

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Continent: [Asia](#)

[Population](#): 34.9 million

[Life Expectancy \(at Birth\)](#): 75.7

[Governance System](#): [Absolute Monarchy](#)

Capital: Riyadh

[Area](#): 2,149,690 km²

Major Languages: [Arabic](#)

[GDP \(2021\)](#): 833,541 US\$ Millions

Select Global Rankings

[Human Development Index](#): 35

[Fragile States Index - Inverted](#): 85

[Soft Power 30 rank](#): NR

[Human Freedom Index](#): 155

[World Happiness Ranking](#): 25

[Good Country Index](#): 114

Elite Sport System Rankings

[Global Cup Ranking](#): NR

[Per Capita Cup Ranking](#): NR

[Olympic Medals – Summer '20](#): 77th

[Olympic Medals – Winter '22](#): NR

Football/World Cup Profile

[FIFA Region](#): AFC

[FIFA Ranking](#): 51

World Cup Appearances: 6

Best World Cup Performance(s): Round of 16 (1994)

Qualification: AFC Group B 2nd place

[World Cup Group](#): C

Last World Cup Appearance: 2018

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (by Shaza Ahmed)

The Kingdom of [Saudi Arabia](#) is in South West Asia, bordered by the Red Sea, the Arabian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, and Oman.

The history of Saudi Arabia is divided into [three Saudi States](#). The First Saudi State took place in the early 18th century, when the imams of the state unified the Arabian Peninsula by imposing Islamic law called Sharia. Saudi Arabia is considered the birthplace of Islam and home to Islam's holiest mosques in Mecca and Medina. The First State ended when Ottoman troops invaded under the command of the Governor of Egypt. The Second Saudi State re-emerged two years later, moving the capital from the destroyed Diriyah to Riyadh. The Third Saudi State is the modern Saudi Arabia, when King Abdulaziz reconquered and unified the country under the name "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" in 1932. Since then, Saudi Arabia has been a [monarchy](#) with the King being chosen by his predecessor from male descendants of King Abdulaziz and the [Al Saud](#) dynasty. The choice is approved by a council of princes called the Allegiance council.

In the [1990s](#), when Iraq invaded Kuwait, Saudi Arabia accepted the Kuwaiti royal family and refugees as well as western ally troops. The presence of foreign troops was a source

of tension between the royal family and the public until all US troops left in 2003. From 2005 to 2015, King Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud modernized the Kingdom through social and economic reforms including attracting foreign investment, private sector support, and employment opportunities for women. Under the current King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz, these reforms have been accelerated. The Kingdom has lifted a driving ban on women and funded green initiatives. Saudi Arabia is a [resource rich](#) country with abundance in oil, gold, phosphate, and uranium. Saudi Arabia is a founding member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). However, they are trying to diversify through becoming a global investment powerhouse. US troops returned to the country in 2019 following attacks on oil infrastructure. The [US](#) and Saudi Arabia also continue to work together in intervening with the conflict in Yemen. Saudi Arabia leads a multinational coalition to restore the government against an Iranian-backed rebel movement. The conflict is regarded as a [proxy](#) war between the two countries for regional dominance, intensified by religious differences.

According to international standards for political rights and civil liberties, Saudi Arabia is considered [not free](#). The King holds all executive, legislative, and judiciary authority. The Kingdom relies on surveillance and criminalization of dissent. Elections occur only at the municipal level, where they can be postponed without explanation. Political parties are forbidden, and the Saudi rulers explicitly oppose democracy. All Saudis are required by law to be Muslim. Women and religious minorities face legal and social discrimination. Working conditions for the large immigrant labour force are exploitative.

Saudi Arabia was heavily criticized by the international community when the assassination of a dissenting reporter, Jamal [Khashoggi](#), took place in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.