

# **2015 Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa**

## **Meeting Summary and Main Findings**

Angela Buchanan, Rachel Marks,  
and Magdaliz Álvarez Figueroa

Population Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, DC 20233

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The 2015 Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa was the result of efforts of many people. Karen Humes and Roberto Ramirez had overall responsibility for directing the conference. Angela Buchanan, Rachel Marks, and Merarys Rios were responsible for planning the conference, preparing content, and communicating with participants. Nicholas Jones provided much assistance in planning the content. Beverly Pratt and Joseph Brunn helped document the feedback.

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## Executive Summary

Like in the past, the U.S. Census Bureau conducted a mid-decade content test in 2015 to explore ways of improving the quality of the race and ethnicity data the Census Bureau collects and provides. The 2015 National Content Test (NCT) included a category for people to identify as Middle Eastern or North African (MENA).<sup>1</sup> This being the first time the MENA category has appeared on any census test or Census Bureau sponsored survey, it was critical to get feedback from the community and stakeholders on the proposed format and usage of the category. To address this need, the Census Bureau held the Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa on May 29, 2015.

The Census Bureau invited community members, academics, organization leaders, and other experts in the field to review its plans to include a Middle Eastern or North African category in the census test, and provide feedback on several aspects of its data collection plans. The Census Bureau asked participants for their opinions on how the public would identify with the term Middle Eastern or North African, the validity of the working classification of nationalities and ethnicities, the appropriateness of the examples listed with the category on the test form, and possible ways of presenting the data. Furthermore, under the current government standards on the collection of race data issued by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a person having origins in the original peoples of the Middle East and North Africa is classified as White.<sup>2</sup> The Census Bureau asked for the opinions of participants on whether MENA respondents should continue to be classified this way.

Participants reviewed background materials prior to the forum, were briefed on the goals of the meeting, and then gathered with Census Bureau staff to give their input.

During the forum, there were five sessions of information sharing and discussion:

- Session A: Testing a Middle Eastern or North African category on the 2015 National Content Test

In this session, forum participants were briefed on the Census Bureau's plans to test alternative question formats for collecting race and ethnicity data. The NCT tested four key dimensions for the questions on race and ethnicity, including question format, response categories, instruction wording and terminology, and web-based designs to improve understanding and optimize reporting of detailed racial and ethnic groups. The three goals of the NCT were to 1) increase accuracy and reliability of reporting in the major OMB race and ethnic categories, 2) collect detailed data for groups, and 3) obtain lower item nonresponse rates. In an effort to meet these goals, the Middle Eastern or North African category was tested in both the separate and combined question approaches.

This session also outlined the current standards laid out by the Office of Management and Budget in 1997 for the collection of data on race and ethnicity by federal agencies. According to

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the 2015 National Content Test, see <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/research-testing/testing-activities/2015-census-tests/national-content-test.html>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the OMB standards, see [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg\\_1997standards](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards).

the standards, a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa is classified as White.

Lastly, this session discussed the rationale for the examples that were chosen to appear with the Middle Eastern or North African category on the questionnaires. For the 2015 NCT race and/or ethnicity question(s), each major category, such as White, Hispanic or Latino, or Black or African American, included examples to give respondents an idea of what groups are included in each category. All test panels that included the Middle Eastern or North African category used Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, and Algerian as examples. The rationale for using these groups as examples was to use the three largest Middle Eastern nationalities and three largest North African nationalities in the United States. On some web-based panels and one paper panel, three additional examples of Israeli, Iraqi, and Tunisian were included. These groups represented the next two largest Middle Eastern nationalities and the next largest North African nationality.

- Session B: The Term “Middle Eastern or North African”

This session introduced participants to the research done by the Census Bureau into how fifteen other federal agencies, research centers, universities, and other organizations classified people with origins from the Middle East and North Africa. Most used the term “Middle Eastern and North African,” and half of those also used the acronym “MENA.” A few organizations used the terms Near East, Southwest Asian and North African, or Eastern Mediterranean.

- Session C: Census Bureau’s Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test

This session expanded on the research discussed in Session B, describing how the Census Bureau used the fifteen organizations’ classifications to develop a working classification of Middle Eastern and North African for the 2015 NCT. To do so, the Census Bureau included a country or territory in the working classification if it was in the majority of the 15 organizations’ classifications. Nationalities from these countries and territories included Algerian, Bahraini, Egyptian, Emirati, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, and Yemeni. Transnational ethnic groups from the MENA region were also included, such as Amazigh or Berber, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Copt, Druze, Kurdish, and Syriac, as well as pan-ethnic groups such as Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African.

- Session D: Potential Data Products Featuring Middle Eastern and North African Data

This session described how potential data products could present data on the Middle Eastern and North African population. Under the current OMB standards, Middle Eastern and North African responses are classified as White. However, within that higher classification, a total for the MENA population could be shown, and data for detailed nationalities and ethnic groups could be available.

- Session E: Wrap-Up and Next Steps

In this last session, the timeline for making decisions on the 2020 census content was discussed. By early 2017, the topics must be submitted to Congress, with final question wording due in 2018.

The Census Bureau director, John Thompson, also spoke with participants and thanked them for their involvement.

### **Main Themes Expressed by Forum Participants**

Many topics were discussed throughout the day, and even more comments were provided through the written feedback that was requested by the Census Bureau. Several invited experts who did not attend the forum also submitted written feedback. This section outlines the major themes discussed during the forum and in the written feedback. Please note that the views expressed in this report are those of the 33 experts invited to participate in this forum, and as such, are not generalizable to the larger MENA community.

#### **1) Support for a distinct Middle Eastern or North African category on the 2015 National Content Test**

Nearly all participants were pleased to hear of the Census Bureau's plans to test a Middle Eastern or North African category on the 2015 National Content Test. Many participants reported using the current American Community Survey (ACS) ancestry data, but thought those data were not sufficient for several reasons. They expressed many different needs for more robust census data on the MENA population, including health research, discrimination policy research, and the need for data at smaller geographic levels to provide better community services.

Most participants approved of the way the Census Bureau is testing the category. They thought that combining the race and Hispanic origin questions together and including the MENA category in that question provided a more simple approach to race and ethnicity data collection overall, and that people of MENA origin would be able to identify themselves and feel included. Some, however, thought that it was better to collect data on the MENA population separately from race, similar to the current Hispanic origin question, because some people of Middle Eastern or North African origin identify with different race groups.

#### **2) Racial identification of people with Middle Eastern or North African heritage**

Most of the participants expressed that MENA responses should not be classified as White. They thought classifying this group as White makes them invisible in the data, even though they face discrimination in many aspects of society.

Some argued, however, that there are many people in the United States with MENA heritage that *do* consider themselves White and would not want to identify as MENA if it appears to be a racial category. Likewise, they advised, people who are Black and are of MENA heritage should be able to identify as such.

### **3) The Census Bureau’s working classification of Middle Eastern or North African**

Many forum participants were concerned that nationalities such as Turkish, Sudanese, or Somali were not included in the current Census Bureau working classification of MENA. Several participants advised the Census Bureau to consider groups from the countries and territories affiliated with the Arab League, plus Iran, Israel, and Turkey as the MENA classification. At the same time, other participants advised that Turkey, Sudan, or Somalia should *not* be included because they are not geographically part of the Middle East and North Africa region, and that to include them would be creating a category based on politics rather than geography.

Some participants thought that geographic proximity should not warrant the inclusion of certain ethnic groups in the classification, such as Amazigh, and that these groups should be collected through a separate category.

### **4) The example list for the Middle Eastern or North African category on the questionnaire**

Nearly all of the discussion and comments from forum participants surrounding the examples on the questionnaire indicated that the Census Bureau should add more diverse groups to the list. Several participants suggested that the example list for the Middle Eastern or North African category should include “sub-national” ethnic groups, or transnational groups, such as Chaldean or Kurdish. Participants thought that the list of examples, which currently only includes nationalities, would discourage respondents from reporting their non-national ethnic origins.

Other participants thought the Census Bureau should make the examples more diverse by including groups from countries and territories that are predominantly not Muslim, such as Israeli; groups that are often classified as Black, such as Somali; and a group that is smaller in size such as Yemeni.

## Introduction

The 2015 Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa was held on May 29, 2015 at the U.S. Census Bureau headquarters in Suitland, MD.

The four major goals of the forum were to:

1. Update stakeholders and community members on the Census Bureau's efforts to test a "Middle Eastern or North African" category on the 2015 National Content Test.
2. Obtain expert feedback on the terms "Middle Eastern or North African" and "MENA."
3. Obtain expert feedback on the Census Bureau's working classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test.
4. Obtain expert feedback on potential data products featuring Middle Eastern and North African data.

The Census Bureau met these goals by giving formal presentations to the attendees followed by discussion sessions where attendees provided their feedback to questions prepared by the Census Bureau. The discussion sessions also provided an opportunity for attendees to ask questions about the research the Census Bureau is conducting. See Appendix A for the agenda and Appendix B for the presentation slides.

After the forum, the Census Bureau collected written feedback from the participants through feedback sheets given to the participants prior to the forum. See Appendix C for the blank feedback sheets.

This report provides a summary of the material presented by the Census Bureau at the forum and a summary of the feedback the Census Bureau received from the participants. The participants' contributions were grouped by topic.

All the materials from the forum, including the materials mailed to participants ahead of time, can be found (as hyperlinks) in the Materials section of this report. Those directly related to the forum are in the appendices to this report.

Video of the entire forum, including presentations and discussion sessions, is on the Census Bureau's *2015 Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa* webpage at: <https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2015/demo/2015-MENA-Experts.html>.



## Participants

Staff from the Population Division identified scholars, community leaders, and advocates as potential invitees to the forum. In order to ensure representation of various opinions and communities at the forum, the Census Bureau invited individuals with a wide range of expertise, including organization leaders, legal advocates, social researchers, and professors with knowledge of both broad and specific ethnic groups and nationalities. Some invitees had specific knowledge of nationality and ethnic groups from the MENA region, including groups that were both included and excluded from the working classification.<sup>3</sup>

Individuals were found through several methods:

1. Online research – Census staff identified university professors who worked in Middle Eastern Studies Programs and/or who had a background in race or ethnic studies, policy, census data, or other related areas. Census staff also identified community leaders through online research of community organizations.
2. Comments on the *Federal Register Notice* “Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; 2015 National Content Test,” published December 2, 2014<sup>4</sup> – Some individuals were included as invitees because they submitted unique comments on the *Federal Register Notice* and to the Census Bureau regarding the classification of MENA. Specifically, Census staff identified two community leaders from the Amazigh American Cultural Association and the Kurdish American Society because of comments submitted on the *Federal Register Notice*.
3. The Census Bureau’s National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Other Populations (NAC) – Three invitees were members of the NAC (Morad Ghorban, Hassan Jabber, Akram Khater).
4. Professional networks – The Population Division maintains a list of contacts when sharing MENA-related news with the community. Staff examined this list and identified people who had particular knowledge of ethnic groups, who were demonstrated leaders in the field of research on the population, or community organization representatives. Staff also included academic scholars and community leaders recommended by members from the NAC and from contacts at the Arab American Institute.

The Census Bureau invited over 40 experts to the forum, and 37 participated by either attending in-person or watching the forum remotely and submitting comments. In all, written comments were received from 33 experts.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix E for information about the Census Bureau’s working classification for the Middle East and North African category on the 2015 National Content Test.

<sup>4</sup> See *Public Comments Received on Federal Register Notice 79 FR 71377*. Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; 2015 National Content Test, U.S. Census Bureau; Department of Commerce, December 2, 2014 – February 2, 2015. [http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/decennial/2020-census/2015\\_census\\_tests/nct/2015-nct-frn.pdf](http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/decennial/2020-census/2015_census_tests/nct/2015-nct-frn.pdf).

Below is the list of all participants with their affiliations at the time of the forum. Participants noted with an asterisk (\*) did not attend in person, but provided written feedback.

**Cawo Abdi\***

Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Minnesota

**Soumia Aitelhaj**

Graduate Student, Harvard University and Tufts University

**Kristine Ajrouch\***

Professor, Eastern Michigan University

**Evelyn Alsultany\***

Associate Professor, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor

**Fatima Alaoui\***

Post-Doctoral Fellow  
Georgetown University

**Germine Awad**

Assistant Professor, African and African Diaspora Studies Department, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin

**Iman Awad**

Administrative Director, Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs and Governor's Commission

**Abed Ayoub\***

Legal and Policy Director, American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

**Sahar F. Aziz**

Associate Professor of Law, Texas A&M University School of Law

**Maya Berry**

Executive Director, Arab American Institute

**Khaled Beydoun**

Assistant Professor of Law, Barry University

**Medhi Bozorgmehr**

Professor of Sociology, City University of New York

**Louise Cainkar**

Associate Professor of Sociology, Marquette University

**Yinon Cohen**

Yerushalmi Professor of Israeli and Jewish Studies, and Chair, Columbia University Department of Sociology

**Joseph Gebeily**

President, Lebanese Information Center

**Morad Ghorban**

Director of Government Affairs and Policy, Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans

**Steve Gold**

Professor and Associate Chair, Michigan State University Department of Sociology

**Oren Heiman**

Chairman, Moatza Mekomit New York

**Sally Howell**

Assistant Professor of History, University of Michigan at Dearborn

**Hassan Jaber\***

Executive Director, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services

**Amaney Jamal\***

Associate Professor and Edward S. Sanford Professor of Politics, Princeton University

**Joseph Kassab**

Founder and President, Iraqi Christians Advocacy and Empowerment Institute

**Randa Kayyali**

Adjunct Professorial Lecturer of Sociology,  
George Mason University

**Eric Ketcham**

Graduate Student, City University of New York

**Samer Khalef**

President, American Arab Anti-Discrimination  
Committee

**Akram Khater\***

Director of Middle East Studies Program, and  
Director of the Khayrallah Program for  
Lebanese-American Studies, North Carolina  
State University

**Sonia Ladjadj**

President, Amazigh American Cultural  
Association

**Cristina Mora**

Associate Professor, University of California at  
Berkeley

**Fatma Müge Göçek**

Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies,  
University of Michigan at Ann Arbor

**Helen Samhan**

Board of Directors, Arab American Institute

**Linda Sarsour**

Director, Arab American Association of New  
York

**Yuksel Serindag**

The Kurdish American Society

**Peter Skerry**

Professor of Political Science, Boston College  
and Non-resident Senior Fellow, Brookings  
Institute

**Tamir Sorek\***

Associate Professor of Sociology and Jewish  
Studies, University of Florida

**Rita Stephan**

Analyst, U.S. State Department

**John Tehranian**

Irwin R. Buchalter Professor of Law,  
Southwestern Law School

**Fareed Zein El Abdin**

Board Chairman, Sudanese American Public  
Affairs Association



## Materials

Prior to the forum, staff from the Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch mailed a binder of materials to all participants.

