RELATIONSHIP THERAPY

Making Arab police reform work

By
Florence Gaub and Alex Walsh

European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and
do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

RELATIONSHIP THERAPY

Making Arab police
reform work

By
Florence Gaub and Alex Walsh

The authors

Florence Gaub is the Deputy Director of the EUISS. She specialises in strategic foresight, as well as security and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa.

Alex Walsh has worked on police reform and stabilisation programming in Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia and Syria. He currently works with the International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAF) in Geneva.

The EUISS Chaillot Paper series

The *Chaillot Paper* series, launched in 1991, takes its name from the Chaillot hill in the Trocadéro area of Paris, where the Institute's first premises were located in the building occupied by the Western European Union (WEU). The hill is particularly known for the Palais de Chaillot which was the site of the signing of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and housed NATO's provisional headquarters from 1952 until 1959.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its ideal form, the police force or service is both a state institution and a part of the community. It serves to regulate daily life and enforce the rule of law in an active partnership with citizens. And, even while policing approaches and models vary as much as the contexts in which they operate, police forces still fulfil their essential role as long as they protect citizens' rights, life and property while taking into consideration the community's needs.

In much of the Arab world, the police have become detached from the community they are supposed to serve. The partnership between police and people has become dysfunctional and mutually mistrustful; rights and needs are ignored, while the police often serve other masters than the citizen and the law. This rupture brings conflict, violence and insecurity into the heart of the community and the state.

This much is apparent at a surface level, but when it comes to examining the complex underpinnings of the relationship between police and citizens, there is surprisingly little regional coverage. This *Chaillot Paper* seeks to fill this gap and asks some salient questions. What has become of the relationship between the people and police forces across the Arab world? What are the sources of its troubles, and can this relationship undergo some constructive therapy? And how might the EU support this therapeutic process?

Colonial history is an important dimension: colonial policing biased police in the Arab world towards protecting elites from the people and rendered police forces militaristic and distant from populations. But many post-colonial administrations cultivated and added to these characteristics.

Police violence is another very common trend. It has become part of a counter-productive cycle, where the police adopt a militarised approach to citizens on the one hand and account for a disproportionate number of casualties in insurgencies on the other. It is also part of wider patterns of violence, in a region where eight in ten women experience domestic violence, and the same proportion of children experience violence at school. Conflicts have exacerbated this trend and make police institutions less inclined to reform, and the public less able or disposed to engage in dialogue.

Corruption is the other major issue that weighs on the relationship between the police and the people, even if the police are usually not the worst culprits in this regard. Finally, the deep involvement of the police in politics is a factor which puts the relationship under additional strain.

So much can be said about trends that are common to policing in many parts of the Arab world. However, the region's great diversity is a challenge to a single overarching diagnosis of all the police-community relationships therein, albeit one that can be partially addressed by categorising states according to the extent to which citizen input into policing occurs or is allowed.

Recognising the role of the relationship between the people and the police for reform, four broad types of relationship emerge from this categorisation, each with a set of general considerations for EU and member state policymaking. In the *Estranged Partners* group, comprising Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen, the police have become fragmented, hyper-politicised and sometimes marginalised. However, even within these insecure contexts, citizens continue to strive to make their voices heard and want the police to build a more constructive relationship with the community. Localised work with citizens and police may yield many benefits including increased security, not least to lay the groundwork for an eventual future peace process.

In the *Abusive Marriage* group, comprising Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the security of the ruling administrations has been the driving principle in policing, while space for citizen input into policing is very constrained and takes largely antagonistic forms, such as protest or violence. The power to change lies largely for the time being with the state authorities, and international engagement with them could be better targeted in terms of appropriate messaging that resonates with them.

In the *Renewal of Vows* group, comprising Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), there has been a reappraisal of colonial and independence-era policing. Certain functional mechanisms exist for citizen input into policing policies and practices, albeit at different intensities and levels of formality. Among other avenues, it is important to ensure that citizen forums are rendered more durable and institutionalised.

Algeria and Sudan are placed in the *In Counselling* group. Citizen input into policing in these countries for the time being remains limited, while many past abuses are unaddressed. However, with the potential for wider political transition, comes a necessity for a transformation in the police-people relationship so that old orders of political control cannot remerge. Opening the public conversation up on policing is an important step towards making police reform a fundamental pillar of the transition.

In all of these groups, the development of the partnership between the people and the police is key to just peace, stability and security, while the distinctive character of each of those partnerships varies according to the circumstances prevailing in each country. To date, the EU has recognised half of this important truth – investing heavily in police reform in the Arab world but overlooking the need to place the partnership between the police and the community at the heart of the process.

This *Chaillot Paper* draws attention to an institution that, in terms of its importance for the security and stability of the Arab world and its neighbours, is under-researched – a fact that has made this study all the more challenging. Above all, it seeks to engender a response in terms of programming and research – whether this means that this paper's diagnoses are corroborated, refuted or built upon.

INTRODUCTION

In *The Nile Hilton Incident*, a thriller set in Cairo just before the Arab Spring,[1] the audience gets a rare glimpse into an institution normally well shielded from the public eye: the Egyptian police. Noredin Mostafa, the police commander investigating a gory murder, is as much a product of the system as its victim: although clearly the hero of the story, his acts of misconduct include corruption, sex while on duty, drug use, violence and violation of procedures.

In the film's last scene, Noredin finds himself defeated in the crowd flocking to the first demonstrations of the Arab Spring. This event is intrinsically linked to the police: it not only began with the now famous altercation between a Tunisian police officer and a vegetable seller, who subsequently immolated himself, but continued with demonstrations in Egypt on National Police Day and in Libya on the anniversary of deadly clashes between protesters and security forces. Although the Arab Spring was about more than just the police, their performance and misconduct was a key trigger in the uprisings. Burning police stations became a symbol of citizens' discontent.[2]

Almost ten years have passed since then, and little seems to have changed when it comes to Arab police affairs. The year 2019 in particular was yet another when tensions between citizens and police came to a boil. In Iraq, more than 500 people were killed by police forces. In Algeria, police used water cannon and teargas against protesters, and arrested dozens of activists.[3] In Lebanon, the police was accused of using excessive force, wounding dozens.[4] Tunisia, the most successful Arab Spring state, saw violent clashes between civilians and the police.[5] In Sudan, police forces killed dozens of protestors.[6] Across the region, police stations were not only burning, they were also besieged and even bombed.[7]

Despite large-scale support from international donors, the sobering assessment seems to be that Arab police reform is a fruitless pursuit. Arab police officers simply refuse to change their ways, and in the absence of full democracy, no democratic policing can take place, so the reasoning goes.

But this assumption is not supported by research: police performance depends on many

1   We use the term 'Arab' to designate all states that are members of the League of Arab States. These are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

2   Salwa Ismail, "The Egyptian Revolution against the Police", *Social Research*, vol. 79, no. 2, *Special Issue: Egypt in Transition* (Summer 2012), pp. 435-62; "In Tunisia's new democracy, authorities are prosecuting the activists who started the revolution", *PRI,* May 5, 2014, https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-05-05/tunisias-new-democracy-authorities-are-prosecuting-activists-who-started.

3   Human Rights Watch, "Iraq: State Appears Complicit in Massacre of Protesters", December 16, 2019, https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/12/16/iraq-state-appears-complicit-massacre-protesters; Human Rights Watch, "Algeria: Police Renew Crackdown on Mass Protests", April 19, 2019, https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/04/19/algeria-police-renew-crackdown-mass-protests.

4   "Lebanon: Police clash with anti-government protesters in Beirut", *Deutsche Welle*, December 15, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/lebanon-police-clash-with-anti-government-protesters-in-beirut/a-51677486.

5   "Eleven arrests as protesters clash with police in central Tunisia", *Al Jazeera*, December 3, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/eleven-arrests-protesters-clash-police-central-tunisia-191203154635735.html.

