

# 02

## Urban exposure and vulnerability

## 2.1 Urbanization profile

**Table 1**  
**Main urbanization indicators for subregions and countries in 2015**

### 2.1.1 Urbanization: regional trends

Even though urbanization trends vary widely between countries, there is a global trend towards rapidly growing urbanization. In the Arab region, the total population residing in urban areas reached 55.8 per cent in 2015 and will continue to grow to 58 per cent by 2030 (Figure 3). The level of urbanization varies significantly across the different subregions.

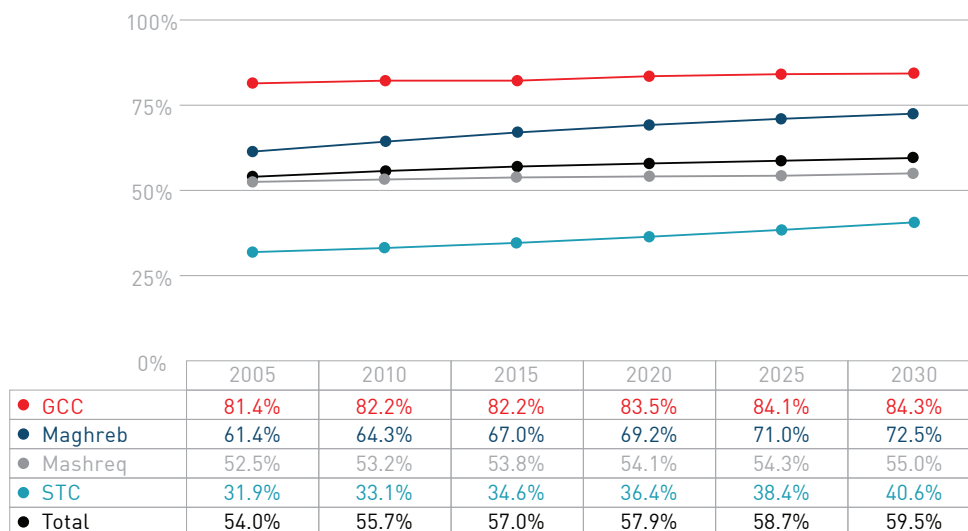
The total population in urban environments is growing in each of the subregions: in the Mashreq – from 88.5 million in 2015 to 121.6 million in 2030, in the Maghreb – from 64.1 million in 2015 to 82.6 million in 2030, in the GCC – from 43.3 million in 2015 to 54.6 million in 2030, and in the STC – from 27.5 million in 2015 to 45.2 million in 2030. The most urbanized subregion is the GCC (82.2 per cent in 2015 and projected at 84.3 per cent in 2030). The least urbanized area is the STC (34.6 per cent in 2015 and 40.6 per cent in 2030). The ranking of the subregion urban population will not change in 2030, but the STC subregion will come very close to the GCC subregion.

Table 1 provides an overview of the key urbanization indicators in the Arab region. The details of the dynamic for each indicator for the period 2015-2030 are given in Annex 5.

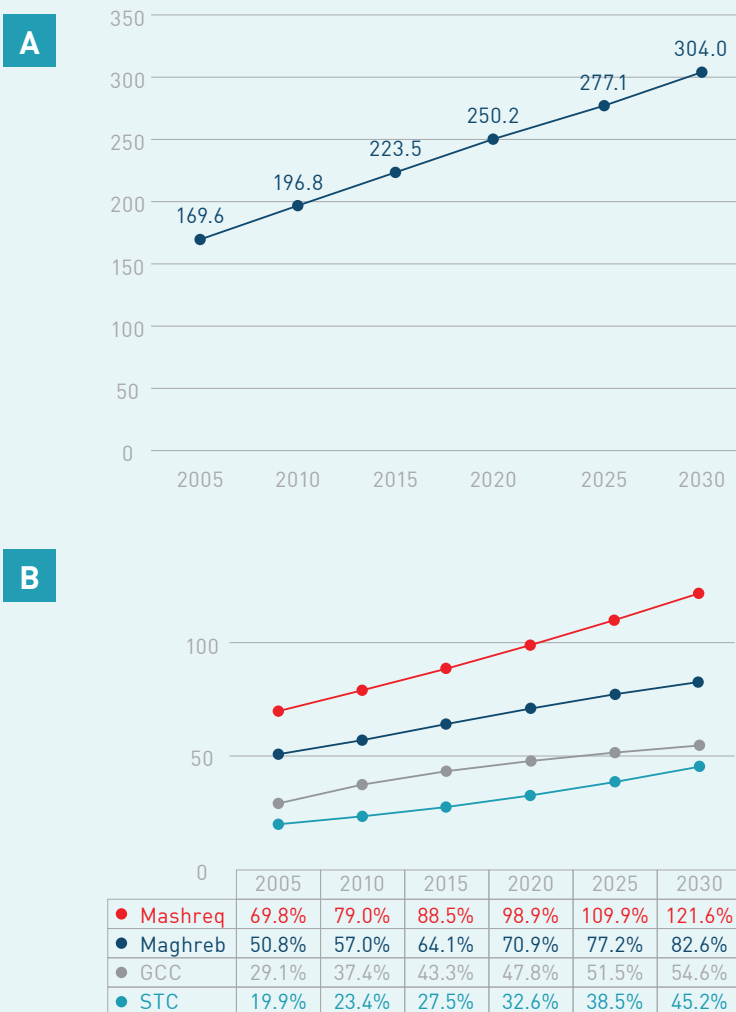
Region	Country	% of Population in Urban Areas	Urban Population, 1000	Average Annual Rate of Change of the Urban Population, %	Average Annual Rate of Change of the Percentage Urban, %	Slum population as a percentage of urban population, 2014, %
Mashreq	Lebanon	87.8	4 437	3.18	0.14	-
Mashreq	Jordan	83.7	6 435	3.79	0.29	12.9
Mashreq	Palestine	75.3	3 423	2.81	0.30	-
Mashreq	Iraq	69.5	24 847	3.01	0.13	47.2
Mashreq	Syria	57.7	12 837	1.37	0.70	19.3
Mashreq	Egypt	43.1	36 538	1.68	0.05	10.6
<b>Mashreq Total</b>			<b>88 517</b>			
Maghreb	Libya	78.6	4 962	1.13	0.23	
Maghreb	Algeria	70.7	28 739	2.77	0.93	
Maghreb	Tunisia	66.8	7 510	1.38	0.27	8.0
Maghreb	Morocco	60.2	20 439	2.26	0.85	13.1
Maghreb	Mauritania	59.9	2 442	3.54	1.09	79.9
<b>Maghreb Total</b>			<b>64 093</b>			
STC	Djibouti	77.3	696	1.60	0.09	
STC	Somalia	39.6	4 399	4.06	1.19	73.6
STC	Yemen	34.6	8 837	4.03	1.73	60.8
STC	Sudan	33.8	13 391	2.54	0.43	91.6
STC	Comoros	28.3	218	2.67	0.27	69.6
<b>STC Total</b>			<b>27 541</b>			
GCC	Qatar	99.2	2 333	6.02	0.12	
GCC	Kuwait	98.3	3 524	3.63	0.02	
GCC	Bahrain	88.8	1 207	1.71	0.05	
GCC	Emirates	85.5	8 192	2.87	0.35	
GCC	Saudi Arabia	83.1	24 854	2.10	0.25	-
GCC	Oman	77.6	3 228	8.54	0.65	
<b>GCC Total</b>			<b>43 338</b>			
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>223 489</b>			

Source: The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)/ UN Population Division (UNPD), World Population Prospects [<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/>].

