

## **Muslim Population in Oceania**

Houssain Kettani <sup>+</sup>

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Computer Science  
Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA

**Abstract.** The purpose of this manuscript is to present a reliable estimate in form of tables of the Muslim population and its percentage in each country in Oceania. This data is summarized to be a reference for other studies and discussions related to Muslim population. The data show that Muslim population in Oceania, both in size and in percentage, remains very low. Accordingly, there are less than half million Muslims in Oceania; that is less than 1.4% of the total population.

**Keywords:** Muslims, population, statistics, Oceania.

### **1. Introduction and Methodology**

Muslims remain well under represented in Oceania, although there are substantial minorities in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. Accordingly, the results of this paper reveal that the percentage of Muslims in Oceania is less than half a million or 1.4% of the total Oceania population. In addition, only 0.03% of the world Muslim population reside in this continent. Our results are summarized in tables and a superscript number is put by a country name representing the source of the percentages. A “(year)” sign is put next to this number to indicate that the source bases its estimate on official census data and the year the census was conducted. Percentage values are based on the latest available census and reliable estimates.

Official censuses were considered in this study to be the most reliable; although official censuses are usually challenged by minorities, whether Muslims or not, claiming that their number is underestimated for various reasons. However, these claims tend to be based on emotions and wishful thinking and not on scientific facts. In addition, residents who are not citizens are not counted in many religious and ethnic censuses. While typically non-citizens do not influence the political life in a country, they do help in establishing and maintaining various religious facilities and activities. Thus, it makes sense to include them in an estimate that inquires about adherents of a certain religion in a country. The total population estimate for each country and the corresponding annual population growth rate (APGR) are based on [CIA]. An estimate for the Muslims demographics in the Year 2020 is also given based on these growth rates.

The next section presents percentage and population of Muslims in Oceania. A summary data and comparison for all continent of the world is presented in the last section.

### **2. Muslims in Oceania**

Oceania consists of many island nations in the Pacific Ocean, the total population of which is 35 million. Therefore, it is the least populated continent in the world. The Muslim population in this continent is about half million, or 1.4% of the total population of the continent. The corresponding individual data for each country in Oceania is discussed below and summarized in Table 2.

- **Australia:** Based on census data [UN, UN56, UN73, UN83, UN88, UN93, AU], in 1947 out of 7,579,358 Australian inhabitants, there were 2,704 or 0.04% Muslims. The total Australian

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<sup>+</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: + (601) 955-4351; fax: + (787) 281-8342.  
*E-mail address:* hkettani@pupr.edu.

population increased from 12,755,638 in 1971 to 13,548,400 in 1976, to 14,576,330 in 1981, to 15,602,156 in 1986, to 16,850,540 in 1991, to 17,892,423 in 1996, to 18,769,200 in 2001, to 19,855,300 in 2006. The corresponding Muslim population increased from 22,311 or 0.17% in 1971, to 45,200 or 0.33% in 1976, to 14,576,330 or 0.53% in 1981, to 109,523 or 0.70% in 1986, to 147,487 or 0.88% in 1991, to 200,885 or 1.12% in 1996, to 281,600 or 1.50% in 2001, to 340,400 or 1.71% in 2006. The average annual Australian population growth rate between 1986 and 1991 was 1.55%, which decreased to 1.21% between 1991 and 1996, then to 1.12% between 1996 and 2001, then increased slightly to 1.13% between 2001 and 2006. The corresponding rate for the Muslim population on the other hand, was 6.13% between 1986 and 1991, which increased to 6.38% between 1991 and 1996, then to 6.99% between 1996 and 2001, then decreased by almost a half to 3.88% between the years 2001 and 2006.

- **Cook Islands:** Based on census data [UN], the Islands had 14,990 inhabitants in 2001. No information was reported on the number of Muslims in the Islands in this and previous censuses. However, the religious data indicated that there were 616 or 4.10% people confessing other religions than the listed ones. Thus, our estimate of Muslims in Cook Islands is 0.10%.
- **Federated States of Micronesia:** Based on census data [UN], the Islands had 105,506 inhabitants in 1994 out of which 26 or 0.02% were Muslims. The total population increased to 107,008 in 2000, but the corresponding census did not include Muslims in its religion questionnaire.
- **Fiji:** Based on census data [UN, UN56, UN63, UN71, UN83, FJ], the Islands had 259,638 inhabitants in 1946, out of which 16,932 or 6.52% were Muslims. The Fijian population grew since then to 345,737 in 1956, to 476,727 in 1966, to 588,068 in 1976 to 715,375 in 1986, to 775,077 in 1996 to 837,271 in 2007. The corresponding Muslim population increased from 25,394 or 7.34% in 1956, to 37,116 or 7.79% in 1966, to 45,459 or 7.73% in 1976, to 54,323 or 7.59% in 1986, to 56,001 or 7.23% in 1996, then decreased to 52,520 or 6.27% in 2007. Thus, since the 1980s, the representation of the Fijian Muslim population with respect to the rest of population has been decreasing constantly.
- **French Polynesia:** These islands are part of the Republic of France as a French Overseas Collectivity