6   "Protesters Shot, Killed as Sudan Police Try to Disperse Sit-in", *Deutsche Welle*, June 3, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/protesters-shot-killed-as-sudan-police-try-to-disperse-sit-in/a-49011394.

7   "Tunisia forces clash with protesters, one killed, stations burned", *Reuters,* May 22, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-protests/tunisia-forces-clash-with-protesters-one-killed-stations-burned-idUSKBN18I0XS; "Protesters clash with police in Tunisian mining town over jobs", *Reuters*, March 21, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-protests/protesters-clash-with-police-in-tunisian-mining-town-over-jobs-idUSKBN1GX32P.

more variables than just officers' values or the political systems in which they are embedded. Corruption, public opinion, and the role of historical state-formation in the relationship between police and citizens matter far more for police performance than a binary choice between democracy and non-democracy.[8] In fact, the most important ingredient in police performance is how the police relates to the community in which it operates.

In this light, this *Chaillot Paper* asks how we can make Arab police reform more effective. It is our hypothesis that the main problem is precisely the relationship between people and police, and that the main flaw of most European and American police reform programmes is the almost complete absence of citizens in the conceptual understanding of policing in the region, and by extension, in police reform. It is important to understand that this relationship is about much more than the protection of human rights. Instead, it includes the degrees to which individuals, local communities, towns, or residents of governorates who are not especially influential, rich or powerful, can influence how policing is delivered and what its priorities are, and what they can do to hold police accountable for misconduct.

> Chapter 1 explains why citizens – not just as passive recipients of police services, but as agents in their own right – are one of the two main components of policing (the other being, of course, the police itself), and therefore have to be part of any reform efforts. It explains why this concept has not translated into Arab police work. It looks at past and existing reform programmes and assesses to what extent this understanding has featured in them.

> In chapter 2 we outline what elements enable us to understand the state of play when it comes to the relationship between people and police in the Arab world. We focus on

relational elements such as effectiveness and trust – but also violence and corruption.

> In chapter 3, we delineate four categories of Arab states to assess in what states reform efforts are more likely to be successful, depending on the nature of the existing relationship elaborated in the previous chapter.

We hope to contribute to a better understanding of police forces in general, and to facilitate efforts to improve their work. This does not imply that police reform in the Arab world is an easy endeavour – far from it. But this is because police reform is never easy, no matter in what part of the world.

METHODOLOGY

This analysis covers the entire Arab region, although not all states are included to the same degree due to a lack of data. While we fully recognise the individual differences between countries, we consider that similarities in the state-formation process, culture, religion, and recent history warrant grouping them together. This allows us to identify common patterns as well as differences, and helps with the fact that research on police forces in the region is an extremely difficult task.

The data presented here derives from a combination of interviews with officers, activists, and citizens from the countries in question, and surveys and analysis conducted by other researchers. We also rely on research on police forces from other states where we have no regional equivalent, because we find that patterns and issues pertaining to the police are almost universally the same, albeit to different degrees.

The reason we had to rely on this patchwork approach is that police forces in general are

---

8   Tim Prenzler, *Police Corruption: Preventing Misconduct and Maintaining Integrity* (London: CRC Press, 2009); Lesley J. Wood, *Crisis and Control: The Militarization of Protest Policing* (Toronto: PlutoPress, 2014).

under-researched and under-studied, particularly when compared to their institutional cousins, the armed forces. It is no exaggeration to say that popular writers of fiction have shown much more interest in the police than science.[9] Critically, there is very little literature (and even less consensus) on what the accepted path is towards a substantially reformed police force; there is very little comparative analysis, and what exists is mostly produced by either police officers themselves or human rights advocates.[10] In fact, police "have fallen into a position so peripheral to the core of political science that it is virtually impossible to find a sustained theoretical discussion of the varied functions they fulfil in political systems".[11] As a result, the vast majority of the body of knowledge on police forces (and particularly on Arab police forces) is detached from academic research, uncritically reproducing norms, and repeating unquestioned ideas on what police reform is and should be.[12]

Lastly, this publication does not look at the secret police, because it is an entirely different beast from the regular police.[13] It is not the community that lies at the heart of their work, but the protection of a government from political opposition. The term 'police state' is therefore somewhat misleading as it does not signify a state where the police is very active in managing public order, preventing crime or enforcing the law, but in fact a state where (an often secret and secretive) organisation has the stated aim of securing first and foremost a particular government.[14] Of course, any type of police is by default part of a state and therefore part of a certain political order it has to protect – but given that secret police are conceptually, methodologically, and in most cases also institutionally different from the regular police they are not included in the study here. In the region under scrutiny here, however, the two are often lumped together. This would distract from the key feature that distinguishes the regular police from not just the secret police, but also the military: the relationship with the community in which it is embedded and in – and ideally also for – which it works.

9   Tahani Algureiby, "The Curious Case of Crime Fiction in Arabic Literature", *Arab World English Journal,* no.4, May 2015.; David F. DiMeo, "Egypt's Police State in the Work of Idris and Mahfouz", *Comparative Literature and Culture*, vol.14, no.4, 2012.

10 David H. Bayley, *Patterns of Policing: A Comparative International Analysis* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985).

11 David Easton and Jack Dennis, *Children in the Political System* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p.210.

12 Xiaoyun Wu et al., "Trends in police research: a cross-sectional analysis of the 2010-2014 literature", *Police Practice and Research*, vol. 19, no. 6, 2018, pp. 609–16.

13 When we use the term police, we refer to internal security forces in charge of regulating daily life in a community, including associated forms of police such as the *gendarmerie.*

14 Jill Crystal, "Criminal justice in the Middle East", *Journal of Criminal Justice*, vol. 29, no. 6 (November/December 2001): pp. 469–82.

THE PUBLIC ARE THE POLICE: ON THE ROLE OF CITIZENS IN POLICING

"I swear all I want is to protect people, apply the law, and serve justice"

The Eagle of El-Se'eed (2018)

THE CONCEPTUAL ORIGINS OF POLICING

There is something quite mundane about police forces: every state has one, most laws pertaining to their tasks and duties look alike, and in contrast to army officers or diplomats, police officers can be interacted with on an almost daily basis – because their work is rooted in the dynamics of everyday life. As a result, we assume that we know who the police is, what it does and how it should carry out its duties.

But this perception clouds the fact that no two police forces are alike, that their tasks and duties are difficult to define, and that many questions about how police forces work remain unanswered so far. So let us rewind.

The police, just like the military, taxes, or borders, constitute a regular part of the state-formation process – that is why virtually

every state has a police force. The first police force considered 'modern' was the London Metropolitan Police, created in 1829 (although there is evidence that the world's very first police force emerged in Mesopotamia [modern-day Iraq] and Egypt in 1500 BC).[1] Because modern police emerged in the nineteenth century, and because a police force is part and parcel of a state's portfolio, we tend to think of the police first and foremost as a state institution. Indeed, in rural areas in Egypt, the police is referred to as *hukuma* (the Arabic word for 'government') by the population. After all, what distinguishes the police from other actors in a given territory is broadly three characteristics: they are authorised by society collectively to use or threaten force *within* a certain community, they perform their work *only* within that community and not abroad, and they have an organisational link to the authority that created them. (The important point here is that the *use or threat of force* is not their main characteristic, but the *authorisation by the collective* to use or threaten force when necessary.)

But more can be deduced from the time and circumstances of the birth of the modern police: it emerged along with urbanisation (hence the *metropolitan* police) and industrialisation. Before, social discipline in a given community was managed by the community itself through

---

1 Patrick B. Adamson, "Some comments on the origins of the police", *Police Studies*, *International Review of Police Development*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1991).

informal processes – indeed, even today closely-knit communities only resort to the police when they cannot find a solution themselves. [2] Here, the role of the police is not so much to enforce the law, but more to mediate social relations. However, where the sheer size of the community and the loosening of social ties (both effects of urbanisation and industrialisation) meant that this was no longer the most effective way to maintain social discipline, the police became a necessity.