The binder contained the following materials:

- [Welcome letter](#)
- [List of forum participants](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau at a Glance](#)
- [Presentation slides for all sessions](#)
- [Office of Management and Budget's 1997 Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity](#)
- [2015 National Content Test paper forms \(Forms A, G, and W\)](#)
- Examples of 2011-2013 American Community Survey ancestry data products:
  - [Table B04006](#) – People Reporting Ancestry
  - [Table S0201](#) – Selected Population Profile for Egyptian, Lebanese, and Syrian Populations
  - [Table S0201](#) – Selected Population Profile for Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac, Iranian, and Israeli Populations
- [Arab Households in the United States: 2006-2010](#)
- [Draft proposal of the 2020 Census MENA code list](#)
- ["Measurement of Race and Ethnicity in a Changing, Multicultural America"](#) by Karen Humes and Howard Hogan
- [2010 Census Questionnaire](#)
- 2010 Census Language Guides ([Arabic](#), [Farsi](#), [Hebrew](#), and [Turkish](#))
- [Feedback Sheets](#)

The above materials can be found by clicking on the hyperlinks. The welcome letter, agenda, proposed 2020 MENA code list, presentation slides, feedback sheets, and 2015 National Content Test paper forms are also appendices to this report.

Population Division staff hosted a conference call for all participants on May 20, 2015. The purpose of the conference call was to provide background information about the forum, talk about what the attendees should expect, and what was expected from them.

During the conference call, Census staff walked through the contents of the binder explaining what each document was and explained to participants exactly what they needed to do with the materials prior to the forum. Staff emphasized that it was critical that participants familiarize themselves with the OMB's 1997 *Revisions to the Standards for the Classification on Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*, review the draft proposal of the 2020 Census MENA code list, and complete the Feedback Forms.

Census staff also discussed what was out of scope for the forum. Below is a quote from the conference call regarding this.

*This forum is not a political or religious forum. This forum is not to discuss political or religious views, but to collect as much feedback as possible on the classification of Middle Eastern and North African responses to the race and origin question(s) on the Census questionnaire. This forum will be based on the United States life experience and not on groups living outside of the United States. The Census Bureau is a data collection agency, and we do not create policies – we are not trying to determine minority status for the Middle Eastern and North African population.*

A recording of the conference call was made available to all forum participants 24 hours after the call and remained available for 30 days.

## Opening Remarks

### **Roberto Ramirez, Assistant Division Chief for Special Population Statistics, Population Division**

Roberto Ramirez opened the forum by expressing that the Census Bureau was pleased to host experts and community leaders from around the country to give advice and feedback on plans to test a Middle Eastern or North African category leading up to the 2020 Decennial Census.

He expressed that the intention of this test was to develop the best methods for enumerating all people in the United States, including those with heritage from the MENA region of the world, and to help them express their own identities within the diverse and complex American experience.

It was stressed that the forum was a means to collect participant feedback on the testing and classification plans, not to engage in political or religious discussions. He reminded participants that the Census Bureau does not create policies or determine minority status for any population.

### **Karen Humes, Chief, Population Division**

Karen Humes started by noting that the contributions of members from the National Advisory Committee (NAC) on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations along with former Decennial Census Advisory Committee members have helped guide the Census Bureau's efforts to improve the quality of race and ethnic data in this country.

Karen Humes reiterated that the participation of the MENA community was important to the success of the 2010 Census, and the Census Bureau will continue this collaboration and partnership for the 2020 Census.

Since the 1980s, Karen Humes mentioned, data on populations with MENA heritage have been collected through the ancestry question on the decennial census and on the American Community Survey. Now the Census Bureau was testing the possible inclusion of a Middle Eastern or North African category on the 2020 Census.

Karen Humes assured everyone that the Census Bureau was not looking for complete agreement during this forum, and it was expected that many different viewpoints would be heard. The results of the 2015 National Content Test, combined with feedback from the community, will help the Census Bureau determine the most accurate race and ethnicity question(s) for the 2020 Census.

### **Helen Hatab Samhan, Arab American Institute and MENA Advocacy Network**

Helen Samhan, speaking as an advocate for the Arab American community, presented the context for the testing of a MENA category. Below is a summary of her presentation.

The Arab American Institute (AAI) became involved in the 1980s when the Census Bureau began collecting data on ancestry, becoming a community partner for the 1990 Census. In the 1990s, AAI held

a seat on the Race and Ethnic Advisory Committee (REAC) and also lobbied the U.S. Congress to save the ancestry question. In 2001, AAI was the first organization to become a Census Information Center focusing on the Arab American population. Currently, three seats on the NAC are filled by people representing the MENA community.

In 2010, the Decennial Census form no longer included the ancestry question, which was moved to the ACS. Many MENA Americans felt that the existing race and ethnic categories did not represent who they were, and there was no longer a way for Arab or MENA respondents to identify as such on the form. Therefore, surrounding the 2010 Census, many MENA organizations encouraged people to identify as “Some Other Race” on the census form.

In 2011, the Census Bureau organized a meeting to discuss the issue of accurate data for the MENA population. After that, a coalition formed with the goal to improve participation in the Census, in order to get better data that can be of use to organizations and researchers. Since then, AAI has had meetings with the Director of the Census Bureau, and with the Office of Management and Budget’s Interagency Working Group for Research on Race and Ethnicity.

Helen Samhan explained that by using the ACS ancestry data and their own classification of the MENA region, AAI estimated that there were 3.2 million people in the United States with ancestry from the MENA region. While the ancestry data are not as robust as data on race or Hispanic origin, she noted, some things can be learned from it. Compared to the general White population, people with MENA ancestry were younger, were less likely to be native born, had larger families, and had a higher proportion who spoke English less than very well. Also, while Lebanese and Iranian were the largest MENA origins written in to the ancestry question, the next largest group consisted of people who simply responded that they were “Arab” or “Arab American.”

According to Helen Samhan, the coalition members support the creation of a MENA category on the Decennial Census form because it is an opportunity to acquire accurate data on the population in the United States with MENA origin. It will provide 100-percent data rather than sample data. It does not confer a primary ethnic identity, a racial, political, philosophical, or religious identity, and it is not about surveillance. Rather, it is a means of collecting data through self-identification. The term MENA is an inclusive name for a category that will provide data on detailed groups. The data are vital for health research, among other purposes.

Helen Samhan stated the three main recommendations of the coalition:

1. Test MENA as an ethnicity question (not a racial category), alongside Hispanic origin in a separate question format.

2. The definition of MENA should include nationalities from member nations of the League of Arab States<sup>5</sup> plus Iran, Israel, and Turkey (which includes three not currently in the Census Bureau's definition: Somalia, Sudan, and Mauritania).
3. The examples of nationalities and ethnicities shown with the MENA category on the questionnaire should show the breadth and scope of populations from this region, and should include examples from each of the following regions and groups: 1) The Levant (e.g., Lebanese); 2) North Africa (e.g., Egyptian); 3) Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Sudanese or Somali); 4) Gulf States (e.g., Yemeni); 5) Non-Arab MENA (e.g., Iranian); and 6) Sub-national ethnicities (e.g., Assyrian or Chaldean).

Helen Samhan reported that according to the Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics, the MENA countries that have contributed the most to immigration into the United States during the last five years are Iraq, Egypt, Somalia, Morocco, and Sudan. She stated that from all MENA countries, 1.5 million people came to the United States between 1989 and 2013.

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<sup>5</sup> Nationalities belonging to the League of Arab States are: Algerian, Bahraini, Comoran, Djiboutian, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Mauritanian, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Somali, Sudanese, Syrian, Tunisian, Emirati, and Yemeni. See <http://www.lasportal.org/en/aboutlas/Pages/CountryData.aspx> and <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Arab-League>.



## Session A: Testing a Middle Eastern or North African Category on the 2015 National Content Test

During Session A, Nicholas Jones, Director of Race and Ethnic Research and Outreach in the Population Division, explained the Census Bureau's plans to test a Middle Eastern or North African category during the 2015 National Content Test. He discussed the Office of Management and Budget's definitions of race and ethnicity and explained that in the current standards, White is defined as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. The Census Bureau asked for feedback on its plans for testing a MENA category in the 2015 National Content Test via a Federal Register Notice in December 2014, and there was a high level of support with over 4,500 submissions received in favor of testing a MENA category.

Nicholas Jones explained that the 2015 NCT explores four key dimensions, which build upon the results from the 2010 Census Race and Hispanic Origin Alternative Questionnaire Experiment:

1. *Separate question vs. Combined question* – The 2015 NCT evaluated the use of two alternative question format approaches for collecting data on race and ethnicity. One approach used two separate questions: the first about Hispanic origin and the second about race. The other approach combined the two items into one question. The MENA category was being tested in both of these question approaches.
2. *“Middle Eastern or North African” (MENA) category* – The second research dimension examined response categories, exploring how to collect and tabulate data for MENA respondents. The 2015 NCT evaluated the addition of a separate MENA checkbox category and relevant examples, compared to approaches without a separate MENA checkbox category where MENA is part of the “White” category, and Lebanese and Egyptian were included as examples

With the addition of this new category, the “White” example groups were revised. The Middle Eastern and North African examples of Lebanese and Egyptian were replaced with the European examples of Polish and French. All panels with the MENA category had examples of Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, and Algerian. These examples represent the three largest Middle Eastern and the three largest North African nationalities in the United States. All other major categories and write-in spaces remained the same. On some web-based panels and one paper panel, three additional examples of Israeli, Iraqi, and Tunisian were included. These groups represent the two next largest Middle Eastern nationalities and the next largest North African nationality in the United States.

3. *Instruction wording and terminology* – The third dimension pertained to the wording of instructions and question terminology, examining ways to optimize detailed reporting and to improve respondent understanding of the options to report multiple race and ethnic groups. The 2015 NCT evaluated the use of different approaches for wording the instructions used to collect data on race and ethnicity in an attempt to improve the clarity of the question and make it more apparent that more than one group may be selected. The 2015 NCT also evaluates the use of different conceptual terms (e.g., origin, ethnicity, or no terms) in the wording of questions.

4. *Web-based designs to improve question understanding and optimize reporting of detailed racial and ethnic groups* – The fourth dimension of the research explored the use of Web-based technology to enhance question designs and optimize reporting of detailed racial and ethnic groups, while enabling people to respond via computer, smartphone, and telephone questionnaire assistance.

See Appendix B for the slides from the presentation.

### **Discussion based on the presentation**

At the beginning of the discussion session, the Census Bureau asked the experts three questions:

1. Do you have a preference for the combined or separate question(s) on race or Hispanic origin?
2. Do you think that Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White?
3. What do you think about the examples shown in the Middle Eastern or North African category on the questionnaire and the rationale of the selection of the examples?

*Do you have a preference for the combined or separate question(s) on race or Hispanic origin?*

- A number of participants supported testing a MENA category in the combined question format because many people of MENA origin do not feel White or Black.
- Several people supported MENA as part of the combined race/ethnicity question because they thought that race and origin are social constructs. They contended that many people in the Middle East and North Africa identify instead with religious identities.
- One person mentioned that many Latino advocates support the combined question because people see Latino as a “racialized” category. That being said, it is difficult to compare the MENA population to that of the Latino population.
- However, some participants thought having a question distinct from race would be the best option since people from the MENA region may identify with different racial groups. One said that the MENA category captures a pan-ethnic geographically defined group, but does not capture racial diversity.
- Another major concern from the participants during this session was that “race and ethnicity” are not the correct terms to use for MENA.
- Another concern was that people are accustomed to checking only one box in other questionnaires, so they may only check one box.

*Do you think that Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White?*

- Most participants thought that Middle Eastern and North African people generally do not see themselves as White, and should not be classified as White.
- One expert stated that in her own research with 500 Middle Eastern or North African respondents, 86 percent of respondents chose the MENA category, while 10 percent chose the White category.
- Another participant mentioned that although there are some in the Arab or Middle Eastern community that may want to “maintain their Whiteness,” the demographics have shifted and the White classification no longer applies to most of that population.
- Two participants said that it is not useful to debate whether MENA respondents are White or not, as some may feel they are and some may not. The most important thing is to allow them to identify their specific origin.
- Several participants noted that when people of MENA origin are classified as White, the statistics on their population cannot be properly gathered and it limits the ability of organizations to work against discrimination.
- One expert said that the population should be distinguished from White in order to best serve the needs of the MENA community. This is why one organization started a campaign during Census 2010 to “Check it right, you ain’t White.” As part of the campaign, people with MENA origin were encouraged to check the Some Other Race category and write in their group.
- One participant mentioned that universities need to count students with MENA origin, but many do not because they follow the government standards on race and ethnic data collection.