**Figure 3**  
Urban population percentage of total population, in subregions and total



**Figure 4**  
Total population (both sexes), in the region (A) and in the subregions (B), 1000



Each subregion has its own pattern of urbanization. In the Mashreq subregion in 2015, the countries with large populations (i.e., Egypt, Iraq and Syria, were less urbanized, while the countries with smaller populations were more urbanized). The average annual rate of change of the urban population was also greater in countries with smaller population size, and also in Iraq. Egypt is expected to continue to exhibit an exceptionally high urbanization rate. Despite this dynamic, will remain the least urbanized country in its subregion by 2030, while Lebanon and Jordan will reach almost 90 per cent urbanization, followed by Palestine with about 78 per cent and Iraq, 72 per cent.

In the Maghreb, with an average urbanization level of more than 50 per cent, Libya was the most urbanized country (78.6 per cent in 2015, reaching 81.8 per cent by 2030). Each of the countries shows a slightly reducing rate of urbanization during the period 2015-2030, with Mauritania, Morocco, and Algeria maintaining the highest rates.

The STC was the subregion with the lowest urbanization level in 2015: the urbanization level in Sudan is 33.8 per cent (population 13.4 million), Yemen – 34.6 per cent (population 8.8 million), Somalia – 39.6 per cent (population 4.4 million). It is, nevertheless, the fastest urbanizing subregion in the Arab region, with Somalia being the fastest urbanizing country in the whole region at 4.05 per cent growth rate in 2015.

The GCC is most urbanized subregion. The urbanization rate for Qatar and Kuwait had reached 99.2 and 98.3 per cent respectively by 2015. Bahrain, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have reached an urbanization rate of more than 80 per cent, while for Oman it was 77.6 per cent in 2015.

## 2.1.2 Urbanization: focus on Arab cities

The region is characterized by: (a) mushrooming of secondary cities and smaller towns, and (b) growth of large agglomerations with urban population of more than one million. Such agglomerations are scattered throughout all the subregions (Table 2). The following are the largest cities in the Arab region showing positive demographic growth over the period of 2015-2030:

- Cairo (Egypt): from 18.8 million to 24.5 million by 2030
- Baghdad (Iraq): from 6.6 million to 9.7 million by 2030
- Riyadh (Saudi Arabia): from 6.4 million to 7.9 million by 2030
- Khartoum (Sudan): from 5.1 million to 8.2 million by 2030
- Alexandria (Egypt): from 4.8 million to 6.3 million by 2030
- Jeddah (Saudi Arabia): from 4.1 million to 5.0 million by 2030
- Aleppo (Syria): from 3.6 million to 5.1 million by 2030
- Casablanca (Morocco): from 3.5 million to 4.4 million by 2030
- Sanaa (Yemen): from 3.0 million to 5.0 million by 2030
- Kuwait City (Kuwait): from 2.8 million to 3.9 million by 2030
- Mogadishu (Somalia): from 2.1 million to 4.2 million by 2030

Region	Country or Area	Urban Agglomeration	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Trend
GCC	Saudi Arabia	Ar-Riyadh (Riyadh)	4 227	5 227	6 370	7 133	7 617	7 940	...
GCC	Saudi Arabia	Jiddah	2 883	3 452	4 076	4 475	4 770	4 988	...
GCC	Kuwait	Al Kuwayt (Kuwait City)	1 551	2 102	2 779	3 202	3 571	3 915	...
GCC	Emirates	Dubayy (Dubai)	1 268	1 778	2 415	2 862	3 189	3 471	...
GCC	Saudi Arabia	Makkah (Mecca)	1 326	1 543	1 771	1 912	2 039	2 146	...
GCC	Saudi Arabia	Al-Madinah (Medina)	942	1 106	1 280	1 391	1 488	1 570	...
GCC	Emirates	Sharjah	640	919	1 279	1 542	1 730	1 890	...
GCC	Emirates	Abu Zaby (Abu Dhabi)	655	876	1 145	1 323	1 471	1 608	...
GCC	Saudi Arabia	Ad-Dammam	765	909	1 064	1 166	1 251	1 321	...
<b>GCC Total</b>			<b>14 256</b>	<b>17 915</b>	<b>22 178</b>	<b>25 006</b>	<b>27 126</b>	<b>28 848</b>	...
Maghreb	Morocco	Dar-el-Beida (Casablanca)	3 301	3 405	3 515	3 736	4 056	4 361	...
Maghreb	Algeria	El Djazaïr (Algiers)	2 282	2 432	2 594	2 835	3 149	3 405	...
Maghreb	Tunisia	Tunis	1 841	1 916	1 993	2 093	2 222	2 347	...
Maghreb	Morocco	Rabat	1 647	1 799	1 967	2 172	2 385	2 574	...
Maghreb	Morocco	Fès	960	1 061	1 172	1 305	1 439	1 559	...
Maghreb	Morocco	Marrakech	837	974	1 134	1 306	1 450	1 572	...
Maghreb	Libya	Tarablus (Tripoli)	1 058	1 095	1 126	1 167	1 249	1 333	...
<b>Maghreb Total</b>			<b>11 926</b>	<b>12 683</b>	<b>13 501</b>	<b>14 614</b>	<b>15 949</b>	<b>17 151</b>	...
Mashreq	Egypt	Al-Qahirah (Cairo)	15 174	16 899	18 772	20 568	22 432	24 502	...
Mashreq	Iraq	Baghdad	5 327	5 891	6 643	7 544	8 602	9 710	...
Mashreq	Egypt	Al-Iskandariyah (Alexandria)	3 919	4 333	4 778	5 225	5 733	6 313	...
Mashreq	Syria	Halab (Aleppo)	2 605	3 078	3 562	4 140	4 600	5 087	...
Mashreq	Syria	Dimashq (Damascus)	2 201	2 401	2 566	2 833	3 116	3 451	...
Mashreq	Lebanon	Bayrut (Beirut)	1 777	1 990	2 226	2 252	2 347	2 437	...
Mashreq	Iraq	Al-Mawsil (Mosul)	1 236	1 447	1 694	1 976	2 276	2 586	...
Mashreq	Syria	Hims (Homs)	1 072	1 341	1 641	1 981	2 225	2 471	...
Mashreq	Syria	Hamah	676	925	1 237	1 581	1 800	2 003	...
Mashreq	Iraq	Irbil (Erbil)	874	1 009	1 166	1 348	1 552	1 766	...
Mashreq	Jordan	Amman	1 062	1 109	1 155	1 162	1 251	1 355	...
Mashreq	Iraq	Al-Basrah (Basra)	837	923	1 019	1 144	1 310	1 491	...
Mashreq	Iraq	Sulaimaniya	696	836	1 004	1 191	1 379	1 571	...
<b>Mashreq Total</b>			<b>37 456</b>	<b>42 181</b>	<b>47 462</b>	<b>52 944</b>	<b>58 622</b>	<b>64 742</b>	...
STC	Sudan	Al-Khartum (Khartoum)	3 979	4 517	5 129	5 905	6 929	8 158	...
STC	Yemen	Sanaa	1 757	2 291	2 962	3 643	4 351	5 071	...
STC	Somalia	Muqdisho (Mogadishu)	1 415	1 426	2 138	2 782	3 441	4 176	...
<b>STC Total</b>			<b>7 151</b>	<b>8 234</b>	<b>10 229</b>	<b>12 330</b>	<b>14 722</b>	<b>17 405</b>	...
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>70 789</b>	<b>81 013</b>	<b>93 370</b>	<b>104 895</b>	<b>116 419</b>	<b>128 146</b>	...

