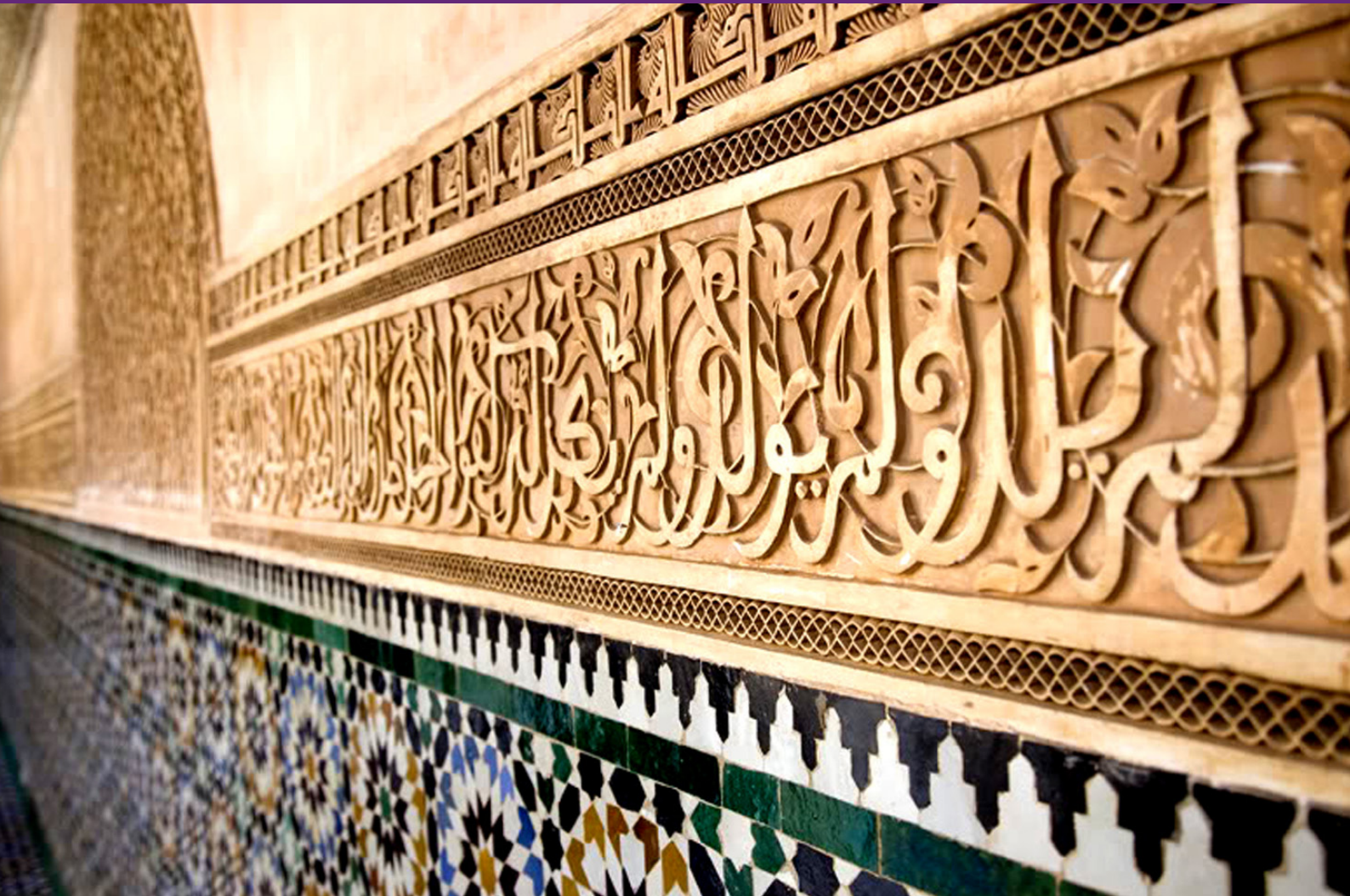
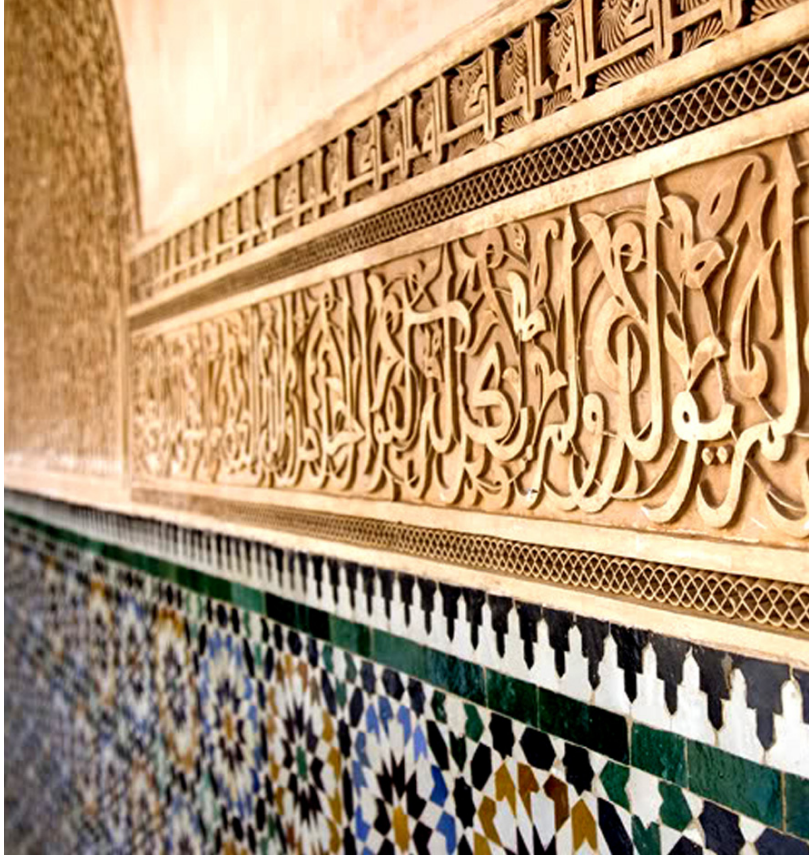


