WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN THE ARAB WORLD
THE WORST AND BEST STATES FOR WOMEN
WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN THE ARAB WORLD
THE WORST AND BEST ARAB STATES FOR WOMEN

The ranking - worst to best
22. Egypt
21. Iraq
20. Saudi Arabia
19. Syria
18. Yemen
17. Sudan
16. Lebanon
15. Palestinian Territories
14. Somalia
13. Djibouti
12. Bahrain
11. Mauritania
10. UAE
9. Libya
8. Morocco
7. Algeria
6. Tunisia
5. Qatar
4. Jordan
3. Kuwait
2. Oman
1. Comoros

THE POLL
This map shows how the 21 members of the Arab League plus Syria compare for women’s rights, according to a poll of gender experts by Thomson Reuters Foundation. The ranking is based on analysis of six themes, below, drawn from key provisions of the UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which 19 Arab League states have signed or ratified.

WHAT THE POLL MEASURES
- Violence against women
- Reproductive rights
- Women in the family
- Women in the economy
- Women in society
- Women in politics

ARAB SPRING COUNTRIES
22. Egypt
19. Syria
18. Yemen
17. Sudan
16. Lebanon
15. Palestinian Territories
14. Somalia
13. Djibouti
12. Bahrain
9. Libya
6. Tunisia

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COMOROS
Ranks 1st out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“Politicians still believe that a woman has no place in politics and that her role is to be a housewife.”
- Comoran female civil servant

CEDAW status*: Acceded, 1994
Accepts all articles of CEDAW

WOMEN IN POLITICS
3%
3% of seats in national parliament are held by women and 20% of politicians in ministerial positions are female
Source: World Bank

WOMEN IN SOCIETY
18
The minimum legal age for a woman to marry is 18
Source: UN (2011)

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY
35%
35% of adult women are in the labour force
Source: UN (2011)

WOMEN IN THE FAMILY
Fact
Land and homes are usually awarded to women in cases of divorce or separation

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
280
There are 280 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
50%
50% of all inmates are being held for crimes of sexual aggression

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**OMAN**
Ranks 2nd out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

**“Abortions are illegal, so some women resort to secret abortions, which can be deadly.”**
- Journalist in Oman

**CEDAW status**: Ratified, 2006
**BUT** Oman rejects all articles on citizenship, movement of persons and right to choose residence as well as equality in marriage and family life. Oman also rejects all aspects of CEDAW that are not in accordance with Islamic law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN IN POLITICS</th>
<th>WOMEN IN SOCIETY</th>
<th>WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td><strong>29%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2% of seats in parliament are held by women</td>
<td>Women inherit half of what a man can</td>
<td>29% of adult women are employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN IN THE FAMILY</th>
<th>REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS</th>
<th>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A man can divorce his wife for any reason. A woman has 8 legal grounds on which she can get a divorce</td>
<td>There are 2 grounds for abortion in Oman: if the life of the woman is in danger and in cases of foetal impairment</td>
<td>There is no law prohibiting private facilities from performing female genital mutilation in Oman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2013 Thomson Reuters Foundation  *UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women  PHOTO: REUTERS/Said Al Bahri
“A woman is judged solely on her reputation: one tarnish and her reputation is ruined. Her ‘value’ as a future wife would diminish and her family would be shamed.”

- Female Kuwaiti student

**KUWAIT**
Ranks 3rd out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

**CEDAW status**: Acceded, 1995
**BUT** Kuwait rejects articles on citizenship, guardianship and adoption

**WOMEN IN POLITICS**
2005

In 2005, Kuwaiti women were granted the right to vote and stand for election

Source: UNICEF

**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**
15

The minimum legal age for girls to marry is 15, while it is 17 for boys

Source: UNICEF

**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**
10 weeks

Kuwaiti women are legally entitled to 10 weeks maternity leave

Source: World Bank

**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**
130,800

Over half of the 240,000 employees in the government sector are Kuwaiti women

Source: Kuwaiti Central Statistics Bureau

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**
2.6

The average birth rate is 2.6 children per woman

Source: World Bank

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**
0

There are no specific laws against domestic violence. Marital rape is also not recognised or punished

