

Strategy to spread Rotary in the Arab countries. RI Districts 2451, 2452 and 9010.

By Michel P. Jazzar

RI Representative to United Nations-ESCWA, Beirut [2006-2007_2015-2016]

jazzar@micheljazzar.com - Mobile: +9613225525

1-Introduction:

1.1-What is the difference between Arab world and Islamic world?

The Arab world, also known as the Arab Nation consists of the 22 Arabic-speaking countries of the Arab League.

The standard definition of the Arab world comprises the 22 countries and territories of the Arab League. These [Arab states](#) occupy an area stretching from the [Atlantic Ocean](#) in the west to the [Arabian Sea](#) in the east, and from the [Mediterranean Sea](#) in the north to the [Horn of Africa](#) and the [Indian Ocean](#) in the southeast.^[u] The Arab world has a combined population of around 422 million people, with over half under 25 years of age... [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_world]



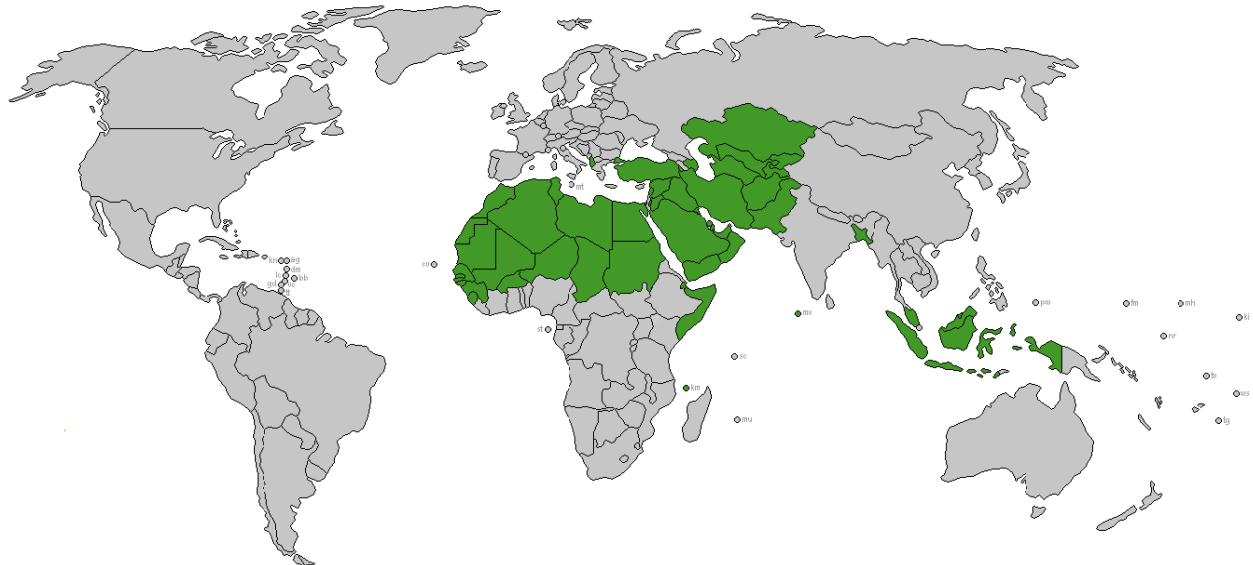
[Fig:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arab_World_Green.svg#/media/File:Arab_World_Green.svg]

The term **Muslim world**, also known as **Islamic world** and the *Ummah* has different meanings. In a religious sense, the Islamic *Ummah* refers to those who adhere to the teachings of [Islam](#), referred to as [Muslims](#). In a cultural sense, the Muslim Ummah refers to Islamic civilization, exclusive of non-Muslims living in that civilization.

In a modern [geopolitical](#) sense, the term [Islamic Nation](#) usually refers collectively to [Muslim-majority countries](#), states, districts, or towns.

