



## **NATO Parliamentary Assembly**



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**11<sup>TH</sup> MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE SEMINAR**

**DOHA, QATAR**

**BACKGROUND READING**

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## Challenges for the Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Recent Developments

The GCC countries - Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - face challenges on both domestic and international fronts. Domestically, demographic pressures and a crisis of the social model are exacerbated by the volatility of the very narrow natural resource-based and state-dominated economies. Internationally, the fall of the Baathist regime in Iraq has changed the security balance and requires new thinking. Amidst reform efforts, an unpredictable Iranian foreign policy and a wave of Islamic fundamentalist terror activities pose additional challenges and are reinvigorating international attention. The following paper gives an overview of some of the key issues of reform, media, economic structure and security with a special emphasis on Qatar.

### Political Systems and Reforms

Like the rest of the Middle East, the Gulf monarchies have not been exempt from calls towards greater political openness and participatory political systems. Such calls for change have long emanated notably from Islamist groups. More recently, a broader basis of reform oriented activists and intellectuals have started to actively promote democratic reforms throughout the region in meetings and declarations like the Doha Declaration for Democracy and Reform of June 2004. The declaration states, that “democratic change has become a non-negotiable choice which cannot be postponed” and “neither Arab culture nor the Islamic religion are in any form or shape contradictory to democratic practices and values. Two thirds of the 1.4 billion Muslims in the world today are already living under democratically elected governments.”<sup>1</sup>

Mostly regarded as stifling autocracies, which have survived Arab nationalism, Islamism and so far democracy, the Gulf systems should also be considered in their particular historical and social context, which distinguishes them from other Middle Eastern countries. Throughout their long history, ruling families have been intertwined with tribal, arch-patriarchal and traditional societies through a web of marriage alliances. Societal demands for reforms thus often focus on broader, more responsive autocracy rather than Western style democracy. Above all, the economic structure of the Gulf countries has so far determined the patriarchal nature of the political systems. States whose primary function is the allocation of revenues derived from resource exports do not act on the classic premises of tax financed public good provision. Thus, citizens expect the state to generously and fairly distribute revenue and do not hold it accountable for the provision of public goods as if they were financed out of the people’s pocket. It is thus not surprising that demands for political openness became more vociferous in the early 1990s when oil revenues were low and national budgets were strained. Pressure is especially high in Saudi Arabia, not a city-state like other GCC countries, which is faced with strong demographic pressures (see table on population on page 11). Crown Prince Abdullah himself has spoken of a “suffocating crisis” at least before the new oil price hike in the past year.<sup>2</sup>

Since the 1990s, shura councils (Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain) or parliaments (Kuwait) have been developed in almost all GCC countries. The institution of shura (consultative) councils is founded in the Qur’an,<sup>3</sup> and often taken as evidence that Islam and democracy are not mutually exclusive but, in fact, Islam makes democratic provisions. The holy text calls on leaders to consult with their followers on matters of the community. According to different interpretations of the Qur’an, Islamic scholars debate whether shura councils are obligatory or merely desirable for a ruler to instate. There is also no clear indication as to how shura councils are composed (elected or appointed) and how much influence they have in the decision making process. The difficult issue of the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.npwj.org/?q=node/1715>

<sup>2</sup> The Economist March 21, 2002, “No taxation, no representation”

<sup>3</sup> Sure 3:159 “And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and hardhearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).”

interpretation of the religious text is inherent in the debate as to how much shura councils resemble democratically elected parliaments with all their rights and duties. In line with this ambiguity, shura councils and parliaments in the Gulf also differ in the percentage of elected and appointed members, their unicameral or bicameral character and their powers.

Kuwait's unicameral parliament, the fully elected Majlis al-Umma, is the most active and has the greatest authority. Going beyond pure consultation, the parliament can remove ministers with a majority vote of its elected members. The ruling family thus needs to consider the ministers' popularity before appointing them. Long prevented by the tribal and Islamist majority of the assembly, women's voting rights have finally been approved in May 2005.

In Bahrain, the elected lower house of the parliament can also remove ministers, but with a threshold of two-thirds of its forty members. The second chamber, the Majlis ash-Shura consists of forty royal appointees, six of which are women. The modern 2002 constitution has boasted hopes about democratic reform in Bahrain. In addition to further developing participatory institutions, the integration of the Shiite majority (60-70%) remains a challenge. The Shiites largely boycotted the 2002 elections. In Qatar, a similar set-up of a mix of elected and appointed members is envisaged, but in one chamber. Two thirds of the Majlis ash-Shura will be elected and one third appointed by the Emir. The assembly will be able to remove a minister with a two-thirds majority.