Source: UNICEF

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“Jordan is a patriarchal society and if a wife does not give birth to boys, there is a possibility that her husband will marry another woman.”
- Hanan Al-Kiswany, journalist

- **Women in Politics**
  - **18**
  - 18 women have seats in the House of Representatives, representing 12% of the total 150 seats
  - Source: The Quota Project (2013)

- **Women in Society**
  - **2003**
  - In 2003, the law was changed so that women could obtain a passport without their husbands' consent
  - Source: UNICEF

- **Women in the Economy**
  - **17%**
  - 17% of property is owned by women
  - Source: US State Dept (2011)

- **Women in the Family**
  - **Fact**
  - Jordanian women cannot transfer their citizenship to their non-Jordanian spouse or children
  - Source: UNICEF

- **Reproductive Rights**
  - **59.3%**
  - 59.3% of adult women use modern contraceptives in Jordan
  - Source: UNDP (2009)

- **Violence Against Women**
  - **681**
  - There were 681 cases of rape and sexual assault reported to the Family Protection Department in 2012

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QATAR
Ranks 5th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“Unmarried women who become pregnant cannot access healthcare as it is illegal to get pregnant outside of marriage.”
- Female academic in Qatar

CEDAW status*: Acceded, 2009
BUT Qatar rejects articles on gender equality in domestic laws, citizenship, equality before the law, freedom of movement and residence and equality in marriage and family life

WOMEN IN POLITICS
1 out of 29 seats on the Central Municipal Council is filled by a woman. Qatar appointed its first female judge in 2010
Source: Human Rights Watch & World Bank

WOMEN IN THE FAMILY
Women are on average 25.4 years old when they marry for the first time

WOMEN IN SOCIETY
Fact
Qatari women need their husbands’ consent to obtain a driving licence
Source: UNICEF

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
Nearly 100 expat women a year are arrested and jailed for having babies out of wedlock
Source: Doha News

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY
Up to 51.8% of Qatari women are in the workforce
Source: UN Data (2012)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
There were 550 cases of domestic abuse reported to the Qatar Foundation for Women and Children in 2012
Source: US State Dept

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6 TUNISIA
Ranks 6th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“Domestic violence and rape is still often seen as a shameful thing for a woman. Despite being the victim, women still feel ashamed of their rape and tend to blame themselves.”
- Christine German, The Munathara Initiative

CEDAW status*: Ratified, 1985
AND Tunisia accepts all articles since they withdrew all reservations in 2011

WOMEN IN POLITICS
26.7%
Women hold 26.7% of seats in parliament
Source: UN Data (2012)

WOMEN IN SOCIETY
2009
In 2009, non-Muslim women gained the right to inherit from their Muslim husbands
Source: UNICEF

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY
30
Tunisian women are entitled to 30 days of maternity leave, at 67% of their full wages
Source: World Bank

WOMEN IN THE FAMILY
2002
In 2002, the law was amended to allow Tunisian women to transfer their citizenship to foreign-born husbands and children
Source: UNICEF

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
Article 214
Article 214 grants Tunisian women the right to abortion upon request within the first 3 months of pregnancy
Source: UN

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
Dec 10 2012
The date that the first government-run domestic abuse shelter and emergency hotline were opened
Source: US State Dept

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ALGERIA
Ranks 7th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“Corruption in all its forms is a large issue and works generally against efforts to protect their rights.”
- Chloéé Ponchelet, Algerian human rights activist

CEDAW status*: Ratified, 2008
BUT Algeria rejects articles on citizenship, inheritance and child custody

**WOMEN IN POLITICS**
31.6%
Women hold 31.6% of seats in parliament

**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**
Oct 14 2012
The date Algeria issued its first ever conviction for sexual harassment
Source: US State Dept

**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**
16%
16% of adult women are in the workforce. Women get 14 weeks maternity leave

**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**
29.5
The average age for women to enter their first marriage is 29.5 years old

