

Muthanna Governorate Profile



Source map: [JAPU](#)

Muthanna at a Glance

Fast Facts:

- Area: 51,740 km²
- Average High Temperatures: 15°C (January) to 42°C (July)
- Population: 682,520
- Capital City: Samawah
- Average Low Temperatures: 7°C (January) to 30°C (July)
- Population Distribution Rural-Urban: 56,3%-43,7%

Geography and Climate

The governorate of Muthanna is located in southwestern Iraq. Muthanna borders Saudi-Arabia and shares internal boundaries with the governorates of Najaf, Qadissya, Thi-Qar and Basrah. The governorate's landscape is dominated by desert plains, with only a narrow ribbon of irrigated farmland along the Euphrates River in the north. Lake Sawa, a salt lake, is located to the west of the governorate's capital Samawah.

The climate in Muthanna is a dry desert climate. In summer temperatures easily surpass 40°C, while rainfall is very limited and restricted to the winter months.

Population and Administrative Division

The majority of Muthanna's inhabitants are Shia Arabs. The population is concentrated along the Euphrates River in the north of the governorate, while the southern desert districts are only sparsely populated. The governorate is divided into four districts: Al-Samawa, Al-Khidhir, Al-Rumaitha and Al-Salman.

Economy

Much like other governorates in the Shia south, the governorate of Muthanna had been neglected by the Ba'ath regime since the 1980s. The Iran-Iraq war, the invasion of Kuwait, the UN sanctions regime and the 2003 invasion, also hindered the economic development of Muthanna.

Muthanna is an important center for the production of cement and other construction materials. In 2005 an oil refinery was opened in Muthanna, which processes crude oil from the Kifl oil field. The salt waters of Lake Sawa provide salt, which is used as a raw material in various industries. The lake's touristic infrastructure has dilapidated over the years, but the area still holds the potential to be developed into a touristic hotspot.

A number of archeological sites are spread out throughout the governorate and could also attract visitors from inside and outside Iraq. The railroad between Baghdad and Basrah passes through Samawah, which combined with its location on the border with Saudi-Arabia, could make the governorate an important logistical center for both goods and persons, especially pilgrims. Samawah also hosts the university of Al-Muthanna.

Historical Introduction

The governorate of Muthanna was once the location of the ancient Sumerian city of Uruk, one of the world's oldest cities. Following the 2003 invasion the governorate witnessed a number of security incidents before returning to a situation of relative calm and peace.



The Euphrates River and palm groves nearby Samawah. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

During the 2003 invasion, American forces intended to bypass Samawah, the governorate’s capital. Fighters from the Saddam Fedayeen, a paramilitary group loyal to former president Saddam Hussein, used the city as a base to harass American supply lines, forcing the American army to take the city by force.

Similar to other governorates in Iraq’s Shiite south, Muthanna became a hotbed for a number of Shia groups and militias after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. These groups included

Moqtada Al-Sadr’s Sadrist Trend and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), who each had their own armed wing. These factions and their militias not only attacked the multinational occupation forces and the new Iraqi government, but also frequently fought among themselves for power and influence. In late 2006, Al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army and the ISCI aligned Badr brigades fought a number of open battles, and in 2007 the governorate’s governor was assassinated in a bomb attack linked to inter-Shiite rivalry.

During the past few years peace returned to the governorate, making Muthanna one of the safest governorates of Iraq. Muthanna was also spared from the onslaught of IS, which swept large parts of northwestern Iraq in 2014.

Humanitarian Issues

	Population under the poverty line	Unemployment	Enrollment primary education	Enrollment secondary education	Literacy
Muthanna Governorate	29,4%	14,5%	85,9%	33,5%	67,1%
National Averages	11,5%	11,3%	90,4%	48,6%	79% ¹

The governorate of Muthanna is one of the poorest governorates of Iraq. Even though the percentage of people living under the poverty line of \$2,5 a day decreased from 38,2% in 2007 to 29,4% in 2011, the

¹As by UNICEF, *State of The World’s Children 2015 Country Statistics Table*, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iraq_statistics.html , 25/02/2015. All other data are from JAU, *Muthanna Governorate Profile* (2013), <http://www.iau-iraq.org/gp/print/GP-Muthanna.asp> , 25/05/2015.

population living in poverty is still almost thrice the national average. Food insecurity and unemployment are other issues affecting the inhabitants of Muthanna. Both poverty and unemployment vary considerably between the districts of the governorate.