Source: The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)/ UN Population Division (UNPD), World Population Prospects [https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/].

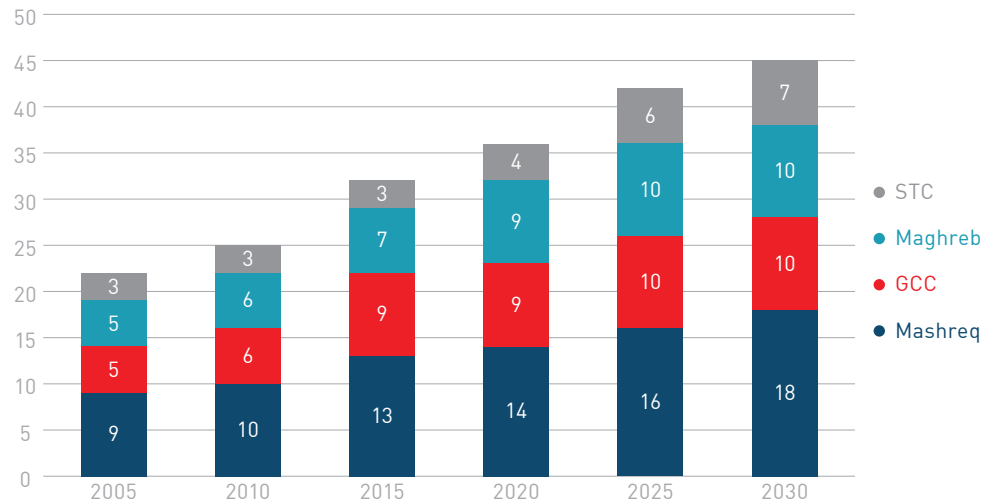
## Table 2 Population estimates and projections (2005-2030) for urban agglomerations with one million or more inhabitants in 2014 (thousands)

Table 2 also shows the positive growth trend for each of the cities. These are also the cities with the highest average annual urbanization growth rate. The frontrunner, however, is post-conflict Mogadishu: with a population growth rate of 6.9 per cent, it is considered to be the second fastest growing city in the world.<sup>1</sup> The number of agglomerations with a population of more than one million in the region will grow from 32 to 45 by 2030: with one in the GCC, three in the Maghreb, four in the STC and five in the Maghreb (Figure 5). The total population residing in large agglomerations will therefore rise from 93 million (23 per cent of the total regional population) to 128 million (24 per cent of the total).

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2015/Nov/102674/mogadishu\\_ranked\\_second\\_fastest\\_growing\\_city\\_in\\_the\\_world.aspx](http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2015/Nov/102674/mogadishu_ranked_second_fastest_growing_city_in_the_world.aspx).

**Figure 5**  
The calculated and projected number, per subregion, of urban agglomerations with one million or more inhabitants from 2005 to 2030



## 2.2 Demographic and socioeconomic profile

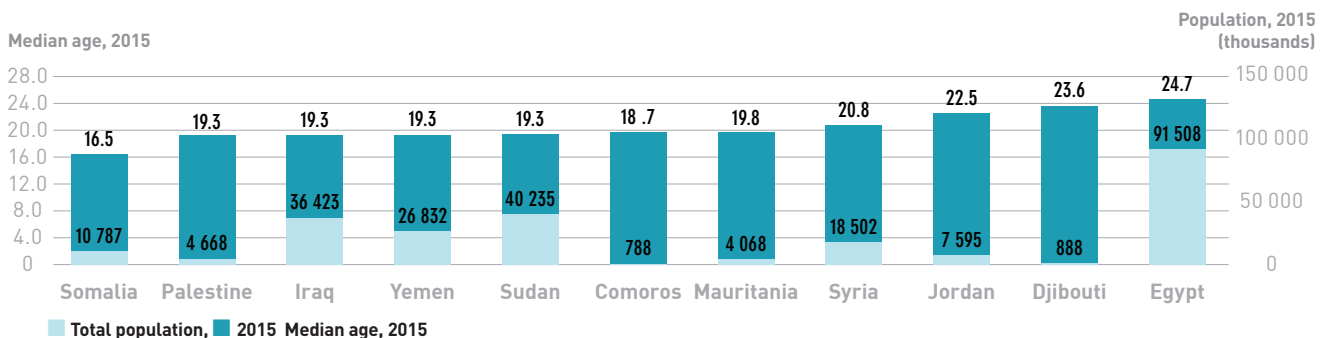
### 2.2.1 Demographic profile: a regional perspective

Regional demographic change becomes a strategic issue for policy-makers and development partners when addressing resilience-building to disasters and climate risks. Table 3 illustrates the combined elements of demographic context as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Even though the data for urban settings is largely missing, the experience suggests that the pattern of demographic distribution varies little in urban and rural settings.

There is a positive dynamic of the population growth in the Arab region. By 2030, the total population of the region will increase to 528.8 million (compared with 404.8 million in 2015); the proportions of population growth in the subregions will remain the same throughout the period of 2015-2030, whereby the Mashreq will remain the largest subregion, followed by the GCC countries, the Maghreb, and the STC respectively.

Trending is the proportion of the young males across the whole region, in which the STC population is the youngest. Median age varies from 16.5 (Somalia) to 30.3 (Bahrain).

**Figure 6**  
Countries with the youngest median age in 2015



FOOTNOTES

<sup>2</sup> All data was taken from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division World Population Prospects, the 2015 edition [<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>].

**Table 3**  
**Combined table**  
**showing demographic**  
**situation in the Arab**  
**region per subregion**  
**and per country in 2015**

Another important characteristic is the net migration rate, which is negative for all countries in the STC, and the Maghreb subregions for the period 2015-2030. The Mashreq will remain the largest migration subregion in 2015-2030. Palestine has negative net migration rate, whereas Lebanon and Jordan experience influx of migrants. Syria is experiencing extreme out-migration due to war, which requires significant corrections of the predictions suggested by the available data. The GCC is the only subregion that exhibits a stable positive net migration rate, with the exception of Oman.