The Arab Network for Tolerance,
the Westminster Foundation for Democracy,
and the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building



Diversity, Participation and Tolerance in the Arab World

A report based on the work of a joint
workshop held in Beirut, Lebanon,
21-23 November 2016



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Diversity, Participation and Tolerance in the Arab World

This workshop, held in Beirut in November 2016, brought together parliamentarians and civil society representatives from the Arab world, with some experts in democracy and peace building from Northern Ireland to explore the situation in the region and the possibilities and challenges for developing democracy through parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations working in their separate fields and also cooperating together across institutional boundaries.

What follows is a digest of the findings of the observer/participants from the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building who tried to understand the context and the challenges that the parliamentary and civil society participants described and currently face. The paper also contains some tentative recommendations for future work.

Background

The Arab World has experienced great turmoil in recent years. As this has unfolded, a number of state and non-state actors involved in the political struggle have taken the opportunity to pursue their own regional interests. With a population reaching almost 400 million – about 6% of the world - the political turbulence and political clashes in the region have led to the most devastating humanitarian crisis since World War II.

The year 2016 marked the centenary of Arab revolts in 1916, which triggered many of the nationalist uprisings and motivations of the 20th century in the region. Although this anniversary coincides with a heightened sense of change and transformation in the Arab world unfortunately it cannot be said that the move is for the better.

Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen are embroiled in civil war causing hundreds of thousands of casualties, millions of people fleeing their homes to survive, economies collapsing and infrastructures destroyed. This situation has created a huge burden for the neighbouring countries which are also vulnerable and economically pressed, especially Jordan, Lebanon, Djibouti and Tunisia, giving rise to an influx of refugees that is too large to manage. Although Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan can be considered relatively stable, with their citizens increasingly engaging in the process of policymaking, they also are facing the side effects of the refugee crisis and the potential ISIS/Daesh threat

which is spreading around the world, not least through foreign fighters and the refugee movements.

While more than 60 million refugees and displaced peoples are on the move around the world, the Arab region is witnessing the most extensive displacement the world has seen since the 1940's. According to the last UNHCR report, forced displacement globally increased in 2015 with record high numbers. By the end of the year, 65.3 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. This is 5.8 million more than the previous year (59.5 million). More than half (54%) of all refugees worldwide came from just three countries - the Syrian Arab Republic (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), and Somalia (1.1 million) - and it is developing countries that host 86 % of the world's refugees under UNHCR's mandate. Least Developed Countries (LDC) provided asylum to 4.2 million refugees or about 26% of the global total. Lebanon hosts the

largest number of refugees in relation to its national population, with 183 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants while Jordan (87) and Nauru (50) ranked second and third, respectively.¹

The Israel-Palestine issue remains tense as the new wave of violence, which began in 2015, continues. The Israeli government continues to enforce severe and discriminatory restrictions on the human rights of Palestinians, building unlawful settlements in and facilitating the transfer of Israeli civilians to the occupied West Bank. According to Human Rights Watch's 2016 report, Israeli authorities destroyed homes and other property under discriminatory practices that severely restrict Palestinian access to construction permits and forcibly displace hundreds of Palestinian residences, as well as Bedouin citizens of Israel, in West Bank areas under Israeli control.²

While the focus of this workshop was not on the Israel/Palestine problem, it is impossible to meet in Lebanon and ignore the impact that it has on surrounding countries, including Lebanon, not least through the long-standing and worsening problem of refugees.

The most important recent development on this issue is UN Resolution 2334 passed in December 2016. This latest UN vote is not only about Israeli settlements but also challenges Israel's claim to parts of the Old City of Jerusalem among other sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. As the US did not use its veto power against the resolution this time, the Security Council took the opportunity to condemn Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem as a "flagrant violation" of international law.

¹ www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html

² www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/israel/palestine



Political Situation

The politicians and civil society activists who attended the workshop are facing enormous challenges. Five years after the Arab uprisings demanding more inclusive politics, more responsive governments, more jobs and less authoritarian rules, the Arab World is actually worse off than ever.