Oman and Saudi Arabia are at the lower range when it comes to parliamentary influence. The Omani "Majlis Oman" consists of an elected Majlis ash-Shura and an appointed Majlis ad-Dawla. The former has a merely consultative role and no further powers. The members of the Saudi Majlis ash-Shura are all appointed by the king and also have a merely consultative role. Saudi Arabia held municipal elections in March 2005, which were the first elections ever to be held in the kingdom. Male voters above the age of 21 elected half of the members of the local councils and the king designated the other half. Islamist candidates were somewhat unexpectedly more successful than those who had run their campaign on tribal allegiance.<sup>4</sup>

Even if the powers of these newly elected assemblies are restrained, the quality of elections scores well compared to other emerging democracies and authoritarian regimes. Elections were mostly free and fair. It is not so much by controlling the election process than by balancing the elected bodies with appointed officials that the leaders guarantee the relative continuity of political systems.<sup>5</sup> The strategies of many regimes seem to correspond to the aristocrat's view in Lampedusa's Leopard: "If we want things to stay as they are things will have to change."

## **Challenges by Islamist Movements**

Progress in making political systems more accountable is overshadowed by the fear of rising radicalism. One of the most pertinent threats in the Gulf region stems from the growing radicalisation of Islamist splinter movements. While Islamism has a tendency towards moderation or even integration into political systems in other Middle Eastern countries, violent jihadist groups are on the rise in the Gulf. For groups inspired by the survival of Osama bin Laden and the surge of terrorist activity in Iraq, the Gulf countries and especially Saudi Arabia are the real battlegrounds against the infidels. Growing dissatisfaction with the ruling elites on the one hand and a still deeply rooted conservative culture on the other feed the destabilising role of violent fundamentalist groups.<sup>6</sup> These challenges have also led to a relative slowdown of political reforms in the last year in order to maintain public order, which coincides with Western interests in a stable regional environment.

The 1990-1991 Gulf War and the stationing of US-led multinational forces was a defining moment for the radicalisation of Islamist movements, which started to target their opposition against the

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<sup>4</sup> Courier International April 25, 2005

<sup>5</sup> Michael Herb, "Parliaments in the Gulf Monarchies: A long Way from Democracy," Carnegie Arab Reform Bulletin Vol. 2, Issue 10.

<sup>6</sup> Amr Hamzawy, "Understanding Arab Political Reality. One Lens Is Not Enough, Carnegie Policy Outlook, March 2005

state and its institutions rather than limiting it to liberal intellectuals. Many members of Islamic opposition groups drifted towards militant jihadism, among them Osama Bin Laden. The state reacted by cracking down on Islamist groups and imprisoning many of its members, which were slowly released again and partly co-opted by the regime by the late 90s. While many old leaders evolved more moderately and were in favour of an “enlightened” reading of the sacred texts, another stream evolved more radically and were at the origin of today’s salafist-jihadist movement. Among militant groups, there exists tension and some competition between those with an international outlook (like the al-Qaeda network) and those who focus on domestic matters (al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula, QAP). Yet, despite the QAP’s at least rhetorical focus on Saudi Arabia, it also concentrates its attacks on foreign targets leading to a split within the movement. Moreover, it finds that many of its followers find it worthier to fight foreign infidels in Iraq rather than the Saudi security forces at home and are now strongly calling on militants to refocus the battle on Saudi Arabia.<sup>7</sup> Although Saudi security forces recently had some success in curtailing terrorist activities, the movement is far from being quelled.

As in other Middle Eastern countries, ethno-religious cleavages and a division of labour that does not reflect social realities give rise to destabilisation. This has become key in Iraq, but is an underlying source of tension also in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, where Sunni- Shiite relations remain tense. In Bahrain, the Shiite majority boycotted the 2002 elections and is until today considerably underrepresented in national politics. In Saudi Arabia, the regime is anxious not to encourage separatism of the Shiites who represent the majority of the population in the oil rich parts of the country and have spared Shiite Islamists from recent crackdowns. Social cleavages are still relevant. Although terrorists and jihadist militants are generally not from poor backgrounds, they disproportionately come from politically and economically marginalized areas.<sup>8</sup>

### **Media – Al-Jazeera as a Pioneer**

In the debate over political liberalisation, the media is usually attributed a key role. Still, the most important development in this respect was the birth of Al-Jazeera in 1996 as an independent satellite channel that could challenge the national and regime-friendly broadcasting services of the Arab world.