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**
89.4%
89.4% of pregnant women receive antenatal care. The prevalence of contraceptive use is 61%

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**
Fact
Spousal rape is not recognised under Algerian law

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MOROCCO
Ranks 8th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“A woman has the freedom to use contraception on the condition that her husband agrees.”
- Female Moroccan journalist

**WOMEN IN POLITICS**

67
67 seats in the Chamber of Representatives are held by women. This represents 17% of the total number of seats. Source: US State Dept (2012)

**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

Article 496
Article 496 of the penal code criminalises harbouring a woman who leaves her husband. Source: Human Rights Watch

**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**

44%
44% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are literate. Source: World Bank (2009)

**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**

10%
10% of marriages involve girls under the age of 18. Source: Freedom House (2010)

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

67%
Up to 67% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 use contraception; 72% of those women use contraceptive pills. Source: UNFPA

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

17,000
There were 17,000 incidents of violence against women reported in the first 3 months of 2008. In 78.8% of the complaints, the alleged perpetrator was the victim’s husband. Source: Freedom House (2010)

CEDAW status: Acceded, 1993
BUT Morocco rejects articles on citizenship, equality in marriage and family life, administration of the convention and articles on prohibiting discriminatory government laws and policies.
"Women feel unsafe due to the lack of social protection against abusive husbands. There are no safe houses."
- Female Libyan human rights activist

**WOMEN IN POLITICS**
- **33**
  - In the 2012 election 33 women were elected to the General National Congress out of 200 representatives
  - Source: US State Dept

**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**
- **20**
  - The minimum legal age for a woman or man to marry is 20 unless they get special permission from a court and their guardians
  - Source: UNICEF

**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**
- **28%**
  - Libyan women represent 28% of the total workforce

**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**
- **Apr 2013**
  - The month that the Ministry of Social Affairs reportedly suspended marriage licences for Libyan women marrying foreigners, according to local media
  - Source: Human Rights Watch

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**
- **64**
  - There are 64 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births in Libya

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**
- **99%**
  - Up to 99% of victims who filed domestic abuse charges eventually withdrew their cases, according to a senior Libyan judicial official
  - Source: Freedom House
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Ranks 10th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“Some women are brought in as ‘domestic staff’ but then trafficked and used for sex.”
- Female Emirati journalist

CEDAW status*: Acceded, 2004
BUT UAE rejects articles on inheritance, citizenship, legal capacity and equality in marriage and family life

WOMEN IN POLITICS
2008
In 2008, a law was implemented to allow women to become judges. Since then two female judges have been appointed
Source: UNICEF

WOMEN IN SOCIETY
Half
A woman’s testimony is worth half that of a man’s in court
Source: UNICEF

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY
14%
Women represent 14% of the total workforce
Source: World Bank

WOMEN IN THE FAMILY
Fact
Emirati women are forbidden from marrying non-Muslims though Emirati men can
Source: Human Rights Watch

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
Fact
A woman who has a child outside of wedlock may be arrested, imprisoned and deported
Source: US State Dept

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
Fact
Rape victims have a high burden of proof placed on them and may be charged with adultery when reporting assault
Source: US State Dept

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MAURITANIA
Ranks 11th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“Early marriages, marriages to minors and forced fattening are all practices that are forced upon women.”
- Mohamed Lemeine, journalist

CEDAW status*: Acceded, 2001
BUT Mauritania rejects any aspect of the convention that is contrary to Islamic law and the Mauritanian constitution

WOMEN IN POLITICS
20%
Mauritania has a quota of 20% of female representation on all candidate lists for elections. The 27 member cabinet includes three women.
Source: US State Dept

WOMEN IN SOCIETY
Fact
Divorced women may lose custody of their children if they remarry
Source: US State Dept

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY
98
Women are entitled to 98 fully paid maternity days. They make up 29% of the workforce.
Source: World Bank

WOMEN IN THE FAMILY
20%
In Mauritania, 20% of girls are at risk or are victims of forced feeding.
Source: UNICEF

