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العربي

**ARAB
DEMOCRACY
INDEX IV - 2014**

SUMMARY

*Edited by The Arab Reform Initiative
and The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research*

Arab Democracy Index IV 2014

Summary of Findings

- *There has been a positive but slow progress towards democratic change.*
- *The Arab Spring has had a positive impact on democracy in the Arab region*
- *There has been a marked rise in respect for the rights and freedom of individuals*
- *A rise in improving equality and social justice*
- *A smaller but significant rise in implementing the rule of law and also the establishment of stronger and more accountable public institutions*

Background

This is the fourth edition of the Arab Democracy Index (ADI). It was established in 2008 and is a bi-annual report.

This edition uses data collected between 2011-2013 for nine Arab countries in order to measure for the first time the changes since the 2011 'Arab Spring' uprisings, progress towards democracy, its significance and its sustainability.

Methodology

The ADI is unique in being collectively built by social scientists from Arab countries with the objective to document processes of democratic change through an objective mechanism that measures progress, its significance and its sustainability. The ADI evaluates forty socio-political factors chosen to reflect the reality of changes in the reform process of Arab countries.

The ADI indicators document the *transition* to democracy. They do not aim to predict the capacity of these states to achieve political reform, nor the outburst of popular demand for such reform. Neither does it represent an analysis of the potential outcomes of the reform effort or popular revolt.

The sources of information combine data with public opinion polls. Data sources used include State sources including central ministries, security services, central statistical systems parliamentary committees, supreme judicial councils, courts, local government sources, local and regional councils, and non-governmental organisations, trade unions and other relevant professional institutions, local newspapers, and Internet sites.

The ADI's unique approach lies in that it provides quantitative analysis that is not limited to observing the evolution of political institutions or public opinions. Rather, it investigates citizens' perceptions and concrete behaviours, as well as the social and economic impact of regime changes on their daily lives. Hence, it is a tool that allows a precise overview of the most salient effects of the 2011 street movements. This differentiates it from the reports by certain international institutions such as the Human Development Index, Transparency International, Freedom House, the World Bank or Bertelsmann.

Results

Table 1: Country Rankings

Table 1 shows that between the third edition of the ADI (2011) and this fourth edition, the overall average score for the countries surveyed in both editions rose by 20 points. Progress was seen in five countries - Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt - while the score has fallen in four others - Bahrain, Lebanon, Morocco and Kuwait.

| Table 1: ADI RANKING 2014 | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Rank | Country | ADI IV Score* | Difference to ADI III (2011) |
| 1 | Morocco | 652 | (↘ -21) |
| 2 | Jordan | 645 | (↗ +58) |
| 3 | Algeria | 616 | (↗ +105) |
| 4 | Tunisia | 607 | (↗ +70) |
| 5 | Lebanon | 582 | (↘ -18) |
| 6 | Egypt | 581 | (↗ +12) |
| 7 | Kuwait | 547 | (↘ -41) |
| 8 | Palestine | 511 | (↗ +22) |
| 9 | Bahrain | 452 | (↘ -7) |

*Out of 1000

Table 2: The Discrepancy between Means and Practices

The scores shown in table 2 measure Means (the tools that allow a democratic transition to happen such as legislation) and Practices (what is done in practice in association with democratic transition such as elections).

The indicators are divided into four sections measuring:

- the presence of strong public institutions (e.g. the separation of power or ability to hold the government accountable);
- respect for rights and freedoms (such as political party freedom or freedom to demonstrate and protest);
- the effectiveness of the rule of law (independence of the judiciary or prevalence of arbitrary arrests);
- equality and social justice (gender equality, level of illiteracy and its prevalence among men and women, and percentages of men and women university graduates).

ADI IV registered an improvement in Means and in Practices. Table 2 shows that the average Means score for the nine surveyed countries has risen to 821 points while the average for Practices remains low at 496 points. This growing discrepancy between procedural and actual reforms raises questions about the value of legal and constitutional changes as the way to promote democratic change. It also suggests that improvements are fragile and subject to regression at any time.