As the world's hopes for establishing a more liberal environment and democracy through peace and stability have faded, the region has disintegrated into turbulence and violent disorder. The cost of living under continuously fluctuating political conditions has reached a peak, in terms of humanitarian standards. As the search for stability brought a more unstable political environment, the search for economic welfare brought poverty and unemployment; the search for a better life brought death or displacement; the search for democracy brought more authoritarian regimes or failed states which are under the threat of

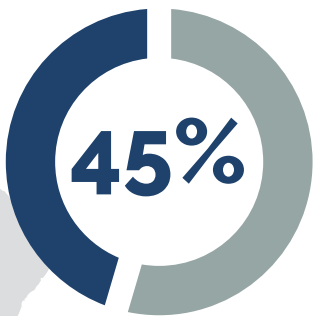
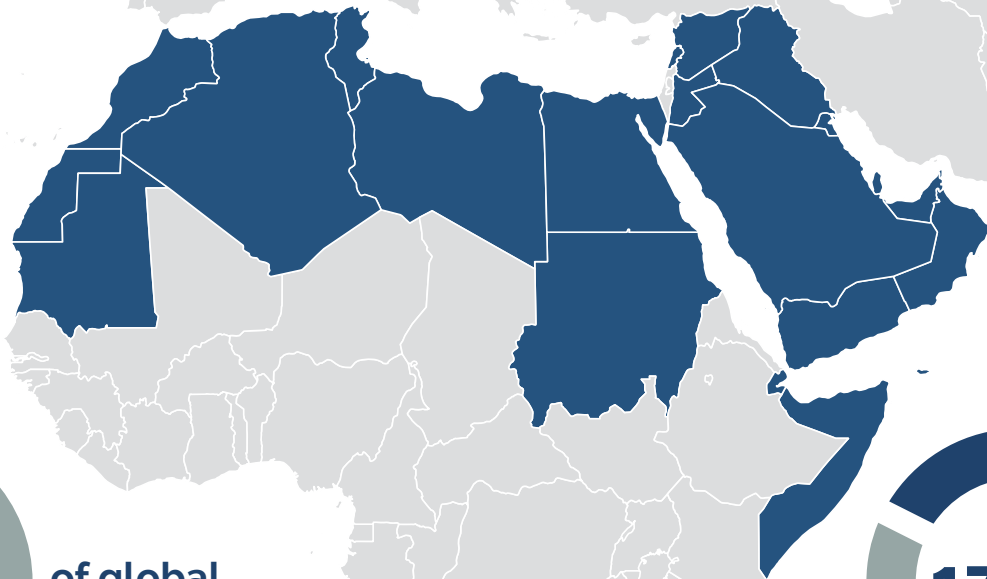
radicalism or terrorist organisations; and the notion of the Arab Spring turned into a bitter winter. This is a disastrous outcome for the people of the Arab world and a huge disappointment for those attending the workshop who have for years worked for democracy and peace building.

The humanitarian crises caused by armed conflicts, political violence and instability in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya are destroying the societies of the region and leading to the creation of new social communities that are extremely traumatised and insecure.

The Arab region is home to

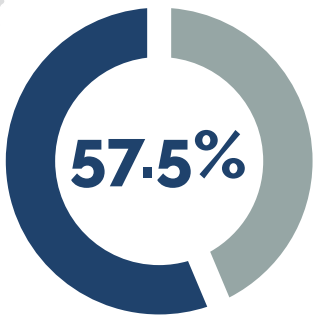
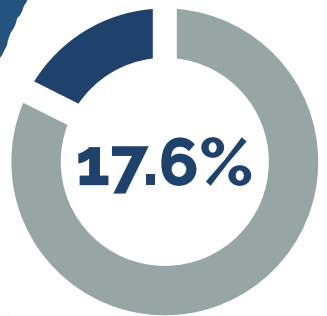


5% of the world's population



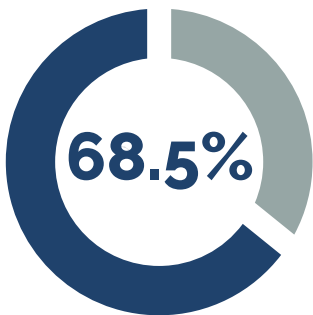
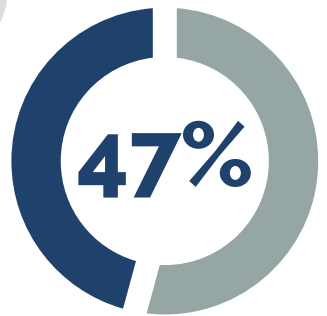
45%
of global
terrorist attacks
2014

of world's conflicts
1948-2014



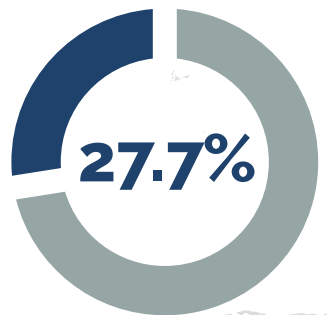
of world's
refugees including
Palestinian refugees
2014

of world's
internally
displaced
2014



of the world's
battle-related
deaths
2014

of world's
battle-related deaths
1948-2014



Press Freedom

In the past few years the state of press freedom in the Middle East has deteriorated. With the collapse of the Arab Spring, the situation reached a critical point where not only traditional media but also social media channels are widely controlled by government. Local press in the Arab world still suffers from self-censorship, avoidance of government criticism and respect for broad “red lines” in coverage that simply aren't crossed.