In other words, the police emerged *not just* because of a state's desire for control, but because informal processes were no longer suitable to manage social relations in a given community. This aspect cannot be overemphasised, because historically it means that the police is a product of and for the *community* whereas the military is a product of and for the *state.*

This is particularly obvious in the London Metropolitan Police's principles of 1829: "The basic mission for which police exist is to *prevent crime and disorder* as an alternative to the repression of crime and disorder by military force and severity of legal punishment. (…) The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police existence, actions, behaviour and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public respect. (…) The police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain public respect. (…) *The police are the public and the public are the police.*"[3]

The police is therefore a double-hatted entity: it is a state institution, but it is also a community institution. This latter fact is visible also in the staggering variety that characterises how police forces across the world maintain order in their given societies. Police forces can

be centralised or decentralised, coordinated or un-coordinated, made up of single or multiple entities, be attached to the defence or interior ministry, be armed or not. This indicates two things: firstly, that not one police model has proven to work significantly better than others, and secondly, that this variegated police landscape reflects the plural nature of states and cultures around the world. To put it differently: police forces differ from each other because the communities they work in differ from each other.

The police is therefore a double-hatted entity: it is a state institution, but it is also a community institution.

Because police work is so tightly connected to the community and its daily life, police work covers a wide spectrum of very different tasks. Police officers go on patrol, investigate, direct traffic, counsel and mediate, administer, warn, or threaten – but the fluidity between these tasks means they are not easily separated out. For instance, traffic police also patrol, police patrols might also regulate traffic, detectives counsel juveniles, juvenile delinquency officers might collect evidence about crime, riot police guard public buildings, while all police officers perform a range of administrative tasks. This is reflected too in the diversity of situations in which they get involved, such as crimes in progress, domestic disputes, missing children, car accidents, burglaries, public disturbances, or unnatural deaths. But even so, situations and responsibilities overlap, and all of these activities are part of a continuous task that is never accomplished – police work, in contrast to military work, is a daily task that of its nature is never finite because it is centred on the daily life of a community.

An important point has to be made about the link between the police and politics. It has become the norm to assume that the police should be politically neutral, serving the law rather than regimes, institutions rather than persons.

2   Op.Cit., *Patterns of Policing: A Comparative International Analysis,* pp. 130 – 34.

3   "Sir Robert Peel 's Principles of Law Enforcement, 1829", https://www.durham.police.uk/About-Us/Documents/Peels__ Principles__Of__Law__Enforcement.pdf.

But this is problematic in more than one way. For instance, in societies where the notion of justice is disputed – say, for instance, where intercommunal relations are tense, be it in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, or in the Palestinian Territories – the police will implicitly take sides even by simply applying the law. And there are other ways in which the police, by default, play a political role without seeking it: by allowing and denying demonstrations and public meetings, by protecting politicians, by assisting in the electoral process, by legitimising the government, by sympathising with challengers to the government (e.g. if they are from the same community), and more.[4] This does not refute the ideal-type of a politically neutral police, but it shows that the neat distinction between a political and neutral police force is much more difficult to make than its advocates seem to think. From a statistical point of view, police tend to be more involved in politics in countries with low GDP and high centralisation rates, with little political competition, and where regimes feel politically insecure – e.g., a state that faced political insecurity early on its formation will develop police traditions that are highly politicised, especially if it faced violent resistance, and maintain that tradition long thereafter.[5]

Four important characteristics of police forces' role should be highlighted: police forces are *state institutions* designed for the regulation of daily life *within a certain community*, whose prerogatives include the threat or use of *force*; they are, even in the best of cases, involved in the *political life* of this community, and just like their community, they are *unique* in the way they operate.

COMMUNITY POLICING: A 'NEW' IDEA

Although modern policing started out as a community-centric affair in the nineteenth century, and this approach remained the guiding ideal for a very long time, it would be mistaken to think that European police of the 1950s or 1960s followed all the principles of the London Metropolitan Police. But by the 1970s, the standard model of policing in Europe and the United States had begun to show its shortcomings. Crime rates were skyrocketing – homicide rates in New York City, for instance, stood at 30 per 100,000 in 1990 – ten times higher than today, or indeed, 1951.[6] Violence between citizens and police was increasingly common, and police corruption became a familiar theme.

It is from this predicament that *community policing* emerged conceptually. It identified the distance between people and police as one of the main reasons for the increasingly troubled relationship between citizens and the police (social change being one of the others): modern technology and mobility (cars, use of radio communication, telephone) had reduced direct contact between people and police, making policing more inefficient. (One study showed, for instance, that aimless car patrolling had no positive impact on crime prevention.[7]) At the same time, as crime rates rose for a number of reasons unrelated to the police, police work became demand-driven and reactive rather than preventive, while the police failed to include their respective communities in decision-making, ignored what the community needed and wanted, and did not fully understand social and cultural

---

4   Op.Cit., *Patterns of Policing: A Comparative International Analysis*, pp.200–05.

5   Philip Coulter, "National Socio-Economic Development and Democracy, A Note on the Political Role of the Police", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, March 1972, pp.55 – 62.

6   "The Great Crime Tsunami of the 1970s and '80s Is Gone—And It's Probably Not Coming Back", *Daily Beast*, January 15, 2018, https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-great-crime-tsunami-of-the-1970s-and-80s-is-goneand-its-probably-not-coming-back.

7   George L. Kelling, Tony Pate, Duane Dieckman and Charles E. Brown, "The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment – A Summary Report", Police Foundation, 1974.

dynamics in their given community. [8] But without input from the public, the police can solve a bare 10% of cases of murder, rape, assault, robbery, burglary, and theft.[9] Where police and the community work closely together violent crime has decreased by 16% in some American communities, and similar numbers have been reported elsewhere.[10] Even compliance with the rule of law increases where people feel they are being treated fairly by the police.[11] This means that decent treatment of citizens is integral to effective police work: "We cannot emphasize too strongly that human rights are not an impediment to effective

Where the relationship between people and police is damaged, both citizen security and police effectiveness suffer.

policing but are, on the contrary, vital to its achievement. Bad application and promiscuous use of powers to limit a person's human rights – by such means as arrest, stop and search, house searches – can lead to bad police relations with entire neighbourhoods, thereby rendering effective policing of those neighbourhoods impossible."[12]

The European and American examples show that where the relationship between people and police is damaged, both citizen security and police effectiveness suffer: this is because, as stated above, the police is from and for the community. It cannot effectively perform its work *against* this community. Damage to this relationship can be the result of several trends, such as a change in social or political values, political systems, the emergence of new security threats or perceptions, violent conflict or even institutional breakdown. In each case,

reform is the consequence of societal change. In Europe, citizen-centric policing has been credited with lowering crime rates since the 1990s.

It is important to note, however, that community policing is not a one-size-fits-all model: it has different emphases and takes different forms, depending on context and country. Other, related, approaches are problem-oriented policing (where specific crimes and disorder problems are identified and actions are taken pre-emptively to solve them), or intelligence-led policing (where the police gathers information in order to understand patterns of social and community life in a given area). Where the resources are available, police can also engage in evidence-based policing, which involves tracking data and trends statistically in a given community to see whether their approach actually works.[13] Most importantly, these types are not mutually exclusive: community policing, with its close link to the people in the community, will inevitably lead to a better understanding of crime patterns and issues; both problem-oriented and intelligence-led policing will lead to a better understanding of what the community's security concerns are, and evidence-based policing is part of a larger process of self-reflection which will improve the police's approach to problems.

No matter what approach is chosen, as long as police work is respectful of people's *rights*, but also responsive to people's security *needs*

---

8   "Community Policing", in *World Encyclopaedia of Police Forces and Correctional Systems* (Farmington Hills: Thomson Gale: second edition, 2006), p.19.

9   Westley Skogan and Kathleen Frydl, *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence* (Washington: The National Academies Press, 2004); David H. Bayley and Robert M. Perito, *The Police in War: Fighting Insurgency, Terrorism, and Violent Crime* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), p.63.