*What do you think about the examples shown in the Middle Eastern or North African category on the questionnaire and the rationale of the selection of the examples?*

- Many participants were concerned about groups that were not listed in the examples, especially ethnic groups that are not nationalities, like Kurdish, Assyrian, or Persian.
- Some participants thought nationalities that are not Arab, such as Turkish and Israeli, should be represented in the example set.
- Other participants were concerned that people from majority Black countries, such as Somalis, were excluded from the Census Bureau’s current MENA classification and that they should be listed as examples.
- Some experts thought that smaller groups, like Sudanese, or groups that are minorities in some MENA countries, such as Armenian, should be in the examples to help people figure out where

to identify. One expert suggested that rather than listing obvious examples, such as Lebanese, the less obvious groups should be listed.

## Written feedback

The Census Bureau provided feedback sheets to participants prior to the forum and asked participants the same three questions that were asked during the discussion session. See Appendix C for an example of the feedback sheets.

Table 1 shows the tabulated results of the written feedback from Session A. Below that is a description of the results and some excerpts from the participants' written responses to the questions.

**Table 1. Responses to Questions on Session A  
Feedback Sheets**

<b>Question 1 - Do you have a preference for the combined or separate question(s) on race and Hispanic origin?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number (N=33)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Separate	7	21.2
Combined	14	42.4
Either	4	12.1
None of the above	7	21.2
No response	1	3.0
<b>Question 2 - Do you think that Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number (N=33)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	5	15.2
No	23	69.7
Depends on situation*	3	9.1
No response	2	6.1
<b>Question 3 - What do you think about the examples shown in the Middle Eastern or North African category on the questionnaire and the rationale of the selection of the examples?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number (N=33)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	10	30.3
Disagree	17	51.5
No response	6	18.2

\* This was not a category, but a few respondents wrote it in.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

In Question 1, participants were asked if they had a preference for the combined or separate question(s) on race and Hispanic origin.

- About 42 percent of the experts who provided feedback preferred the combined question approach.
  - Several experts shared the opinion that the combined question was simpler and that people could still identify as White or Black, for example, but would not have to if they did not see themselves as part of those race groups. One said, “The more streamlined the better. Allow people to find themselves, while not feeling singled out.”
  - A number of participants expressed support for MENA being asked as a separate question on ethnicity. Since a separate MENA question was not part of the Census Bureau’s research plan, many felt that the next best option was to include MENA as an ethnic category in the combined race and ethnicity question. For instance, one participant said, “Since a separate MENA ethnicity question is not possible, then a combined question is the best solution. MENA is not a race and should never be listed as a race box. While Middle Easterners and North Africans are of different races, they all share similar cultural traits and values.”
  - Two participants expressed support for the terminology “What categories describe this person?”
- About 21 percent of the experts indicated that they preferred the separate questions approach. However, from the written comments to this question, it was apparent that nearly all who wrote that they supported the separate questions approach were in support of a separate MENA ethnicity question and not in favor of MENA being considered a race on a separate race question.
  - A number of participants stated that MENA should not be used as a racial term. People from the MENA region are very diverse. Having a separate (MENA) question “would provide more specific data on diversity and multiculturalism.”
  - There were several participants who thought large parts of the MENA population would be missed if MENA was presented as a racial category instead of as an ethnicity category.
- Another 21 percent did not like either the combined or the separate question(s) approach.
  - A few participants mentioned that MENA is a geographic definition, and that people from this region do not share a common race or ethnicity. This category should not be used to imply such a commonality. One added that using the term “origin” or “regional origin” would be more appropriate.

- One participant expressed the opinion that MENA should be a separate ethnic question and also a category on the race question so people could identify as either a race or ethnicity.
- Twelve percent said either approach was fine as long as the MENA category was included in the question(s).
  - These participants thought that the question format should be determined by the results from the National Content Test and using input from Congress.
- Three percent of the participants did not respond to the question.

In Question 2, participants were asked if they thought that Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White.

- About 70 percent of the experts who provided feedback did not think Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White.
  - Several felt that the majority of MENA group members do not identify as White, or that White means being European.
  - Several expressed that MENA group members are different from the overall White population in several characteristics, including nativity, language spoken at home, etc.
  - One argued that people of MENA origin have never been considered White to the average American. They are discriminated against and racially profiled, but legally they are ineligible for affirmative action and diversity policies.
- Fifteen percent thought Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White.
  - One expert said the Census Bureau should keep MENA responses classified as White because of the impracticality of having a separate ethnicity question for MENA.
  - One participant said that many North Africans, such as the Amazigh, would identify more as White than as Middle Eastern because of discrimination they have faced in their home countries.
- Nine percent said it depends on the situation.
  - One participant expressed concern that “Some are White, some are Black. Many fought [through the courts] to be classified as White and will not be stripped of their status, whereas others feel a discrepancy between their status as members of the White race and their realities as an invisible minority.”
- Six percent did not indicate how MENA respondents should be classified.

- One expert said, “The question about MENA being part of White is counterproductive and potentially destructive to the process of creating a category to achieve the shared goal of getting more accurate data.”

In Question 3, participants were asked what they thought about the examples shown in the MENA category on the questionnaire, and the rationale of the selected examples.

- Around 52 percent of the experts who provided feedback disagreed with the examples used in the MENA category on the 2015 NCT questionnaire.
  - A number of experts thought the Census Bureau should provide different types of examples to be more inclusive. They stressed that it is more important to show diverse groups than it is to show the largest groups.
  - Most participants thought that people with identities such as Kurdish, Amazigh, Assyrian, or Chaldean may not see themselves in the category, and therefore those ethnicities should be included in the examples. Also, one expert thought that since Arab may be the largest ethnic group people identify with, that it should be included in the examples as well.
  - Several participants mentioned that the examples shown with the MENA category on the questionnaire should be more geographically diverse, including at least one from: the Levant (e.g., Lebanese), North Africa (e.g., Egyptian), and the Gulf countries (e.g., Yemeni). One participant added it would be helpful to include Morocco on the list, since it is at the western end of the region.
  - Several participants added that the examples should make sure to include nationalities from a non-Muslim country, namely (e.g., Israeli) and a non-Arab country (e.g., Iranian).
  - Several participants thought that Sudanese or Somali should be included in the examples, because that would indicate that Black groups can be MENA, and also because they are examples of MENA nationalities with smaller populations.
- About 30 percent checked the box indicating that they agreed with the examples the Census Bureau used. However, after expressing their agreement, most of these participants thought more groups should be added that represent ethnicities or sub-national groups, and smaller countries.
  - For example, one expert said the Census Bureau should “provide more options, such as sub-ethnicity and religion, in that they may be more meaningful to some than nationality.”
  - One participant stressed that the “category should have a clear definition based strictly on a demarcated geographical area” and that the Census Bureau should not include West African or Sub-Saharan African countries simply because they “share or are perceived to share some pan-nationalist identity.” For example, this participant thought

Mauritanian, Somali, and Comoros Islanders “should not be included because their countries are part of the Arab League. That would only serve to confuse and potentially alienate members of our community.”

- Eighteen percent of participants did not indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the examples, and gave no related comments.

## Session B: The Term “Middle Eastern or North African”

During Session B, Roberto Ramirez discussed the term “Middle Eastern or North African” and why the Census Bureau used this term for data collection in the 2015 NCT.

Roberto Ramirez described research done by the Census Bureau into how other organizations classify and label people with origins from the Middle East and North Africa. The analysts considered classifications from research centers and universities, non-governmental organizations, and U.S federal agencies. They found that of the 15 organizations researched, 12 used the term “Middle Eastern or North African” to refer to this geographic area and six of those also used the “MENA” acronym. Other terms used were: Near East, Southwest Asian and North African, and Eastern Mediterranean.

See Appendix B for the slides from the presentation.

### Discussion based on the presentation

At the beginning of the discussion session, the Census Bureau asked the experts four questions:

1. What are your thoughts on using the term “Middle Eastern or North African” as a category label on the Census questionnaire?
2. Do you think that the community will identify with the “Middle Eastern or North African” term?
3. Are there other terms that the Census Bureau should consider using instead of the term “Middle Eastern or North African”?
4. Is it appropriate to use the acronym “MENA” when discussing this population?

*What are your thoughts on using the term “Middle Eastern or North African” as a category label on the Census questionnaire?*

- Most of the experts agreed that the term “Middle Eastern or North African” is a clear, “commonsensical” label and the most “non-alienating of them all.” Participants agreed that the term is the most politically correct and inclusive.
- Participants mentioned they liked the term for a variety of reasons. One participant liked that MENA is not a religious category but instead is an ethnic category. Another mentioned that the term provided a good way to identify a common cultural or ethnic group (like the term Hispanic) without national or racial limitations.
- There was also concern that this term could be problematic for North Africans because of the history of Arabization. Two participants mentioned that North Africa is not part of the Middle East, and that it should have its own classification. One participant stated that Amazigh Americans should have their own classification as well.
- One participant noted that the term does not include the word “American.”

*Do you think that the community will identify with the “Middle Eastern or North African” term?*

- Many participants thought that people would choose this option in the absence of an alternative and that the term makes sense.
- One participant suggested that people with Israeli ancestry and those born in Israel will not identify with the term but will check the box if Israeli is an example.
- Other participants mentioned that because the term was general and the examples show groups that do not necessarily identify with each other, people would not identify with it themselves.
- One participant said that the Amazigh community would identify as “White” or “other race” instead of MENA because they think they will be labelled as Arabs if they select the MENA category.
- One participant said that for the Iranian American community, the most important thing is to be counted as Americans of Iranian or Persian ancestry. Their community might be split in whether they want to be identified as White or not.
- One participant thought the Lebanese community would find the term acceptable.
- Another participant thought the Turkish community would identify with the term, even though when they are in their home country they would have a different ethnic identity.

*Are there other terms that the Census Bureau should consider using instead of the term “Middle Eastern or North African”?*

- Most of the experts agreed that this term, although not perfect, is the best available option.
- The experts who did not agree with the term suggested alternative terms. Some of the terms suggested were “Middle Eastern, North African, and Arab” (MENAA), “Eastern Mediterranean,” and “Middle Eastern American.”
- Several participants mentioned that, regardless of the community identifying with the term or not, the community will need to be educated about the new term.

*Is it appropriate to use the acronym “MENA” when discussing this population?*

- Most of the participants agreed that the acronym “MENA” is appropriate, and that this term is already used internationally and in academia.
- One participant mentioned that the term is not appropriate as it denotes a political and geographical area, rather than describing a population. Another participant believes that this term prolongs Arabization and discrimination.

- A participant mentioned that the term sounds like the word “mean.” However, another participant disagreed, saying it was a commonly used term.

### Written feedback

The Census Bureau provided feedback sheets to participants prior to the forum, and asked the same four questions that were asked during the discussion session. See Appendix C for an example of the feedback sheets.

**Table 2. Responses to Questions on Session B Feedback Sheets**

<b>Question 1 - What are your thoughts on using the term “Middle Eastern or North African” as a category on the Census questionnaire?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number (N=33)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	28	84.8
Disagree	4	12.1
No response	1	3.0
<b>Question 2 - Do you think that the community will identify with the “Middle Eastern or North African” term?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number (N=33)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, will identify	22	66.7
No, will not	9	27.3
Depends on situation	1	3.0
No response	1	3.0
<b>Question 3 - Are there other terms that the Census Bureau should consider using instead of the term “Middle Eastern or North African?”</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number (N=33)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Other terms	6	18.2
No other terms	26	78.8
No response	1	3.0
<b>Question 4 - Is it appropriate to use the acronym “MENA” when discussing this population?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number (N=33)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Appropriate	27	81.8
Not appropriate	5	15.2
No response	1	3.0

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

In Question 1 of the feedback forms, participants were asked their thoughts on using the term “Middle Eastern or North African” as a category on the Census questionnaire.

- About 85 percent of the participants agreed with using the term as a category on the questionnaire.
  - For most experts, this term made the most sense because it describes a geographical region, is inclusive, and is already used in international relations as well as research.
  - Several experts agreed that this term seemed to be “the most clear, encompassing and non-alienating of them all.” For them the term was “the most used so far and would be more accepted to the general public.” In addition, they agreed that “It is not perfect, and indeed indicates a politically defined region, yet is an appropriate compromise.”
- Twelve percent of the participants disagreed with using the term “Middle Eastern or North African.”
  - Some participants believed North Africa is not a part of the Middle East and these two regions should not be combined together. In addition, they mentioned how this term could prolong Arabization and discrimination against some groups in North Africa. A participant noted, “having North Africa with the Middle East really further paralyzes Africa as a whole continent.”
- Three percent of the participants did not respond to the question.

In Question 2, participants were asked if they thought that the community would identify with the “Middle Eastern or North African” term.