The existence of Al-Jazeera is a result of two coinciding developments: a tightening of media control in Saudi Arabia; and the pursuit of more openness in Qatar. Following a report that was highly critical of the Saudi Regime, the latter suspended a contract for a joint venture with the BBC. The remaining BBC trained Arabic-speaking journalists almost entirely constituted the core group for the Qatari start-up channel, Al-Jazeera. In Qatar, Amir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani formally lifted censorship of the media and sought to encourage a new independent TV channel as a sign of new openness and liberty after his seize of power in 1995 (Qatar is the only Arab country to have abolished its ministry of information). With its criticism of fellow Arab regimes, the network caused considerable diplomatic tensions between Al-Jazeera’s host state and fellow Arab governments. Several governments (e.g. Jordan, Kuwait) closed regional Al-Jazeera offices and others, notably Tunisia and Libya called back their ambassadors from Qatar.<sup>9</sup>

Until today, the channel is almost entirely funded by the government of Qatar, which according to press releases has recently announced its intention to privatise Al-Jazeera.<sup>10</sup> Unlike its competitors, Al-Jazeera has almost no advertising revenues, since most GCC countries and, above all, Saudi Arabia with 60% of Arab advertising spending, have called for a boycott. Al-Jazeera is the only media enterprise without direct or indirect Saudi shares, which could be jeopardized by privatisation.

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<sup>7</sup> International Crisis Group, “Saudi Arabia backgrounder: Who are the Islamists?” ICG Middle East Report September 2004

<sup>8</sup> ICG Middle East Report September 2004. This is both true for domestically as well as internationally oriented militants. Ten of the fifteen Saudi participants in the 9-11 attacks came from the Southern regions of Asir, Baha and Jizan.

<sup>9</sup> see for example Le Monde, October 15, 2002, “TÉLÉVISION: menaces de boycott d'Al-Jazira”

<sup>10</sup> The Economist Special, February 24, 2005 “The world through their eyes”

Al-Jazeera's most important competitor is the Dubai based Saudi owned channel, Al-Arabiya. Less emotional and less provocative, Al-Arabiya is perceived as more pro-American, especially since the appointment of a former Al-Sharq Al-Awsat journalist as chief editor.<sup>11</sup> While the two channels run neck-and-neck in terms of viewers in Saudi Arabia, Al-Jazeera is still leading the numbers in Egypt. According to recent polls, 88% of viewers in Cairo say they watch Al-Jazeera regularly, and only 35% do so for Al-Arabiya. In Iraq, Al-Arabiya has overtaken Al-Jazeera.<sup>12</sup>

Having stirred considerable tensions in the region, Al-Jazeera has also become the object of criticism notably from US officials. Its coverage of the Second Palestinian Intifada was criticized as too emotional and biased towards the Palestinians. At the same time, it must however be noted that Al-Jazeera was the first Arab television channel to show the state of Israel on a map. This balancing act has become a familiar reality throughout subsequent conflicts as Al-Jazeera balances off calls for independent Arab media on the one hand and the accusations of Islamism, anti-Americanism and its resulting pressures on the other hand.<sup>13</sup> Tensions escalated in the closing down of Al-Jazeera's Baghdad office by the Iraqi interim authorities in August 2004. Journalism associations have also criticized the recent verdict against Al-Jazeera's chief analyst on Islamist terror groups Taysir Alluni in Madrid.<sup>14</sup> Alluni was the first journalist to scoop an interview with Osama Bin Laden after 9-11 and was charged with helping finance terrorism by acting as a courier. Evidence on the al-Qaeda affiliation of the beneficiaries in Afghanistan is unreliable. The trial reflects heightened sensitivities, but also cautiousness in the area of terrorism.