10 "Community Policing: A Success Story?", *The Pioneer Institute*, August 10, 2016, https://pioneerinstitute.org/better_government/community-policing-success-story/

11 Lawrence W. Sherman, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising* (Washington: National Institute of Justice, 1998).

12 Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland (Patten Commission), *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland - The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland*, 1999, p.18.

13 Lawrence W. Sherman, "The Rise of Evidence-Based Policing: Targeting, Testing, and Tracking", *Crime and Justice*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2013.

(irrespective of ethnicity, religion, age, gender or class), it will have achieved its overarching objective.[14]

CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY IN ARAB POLICING

While most modern police forces try to emulate, at least on paper, the London Metropolitan Police, police forces in the Arab world embarked on a different path from the outset. Both Ottoman and colonial structures have left an imprint on how police forces conceptualise their work, and the role of the community in this.

In the Ottoman Empire, the police was in charge of the enforcement of proper conduct in public places, riot control, support to tax enforcement and the protection of villages against brigandage – in addition, systems of surveillance through informers date back to this time.[15] However, they were often inseparable from the armed forces. In rural areas, they relied on irregular forces (which were often involved with brigands and gangs themselves) and in more remote areas, on tribes to maintain social discipline, often through intimidation and coercion. It is worth noting that this policing style differed somewhat from area to area depending on geography, urbanisation rates and bureaucratic evolution. Egypt, for

instance, featured a centralised police whose reach extended well into the countryside under Mohammed Ali in the nineteenth century.[16]

Modern policing as we know it today, as a separate and professional institution, arrived along with European colonialism. Although policing as an alternative to violent, military-style coercion had just been established and formally codified in Great Britain, this model was not applied in colonial contexts. Instead, Britain (after a brief attempt at community policing) applied its lesson from Ireland, replicating the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC): a centralised and militarised force that used coercion to deal with unrest and agrarian agitation in rural areas.[17] This model was applied in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Gulf States and parts of what is today Yemen, and remains, structurally, very much in place up until today.[18] It brought with it a penchant for ethnic policing, with police officers being overwhelmingly recruited from one community, for instance in Bahrain.[19] The French distinction between rural and urban policing, reflected in the police and the *gendarmerie*, found a suitable environment where Ottoman forces, too, had made a distinction between metropolitan and provincial spaces in terms of police corps, with *gendarmerie* (*Jandarma*) regiments established to deliver security in Anatolia and other provinces of the Ottoman empire. Morocco, Tunisia, but also Lebanon and Syria, continue to feature this duality in policing today.[20] Colonial policing resembled Ottoman policing in more ways than one: it prioritised the detection, prevention and repression of

> **A**lmost all police forces in the region resemble their historical predecessors to a remarkable extent.

---

14   DCAF, "Police Reform: Applying the principles of good security sector governance to policing", *SSR Backgrounder,* https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_16_Police%20Reform_0.pdf

15   J.S. Nielsen and Manuela Marin, "Shurta", in Peri J. Bearman et al (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

16   Khaled Fahmy, "The Police and the People in Nineteenth-Century Egypt", *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 39, no. 3, November 1999, pp. 340 – 77.

17   Op. Cit., "Criminal justice in the Middle East", pp. 469–82.

18   Jill Crystal, "Public Order and Authority: Policing Kuwait", in Paul Dresch & James Piscatori (eds.), *Globalisation and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 158–81.

19   Staci Strobl, "From colonial policing to community policing in Bahrain: The historical persistence of sectarianism", *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, vol. 35, no. 1, February 2011, pp. 19–37.

20   Derek Lutterbeck, "Tool of rule: the Tunisian police under Ben Ali", *The Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 20, no. 5, October 2015.

political dissent rather than ensuring the security of a community, relied on irregular or military forces in the rural areas, and used violent means to deal with a population suspected of hostility towards colonial rule.

Independent Arab states embraced these police institutions – essentially because this type of policing is suitable not just for colonial purposes, but also for authoritarian ones. Almost all police forces in the region resemble their historical predecessors to a remarkable extent. For instance, the ranking and command systems have a military character, and the extent and type of weaponry bear military features. The basic unit is more often a 'soldier', who carries a weapon and reports to non-commissioned and commissioned officers, rather than a 'constable' who reports to detectives and calls in specialist firearms units when required. Command structures and decision-making tend to be highly centralised and based on rank hierarchy rather than roles specialisation. Distance to power, as within military institutions, is high. Entry into ranks or non-commissioned ranks can come through national service conscription, and often officers enter through a military academy or after a military career.[21]

Neither citizens nor community rights or needs are therefore at the centre of the way policing is conceived. This in itself is not an obstacle to change: most 1970s police forces in Europe had a similar conception of their work. However, the region differs in a crucial way from Europe

> # Just as democracy depends on more than the police, police work depends on more than the political system.

at that time: crime rates in the Middle East and North Africa are not as dramatic as they were in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, so crime and its reduction or prevention do not serve as an impetus for police reform. Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates display homicide rates the equivalent of Germany; slightly higher are Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon – all below the United States.[22] (Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Libya are excluded from this because data on homicide is conflated with an ongoing violent conflict in these countries.) Car theft, too, is below international averages.[23] Incarceration rates are on the upper end of European rates (if data is to be trusted) but still below or even far below Russian, Turkish or American ones.[24] This does not mean that there is no need for reform, but that the pressure for change is much more political in nature.

However, where reform is delayed, states will pay a high price regardless. The best example of this is the Arab Spring. In Egypt in the two years following the removal of President Mubarak, homicide rates tripled, kidnappings and car thefts quadrupled, and armed robberies increased by a factor of twelve. Since then, both Egypt and Tunisia have reached the top ten of worst countries when it comes to the business costs of terrorism, crime and violence, organised crime, and reliability of police services.[25] Losses due to vandalism are higher than in any other region.[26] Sadly, the conclusion reached by states such as Egypt is that the problem is not

21 See Article 1 of the Law 17 organising the Lebanese Internal Security Forces: "The interior security forces are general armed forces, and its authorities incorporating all the Lebanese lands as well as the territorial waters and airs thereof…"

22 World Bank, "Intentional homicides (per 100,000 people)", https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC. P5?end=2017&locations=ZQ-US&start=2017&view=bar&year=2017.

23 Knoema, World Data Atlas-Rankings-Crime Statistics, "Private car theft rate (cases per 100,000 of population")", https://knoema. com/atlas/ranks/Private-car-theft-rate.

24 World Prison Brief, "Highest to Lowest - Prison Population Rate", https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_ population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=22.

25 Youssef Chaitani, Omar Ashour and Vito Intini, *An Overview of the Arab Security Sector Amidst Political Transition: A Reflection on Legacies, Functions and Perceptions, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia*, July 31, 2013, https://www.unescwa.org/ publications/arab-security-sector-transition.

26 World Bank, "Losses due to theft and vandalism (% of annual sales of affected firms)", https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ IC.FRM.CRIM.ZS?locations=ZQ-ZJ.

the police or other aspects of governance, but the community – a miscalculation, as the continuous unrest shows.

In this light, it would be easy to conclude that principles of community policing cannot be implemented in states that are not full democracies. If then the impetus for change is discontent with the political system, can the police be transformed for the better in the absence of such change? The answer is that this depends on a variety of issues. Just as democracy depends on more than the police, police work depends on more than the political system. Respect for rights, the rule of law, and strong relations between community and police are all possibilities in non-democratic systems. In fact, community policing could also be a tool to work around the democratic deficit precisely because it can provide democratic values and principles at local level. Some researchers even argue that without police reform, democratisation will remain elusive.[27] We share this sentiment: while democracies will make these efforts easier in the long run, the local level offers potential for improvement in the meantime.