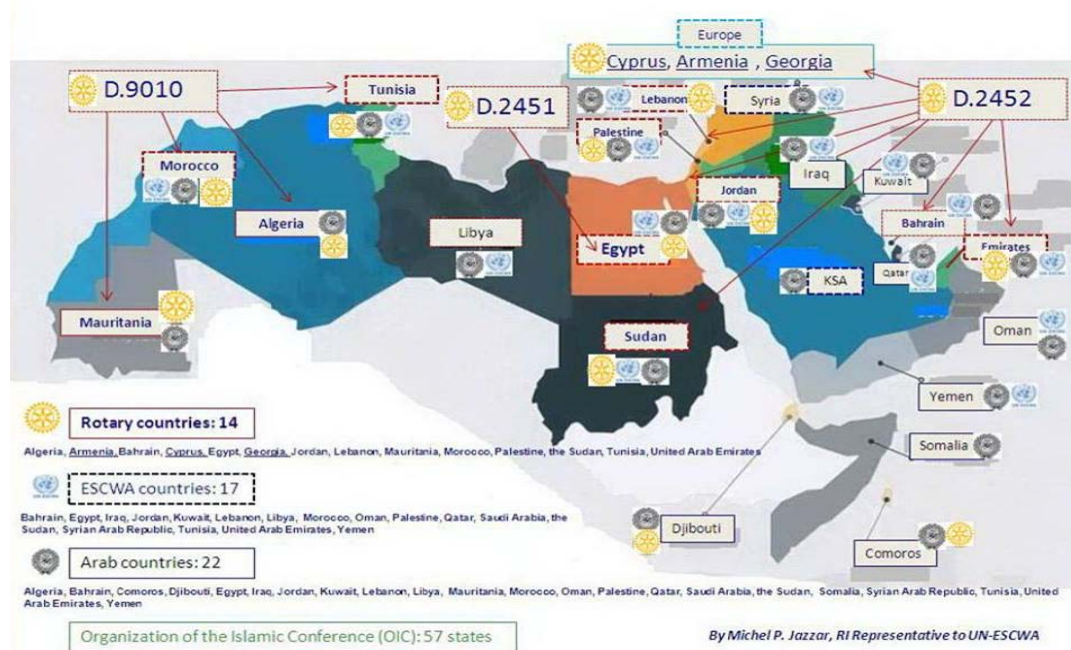
Although Islamic lifestyles emphasise unity and defence of fellow Muslims, [schools and branches](#) (see [Shia-Sunni relations](#), for example) exist. In the past both [Pan-Islamism](#) and nationalist currents have influenced the status of the Muslim world.

As of 2010, over 1.6 billion or about 23.4% of the world population are Muslims.^[3] By the percentage of the total population in a region considering themselves Muslim, 24.8% in Asia-Oceania do,^[4] 91.2% in the Middle East-North Africa,^[5] 29.6% in Sub-Saharan Africa,^[6] around 6.0% in Europe,^[7] and 0.6% in the Americas. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world]



[Fig
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Muslim_majority_countries2.png#/media/File:Muslim_majority_countries2.png]

[Figure by Michel P. Jazzar that shows the current three Arabic speaking Districts 2451, 2452, 9010 and their relations with Rotary, Arab States and UN-ESCWA]