## Regional Security

The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) is a regional common market with a defence planning council and a collective security mechanism that was established in 1981 at the initiative of Saudi Arabia and as a response to the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. Despite attempts to create an independent, regional security structure, most GCC states still rely on the US to guarantee their security. Divisions among member states, notably Saudi Arabia and the smaller countries, and reluctance to give up sovereignty have hampered regional efforts. Differences remain on domestic issues, such as the pace of political reform, and regional issues, such as the US-led invasion of Iraq. However, with mounting domestic opposition, a revision of the US security strategy, and discussions on force reductions,<sup>15</sup> the Gulf faces the challenge of increasing its own efforts or redesigning strategic partnerships. A strong international interest in the stability of the region will continue to underpin all such discussions.

The current situation presents itself as somewhat of a dilemma between mitigating outward threats and containing domestic pressures.<sup>16</sup> Following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime the most obvious threat to the region comes from Iran. The issues at stake are both tangible territorial disputes and broader questions of a nuclear arms race in the region. The UAE and Iran have still not settled their dispute on the strategically important Musa and Tunb islands. At the origin of the tensions are the historic rivalry of the twin pillars of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iran, a strong historical distrust on the Sunni Arab side towards the Persian Shiite theocracy and a constant fear of spill over of religious radicalism and Shiite separatism. Up to now, the US has acted as an open guarantor of Persian Gulf security. Yet, this security arrangement stirs domestic pressure of a publicly anti-American population and fuels Islamic extremism. Current discussions about a new Persian Gulf security system thus focus on attempts to overcome this dilemma and to find a sustainable arrangement that can integrate Iran and a new Iraq.

NATO's relations with the GCC mainly focus on border security, intelligence exchange and training. For the first time, NATO has established formal agreements with the GCC countries in the form of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). The initiative is open to all interested countries in

<sup>11</sup> Le Monde, November 2, 2004 "Les télévisions arabes et la guerre des images"

<sup>12</sup> The Economist Special, February 24, 2005 "The world through their eyes"

<sup>13</sup> For a good account see John R. Bradley, "Will Al-Jazeera bend?" in Prospect 97/2004

<sup>14</sup> cf. FT September 27, 2005 "Jailing of al-Jazeera reporter draws journalists' ire"

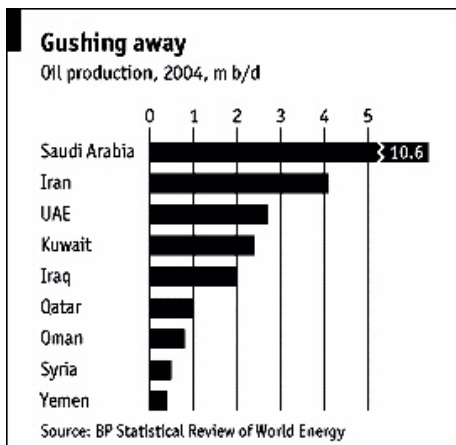
<sup>15</sup> as indicated in its January 2005 National Defence Strategy

<sup>16</sup> see Kenneth M. Pollack, "Securing the Gulf," in: Foreign Affairs July/August 2003

the broader Middle East and for the time being focuses on the GCC. It is intended to compliment the Mediterranean Dialogue, which does not include the GCC countries. Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and, the United Arab Emirates have so far joined the ICI and both Saudi Arabia and Oman have expressed a strong interest in joining. This recent initiative focuses on capacity building and helping interested countries' forces develop the ability to operate with NATO forces. Shared areas of interest include the areas of combating terrorism, preventing WMD proliferation, and arms trafficking as well as contributions to NATO-led peace operations.

### Sustainability of Hydrocarbon Economies

Predictions on the sustainability of oil and gas reserves should all be taken with a pinch of salt because they include a high degree of uncertainty about future discoveries, innovation in production technology and the structure of future demand. At present production rates, the Gulf's proven reserves are predicted to last for 100 years as opposed to 25 years for the rest of the world's proven oil. Research by the US Geological Survey estimates that with new discoveries and adding gas into the equation, the GCC countries will contribute 20% of the world's fossil fuel supplies, which would not be much more than Russian supplies.<sup>17</sup> Other estimates solely based on oil yet predict that the Gulf will become an even more important supplier in the coming decades than it is now.