Four main points need to be highlighted: Arab police forces are historically focused on *protection from the community* rather than *for* the community; their mindset remains *highly militarised* in structural and organisational terms; impetus for change is not dissatisfaction with crime rates, but with the *political system*; and lastly, community policing is possible in *non-democratic* systems.

CITIZENS IN EUROPEAN REFORM PROGRAMMES

The European Union is no newcomer to police reform. Police reform, as well as strengthening the rule of law, were two of the four areas to guide future Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)[28] missions outlined at the 2000 Feira European Council. The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) explicitly mentioned security sector reform (SSR), and two of its first missions, EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Rafah and EU Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS), launched in 2005 and 2006, both in the Palestinian territories, were designed to not just reform the police and border guards, but in fact helped build these structures from scratch.[29] Since then, the Union has launched other missions with a police reform component, including the EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq EUJUST LEX-Iraq (2005 – 2013), EUBAM Libya in 2013, and EU Advisory Mission - Iraq (EUAM) in 2017. In addition, both the EU and member states have engaged in bilateral training and equipment programmes. Out of the funding committed to development cooperation overall, Europe spent approximately €820 million on programmes targeting the security sector between 2009 and 2018.

In principle, the EU recognises the role of citizens and community within police reform. According to the EU's strategic framework to support SSR, there are two overarching objectives to reform: "to make states more stable and *individuals* more secure."[30] The framework

27 Yezid Sayigh, "Missed Opportunity: The Politics of Police Reform in Egypt and Tunisia", Carnegie Middle East Center, March 2015, https://carnegie-mec.org/2015/03/17/missed-opportunity-politics-of-police-reform-in-egypt-and-tunisia-pub-59391.

28 This policy is at the core of EU foreign relations, enabling the EU to take a role in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention, police reform and international security management: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp_en.

29 Madeline Kristoff, "Policing in Palestine: Analyzing the EU Police Reform Mission in the West Bank", *SSR Issue Papers* no. 7, The Centre for International Governance Innovation, February 2017,

30 European Commission, "Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform", *JOIN(2016) 31 final,* Strasbourg, July 5, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/sites/fpi/files/docs/news/join_2016_31_f1_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v2_p1_854572.pdf.

European involvement in security assistance and reform

Official Development Assistance commitments by EU members states and institutions for security system management and reform, $ million, 2009–2018
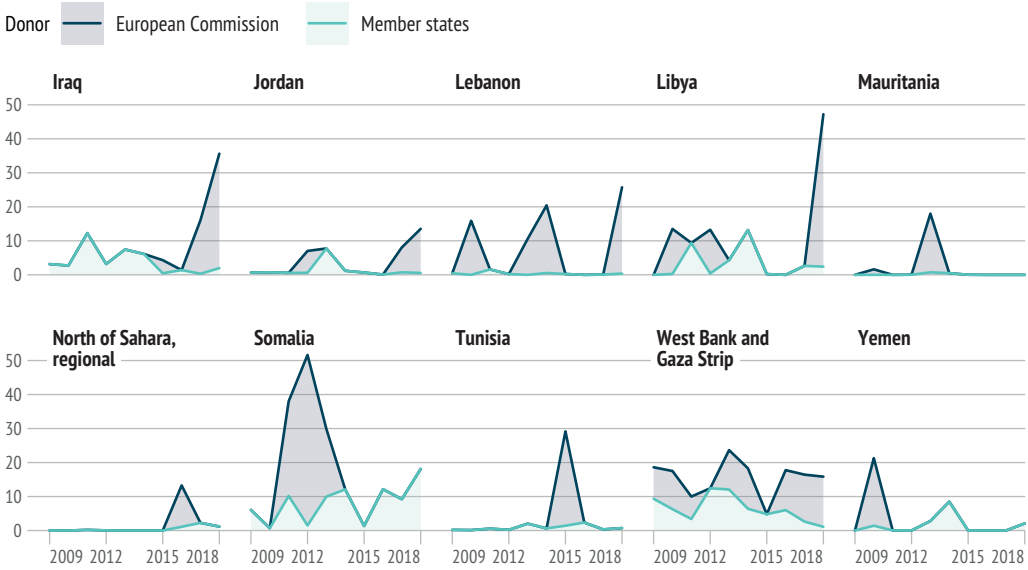
Data: OECD, 2020

goes on to state that both human and national security have to be guaranteed in order to achieve stability, by way of ensuring the protection of human rights, democratic principles, and the rule of law. But beyond these elements, it is not clear how this balance of human and national security is to be achieved by the police, and therefore by police reform.

Perhaps because of this ambiguity, or perhaps because of inherently Eurocentric thinking, for most European actors, police reform is or was a technical matter: it concerns procedures, management, skills, finances, and equipment. In this perspective, policing is about fighting crime and overt threats to public law and order. But as we have seen, in the Middle East and North Africa, police reform is deeply political. It is not so much the police that is compromised, but policing as a concept.

The EU has candidly recognised this flawed thinking: in a document identifying the lessons that it has drawn from its experience in police missions so far, it recognises that the "EU has not always paid enough attention to the needs of the local population and service-delivery. Much of the focus has been going into institution building or capacity building programmes which may not have a tangible impact on human security. Furthermore, less emphasis was placed on strengthening the role of oversight actors such as parliaments and civil society groups, nor has there been sufficient attention on engaging those who are supposed to be the ultimate beneficiaries of SSR support. The recommendations also called enhancing the capacity of civil society to monitor the performance and engage in the reform processes. There has also been criticism that interventions were often not tailored to the context and that input was lacking from those with local

knowledge of the security and justice situation in the country."[31]

Perhaps tellingly, the document concludes that the EU should "be more flexible in balancing between strengthening state institutional capacities and meeting the security and justice needs of the local population."[32]

But police reform is not a zero-sum game: neither the citizens nor the police are at the centre of police reform, but rather their relationship with each other. In fact, the very need for police reform is born out of the fact that the relationship between society and police is damaged. Any reform effort will have to repair this relationship in order to achieve the right balance between state and citizen security.

This means that the technical approach can only go so far as it ignores local perceptions and needs of security and justice, and assumes to know what local citizens want from their police forces, and how they want it to be achieved. "Members of society may universally view the provision of clean drinking water, electricity, or municipal services as self-evident entitlements and unproblematic public goods, yet notions of what constitutes good policing diverge substantially."[33] In addition, the term 'citizens' glosses over the fact that the population is not a cohesive whole but has different perceptions of both security and the police depending on gender, class, even religion or locality. In Lebanon, for instance, according to a 2014 survey, trust in the Interior Security Forces varies widely by region among Christian and Shia Muslim co-religionists, and Sunni Muslims feel targeted regardless of their geographic location. There was also a curious discrepancy between perception of security at the national level, which was seen as highly troubled, and security at the local level, which was seen as adequate.[34]

Ignoring such perceptions has meant that past efforts were often skewed towards security matters that have little or no impact on the daily life of citizens. Euromed Police, a project funded by the EU between 2004 and 2019, was designed to "to increase citizens' security" in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories and Tunisia. But it never conducted surveys to assess what citizens understood to be their security, did not engage with civil society actors, nor did it explore options for citizens to provide input to police matters. Instead, it zeroed in on matters that are in fact state security concerns, such as migration, terrorism, organised crime and trafficking.[35] In part, this was also because officials of these states are not particularly interested in conducting such surveys (for more on this see chapter 2); but in part, this is because the cornerstone of European police reform programmes is institutional rather than relational, such as training of police officers, particularly on matters such as human rights and conduct.

> **N**either the citizens nor the police are at the centre of police reform, but rather their relationship with each other.

Training is, of course, part of a larger set of tools available for police reform, and human rights and police conduct are essential ingredients of all reform programmes. But because they address the problem at the individual level of the police officer, rather than at the systemic level, and because they are devised without

---

31 European Commission, "Joint Staff Working Document: Lessons drawn from past interventions and stakeholders' views", *JOIN(2016) 31 final*, Strasbourg, July 5, 2016, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016SC0221&from=en.

