



June 2017

Arab Democracy Index 5

Executive Summary

Results:

- The Arab Democracy Index (ADI) is down by 10 points.
- There is a wide gap between the scores of means (such as legislation and constitutions) and practices.
- There has been a decline in the scores of respect for rights, freedoms, equality, and social justice and an improvement in the rule of law.
- Morocco remains at the forefront, Tunisia is witnessing the greatest progress, and Egypt saw the greatest decline.

Recommendations:

The Arab teams participating in the preparation of the ADI 5 agree on the importance of the following measures:

- Strengthen oversight functions in Arab political systems, enhance the ability of parliaments to ensure accountability, increase respect for judicial independence, and impose oversight on the performance of the security services.
- Strengthen the role of women in the labour force.
- Make fundamental change in the priorities of government spending.
- Reform education by allocating larger budgets, combating illiteracy, and reducing school dropouts.
- Increase freedom of the media in order to boost social debate and increase citizen awareness.

The report covers the result of a survey that took place in 2015. During the last year, the political, economic, and social situation of some of the countries covered by the report witnessed changes and developments that are not reflected here.

The ADI 5 shows the democratic transition process in 10 Arab countries: Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco. The Index consists of the scores of 42 key indicators, which are used as a general framework to assess the process of democratization in these countries. The Index is based on a variety of sources of information, such as government documents, civil society reports, and public opinion polls conducted for this purpose in participating countries.

The ADI 5 reveals a noticeable decline

The ADI 5 score of 571 out of 1000 indicates a deficiency in democratic transformation and its ability to make real change in the Arab world. In fact, this process is still in an emerging phase and has been at a standstill throughout the nine years during which the ADI has been conducted. In its fifth edition, the Index score decreased by 10 points compared to the fourth edition (571 vs 581). The main reason for the decline in the Index is the inclusion of Saudi Arabia in the current report. If Saudi Arabia were excluded from the calculation, the current index would rise to 588, with an increase of seven points from the previous report.

A wide gap between the means and practices indicators

The results of the report show a decline in the means (legislation) indicator and a rise in the practices (elections) indicator. The analysis of the digital results indicates that the process of democratization seems to be either driven from outside or designed to satisfy the population through formal processes. While the indicator of the means (the most sensitive to external and internal pressure) is 788 points, the indicator of the practices (the least sensitive to external and public pressure) is only 504 points. The wide discrepancy between the indicators for means and those for practices raises questions about the usefulness of legal and constitutional reforms in the process of democratic transformation, and highlights the failure of the Arab Spring to bring about meaningful change in the region.

A decline in the index of rights, freedoms, equality, and social justice and an improvement in the rule of law

Respect for rights and freedoms saw the largest decline (49 points), from 584 to 535. The score for equality and social justice dropped by 32 points, from 561 to 529. The index that measures the presence of strong and accountable public institutions fell by 16 points from 563 to 547. In contrast, the rule of law score rose by 114 points, from 626 to 737 points, compared to the previous report.

Morocco in the lead

Morocco (which scored 735) came first among the 10 countries in the Index; it has held this place for the fourth time since 2008, when the Index was first conducted. Morocco's

involvement in the reform process, after the promulgation of the 2011 constitution, clearly influenced political and social stability and intensified the democratic transition. However, a cabinet that was supposed to be formed by an alliance led by the Justice and Development Party, which has a religious orientation and led the election results, was delayed for a long period, leaving the country in a political crisis, and consequently was not covered by the Index.

Tunisia is witnessing the greatest progress

Tunisia came second with 690 points. It has witnessed the biggest progress among all countries in the Index, with a gain of 80 points compared to the fourth report (from 610 to 690 points). Tunisia has successfully moved through a political transition that lasted four years. The turning point was the organization of parliamentary and presidential elections at the end of 2014. However, this does not mean that all new institutions approved by the constitution were established. When this report concluded, some of them had not yet started, while others were faltering. Consequently, it is fair to say that the emerging political system remains in a testing stage and continues to suffer many of the difficulties and challenges that nascent democracies often face. Adding to these challenges are the country's economic crisis, the fight against terrorism, and the spread of corruption.

Jordan came third with 640 points, Kuwait ranked fourth with 631 points, followed by Algeria in the fifth place with 589 points.

Egypt: the biggest decline

Five countries scored less in comparison with what they obtained in the previous report, primarily Egypt with 503 points. With this score, Egypt saw the largest decline, falling by 81 points. This change is due to the developments that have taken place in the country in recent years. Some of these changes have been positive, such as the adoption of a new constitution in 2014 (although it grants immunity to the armed forces, the police and the judiciary and the power to decide on their own legislative proposals before ratification by the Chamber of Deputies), and holding parliamentary elections. Others, however, are negative: the confrontations between the government and the supporters of political Islamist movements continue and have expanded to include civil society groups, although some of these confrontations were in the form of peaceful protests. Terrorist acts in the capital and the Sinai Peninsula have overshadowed these protests, and were followed by widespread human rights violations such as long-term detention, enforced disappearance, torture and restrictions on freedom of association, expression and assembly. These violations have expanded to take the form of overall confrontation between the government and civil society.

The scores of Lebanon (532), Algeria (589), Bahrain (436) and Jordan (640) all declined.

Saudi Arabia received 419 points, which keeps it in tenth and last place. Nevertheless, this score is an improvement of 13 points compared to the average of the Democracy Index reports for the period prior to 2012, the last period monitored by the Index. Political events in 2015 have clearly affected the social and economic situation in the country. King Salman

bin Abdul-Aziz took power and chose the crown prince and deputy crown prince from the third generation for the first time in the history of the kingdom. The continuous deterioration of oil prices throughout the year in conjunction with other policies exhausted the treasury and led to the aggravation of the economic crisis, which prompted the government to take economic reform measures to diversify its sources of income and reduce dependence on oil revenues. However, the new policies did not accompany any reform programs at the political and social levels.

The ranking of countries on a scale of 1000 points

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|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Morocco 735 | 2. Tunisia 690 | 3. Jordan 640 | 4. Kuwait 631 | 5. Algeria 589 |
| 6. Palestine 538 | 7. Lebanon 532 | 8. Egypt 503 | 9. Bahrain 436 | 10. Saudi Arabia 419 |