

# MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX 2015

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## HIGHLIGHTS ~ ARAB STATES

At present, the Global MPI has national estimates for a total of 12 Arab States, 110 subnational regions, and 263 Million people, which is nearly 75% of the population of the Arab States. Of these, over 54 million are MPI poor. On average, 21% of the population in the Arab States covered are MPI poor, and the average intensity of poverty for each poor person is 52.7%.<sup>1</sup>

In 2015, we release MPI estimations for Sudan for the first time, and update estimations for six of the Arab States and for 90 subnational regions. This is a major update and provides new estimations for 72% of the population covered and of 55% the MPI poor people in these Arab states. In particular, in 2015 we provide new MPI estimations for Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Sudan. Every updated country has disaggregated data by rural-urban areas and for all except Libya, by subnational regions, thus there are new MPI estimations for 90 of the 110 subnational regions covered.

**Diversity in the Incidence of Poverty (H) within the Region:** As a region, the Arab States are highly diverse in terms of Multidimensional Poverty levels. In six Arab States less than 5% of the populations are MPI poor; in Iraq and Morocco, poverty rates are 12% and 15%, and in Djibouti, 29%. However, in Yemen and Sudan the rates are much higher at 53% and 58% respectively, and in Somalia, 80% of the population are multidimensionally poor.

**Diversity in the Intensity of Poverty (A) within the Region:** Similar diversity is seen in intensity. In six Arab states, the average poor person experiences deprivations in less than 38% of weighted indicators – less than one indicator per dimension. In Yemen and Sudan, poor people are on average deprived in well over half of the indicators, and in Somalia average intensity is as high as 63% of dimensions.

In some Arab States, as in Latin America and Europe and Central Asia, the Global MPI rates are very low, so the Global MPI – which measures acute multidimensional poverty – should be complemented by a measure of moderate multidimensional poverty, whose indicators and cutoffs better reflect the aspirations and standards of poverty in this region. Furthermore, due in part to data limitations, the current Global MPI does not capture some pertinent deprivations such as un- and under-employment, insecurity, and overcrowding to name but a few.

- **Data:** The 2015 Global MPI estimations for the Arab States are taken from surveys fielded 2006-2014. Two are Demographic and Health Surveys (Jordan, Egypt), three are PAPFAM surveys (Libya, Syria, Morocco), and the remaining six are Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. The most recent data are for Egypt (2014), followed by Jordan (2012), Tunisia (2011/12) and Iraq (2011). Iraq and Tunisia were updated in 2014, so between 2014 and 2015, we have updated MPI estimations for 75% of the Arab States. In comparison with some regions, the data for the Arab States are not as recent, with three surveys from 2006 and one from 2007; however, half of the Arab States' MPI estimations are based on surveys that have been fielded 2010-2014.

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<sup>1</sup> To give an intuitive feel, this means that on average, poor people are deprived in something like four living standards indicators, and three health or education indicators among the 10 weighted MPI indicators.

- We also have disaggregated data for 110 **subnational regions** in **eight Arab states**: Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, and Syria. These regions range from an MPI poverty rate of less than 5% in 72 subnational regions, to poverty rates of 63% to 86% in 10 regions. We lack subnational decompositions other than rural-urban areas for Somalia, which has a national MPI poverty rate of 81%, making it by far the poorest Arab State. **The poorest subnational regions in the Arab States** outside of **Somalia** is **West Darfur** in Sudan. West Darfur has the same MPI as Somalia, 0.514, although it is Somalia's rural area that is the poorest of all. Otherwise, the 15 poorest subnational regions are found in Sudan, Djibouti (Other Districts) and Morocco (Marrakech-Tensift-El Haouz).
- **Intensity** varies greatly subnationally as well – in 68 subnational regions, poor people on average experience deprivations in less than 40% of the weighted indicators of the global MPI. But in 14 subnational regions (Tubas in Palestine, plus Sudan), the average intensity is 50% or greater – half of the MPI dimensions. The Blue Nile region of Sudan plus the country of Somalia, experience intensity levels over 60%.
- We now have destitution for 9 of our 12 Arab States, but unfortunately lack destitution for three of the four poorest countries: Djibouti, Yemen, and Somalia. Our **measure of destitution** identifies a subset of poor people as destitute if they experience a number of extreme deprivations like severe malnutrition, losing two children, having all primary-aged school children out of school, and practicing open defecation. However, here is the rather large surprise: on average, across nine Arab States covered, a total of 14.7 million people, or **43% of MPI poor people are destitute**. This figure, like that of MPI, is polarized but with some differences: in Libya, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Iraq the proportion of MPI poor who are destitute is low: 4% to 12%. In Tunisia, a low MPI country, it is 22%, suggesting pockets of poverty. In Egypt it is 20%, and in Morocco and Sudan, over 50% of MPI poor people are destitute.