Region	Country	Total Population, 1000	Growth rate %	Sex Ratio, Age 15-25	Median Age, year	Total Fertility	Male 15-49, 1000	Net Migration Rate, %	Number of Migrants, 1000
Mashreq	Egypt	91 508	2.18	104.5	24.7	3.38	23 734	-0.5	-216
Mashreq	Iraq	36 423	3.31	105.1	19.3	4.64	9 133	3.3	549
Mashreq	Syria	18 502	-2.27	109.3	20.8	3.03	4 671	-41.1	-4030
Mashreq	Jordan	7 595	3.06	104.2	22.5	3.51	2 081	6.5	230
Mashreq	Lebanon	5 851	5.99	93.3	28.5	1.72	1 593	49.1	1 250
Mashreq	Palestine	4 668	2.75	104.0	19.3	4.28	1 192	-2.0	-44
<b>Mashreq Total</b>		<b>164 548</b>					<b>42 403</b>		<b>-2 261</b>
Maghreb	Algeria	39 667	1.92	103.3	27.6	2.93	10 833	-0.8	-143
Maghreb	Morocco	34 378	1.37	104.0	28.0	2.56	8 895	-1.9	-311
Maghreb	Tunisia	11 254	1.12	103.6	31.2	2.16	2 991	-0.6	-33
Maghreb	Libya	6 278	0.04	100.9	27.5	2.53	1 745	-16.0	-502
Maghreb	Mauritania	4 068	2.49	103.1	19.8	4.69	1 011	-1.0	-20
<b>Maghreb Total</b>		<b>95 644</b>					<b>25 475</b>		<b>-1009</b>
STC	Sudan	40 235	2.16	102.2	19.4	4.46	9 877	-4.2	-800
STC	Yemen	26 832	2.57	103.7	19.3	4.35	6 848	-0.4	-50
STC	Somalia	10 787	2.37	100.2	16.5	6.61	2 370	-7.9	-400
STC	Djibouti	888	1.33	102.3	23.6	3.30	242	-3.7	-16
STC	Comoros	788	2.42	103.2	19.7	4.60	197	-2.7	-10
<b>STC Total</b>		<b>79 531</b>					<b>19 535</b>		<b>-1 276</b>
GCC	Saudi Arabia	31 540	2.32	101.0	28.3	2.85	10 789	5.7	850
GCC	Emirates	9 157	1.89	186.4	33.3	1.82	5 294	9.3	405
GCC	Oman	4 491	8.45	152.7	29.0	2.88	2 218	65.2	1 211
GCC	Kuwait	3 892	4.81	102.7	31.0	2.15	1 495	29.8	518
GCC	Qatar	2 235	4.72	311.2	30.7	2.08	1 303	36.3	364
GCC	Bahrain	1 377	1.76	153.2	30.2	2.10	597	4.5	30
<b>GCC Total</b>		<b>52 693</b>					<b>21 697</b>		<b>3 377</b>
<b>GrandTotal</b>		<b>392 141</b>					<b>109 110</b>		<b>-1 169</b>

### 2.2.1a Refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and migrant workers

The Arab region is experiencing multiple and complex emergency situations on an unprecedented scale. Understanding the demographic profile of the region and subsequent analysis of urban resilience requires careful consideration of the consequences that current emergencies might trigger at the regional, subregional and national levels. One of the overwhelming challenges is the wave of migration that has hit the region, escalating humanitarian challenges in the region to the highest level. This, in turn, requires careful consideration of migrants' specific vulnerabilities, including the gender dimension, while designing urban resilience strategies, since the proportion of urban-based women-headed households is generally higher than in rural areas.

The UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 highlights the scale of the problem in the Middle East,<sup>3</sup> which is largely explained by the gravity of the problem in Arab states.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 4**  
**Refugee and IDP**  
**population**  
**in Arab States**

Country	IDPs	Refugees
Algeria		94 128
Bahrain		311
Djibouti		20 530
Egypt		236 090
Iraq	3 300 000	271 143
Jordan		
KSA		534
Lebanon	19 719	1 606 709
Libya	434 000	27 964
Morocco		1 216
Mauritania		49 635
Oman		151
Palestine	263 500	
Qatar		133
Somalia	1 107 000	2 729
Sudan	3 100 000	244 430
Syria	6 600 000	677 756
Tunisia		901
UAE		417
Yemen	2 500 000	2 057 098
TOTAL	17 324 219	8 315 636

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR lists Israel among the countries of the Middle East.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR, "Middle East and North Africa," Global Appeal 2016-2017. [<http://www.unhcr.org/564da0e49.pdf>]. Accessed 25 February 2018.

This region is one of origin, destination and transit of refugees and migrants, whereby the number of IDPs, at 17.3 million, is by far the largest in the world. In the fifth year of the conflict in Syria, there were more than 6.7 million Syrian refugees and some 6.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region. Over one million Syrians have sought asylum in more than 90 countries outside the region.<sup>5</sup> Since the escalation of the conflict in Yemen in March 2015, more than 2.3 million people have been internally displaced and nearly 100,000 more have fled the country. Iraq alone hosts 3.2 million IDPs.<sup>6</sup> Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Somalia and Sudan are also home to large number of IDPs.

The overwhelming burden of the refugees has been unevenly spread across the Arab states, whereby Lebanon and Jordan had received the largest portion of refugees by the end of 2014.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the UNHCR reports that Jordan is ranked second in the world for the number of refugees (90) per 1,000 inhabitants. The top country is Lebanon, with a staggering 209.<sup>8</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Yemen are also hosting refugee populations.

Analysing demographic data – total population and median age of population – through the prism of mobility, and based on these two indicators, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and Yemen remain the top countries of origin for migration.

The Gulf region is also home to 32 million<sup>9</sup> migrant workers mostly from Asia and the Arab States. Most of the refugees, migrants and IDPs typically live in urban slums and informal settlements<sup>10</sup> which contributes to their vulnerability. Migrant workers make up the majority of the population in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, offering a new set of challenges with regards to hazard and climate risks. Most of the migrant workers live in trying conditions (e.g., in isolated camps, informal settlements and crowded houses). Due to the lack of the knowledge of Arabic their understanding of risk situations remain weak. Due to their poor social status they remain among the most vulnerable social groups.

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#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>5</sup> Ibid: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02db416.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid: <http://www.unhcr.org/564da0e49.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International 2014.

<sup>8</sup> [http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/02/the-weakest-links-syria-refugees-migrants-crisis-data-visualization/?utm\\_content=buffer52983&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/02/the-weakest-links-syria-refugees-migrants-crisis-data-visualization/?utm_content=buffer52983&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> IOM 2015.