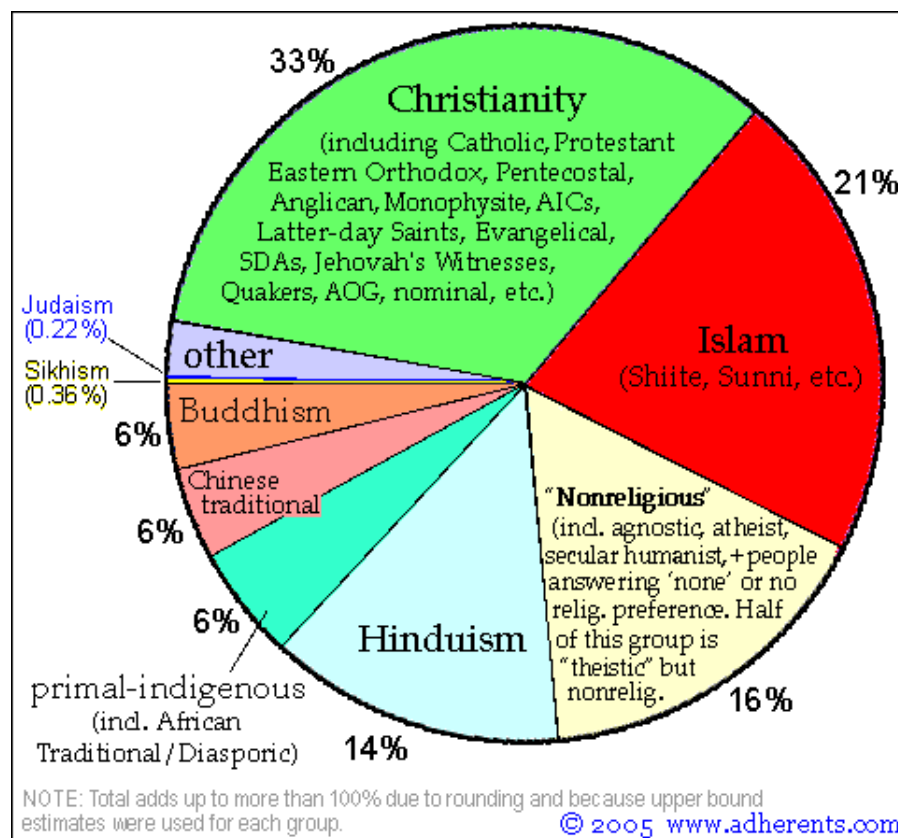


1.2-What is the difference between Arab and Muslim?

Just to augment Chadborne Whiting's excellent answer here are some statistics:

<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-Arab-and-Muslim>

- Approximately 92% of Arabs are Muslims in other words; the dominant religion in the Arab world is Islam. There are significant Christian and Jewish minorities (e.g. in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq) in the Arab world.
- Consequently, approximately 20% of Muslims are Arabs [approximately 300 million Arabs] as there are approximately 1.5 billion Muslims
[\[http://www.adherents.com/Religions By Adherents.html\]](http://www.adherents.com/Religions%20By%20Adherents.html) Non Arab Muslims include significant numbers from the Indian Subcontinent, China, South-East Asia (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia), the Balkans and Adriatic regions (e.g. Bosnia, Turkey).



The difference is that one is religious [Muslim], the other is ethnic [Arab].

“Eastern Mediterranean” is not appropriate as Israel falls into this denomination, taking into importance that Arab lands are still occupied by Israel and that the core of the problem is Palestine and the status of Jerusalem.

A **Muslim** is a person who accepts the five pillars of the religion Islam.

1. Profession of faith.
2. Proper and sincere adherence to the five daily prayers.
3. Ritual (Ramadan), repentant, and ascetic fasting.
4. Alms giving.
5. Once-in-a-lifetime (at least) pilgrimage.

An **Arab** is a much looser term. It can certainly be said that a person who is an ancestral native of the Arabian Peninsula is an Arab, but many others claim this ethnic descriptor as well. The claim is made either on the basis of ancestry, or on the similarity of many cultures (such as Ethiopian or Moroccan) to Arab culture.

There are of course many millions of non-arab muslims. Just look at Indonesia, Afghanistan, Iran and many Europeans. Then there's the group of non-muslim arabs. Examples can be found in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. ..

An Arab citizen can be of any religious order like: Jewish, Islam and Christianity. Hence, this gives birth to Christian Arabs and Muslim Arabs. In the same manner, depending on your nationality you can still be a devotee of Islam. You can be called an American Muslim or Arab Muslim, for that instance.

<http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-muslims-and-arabs/>

1.3-Arabic language in the religion of “Islam” [or to Muslims]

Why is Arabic so important to understanding the faith of Islam?

Regardless of their linguistic, cultural, and racial differences, Muslims form one community of believers. This community is based on their shared faith in One Almighty God, and the guidance He has sent down to mankind. His final revelation to mankind, the Qur'an, was sent over 1400 years ago in the [Arabic language](#)

[http://islam.about.com/od/arabiclanguage/tp/ar_books.htm].

Arabic thus serves as a common language among this diverse community of believers.

The original Arabic text of the Qur'an has been preserved from the time of its revelation.

