

# DRUZE CITIZENS OF ISRAEL



This infographic provides a basic introduction to Druze citizens in Israel. Refer to the Source Sheet Companion for a list of links used to compile this explainer, as well as a selection of additional resources for further learning.



## Who are the Druze?

The Druze community in Israel is a unique ethno-religious Arabic-speaking minority who practice the Druze faith. Part of a global Druze community of about 1 million people, and deeply connected to their ancestral lands, Druze generally consider it both a matter of faith and commitment to support the country where they live. Unlike Muslim and Christian Arabs, Druze men are obligated to serve in the army based on a historical covenant with the state.<sup>1-9</sup>

Members of the community often describe themselves, and are referred to by others, as **Druze**, **Druze-Israeli**, **Israeli Druze**, **Arab Israeli Druze**, **Arab Druze** or **Druze-Arab**.

**~ 150,000**  
DRUZE POPULATION

**7.4%**  
of Arab  
Citizens

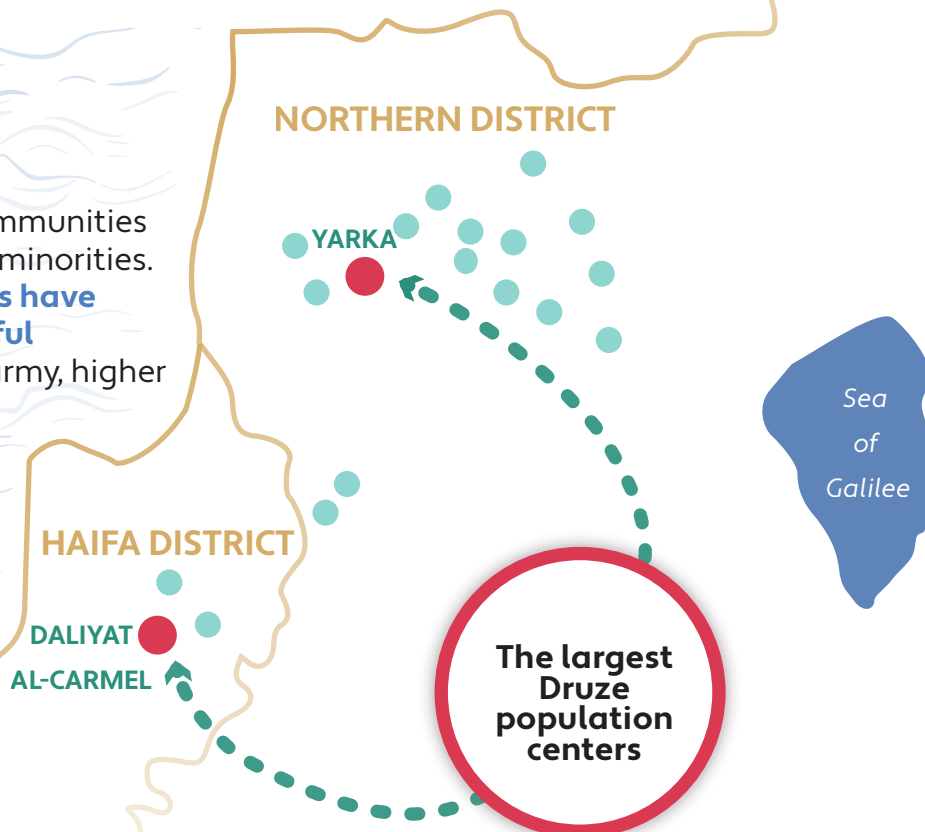
**1.6%**  
of Israel's  
Population

## Geography

Most Druze live in entirely Druze communities or areas with Christian and Muslim minorities. Therefore, **Druze and Jewish citizens have limited opportunities for meaningful interaction** prior to meeting in the army, higher education, or the workplace.<sup>10-14</sup>

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Druze localities are situated in **two main districts in Israel's northern periphery**.



## Key Events in State-Minority Relations

The unique pact between the Druze, the state of Israel and Jewish population is often referred to as *Brit Damim*, a “Blood Covenant”, a symbol of allegiance and shared destiny. Key aspects of the covenant include military service, acknowledgment of the Druze distinct identity, and a pledge of loyalty to the State. While views on the origin of this commitment and its extension vary, **debates within the community about their relationship with the State persist.**<sup>15-34</sup>

1948

In the early years of the state, some **Druze men volunteer for military service** in a specially established unit.

1956

A new law expands **Israel's conscription to include Druze men**. Today, 85% of Druze men serve in Combat Units, and Druze women account for 22% of Arab National Service volunteers.

1957

**Israel officially recognizes Druze citizens** as a distinct ethno-religious group and an autonomous religious community.

1967/  
1982

Following **the annexation of the Golan Heights**, the local Druze population is granted residential status rather than full citizenship.

