

2.9.3 Individuals selling/consuming alcohol

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In November 2024, the Iraqi authorities banned the sale of alcohol in hotels and so-called social clubs, among the few remaining venues serving alcohol, sending letters to businesses in Baghdad and threatening them with ‘legal action’. Fines up to 10-25 million Iraqi dinars (approximately 7 600 to 19 000 USD) are also applicable.1012 Although the sale of alcohol was already banned since 2016, it continued to be available and was in many cases sold in liquor stores by licensed non-Muslims, including Christian and Yazidi businesses.1013 Following the ban, alcohol reportedly remained available at the Baghdad International Airport and in the KRI. The announcement led to ‘dozens of establishments’ being closed, leading their Yazidi owners to organise protests in Baghdad. Even though Muslims are also reported as customers and alcohol consumers, the policy has disproportionately affected religious minorities who tend to be the owners of alcohol businesses, mainly Yazidis and Christians.1014 An Iraqi Christian group described the ban as a ‘commercial matter under a religious disguise’ and warned of spread of drug markets controlled by armed groups.1015 The ban has also been described as unlawful and unfair towards the religious minorities.1016 An academic study published in February 2025 has found that the consumption of alcohol in Iraq is more stigmatised than the consumption of other drugs.1017 In March 2025, while banning public Iftar1018 gathering during Ramadan, the government ordered closure of liquor stores and sale of alcohol during the month.1019 See also 2.3 Ethnic and religious minorities.

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  Al Ansari, M. et al., Alcohol use in Iraq: Perceptions of interviewed students at three Iraqi universities, 23 February 2025, url

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  Iftar is the evening meal eaten by Muslims after the sun has gone down during Ramadan, Cambridge Dictionary,

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  Syriac Press, Iraq bans public Iftar, alcohol sales, and forces restaurants and cafes to close during Ramadan in controversial move, 3 March 2025, url

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