### 2.2.1b Demographic profile: subregional perspective

Each subregion has its own demographic dynamic. The Mashreq (with a population of 165 million in 2015 and 221 million in 2030) remains the largest subregion with Egypt the most populous country in the whole Arab region. The region is characterized by a predominantly high population growth rate, which at 2030 will be: 2.47 per cent (Iraq), 2.28 per cent (Syria), 2.27 per cent (Palestine), 1.27 per cent (Jordan) and 1.45 per cent (Egypt). Lebanon is the exception, with negative population growth forecast over the period 2020-2030. It maintains a relatively high sex ratio (males per 100 females) within the 15-25 age group, with Syria having very high sex ratio (109) and Lebanon an unusually low ratio for the region (93.3 but increasing to 103 by 2030). Lebanon is projected to see significant migration out of the country, the highest in the whole region, reaching 27.3 per cent in 2020-2025 and 12.5 per cent in the period 2025-2030. In addition, Lebanon received over one million refugees since 2011.<sup>11</sup> And, as of April 2016, about 650,000 refugees were registered in Jordan.<sup>12</sup> This is a massive burden for a country with a population of only 9.5 million. For comparison, should the same proportion arrive to the United States, it would represent more than 22 million refugees. About 250,000 refugees from Syria have settled in Iraq, the majority of whom reside in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).<sup>13</sup>

The Maghreb (with a population of 96 million in 2015 and 114 million in 2030) shows a relatively small population growth rate, from 0.59 per cent in Tunisia to 1.2 per cent in Algeria by 2030, except for Mauritania that has a 2.08 per cent growth rate. The population has a relatively high median age and it will continue to show slow growth, ranging from 21 in Mauritania to 36 in Tunisia by 2030. Continuous migration out of the Maghreb over the period 2005-2030 is expected, with Libya experiencing the highest negative net migration rate in the Maghreb: -16 per cent, which is largely explained by the civil war in 2011. There are about 434,900 IDPs in the country.<sup>14</sup>

The STC (with a population of 79 million in 2015 and 111 million in 2030) is the youngest subregion with a median age of 18 to 19 years in 2015, with the exception of Djibouti, with a median age of 23.6. It is also the subregion with the highest fertility rate in the Arab region in 2015: 6.1 per cent (Somalia), 4.2 per cent (Comoros), 4.1 per cent (Sudan), 3.9 per cent (Yemen) and 2.9 per cent (Djibouti). By 2030 the total population of this subregion (129 million) will exceed the Maghreb's (114 million). Continuous and stable migration from the subregion is taking place ranging from -7.9 per cent in Somalia to -4.2 per cent in Sudan, -3.7 per cent in Djibouti and -2.7 per cent in Comoros.

As estimated by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), there are over 1.1 million IDPs in Somalia (however difficult it is to clearly distinguish IDPs from economic migrants, pastoralists who have moved into urban centres following loss of livestock or

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>11</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=103>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e485f36&submit=GO>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/somalia/figures-analysis>.

IDP returns).<sup>15</sup> Instead, Djibouti has experienced protracted refugee crisis, having hosted more than 23,000 mainly Somali refugees and more than 5,000 asylum-seekers (December 2015).<sup>16</sup> Human and food insecurity are the main causes for mass movements in this subregion: disasters such as droughts and conflicts shape the IDP landscape in the STC.

The GCC (with a population of 54 million in 2015 and 69 million in 2030) is the only subregion with positive net migration. During 2010-2015, net migration into the subregion was 3.4 million, with 5.8 per cent to the UAE and 8.5 per cent to Qatar. These numbers do not take into account the vast number of illegal migrants in the subregion. The median age is the highest in the region: ranging from 28.3 years (Saudi Arabia) to 33.3 years (United Arab Emirates). The subregion has the highest sex ratio in the whole region's 15-25 age group, especially Qatar (311), UAE (186), Bahrain (153), and Oman (152).

## 2.2.2 Regional and subregional socioeconomic profile

A look at some of the main socioeconomic indicators reveals some of the underlying drivers of vulnerability. Table 5a provides an overview of the main indicators from 2014. This shows the socioeconomic patterns of subregions and countries at a glance.

**Table 5a**  
**Social and economic indicators, 2014**

Region	Country	GNI	GNI Per Capita	GDP growth ann., %	Access to elect., % of pop.	Internet users, %	Women in nat. parl., %
GCC	Saudi Arabia	759.3	51 320	3.5	97.7	63.7	20
GCC	Emirates	405.2	67 720	4.6	97.7	90.4	18
GCC	Qatar	200.3	134 420	4.0	97.7	91.5	0
GCC	Kuwait	185.0	79 850	-1.6	97.7	78.7	2
GCC	Oman	65.9	33 690	2.9	97.7	70.2	1
GCC	Bahrain	28.4	17 680	4.5	97.7	91.0	8
Maghreb	Algeria	213.8	13 880	3.8	100.0	18.1	32
Maghreb	Morocco	105.8	7 290	2.4	100.0	56.8	17
Maghreb	Libya	49.0	16 000	-24.0	100.0	17.8	16
Maghreb	Tunisia	46.5	11 020	2.7	100.0	46.2	31
Maghreb	Mauritania	5.0	3 710	6.4	21.8	10.7	25
Mashreq	Egypt	273.1	10 260	2.2	100.0	31.7	2
Mashreq	Iraq	226.3	15 030	-2.1	100.0	11.3	25
Mashreq	Syria	72.0	3 890		96.3	28.1	12
Mashreq	Lebanon	45.6	17 590	2.0	100.0	74.7	3
Mashreq	Jordan	34.1	11 910	3.1	99.5	44.0	12
Mashreq	Palestine	13.1	5 000	-1.5	97.7	53.7	
STC	Sudan	67.3	3 920	3.1	32.6	24.6	24
STC	Yemen	33.3	3 650	4.2	48.4	22.6	0
STC	Somalia	5.7	226	2.6	32.7	1.6	14
STC	Djibouti	1.5	1 878	6.0	53.3	10.7	13
STC	Comoros	0.6	1 430	2.1	69.3	7.0	3

■ Data for 2013. Data for GNI and GDP per capita for Syria, Somalia, Djibouti.

Source: World Bank Indicators [<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/>].

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e483836.html>.