32 Ibid.

33 Yezid Sayigh, "Dilemmas of Reform: Policing in Arab Transitions", Carnegie Middle East Center, March 2016, https://carnegie-mec.org/2016/03/30/dilemmas-of-reform-policing-in-arab-transitions-pub-63090.

34 Hovig Wannis, "Security threat perceptions in Lebanon", *International Alert*, November 2014, https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_SSRSecurityThreatPerceptions_EN_2014_1.pdf.

35 Interview with Euromed Police IV officials, Brussels, April 2018.

input from the local community, their effectiveness is limited.

In a situation such as that pertaining in Tunisia post-Ben Ali, an important step for police reform would have been not training but to initiate a dialogue between the police and several civil society organisations such as the Tunisian Observatory of Global Security and Tunisian Institutional Reform. These had developed reform agendas but had difficulties reaching an interior ministry preoccupied with other matters. As a result, an important window of opportunity closed. Similarly, several Egyptian civil society platforms had come up with a broad reform framework after the fall of Mubarak: the National Initiative to Rebuild the Police Force—A Police for the Egyptian People, the General Coalition of Police Officers, the General Coalition of Police Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates, Officers but Honorable, and others. All of

these were, however unable to join forces, and due to the presence of former police officers in their ranks, failed to forge links with activists that saw the police as the enemy and had little understanding of police culture and police work. Facilitating this important exchange between citizens and police would have been a fruitful first step towards more comprehensive police reform.

There are three main takeaways from this chapter: the EU has recognised that citizens and the community need to be involved more in their CSDP missions, but its other police reform activities in the region still *focus overwhelmingly on engagements with state actors*; it focuses primarily on *training of individual officers*, an approach that has met with only limited success; recalibrating its efforts towards *more citizen engagement* shows the greatest possible room for improvement.

CHAPTER 2

MEASURING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND POLICE

"Are you exploiting your power already? You will be a corrupt officer."

The Eagle of El-Se'eed (2018)

Effective police reform is not about procedures and capabilities but about the relationship between people and police. This much is clear – but how can we assess the state of affairs when it comes to the relationship between people and police in the Arab world? Conventional ways of measuring police performance are used to compile indexes such as the World Internal Security and Policing Index (WISPI).[1] A lot can be learned from this index: it shows us that while the region spends more than other world regions per capita on their police, within the region the Gulf ranks first. We also see that the Arab East does slightly better than the Arab West, and we see large variations when it comes to legitimacy, with Bahrain scoring highest. Crucially, the index indicates that Arab police forces fare particularly badly on process and procedure (covering integrity, effectiveness and crime reporting) – particularly those areas that matter most to the relationship with the people.

Indexes alone are, of course, not enough to measure the relationship between people and police. We assume that for any relationship to be productive and cooperative, essentially two criteria have to be met: at the minimum, the behaviour of those in the relationship has to be *predictable* and *consistent*. In addition, it should have *positive effects* for both sides. Where behaviour is unpredictable, trust will be virtually impossible to develop; where there are no benefits, or, even worse, negative effects, neither side will engage with the other.

We have identified four ways in which this relationship is particularly undermined: firstly, where citizens cannot count on the police to protect them from insecurity, be it property or violent crimes, the relationship will be a negative experience. In other words, police effectiveness is a key determinant of the relationship. Secondly, trust in the police will play a key role, too – as we will see, it normally plays a role in how likely citizens are to report to the police. Thirdly, where the two parties become a source of insecurity for each other, they make the relationship by definition a negative one. Lastly, predictability and consistency of police behaviour is undermined if the rule of law is not applied consistently: in many contexts in the Arab world the rule of law is hostage to political interests and corruption. The prevalence

---

1 Institute for Economics and Peace, *World Internal Security and Policing Index 2016*, http://www.ipsa-police.org/ProjectInfoDetails/world-internal-security-and-police-index. The index is not comprehensive: Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Qatar are excluded.

of such corruption undermines efficiency and increases insecurity.

MEASURING POLICE EFFECTIVENESS: OF DATA AND SURVEYS

On the surface, Arab police appear to perform rather effectively: for instance in Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates homicide rates are lower than in some European states. And, while they are higher in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon, they still rank below the United States.[2] Property crimes, too, are below international averages.[3] And since there is a correlation between homicide rates and police perception, it is perhaps not altogether surprising that, overall, Arab police institutions rank generally second or even first in the trust of citizens (see next section in this chapter).[4] As a result, the need for reform is often not seen by police institutions themselves, or even state officials.

But do these statistics really tell us that Arab police are doing their job properly?

Let us look first at the crime statistics: they tell us not how much crime has taken place, but how much crime has been *reported*

> **T**he decision to report a crime depends largely on citizens' perception of the police.

to the police (not to mention, to international organisations: Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen stopped reporting crime rates to the United Nations after the Arab Spring). In general, reporting rates depend entirely on the decision of crime victims to involve the police in their problem. The only way to measure the *actual* rather than *reported* extent of crime are victimisation surveys. Such surveys go much deeper than assessing threat perceptions or general opinions on crime. They include details of crimes including type, location, profile of the victim, damage assessment, and more. This way, not only crime can be measured, but also the levels of citizens' fear for their own safety – and how much citizens trust the police, as well as the wider justice system, to be of assistance. After all, the decision to report a crime depends largely on citizens' perception of the police:[5] will it solve my problem, or even make it worse? How safe am I at the police station? Is there a chance that I will be accused of a crime myself by reporting a crime (for instance, women that have been sexually assaulted may well end up being accused of public indecency or even unfaithfulness)?[6]

The only Arab state where such surveys exist and are available is Iraq.[7] Here, we have such a granular picture of insecurity that it actually helps identify concrete measures to alleviate it. A recent UNICEF survey showed, for instance, that 3.3% of Iraqi women were victims of assault and/or robbery in the last three years, that more than 40% of these assaults involved a gun or another weapon, and that 90%

---

2   World Bank, "Intentional homicides (per 100,000 people)", https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC. P5?end=2017&locations=ZQ–US&start=2017&view=bar&year=2017.

3   Op.Cit., "Private car theft rate."

4   Andrew Dawson, "Police Legitimacy and Homicide: A Macro-Comparative Analysis", *Social Forces*, vol. 97, no. 2, December 2018, pp. 841–66.

5   Rodrigo R. Soares, "Crime Reporting as a Measure of Institutional Development", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol. 52, no. 4 (July 2004): pp. 851-71.

6   Amnesty International, "Les victimes accusées: Violences sexuelles et Violences liées au genre en tunisie", 2015, https://www. amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE3028142015FRENCH.PDF.

7   While the EU as a collective does not conduct victimisation surveys, Eurobarometer regularly includes questions about crime, and has a regular special edition on security perception. In addition, several EU member states conduct victimisation surveys.

Perceptions of security
% of respondents, 2016

○ Female ○ Male

	I currently feel that my own personal as well as my family's safety and security are ensured.	I am worried about a terrorist attack in my country.	I am worried about being harassed or threatened on the street.
Tunisia	16 ... 55	98 99	22 ... 73
Palestine	6 ... 39	83 89	8 ... 62
Morocco	33 52	81 84	28 44
Lebanon	9 ... 39	88 90	15 ... 56
Jordan	12 84	63 65	6 ... 36
Egypt	36 45	88 96	37 49
Algeria	36 37	89 91	43 44

Data: Arab Barometer, 2016

took place in their own homes.[8] As a result, only 65% of Iraqi women feel safe at home alone after dark, and 49% dare to walk around in their neighbourhood alone after sunset. We also know that crime is roughly evenly distributed between urban and rural areas. Another survey found that crime reporting varied widely across Iraq: in Hamdaniyah, where 60% of citizens also happen to feel safe, 94% said that they would report a crime to the police. In Baradiyah, where only 7% feel safe, only 30% would report a crime – and of those, the vast majority would use indirect approaches rather than going to the police station.[9]

Nowhere else in the region do we have comparable data: the last victimisation survey in Tunisia was conducted in 1995, and in Egypt and Morocco in 2009.[10] No data can be found for the Gulf States, Algeria, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Jordan or the Palestinian Territories. We therefore have to work with surveys and statistics that *indirectly* tell us how good the police is at doing its job.