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
9%
9% of adult women use contraceptives
Source: UN

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
1 month
On average girls are 1 month old when they undergo female genital mutilation. 69% of Mauritanian women are victims of FGM
Source: UN Women

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BAHRAIN
Ranks 12th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“In Bahrain a rapist can marry their victim in order to avoid punishment.”
- Male Bahraini human rights activist

CEDAW status*: Acceded, 2002
BUT Bahrain rejects articles on prohibiting discrimination within government policies, inheritance, citizenship, a woman’s freedom of movement and equality in marriage and family life

**WOMEN IN POLITICS**

**2002**
In 2002, women were able to run for election and vote for the first time
Source: UNICEF

**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

**Half**
What a woman’s testimony is worth compared to that of a man’s before an Islamic court
Source: Freedom House

**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**

**40%**
40% of adult women are in the workforce, representing 19% of the total workforce
Source: World Bank

**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**

**15**
The minimum legal age for a girl to marry is 15
Source: UNICEF

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

**1/2200**
The risk of maternal mortality is 1 in 2,200 for a Bahraini woman over the course of her lifetime
Source: UNICEF

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**30%**
30% of Bahraini women face some form of domestic abuse
Source: Freedom House

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“Women are subjected to genital mutilation, which increases child-mother mortality, especially in rural areas where medical facilities are practically non-existent or poorly equipped.”

- Male Djiboutian development worker

**Women in Politics**

7

7 women sit in the National Assembly, representing 11% of total seats. 2003 marked the first year a woman was elected to parliament.

Source: UNICEF & Quota Project

**Women in Society**

0

There are no laws prohibiting sexual harassment.

Source: US State Dept

**Women in the Economy**

38%

38% of the workforce are adult women, numbering just over 100,700.

Source: World Bank (2011)

**Women in the Family**

18

The minimum legal age for girls and boys to marry is 18, although earlier marriage is permitted with the consent of a guardian or judge.

Source: UNICEF

**Reproductive Rights**

3.53

The average number of births per woman is 3.53. Contraceptives are difficult to obtain outside of Djibouti City.


**Violence Against Women**

93%

Up to 93% of women are victims of female genital mutilation.

Source: UNICEF

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“Women are thought to be trafficked within the country; many are kidnapped from internally displaced people camps.”

- Anab Nur, activist

**Women in Politics**
- 14%
  - 14% of seats in the Transnational Federal Parliament are held by women

**Women in Society**
- Half
  - A murdered woman is considered to be worth half the monetary worth of a murdered man in cases of blood compensation
  - Source: US State Dept

**Women in the Economy**
- 39%
  - 39% of women are employed, making up 33% of the total workforce
  - Women are not permitted to have jobs in regions controlled by Islamist group al Shabaab
  - Source: World Bank (2011) and US State Dept

**Women in the Family**
- 45%
  - Up to 45% of women between the ages of 20 and 24 were married before they were 18

**Reproductive Rights**
- 1,200
  - 1,200 women die in childbirth for every 100,000 births. This is one of the world’s highest maternal mortality rates
  - Source: UNICEF

**Violence Against Women**
- 1,700
  - In 2012, 1,700 women were raped in camps for internally displaced people
  - Source: Amnesty International

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"There is a strong contradiction between the people’s rejection of violence against women and violence that is committed to satisfy the community, especially honour killings."

- Palestinian women’s rights activist

**Women in Politics**

1996

In 1996, women voted for the first time, in the first election of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Source: UNICEF (2011)

**Women in Society**

15

The legal minimum age for girls to marry in the West Bank is 15. In Gaza, it is 17.

Source: UNICEF (2011)

**Women in the Economy**

17%

17% of women are employed, and women have a literacy rate of 92.6%.

Source: UNICEF (2011) and Palestinian Bureau of Statistics

**Women in the Family**

46%

In Gaza 46% of children from divorced families are in their mothers’ care.

Source: Center for Women’s Legal Research & Consulting

**Reproductive Rights**

4.4

Women have on average 4.4 children in the Gaza Strip. There are 64 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births.