- Around 67 percent of the participants thought the community would identify with the term.
  - Many participants agreed that the community would identify as MENA, mainly because of the lack of other categories to identify with.
  - One of the participants spoke about her own research with this category, in which 86 percent of respondents chose MENA in a race/origin question when presented with the option.
  - Two participants brought up the subject of public buy-in; they mentioned there might be resistance from the population at the beginning to identifying with a MENA category, but as more institutions and people start using the category, it will have a “cascading effect.” However, the participants felt that “if this classification is adopted, and the nominal buy-in isn’t that great, that’s not going to necessarily reflect whether people want to identify as such.”
  - “This is an identity they have to embrace in place of other identities, but a means to an end in terms of enumeration.”

- About 27 percent of participants thought the community would not identify with term.
  - One participant mentioned that the term is too general and associates nationalities and ethnic groups.
  - One participant believed Israelis would identify with the term only if Israeli was included as an example.
  - A small number of experts opposed the term, believing the Amazigh community would rather identify as White or Some Other Race. They believed that since North Africa is part of Africa, the ethnic groups from that region would not want to be identified as Middle Eastern because that is similar to saying they are Arab.
- Three percent of the participants thought the community would identify with MENA depending on the situation.
  - One participant said, “The MENA population can recognize itself under this category but does not necessarily identify as such. As a socially acceptable term, MENA will be embraced by the population. With awareness campaigns and proper outreach activities, people will be more likely to check the box.”
- Three percent of the participants did not respond to the question.

In Question 3, participants were asked if there are other terms that the Census Bureau should consider using, instead of the term “Middle Eastern or North African” (MENA).

- About 79 percent of the participants could not think of other terms to use instead of the term “Middle Eastern or North African.”
  - One participant mentioned, “although flawed and fluid, the classification is pragmatically the best available option.”
  - Another participant said, “I don’t think there should be any other categorizations for now. However, some Iranians and Turkish don’t necessarily identify as Middle Eastern. Hence, the Census Bureau should test the Middle Eastern or North African category first to see if it’s fully inclusive or not. Again, there should be education along with adding this category to prepare the people.”
- Eighteen percent of the experts mentioned other terms that could be used instead of MENA. Their suggestions were:
  - Middle Eastern-American (MEA)
  - Mediterranean or Eastern Mediterranean
  - Eastern Mediterranean, Middle Eastern or North African (EMMENA)

- Arab, Middle Eastern, or North African (AMENA)
  - Amazigh American
  - Arab American
- Three percent of the participants did not respond to the question.

In Question 4, participants were asked if the acronym “MENA” was appropriate when discussing this population.

- About 82 percent of participants agreed that it was appropriate to use the acronym “MENA” when discussing this population.
  - The participants mentioned that this is not a new category or classification. They are familiar with it and it is used by international organizations, like the World Bank, and in academic research.
  - One participant said “It has already been used, [I have] seen it on social media platforms as well. I think it will be well received.”
  - One participant said MENA is an acronym that is commonly understood to refer to this region.
- Fifteen percent of the experts did not deem the acronym as appropriate.
  - One participant said: “MENA usually denotes the politico-geographical area, not the people. It doesn’t symbolize the people, but rather the lands and the discourse around it.”
- Three percent of the participants did not respond to the question.

## **Session C: Census Bureau’s Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test**

Roberto Ramirez described how the Census Bureau developed a working classification for the Middle Eastern or North African category for the 2015 National Content Test. He explained that the classification is geographically based, as are the classifications for other major race and ethnic categories. It includes both Arab groups, such as Egyptian and Jordanian, and groups that are not Arab, such as Iranian and Kurdish.

To develop the working classification, Census Bureau staff identified fifteen organizations that published classifications of the MENA region of the world. The organizations included research centers, universities, non-governmental organizations, and U.S. federal agencies. Nationalities from the countries and territories that were in the majority of the fifteen classifications were included in the Census Bureau’s working classification. In addition to these nationalities, transnational and pan-ethnic ethnicities with roots in the MENA region were added to the classification. These ethnicities were selected from previously reported responses to the American Community Survey’s question on ancestry.

Roberto Ramirez listed the groups in the Census Bureau’s working classification of MENA: Algerian, Bahraini, Egyptian, Emirati, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, and Yemeni. He also listed the transnational and pan-ethnic identities that are in the classification: Amazigh or Berber, Arab or Arabic, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Copt, Druze, Kurdish, Middle Eastern, North African, and Syriac.

The Census Bureau received over 700 comments related to the classification of the MENA category in response to the Federal Register Notice on the 2015 National Content Test. Groups suggested for inclusion were Comoran, Djiboutian, Mauritanian, Somali, Sudanese, and Turkish, although some comments indicated these should not be included in the MENA category because they are not geographically in the MENA region.

See Appendix B for the slides from the presentation, and see Appendix E for further explanation of the MENA working classification.

### **Discussion based on the presentation**

At the beginning of the discussion session, the Census Bureau asked the experts two questions:

1. What nationalities and ethnicities should be added to or removed from the Census Bureau’s working classification of Middle Eastern or North African?
2. Are there other classifications within the Middle Eastern and North African population the Census Bureau should consider?

*What nationalities and ethnicities should be added to or removed from the Census Bureau's working classification of Middle Eastern or North African?*

- A number of participants thought the classification needed to be improved. One participant said the definitions the Census Bureau researched were “written by outsiders” and should not be reproduced. Another expert mentioned that some of the classifications were used by agencies who deal in exporting to the MENA region, and that their classifications were not developed to classify ethnicities.
- Multiple participants said that the classification of MENA should include members of the “Arab League<sup>6</sup> plus three [Turkey, Iran, and Israel].” However, some participants disagreed with this, saying that Arab League membership is political and that race and ethnicity a different concept. Another participant said that she did not think some of the countries in the Arab League should be included because they were not geographically in North Africa.
- Most participants expressed that the classification should be as inclusive as possible and should include ethnicities with smaller numbers of people and ethnoreligious groups. One participant emphasized the need to give smaller ethnicities unique codes, as the census is the only opportunity to get data for these groups.
- There was discussion about the inclusion of Bedouin in the classification. Some participants said the term is “Orientalist,” is not an ethnicity, and refers to people who live in the desert. Others said that Bedouins are mostly from the Middle East and that they should be in the classification because they need to be counted somewhere if someone reports that group.
- There was disagreement among participants as to whether Copt should be included in the classification. Some said Copt is a religious group, while others said it is an ethnoreligious group.
- The following ethnicities and nationalities were suggested for inclusion: Nubian, Armenian, Chadian, Cypriot, Circassian, Nigerien, Sudanese, Somali, Tuareg, and Turkish. However, not all participants agreed, and at least one participant said that Somalia, Mauritania, Sudan, Djibouti, and Chad are not geographically part of the MENA region. Another said that Azerbaijan, Comoros, Georgia, and Malta were also not part of the MENA region
- One participant noted that although Armenia is outside the boundaries of the Middle East, data from the American Community Survey indicate that around 90 percent of Armenians in the United States were born in Middle Eastern countries. For this reason, he suggested that Armenian should be included in the classification as an ethnic group.

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<sup>6</sup> Nationalities belonging to the League of Arab States are: Algerian, Bahraini, Comoran, Djiboutian, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Mauritanian, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Somali, Sudanese, Syrian, Tunisian, Emirati, and Yemeni. See <http://www.lasportal.org/en/aboutlas/Pages/CountryData.aspx> and <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Arab-League>.

- Participants wanted to know how the Census Bureau determined which terms were purely religious vs. ethnoreligious, given that some of the ethnic groups in the working classification were also religious groups (e.g., Chaldean). Another participant mentioned that Chaldean was not a religion, but that most Chaldeans are Catholic.

*Are there other classifications within the Middle Eastern and North African population the Census Bureau should consider?*

- Several participants mentioned that there are universities with Middle Eastern Studies programs that could provide definitions of the Middle East and North Africa.

### **Written feedback**

In the feedback sheets that were provided to participants prior to the forum, participants were asked the same two questions that were asked during the discussion session. See Appendix C for an example of the feedback sheets.

In the first question, a checklist was provided of all of the nationalities and ethnicities that were classified as MENA, Southwest Asian or North African, Eastern Mediterranean, or Near East according to the organizations in the Census Bureau's research. Then participants were asked to mark which groups should be included in the Census Bureau's classification of MENA.

Table 3 shows the results of the written feedback from the instructions of "Mark all of the nationalities that you think should be included in a Middle Eastern or North African classification."

**Table 3. Responses to Questions on Session C  
Feedback Sheet**

<b>Question 1, Part 1- Mark all of the nationalities that you think should be included in a Middle Eastern or North African classification.</b>		
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number (N=31)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Bahraini	31	100.0
Egyptian	31	100.0
Iraqi	31	100.0
Jordanian	31	100.0
Kuwaiti	31	100.0
Lebanese	31	100.0
Libyan	31	100.0
Moroccan	31	100.0
Omani	31	100.0
Algerian	30	96.8
Iranian	30	96.8
Syrian	30	96.8
Tunisian	30	96.8
Emirati	29	93.5
Palestinian	29	93.5
Qatari	29	93.5
Saudi Arabian	29	93.5
Yemeni	29	93.5
Israeli	28	90.3
Turkish	28	90.3
Armenian	24	77.4
Sudanese	24	77.4
Mauritanian	23	74.2
Western Saharan	21	67.7
Somali	20	64.5
Djiboutian	19	61.3
Comoran	16	51.6
Azerbaijani	11	35.5
Cypriot	11	35.5
South Sudanese	11	35.5
Georgian	8	25.8
Afghan	6	19.4
Maltese	4	12.9
Pakistani	4	12.9

Note: Two of the 33 participants who provided written feedback did not respond to this question.

**Table 3, Continued. Responses to Questions on Session C Feedback Sheet**

<b>Question 1, Part 2- Mark all of the ethnicities that you think should be included in a Middle Eastern or North African classification.</b>		
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number (N=31)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Amazigh/Berber	30	96.8
Arab/Arabic	30	96.8
Assyrian	30	96.8
Chaldean	29	93.5
Kurdish	29	93.5
Druze	27	87.1
Mideast	27	87.1
North African	27	87.1
Copt	25	80.6
Syriac	25	80.6
Bedouin	23	74.2

Note: Two of the 33 participants who provided written feedback did not respond to this question.

- All of the participants thought that the following nationalities should be included in a MENA classification: Bahraini, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, and Omani.
- Over 90 percent of participants thought that Algerian, Emirati, Iranian, Israeli, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, Turkish, and Yemeni should be included in a MENA classification.
  - One expert wrote, “It’s surprising that Turkish hasn’t been included thus far, and it is included in almost all definitions of the Middle East that I’ve ever seen.”
  - One expert said Turkish should be excluded because it is “Caucasian/European.”
- Around 77 percent of participants thought both Armenian and Sudanese should be included, while 74 percent thought Mauritanian should be included.
- Between 60 and 70 percent of participants thought that Western Saharan, Somali, and Djiboutian should be included.
  - One expert wrote, “I am in great support of including Somalis (as well as Sudanese and Djiboutian) within the MENA category.” The expert described their own research which found that Somalis in the United States find the Black category very alien, and that they prefer to identify in other ways, such as Somali or Arab.

- Another expert wrote, “In the meeting, several people explained the rationale for including Somali and Djiboutian is that they are in the Arab League. This rationale is unconvincing and unsustainable because it is based on temporary political alliances in the Middle East and not on geography, ethnicity, race, or origin. I have no objection to include these origins, but the rationale must be different.”
- About 52 percent of participants thought Comoran should be included in a MENA classification.
- Around 36 percent thought Azerbaijani, Cypriot and South Sudanese should be included.
- Fewer than 26 percent thought that Georgian, Afghan, Maltese, and Pakistani should be included.
  - One expert wrote that Malta should be excluded because it “seems mostly European in history, culture, and affiliations.”

Table 3 also shows the results of the written feedback from the instructions of “Mark all of the ethnicities that you think should be included in a Middle Eastern or North African Classification.”

- Over 90 percent of participants identified the following ethnicities as groups that should be included in a MENA classification: Amazigh/Berber, Arab/Arabic, Assyrian, Chaldean, and Kurdish.
- About 87 percent of participants said that Druze, Mideast, and North African should be included in the classification.
- About 80 percent of participants agreed that Copt and Syriac should be included.
  - Two experts said Copt should be removed because it is a religious group.
- About 74 percent of participants said that Bedouin should be included in a MENA classification.
  - Two experts said Bedouin should be removed, writing that Bedouin is “not an ethnicity; it is a way of life” and that it is “silly” to include this group.

Participants were also asked to list any nationalities, ethnicities, or other origins they thought should be included in a MENA classification, but were not listed on the feedback sheet. See Table 4 for a list of the groups that were mentioned.

- Five experts suggested adding Circassian and Nubian to the MENA working classification.
- Three experts suggested adding Turkomen to the MENA working classification.
- Two experts suggested adding Persian to the MENA working classification.

- There were a few other groups that were suggested once (See Table 4).

**Table 4. Additional Ethnic Groups Mentioned in Session C Written Feedback**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of times mentioned</b>
Circassian	5
Nubian	5
Turkomen	3
Persian	2
Arab American	1
Baluchi	1
Ethiopian	1
Laz	1
Maghreb	1
Mizrahi	1
Qajar	1
Roma	1
Sahrawi	1
Tuareg	1
Yazidi	1

- Participants also wrote about the inclusion of religious and ethnoreligious groups in the MENA category.
  - One participant wrote, “various religious distinctions might be added, as they are socially meaningful and likely connected to some immigrants’ experience of oppression. Some Israeli ethnicities, such as Ethiopian, Sephardic, and Mizrahi, are more regional or national than religious.”
  - One participant wrote, “most Jewish Americans view themselves as both a religious and an ethnic group.”
  - One participant suggested further research into whether or not Copt was a religion or ethnicity.

