



Iraq



Country Overview:

Location: Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iran and Kuwait

Size: 58th largest country in the world at 437,367 sq km

Population: 31,858,481 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Baghdad

Export-commodities: crude oil 84%, crude materials excluding fuels, food and live animals

Import-commodities: food, medicine, manufactures

Currency: Iraqi Dinars (IQD)

Ethnic groups: Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian, or other 5%

Religion: Muslim 97% (Shia 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian or other 3%

Government type: parliamentary democracy

Chief of State: Jalal TALABANI (since 6 April 2005)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Nuri al-MALIKI (since 20 May 2006)

Language: Arabic (official), Kurdish (official in Kurdish regions), Turkoman (Turkish dialect), Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic), Armenian

Iraq is the 64th largest economy in the world



Republic of Iraq/ Jumhuriyat al-Iraq

Meetings and Negotiations

-Arrive 15 minutes prior to the meeting for greetings and small talk.

-Usually the host begins the business discussion. The visitor should be the one ending the meeting.

-Greetings-handshake coupled with eye contact and a smile. **Note:** too much eye contact may be considered rude.

-Men should wait to see if a woman extends her hand first.

-Business cards are routinely exchanged and are often printed in Arabic and English or in Kurdish and English.

-**Note:** It is **taboo** for religiously observant men to touch women and vice-versa.

-Bargaining is **ALWAYS** expected.

-Decisions usually take a lot of time

and showing some emotion/humor is expected during the negotiation process.

-Personal relationships are very important in doing business.

Business Attire

-Men typically wear a jacket and tie or a full suit in formal situations. Less formal meetings; nice slacks and collared shirt.

-Women's dress is conservative and formal. Iraqi women tend to cover their hair when necessary.

Behavior

-Pointing with a single finger is considered **rude**; use the whole hand to point to someone.

-Putting the right hand on the chest means "thanks, but no, thanks".

-Muslims follow the doctrines of the Koran, which forbids alcohol, pork and shellfish.

-The left hand is seen as **unclean**, therefore, use your right hand to

receive and hand items.

-Sitting cross-legged with your shoe/foot in the direction of someone's face is considered rude.

Gift Giving

-Gifts are not expected, yet welcomed on the condition that it would **not be expensive, so it is not viewed as a bribe**. Gifts are given with two hands (never by the left hand). Gifts are generally not opened when received.

Appropriate Gifts:

-pens/promotional materials and compasses are great

Gifts to Avoid:

-liquor/perfume, products, food, or leather goods from pig, items related to dogs, anything too expensive or flashy that could embarrass the recipient and be viewed as a **bribe**

Business Tips Continued

Conversation

- When dining, do not discuss business.

- Directness and brevity in business meetings can be considered **rude**.

- A few Arabic or Kurdish words/phrases such as hello (Marhaba Salam Alekom), thank you (Shukran), please (min fudlika (male) or min fudliki (female)

- The standard Arabic/Islamic greeting is "asalaamu alaikum" ("peace be with you"), to which the response is "wa alaikum salaam" ("and peace be unto you")

- Always keep your word. Do not make a promise or guarantee unless you can keep it.

- Iraqis often have several side discussions taking place during a meeting. They may interrupt the

speaker if they have something to add. They can be forceful in getting their point of view across.

Topics to Discuss: culture, sports, history, current affairs

Topics to Avoid: previous/current wars (with the USA and Russia), religion (unless inquiring about its history), terrorism.