

Saudi Arabia rated worst in GCC for water security

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BIG PROBLEM: Iraq, Egypt and Syria were ranked fifth, eighth and tenth, respectively, out of a survey of 165 nations.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries have performed badly in a new index that rates the supply of fresh clean water to societies and businesses.

Carried out by UK-based corporate risk intelligence firm Maplecroft, the research shows that Iraq, Egypt and Syria were ranked fifth, eighth and tenth, respectively, out of a survey of 165 nations.

All three countries were given an “extreme risk” designation by the report, which added that Egypt was already experiencing internal and cross-border tensions due to limited water resources.

All the GCC nations were ranked as having “high” risk, with Saudi Arabia the worst in 23rd place. Kuwait was ranked at 24th, with Oman (33), the UAE (39) and Qatar (41) following on, respectively.

Bahrain was not rated due to the lack of available data for access to clean water, access to sanitation and water stress – the relationship between available water and supply demands.

Yemen rated twelfth, and Jordan ranked 28th. Lebanon (70) was the only country in the MENA region to have a “medium” rating.

“The fact that Pakistan and Egypt are amongst the most vulnerable nations should send a signal to investors who will need to develop water conservation and security strategies and be mindful of their water use impacts on local communities,” said Maplecroft CEO Alyson Warhurst.

“These countries also have some of the highest population growth rates in the world, especially around cities, so there is an urgent imperative for renewed policy action underlined by these results.”

Other than Iraq, Egypt and Syria, the seven other countries also rated at “extreme risk” were Somalia, Mauritania, Sudan, Niger, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

Maplecroft’s water security risk index uses a series of measured or derived indicators, including the proportion of the population that has access to improved drinking water and sanitation, availability of potable water, and water intensity – the water dependency of the economy of each country.