The last question in the Session C written feedback asked, “Are there other classifications within the Middle Eastern and North African population the Census Bureau should consider?”

- No other classifications were recommended for consideration. The responses to this question reiterated the responses that were given to the first question.



## Session D: Potential Data Products Featuring Middle Eastern and North African Data

In Session D of the forum, Merarys Rios, Chief of the Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch, presented how potential data products may show data on the Middle Eastern and North African population. She explained that under the current OMB standards, Middle Eastern and North African responses are currently classified as White. She gave an example of how a table could show MENA as a population total, as well as detailed MENA groups, such as Iranian or Syrian.

See Appendix B for the slides from the presentation.

### Discussion based on the presentation

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants were asked the following questions:

1. How much and what kind of detail should new data products provide?
2. What type of data do you currently look for but cannot find?
3. What types of cross-tabulations are important with Middle Eastern and North African data?
4. What do you like about the current American Community (ACS) ancestry data products?

The following is a summary of the resulting discussion:

#### *How much and what kind of detail should new data products provide?*

- Overall, the participants were very interested in seeing detailed data for MENA groups. One participant stressed the importance of vetting suggestions that come to the Census Bureau before implementing them.
- Several experts were interested in how the Census Bureau plans to classify combinations of MENA groups, for instance Palestinian-Jordanian or Iraqi-Chaldean. Along with that, one participant urged the Census Bureau to create a very detailed code list so it can code detailed groups and combination groups, such as Lebanese-Armenian.
- One participant mentioned that since some people have several ethnicities, however many are coded in the data will have an effect on the estimates for detailed groups.
- One expert mentioned that future generations may not identify as readily with specific detailed groups. Many third generation people only identify as Arab, not with any nationality, so thinking ahead, the Census Bureau should provide some tables showing broad categories.

- One participant urged the Census Bureau to be aware that it may get more detail from internet responses than from the paper form because of how the write-in line is presented.
- One participant urged the Census Bureau to consider the legal case that led to the current ancestry category for Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac and to not “reinvent the wheel” when showing data for these groups.

*What type of data do you currently look for but cannot find?*

- Some participants noted that the margins of error associated with ACS data can often be substantial, and hoped that 100-percent data from a census will solve that problem.
- Several experts mentioned that having more data on disadvantaged groups such as Yemeni Americans or Sudanese Americans would be helpful for advocacy work.
- Some participants would like to have data for their ethnic groups separate from nationalities. For example, Algerian is a nationality, while Amazigh/Berber is a race or ethnicity.
- One participant mentioned that it is important to make the tables easy to understand.

*What types of cross-tabulations are important with Middle Eastern and North African data?*

- Most participants said that socio-economic indicators such as education, income, and poverty, as well as occupation by industry, and occupation by class of worker would be important cross-tabulations to have in order to do research on discrimination.
- Several participants mentioned that it is important to be able to study generations of the MENA population by using country of birth and parental place of birth.
- One participant added that cross-tabulations of MENA by race would be very interesting.

*What do you like about the current ACS ancestry data products?*

- Some participants noted their appreciation for the ACS data for being useful, detailed, and accessible, and urged other participants to encourage Congress to fund the ACS budget.
- A few participants stressed that the community, stakeholders, and other data users should work with the Census Bureau now to achieve the goal of collecting the data with the goal to improve the data products in the future.
- One participant suggested that the Census Bureau give all religions the same code for research purposes, similar to how data on religion is tabulated in the American Community Survey ancestry data.

## Written feedback

Feedback sheets were provided to participants prior to the forum, and participants were asked the same three questions during the discussion session. See Appendix C for the feedback sheet from this session.

In Question 1, participants were asked how much and what kind of detail new data products should provide.

- Several participants would like to see data at the pan-ethnic level, such as Middle Eastern, North African, and Arab as well as for the total for Middle Eastern and North African.
- Some participants mentioned it is important to be able to distinguish those who reported only a pan-ethnic term such as Arab, from those who gave a detailed group that falls under Arab.
- However, one participant recommended not using Arab as a detailed group unless the Census Bureau plans to show all other ethnic groups in the same table, such as Amazigh.
- Most participants urged the Census Bureau to show as many particular groups as possible from the 2020 Census. Data for small groups cannot be obtained accurately from the ACS.
- Several experts stressed the need to be inclusive of all communities in the region, and some asked that their specific ethnic groups be included (Sudanese, South Sudanese, Turkish, and Israeli).
- Two participants asked for detail on specific dual-identities: Iranian-Azeri, Iranian-Armenian, Iranian-Kurd, Iranian-Arab, Israeli-Iranian, Armenian-Lebanese, Syrian-Kurd, Iraqi-Kurd, Turkish-Kurd, Algerian-Amazigh, and Egyptian-Nubian. For example, Iranians have different ethnicities, such as Azeri, Kurdish, etc., and many Iranian Jews have become Israeli citizens.
- One participant mentioned that when deciding what groups to show, the Census Bureau should follow the advice of whoever requested the category.

In Question 2, participants were asked what type of data they currently look for but cannot find.

- Several participants said they look for data from the decennial census rather than from ACS, for better quality and reliability. One said the current ACS estimates “don’t reflect the reality of this population.”
- Several participants mentioned that they could not find appropriate data for detailed groups, such as Sudanese.

- The following are some of the types of data participants said they could not find:
  - Combinations of race and ethnic categories, for instance MENA ancestry groups by Hispanic origin and race.
  - Socio-economic data linked to nationality
  - Ancestry data for all geographic areas, including suburbs, tracts, etc.
  - Country of origin
  - Ancestry data on smaller groups, such as Kurdish or Amazigh
  - Parental place of birth
  - Information on multi-family households
  
- One participant mentioned that data on religion would be helpful, but if it is not possible to do that, religious groups should get a code reserved for religious groups only so that they can be distinguished from other uncodable groups.
  
- One participant said that the data should be easier to find.
  
- Several participants noted that there is a great need for data products on the MENA population for civil rights purposes and medical and psychological research, in order to make a case for resources and political inclusiveness.
  
- Outside of what is collected in the census and ACS, some participants mentioned that they need data on people of MENA origin related to police activity, national security activity, public health information and medical research.

In Question 3, participants were asked what types of cross-tabulations are important with Middle Eastern and North African data.

- A number of participants noted that cross-tabulations with socioeconomic variables are very important for all detailed groups and for pan-ethnic groups including Middle Eastern, North African, and Arab.
  
- The following cross-tabulation variables were requested:
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Race

- Marital status
  - Relationship
  - Country of birth
  - U.S. state of birth
  - Citizenship status
  - Language spoken at home and language proficiency
  - Education
  - Employment status and class of worker
  - Occupation
  - Business ownership
  - Income
  - Veteran status
  - Children, fertility, and family-related characteristics
  - Household size
  - Housing characteristics
  - Geographic distribution
  - Neighborhood information
- A few participants also noted they would be interested in health characteristics, technical skills, and religion.
  - Some participants mentioned that whatever cross-tabulations are available for Hispanic origin groups should be available for MENA groups.

In Question 4, participants were asked what they like about the current ACS ancestry data products.

- A number of participants expressed their appreciation that people have open access to ACS data products, and that is free of charge. One said “We love ACS ancestry data.”
- Several participants stressed how important the ACS is, because it is the only survey that currently captures groups in the MENA population. One said, “[The ACS] gives us qualitative insight on the community,” allowing data users to “compare data with other ethnic and racial minorities.” Another said the data made them “feel finally represented and included.”
- Other participants stressed that the ACS is very valuable for providing data in the years between censuses, and that data users should continue advocating for it.
- Others appreciated the socio-economic data available from the ACS.
- Some participants mentioned they used the 3- and 5- year data to analyze the small MENA population and its subcategories.
- One participant liked that the technical documentation and code lists are easy to access.

## **Session E: Wrap-Up and Next Steps**

In Session E of the forum, Roberto Ramirez presented a high-level timeline for making decisions on the 2020 Census content. He explained that by early 2017, the 2020 Census topics must be submitted to Congress, with the final question wording due in April of 2018. The results from the expert forum and results from the 2015 National Content Test will feed into the recommendations for the content for the 2020 Census.

Roberto Ramirez also asked the participants to review the Census Bureau's proposed Middle Eastern and North African code list and provide feedback on the groups to be coded.

### **Discussion based on the presentation**

At the beginning of the discussion session, the experts were asked to:

1. Return all completed feedback sheets to Census Bureau staff before leaving that day.
2. Review the proposed Middle Eastern and North African code list and return feedback to Census Bureau staff before leaving that day, or e-mail it to Census Bureau staff by June 26, 2015.

The discussion was then opened up for remaining comments or questions.

- The participants thanked the Census Bureau for putting together and hosting the forum.
- Participants asked if there were plans for future meetings once the results of the 2015 National Content Test were available.

### **Written feedback**

Participants were asked to review the proposed MENA code list and provide comments in the last section of the feedback sheets. See Appendix C for an example of the feedback sheets and Appendix D for the Proposed MENA Code List. The following is a summary of the comments that were received.

Comments on proposed MENA code list:

Codes to add:

- Arab American
- Armenian (under Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian, and Palestinian)
- Circassian (under Jordanian and Syrian)
- Fur (under Sudanese)
- Maghrebi (under North African)

- Multiple Middle Eastern Ancestries
- Nubian (under Sudanese or Egyptian)
- Saidi (under Egyptian)
- South Sudanese
- Sudanese

Codes to reclassify or move:

- Amazigh – make it the main heading and place Berber under it
- Copt – move from North African to Egyptian
- Maghreb – move from Other North African to North African

Codes to remove:

- Bedouin
- Copt

Other comments:

- Further research is needed for Copt and Bedouin.
- Consider adding languages to the list.
- “Code list lacks many groups ... list in Section C of this feedback sheet is better.”
- “The code list should be expanded in ways that allow for maximum capturing of the nuances of the population.”

Participants also left additional feedback on their sheets about their thoughts on the forum and next steps. Here are some of the comments that were received:

- “Please schedule a follow up meeting after the September testing.”
- “Remember fear of government surveillance may skew data collection and results in the next five years and maybe more.”
- “I suggest you formally appoint community liaisons to educate the community about this effort and encourage them to complete this data.”
- “It is critical to reach out to various MENA communities to explain the new terminology and classifications that are being considered.”
- “I recommend an organized tour of Census staff to various communities to experience the diversity and similarities within the community.”



## **Closing Remarks**

### **John Thompson, Director, U.S. Census Bureau**

Director Thompson thanked the participants for taking the time to travel to the Census Bureau to participate in the forum. He also thanked the community for their ongoing engagement and collaboration with the Census Bureau throughout the decades.

The Director discussed some of the reasons the Census Bureau is conducting this important research. He spoke about findings from the 2010 Census Race and Hispanic Origin Alternative Questionnaire Experiment focus groups, which revealed that the current categories on the race and origin questions do not work for many respondents.

The Director then discussed the 2015 National Content Test and the Census Bureau's timeline for making recommendations to OMB, delivering the topics to Congress by 2017, and delivering the final questionnaire wording to Congress by 2018.

The Director concluded his remarks by thanking the group again for its participation in the forum and its ongoing collaboration with the Census Bureau.

### **Discussion**

Director Thompson opened the floor for comments and questions from the participants.

Several forum participants spoke expressing that they were thankful for the opportunity to participate, and grateful to have become more visible to the Census Bureau. They felt that the proposed MENA category would give people in their communities an increased sense of pride in their origins. One participant stressed that even with a range of cultures and political views, we can all sit together and work towards the goal of better data.

Another participant cautioned not to let a sense of fear change the forward momentum and to continue working with the communities to decide who should be included in the MENA classification.



## Appendix A. Agenda

### Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa

May 29, 2015

Census Bureau Conference Center  
4600 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, MD 20746  
Conference Rooms 1 and 2

- 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM            **Bus from the Hotel to the Census Bureau**
- 8:30 AM – 9:00 AM            **Check-in and Coffee/Tea**
- 9:00 AM – 9:10 AM            **Welcome and Introductions**  
Roberto Ramirez, Assistant Division Chief, Special Population Statistics
- 9:10 AM – 9:20 AM            **Opening Remarks**  
Karen Humes, Division Chief, Population Division
- 9:20 AM – 9:30 AM            **Brief History of the Support for the Middle Eastern or North African Category**  
Helen Hatab Samhan, Arab American Institute and MENA Advocacy Network
- 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM            **Session A: Testing a Middle Eastern or North African Category on the 2015 National Content Test**  
Nicholas Jones, Director of Race and Ethnic Research and Outreach, Population Division  
A brief overview of plans for the upcoming 2015 National Content Test followed by a question and answer session.
- 10:45 AM – 11:00 AM            **Session B: The Term “Middle Eastern or North African”**  
Roberto Ramirez, Assistant Division Chief, Special Population Statistics, Population Division  
Presentation on the terms “Middle Eastern or North African” and “MENA” followed by expert discussion.
- 11:00 AM – 11:15 AM            **Break**
- 11:15 AM – 12:30 PM            **Session C: Census Bureau’s Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test**  
Roberto Ramirez, Assistant Division Chief, Special Population Statistics  
Presentation of the development of the Census Bureau’s Working Classification of MENA followed by expert discussion.
- 12:30 PM – 1:15 PM            **Lunch on Your Own**
- 1:15 PM – 2:35 PM            **Session C, continued: Discussion: Feedback on The Census Bureau’s Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test**  
Roberto Ramirez, Assistant Division Chief, Special Population Statistics, Population Division  
Continuation of expert discussion.

