**Emir**

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*This article is about title of high office. For other persons, see* [*Emir (name)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emir_%28name%29)*. For other uses of Emir, see* [*Emir (disambiguation)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emir_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

*"Amir" redirects here. For other persons, see* [*Amir (name)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amir_%28name%29)*. For other uses of Amir, see* [*Amir (disambiguation)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amir_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

The court of the [Afghan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan) [Durrani Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durrani_Empire) in 1839.

**Emir** (pronounced [[eˈmiːr]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AIPA_for_Arabic), [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): أمير‎ *ʾAmīr* ([Feminine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female): **Emira**, أميرة *ʾAmīrah*), meaning *"commander", "general", or "prince"*; also [transliterated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Arabic) as **Amir**, **Aamir** or **Ameer**) is a title of high office, used throughout the [Muslim world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world). Emirs are usually considered high-ranking [Sheikhs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh), but in monarchic states, the term is also used for [Princes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince), with "[Emirate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emirate)" being analogous to a [sovereign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_state) [principality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principality).

While *Emir* is a common transliteration in English and other languages, the form *Amir* is found for numerous compounds (e.g., [admiral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admiral)) and names. Transliteration differs depending on the sources consulted.

**Origins**

*Amir*, meaning "chieftain" or "commander", is derived from the Arabic [root](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triconsonantal) *'-m-r*, "command". Originally simply meaning commander or leader, usually in reference to a group of people, it came to be used as a title for governors or rulers, usually in smaller states, and in modern Arabic is analogous to the English word "prince". The word entered English in 1593, from the [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language) *émir*. It was one of the titles or names of the [Islamic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) prophet [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad).

**Princely, ministerial and noble titles**

[Mohammed Alim Khan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammed_Alim_Khan), Emir of Bukhara, taken in 1911 by [Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergey_Prokudin-Gorsky).

* The monarchs of [Qatar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) and [Kuwait](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait) are currently titled Emirs.
* The [caliphs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph) first used the title [Amir al-Muminin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amir_al-Muminin) or "Commander of the Faithful", stressing their leadership over all [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), especially in the military form of [jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad); both this command and the title have been assumed by various other [Muslim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) rulers, including Sultans and Emirs. For [Shiite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiite) Muslims, they still give this title to the Caliph [Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali) as Amir al Muminin.
* The Abbasid (in theory still universal) Caliph [Ar-Radi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ar-Radi) created the post of [Amir al-Umara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amir_al-Umara) ("Amir of the Amirs") for Ibn Raik; the title was used in various Islamic monarchies; see below for military use
* In [Lebanon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon), the ruling Emir formally used the style al-Amir al-[Hakim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakim_%28title%29) since, specifying it was still a ruler's title. Note that the title was held by Christians as well.
* The word *Emir* is also used less formally for leaders in certain contexts. For example, the leader of a group of *pilgrims* to [Mecca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca) is called an *Emir hadji*, a title sometimes used by ruling princes (as a mark of Muslim piety) which is sometimes awarded in their name. Where an adjectival form is necessary, "Emiral" suffices.
* *Amirzade*, the son (hence the Persian patronymic suffix *-zade*) of a prince, hence the Persian princely title [*Mirza*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirza).
* The [traditional rulers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_traditional_rulers) of the predominantly Muslim northern regions of [Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria) are known as Emirs, while the titular sovereign of their now defunct empire is formally styled as the [Sultan of Sokoto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultan_of_Sokoto), Amir-al-Muminin (or *Sarkin Musulmi* in the [Hausa language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa_language)).
* The temporal leader of the [Yazidi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidi) people is known as an Emir or Prince.

**Military ranks and titles**

From the start, Emir has been a military title, roughly meaning "general" or "commander."

The Western naval rank "[admiral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admiral)" comes from the Arabic naval title *amir al-bahr*, *general at sea*, which has been used for naval commanders and occasionally the [Ministers of Marine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_Marine).

In certain decimally-organized Muslim armies, Amir was an officer rank. For example, in [Mughal India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_India) Amirs commanded 1000 horsemen (divided into ten units, each under a [Sipah salar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sipah_salar)), ten of them under one [Malik](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malik). In the imperial army of Qajar Persia:

* *Amir-i-Nuyan*,
* *Amir Panj*, "Commander of 5,000"
* *Amir-i-Tuman*, "Commander of 10,000"
* *Amir ul-Umara*, "Amir of Amirs" (cfr. supra) or 'Commander of Commanders'

In the former [Kingdom of Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Afghanistan), *Amir-i-Kabir* was a title meaning "great prince" or "great commander."

[Muhammad Amin Bughra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Amin_Bughra), [Nur Ahmad Jan Bughra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nur_Ahmad_Jan_Bughra), and [Abdullah Bughra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_Bughra) declared themselves Emirs of the [First East Turkestan Republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_East_Turkestan_Republic).

**Other uses**

* Amir-i-Il designates the head of an [Il](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Il_(tribe)&action=edit&redlink=1) (tribe) in imperial Persia.
* In addition to being an Arabic name, *Amir* is also a common Muslim male name for both Arab and non-Arab Muslims, taken from [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) just as the Western name Rex ("king") is borrowed from [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) while Amira is a common Muslim female name. In [Bosnia and Herzegovina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina), the female name Emira, often interpreted as "princess", is a derivative of the male name Emir.

**See also**

* [Murabitun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murabitun)

**Specific emirates of note**

[HRH Crown Prince Farouk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HRH_Crown_Prince_Farouk), Amir of [the Kingdom of Egypt and the Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Egypt), on ascension to the throne 1936 as HM King Farouk I.

* [List of emirs of Harar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emirs_of_Harar)
* [List of emirs of Kuwait](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emirs_of_Kuwait)
* [List of emirs of Qatar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emirs_of_Qatar)
* [List of Emirs of Mosul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Emirs_of_Mosul)
* [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Emirate_of_Afghanistan)

**Islamic titles**

* [Amir al-Muminin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amir_al-Muminin)
* [Bey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bey)
* [Beg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baig)
* [Caliph](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph)
* [Dai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dai)
* [Dervish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dervish)
* [Imam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imam)
* [Mahdi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahdi)
* [Mir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mir_%28title%29), itself used in various compounds
* [Mirza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirza), literally "son of an Emir"
* [Sheikh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh)
* [Sayyid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid)
* [Shah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shah)
* ShahenShah
* [Sultan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultan)
* Umrao
* [Vizier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vizier)

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