According to the 2016 World Press Freedom Index, issued by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the Arab region is still one of the world's most problematic regions for journalists, who in many places are trapped between ethnic or religious factions, belligerents, fundamental/radical groups and repressive governments.

The index shows that the biggest deterioration is seen in South Sudan (140th), which fell 15 places in the

Index. In this country, torn by civil war since 2013, journalists fell victim to the conflict's violence and a campaign of intimidation by the authorities.³ A Freedom House report states that the Sudanese government has engaged in a number of repressive practices to maintain control over the information landscape, including prepublication censorship, suspension of critical outlets, confiscation of newspaper press-runs and arbitrary detention of journalists.⁴



³ www.rsf.org/en/ranking_list/analysis

⁴ www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/sudan

Press Freedom ranking for Arab Countries

	Country	Abuse score	Underlying situation core	Global score	Diff.score 2015	Diff.postion 2015
	Tunisia	27.73	31.60	31.60	7.08	30
	Lebanon	32.19	31.98	31.95	-0.14	0
	Kuwait	35.84	31.78	32.59	-1.75	-13
	Qatar	6.93	35.97	35.97	-0.62	-2
	United Arab Emirates	0	36.73	36.73	0	1
	Oman	31.35	40.43	40.43	-1.60	2
	Algeria	29.44	41.69	41.69	-5.06	-10
	Morocco	29.96	42.64	42.64	-3.45	-1
	Palestine	60.45	38.55	42.93	-1.92	8
	Jordan	20.79	44.49	44.49	-2.42	8
	South Sudan	52.42	40.32	44.87	-6.83	-15
	Iraq	73.94	49.45	54.35	-6.59	-2
	Egypt	63.06	52.29	54.45	-4.28	-1
	Bahrain	59.84	53.61	54.86	3.83	1
	Libya	67.72	55.44	57.89	-11.90	-10
	Saudi Arabia	57.20	59.72	59.72	-0.31	-1
	Yemen	73.88	65.37	67.07	-0.71	-2
	Djibouti	0	70.90	70.90	0.14	-2
	Sudan	24.85	72.53	72.53	-0.19	0
	Syria	84.36	80.60	81.35	-4.06	0

Status of the Social Media

Governments in the region are also active in using cybercrime laws to crack down on activists who are using social media channels.

As these laws often consist of vaguely worded articles, the authorities have the opportunity to abuse them or find other ways to suppress dissent. Freedom House reports state that "When you see people being arrested for posting things on Facebook, you start doing the government's job for them by self-censoring." However, the influence of social media remains significant even after the collapse of the Arab spring. According to the "Social Media in the Arab World: The Story of 2016" report, there are 12 key findings reflecting the trends of 2016:⁵

1

Facebook remains the leading social network. Across the region Facebook has 136 million monthly users of whom 93% access Facebook on mobile. The number of active monthly users has tripled since 2012.

2

WhatsApp—which along with Instagram is also owned by Facebook—remains the most popular direct messaging service in the region, according to data from Northwestern University in Qatar. 93% of WhatsApp users, in the six nations studied, are daily users of the app.

3

Across the 16 countries covered by the annual Arab Youth Survey, 62% of young Arabs (those aged 18–24) use WhatsApp on a daily basis (ahead of Facebook at 55%).

4

Instagram usage has grown from 38% of Internet users across UAE in 2014 to 60% in 2016. Usage in Saudi Arabia has jumped from 57% in 2014 to 82% in 2016. The global average is 42% (2016), up from 24% two years ago, according to the Connected Life study published by the research agency Kantar TNS.

5

The same study found usage of Snapchat in Saudi Arabia and UAE has tripled in two years among internet users. Usage in Saudi Arabia grew from 24% to 74% during 2014–16. In UAE, it increased from 15% to 53%. The global average was an increase from 12% to 23%.

⁵ www.arabcrunch.com/new-report-social-media-in-the-middle-east-the-story-of-2016-e68934f575dc#.trpog1en3

6

Instagram has overtaken Twitter, according to a survey of internet users (nationals only) in Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and UAE. Data from Northwestern University in Qatar, shows that use of Instagram in these markets increased by 24% between 2013 and 2016. The number of Twitter users fell by 17% in this time, including a 12% drop in the past year.

7

YouTube launched a new hub called Mosalsalat. Featuring more than 500 iconic Arabic television series, it offers over 7,000 hours of content, produced in the region. The hub contains material dating back to 1962, searchable by genre and country of origin.

8

The network also created an offline viewing mode on the YouTube mobile app for users in Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Yemen, and Algeria.

