The Middle East: 30+ Years of Building Tall

The Middle East region is hosting its first CTBUH International Conference since 2008. In that year, there were 119 completed buildings of 150 meters or greater height. Ten years later, there are now 387 such buildings either completed or topped out (with expected 2018 completion), meaning an average of nearly 27 were constructed each year in the region during that decade. As this study will show, however, the growth is not evenly distributed nor especially correlated to overall population, or to density. The dynamics, and the reasons for high-rise construction in the region, are as diverse as the nations that comprise it.

### Key Data

- **Total Population of Middle East:** 402,997,323
- **Total Buildings:** 245

### Regional Breakdown

- **Saudi Arabia**: 37 buildings, 9.5% of total, 9,121,167 people, 2.3% of total
- **United Arab Emirates**: 14 buildings, 3.6% of total, 148,257,284 people, 36.8% of pop.
- **Iraq**: 14 buildings, 3.6% of total, 79,926,270 people, 19.8% of pop.
- **Bahrain**: 14 buildings, 3.6% of total, 2,404,776 people, 52.6% of pop.
- **Asiatic Turkey**: 16 buildings, 4.1% of total, 64,012,926 people, 15.9% of pop.
- **Lebanon**: 16 buildings, 4.1% of total, 4,828,600 people, 1.3% of pop.
- **Jordan**: 19 buildings, 4.9% of total, 6,206,000 people, 1.9% of pop.
- **Israel**: 19 buildings, 4.9% of total, 8,628,600 people, 2.1% of pop.

### Notes

1. The focus on buildings over 150 meters is driven by the need to ensure accuracy of data, rather than suggesting that this is the threshold for a tall building.
2. All population and land area data is taken from citypopulation.de.
3. All tall building data is taken from the CTBUH Skyscraper Center as of 1 September, 2018.
4. For the purposes of this study, Turkey’s provinces of Edirne, Kırklareli, Istanbul, and Tekirdağ are considered to be part of Europe, rather than Asiatic Turkey.

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Edirne, Kırklareli, Istanbul, and Tekirdağ are considered to be among the most populous cities in Turkey. For the purposes of this study, Turkey's provinces of Skyscraper Center as of 1 September, 2018.

Footnotes:
1. The focus on buildings over 150 meters is driven by the fact that this height threshold is a common benchmark for defining skyscrapers.

2. The Middle East region is hosting its first CTBUH International Conference since 2008. In that year, there were 30 skyscrapers completed in the Middle East, with a total height of 10,527 meters and an average height of 350 meters.

3. The future of skyscrapers in the Middle East rests on the shoulders of the region's current population, which is expected to exceed 413,000,000 people by 2030.

4. The growth of skyscrapers in the Middle East is not evenly distributed nor especially correlated to overall population or to density. The dynamics of skyscraper construction are influenced by political and economic factors.

5. The tallest 150m+ building in each country is listed below, along with its location and year of completion:

- **UAE**: Burj Khalifa, Dubai, 2010 (828 m)
- **Saudi Arabia**: Abraj Al Bait Clock Tower, Mecca, 2012 (601 m)
- **Qatar**: Katara Twin Towers, Doha, 2011 (387 m)
- **Kuwait**: Al Hamra Tower, Kuwait City, 2007 (271 m)
- **Bahrain**: Mistral Office Tower, Manama, 2015 (246 m)
- **Iraq**: Aspire Tower, Doha, 2017 (208 m)

6. The Middle East has seen a rapid increase in skyscraper construction over the past decade, with the number of completed buildings increasing from 4 in 2008 to 37 in 2018.

7. Of all Middle East countries, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has had the largest percentage increase in skyscraper construction, from 4 to 37.

8. Three of the 10 future tallest buildings in the Middle East, and four of the 10 current tallest, are in Dubai Marina, mere blocks from each other.