For instance, the Arab Barometer survey of 2016 included questions concerning security perceptions.[11]

While this survey gives us an indication of security perceptions generally, and shows a clear concern about terrorism, it is not granular enough for the police to deduce what it could do, for instance, to reduce the fear of harassment or threats on the street. It does not tell us what the profile of victims is, at what time and where incidents occur, and whether the police was informed. For the police, such a survey is operationally not useful. Without such data, police work is guesswork.

---

8   UNICEF, "Iraq: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018, Survey Findings Report", 2018, https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3495/related-materials.

9   International Organisation of Migration, "Perceptions of security and police in Iraq: Baseline survey findings", April 9, 2020, https://iraq.iom.int/publications/perceptions-security-and-police-iraq-baseline-survey-findings.

10 Ugljesa Zvekic and Anna Alvazzi del Frate, *Criminal Victimisation in The Developing World* (Rome: United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Institute, 1995); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Victimization survey in Egypt", October 2009, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/dfa/Egypt_victimization_exsum.pdf.

11 Arab Barometer, "Wave IV 2016 – 2017", https://www.arabbarometer.org/surveys/arab-barometer-wave-iv/

Other surveys give us glimpses into the true extent of crime: one Lebanese study of 2019 reported that 8.7% of citizens had experienced some form of crime, without asking for further details, however.[12] More than 82% of Arab women suffer from domestic violence, but more than 6 in every 10 victims refrain from asking for support or protection of any sort, and those who do speak up turn to family and friends for this support or protection rather than the police. We have no further information on the context or extent of this violence. Neither in Iraq nor Yemen would relatives allow their female household members report a crime at the police station alone and unaccompanied.[13] According to another survey, 26% of businesspeople in the region stated that their company had reported economic crime (such as asset misappropriation, cybercrime, bribery and procurement fraud). This was the lowest reporting rate in the world: 40% of respondents said they had reported crime in Europe, 30% in the Asia Pacific, and 57% in Africa. In the Arab world, 17% of these had uncovered the crime by accident, and 20% did not know for sure whether they had been the victim of a crime, indicating a lack of trust in internal auditing mechanisms.[14] Another study showed that homicide rates have increased by 152% over the last 25 years – but this data lumps together all victims of violence, including those from war and conflict – meaning that no actionable conclusions can be drawn for the police.[15]

Given the incomplete picture of the actual levels of crime, and the probably low levels of reporting, we can assume at the minimum that we do not have enough data to state what Arab citizens need and want from the police, how this could be addressed, and therefore how good police performance actually is. Of course, the number of arrests, number of citations, the amount of contraband they seize, number of calls for police service, average response times, and so forth[16] can be computed – but there is not even evidence that these police activities actually contribute to a reduction in crime or the improvement of public safety.[17] For instance, one study showed that it is not police response time that is the determining factor in making an arrest, but citizen reporting time (more on that in the next section).[18]

Even where police departments display high success rates in catching criminals, this does not necessarily imply that they succeed in reducing crime or improving citizens' quality of life.[19]

This is what community policing seeks to achieve: rather than arrest criminals, recover stolen property, and seize contraband, the police can reduce crime rates by solving problems of social disorder first. Thus, police effectiveness needs to be measured not only in traditional ways, but also in terms of improvement in quality of life and involvement in

12 ARK, "Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon", June 2019, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/70101.

13 Yemen Polling Center, "Perceptions of the Yemeni public on living conditions and security-related issues", May 2017, http://www.yemenpolling.org/advocacy/upfiles/YPCPublications_YPC-Data---Perceptions-of-the-Yemeni-public-on-living-conditions-and-security-related-issues---May-2017.pdf.

14 PriceWaterhouseCoopers, "Global Economic Crime Survey 2016: Middle East report: Adjusting the Lens on Economic Crime in the Arab World", https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/publications/middle-east-economic-crime-survey.html.

15 "Middle East: Ten times more people are dying from murder and suicide than in war", *Independent*, August 8, 2017, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/middle-east-murder-suicide-rates-more-deaths-war-yemen-syria-iraq-isis-ten-times-a7882801.html.

16 Even here there is no evidence that such data is being sourced in Arab countries, with the exception of the Gulf States, as most filing is done by hand, and there is no centralised system that could be used to conduct these analyses.

17 Robert O'Brien, "Police productivity and crime rates: 1973–1992", *Criminology*, vol. 34, no. 2, May 1996, pp.183–207.

18 David A. Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga, "Introduction: understanding police innovation", in David Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga (eds.), *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.8.

19 Geoffrey P. Alpert and Mark H. Moore, "Measuring police performance in the new paradigm of policing" *in Performance measures for the criminal justice system: Discussion papers from the BJS–Princeton project* (Washington DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1993), pp. 109–42.

problem-solving activities.[20] For this, first an assessment needs to take place measuring what citizens experience, and how they feel about it.

TRUST: A FOUNDATION TO BUILD ON?

In most states, there is a correlation between trust in the police and reporting. Since we cannot know for sure how much of Arab crime is reported to the police, we will have to resort to other data available on trust. Here, surveys are often the only yardstick available to measure how the people relate to the police force – but they need to be treated with a large dose of caution. Surveys in the region are often small in sample size, are conducted in a politically tense context, and are subject to censorship and high levels of distrust.[21] Questions are often ambiguous or narrow, and answers open to interpretation. That said, surveys cast light on the depth of the relationship between the community and the police. Particularly when several different surveys are combined, a larger picture emerges allowing us to draw some conclusions. It is worth noting that in general, democratic systems correlate with higher levels of trust in the police, although this is not automatic and increases only over time. But, overall, corruption has a larger impact on trust in the police than democracy.

For instance, the World Economic Forum data on perceptions of police reliability in the Arab world place all countries in the region except one in the top half globally (but data is lacking on Iraq, Palestine, Libya and Sudan).[22] In response to the question "to what extent can police services be relied upon to enforce law and order?", business executives ranked Arab states at a par or even above European states (1 = not at all; 7 = to a great extent).

This data is most certainly skewed as it represents elite perceptions, but other surveys, too, give a moderately positive picture. According to the Arab Opinion Index, 36% of Arabs had high degrees of confidence in the police, and 39% had confidence to some extent – the police were the second most popular institution after the military.[23]

According to the Gallup Law and Order survey, 67% of people in the Middle East and North Africa said they trusted the police (in comparison, the figure is 84% in Western Europe). The United Arab Emirates (UAE) even ranked third in the world, and Egypt ranked eighth above Finland, Austria and Denmark. Other Arab states fared well compared to European states, too: Jordan is on a par with Portugal, Saudi Arabia on a par with France, Algeria and Iraq are at a level with Cyprus, and Lebanon at a level with Greece and Romania.[24]

Corruption has a larger impact on trust in the police than democracy.

The Arab Barometer survey, too, finds that trust in the police is consistently above trust in other institutions and either just below or on a par with the most trusted institution, the military. In the Palestinian Territories, where 47% of respondents declared that they trusted the police,

20 Stephen Mastrofski, Robert Worden and Jeffrey Snipes, "Law enforcement in a time of community policing", *Criminolog,* no. 33, 1995, pp. 539–63.

21 Lindsay J. Benstead, "Survey Research in the Arab World: Challenges and Opportunities", *PS: Political Science & Politics*, vol. 51, no. 3, July 2018 , pp. 535–42.

22 World Economic Forum, "Reliability of Police Services", Executive Opinion Survey, 2017, http://reports.weforum.org/pdf/gci-2017-2018-scorecard/WEF_GCI_2017_2018_Scorecard_EOSQ055.pdf.