9

More than half (52%) of Arab youth share stories with their friends on Facebook, up 11% in the past year. Only 17% of young Arabs aged 18–24 use newspapers as a source for news. In 2011, nearly two-thirds of Arab youth (62%) claimed to use newspapers as part of their news habits.

10

71% of UAE residents will take advice from Social Media Influencers before buying a product. Facebook is the most popular channel to follow influencers in food, fashion and beauty.

11

Services were restricted on a temporary, or permanent, basis across the region. In Turkey, popular services were blocked in March, July and November. In Morocco, Skype, Viber, Tango, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, were among the services blocked, whilst in July, UAE issued a new law banning the use of VPNs. 13 In September Saudi Arabia added calls from the app Line to its list of blocked services.

12

Research from Northwestern University in Qatar found: "Nearly seven in 10 national internet users say they changed how they use social media due to privacy concerns, with proportions ranging from 89% of Saudis and 75% of Egyptians to 46% of Qataris".



State of Democracy

According to Uriya Shavit “Liberalism has deep roots in the Middle East, if we know where to look”. For Shavit “there is no truth to the claim that the Arabs have never had any contact with democracy. Just the opposite is the case: democracy has historic roots in a number of Arab societies. In fact, it is this very experience with democracy that makes their approach to it more complex and guarded than that of other cultures.”⁶

The Arab acquaintance with democracy began as far back as 1829, when Muhammad Ali, one of the founders of modern Egypt and the governor of the Ottoman district, announced the establishment of a “consultative council” (majlis al-mashwara). The council was based on the Islamic principle of Shura, whose standard interpretation requires a ruler to include the community in the decision-making process. From this perspective, the claim that the Islamic tradition is in contradiction to the main assumptions of democracy is not a valid argument. On the contrary there are many cases that show the tradition of Islam has the seeds of democracy as an inherent factor, such as:

the critical approach to shura; Islam is against despotic rule

social justice; Islam legislated zakah (obligatory charity) as one of its fundamental pillars and urged Muslims to pay sadaqah (voluntary charity)

to the needy, in order to prevent a deep rift between the rich and the poor in the Muslim community the establishment of bait al-mal (the treasury) to finance the community’s needs

the electoral process (‘Umar bin al-Khattab, the second Rightly Guided Caliph, set up the first electoral process in Muslim history in the 7th century to choose his successor

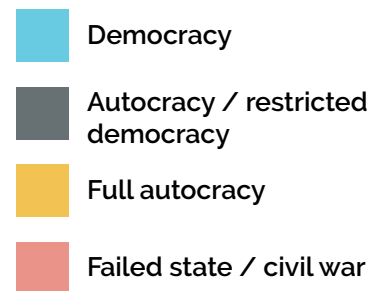
the concept of al-Bay’ah (pledge of allegiance) which is understood as a social contract between the ruler and the ruled

the right of the people to criticise an unjust ruler; this stems from the doctrine of al-‘amr bil-ma’ruf wa al-nahi an al-munkar (the duty of the believers to enjoin good and forbid evil)⁷

However, despite having such an historical link to democratic values, many Arab countries are far from

⁶ www.azure.org.il/include/print.php?id=44

⁷ www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-opening/islam_2990.jsp



universally accepted democratic norms today. For many in the West the perspective is of a controversy between Islam and democracy.

For example Elie Kedourie argued (in *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*, 1992), that there is "a deep confusion in the Arab public mind, at least about the meaning of democracy" and that "the idea of democracy is quite alien to the mindset of Islam".

The Economist's special report, titled "What's the Arabic for Democracy" states that Democracy in Arab countries has 2 peculiar hurdles. The first is the fear of Islamist parties taking power if free elections are held. As they reflect the counter reaction of the society, Islamist parties have the power of representing the "anti" of Western imperialism, atheism, corrupted regimes, modernism (and even post-modernism), Zionism, Americanisation, immoral capitalism etc. However, there are cases in Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt which show that suppressing them can be worse.

Tunisia's advantage was to have a structured and visionary army (as it stayed in barracks) and very thoughtful Islamists who have been more able to work with secularists. "Any state has an army; in Egypt the army has a state," notes Rached Ghannouchi, the leader of Ennahda in Tunisia. He no longer likes to be called a political Islamist; he prefers "Muslim democrat" because, he says, there are Muslims who are not democrats while stressing the need for co-operation with other parties.⁸

A second factor that makes it difficult for democratic systems to exist in the region is the diversity of Arab peoples. Although in good times it makes for an admirable multiculturalism, in times like today, different groups can behave like embattled minorities. In the Arab world, each group fears that rivals will capture the state, its economic resources and above all its guns. So the historical experiences show us that the tendency to multiculturalism or diversity becomes secondary to power struggles.

⁸ www.economist.com/news/special-report/21698436-endless-obstacles-political-freedom-remain-what-arabic-democracy

Economic Situation

As if the problems of the political situation and media freedom were not enough, there are enormous economic challenges. Some of the oil exporting countries, such as Algeria, Libya and Iraq are grappling with low oil prices, as are the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The biggest challenge for oil exporters is managing their financial strategies with oil prices below \$45 a barrel which is projected to fall down to \$38-40 in 2017, (WTI) though of course it must be noted that Saudi Arabia played a significant role in the intentional lowering of oil prices for strategic reasons.