Regarding literacy and education, Muthanna scores considerably lower than the national averages. The literacy rate in Muthanna is the lowest of the entire country, and access to both primary and secondary education is limited.

Access to drinking water is limited in the governorate of Muthanna. Only 77,8% of the population has sustainable access to an improved source of water and only 66,7% of the households is connected to the public water network, percentages which are considerably lower than the national averages. Even when households are connected to the public network, drinking water is often only available for a few hours daily, forcing more than 80% of the population to rely on other sources like water tankers or bottled water to satisfy their water needs. Muthanna also scores below average regarding access to sanitary facilities. 91,8% of the governorate's inhabitants have access to an improved sanitation facility, slightly lower than the national average of 93,8%. The situation regarding waste water disposal however is worse: less than three percent of Muthanna's households relies on the public sewage system, with the overwhelming majority using septic tanks or covered canals for waste water disposal.

The public electricity network is the first source of power for 97,8% of the governorate's households, but given the fact that nearly 60% of the population faces power cuts of at least three hours daily it is no surprise that more than 70% of the governorates inhabitants also use private or shared generators to satisfy their electricity demands.

The governorate of Muthanna is hosting a relatively small number of IDPs. The overwhelming majority of these IDPs are hailing from Ninewa, with a smaller group coming from Anbar or other governorates. The majority of these IDPs was displaced following the IS conquests in the summer of 2014. For an up to date overview of the numbers and locations of IDPs, refugees and camps in the governorate please consult [IOM's displacement tracking matrix](#) or [REACH Iraq's resource center](#).

Presence of NGOs

Please see the [members' area](#) on NCCI's website for full access to our weekly field reports, which include an up to date humanitarian situation overview. NCCI's [online NGO mapping](#) gives an oversight of local and international NGO presence on a governorate level.

Sources

Muthanna at a Glance

Al-Arabiya, *Iraq's historic Lake Sawa suffers from neglect* (01/04/2013), <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2013/04/01/Iraq-s-historic-Lake-Sawa-suffers-from-neglect.html> , 07/05/2015.



JAPU, *Muthanna Governorate Profile* (November 2010), <http://www.jauiraq.org/gp/print/GP-Muthanna.asp> , 07/05/2015.

JAU, *Muthanna Governorate Profile* (2013), <http://www.jauiraq.org/documents/474/GP-Muthanna%202013.pdf> , 07/05/2015.

M.R. Izady, *IRAQ: Religious Composition* (2004-2014), http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Iraq_Religions_lg.png , 07/05/2015.

Weatherbase.com, *As Samawah, Iraq* , <http://www.weatherbase.com/weather/weather.php3?s=47604> , 07/05/2015.

Historical Introduction

Al Jazeera English, *Police killed in Iraq bombing* (24/12/2006), <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2006/12/2008525134812590659.html> , 21/05/2015.

BBC News, *Fierce Battle for Key Town* (27/03/2003), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2891291.stm , 21/05/2015.

Molly Hennesy Fiske, *Shiite-on-Shiite violence racks south Iraq city* (Los Angeles Times 25/12/2006), <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/dec/25/world/fg-iraq25> , 21/05/2015.

Stars and Stripes, *Iraqi forces put up tough fight in As Samawah* (29/03/2003), <http://www.stripes.com/news/iraqi-forces-put-up-tough-fight-in-as-samawah-1.3515> , 21/05/2015.

JAPU, *Muthanna Governorate Profile* (November 2010), <http://www.jauiraq.org/gp/print/GP-Muthanna.asp> , 07/05/2015.

Jonathan Steele, *Roadside bomb kills governor in Iraqi province lauded for progress* (The Guardian 21/08/2007), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/aug/21/iraq.international> 21/05/2015.

Wikimedia Commons, *Euprates at Samawa, looking into Mesopotamia's palm groves* (01/11/2006), <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Samawa2.jpg> , 25/05/2015.

Humanitarian Issues

IOM Iraq, *DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX DTM ROUND XXII JUNE 2015* (04/06/2015), <http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page> , 09/07/2015.

IOM Iraq, *DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX DTM ROUND XX MAY 2015* (07/05/2015), <http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page> , 26/05/2015.

JAU, *Muthanna Governorate Profile* (2013), <http://www.jauiraq.org/documents/474/GP-Muthanna%202013.pdf> , 07/05/2015.

UNICEF, *State of The World's Children 2015 Country Statistics Table*, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iraq_statistics.html , 25/02/2015.