

Irob of Ethiopia

The Irob are part of the Afar people cluster. They may be a tribe of the Saho people. Irobland is in a mountainous area in the Tigray Region. The traditional center is Alitena. Their neighbors are the Tigre, Tigrinya and Afar people groups. The Irbo share the same social structure as their Saho speaking neighbors - they are divided by clans with their regional leaders called Ona. Some of their customs, such as wedding ceremonies, dress, dance and foods, are more similar to the Tigrigna speaking neighbors, especially the peoples of Agame. Their own unique customs include elaborate poetry telling called Adar and the men's dance/step routine called Hora and Alkafo.

Alternate names: Erob, Minifere
Population: 46,000
Language: a dialect of Saho
Location: Tigray Province in Ethiopia and many more live in Eritrea
Religion: 86% Syncretistic form of Christianity; Christo-pagan religion (80% Orthodox, 20%, Protestant); 7% Ethnic religions, 7% Islam
% Evangelical: .6%
Christian resources available: Bible portions; Global Recordings

The elders say the name Irob is derived from the Saho word, Oroba, which means "get or come in." They trace their lineage to one man, Summe, son of Neguse Worede-Mehret, who migrated to Irobland from Tsira'e, a part of Tigray, about 700 years ago.

The Irob have been at the forefront of regional and national politics in Ethiopia.

Though the Saho are Muslims, the Irbo are Christian, though it is syncretistic. There are three major subgroups, two of which are predominately Orthodox Christians and the other Catholic.



The Irob economy is primarily based on agriculture and animal husbandry. They grow maize. They are known for excellent honey.

Their homes are well built and their villages are clean.

Some of the younger and more educated Irobs move to larger cities in search of a better livelihood and tend to integrate with the local residents there.

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Prayer Points

- Pray for the Ethiopian churches in the diaspora and in Ethiopia to mobilize their people and resources to reach the Irob for Christ.
- Ask God for a move of the Holy Spirit among the Irob people.
- Pray for God to send laborers to the Irob who will contextualize the gospel message.
- Ask God for a disciple making movement among the Irob.



You can watch video of the Irbo-Saho at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpXpnV1UiGc>

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
As it is written ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’
Romans 10: 14 - 15

Information from The Joshua Project at
www.joshuaproject.net; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irob_people; <http://www.irobdevelopment.org/irob/language>



For information on adopting the Irob

www.hornofafrica.org

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