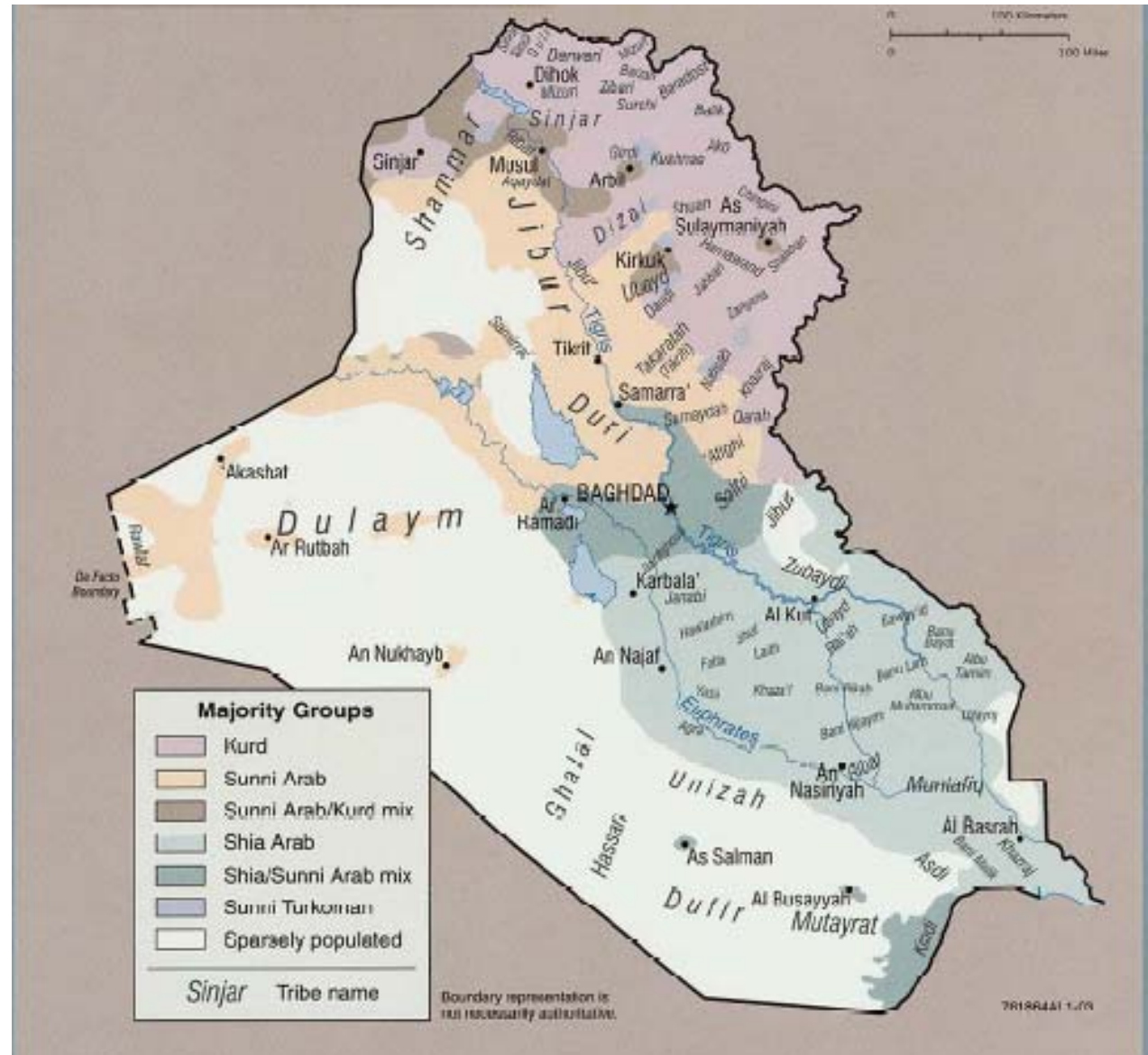


# *Iraqi Ethnic, Tribal, and Religious Groups*



# *Iraq is a multi-ethnic nation*

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Estimated Population</b>	<b>Also Found In</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>Arabs</b>	16 to 20 million	Throughout North Africa and the Middle East, Iran	65-80 percent Shia, 20-30 percent Sunni, less than 5 percent Christian	Arabic (Iraqi dialect)
<b>Kurds</b>	3.6 to 4.8 million	Turkey, Iran, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan	Mostly Sunni, Shia, and Yazidi minority	Kurdish
<b>Turkomans</b>	300,000 to 800,000	Related to other Turkic peoples in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkmenistan	Primarily Sunni	South Azeri Turkish
<b>Others</b>	As many as 1 million	Mostly Christians, Iranians, and other groups found in the Middle East	At least 50 percent Christian; Shias, Sunnis, and members of other religions account for the balance	Mostly Arabic, some Persian and other languages

