



GENDER REPORT: MIDDLE EASTERN NATIONS AMONG WORST

Middle Eastern countries have performed dismally in a recent international report on gender equality in property rights.

The Gender Equality in Property Rights index, released by the Property Rights Alliance, measures women's free possession, enjoyment and disposal of property globally.

While Kuwait, Israel, Mauritania and Egypt received more favorable ratings than other Middle Eastern states, all of the region's nations were in the bottom half of the 90 countries surveyed.

The United Arab Emirates came in at the bottom of the pack in 88th place, with Pakistan and Bahrain in only marginally better positions at 80th and 75th place respectively. Algeria, Morocco and Jordan were also towards the bottom of the list.

The index, whose data is sourced from the OECD Gender Institutions and Development Database, measures inheritance practice, social rights and women's access to land, credit and property other than land.

Women in countries with gender unequal property rights are generally unable to secure a higher standard of living, enter certain professions or open their own businesses.

Gender equality is usually very strong for developed countries. But Israel, which had the best ranking in the Middle East, was considered to have a poor score at 53rd place internationally, behind most European and North American countries and was beaten by countries like Tunisia and Turkey.

Israel's rankings were positive for social rights and inheritance practice but relatively poor for equal access to land, credit and property.

"Most Middle East countries have laws that allow for polygamy, inheritance law that favors males, and a patriarchal system," said Corinne Sauer, of the influential think tank Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies, which participated in the gender portion of the study. "All of that goes into this index."

"While Israel performed much better than other Middle Eastern countries in social regards, there is a large gendered difference in wages, and women have much more difficult time getting access to credit," Sauer told The Media Line.

By The Media Line Staff on Wednesday, May 06, 2009