

Oman

Ethnicity in Oman

Group selection

Oman's population consists predominantly of **Ibadhi Muslims (Arabs)** who make up about 74% of the total population (Fearon, 2003). The rest of the population is made up of foreigners, mainly from South Asia such as Indians, Pakistani or Bangladeshi.

Power relations

1971-2017

Since 1970, when Oman's ruler, Sultan Qabus ibn Said Al Said, assumed power, the sultanate moved from a poor underdeveloped country towards becoming a modern nation state. Although the government's administrative structure expanded to accommodate public services, change in the political system was slow. Oman remained a conservative monarchy, with the sultan relying on the support of a traditional political elite comprising the Al Said family, established merchant families, and, to a lesser extent, tribal sheikhs (³⁴¹⁷). As head of state, Sultan Qabus held the power of the prime minister and presided over the Council of Ministers at the same time. The Consultative Council had an advisory role but no legislative powers. Its purview remained limited to social and economic matters, and review of government policies (³⁴¹⁸). Oman did not have up a constitution and political parties were not allowed. At the same time, minorities in Oman were "experiencing no oppression or discrimination, either religious or ethnic, and, on the contrary, they were enjoying all the privileges of traditional Omani hospitality and generosity" (³⁴¹⁹, 129). In fact, Oman was one of the most tolerant countries in the region: the sultan built churches and Hindu temples for the Christian and Indian minorities. There were no indications for discrimination based on ethnic origin since independence.

There is no evidence that subnational identities were politicized in recent years or that minority groups experienced state-led discrimination (see e.g. ³⁴²⁰). The sultan continued to have absolute power. While the law did not allow political parties and government policy did not recognize minority groups, citizens did not attempt to form political movements and neither were there self-identified minority communities (³⁴²¹). Therefore, Irrelevant ethnicity coding was extended to 2017.

³⁴¹⁷ [Federal Research Division, 1994]

³⁴¹⁸ [Peterson, 2004]

³⁴¹⁹ [Ghubash, 2006]

³⁴²⁰ [Al-Rasheed, 2013]

³⁴²¹ [US Department of State, 2016]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Oman

From 1971 until 2017

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ibadhi Muslims (Arab)	0.74	IRRELEVANT

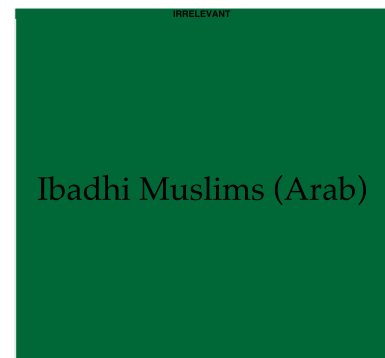


Figure 678: Political status of ethnic groups in Oman during 1971-2017.

Conflicts in Oman

Starting on 1957-07-30

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Oman	State of Oman/Free Oman		1957-07-30			

Starting on 1968-10-30

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Oman	PFLO		1968-10-30			