According to the World Bank Economic Monitor, October 2016:⁹

- 2016 was one of the toughest for the region as governments are facing major policy challenges.
- The biggest challenge for oil exporters is managing their finances and diversification strategies with oil under \$45 a barrel. For oil importers, the challenges are spill-overs from conflict and fiscal consolidation in a difficult socio-political environment.
- Growth in the region is expected to slow down to an average of 2.3% in the next year, half a percentage point lower than last year.
- Low oil prices have dampened growth among the oil exporters, especially the GCC countries (Saudi Arabia itself is growing at 1% in 2016), which are forecast to grow at only 1.6% in 2016.
- Four of the developing oil exporters—Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya—are mired in civil war or violent conflict with untold humanitarian cost.
- The region's oil importers, who would normally benefit from low oil prices, are also growing slowly (2.6% on average) because of spill-overs from wars in neighbouring countries or the effects of terrorist attacks on tourism and investor confidence.
- Regional growth is expected to improve slightly to 3.1 and 3.5% over the next two years, as governments across the region are taking the oil price decline as largely permanent and are undertaking reforms to diversify their economies away from oil.

According to the World Bank, the real GDP growth in the region is projected to stay at its lowest level for the fourth consecutive year, at around 2.7% in 2016 and the future of the job market doesn't show positive signs for the future. Regional turmoil, collapsing industries, destructive political violence and the refugee problem are helping the rise of unemployment figures together with fatigue, poverty, desperation and social traumas.

⁹ www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena/publication/mena-economic-monitor

State of Arab Youth

Almost 60% of the region's population is under 25, with approximately 200 million young people living in the region. Although younger generations are considered as the basic driver of modern industrial societies and powerful economies, for the Arab world many people think that these millions are potential dangers (ISIS/Daesh members) or threats to stable societies, which is a false argument.

The largest Arab Youth Survey prepared by ASDAA Burson-Marsteller states that while three in four (77%) Arab youth are concerned about the rise of Daesh, just one in six (15%) believe the terrorist group will ultimately succeed and establish an Islamic state in the Arab world. Instead, 76% believe the group will fail to achieve its ultimate goal of establishing an Islamic state. According to the survey, 50% of the young people think that Daesh is the biggest obstacle facing the Middle East now. The threat of terrorism comes after Daesh with 38% and unemployment with 36%.¹⁰

Another survey, from the International Labour Organisation, shows that youth unemployment in the region, has risen to nearly 30% from 25% in 2011, which is more than double the average around the world. Although unemployment is a global phenomenon and more than 200 million people are unemployed worldwide, its impact upon the region

is much more security oriented. ILO's survey underlines that globally more than 61 million jobs have been lost since the start of the global economic crisis in 2008, and the number of jobless is forecasted to reach more than 212 million by 2019.¹¹

Worldwide the highest ranked country is Mauritania with a rate of 30.9%. Qatar at 0.3% has the lowest jobless rate worldwide, according to the ILO. Regionally, more than 30% of young Arabs are jobless because of unrest and insufficient investment in several Arab countries. According to Mohammed Luqman, director-general of the Arab Labour Organisation (ALO) the major problem for the region is obviously youth unemployment, but adult unemployment is also at an incredibly high level. He estimated the number of unemployed Arabs at 20 million, two million more since the 2011 "Arab spring" revolutions that swept across the region and toppled four of its leaders.¹²

¹⁰ www.arabyouthsurvey.com/en/whitepaper

¹¹ www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_336884/lang--en/index.htm

¹² www.thearabweekly.com/Opinion/833/Turmoil-fuels-unemployment-and-poverty-in-Arab-region



State of Political Participation and Diversity

Electoral participation is an essential first step in the democratic process but democracy is not merely about elections even if they are judged to be credible.

Some non-democracies regularly hold elections and have substantial levels of citizen electoral (and non-electoral) involvement. In the case of many Arab countries, political liberalization (i.e. the creation of a parliament and the holding of elections) has not been accompanied by democratization.

According to the World Bank, the quality of governance today in the Arab countries is lower than it was before the Arab Spring in nearly every category from government effectiveness to corruption. As Freedom House noted in its 2016 annual report, the prospects for improvement remain bleak due, in part, to the prevalence of a "model of governance that erodes the kind of long-term and inclusive stability the region desperately needs" and "sacrifice[s] public safety for regime security."¹³

The participation of women in political life remains another problem for the region. Although political empowerment has improved in the recent years, apparently more than doubling the rate in 2006, according to the WEF Gender Gap Report, it is still very low. Globally, the average percentage of women in parliament is 25%, but across the Arab world as a whole, women only hold 7% of parliamentary seats. When it comes to the work force, participation is low at 25% although the global average for women in the labour force is

about 50%. In the region, it is half that, despite the fact that more and more women are better educated than before. Only 17% of women work in agriculture sector.¹⁴