Country	2010				2020	
	Population	Muslim%	Muslims	APGR%	Population	Muslims
Australia <sup>[AU](2006)</sup>	21,516,730	1.71	367,936	1.195	24,230,748	414,346
Cook Islands	11,478	0.10	11	-3.302	8,204	8
Federal State of Micronesia <sup>[UN](1994)</sup>	107,178	0.02	21	-0.238	104,654	21
Fiji <sup>[FJ](2007)</sup>	957,748	6.27	60,051	1.379	1,098,326	68,865
French Polynesia	291,025	0.01	29	1.391	334,137	33
Guam <sup>[GU]</sup>	180,866	0.03	54	1.365	207,127	62
Kiribati	115,372	0.01	12	2.235	143,912	14
Marshall Islands <sup>[DOS]</sup>	65,864	0.02	13	2.080	80,920	16
Nauru <sup>[UN56](1947)</sup>	14,264	2.30	328	1.748	16,963	390
New Caledonia <sup>[NC]</sup>	230,020	4.00	9,201	1.136	257,527	10,301
New Zealand <sup>[NZ](2006)</sup>	4,252,813	0.90	38,275	0.935	4,667,606	42,008
Northern Mariana Islands <sup>[MP](2000)</sup>	90,694	1.26	1,143	2.292	113,761	1,433
Palau <sup>[PW]</sup>	20,885	2.51	524	0.428	21,796	547
Papua New Guinea <sup>[DOS]</sup>	6,182,588	0.04	2,473	2.069	7,587,678	3,035
Samoa <sup>[WS]</sup>	222,959	0.03	67	1.346	254,854	76
Samoa, American <sup>[RIS]</sup>	66,430	0.03	20	1.222	75,009	23
Solomon Islands <sup>[DOS]</sup>	609,860	0.09	549	2.392	772,486	695
Tonga <sup>[TO](2006)</sup>	122,690	0.05	61	1.482	142,134	71
Tuvalu <sup>[TV]</sup>	12,573	0.10	13	1.616	14,759	15
Vanuatu <sup>[VU]</sup>	221,574	0.11	244	1.398	254,573	280
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,293,611</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>481,025</b>		<b>40,387,175</b>	<b>542,241</b>

Table 2: Estimated Muslim Population in Oceania for the Years 2010 and 2020

and their censuses do not include data on religious affiliations. According to the 2007 census [PF], there were 259,596 inhabitants in the Islands. Thus, our estimate of the French Polynesian Muslim population is 0.01% of the total population.

