

NEWS RELEASE

Bahrain, Jordan and the UAE offer highest levels of economic freedom among Arab nations

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For Immediate Release

TORONTO, ON—Bahrain, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are the most economically free nations in the Arab world, according to the annual *Economic Freedom of the Arab World* report published by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank, in partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty (FNF) and the International Research Foundation (IRF) of Oman.

All three countries posted scores of 8.0. For Bahrain, the region's financial hub, and the UAE, an Arab leader in commerce, the score represented a slight decrease from their 8.1 scores that topped last year's report. Jordan, which ranked second last year, maintained its 8.0 score.

"Economic freedom is the key to increasing prosperity, creating jobs and reducing poverty. Economic freedom liberates people from government dependence and opens the door to democracy and other freedoms," said Fred McMahon, Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom (Fraser Institute) and co-author of the report.

Among the 18 nations in this year's report, Algeria, last year's last place country, again holds the dubious distinction of being the least economically free nation in the Arab world with a score of 5.8. Mauritania and Iraq ranked 16th and 17th, with scores of 6.3 and 6.1 respectively. Due to the civil war in Syria, and the questionable data emanating from that country, it was not ranked in this year's report.

The *Economic Freedom of the Arab World* report compares and ranks Arab nations in five areas of economic freedom: size of government, including expenditures, taxes, and enterprises; commercial and economic law and security of property rights; access to sound money; freedom to trade internationally; and regulation of credit, labour, and business. The complete report may be downloaded as a PDF, free of charge, at freetheworld.com.

Economic freedom is based on the cornerstones of personal choice, voluntary exchange, freedom to compete, and security of private property. Research shows that individuals living in countries with high levels of economic freedom enjoy higher levels of prosperity, greater individual freedoms and longer life spans. A denial of economic freedom helped spark the "Arab Spring." This report provides a timely reminder of the importance of real reform to increase economic freedom and prosperity throughout the region.

The report measures available data on economic freedom in 22 nations of the League of Arab States, but due to data limitations, calculations of the overall level of economic freedom are only available for 18 jurisdictions: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Sudan, Iraq and the UAE. The rankings are entirely based on third-party data. The full data sets are available at freetheworld.com.

The report, which has been presented since 2005, is one of a number of regional reports based in part or in whole on the Fraser Institute's annual *Economic Freedom of the World Report*, which ranks the economic freedom levels of 144 countries.

(more)

Economic Freedom Rankings 2013: Countries of the Arab World

1. Bahrain, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (8.0)
4. Kuwait (7.8)
5. Lebanon (7.7)
6. Oman and Qatar (7.6)
8. Saudi Arabia (7.4)
9. Yemen (7.3)
10. Tunisia (6.9)
11. Egypt (6.8)
12. Morocco (6.7)
13. Sudan (6.6)
14. Djibouti (6.5)
15. Comoros (6.4)
16. Mauritania (6.3)
17. Iraq (6.1)
18. Algeria (5.8)

-30-

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