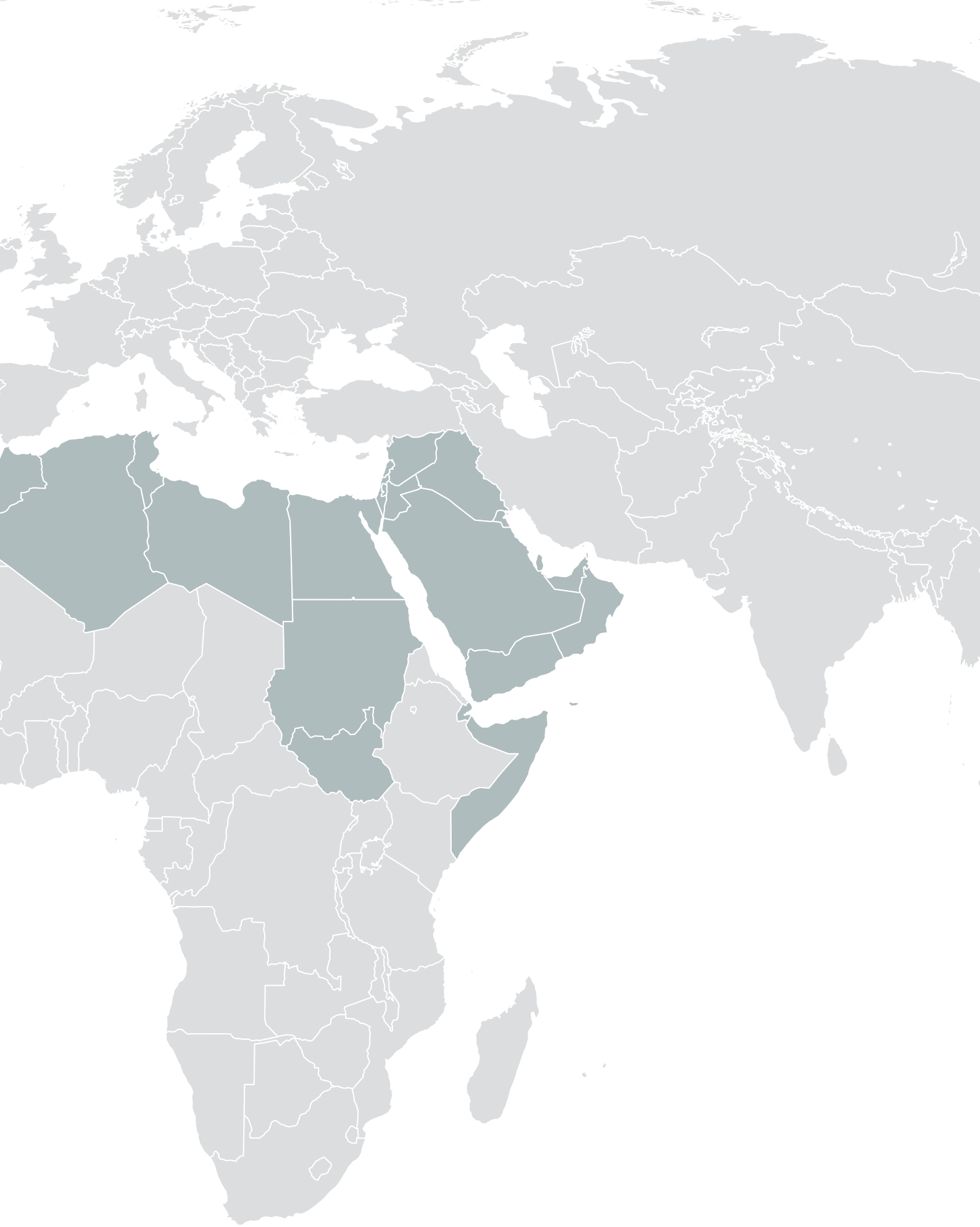
Despite improvements, the Arab world still ranks poorly in global terms in the WEF Gender Gap Report. The highest-scoring Arab country is placed below the regional averages for all the other 5 regions. Last year, the highest climber was Kuwait. At number 113 out of 142 countries, it was the top-performing country in the Arab world due to a significant increase in the "estimated earned income" indicator. The Arab world also has the country at the very bottom of the Gender Gap Index: Yemen. At 142, Yemen has remained at the bottom of the index since 2006 even though it has significantly improved relative to its own past scores.¹⁵

During the Arab Spring women were highly visible participants of the uprisings, from the demonstrators on the front lines of Tahrir Square in Cairo to Nobel Peace Prize-winner Tawakkol Karman, the face of the revolution in Yemen. However, the transitions that followed those uprisings posed particularly fierce challenges to women. Despite regional authoritarian backsliding as some of the former ruling elite regain power, women's social organization and political mobilization continue to have an impact in the region.

¹³ www.rand.org/blog/2016/03/democracy-in-the-arab-world-still-a-mirage.html

¹⁴ www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2016

¹⁵ www.blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/ten-facts-about-women-arab-world



The Workshop set out to address how to Promote Diversity, Participation and Tolerance

Key elements of this process were -

1

To define, develop and promote the notions of cultural diversity, participation and tolerance (CDPT) for building a stable, peaceful and productive society.