## Appendix A. Agenda

2:35 PM – 2:45 PM	<b>Break</b>
2:45 PM – 3:30 PM	<b>Session D: Potential Data Products Featuring Middle Eastern and North African Data</b> Merarys Rios, Chief, Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch, Population Division Potential approaches to tabulating Middle Eastern and North African data in the 2020 Census followed by expert discussion.
3:30 PM – 3:40 PM	<b>Census Bureau Director’s Remarks</b> John H. Thompson, Director
3:40 PM – 4:00 pm	<b>Session E: Wrap-Up and Next Steps</b> Roberto Ramirez, Assistant Division Chief, Special Population Statistics, Population Division
4:00 PM	<b>Adjourn</b>
4:15PM	<b>Bus from the Census Bureau to Airport and Hotel</b>

## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa

U.S. Census Bureau

Census Bureau Meeting with  
Experts, Scholars, and Community Leaders  
May 29, 2015 | Suitland, MD

United States  
**Census**  
Bureau

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Economic and Statistics Administration  
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### Welcome and Introductions

Roberto Ramirez  
Assistant Division Chief  
Special Population Statistics  
Population Division

United States  
**Census**  
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economic and Statistics Administration  
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### Agenda for Today's Forum

**Session A:** Testing a Middle Eastern or North African  
Category on the 2015 National Content Test

**Session B:** The Term "Middle Eastern or North African"

**Session C:** Census Bureau's Working Classification  
of Middle Eastern or North African for  
the 2015 National Content Test

**Session D:** Potential Data Products Featuring  
Middle Eastern and North African Data

**Session E:** Wrap-Up and Next Steps

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### Opening Remarks

Karen Humes  
Division Chief, Population Division

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## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### Brief History of the Support for the Middle Eastern or North African Category

Perspective from Helen Samhan  
Arab American Institute

### Session A

Testing a  
“Middle Eastern or North African”  
Category on the  
2015 National Content Test

Nicholas Jones

### 1997 Race and Ethnicity Standards

U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB)  
defines White as:

*A person having origins in any of the original peoples of*

- Europe
- Middle East
- North Africa

### How Did We Get Here?

- 1997 OMB standards recommended further research on how to improve data on Arabs/Middle Easterners
- Major findings from the Census Bureau's 2010 Alternative Questionnaire Experiment showed that many respondents saw the use of “Egyptian” and “Lebanese” examples for the White category as inaccurate and recommended a separate Middle Eastern or North African category
- Arab American Institute and 25 organizations and researchers sent a formal request for the new category
- Census Bureau engaged and consulted with external stakeholders

## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### Activities in the Past Year

- Census Bureau National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations recommended testing a separate category (Summer 2014)
- Federal Register Notice on 2015 National Content Test (NCT) plans solicited public comment on new category (Winter 2014)
- Researched how various federal agencies, universities, and research organizations classify the region to develop a working definition for the category (Fall 2014 - Spring 2015)
- Planned Middle Eastern and North African expert forum (Spring 2015)

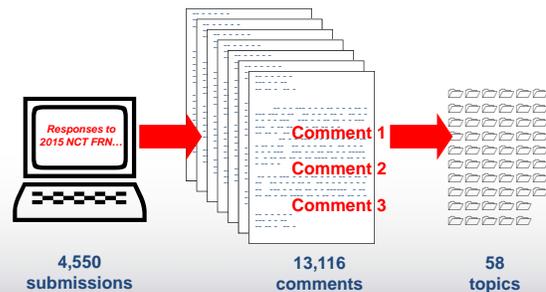
### Public Comments on the 2015 NCT Federal Register Notice (FRN)

- Notice for public comment published in the *Federal Register* on December 2, 2014
- Census Bureau alerted members of National Advisory Committee and hundreds of other stakeholders, advisors, and community leaders to the release of the FRN
- Shared message during public briefings
- Helped elicit public comments on 2015 NCT research plans

### Federal Register Notice on 2015 NCT

- Presented overall objectives for the 2015 NCT
- Described major research dimensions for 2020 Census content (race and ethnicity, relationship, and within-household coverage)
- Requested public feedback on research plans
- All comments were reviewed and addressed in submission of 2015 NCT testing plans for U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- Responses to comments will be made public

### Public Comments on 2015 NCT FRN



## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### Comments on Testing a Middle Eastern or North African Category

Received 4,509 submissions related to testing a “Middle Eastern or North African” category

*Submissions included 12,293 comments, covering 11 topics*

- 4,473 comments expressed strong support for testing the category; 15 comments did not support testing the category
- 3,727 comments expressed strong disagreement with the classification of Middle Eastern or North African as “White”
- 3,301 comments advised that this population is racially diverse
- 737 comments on which countries or ethnic groups to include or exclude in this category

### Summary

- Responses to public comments are under review
- U.S. Office of Management and Budget will review as part of clearance process for 2015 NCT
- Responses will be made public later this year
- Continuing to meet with stakeholders and advisors
- Building strong foundation for the 2020 Census

### Overview of the 2015 NCT

- Test will take place in late Summer of 2015
- Use a large nationally representative sample, including Puerto Rico
- Evaluate and compare different census content, including race and Hispanic origin, relationship, and within-household coverage
- Refine estimates of national self response and Internet response rates and continue testing different contact strategies for optimizing self response
- Conduct content reinterview that includes a subsample of respondents, to measure accuracy of race/origin and coverage

### Goals for Mid-Decade Race and Hispanic Origin Research

#### Four Key Dimensions to Explore

- Separate questions vs. combined question
- “Middle Eastern or North African” category
- Instruction wording and terminology
- Web-based designs to improve question understanding and optimize reporting of detailed racial and ethnic groups

# Appendix B. Presentation Slides

## Dimension 1: Separate Race and Hispanic Origin vs. Combined Race and Hispanic Origin

**Separate Hispanic Origin Question**

**Separate Race Question**

**Combined Race and Hispanic Origin Question**

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## Dimension 2: New Category

**What is Person 1's race or origin?**

**What is Person 1's race or origin?**

United States Census U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration U.S. Census Bureau 18

## Dimension 3: Instructions and Terms

### Instruction Wording:

- Mark [X] one or more boxes.
  - Mark all boxes that apply...
- Note, you may report more than one group.

### Alternatives for Terminology:

- "Race," "Ethnicity," "Origin"
- Which categories describe you?

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## Dimension 4: Web-Based Designs

### Initial Screen for Race and Ethnicity

**Which categories describe Person 1?**

White

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Black or African Am.

Asian

American Indian or Alaska Native

Middle Eastern or North African

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Some other race or origin

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# Appendix B. Presentation Slides

## Dimension 4: Web-Based Designs

### Subsequent Screens for Detailed Responses

Screen for Middle Eastern or North African

Select all boxes that apply and/or enter detailed ethnicities in the space below.

MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN

- Lebanese
- Iranian
- Egyptian
- Syrian
- Moroccan
- Algerian

Enter other ethnicities below (for example, Israeli, Iraqi, Tunisian, etc.)

Iraqi, Palestinian

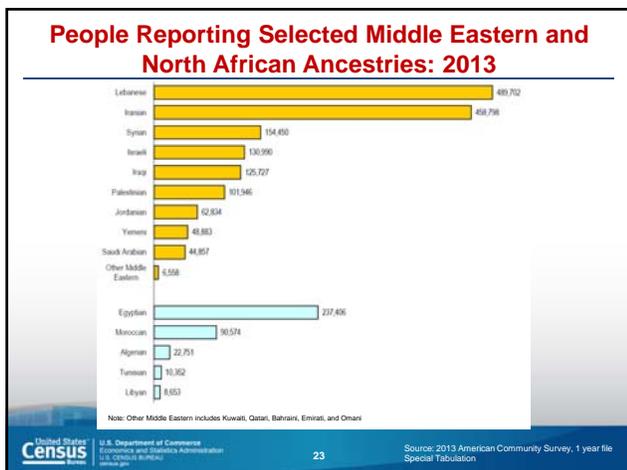
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## Design Rationale for Detailed Groups

- Include six examples to reflect diversity of category's OMB definition
- The Census Bureau identified the largest groups in the United States which represent the different geographic regions referenced in each of the OMB race and ethnic group definitions
- Balance and equity -- present groups in population size order (largest to smallest)

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## Detailed Ethnic Examples

Middle Eastern or North African – Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc. 7

**Middle Eastern Examples**

- 1) Lebanese (489,702)
- 2) Iranian (458,789)
- 3) Syrian (154,450)

**North African Examples**

- 1) Egyptian (237,606)
- 2) Moroccan (90,574)
- 3) Algerian (22,751)

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## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### EXPERT FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

- Do you have a preference for the combined or separate question(s) on race and Hispanic origin?
- Do you think that Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White?
- What do you think about the examples shown in the Middle Eastern or North African category on the questionnaire and the rationale of the selection of the examples?

### Session B

#### The Term “Middle Eastern or North African”

Roberto Ramirez

### Outreach with Stakeholders

We contacted several state data centers to find out how they collect data on the Middle Eastern and North African population

- California, Maryland, Michigan, New York

We consulted with external stakeholders on their recommendations for collecting data on the Middle Eastern or North African population

- National Advisory Committee
- Arab American Institute
- Middle Eastern and North African scholars

### Terms Used

Term Used	Number
Middle Eastern and North African (MENA acronym also used in 6 of these)	12
Near East	1
Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA)	1
Eastern Mediterranean	1
Total	15

## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### Organizations

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**Research Centers and Universities:**

Pew Research Center, Population Reference Bureau,  
Arab American Institute, University of California Berkeley,  
University of California San Francisco Medical Center

**Non-Governmental Organizations:**

World Bank, International Monetary Fund,  
International Organization on Migration, World Health Organization

**U.S. Federal Agencies:**

Department of Commerce Commercial Law Development Program,  
Department of Labor, State Department, Department of Agriculture,  
International Trade Administration

### EXPERT FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

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- What are your thoughts on using the term “Middle Eastern or North African” as a category label on the Census questionnaire?
- Do you think that the community will identify with the “Middle Eastern or North African” term?
- Are there other terms that the Census Bureau should consider using instead of the term “Middle Eastern or North African”?
- Is it appropriate to use the acronym MENA when discussing this population?

### SESSION BREAK

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### Session C

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#### Census Bureau's Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test

Roberto Ramirez

## Appendix B. Presentation Slides



### Classifications

The 15 organizations we used in our research classified the population in various ways

- Included as few as 12 countries/territories, and as many as 29
- Average number of countries/territories was about 20
- Most classifications overlapped (e.g., Jordan was included in all classifications)

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### Census Bureau Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African

- Includes nationalities of countries in majority of 15 classifications (>50%)
- Includes Middle Eastern and North African ethnicities not tied to specific countries

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## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### Census Bureau Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African - Nationalities

- Algerian
- Bahraini
- Egyptian
- Emirati
- Iranian
- Iraqi
- Israeli
- Jordanian
- Kuwaiti
- Lebanese
- Libyan
- Moroccan
- Omani
- Palestinian
- Qatari
- Saudi Arabian
- Syrian
- Tunisian
- Yemeni

### Census Bureau Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African - Ethnicities

- Amazigh/Berber
- Arab/Arabic
- Assyrian
- Bedouin
- Chaldean
- Copt
- Druze
- Kurdish
- "Middle Eastern"
- "North African"
- Syriac

### Comments on Classification Received in Response to the Federal Register Notice

Nationalities suggested for inclusion:

- Comoran
- Djiboutian
- Mauritanian
- Somali
- Sudanese
- Turkish

### EXPERT FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

- What nationalities and ethnicities should be added to or removed from our working classification of Middle Eastern or North African?
- Are there other classifications within the Middle Eastern and North African population we should consider?

## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

**LUNCH**

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### **Session C (continued)**

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#### **Census Bureau's Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test**

### **EXPERT FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION**

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**(continued)**

- What nationalities and ethnicities should be added to or removed from our working classification of Middle Eastern or North African?
- Are there other classifications within the Middle Eastern and North African population we should consider?

**SESSION BREAK**

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## Appendix B. Presentation Slides

### Session D

#### Potential Data Products Featuring Middle Eastern and North African Data

Merarys Ríos

### OMB 1997

#### Race and Ethnicity Standards

- OMB race categories:
  - White
  - Black or African American
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- An additional category is used, “Some Other Race”
- OMB ethnicity categories:
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Not Hispanic or Latino

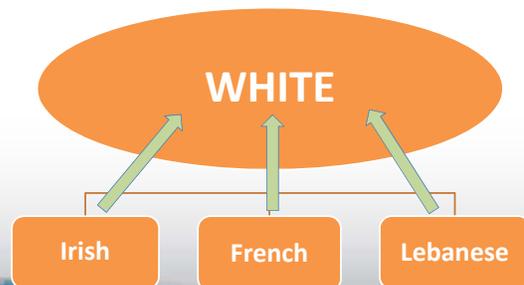
### 1997 Race and Ethnicity Standards

U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB)  
defines White as:

*A person having origins in any of the  
original peoples of*

- Europe
- Middle East
- North Africa

### OMB's 1997 Standards Guide Census Bureau's Classification & Tabulation of Responses to the Race Question



# Appendix B. Presentation Slides

## The combined approach permits reporting of race and/or ethnicity

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. Census Bureau

## Current 1997 OMB Standards Tabulation

Total:
Population of one race:
White alone
Black or African American alone
American Indian and Alaska Native alone
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
Some Other Race alone
Population of Two or More Races

Middle Eastern and North African tabulated in White alone

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. Census Bureau

## Potential Tabulation for Detailed Middle Eastern and North African Groups

TOTAL:
NOT MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN
MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN:
Algerian
Amazigh/Berber
Assyrian
Bahraini
Chaldean
Egyptian
Emirati
Iraqi
Iranian
Israeli
Jordanian
Kurdish
Kuwaiti
Lebanese
Libyan
Moroccan
Omani
Palestinian
Qatari
Saudi Arabian
Syrian
Tunisian
Yemeni
Other Middle Eastern or North African:
Arab
Middle Eastern
North African

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. Census Bureau

## EXPERT FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

- How much and what kind of detail should new data products provide?
- What type of data do you currently look for but cannot find?
- What types of cross-tabulations are important with Middle Eastern and North African data?
- What do you like about the current ACS Ancestry data products?