Nevertheless, there has been a rise by 22 points for Practices between the fourth and the third editions for the countries surveyed in both. This rise is explained by improved Practice ratings for Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt and Palestine that have helped offset drops in Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco and Lebanon.

Table 2: ADI IV Means and Practices

| Country | ADI IV Means Score* | ADI IV Practices Score* |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Morocco | 915 | 565 |
| Jordan | 794 | 596 |
| Algeria | 870 | 531 |
| Tunisia | 890 | 513 |
| Lebanon | 825 | 500 |
| Egypt | 861 | 488 |
| Kuwait | 763 | 475 |
| Palestine | 870 | 387 |
| Bahrain | 606 | 401 |

**Out of 1000*

Analysis of Country Rankings

The countries surveyed in ADI IV can be categorised into three types:

1. Countries that underwent revolutions
2. Countries affected by the uprisings in neighbouring states
3. Countries that have taken a slow reform approach.

1. Countries that underwent revolutions

Tunisia ranked fourth thanks to considerable progress in respect for rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly in the reduced hindrance of political party activities, reduced intrusions

by the security sector and the increased freedom to organize protests. The post-revolution era has displayed improvements in legislation on the freedom of political parties and the freedom of the press, while women's participation in the labour force is more visible, and gender equality ratings rose. Tunisia also witnessed progress in the area of rule of law, with increased numbers of prosecutions of government officials. Tunisia experienced declines in the practice of equality and social justice, however. In particular, violent treatment of detainees and arbitrary detention were some of the negative attributes that rose in Tunisia.

Egypt, which ranked sixth, has undergone constitutional reform and two presidential elections in the past three years and attempted to increase the practice of equality and public participation in policy-making. Yet, according to the ADI 2014 report, the absence of the right to freedom of assembly has been the main deteriorating factor in the country's political progress. The country's indicators have declined for the rule of law, respect for rights and freedom, treatment of detainees, civil and constitutional violations, arbitrary arrests, and security.

Bahrain experienced the most unrest in the Gulf region. It is at the bottom of the 2014 ranking due to a lack of compliance with legislation on freedom of parties, obstruction of parliament, nepotism in public employment, arbitrary arrests, the dire conditions of detainees, corruption in public institutions, and the disruption of partisan political and media activity.

2. Countries affected by the uprisings in neighbouring states

Revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia became catalysts for reform as it became impossible to circumvent internal and international pressure.

Algeria ranks third in this study. In February 2011, it lifted the 19-year state of emergency. In 2012, it allowed the establishment of new political parties and made progress towards establishing periodic and fair elections. Prosecutions of government officials have multiplied in a country known for the immunity and impunity of its ruling elite; arbitrary detentions have diminished and personal security improved. Though indicators on government accountability declined, violations of the constitution and obstruction of parliamentary powers have significantly diminished. The struggle to install the rule of law, despite the fragility of public institutions, is a promising – if still weak – indication of reform. The country, however, displays some weak areas, such its high rate of school drop-outs.

3. Countries that have taken the slow reform approach

These countries are characterise by continuity in their gradual reformist approach over the past decade and a half, a pattern that has proven successful as the indicators for Morocco and Jordan show in this first post-uprisings ADI report.

In the early stages of the 2011 uprisings, *Morocco* pre-empted the potential for unrest and accelerated the implementation of certain reforms. Thus, it has received higher scores in this report for its strong public institutions and respect for rights, and ranks first. However, activist groups in Morocco believe that the monarchy's constitutional reform is not proving to be the significant Means to true democratic change, and the results have to be nuanced with the decline in indicators related to the treatment of detainees and trials in civilian courts.

Jordan ranked second among the nine states and showed progress in all areas. The legal or constitutional reform process in the Hashemite Kingdom is now showing results at the level of Practices. Progress is particularly evident in the area of respect for freedoms, such as reduced censorship of publications and Internet sites, increased space for criticizing government and the expression of political opposition in the local media. Progress is also

clear in the indicators related to strong and accountable public institutions, with increased initiatives from civil society to hold government accountable and the setting of periodic elections. There is also a noticeable improvement in the education sector and in the participation of women in the labour force.