**Table 5b**  
**Unemployment rate in 2016,**  
**by gender and age group**

Region	Country	Age	Time	Unemployment rate -- ILO modelled estimates (%)			Unemployment -- ILO modelled estimates (thousands)			Labour force -- ILO modelled estimates (thousands)		
				Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Maghreb	Algeria	15+	2016	10.2	8.3	18.6	1218	814	403	11937	9769	2168
Maghreb	Algeria	15-24	2016	24.3	20.8	41.7	404	290	114	1664	1391	274
Maghreb	Algeria	25+	2016	7.9	6.3	15.3	814	525	289	10273	8379	1894
Maghreb	Libya	15+	2016	18.4	15.7	26.7	435	281	155	2363	1783	580
Maghreb	Libya	15-24	2016	45.7	38.6	64.3	164	100	64	358	259	99
Maghreb	Libya	25+	2016	13.6	11.9	18.9	272	181	91	2006	1525	481
Maghreb	Mauritania	15+	2016	9.8	8.6	12.6	125	75	50	1273	875	398
Maghreb	Mauritania	15-24	2016	17.8	15.5	22.5	47	27	20	266	176	89
Maghreb	Mauritania	25+	2016	7.7	6.8	9.8	78	48	30	1007	698	309
Maghreb	Morocco	15+	2016	9.4	9.2	9.9	1179	854	325	12542	9270	3272
Maghreb	Morocco	15-24	2016	18.6	19.2	16.8	383	298	85	2056	1552	504
Maghreb	Morocco	25+	2016	7.6	7.2	8.7	796	556	240	10486	7718	2768
Maghreb	Tunisia	15+	2016	15.5	12.6	23.5	633	379	254	4083	3001	1082
Maghreb	Tunisia	15-24	2016	36.4	34.5	40.3	215	140	75	593	407	186
Maghreb	Tunisia	25+	2016	12.0	9.2	20.0	418	239	179	3491	2594	896
<b>Maghreb</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>3591</b>	<b>2404</b>	<b>1187</b>	<b>32198</b>	<b>24699</b>	<b>7500</b>
<b>Maghreb</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>1213</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>4936</b>	<b>3784</b>	<b>1152</b>
<b>Maghreb</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>2378</b>	<b>1548</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>27262</b>	<b>20915</b>	<b>6348</b>
Mashreq	Egypt	15+	2016	12.4	8.6	25.1	3781	2024	1757	30469	23462	7007
Mashreq	Egypt	15-24	2016	34.6	30.6	43.4	1772	1075	697	5120	3512	1608
Mashreq	Egypt	25+	2016	7.9	4.8	19.6	2009	949	1060	25349	19949	5400
Mashreq	Iraq	15+	2016	7.9	6.9	11.9	810	567	243	10235	8193	2042
Mashreq	Iraq	15-24	2016	16.2	14.1	24.2	398	278	120	2465	1969	496
Mashreq	Iraq	25+	2016	5.3	4.6	7.9	411	289	123	7770	6224	1546
Mashreq	Jordan	15+	2016	15.3	13.1	25.7	363	256	107	2378	1961	417
Mashreq	Jordan	15-24	2016	38.5	33.4	60.6	160	113	47	415	338	77
Mashreq	Jordan	25+	2016	10.4	8.8	17.7	203	143	60	1963	1623	339
Mashreq	Lebanon	15+	2016	6.6	5.3	10.5	142	87	55	2164	1638	526
Mashreq	Lebanon	15-24	2016	17.2	15.1	22.0	59	36	23	345	239	106
Mashreq	Lebanon	25+	2016	4.6	3.7	7.6	83	51	32	1820	1400	420
Mashreq	Palestine	15+	2016	26.9	22.2	44.7	353	230	123	1313	1039	275
Mashreq	Palestine	15-24	2016	41.6	36.1	67.1	140	100	40	336	277	59
Mashreq	Palestine	25+	2016	21.8	17.1	38.6	213	130	83	977	762	216
Mashreq	Syria	15+	2016	14.8	10.8	38.1	708	441	266	4786	4088	698
Mashreq	Syria	15-24	2016	35.1	27.8	80.4	378	258	120	1076	927	149
Mashreq	Syria	25+	2016	8.9	5.8	26.6	330	183	146	3710	3161	550
<b>Mashreq</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>6157</b>	<b>3607</b>	<b>2551</b>	<b>51346</b>	<b>40381</b>	<b>10965</b>
<b>Mashreq</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>41.9</b>	<b>2907</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1046</b>	<b>9757</b>	<b>7262</b>	<b>2495</b>
<b>Mashreq</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>3250</b>	<b>1746</b>	<b>1504</b>	<b>41589</b>	<b>33119</b>	<b>8470</b>

Region	Country	Age	Time	Unemployment rate -- ILO modelled estimates (%)			Unemployment -- ILO modelled estimates (thousands)			Labour force -- ILO modelled estimates (thousands)		
				Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
GCC	Bahrain	15+	2016	1.2	0.5	4.0	10	3	7	816	641	175
GCC	Bahrain	15-24	2016	5.5	2.6	13.2	5	2	3	87	63	23
GCC	Bahrain	25+	2016	0.7	0.2	2.5	5	1	4	730	578	151
GCC	Emirates	15+	2016	1.6	1.2	4.6	105	69	36	6416	5634	781
GCC	Emirates	15-24	2016	4.9	3.8	9.3	24	15	9	481	386	95
GCC	Emirates	25+	2016	1.4	1.0	4.0	81	54	27	5935	5248	687
GCC	Kuwait	15+	2016	2.2	1.3	4.6	50	21	29	2229	1598	631
GCC	Kuwait	15-24	2016	17.7	7.6	37.5	29	8	21	166	110	56
GCC	Kuwait	25+	2016	1.0	0.8	1.4	20	12	8	2064	1489	575
GCC	Oman	15+	2016	3.3	1.8	13.2	79	37	42	2410	2091	319
GCC	Oman	15-24	2016	8.7	3.8	27.5	26	9	17	296	235	61
GCC	Oman	25+	2016	2.5	1.5	9.9	53	28	26	2114	1856	258
GCC	Qatar	15+	2016	0.1	0.1	0.7	3	1	2	1929	1659	270
GCC	Qatar	15-24	2016	0.4	0.2	2.1	1	0	1	255	219	36
GCC	Qatar	25+	2016	0.1	0.0	0.4	2	1	1	1673	1439	234
GCC	Saudi Arabia	15+	2016	5.6	2.6	21.5	759	288	471	13431	11242	2189
GCC	Saudi Arabia	15-24	2016	24.9	18.2	46.6	215	121	94	864	662	202
GCC	Saudi Arabia	25+	2016	4.3	1.6	19.0	544	167	377	12568	10580	1987
<b>GCC</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>1005</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>27231</b>	<b>22866</b>	<b>4365</b>
<b>GCC</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>2148</b>	<b>1676</b>	<b>472</b>
<b>GCC</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>25083</b>	<b>21191</b>	<b>3892</b>
STC	Comoros	15+	2016	4.4	4.1	4.6	9	5	4	205	120	85
STC	Comoros	15-24	2016	9.9	11.3	8.6	2	1	1	21	10	11
STC	Comoros	25+	2016	3.7	3.4	4.1	7	4	3	184	110	74
STC	Djibouti	15+	2016	5.8	5.2	6.7	22	12	11	380	221	159
STC	Djibouti	15-24	2016	11.6	10.9	12.3	8	4	4	73	37	36
STC	Djibouti	25+	2016	4.5	4.1	5.0	14	8	6	307	184	123
STC	Somalia	15+	2016	6.0	5.8	6.8	213	164	49	3528	2807	721
STC	Somalia	15-24	2016	11.0	10.8	12.0	102	79	23	927	734	192
STC	Somalia	25+	2016	4.2	4.1	4.9	110	84	26	2601	2072	528
STC	Sudan	15+	2016	12.7	9.1	23.1	1381	734	647	10847	8048	2800
STC	Sudan	15-24	2016	27.3	21.3	42.8	595	335	260	2182	1574	608
STC	Sudan	25+	2016	9.1	6.2	17.7	786	399	387	8666	6474	2192
STC	Yemen	15+	2016	13.7	12.6	26.5	859	725	134	6257	5750	507
STC	Yemen	15-24	2016	25.2	24.1	35.9	407	355	52	1618	1473	145
STC	Yemen	25+	2016	9.7	8.6	22.8	452	369	82	4639	4277	362
<b>STC</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>2484</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>21217</b>	<b>16945</b>	<b>4271</b>
<b>STC</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>1115</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>4821</b>	<b>3829</b>	<b>992</b>
<b>STC</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25+</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>1369</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>16396</b>	<b>13116</b>	<b>3280</b>

Source: ILO modelled estimates, May 2018

[[http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3.jspx?MBI\\_ID=2](http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3.jspx?MBI_ID=2)].