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. Census Bureau

# Appendix B. Presentation Slides

**Director John Thompson**

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Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
census.gov

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**Session E**

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**Wrap-up and Next Steps**

**Roberto Ramirez**

United States Census Bureau | U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
census.gov

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**Timeline for Making Decisions**

2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Ongoing Outreach & Dialogue with Stakeholders, Communities, and OMB About Plans, Research, and Results

United States Census Bureau | U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
census.gov

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**EXPERT NEXT STEPS AND DISCUSSION**

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- Return your completed feedback sheets to us today.
- Review the proposed Middle Eastern and North African code list and send feedback by June 26, 2015. See Coding List tab in your binder.

United States Census Bureau | U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
census.gov

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## Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

### Expert Feedback

**Session A:** Testing a Middle Eastern or North African category on the 2015 National Content Test

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1. Do you have a preference for the combined or separate question(s) on race and Hispanic origin?
  - Separate questions on race and Hispanic origin with a “Middle Eastern or North African” category on the race question
  - Combined question with a “Middle Eastern or North African” category
  - Either approach as long as a “Middle Eastern or North African” category is included
  - None of the above

Please explain your selection.

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2. Do you think that Middle Eastern and North African responses should be classified as White?
  - Yes
  - No

Please explain your selection.

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### Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

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3. What do you think about the examples shown in the Middle Eastern or North African category on the questionnaire and the rationale of the selection of the examples?

- Agree with examples selected and rationale
- Disagree with examples selected and rationale

Please explain your selection, if in disagreement please share which examples you would use or provide if any and what the rationale would be.

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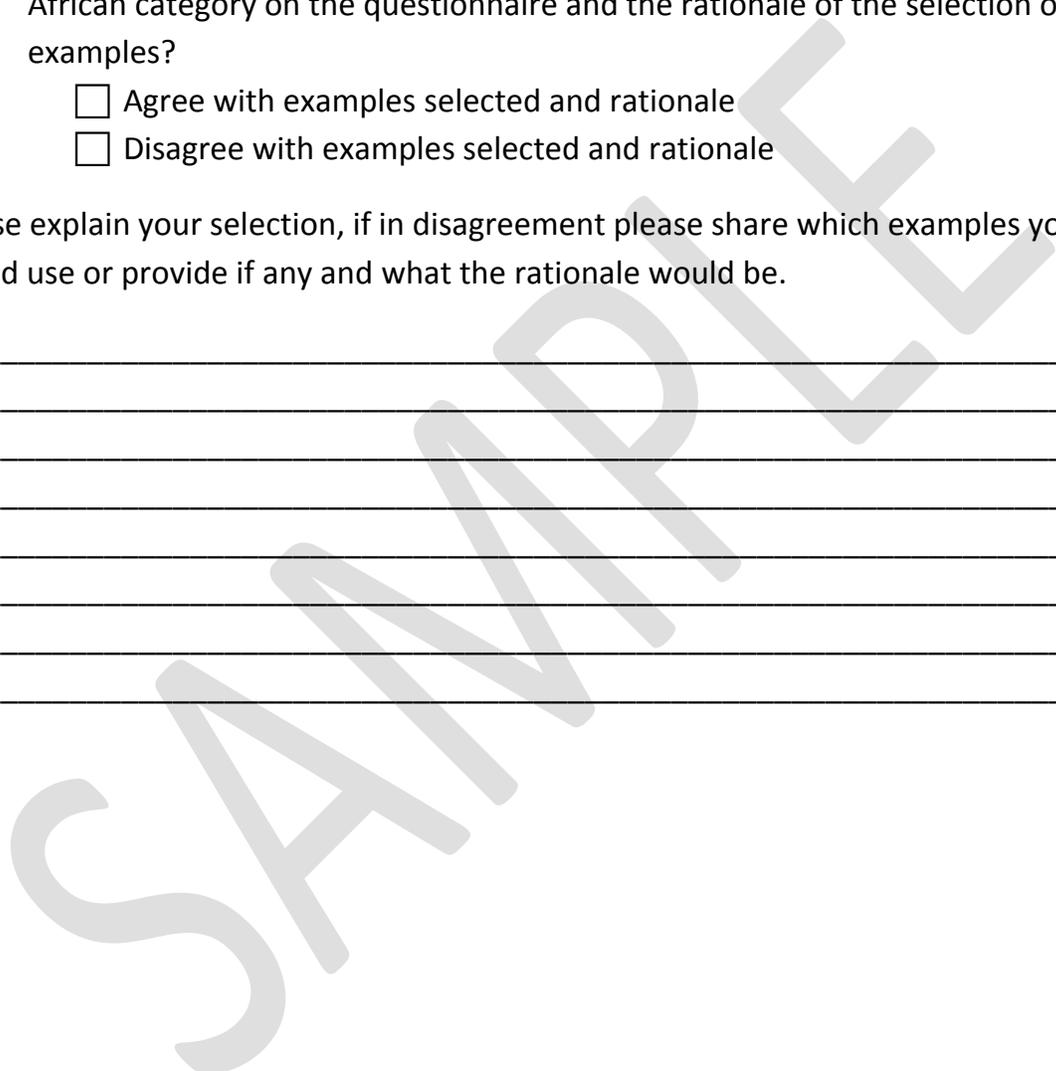
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## Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

### Expert Feedback

#### Session B: The Term “Middle Eastern or North African”

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1. What are your thoughts on using the term “Middle Eastern or North African” as a category on the Census questionnaire?

- I agree with the use of the term “Middle Eastern or North African”
- I disagree with the use of the term “Middle Eastern or North African”

Please explain your selection.

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2. Do you think that the community will identify with the “Middle Eastern or North African” term?

- Yes, they will identify with the term “Middle Eastern or North African”
- No, they will not identify with the term “Middle Eastern or North African”

Please explain your selection.

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### Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

3. Are there other terms that the Census Bureau should consider using instead of the term “Middle Eastern or North African”?

- Yes
- No

If **Yes**, please make sure to indicate what that other term(s) would be and why.

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4. Is it appropriate to use the acronym MENA when discussing this population?”

- Yes, it is appropriate
- No, it is not appropriate

Please explain your selection.

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**Appendix C. Feedback Sheets****Expert Feedback**

**Session C:** Census Bureau's Working Classification of Middle Eastern or North African for the 2015 National Content Test

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1. What nationalities and ethnicities should be added to or removed from our working classification of Middle Eastern or North African?
  - Mark all of the nationalities that you think should be included in a Middle Eastern or North African classification

Nationality	Include in Middle Eastern or North African Classification?
Afghan	
Algerian	
Armenian	
Azerbaijani	
Bahraini	
Comoran	
Cypriot	
Djiboutian	
Egyptian	
Emirati	
Georgian	
Iranian	
Iraqi	
Israeli	
Jordanian	
Kuwaiti	
Lebanese	
Libyan	
Maltese	
Mauritanian	
Moroccan	
Omani	
Pakistani	
Palestinian	
Qatari	
Saudi Arabian	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

Somali	
South Sudanese	
Sudanese	
Syrian	
Tunisian	
Turkish	
Western Saharan	
Yemeni	

- Mark all of the ethnicities that you think should be included in a Middle Eastern or North African classification

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Include in Middle Eastern or North African Classification?</b>
Arab/Arabic	
Assyrian	
Bedouin	
Amazigh/Berber	
Chaldean	
Copt	
Druze	
Kurdish	
Mideast	
North African	
Syriac	

- If there are nationalities, ethnicities, or other origins that are not listed above that you think should be included in a Middle Eastern or North African classification, list them below

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

2. Are there other classifications within the Middle Eastern and North African population we should consider?

- Please name that classification
- List the nationalities and ethnicities that should be included
- Explain why you listed these nationalities and ethnicities

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SAMPLE

## Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

### Expert Feedback

#### Session D: Potential Data Products Featuring Middle Eastern and North African Data

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1. How much and what kind of detail should new data products provide?

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2. What type of data do you currently look for but cannot find?

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3. What types of cross-tabulations are important with Middle Eastern and North African data?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

4. What do you like about the current ACS Ancestry data products?

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SAMPLE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C. Feedback Sheets

### Experts' Next Steps

#### Session E: Wrap-Up and Next Steps

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1. Please review the proposed Middle Eastern and North African code list and either bring it to the forum or send feedback by June 26, 2015. See Code List tab in your binder.

SAMPLE

# Appendix D. Proposed Middle Eastern and North African Code List

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU DRAFT DOCUMENT - May 2015

## Overview:

The following code list is an excerpt of the "White" code list. It is also our proposed list of "Middle Eastern or North African" nationalities and ethnic groups for the 2020 Census.

The document presents:

- 1) major "MENA" nationalities/ethnic terms that will have a separate code for tabulation purposes
- 2) terms that will not have a separate code, but will be coded to a broader nationality/ethnic group

Please review this list and provide your thoughts on:

- 1) whether we are missing any major nationalities or ethnic groups that meet the Census Bureau's working classification of "Middle Eastern or North African" and have a known presence in the United States; and
- 2) whether we have misclassified any of the nationalities or ethnic groups/terms.

For the purposes of review, we have only included the "Middle Eastern or North African" or "MENA" section of the "White" code list. The "MENA" codes are included as part of the "White" code list because the Office of Management and Budget currently defines "White" as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

## Objectives of the Code List:

- 1 Determine which nationality and ethnic terms reported in response to the census race question will be classified as "Middle Eastern or North African" or "MENA."  
This includes identifying the nationalities and ethnic terms that have historically been classified as "MENA," but should be classified as a different race/ethnic group.
- 2 Determine which nationality and ethnic terms classified as "MENA" will receive a unique code (making it possible to publish counts separately).  
This is key, as the 2020 Census will be the first time that we collect and publish detailed nationality/ethnicity information for those classified as "MENA."
- 3 Determine which ethnic terms commonly reported in past decennial censuses will not receive a unique code, but will be coded to a broader nationality/ethnic category.

## Classification Guidance:

- 1 Per executive leadership for the decennial census, we used our interpretation of the 1997 OMB race and ethnicity standards to classify terms as "MENA."
- 2 The United Nations' and the U.S. State Department's classification of nations and regions of the world were useful in determining how nationalities/ethnic groups could be associated with the "MENA" category - however, they did not always agree with each other.
- 3 Since we are following the "original peoples" approach, the CIA factbook's ethnic data (on-line) for each nation was of use. However, we also looked at the race/origin distribution of ancestry groups in the United States from the 5-year ACS. ACS data collected over a 5-year period provide more reliable estimates for small ancestry groups than do the estimates from the 1-year ACS.

## Appendix D. Proposed Middle Eastern and North African Code List

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU DRAFT DOCUMENT - May 2015

- 4 In order for a group/term to have its own separate code - we considered the following criteria:
  - ~ If the term already had its own ancestry code in the 5-year ACS, there needed to be a minimum of 100 people reporting that term in the 5-year ACS
  - AND-
  - ~ The term represented a nationality or Historic nation,
  - ~ Or the term represented a major transnational ethnic group,
  - ~ Or the term represented a major ethnic group within a nation, but identification with the ethnic group is much stronger than identification with the nationality. This ethnic group had to have a minimum of 1,000 or more people reporting that term in the 5-year ACS.

If there were less than 1,000 people reporting that term in the 5-year ACS, that ethnic group did not get assigned a separate code and was coded to the nationality. Also, if less than 1,000 people reported that term in the 5-year ACS and it was a transnational ethnic group, the ethnic group was coded in a more general ethnic group category or in a residual category.

  - ~ The term was not solely a reference to a geographic region within a nation/territory or a language/dialect or a religious term.
  - ~ The term was deemed to be historically relevant and was not offensive/outdated/obsolete.
- 5 We identified external experts and asked for their comments/feedback on the classification. If a new term was highly recommended by multiple external experts because it represents a significant ethnic group in the United States, we added the new term to this document and assigned a unique code. If multiple external experts advised that certain terms were misclassified or should be removed, we made those changes as well.