In contrast **Kuwait**, though it still ranked seventh out of nine, registered the most serious democratic decline. Its low performance in the presence of strong public institutions and accountability is due to a significant regression in the prosecution of government officials and personal security. Indicators such as respect for the rights and freedoms, equality, and social justice also went down.

Lebanon ranked fifth among the nine states. It ranked highest in respect for rights and freedoms but is at the bottom of the list for indicators measuring the rule of law.

Palestine ranked second to last on the list. The situation is especially difficult in Palestine, which is split between Hamas and Fatah, and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, there are signs of improvement on issues of criticism of the Palestinian Authority, personal security, social security, education, and the participation of women in the workforce.

Key Findings

The revolutionary uprisings in the region erupted not only from poverty but from citizen demands to participate in public affairs, and are imbued with the desire to attain social recognition, freedom, and political and economic reform. The peoples in the countries surveyed are eager to restore security, maintain stability, and continue the process of reform, in spite of the slow progress.

The failure of previous reform efforts and the outbreak of popular revolts demanding the fall – rather than the reform – of regimes throughout the region confirm that change, through reform or otherwise, will inevitably occur. It might come from above – as the regimes in Morocco, Jordan, and even Saudi Arabia are attempting. Policy-makers and the elites supporting them have realised their interest in survival requires the implementation of real reforms to address popular demands before they explode into mass revolts. On the other hand, and despite the allure of demanding full revolution, the bloody examples of Libya, Syria, and Yemen provide an opportunity for reform, so long as the public sees reform efforts as serious.

Whereas previous reports have demonstrated continuing regression in Arab states’ respect for citizens’ rights and freedoms year after year, the present report suggests the achievement of real progress.

IMPROVEMENT ON RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

“As a result of the Arab Spring, we see a sharp rise (50 points) in the indicators on ‘respect for rights and freedoms’, a rise of 13 points for the indicators on ‘equality and social justice’, slight variations in the indicators on rule of law and existence of strong and accountable public institutions.”

Indeed, this is what the previous ADI report – released during the outbreak of the Arab uprisings – suggested would happen. Previous reports indicated that the Arab world’s ruling elite would not reform except under pressure. In the past, such pressure did not come from within, causing any such reforms to be crafted for the media and the public image, and not effect a change in practices necessary to any real democratic transition. But the current popular pressure will not be diffused through the old strategies of co-optation and cosmetic reforms. The ADI’s authors therefore expect that governments will concentrate their reforms in such practices in the coming years. The most important conclusion of this report signifies the unpredictability of the outcome of the Arab

uprisings, as it can take years before their consequences become clear and effective in each nation.

The states' attempt to restore control over society has resulted in addressing issues such as social justice and security but also the rule of law, key aspects of freedom of expression such as media censorship, governance issues including the corruption that plagues public institutions, and the treatment of political prisoners.

For now, the overall improvement in the lives of citizens of the countries that witnessed uprisings remains to be verified in subsequent work as they will be measured against the setbacks produced by insecurity, political violence, non-democratic agendas among certain political players, and relapses into authoritarianism. Egypt and Tunisia—two countries that experienced major revolutions—have improved in various sectors since the revolution, nevertheless, their ranking did not progress in the current report.

Additional Country Analysis: Syria and Saudi Arabia

These two countries were not covered in the quantitative surveys for this edition of the ADI because of the conflict and collapse of institutions in Syria, and the lack of reliable information on the situation in Saudi Arabia. The two countries are analysed through qualitative analytical papers.

Syria has seen what appears to be substantial change in the constitutional and legal realms, such as a new Syrian constitution enacted in 2012, the declaration on the formation of parties, and a new media law. The paper also reviews important aspects in the political regime's practices, and especially those related to human rights and freedom of protest.