2001

Saleh Tarif, Minister without Portfolio, becomes **Israel's 1<sup>st</sup> Druze minister**.

2017

**The Kaminitz Law**, targeting unregulated construction, is seen by the Druze as discriminatory due to planning regulations that don't fit Arab and Druze urban realities.

2018

**The Nation-State Law** recognizes self-determination as unique to Jews in Israel. It marks an unprecedented crisis of confidence in Jewish-Druze relations: more Druze describe ambivalence over their military service.

2023

**Wind Turbine Protests** demonstrate the solidarity of Israeli Druze and the Golan Druze residents, increasing tensions with the State.

10.07  
2023

Druze soldiers fight and fall during the **Operation Iron Swords**. This reignites the debate over the Nation-State Law with Druze leadership demanding amendments.

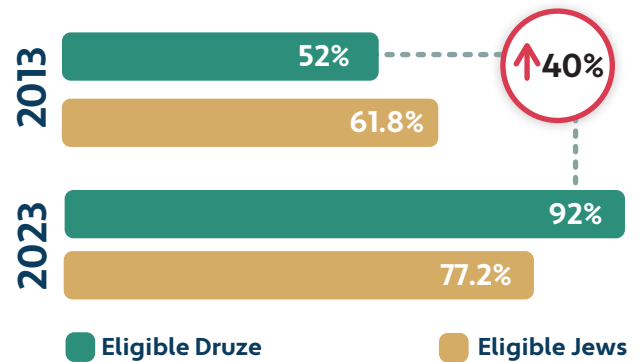
06.27  
2024

A rocket attack on the Golan Druze town of **Majdal Shams** kills 12 children, leaving both Israeli and Golan Druze deeply vulnerable in the face of the war.

## Education

Education is one of the key avenues for social and economic mobility for the Druze. **Over the last two decades, Druze educational achievements increased significantly.**<sup>35-40</sup>

### Matriculation Certificate

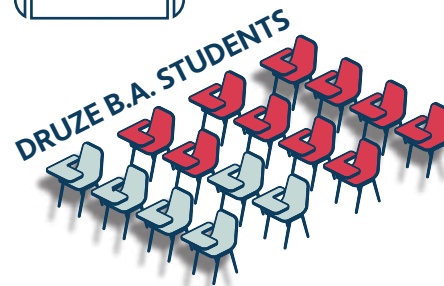


### Higher Education in 2022

Druze are well represented in higher education, aligning with their percentage in the population.<sup>41-46</sup>

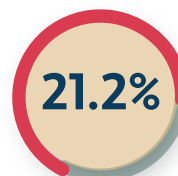


High school graduates went on to study for a B.A., compared to the overall population percentage of 45.2%.



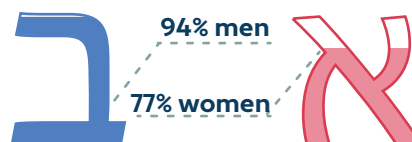
**63% female**  
**VS**  
**37% male**

**68% female students**  
**32% male students**



**Continued to an M.A. program**, compared to 29% in the whole population.

### Hebrew Proficiency



## Economy

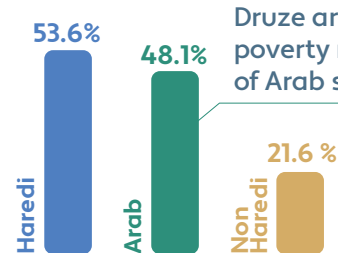
Druze communities are characterized by **high poverty rates, lower levels of employment, and insufficient land for development.**

Government data indicates that **economic disparities between Druze and the Jewish majority mirror those of the Arab minority overall.** Despite government efforts and growing investments in multi-year socio-economic development plans since 2006, considerable gaps persist.<sup>47-60, 64</sup>



**Most Druze localities** fall within the lower to medium deciles on Israel's socio-economic index, ranging from **2 to 5 out of 10.**

### Poverty



Druze are included in poverty measurements of Arab society.

### Employment Rate

**50.8%**

★ Compared to 61% of the whole population.



~ 40.2%

~ 64.2%

**Druze Women vs Men**

### Most Common Fields of Work

- Sales and services
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Public administration
- Education

### Women in Workforce

Druze women increasingly balance education and career with their religious and communal identities. **Yet they face a significant gap in labor force participation due to limited infrastructure and societal restrictions.**<sup>61-63</sup>

### NEETs

**37.4%** of the Druze youth aged 18-24 are not involved in education, employment, or training, compared to **21%** of the whole population.

## Public Representation

Druze engage in Israeli politics at local and national levels. Despite diverse political discourse and consistent representation in the Knesset, **Druze lack significant influence in Israel's political landscape.**

Druze Israelis are well represented at senior levels in **academia, politics, the military, science, medicine, arts, sports and business.**<sup>65-70</sup>