[<http://islam.about.com/od/arabiclanguage/a/arabic.htm>]

1.4-Arabic language and role of Lebanese Christians [Maronite] in keeping the Arabic language safe from Turkish ottoman, grammatical analysis of the Arabic language, speaking, writing, and in “An-Nahda”.

Al-Nahda (for "awakening" or "[renaissance](#)") was a cultural renaissance that began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in [Egypt](#) [by Lebanese fleeing Ottomans], then later moving to [Ottoman](#)-ruled Arabic-speaking regions including [Lebanon](#), [Syria](#) and others. It is often regarded as a period of intellectual modernization and reform.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Nahda>

The official declared "Arab Identity" of Lebanon was created in 1990 based on the Taif Agreement.

2-Resume

From all the above what can we resume?

-Know the difference between two terms of "Arab" and Muslim". All Muslims are not Arabs and all Arabs are not Muslims.

-Arabic language is, for Muslims, a holy language as it is the language of the holy Coran. [The message, passed from God by Angel Gabriel to Prophet Mohamed, uses the Arabic language]. Respect this language is to show Rotary's respect for +1.3 billion of Muslims.

-Arabic is the language of more of 300 millions of Arabs [Muslims, Christians, and Jews] speaking Arabic, thus to spread Rotary in Arabic countries we should use the Arabic language; even other languages are used like English, French, Armenian etc.

-"Eastern Mediterranean" is not appropriate as Israel falls into this denomination, taking into importance that Arab lands are still occupied by Israel and that the core of the problem is Palestine and the status of Jerusalem.

Spread Rotary into the Arabic countries, that all are also Islamic countries to develop more clubs into the Rotary Arab countries, to re-install Rotary in former Rotary countries, to install Rotary in new Arab countries, amounts to saying that Arab language is a must to almost all local authorities.

There was a committee on the International for extension of Rotary into Arab countries, unfortunately it was neglected suddenly. I was member of this committee, as well as many Rotarians from other Arabic countries [e.g. PDG Ignace Mouawad [Lebanon D2452], PDG Mohamed Benmejdoub [Morocco, D9010], PDG Mohamed Delawar – D2451, Egypt]. Adding members from Islamic countries [e.g. Turkey] is nonsense to Rotary, because we should try to avoid using religion reference and keep the geographical-ethnic term. This is why I advise to keep the title of "Rotary Extension in Arab countries".

3-Strategy [This strategic plan is updated on December 24, 2015]

- **To appoint a RI committee "Extension of Rotary in the Arab countries", members of the said committee chosen from D.2451, D2452, D9010.**
- To open a new RI Office for Districts and Clubs of the Arab region, we can add the Africa to it.
- To issue Arabic Rotary publications [unfortunately this project started RY 2007-2008 and has been stopped RY 2011-2012]
- To post on the internet a Rotary Arabic e-library
- To plan for a PR Strategy with media
- To form new Districts within the "Arab world" [Two new Districts has been formed 2451, 2452 starting 1st July 2013 by splitting the previous D2450] + D.9010 countries have been attached to south France.
- To increase number of Clubs and Rotarians
- To reinstall Rotary in the Arab countries where it was previously banned.
- To spread Rotary in non-Rotary Arab countries
- To issue a Rotary Magazine for the Arab world.

- To develop partnership with local authorities and private sector.
- To organize a Rotary presidential conference in the Arab region on one of the Areas of Focus. "Education field" is my favorite.
- To support The Rotary Foundation program by fundraising events [Polio / AoF]
- To launch a Rotary Peace curriculum in one of the Arab universities.
- To stress more on the partnership with UN Agencies and Commissions and International Organizations operating in the region [e.g. UN-ESCWA, League of the Arab States-LAS]
- To look on how to develop a partnership with the Organization of Islamic Conference [57 States] and the Gulf Cooperation Council-GCC [6 States]
- To organize Rotary Institutes.
- To organize a RI Convention.

4-Conclusion:

My first advice is to appoint a RI committee "Extension of Rotary in the Arab countries", members of the said committee chosen from D.2451, D2452, D9010.