Source: UNFPA and CIA World Factbook

**Violence Against Women**

51%

Up to 51% of married women in Gaza City were victims of domestic abuse in 2011.

Source: Palestinian Bureau of Statistics

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LEBANON
Ranks 16th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“Widespread corruption and cronyism deters women from going for political positions and in some cases from getting them.”
-Female Lebanese human rights activist

CEDAW status*: Acceded, 1997
BUT Lebanon rejects articles on citizenship, equality in marriage and family life and articles on the administration of the convention

WOMEN IN POLITICS
2004
In 2004, a woman held a ministerial position for the first time. Since then, there have been 3 female ministers
Source: US State Dept

WOMEN IN SOCIETY
Fact
Lebanese law does not address the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace
Source: Freedom House (2010)

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY
54%
54% of female business owners act as managers compared with 90% of men
Source: Freedom House (2010)

WOMEN IN THE FAMILY
Fact
Women are not permitted to transfer their citizenship to foreign-born husbands or children
Source: UNICEF

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
Fact
Women who perform illegal abortions on themselves can be sentenced to 7 years in prison. Abortion is only legal in cases to save the life of the mother
Source: Freedom House (2010)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
Article 522
Article 522 of the Lebanese penal code permits a rapist to avoid prosecution if he marries his victim. There is no law against marital rape
Source: US State Dept

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PHOTO: REUTERS/Steve Crisp
"There are some laws that target women, degrade them and affect their human dignity. Through these laws women are degradingly punished by whipping and imprisonment."

- Liemia Abubkr, journalist

**WOMEN IN POLITICS**

- **25%**
  - The National Election Act of 2008 states that 25% of seats in the National Assembly are reserved for women
  - Source: Quota Project

**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

- **Article 152**
  - Article 152 of the penal code is used to justify arresting and flogging women for the way they dress
  - Source: Amnesty International

**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**

- **62%**
  - There is a 62% literacy rate for women, compared with 80% for men

**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**

- **10**
  - The legal minimum age for girls to marry is 10 years old. 32% of women aged between 20 and 24 were married by the age of 18

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

- **730**
  - There are 730 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births. A woman’s lifetime risk of maternal death is 1 in 31
  - Source: US State Dept

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

- **12.1 mln**
  - 12.1 million women have undergone FGM
  - Source: UNICEF (2013)
“The most important cases of trafficking in Yemen are marriage to minors and tourist marriages. There are many of these cases, some of which have led to death.”

- Female Yemeni women’s rights activist

**Women in Politics**

- 5
- There are 5 female members of the 31-person National Dialogue Preparatory Committee

**Women in Society**

- 98.9%
- Up to 98.9% of women have faced sexual harassment in the streets

**Women in the Economy**

- 53%
- 53% of girls complete primary school, compared with 73% for boys

**Women in the Family**

- Fact
- There is no legal minimum age for marriage, and a quarter of all girls are married before they are 15

**Reproductive Rights**

- 210
- There are 210 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births. 36% of births are attended by skilled helpers
- Source: UNICEF (2010)

**Violence against Women**

- Fact
- Hospitals in Yemen receive many cases of girls with severe injuries from forced sex but rarely report these incidents to the authorities
- Source: Human Rights Watch

© 2013 Thomson Reuters Foundation *UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* PHOTO: REUTERS/Mohammed Dabbous
Women in Syria are used as weapons of war. They are subjected to abductions and rape by the regime and other groups. The regime uses these actions to undermine peaceful protests.

- Sabiha Khalil, activist

**Women in Politics**

13%

Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, 13% of judges were female. It is thought the number has fallen since.


**Women in Society**

1.06 mln

There are 1.06 million female refugees registered with UNHCR.

Source: UNHCR

**Women in the Economy**

16%

Before the conflict, 16% of women had jobs. It is not known how many are still able to work.

Source: US State Dept 2012

**Women in the Family**

17

The legal minimum age for girls to marry is 17. However, child marriage is prevalent in refugee camps. There have been reports of girls as young as 12 being married.

