

Middle Eastern Minorities: Between Integration and Conflict

Jan 1, 1999



In-Depth Reports

Religious and ethnic minorities have significantly influenced political, economic, cultural, and ideological developments in the Middle East for the last two centuries. This Policy Paper focuses on Egypt, Sudan, and the countries of the Fertile Crescent, some of which have minority populations of 35 percent or more. The relationships of these minorities with the majority population in their respective countries, as well as their interrelations within and across borders, have undergone crucial changes over the generations. In some cases, sections of various religious communities and of small ethnic communities have been gradually integrating into or adjusting to their developing national societies. In others, certain ethnic/nationalist and religious/sectarian conflicts have been aggravated to the point of violence, and, at times, war.

In this Policy Paper, noted historian Moshe Ma'oz, distinguishes the factors, forces, and circumstances that have affected intercommunal relations in the region--toward both coexistence and antagonism--by examining case studies from the region.

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