Contrary to media portrayals and popular belief, the Syrian revolution has not transformed into a sectarian war between the Sunni majority and the religious and ethnic minorities. Following the revolutionary waves of Arab nations in the region, Syrians started their movement by demanding democracy and social justice. The opposition in Syria has been pressuring the regime towards reform for decades. Since the beginning of Bashar Al Assad's presidency in 2000, the civil reform movement has been demanding the modification of the constitution released by the Baath Party and to end the state of emergency. However, Assad's promises were limited to economic reform and left out issues related to the regime's political and administrative affairs. Even then, the country's wealth and political power remained concentrated within a narrow circle of rulers and dependent beneficiaries, while the middle class was socially and economically repressed. With the revolution intensifying, the regime was forced to initiate changes within the constitution—viewed as a formality and not an attempt for reform. Following the amendments and establishment of new laws after the Syrian uprising, supporters of the opposition were forced to flee the country, while others were arrested and tortured. In the case of Syria it is evident that reform was a tactical solution to circumvent the uprising while the country has experienced a decline in many of the indicators studied in this report.

Saudi Arabia has experienced sudden changes in the composition of the *majlis al-shura* (the only representative assembly), and more popular engagement with demands for reform, various forms of political opposition exposing violations of human rights. Social media has flourished in impressive ways, creating a strategic space for political participation. The paper reviews the most important steps that the government has taken to manage popular demands, exemplified by government hand-outs and attempts to reduce unemployment and distribute housing. After analysing developments in combating corruption and improving the status of

women, the analytical paper concludes with a number of recommendations to instigate reform in the Kingdom.

During the 2011 Arab uprisings, protests across Saudi Arabia emerged to demand higher living standards and the release of political prisoners. Due to internal and international pressure during this period, the Declaration of National Reform was released in March 2011. The declaration states the demand for judicial reform, anti-corruption initiatives, freedom, the release of prisoners, and the inspection of civil organizations. However, the government tightened security in order to control the opposition and limit freedom of expression in the media. They also arranged for the arrest of activists and restricted their mobility and means of communication. Power in the Kingdom remains concentrated in the Executive branch of the Council of Ministers, headed by the King, while the Advisory Council's role is limited to consultancy. According to reports by human rights groups, discrimination against marginalized groups continues, in addition to the violation of prisoners' rights and the lack of adequate prisons. There are indications that the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia will allow women to participate in the upcoming municipal elections at the end of 2015—Saudi women are still forbidden to drive and represent themselves in court. The authors believe that the Kingdom has made positive improvements since the previous report and point out that the integration of Saudi citizens in public affairs, adopting periodic elections, and equal rights for women are some of the issues that need to be included in the reform process. Overall, Saudi citizens were not significantly affected by the protests and activism that emerged in different regions of the country.

Recommendations for each country

The recommendations below are based on the aggregate scores of the indicators, while the specific recommendations applying to each country are designed for policy-makers in each country.

The ADI calls for:

- greater political and civil freedoms to be guaranteed in all Arab countries, especially through support for human rights monitors and institutions.
- social justice issues to be central to reform efforts in the Arab World, notably for education reform through enlarged budgets, efforts to combat illiteracy and lower dropout rates, and the improvement of the quality and conditions of education, especially for women.
- strengthened reform efforts in the main public institutions – parliaments, the judiciary and executive branches – by holding legislative bodies accountable, respecting the judiciary, and monitoring the security services.

In addition to these three areas common to all countries, the ADI makes specific per-country suggestions.

- In *Morocco*, the ADI recommends respect of transparency and accountability in furthering democratization and development. This entails issuing laws as stipulated in the 2011 Constitution, implementing legal measures to fight corruption at local and central levels, improving the treatment of detainees (the 2011 constitution prohibits torture, mistreatment or offenses against human dignity), strengthening freedom of expression in the media, and improving education policies to widen school access.