Source: UNICEF and US State Dept

**Reproductive Rights**

68,000

There are 68,000 women thought to be pregnant in Syria. Access to reproductive health care is extremely limited.

Source: UNFPA

**Violence Against Women**

4,000

More than 4,000 cases of rape and sexual mutilation against girls and women have been reported to the Syrian Network for Human Rights. About 700 were prisoners when they were abused.

Source: US State Dept

CEDAW status*: Acceded, 2003

**BUT** Syria rejects articles on policy measures, citizenship, freedom of movement, equality in marriage and family life, child marriage and the implementation of the convention.

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PHOTO: REUTERS/Muhammad Hamed
**SAUDI ARABIA**
Ranks 20th out of 22 Arab states for women’s rights

“The guardianship rule treats women as minors and keeps them under the mercy of male chauvinists and abusers. This is a major violation of human rights in Saudi Arabia.”
- Female Saudi journalist

**CEDAW status**: Ratified, 2000
**BUT** Saudi Arabia rejects articles on citizenship and disputes arising from the implementation of the convention. Saudi Arabia rejects any aspect of CEDAW that is not compatible with Islamic law

**WOMEN IN POLITICS**

**2015**
In 2015, women will be able to vote in elections for the first time. In Jan 2013, 30 women were appointed to the Shura Council for the first time
Source: Reuters

**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

**Fact**
Women are not permitted to drive
Source: Human Rights Watch (2013)

**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**

**2012**
In 2012, women were granted the right to work in special women focused jobs
Source: Human Rights Watch (2013)

**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**

**Fact**
Women need their male guardian’s permission to marry, travel, obtain health care in certain situations and to enrol in higher education
Source: Amnesty International

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

**Fact**
Birth control pills and other contraceptives are available without prescription in pharmacies
Source: US State Dept

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**4**
Four male witnesses are needed to give testimony on behalf of a rape victim in order to get a conviction. Women who report rape or sexual assaults face the risk of being charged with adultery
Source: Freedom House (2010)

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“Physical and verbal violence towards women has become very widespread and I think part of the social culture. This must be changed by law and education.”

- Shatha Al-Obosi, human rights activist and former MP

**CEDAW status**: Acceded, 1986

**BUT** Iraq rejects articles on citizenship, equality in marriage and family life, on modifying laws that discriminate against women and on the administration of the convention.

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**WOMEN IN POLITICS**

0

There are no women governors in Iraq’s 18 governorates

Source: Freedom House (2010)

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**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

Fact

Women need the permission of a close male relative to obtain a passport

Source: UNICEF

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**WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**

14.5%

14.5% of adult Iraqi women have jobs, representing 17.4% of the total labour force

Source: World Bank (2011)

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**WOMEN IN THE FAMILY**

72.4%

Up to 72.4% of women in rural areas and 64.1% of women in urban areas reported having to ask their husband's permission to attend a health clinic

Source: WHO (2006)

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**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

68

There are 68 births per 1,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19

Source: UNICEF (2005)

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**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Article 409**

Article 409 of Iraq's penal code allows greatly reduced jail sentences for honour killings, compared with other murders

Source: Reuters

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“Sexual harassment is endemic here and is likely to stay that way as it appears to be socially acceptable and is not taken seriously by the authorities or society as a whole.”

- Female journalist in Egypt

**Women in Politics**
9
9 women were elected out of the 987 women who ran for election in 2012
Source: US State Dept

**Women in Society**
99.3%
Up to 99.3% of women and girls are subjected to sexual harassment
Source: UN Women (April 2013)

**Women in the Economy**
63%
63% of adult women are literate

**Women in the Family**
Fact
A Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim without the risk of being criminally convicted of apostasy, or turning their back on their faith. Any children from such a relationship could be placed under the guardianship of a male Muslim

**Reproductive Rights**
79%
Skilled personnel attend 79% of all births
Source: World Bank (2011)

**Violence Against Women**
91%
27.2 million women are victims of female genital mutilation, the largest number in a single country in the world
Source: UNICEF (2013)