The importance of Gulf oil is not merely due to its quantity - which is one fourth of the world's proven reserves - but also due to its low production costs. Thanks to these two factors, Saudi Arabia holds a spare capacity of oil that allows it to regulate the market as a swing producer, somewhat like a central banker of oil. Recent oil price hikes are, among other things, a result of the depletion of the Saudi spare capacity, which itself is the result of a lack of investment in production capacities over the past few years. This spare capacity is also the reason why Saudi Arabia's interest somewhat differs from other producers' desired prices. With high oil prices, like they are pursued by Iran, Libya or Venezuela, investors put money in non-OPEC oil or alternative fuels and Saudi Arabia loses market power. Currently, developments within Saudi Arabia

seem to confirm that the buffer is being rebuilt and the Saudi role as a swing producer strengthened again. This might, however, take up to a decade to come to fruition.<sup>18</sup> It is noteworthy in this respect, that speculations about a decline in Saudi oil reserves have prompted the national oil giant, Saudi Aramco, to increase transparency in order to raise confidence in its production capacities and reduce market volatility.<sup>19</sup> Even if spare capacity was completely rebuilt and Saudi Arabia reinstated as a clear swing producer, heightened volatility in oil prices will continue in the meantime. Another big challenge over the next few years will be to counter the risk of terrorist activity, which could seriously disrupt world markets by harming its lifeline. This translates into a fear premium on the price of oil and adds to the current surge in prices.

Differing interests with respect to the ideal oil price were also at the origin of intra-OPEC tensions and of Iraqi – GCC tensions in the run-up to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Iraq needed higher oil prices to stabilize its war-stricken economy after the Iran-Iraq war. Therefore, regional security also remains contingent on the oil regime that will emerge once Iraq becomes a major producer. As it seems, Iraqi oil will be in the hands of the state, like in other GCC countries, and a stable and reliable government will determine Iraq's role as an oil producer and OPEC member.

The current surge in oil prices has bestowed large windfall profits on the oil exporting economies of the Gulf. In Saudi Arabia, the value of oil exports since 2002 has equalled exporting revenues for

<sup>17</sup> The Economist, March 21, 2002 "Middle Earth. Oil is big but it is not the only reason to take the Gulf seriously."

<sup>18</sup> The Economist, April 28, 2005, "Oil in troubled waters"

<sup>19</sup> The Economist, January 6, 2005, "Big oil's biggest monster"

all of the 1990s.<sup>20</sup> This has led to a surge of Arab stock markets, with indices across the GCC being up by 70%. The region's total market capitalization is now over \$800bn, which corresponds to 170% of GDP while the proportion lay at merely 50% three years ago.<sup>21</sup> Apart from consumer goods, the money is mostly being spent on property. A vast array of artificial lagoons, apartment towers and prestigious constructions projects is currently planned or under construction. Nevertheless, especially in Saudi Arabia, the oil bonanza does not as easily translate into wealth as in the 1970s because population has sharply increased. Saudi Arabia's current per capita GDP is half of its 1980 peak. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Dubai are trying hard to diversify their economies. Saudi Arabia has reduced the share of crude exports from 70% to 35% of its GDP. Dubai was particularly successful in creating a financial centre and reducing crude's contribution to its economy to 15%. Kuwait, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi are going in the same direction but pressure is much lower since their populations are small relative to their hydrocarbon assets.<sup>22</sup>

## The State of Qatar

Facts:<sup>23</sup>

- **Population:** 628,000 (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Doha
- **Area:** 11,437 sq km (4,416 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Arabic
- **Major religion:** Islam
- **Life expectancy:** 71 years (men), 76 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 Qatari Riyal = 100 dirhams
- **Main exports:** Oil, gas
- **GNI per capita:** \$36,476<sup>24</sup>

Qatar has made headlines in recent years due to economic and political developments. A tiny Emirate with a small population of just over 850,000, Qatar now ranks as the third richest country in the world and has recently also been ranked the region's most competitive economy by the World Economic Forum. Its revenue is mainly derived from oil and gas exports, which make up 80% of its GDP. In addition to oil reserves, Qatar possesses the third largest gas reserves in the world. The country has made particularly large investments in the liquefaction of natural gas, which is predicted to become a major form of gas used in the years to come. In the exploitation of gas and the investment in processing facilities, Qatar has leapfrogged over Saudi Arabia and Iran not least by offering incentives to foreign investors and slashing red tape.<sup>25</sup> Foreign ownership of Qatari companies is possible up to 25 % and property rights for foreigners are secured by statute. In 2003, Qatar Petroleum and Exxon Mobile signed an agreement for the largest liquid gas facility ever built, RasGas II and RasGas III is underway.<sup>26</sup> Attempts at diversification of the economy have led to increased investment in tourism and, as a consequence, in real estate.