## Appendix D. Proposed Middle Eastern and North African Code List

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU DRAFT DOCUMENT - May 2015

<u>TERM</u>	<u>CODE</u>
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	CODE RANGE
<b>Algerian</b>	<b>CODE1</b>
<b>Arab</b>	<b>CODE2</b>
Arabia	CODE2
Arabian	CODE2
Arabic	CODE2
<b>Assyrian</b>	<b>CODE3</b>
<b>Bahraini</b>	<b>CODE4</b>
<b>Bedouin</b>	<b>CODE5</b>
<b>Berber</b>	<b>CODE6</b>
Amazigh	CODE6
Kabyle	CODE6
Tuareg	CODE6
<b>Chaldean</b>	<b>CODE7</b>
Chaldo	CODE7
<b>Emirati</b>	<b>CODE8</b>
United Arab Emirates	CODE8
<b>Egyptian</b>	<b>CODE9</b>
<b>Iraqi</b>	<b>CODE10</b>
<b>Iranian</b>	<b>CODE11</b>
Irani	CODE11
Parsee	CODE11
Parsi	CODE11
Persian	CODE11
<b>Israeli</b>	<b>CODE12</b>
<b>Jordanian</b>	<b>CODE13</b>
<b>Kuwaiti</b>	<b>CODE14</b>
<b>Kurdish</b>	<b>CODE15</b>
Kurd	CODE15
<b>Lebanese</b>	<b>CODE16</b>
Phoenician	CODE16
<b>Libyan</b>	<b>CODE17</b>

## Appendix D. Proposed Middle Eastern and North African Code List

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU DRAFT DOCUMENT - May 2015

<b>Middle Eastern</b>	<b>CODE19</b>
<b>Moroccan</b>	<b>CODE20</b>
Moor	CODE20
<b>North African</b>	<b>CODE21</b>
<b>Omani</b>	<b>CODE22</b>
Kuria Muria Islander	CODE22
<b>Other Arab</b>	<b>CODE23</b>
<b>Other Middle Eastern</b>	<b>CODE24</b>
Djebel Druze	CODE24
Druze	CODE24
Jebel Druze	CODE24
Jebel Ed Druz	CODE24
<b>Other North African</b>	<b>CODE25</b>
Copht	CODE25
Copt	CODE25
Maghreb	CODE25
<b>Palestinian</b>	<b>CODE26</b>
<b>Qatari</b>	<b>CODE27</b>
<b>Saudi Arabian</b>	<b>CODE28</b>
Saudi	CODE28
<b>Syriac</b>	<b>CODE29</b>
Aramean	CODE29
Suryoyo	CODE29
<b>Syrian</b>	<b>CODE30</b>
Latakian	CODE30
<b>Tunisian</b>	<b>CODE31</b>
<b>Turkish</b>	<b>CODE32</b>
Hatay	CODE32
Turk	CODE32
<b>Western Saharan</b>	<b>CODE33</b>
Sahrawi	CODE33
<b>Yemeni</b>	<b>CODE34</b>
Yemenite	CODE34

## Appendix E. Working Classification for the Middle Eastern and North African Category on the 2015 National Content Test

*In Session C of the forum, the Census Bureau presented its working classification of Middle Eastern and North African. The information in this appendix summarizes the information that was presented in Session C and is supplemental to the materials forum participants received.*

In preparation for the 2015 National Content Test, the Census Bureau had to determine which groups would be included in the Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) category for the purposes of the test. To do so, we identified fifteen organizations that had published classifications of the MENA region of the world. The organizations included research centers, universities, non-governmental organizations, and U.S. federal agencies. Next, we determined which countries were in the majority (over 50 percent) of the classifications we identified, and we included the nationalities and ethnicities with origins in these countries in our working classification. Table E-1 shows the organizations we identified and the countries each organization included in their classifications.

- The working classification of MENA includes the following nineteen nationalities: Algerian, Bahraini, Egyptian, Emirati, Iraqi, Iranian, Israeli, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, and Yemeni.
- The working classification also includes the following ethnic groups, as well as general geographic and pan-ethnic terms: Arab or Arabic, Amazigh or Berber, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Druze, Kurdish, Middle Eastern, North African, and Syriac.

The following countries are in fewer than half of the classifications and are therefore **not** included in our working classification: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Comoros, Cyprus, Djibouti, Georgia, Malta, Mauritania, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Turkey, and Western Sahara.

We do not include religious designations in our classification, such as Muslim or Jewish. The Census Bureau does not collect data on religious affiliation in its demographic surveys or the decennial census.



**Table E-1. Countries Included in Fifteen Organizations' Classifications**

Country <sup>1,2</sup>	Research Centers and Universities				Non-Governmental Organizations				U.S. Federal Agencies						
	Pew Research	Population Reference Bureau	Arab American Institute Affiliates	UC, San Francisco Medical Center	UC, Berkeley	World Bank	International Monetary Fund	International Organization on Migration	World Health Organization	Dept. of Commerce, Commercial Law Development Program	Dept. of Labor	Dept. of State, Bureau of Near East Affairs	Dept. of Agricultural Research Service	Dept. of State, Middle East Partnership Initiative	International Trade Administration
<b>Term used</b>	Middle East-North Africa	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	Middle East and North Africa	Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA)	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	Middle East and North Africa	Eastern Mediterranean	Middle East and North Africa	Middle East and North Africa	Near East Africa	Middle East and North Africa	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
<b>Western Asia</b>															
Armenia															
Azerbaijan															
Bahrain	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Georgia															
Iraq	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Israel	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jordan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kuwait	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lebanon	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Oman	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Qatar	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Saudi Arabia	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
State of Palestine	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Syria	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Turkey	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
United Arab Emirates	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Yemen	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
<b>Southern Asia</b>															
Afghanistan															
Iran	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pakistan															
<b>North Africa</b>															
Algeria	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Egypt	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Libya	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Morocco	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sudan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tunisia	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Western Sahara	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
<b>Eastern Africa</b>															
Comoros															
Djibouti		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Somalia		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
South Sudan				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
<b>Western Africa</b>															
Cyprus				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mauritania															
<b>Southern Europe</b>															
Malta															

<sup>1</sup> Countries are grouped based on the United Nations Statistics Division's classification of countries by geographical region.

<sup>2</sup> Countries highlighted in yellow are included in the Census Bureau's 2015 National Content Test working classification of MENA. This working classification also includes the following transnational groups: Amazigh/Berber, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Druze, Kurdish, and Syriac. Responses of Arab or Arabic, Middle Eastern, and North African also are included in the Census Bureau's working classification of MENA.

• Indicates country is included in an organization's classification.



## Appendix F. Welcome Letter

May 14, 2015

Dear Colleague,

I am happy to hear that you will be attending the *Forum on Ethnic Groups from the Middle East and North Africa* at the U.S. Census Bureau on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015!

### ***Binder Materials***

The materials in the enclosed binder will familiarize you with the race and ethnicity research the Census Bureau has been doing since 2010, particularly as it relates to those of Middle Eastern and North African origin. In the binder, you will find a number of background materials including:

- The Office of Management and Budget's Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity (1997)
- Executive Summary of the Alternative Questionnaire Experiment (2010)

### ***Feedback***

Also included in the binder are some materials on which we are requesting your feedback:

- Feedback Sheets
- Proposed Middle East and North African Code List

Please try to complete your feedback on these items prior to the forum, as there will be limited time throughout the day for this. We will collect hardcopies of your feedback at the end of the forum.

### ***Conference Call***

**We will hold a brief conference call on Wednesday, May 20th at 3:00 PM EST** to discuss the purpose of the forum, walk through the contents of the binder, and answer any remaining questions.

**Please call 1-866-844-9416, and use the passcode 8744710, followed by the # sign.**

For those who cannot call in, the conference call will be recorded and available for you to listen to at any time before the forum. We will send instructions over e-mail on how to do that.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of the binder, please do not hesitate to contact my staff via email at [POP.MENA.Forum@census.gov](mailto:POP.MENA.Forum@census.gov) or telephone at 301-763-2403.

I look forward to working with you.

Kind regards,

Karen Humes  
Division Chief, Population Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
[Karen.humes@census.gov](mailto:Karen.humes@census.gov)  
301-763-2071

Angela Buchanan and Rachel Marks  
Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch, Population  
Division  
[Angela.brittingha.buchanan@census.gov](mailto:Angela.brittingha.buchanan@census.gov)  
[Rachel.marks@census.gov](mailto:Rachel.marks@census.gov)  
301-763-2403



# 2015 National Content Test Paper Forms

The following panels are examples of three experimental treatments the Census Bureau is testing.

Note: To see all of the paper and web-based panels tested in the 2015 NCT, see <https://www2.census.gov/cac/nac/meetings/2016-04/2015-nct-study-plan-appendices.pdf>.



**Person 1**

5. Please provide information for each person living here. If there is someone living here who pays the rent or owns this residence, start by listing him or her as Person 1. If the owner or the person who pays the rent does not live here, start by listing any adult living here as Person 1.

What is Person 1's name? *Print name below.*

First Name MI

Last Name(s)

6. What is Person 1's sex? Mark  ONE box.

Male  Female

7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth? *For babies less than 1 year old, do not write the age in months. Write 0 as the age.*

*Print numbers in boxes.*

Age on September 1, 2015 Month Day Year of birth  
 years

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

Mark  one or more boxes AND print origins.

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – *Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.* ↴

9. What is Person 1's race?

Mark  one or more boxes AND print origins.

- White – *Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.* ↴

- Black or African Am. – *Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.* ↴

- American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.* ↴

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino   | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean  | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – <i>Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.</i> ↴ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – <i>Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.</i> ↴ |  |

- Some other race – *Print race or origin.* ↴

**Person 1**

**5. Please provide information for each person living here. If there is someone living here who pays the rent or owns this residence, start by listing him or her as Person 1. If the owner or the person who pays the rent does not live here, start by listing any adult living here as Person 1.**

What is Person 1's name? Print name below.

First Name MI

Last Name(s)

**6. What is Person 1's sex?** Mark  ONE box.

Male  Female

**7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth?** For babies less than 1 year old, do not write the age in months. Write 0 as the age.

Age on September 1, 2015 Print numbers in boxes. Month Day Year of birth  
 years

**8. What is Person 1's race or origin?**

Mark all boxes that apply **AND** print origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

**White** – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc. ↴

**Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin** – Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc. ↴

**Black or African Am.** – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc. ↴

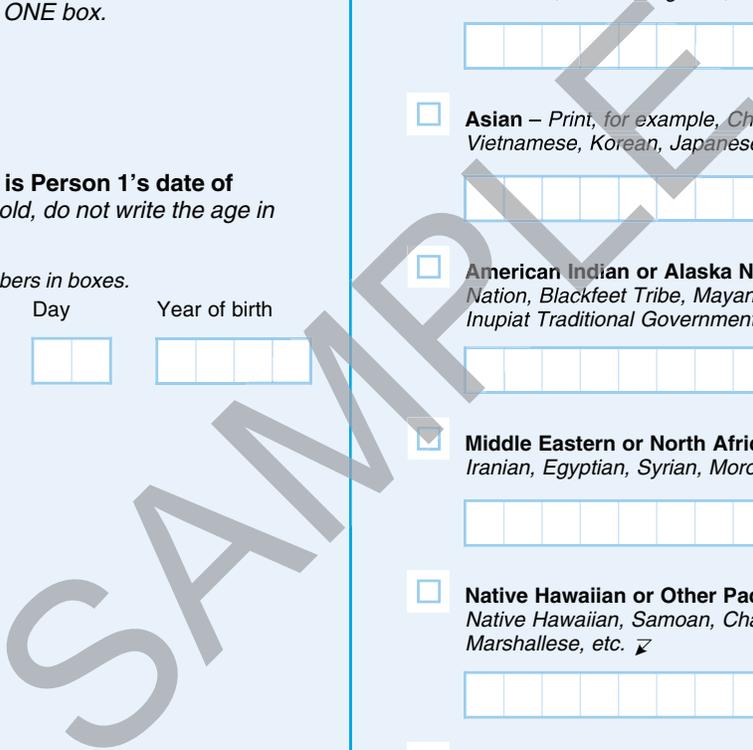
**Asian** – Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc. ↴

**American Indian or Alaska Native** – Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ↴

**Middle Eastern or North African** – Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc. ↴

**Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc. ↴

**Some other race or origin** – Print race or origin. ↴



**Person 1**

**5. Please provide information for each person living here. If there is someone living here who pays the rent or owns this residence, start by listing him or her as Person 1. If the owner or the person who pays the rent does not live here, start by listing any adult living here as Person 1.**

What is Person 1's name? *Print name below.*

First Name MI

Last Name(s)

**6. What is Person 1's sex?** Mark  ONE box.

Male  Female

**7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth?** *For babies less than 1 year old, do not write the age in months. Write 0 as the age.*

*Print numbers in boxes.*

Age on September 1, 2015 Month Day Year of birth

years

**8. Which categories describe Person 1?** *Mark all boxes that apply AND print details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

**WHITE** – *Provide details below.*

German  Irish  English  
 Italian  Polish  French

*Print, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc. ↴*

**HISPANIC, LATINO, OR SPANISH** – *Provide details below.*

Mexican or Mexican American  Puerto Rican  Cuban  
 Salvadoran  Dominican  Colombian

*Print, for example, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc. ↴*

**BLACK OR AFRICAN AM.** – *Provide details below.*

African American  Jamaican  Haitian  
 Nigerian  Ethiopian  Somali

*Print, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc. ↴*

**ASIAN** – *Provide details below.*

Chinese  Filipino  Asian Indian  
 Vietnamese  Korean  Japanese

*Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc. ↴*

**AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE** – *Provide details below.*

American Indian  Alaska Native  Central or South American Indian

*Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ↴*

**MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN** – *Provide details below.*

Lebanese  Iranian  Egyptian  
 Syrian  Moroccan  Algerian

*Print, for example, Israeli, Iraqi, Tunisian, etc. ↴*

**NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER** – *Provide details below.*

Native Hawaiian  Samoan  Chamorro  
 Tongan  Fijian  Marshallese

*Print, for example, Palauan, Tahitian, Chuukese, etc. ↴*

**SOME OTHER RACE, ETHNICITY, OR ORIGIN** – *Print below. ↴*