- **Guam:** This Island is part of the United States of America as a United States Territory and its censuses do not include data on religious affiliations. Based on the 2000 census [UN09], there were 154,805 inhabitants in the Island. However, according to [GU] the Muslim population in the Island decreased from over 100 in the 1990s to about 50 in late 2000s. Thus, the estimate for the Muslim population in Guam is 0.03%.
- **Kiribati:** Based on census data [KI], the Islands had 92,514 inhabitants in 2005. No information was reported on the number of Muslims in the Islands in this and previous censuses. However, the religious data indicated that about 1% of the population follows other religions than the listed ones. Thus, our estimate of Muslims in Kiribati is 0.01% of the total I-Kiribati population.
- **Marshall Islands:** Based on census data [UN], the Islands had in 50,848 inhabitants in 1999. No information was reported on the number of Muslims in the Islands in this and previous censuses. However, the religious data indicated that 5,632 or about 11.08% of the population follows other religions than the listed ones. In addition, [DOS] points out that there are fewer than ten or 0.02% Muslims in the Islands.
- **Nauru:** Based on census data [UN56], the Island had 1,476 inhabitants in 1947, out of which 34 or 2.30% were Muslims. Since this census however, data on Muslim population was not gathered. The 2002 census [NR], reported 10,063 inhabitants of whom 1,417 or 14.08% affiliated with other religions than the ones stated. Thus, our estimate of Muslims in Nauru is kept at 2.30% of the total Nauruan population.
- **New Caledonia:** Is part of the Republic of France as Sui Generis Collectivity. According to the 2004 census [NC04], there were 230,789 people living in the Islands. However, no statistics was gathered about religious affiliations. Nevertheless, [NC] points out that there are 6,000 to 7,000 Indonesians and about 3,000 Arabs living in the Islands who are mostly Muslims. Thus, based on [NC], the New Caledonian Muslim population makes up to 4.33% of the total population recorded in the 2004 Census.
- **New Zealand:** According to census data [UN, NZ], the Islands' population increased from 3,618,303 in 1996, to 3,737,277 in 2001, to 4,027,947 in 2006. Thus, the average annual New Zealand population growth rate between 1996 and 2001 was 0.65%, which more than doubled to 1.51% between 2001 and 2006. Data about Muslim affiliation started being included in the New Zealand census in 1996. Accordingly, the Muslim population grew from 13,548 or 0.37% in 1996, to 23,631 or 0.63% in 2001, to 36,072 or 0.90% in 2006. Thus, the average annual Muslim population growth rate between 1996 and 2001 was 11.78%, which decreased to 8.82% between the years 2001 and 2006. Thus, the percentage of Muslims in New Zealand is expected to keep improving.
- **Northern Mariana Islands:** According to census data [MP], in 2000 there were 69,221 inhabitants of the Islands, out of which 873 or 1.26% Bangladeshis. Since the latter are mostly Muslims, our estimate for the Muslim population in these islands is 1.26% of the total population.
- **Palau:** According to census data [PW05], in 2005 there were 19,907 inhabitants of this island nation, out of which 1,613 or 8.10% profess other religions than the ones listed in the census. [PW] on the other hand, points out that the Island has more than 500 or 2.51% Bangladeshi Muslims, which is our estimate for the Muslim population in Palau.
- **Papua New Guinea:** Based on census data [PG], the State had 5,140,476 inhabitants in 2000. No information was reported on the number of Muslims in the Islands in this and previous censuses. However, the religious data indicated that 15,857 or 0.31% of the population follows other religions than the listed ones. On the other hand, [DOS] points out that there are 1000 to 2000 Muslims in PNG, or up to 0.04% of the total population recorded in the 2000 Census.
- **Samoa:** According to Census data [WS, WS06], the total population increased from 176,710 in 2001 to 179,186 in 2006. Information about the Muslim population was first asked in the 2001 census,

according to which Muslim population was 48 or 0.03% of the total population. Data about Muslims from the 2006 census was not available.

- **American Samoa:** According to Census data [AS], the total population increased from 46,773 in 1990 to 57,291 in 2000. No information on Islam adherence was ever collected in American Samoa censuses, and information on religious adherents was last collected in the census of 1974 [UN]. However, [RIS] points out that in early 1990s, there were twelve Muslims in the Islands, which constitutes 0.03% of the total American Samoan population enumerated in 1990 census.
- **Solomon Islands:** According census data [SB], the Islands had 409,042 inhabitants in 1999. However, no data was collected about religious affiliations. Nevertheless, [DOS] points out that there are 350 Muslims in the Islands, which constitutes 0.09% of the total Solomon Islander population reported in the latest census. Data from the 2009 census is still not available.
- **Tonga:** According to census data [UN, TO], the Islands' population increased from 96,020 in 1996 to 101,991 in 2006 at an average annual population growth rate of 6.86%. Data on Muslim adherents started being reported beginning with the 1996 census. Accordingly, the Muslim population increased from 35 or 0.04% in 1996 to 47 or 0.05% in 2006.
- **Tuvalu:** According to census data [TV02], in 2002 there were 9,561 inhabitants of these islands, out of which 133 or 1.39% profess other religions than the ones listed in the census. However, no information about the Muslim population was reported in this or previous censuses. Nonetheless, [TV] has reported that there is a small number of Muslim in the Islands, but did not state how many. Thus our estimate is that Muslims constitute 0.10% of the total Tuvaluan population.
- **Vanuatu:** According to census data [VU99], in 1999 there were 186,678 inhabitants of these islands, out of which 17,943 or 9.61% profess other religions than the ones listed in the census. However, no information about the Muslim population was reported in this or previous censuses. Nonetheless, [VU] has reported that there are about two hundred Muslim converts in Vanuatu, which constitutes 0.11% of the total Ni-Vanuatu population enumerated in 1999 census. Data from the 2009 census is still not available.

### 3. Muslim World Population Summary

All in all, Oceania has a population of about 35 million, of which 1.4% or half a million are Muslims, that is about 0.03% of the World Muslim population. A summary for each continent for the purpose of comparison is presented in Table 3. Accordingly, there are currently 1.64 billion Muslims in the World, or 24% of the World population. These numbers are expected to increase by the Year 2020 to 1.94 billion and 25%. In addition, while the World population annual growth rate is estimated at 1.203%, the corresponding rate for the World Muslim population is 1.643%. A color coded map of the World illustrating the presence of Muslims in the in each country is presented in Figure 3. The value of pure white color is 255, while pure black is 0. Given a percentage of Muslims  $p$ , the color was chosen as  $255 - 2.55p$ . Thus, the darker the region the higher the percentage of Muslims in the corresponding country.