Politically, Qatar first became a focus of attention when the satellite channel Al-Jazeera was established, which has to be seen in the wider context of inter-Arab relations and political liberalization in Qatar. In 1995, Crown Prince Hamad Bin Khalifa deposed his father to become Emir. Reconciliation between the two later took place at the occasion of the former Emir's wife's funeral in 2004. In a referendum on April 29, 2003, an overwhelming majority of the 71,406 Qataris eligible to vote approved of a new constitution, which entered into force in June 2005. According to this constitution, 30 members of a 45 member Shura Council will be elected, which is expected to take place in late 2005 or 2006. The Council will be able to initiate legislation. It also has some legislative power as it can push laws through with a majority of two thirds without the consent of the

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<sup>20</sup> The Economist August 4, 2005

<sup>21</sup> The Economist August 4, 2005

<sup>22</sup> The Economist, March 21, 2002, "Middle Earth. Oil is big, but it is not the only reason to take the Gulf seriously"

<sup>23</sup> Data from BBC Country Profiles if not mentioned otherwise

<sup>24</sup> Daily Star, July 19, 2005

<sup>25</sup> The Economist, January 6, 2005, "The rise of big gas"

<sup>26</sup> Daily Star, July 19, 2005 "Sitting pretty on plentiful gas"



Emir. In that case, all elected members would have to take a unanimous decision. As a last resort, the Emir has the right to stop laws if there are “compelling circumstances.”

Qatari law is based on Sharia legal principles, which is criticized by women activist groups and in the West for its unfair treatment of women. A revision of personal status laws has been under discussion for some time by a committee at the Supreme Council for Family, but no decision has been reached yet. More progress has been made in the field of education. English instruction has become mandatory from first grade on and classes in religious education have been cut back. Whereas Saudi Arabia has five or six required religion textbooks, Qatar now has just one.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Qatar is trying to carve out a niche in higher education by bringing in American universities like in Education City, a campus in the Qatari desert hosting colleges like Weill Cornell Medical College and Texas A&M University.<sup>28</sup> With increasing difficulties for Arab students in the US since 9-11, American-style education in the Gulf is becoming increasingly attractive.

The new constitution also improves civil liberties for Qataris, providing “equal rights and responsibilities without discrimination on grounds of race, language, religion or gender.” In general, freedom of association is granted, but legislation imposes significant restrictions through permits or restrictions on political activity. An issue of contention is the treatment of naturalized citizens and non-Qataris. Of its 650,000 inhabitants, Qatar has only about 150,000 nationals.<sup>29</sup> Like in other Gulf countries, foreign workers mainly from Asia face difficult and strenuous working conditions with no legal or union protection. The civil liberties as designed in the new constitution will also not apply to these non-nationals.

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<sup>27</sup> Washington Post February 2, 2003, “Qatar Reshapes Its Schools, Putting English Over Islam”

<sup>28</sup> Gulf News April 30, 2004, “Qataris get US education without leaving home”

<sup>29</sup> Daily Star, [Wednesday, June 09, 2004](#)

## GCC Country fact sheets<sup>30</sup>

### State of Bahrain

- **Population:** 754,000 (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Manama
- **Area:** 717 sq km (277 sq miles)
- **Major religion:** Islam (with Shiite majority)
- **Life expectancy:** 73 years (men), 76 years (women) (UN)
- **Main exports:** Petroleum and petroleum products, aluminium
- **GNI per capita:** US \$10,850 (World Bank, 2005)

### State of Kuwait

- **Population:** 2.7 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Kuwait
- **Area:** 17,818 sq km (6,880 sq miles)
- **Major religion:** Islam
- **Life expectancy:** 75 years (men), 79 years (women) (UN)
- **Main exports:** Oil
- **GNI per capita:** US \$17,960 (World Bank, 2005)

### Sultanate of Oman

- **Population:** 3 million (UN, 2005 )
- **Capital:** Muscat
- **Area:** 309,500 sq km (119,500 sq miles)
- **Major religion:** Islam (Ibadi)
- **Life expectancy:** 73 years (men), 76 years (women) (UN)
- **Main export:** Oil
- **GNI per capita:** US \$7,830 (World Bank, 2002)

### Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- **Population:** 25.6 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Riyadh
- **Area:** 2.24 million sq km (864,869 sq miles)
- **Major religion:** Islam (Sunni with Shiite minority)
- **Life expectancy:** 70 years (men), 74 years (women) (UN)
- **Main exports:** Oil, gas, cereals
- **GNI per capita:** US \$9,240 (World Bank, 2005)

### United Arab Emirates

- **Population:** 3.1 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Abu Dhabi
- **Area:** 77,700 sq km (30,000 sq miles)
- **Major religion:** Islam
- **Life expectancy:** 76 years (men), 81 years (women) (UN)
- **Main exports:** Oil, gas
- **GNI per capita:** n/a

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<sup>30</sup> Data from BBC Country Profiles

## Human Development and Governance Indicators

<i>Population indicators</i> <sup>31</sup>	<i>Average annual rate of change of population (%) 2000-2005</i>	<i>Urban population (% of total population) 2003</i>	<i>Population less than 15 years (% of total population)</i>	<i>Population density (people per sq. km) 2002</i>
Bahrain	2.17	90	29	983
Kuwait	3.46	96	26	131
Oman	2.93	78	37	8
Qatar	1.54	92	26	55
Saudi Arabia	2.92	88	39	10
UAE	1.94	85	25	38

<i>Gender indicators</i> <sup>32</sup>	<i>Economic activity rate (%) 1986-2001</i>		<i>Female right to vote</i>	<i>Women in government</i> <sup>33</sup>	<i>Women in parliament</i> <sup>34</sup>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>			<i>Lower or Single Chamber</i>	<i>Upper Chamber</i>
Bahrain	65	24	yes	Minister of health (2004), Minister of Social Affairs (2005)	0/40	6/40
Kuwait	83	43	yes	Minister of Planning (June 2005)	1/65	
Oman	59	13	yes	Minister for the Craft Industry (2003), Minister for tourism, Minister for Higher Education	2/83	9/58
Qatar	93	28	yes			
Saudi Arabia	80	15	no		0/150	
UAE	92	31	no suffrage	Minister of Economy and Planning (2004)	0/40	

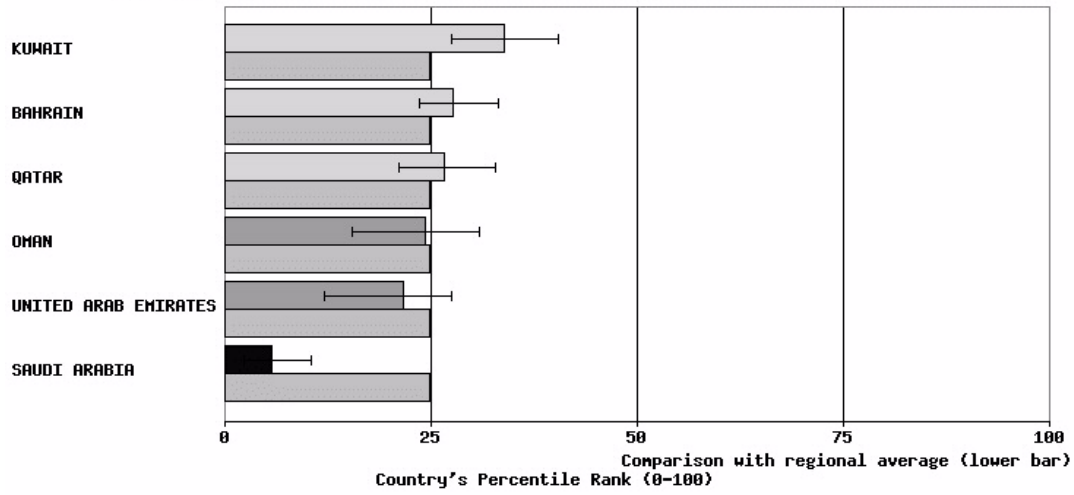
<sup>31</sup> Arab Human Development Report 2004

<sup>32</sup> Arab Human Development Report 2004

<sup>33</sup> Simon Henderson, "Women in Gulf Politics: A Progress Report", Washington Institute for Near East Politics, June 28, 2005