# *Elements of Iraqi Arab Social Organization*

- ✦ Each individual is a member of a tribe (*'ashira*) and groups of tribes are part of tribal federations (*qabila*). There are about 150 tribes in Iraq.
- ✦ Some tribes are quite large. For example, the Al-Dulaim number about 100,000 with most of them in western Anbar province
- ✦ Tribes are composed of related clans (*fukhdh*) led by a paramount *sheikh* or *sheikh of sheikhs*
- ✦ Clan leaders are called *sheikhs*
- ✦ Clans are divided into houses or sub-clans (*beit*) and then into extended families (*khams*)
- ✦ The clan and tribal system is segmentary
- ✦ Most Iraqis identify strongly with their tribe such that they are more loyal to it than the national government

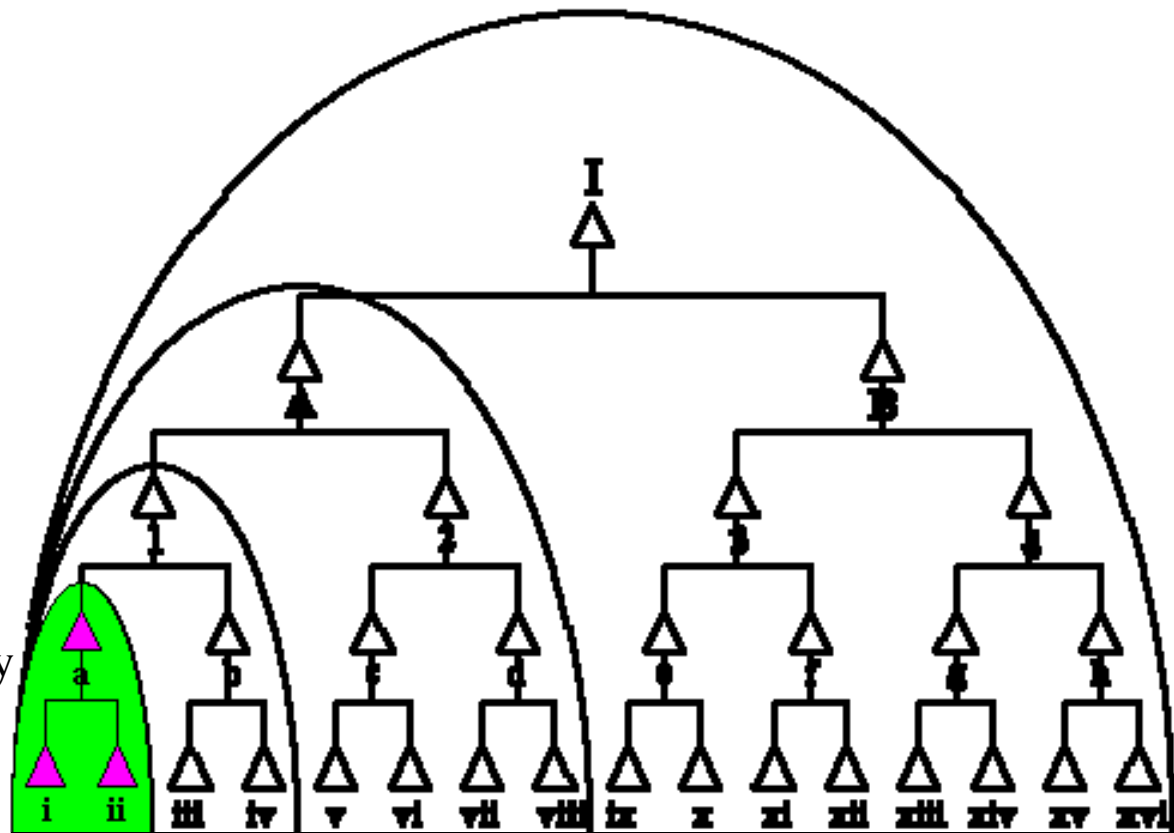
# Segmentary Clan Structure (Iraq)

I: tribe (*'ashira*)

A-B: clan (*fukhdh*)

1-4: house (*beit*)

a-h: extended family (*kham*s)



## *Clan Dispute Settlement & Solidarity*

- ✦ The clan *sheikh* is expected to settle disputes between extended families and sub-clans. However, dispute settlement through revenge killing may occur between families of different sub-clans without the intervention of the *sheikh*.
- ✦ If these vendettas get out of hand the *sheikh* may authoritatively impose a settlement.
- ✦ Raids and ambushes are the accepted means of
  - settling disputes
  - enforcing authority
  - obtaining property
- ✦ The *sheikh* represents the interests of the clan within the tribe. And each tribe has a grand *sheikh* who is normally the head of the largest and most powerful clan.
- ✦ Clan members assist each other with loans, jobs, political support, bureaucratic intervention, etc.

# *Politics of Revenge*

- ✦ Each clan or tribe must avenge the death or harm (e.g., theft) done to any member by someone outside of the clan or tribe.
- ✦ With a strong national government tribal revenge was inhibited by the police much of the time.
- ✦ If American troops kill clan members all other clan members have an obligation to seek revenge.
- ✦ The same applies to conflict between Sunni and Shiite sects who belong to different tribes.