in Druze Society: A Systematic Literature Review."](#) MDPI, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, 17 Dec. 2021.

46. Faraj Falah, Janan. ["The Development of the Status of Druze Women in the 21st Century."](#) *Frontiers*, 10 Aug. 2023.

Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["Continuation of Studies for a Second Degree \(Master's Degree\) after Graduation with a First Degree \(Bachelor's Degree\)."](#) 27 June 2022.

Economy

47. Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel on the Occasion of the Nabi Shu'ayb Festival 2023."](#) 23 Apr. 2023. P.4.

48. The socio-economic plans grew from a 6 M three-year plan in 2006 to NIS 2B in 2021. Note that all of the plans include Circassian community.

Gov.il. Government Services and Information. ["Multi-Year Plan \(2006-2009\) for the Development of Druze and Circassian Communities."](#) [Hebrew]. 31 August 2006.

Gov.il. Government Services and Information. ["Programs for the Development and Empowerment of Druze and Circassian Communities."](#) [Hebrew]. 02 July 2023.

Raviv, Erez. ["The government approved a development plan for Druze and Circassian communities."](#) [Hebrew]. 02 July 2023.*

* The plan hasn't been budgeted yet and was expected to be approved by the end of 2023. Due to the ongoing war, the resolution regarding the latest GR is pending.

49. In Israel, the socio-economic index is a comprehensive indicator comprising 16 variables encompassing demography, education, employment, and standard of living. These variables were amalgamated into a unified index, categorizing all localities into ten clusters, with 1 representing the lowest and 10 representing the highest socio-economic status.

Barakat, Amiram. ["Societal Disparities: Periphery vs. Major Cities in Israel - Where Incomes are Higher, Education is Better, and Satisfaction is Greater."](#) [Hebrew]. 02 October 2019.

50. In Israel, the poverty line is defined by the Social Security Administration as 50% of the disposable median income (including transfer payments and after deduction of taxes), adjusted to the size of the family.

Poverty per capita in a household is measured differently by the Social Security Administration and by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD uses the square root of the number of people in a household. In contrast, the SSA assigns a higher value per capita, which results in a higher rate of poverty per capita in a household. The implications of this different measurement are expressed the most in families with 4 or more children, characteristic of Druze and Arab families.

State of Israel National Insurance Institute. ["2021 Periodic Report on Poverty and Income Inequality."](#) [Hebrew]. 2021

51. [According to the Knesset Research Center](#), 16% of families in Druze settlements are registered with social welfare centers.

52. State of Israel National Insurance Institute Presentation. ["2021 Periodic Report on Poverty and Income Inequality."](#) [Hebrew]. 2021
53. In 2021.
The IDI (Israel Democracy Institute) Economic Discourse Team. ["Young Arabs in Israel: Situation Report 2023 - The Comprehensive Survey."](#) [Hebrew]. Israel Democracy Institute, 2023. P.147.
54. Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel 2023."](#) 23 Apr. 2023. P.9.
55. Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["Labour Force Survey Data, December 2022."](#) 23 Jan. 2023. P.2.
56. Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel 2023."](#) 23 Apr. 2023. P.9.
57. Ibid.
58. Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["Labour Force Survey Data, December 2022."](#) 23 Jan. 2023. P.18.
59. Ibid.
60. The employment rate for Druze women increased from 21.2% in 2010 to 40.2% in 2022.

Faraj Falah, Janan. ["The Development of the Status of Druze Women in the 21st Century."](#) Frontiers in Sociology, vol. 8, 2023, article number 1206494, Section: Gender, Sex and Sexualities, 21 September 2023.
61. Barakat, Ebtesam. ["Educated, Professional, and Pious: Druze Women in Israel as a Case Study of Women Challenging Social Orders Anchored in the Male-Dominated Religious Discourse."](#) Politica, no. 32, Winter 2022, Hebrew University of Jerusalem Manuscript on Civics Studies and International Relations.
62. Infrastructure is limited, being six times less available than in Jewish localities. Daycare options are scarce, with only 3% of 0-3-year-olds attending. Public transportation is inadequate, and mobility is constrained, as only 8% of women have a driving license. Societal restrictions also play a role. Despite ongoing efforts for a more modern society, traditional norms persist, affecting women's education and employment. Leaving the village without supervision may result in social stigma and accusations of violating sexual honor.

Faraj Falah, Janan. ["The Development of the Status of Druze Women in the 21st Century."](#) Frontiers in Sociology, vol. 8, 2023, article number 1206494, Section: Gender, Sex and Sexualities, 21 September 2023.

Zeedan, R., & Luce, M. ["Druze Women and Gender in Druze Society: A Systematic Literature Review."](#) Religions, vol. 12, no. 12, 2021, article 1111.
63. As of 2022. Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel. ["The Druze Population of Israel 2023."](#) 23 Apr. 2023.
64. Shanani, Mahmoud, and Omri Eilat. ["Community and Society: Trends in Druze Voting Patterns in Knesset Elections 1996-2020."](#) The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Dayan Center, 18 March 2021.

Public Representation

65. ["Sheik Moafaq Tarif - Parliament of the World's Religions."](#) Parliament of the Worlds Religions.
66. Staff, Jerusalem Post. ["Druze Woman Set to Enter Knesset in Israeli First."](#) The Jerusalem Post, 10 Apr. 2019.
67. Maltz, Judy. ["The Unconventional Woman Introducing U.S. Jews to 'Another Israel.'"](#) Haaretz.Com, Haaretz, 3 Feb. 2022.

68. Staff, Jerusalem Post. "[Ziv Medical Center Launches US Charity to Step up Care for Needy Communities.](#)" The Jerusalem Post, 20 June 2023.
69. Constantinoiu, Marina. "[Meet 6 Druze Leaders Changing Israel for the Better.](#)" ISRAEL21c, 30 Mar. 2021.

Further Learning

Watch:

- [Insight to Israel - The Druze](#)
- Israeli Druze: [How do you define your identity?](#)
- [BRIEF ENCOUNTERS | Inside the New Generation of Druze in Israel's North, Majdal Shams](#)
- [Druze in the IDF](#)
- [Why are Israeli Druze protesting over wind turbines?](#)
- [How do the Druze residents of the Golan Heights identify at the ballot box?](#)
- [Sights and sounds of Druze culture](#)
- [Druze Artist and Designer Reflects His Heritage in His Artwork](#)

Listen:

- Abu Ahmad, Ibrahim, and Amira Mohammed. "[Introduction to the Druze Community.](#)" Season 1, Episode 9, 6 Feb. 2024, Spotify.

Read:

- [Learn about the Druze with the National Library of Israel](#)
- [A Covenant of Brotherhood](#)
- [A Taste of Druze Cuisine](#)
- [Meet the Israeli Druze Artist Taking the Art World by Storm](#)