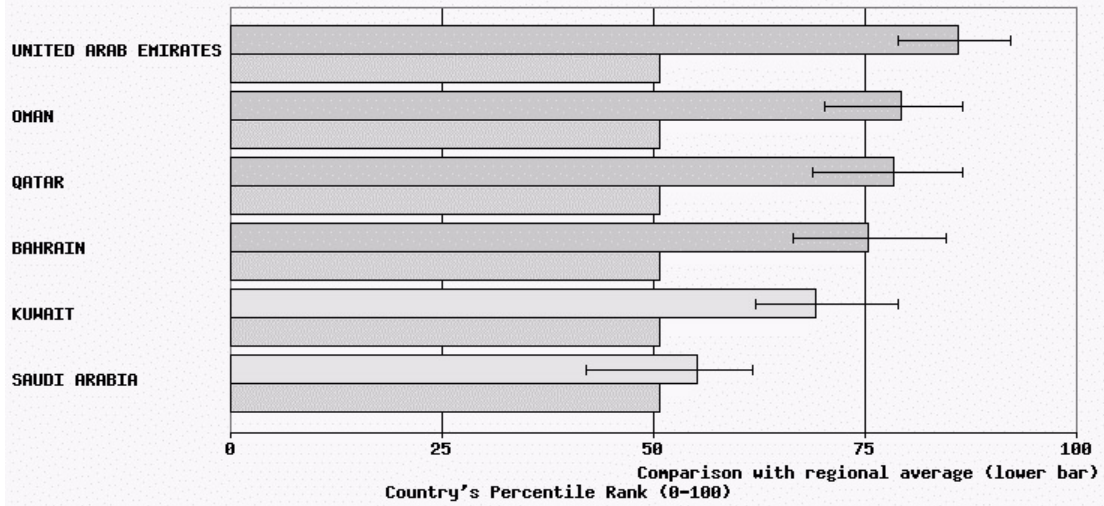
<sup>34</sup> Statistics compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union until August 31, 2005, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

Voice and Accountability (Middle East & North Africa region, 2004)



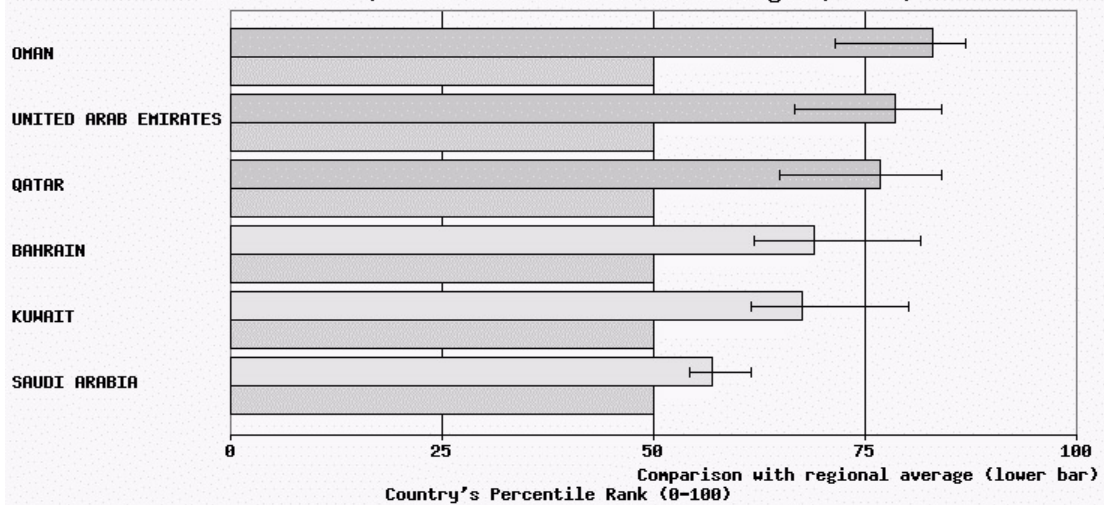
Source: D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2005: Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004 (<http://www.worldbank.org/ubi/governance/pubs/govmatters4.html>)

Government Effectiveness (Middle East & North Africa region, 2004)



Source: D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2005: Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004 (<http://www.worldbank.org/ubi/governance/pubs/govmatters4.html>)

Rule of Law (Middle East & North Africa region, 2004)



Source: D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2005: Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004 (<http://www.worldbank.org/ubi/governance/pubs/govmatters4.html>)