	2010				2020			
	Population	%	Muslims	Muslim Ratio%	Population	Muslims	%	Muslim Ratio%
<b>Asia</b>	4,141,665,333	27.53	1,140,004,391	69.30	4,646,310,785	1,325,512,090	28.53	68.47
<b>Africa</b>	1,017,965,627	43.81	445,973,198	27.11	1,269,491,026	550,836,503	43.39	28.45
<b>Europe</b>	727,174,531	6.73	48,959,460	2.98	723,644,611	48,644,084	6.72	2.51
<b>Americas</b>	938,875,385	1.01	9,518,459	0.58	1,052,361,179	10,483,051	1.00	0.54
<b>Oceania</b>	35,293,611	1.36	481,025	0.03	40,387,175	542,241	1.34	0.03
<b>World</b>	6,860,974,487	23.98	1,644,936,534	100	7,732,194,777	1,936,017,970	25.04	100

Table 3: Estimated World Muslim population for the years 2010 and 2020

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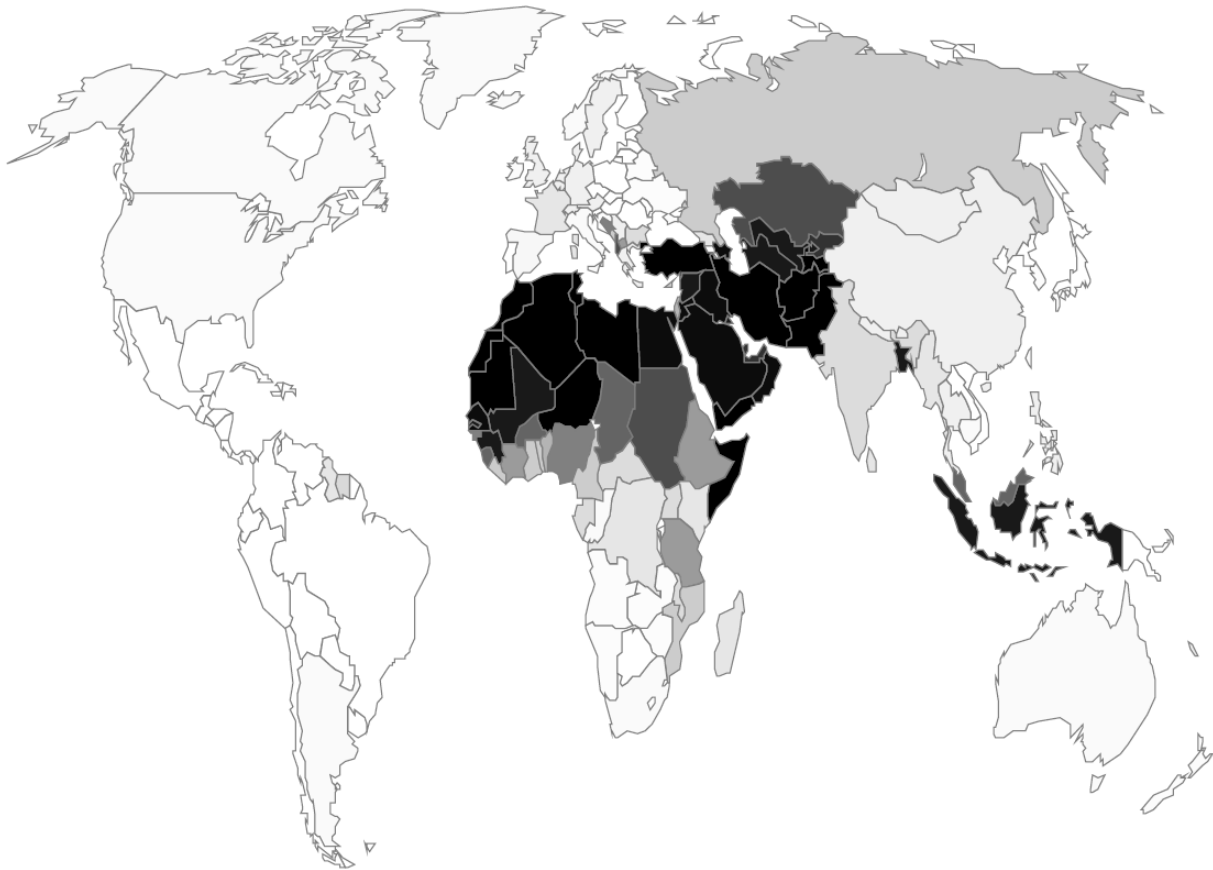


Figure 3: A color coded map of the World illustrating the presence of Muslims in each country; the darker the region the higher the percentage of Muslims in the corresponding country.

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