



For immediate release

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Migration Policy Institute Releases Comprehensive Data on Iraqis in the United States

Washington, DC (March 18, 2003) – With the Iraqi population receiving increased attention due to the impending conflict in Iraq, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the nation’s leading think tank dedicated to studying the movement of people worldwide, releases comprehensive data on Iraqis living in the United States in order to ensure that discussions around this topic remain accurate.

“The data show that nationwide, there are approximately 90,000 Iraqis living in the United States. These are Iraqis that were born in Iraq and who later migrated to the US. In all, the foreign-born Iraqi population accounts for less than 3 percent of all the foreign born in the US,” says Elizabeth Grieco, data manager for MPI’s Migration Information Source. “The population of those born in the US of Iraqi heritage is much larger.”

The data indicate that many Iraqis fled their country during the 1990’s. According to State Department data reported by Immigration and Refugee Services of America, 32,187 Iraqis entered the US as refugees between 1989 and 2002. Several thousand, in addition, have been granted refugee status after entering. Refugees are people who have fled their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, national origin, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Top Ten US Cities with Iraqi Foreign-Born Population

Cities	Number of Iraqi Residents	Percentage of Foreign-Born Population that is Iraqi
Detroit, MI	30,569	9.1%
Chicago, IL	9,513	0.66%
San Diego, CA	7,507	1.2%
Los Angeles, CA	5,499	0.15%
Phoenix--Mesa, AZ	2,343	0.51%
Nashville, TN	2,143	3.7%
Washington, DC	1,797	0.21%
New York, NY	1,507	0.04%
San Jose, CA	1,175	0.20% ⁵
Dallas, TX	1,056	0.17%

Top Ten States with Iraqi -Born Population

States	Number of Iraqi Foreign Born Residents	Total Foreign Born Population	Percentage of Foreign Born that is Iraqi
Michigan	31,927	523,589	6.1%
California	20,532	8,864,255	0.23%
Illinois	9,634	1,529,058	0.63%
Tennessee	2,766	159,004	1.7%
Texas	2,752	2,899,642	0.09%
New York	2,721	3,868,133	0.07%
Arizona	2,456	656,183	0.37%
Virginia	1,841	570,279	0.32%
Missouri	1,275	151,196	0.84%
Pennsylvania	1,209	508,291	0.23%

Immigrants Admitted into the US per Year

Year	From All Countries	From Iraq
1989	1,090,924	1,516
1990	1,536,483	1,756
1991	1,827,167	1,494
1992	973,977	4,111
1993	904,292	4,072
1994	804,416	6,025
1995	720,461	5,596
1996	915,900	5,481
1997	798,378	3,244
1998	654,451	2,220
1999	646,568	3,372
2000	849,807	5,134
2001	1,064,318	4,985

Citizens Naturalized in the US per Year

Year	From All Countries	From Iraq
1991	308,058	1,684
1992	240,252	1,203
1993	314,681	1,545
1994	434,107	1,808
1995	488,088	1,609
1996	1,044,689	2,309
1997	598,225	1,621
1998	463,060	2,033
1999	839,944	3,230
2000	888,788	5,217
2001	608,205	3,451

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The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) is an independent, non-partisan, and non-profit think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. The institute (www.migrationpolicy.org) provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic responses to the challenges and opportunities that migration presents in an ever more integrated world.