Accessed 24 September 2018.

This table shows two extremes of economic development across the region: Gcc with the highest Gni per capita, and the STc with the lowest. For comparison, Qatar has 134,420 Gni per capita (the highest in the whole region), whereas Somali has the lowest at 226. The Maghreb and the Mashreq regions are approximately on the same level of well-being. The Maghreb countries, except Libya, show positive trends in GDP growth. In the Maghreb, the highest value of Gni per capita is in Libya (USD 16,000), despite a significant fall in this indicator (-24 per cent) following the overthrow of Kaddafi, and in Algeria (USD 13,880). The lowest value is in Mauritania (USD 3710). The STC is the poorest region. All available data about GDP per capita correspond to low income countries. The World Bank has no data for Djibouti, but Wikipedia shows GDP 1.6 billion (2004) and GDP per capita USD 1878. Two countries in this region – Somalia and Yemen – are in civil war.

All the countries in the region exhibit positive annual growth in GDP with exceptions of Libya (-24 per cent), Iraq (-2.1 per cent), Palestine (-1.5 per cent) and Kuwait (-1.6 per cent). This indicator is absent for Syria, but it is obvious that after seven years of civil war in Syria, it will be negative and high in absolute value.

The unemployment rate in the GCC countries is relatively low, only high unemployment rates are scored by the age group 15-24 years in Saudi Arabia (24.9 per cent), Kuwait (17.7 per cent), and Oman (8.7 per cent). In the Mashreq and the Maghreb, the unemployment rate is moderate, the exceptions being Libya (45.7 per cent) and Tunisia (36.4 per cent) in the Maghreb, and Palestine (41.6 per cent) in the Mashreq. Similarly, male unemployment in the age range 15-24 is very high, especially in Libya (38.6 per cent), Palestine (36.1), Tunisia (34.4) and Jordan (33.4 per cent). This can induce social instability risks. In all the region, female unemployment is higher than male unemployment, particularly among the 15-24 age groups. In the GCC subregion, this inequality is particularly high in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with female unemployment in the 15-24 age range at 46.6 and 37.5 per cent, respectively, compared to 18.2 and 7.6 per cent of young male unemployment respectively. The only exception is in Morocco where such inequality tends to disappear and even to be reversed, with 19.2 per cent of male unemployment against 16.8 per cent of female unemployment in the 15-24 age range. (See Table 5b)

Another indicator of gender disparity is the percentage of seats held by women in national parliaments. Countries with an extremely low value for this indicator are: Qatar, Kuwait, Oman (Gcc), Egypt, Lebanon (Mashreq), Yemen, Comoros (STc), where there are zero to three women in the national parliaments. There are eight to eighteen women in parliament in Bahrain, the UAE (Gcc), Syria, Jordan (Mashreq), Djibouti, Somalia (STc), Libya, and Morocco (Maghreb). The highest value for this indicator across the whole region is in Algeria (31) and Tunisia (31).

The level of access to electricity is very high in the GCC, the Mashreq and the Maghreb countries – almost 100 per cent, except for Mauritania in the Maghreb (21.8 per cent). This indicator is very low, however, in the STC, especially in Sudan (32.6 per cent), Somalia (32.7 per cent), Yemen (approximately 48 per cent), and Comoros (70 per cent). According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITC), the internet access indicator is sufficiently

high in the GCC countries (e.g. in UAE, Qatar and Bahrain more than 90 per cent of population has access to internet). In the Maghreb, the highest values for this indicator are in Morocco (57.08 per cent) and Tunisia (48.52 per cent). In the Mashreq the highest levels are in Lebanon (74 per cent), Palestine (57.42 per cent) and Jordan (53.4 per cent). Internet access in the STC is very low. The highest levels are in Sudan (26.61 per cent) and Yemen (25.6 per cent).

### 2.2.3 Urban poverty and urban slums

Two important factors to consider while exploring urbanization in the Arab region, are the percentage of urban slums and the level of urban poverty. Both factors are tightly linked to inequalities (and deprivation) and the rights-based approach to development.

#### 2.2.3a Urban Poverty

Urban poverty has become a global challenge. Even though the understanding of urban poverty has advanced significantly during the last 20-25 years, there is still little attention to urban poverty and a significant conceptual disarray in defining and measuring urban poverty. Should it entail the level of income or the level of expenditures, or perhaps, access to basic needs and services, or even the quality of housing? The dollar-a-day poverty line (and its adjustment to USD 1.90) is one example of the use of overly simplistic income-based poverty line. It implies that the income needed to avoid poverty is the same everywhere (whether in large cities, smaller urban centres or rural areas), whereas personal and household expenditures increase proportionally to urbanization level.<sup>17</sup>

There is a massive lack of basic data about urban poverty,<sup>18</sup> but there are different attempts to measure urban poverty. Acknowledging that urban poverty has multiple dimensions, for the purpose of this report, the Alkire-Forster Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is used to explore urban poverty in the Arab states.<sup>19</sup> The AF MPI uses micro survey data to reflect on household deprivation across three areas: education, health and living conditions. Even though the AF MPI is a global tool for monitoring progress and measuring poverty, no up-to-date data gathered through nationally representative surveys is available for the Arab region as a whole. Nevertheless, some indications can be drawn based on already existing data.

Among the 1.7 billion people worldwide defined by the AF MPI as living in multidimensional (MD) poverty, 2.5 per cent live in Arab States, which means 41.225 million people are MD poor in this region. There are also 21.5 million people vulnerable to or at risk of MD poverty in the region, and 18.8 million “severely poor,” representing 9.3 per cent and 7.9 per cent respectively of the total population of 231.1 million urban people in 2010.<sup>20</sup>

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#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>17</sup> Mitlin 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Tacoli 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Nawar 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

When comparing urban rural MD poverty, the Arab region is shown to have a higher ratio of rural to urban poverty (3.5) than all other developing regions. *“The MPI at subnational levels reveals that high social deprivations – and therefore low resilience – are inflicting much suffering on ordinary citizens in rural and certain geographic areas within the Arab States.”*<sup>21</sup> It must be noted that even though the ratio of rural poverty is higher in terms of percentage, given the prevailing and constantly growing urban population in the region, in absolute terms urban poverty in Arab region affects millions of people.