- For *Jordan*, the ADI recommends a new reconciliatory electoral law, as well as legislative reform to encourage political pluralism and ease the formation and action of civil society associations. It advises the country to develop frameworks for a parliamentary government, and suggests increased oversight on the security services.
- For *Algeria*, the ADI recommends taking advantage of the forthcoming constitutional amendments and enactments of laws to increase the power of parliament and grant more freedom of expression. It stresses the need for a fairer access to education and wealth distribution and for a reallocation of public spending from the security sector to development and health programs.
- For *Tunisia*, the ADI recommends strengthening security forces while enhancing civilian control over them. A socio-economic plan should be put in place, rebalancing expenditures in favour of inland regions and increasing education and health budgets.
- Regarding *Lebanon*, the ADI's main recommendations are to reform electoral law towards proportional representation and to increase the power of the supervising commission. It calls for increasing decentralization and local governments' power to carry out development programs, improve the fight against corruption by offering legal protection to those who denounce it. It stresses the need to consolidate the judiciary under the sole jurisdiction of the judicial authority, reinforce its independence from parties and limit the jurisdiction of the military judiciary to crimes committed by military personnel. As for civil rights, it calls for bringing the law on crime and torture in conformity with international standards, cease prior censorship of publications and define more clearly the content that is subject to publication restrictions. It also recommends allowing the Constitutional Council to interpret the constitution and enabling new citizens groups to appeal to the Council. Finally, ADI calls for addressing issues of accountability and social justice on matters of personal statute, unemployment, and gender equality in relation to nationality, national education, unified labour law and modern retirement policies.
- As for *Egypt*, the ADI recommends full compliance to the 2014 Constitution in terms of respect for rights. For instance, the law on demonstrations violates the law on freedom of assembly and demonstration ratified by the Constitution, and thus, must be suspended. Compliance also implies respect for the elections' roadmap and timetable as defined by the constitution. It recommends that a date for local elections be set promptly, and the representation of women, youth and Coptic citizens guaranteed. To halt violence and put an end to the political crisis, it suggests a national reconciliation process with the aim of releasing detainees who were not involved in any criminal activities and political activists. Besides, freedom of expression in the media should be guaranteed. Priority should be given to education and health, as well as improving the provision of public and state services, mainly security.
- With regard to *Kuwait*, the ADI recommends to work on the independence and transparency of political institutions by establishing an independent commission to supervise electoral processes, permitting free establishment of political parties and associations, giving parliament the means to exercise its oversight role, ratifying the Financial Disclosure Law to cover state officials (fighting financial, administrative and political corruption). It calls for revoking the law on the appointment of members of municipal councils to end interference by the executive branch in the appointment of council members. It prompts the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice to guarantee faster

litigation procedures and implementation of sentences. It also advocates for better monitoring and accountability of the security services, continued efforts on the status of illegal residents known as “Bidoun” through legislation that preserves their rights and human dignity and grant citizenship immediately to those eligible. ADI advocates stronger male-female equality in the law.

- In the case of *Palestine*, the ADI emphasizes the need to bridge divides among political parties (on political, geographic and economic matters) to allow a proper functioning of the Legislative Council, and for holding elections without delay. A top priority lies in building public institutions, through fair and accountable governance, an independent judiciary, and effective social welfare programs.
- For *Bahrain*, besides general recommendations on separation of power, accountability, elections, freedom of expression and political association and oversight of the security sector, the ADI presses for the implementation of the Bassiouni Commission’s recommendations. It also recommends transforming the political dialogue conducted with the various political groups into serious initiatives that guarantee progress towards democratization.

Note

The full ADI IV Report contains the following five sections:

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Findings (based on the quantitative data on nine countries)
4. Three analytical papers, 1) comparing countries that underwent a revolution and change of regime and those that did not, based on an analysis of the quantitative data; 2) a qualitative analysis of the state of reform in Syria; and 3) a qualitative analysis of the state of reform in Saudi Arabia.
5. General and country-specific recommendations.

And contains three appendices:

1. Master sheet containing all the scores for each of the indicators by country.
2. Description of the indicators and the methods used to measure them.
3. Detailed survey data on each of the surveyed states.

The ADI is produced by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) and the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI).

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About ARI

The Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) leads the way in the Arab reform agenda through policy analysis and research that highlights global democratic principles. It promotes respect for diversity and also delivers peoples’ opinions including marginalised voices pressing for change.

For more information see the website: www.arab-reform.net or contact us at: contact@arab-reform.net

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