2

To share experiences of ways to strengthen actions for establishing common values that promote the importance of these (CDPT) concepts. In this sense, the Irish experience might be a very good example for learning the stories of other communities and other experiences who had suffered from same problems before.

3

To create institutions that work for this aim. In today's society, NGO's sometimes are much more influential in creating awareness and progress.

As an example, The Arab Network for Tolerance envisions societies of the region which respect diversity and peaceful co-existence based upon democratic values and human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality. Supporting such initiatives can bring regional and global networks together who shares the same purpose.

4

To establish legal and institutional frameworks against hate crime, intolerance and discrimination through governmental and societal initiatives.

5

To support the development of national and regional policies of inclusiveness and participation.

6

Encouraging national parliaments to issue laws and regulations against intolerance and discrimination while promoting the contrary (CDPT)

What emerged in the Workshop?

1

Although there is an historical and sociological notion of "Arab World" *al-waṭān al-arabī*, Arab countries have a lot of differences in their political and socio-cultural characteristics. Extending from Morocco to Iraq, and from Syria to Sudan, the Arab region consists of 22 countries with their own legal and cultural standards. Some have serious conflicts with each other, some are even at war; many are rivals; some could even be called failed states; and some have just recently established their independence. So it is very difficult to establish common standards and similar paths of democratic progress among them – if one could even clarify exactly what that means in an Arab culture.

2

Geographical closeness has socio-cultural influence on the countries, as geo-political factors and common historical factors play a role in the formation of cultures in regions that have close boundaries. However, the geographical closeness does not mean that the cultures are also likely to be similar. Many cultural factors such as linguistics, different religious perspectives, ethnicity, and political administrations, may lead to variance among countries that share common geography, hence creating cultural diversity.

3

There is a significant desire to find stability and peace in the region however the problem is identifying appropriate ways to reach that outcome. Although some countries, such as Tunisia, prefer the traditional path of modernisation and liberalisation, others prefer to impose governmental authority through non-democratic instruments to protect stability and security.

4

The economic problems that countries are facing now - and are likely to continue in the future - will be a major obstacle to democratic progress. Unemployment, underdevelopment, fear of neighbours (near and more distant), lack of participation and democratic deficits are concepts which go hand in hand in all countries.

Recommendations

1

While it would be much easier to develop a programme for democracy building if there was a fully agreed vision of what democracy involved, the achievement of such a shared vision is a major undertaking. On the other hand to simply accept Western ideas of what 'democracy' means (especially with a crisis of democracy within the West itself) and try to implement a democratic protocol that has emerged from a non-Arab cultural context generates substantial problems and resistances of its own. It may be that the best way to address this problem is to take items that have emerged as significant principles in democracy building in international experience, and explore them in the context of some of the Arab cultural experiences. An example from economic development would be that of current capitalist approaches to economics as over against sharia-compliant economics. To have a thoughtful conversation between economic and business experts from both backgrounds would have the potential not only to create a new economic perspective that was congruent with the cultures of the Arab world, but would also provide potential new options in the West. The same kind of conversation could take place on the place of 'the law', the importance of the expression of the 'voice of the people', and the options for peaceful changes of government.

2

Promote a public conversation on Diversity, Participation and Tolerance can help to create a concept/motto which reflects these aims. A rubric such as "Harmony in Diversity", "Uniting against Hate", or "Getting together for Dialogue" would be suitable, but the motto should of course be Arabic in both language and cultural context.

3

Producing a set of ideas or a vision, and developing catchy phrases to promote them are of course not enough in themselves. It is vital to have a social marketing programme or public communication campaign if one is to be successful in motivating people to change their behaviour and influence target audiences for the benefit of the wider societal change.

4

Parliamentarians can achieve a good deal if they have a structured way of cooperating across parliamentary institutions and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was a key supporter and contributor to the November workshop seemed keen to establish a body for "Cultural Diversity, Participation and Tolerance" (CDPT). This could be created in the workings of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union.

5

If individual parliamentarians could be appointed as "Champions of Tolerance and Diversity" in their parliaments they could have a major impact domestically and internationally in the Arab world. A formal network of these 'Champions' would support and encourage them in this important work as the ambassadors of Tolerance and Diversity promotion.

7

Establish a supervisory body which evaluates and grades the development of democratic standards in Arab countries. This institution could also be responsible for reporting to some credible international body, such as the United Nations, that can give democracy ratings in the same way as international financial crediting institutions like Moody's and Standard and Poors provide credit ratings in the financial world.

6

Create new opportunities for societal interaction and harmony, by bringing divergent ideological, ethnic or religious groups together. In the Irish case a sample model was the "Music Unite" project. Gathering people together for an apolitical reason who usually identified themselves as being at odds with each other because of their differing political motivations, may create a new and more positive way of interacting. Sport, art, and music are good ways to help build different and more fair and peaceful relationships.

Diversity, Participation and Tolerance in the Arab World

A report based on the work of a joint
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