### 2.2.3b Urban Slums

Another indication of urban poverty is the percentage of urban slums. There is little data available also on urban slums in the Arab region, but Table 6 shows that urban slums remain a significant issue. The slum population percentage has not changed visibly for Comoros, Somalia and Yemen over the period 1990-2014. Slums have been reduced significantly in Egypt and Morocco, and slightly in Jordan, over the same period. The highest percentage of the urban population living in slums is in Sudan (91.6 per cent), Mauritania (79.9 per cent), Somalia (78.6 per cent), Comoros (69.6 per cent) and Yemen (60.8 per cent). Even though the percentage is smaller in other countries – like Morocco (13.1 per cent), Jordan (12.9 per cent), Egypt (10.6 per cent), Syria (19.3 per cent) or Tunisia (8.0 per cent) by 2014 – the absolute number of people living in slums or informal settlements in these countries is still in the millions.

**Table 6**  
**Slum population**  
**as a percentage**  
**of urban population**  
**for selected Arab**  
**States (1990-2014)**

COUNTRY	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	2009	2014
Comoros	65.4	65.4	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9	69.6
Egypt	50.2	39.2	28.1	17.1	14.4	13.1	10.6
Iraq	16.9	16.9	16.9	52.8	52.8	52.8	47.2
Jordan	-	-	-	15.8	17.7	19.6	12.9
Lebanon	-	-	-	53.1	-	-	-
Mauritania	-	-	-	-	-	-	79.9
Morocco	37.4	35.2	24.2	13.1	13.1	13.1	13.1
Saudi Arabia	-	-	-	18.0	-	-	-
Somalia	-	-	-	73.5	73.6	73.6	73.6
Sudan	-	-	-	-	-	-	91.6
Syria	-	-	-	10.5	22.5	-	19.3
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.0
Yemen	-	-	-	67.2	76.8	-	60.8

Source: United Nations Statistics Division 2015 (data for all available Arab states).

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## 2.3

### Urbanization in progress: challenges and opportunities for urban resilience

Despite many cultural and historical commonalities, countries in the region vary dramatically. Yet, there are certain dynamics that are quite articulated at the subregional urban level and provide entry points to ground resilience-building activities in the region.

The Arab region is witnessing an unprecedented rate of urbanization. According to our calculations based on World Bank indicators, the region already exhibited an average urbanization growth rate of 3.1 per cent in 2015, which is well above the world average of 2.067 per cent. Most of the population resides in urban areas, with the urban population in the GCC ranging between 75 and 100 per cent. The STC however remains the least urbanized subregion (34.5 per cent of urbanization in 2015), yet for the 2015-2030 period it is projected to show the highest urbanization growth. In 2015 there were already 32 agglomerations in the region with more than one million inhabitants. This number will grow to 45 by 2030, with total population exceeding 128 million, with the largest urban populations in Cairo (Egypt), Baghdad (Iraq), and Alexandria (Egypt), with 24.5 million, 9.7 million, and 6.3 million inhabitants, respectively (UN DESA, 2014).

#### Box 1 Cairo Population

The Greater Cairo province is home to 20 per cent of Egypt's population, while its area is no more than two per cent of the total land surface. The Supreme Council for Urban Planning and Development (under the Council of Ministers) formulated a strategy for comprehensive development in Egypt until 2050, which indicates that the population distribution is not proportionate to the surface area of the inhabited regions and outlines the country's need for an additional 40,000 feddans\* a year in order to accommodate the population increase.

\* A unit of area equivalent to 4200m<sup>2</sup> / 0.42 hectares / 1.038 acres.

The population growth dynamic remains positive across the whole region, in which the higher fertility rate is reflected in the least developed countries in the STC, which also have the highest percentage of slums: Sudan (91.6 per cent), Comoros (69.6 per cent), Mauritania (79.9 per cent) and Somalia (73.6 per cent).

The region is characterized by a very young population; more than half the region's population is under the age of 25. Median age varies from 16.5 years in Somalia to 30.3 years in Bahrain. Populations in the STC are both the youngest and the fastest growing. The positive dynamic created by the growing percentage of the young male population (age 15-24) throughout the whole region is accompanied by high youth unemployment in all subregions. Finally, the Maghreb and the Mashreq have the highest average male (respectively 22.6 and 25.6 per cent) and female (respectively 31.0 and 41.9 per cent) youth unemployment.

Socioeconomic progress is unevenly distributed over the region. Although the average GNI per capita is more than USD 26,000 in the GCC, it remains at around USD 10,000 in the Maghreb and the Mashreq, reaching its lowest extreme in the STC at just over USD 2,000. Internet coverage in the region (excluding GCC) remains relatively modest, at around only 26 per cent.



The gender disparity manifests itself in various aspects of the region's social fabric. The predominantly high sex ratio throughout the region, with a disproportionately high ratio in the GCC (Qatar: 265.5, UAE:274, Oman: 197, Bahrain: 163), will inevitably have a major impact on the demographic structure, and eventually the urban and socioeconomic profile of each country in the region. Another indicator of gender disparity is the number of seats in national parliament held by women, which is very small throughout the whole region, with the Maghreb countries having on average the highest numbers of women in parliament (16-32 on average).

Countries in the region are both source, transit and recipient ones of large migrants flows. In non-oil-producing countries, driven by the high level of unemployment and rising cost of living, the young male population migrates to cities in search of economic opportunities. The demographic risk of migration is articulated particularly in Egypt, Sudan, Iraq and Yemen. Oil-producing countries are largely the recipients of migrants. In Kuwait and Qatar, for example, refugees and migrants make up more than 70 per cent of the population.

Wars and internal conflicts over the past 50 years have caused political instability, damage to the infrastructure and stunted economic growth. By the end of 2012, rulers had been forced from power in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Protests, some major (in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Sudan and Bahrain), and some minor (in Mauritania, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti and Palestine) were seen during the Arab Spring uprising. Today, the Arab region is immersed in ongoing wars with civil unrest in Syria, Yemen, and Libya; undergoing the long-drawn-out and periodically escalating tensions in the State of Palestine, Iraq, and Somalia; and still experiencing the ramifications of recent conflicts in their history (e.g., in Egypt and Sudan). This situation jeopardizes further growth and prosperity in the region as a whole, and threatens the major cities facing migration influxes and further escalations of socioeconomic tensions.

Today, the Arab region has the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world (in Iraq, South Sudan and Syria), in which about 40 per cent of the Syrian population or about 6.6 million people, are currently displaced.<sup>22</sup> Since 2011, the Yemeni crisis has left some 21.1 million people (84 per cent of the total population) fully dependent on humanitarian aid.<sup>23</sup> The spillover effect of this situation is felt throughout the region. Jordan and Lebanon, for example, host the highest proportion of refugees in the region, disproportionately high compared to the total population of those countries. Meanwhile, Iraq and Sudan host the world's third and fourth largest IDP populations (over 3.3 million and 3.1 million, respectively). Palestine is facing the largest and longest refugee crisis in the history of the world: about 5.1 million refugees according to UNHCR.

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#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>22</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Displacement in Syria as of 21 October 2014 [<http://www.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/2014/displacement-in-syria-as-of-october-2014>].

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.unocha.org/yemen>.