23 Arab Center Washington DC, "Arab Opinion Index 2017-2018", July 2018, http://arabcenterdc.org/survey/2017-2018-arab-opinion-index-executive-summary/

24 Gallup, "Global Law and Order 2019,", Washington D.C, 2019, http://enterprise.press/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019_Global_Law_and_Order_Report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR30vN8DrD6WJp7IjFevqNuzUaI_YzMi3GlNispDwCJJwhmW7M6GRtHS124.

Confidence in institutions
% of respondents, 2018

○ Judiciary   ○ Military   ○ Parliament   ○ Police

not
← *confident*   *confident* →

Iraq

Tunisia

Egypt

Jordan

Lebanon

Palestine

Saudi Arabia

United Arab Emirates

100   50   0   50   100
%
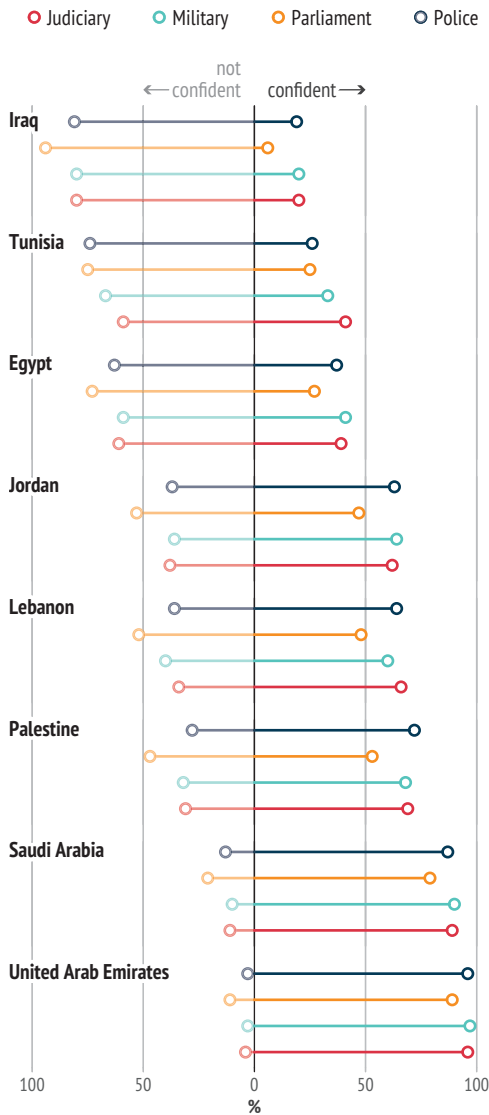
Data: Zogby Research Services, 2018

rates are surprisingly high with 46% and 49% respectively.[25]

According to another poll, conducted by the Zogby Research Service, the picture was more nuanced: positive in the Gulf States (96% were confident in the police's performance in the United Arab Emirates, 87% in Saudi Arabia) but less so for instance in the Palestinian Territories (72%), Lebanon (64%), Jordan (63%) and very low in Egypt (37%), Tunisia (26%) and Iraq (19%).[26]

This means that across the region, the police has more social capital than all political entities (such as parliament or political parties) and is outmatched only by the military. But even in those states where numbers are moderately positive, such as Lebanon or Jordan, we should be cautious about interpreting this data as a signal that all is well in the relationship between police institutions and their respective communities. Firstly, these surveys measure *trust* or *reliability* rather than reporting rates or police effectiveness. Trust and reliability can signify that police behave in a *predictable* fashion: where the police behave in an expected manner, even if it is not particularly beneficial for citizens, this will still generate a degree of trust. Secondly, as we have seen from similar data on the armed forces, trust in institutions that are seen as symbols of the nation-state is generally higher *regardless of their performance.* This means that the police is valued for what it represents more than what it does. In addition, survey data alone from a region with a complicated relationship with public opinion (and a tendency towards preference falsification) should not serve as the only indicator we rely on. Algeria, for instance, which appears to rank rather favourably, saw local demonstrations in 2018 against the construction of accommodation for unmarried policemen in Aokas. While only an anecdote, it serves as an indication that the relationship between police and people is not free from conflict.[27]

it even ranked highest. Jordan, where 90% trust the police according to this survey, is the regional leader in that sense. But even in troubled areas, such as Libya and Sudan, approval

25 Arab Barometer, "Wave V, 2018 – 2019", https://www.arabbarometer.org/surveys/arab-barometer-wave-v/

26 Zogby Research Services, "Middle East Public Opinion 2018", http://www.zogbyresearchservices.com/new-gallery-71.

27 "Algerians to protest accommodation for unmarried policemen", *Liberté*, September 14, 2018 (*BBC Monitoring*).

Trust in the police and the army

% of respondents, 2018
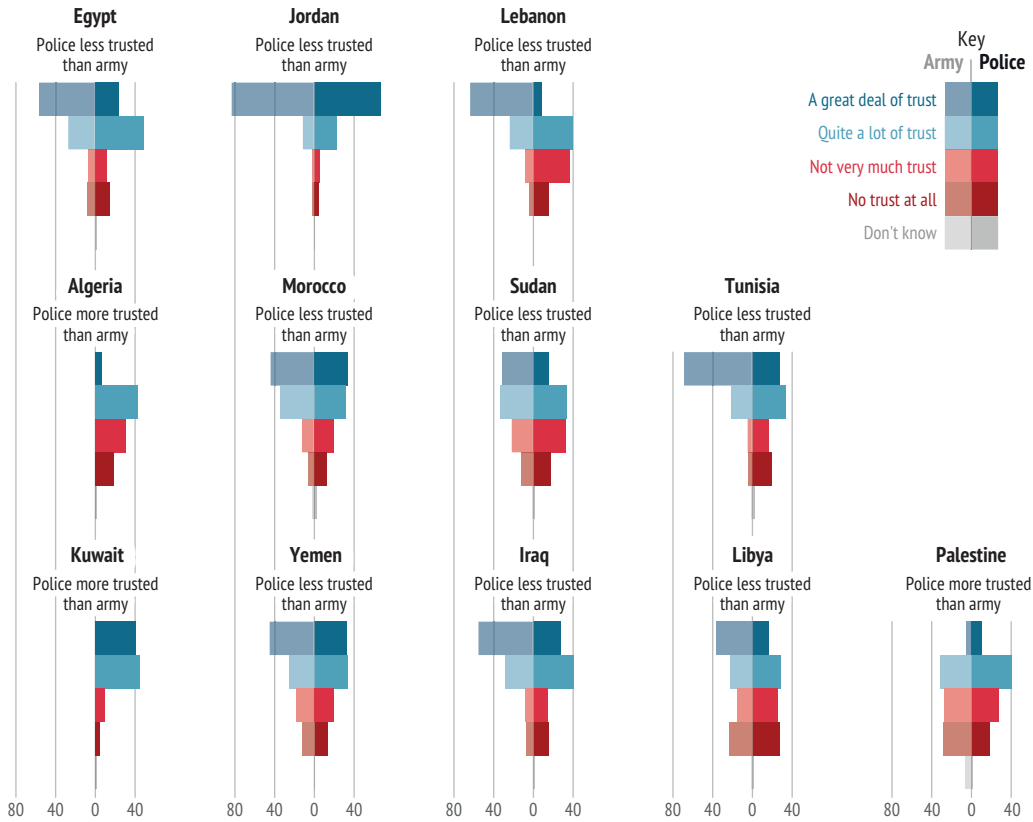
Data: Arab Barometer, 2018

It should not be forgotten, however, that trust works both ways, but methodological research analysing surveys of police officers is rare in general and non-existent in the region.

To truly grasp the depth of relations between citizens and police, other variables will have to be taken into account that correlate positively or negatively with trust: any behaviour that undermines predictability (i.e. anything undermining the rule of law in this case, particularly corruption), any behaviour that expresses distrust (i.e. low levels of citizen reporting to the police) and any indication that the police is underperforming in its task (i.e. levels of insecurity).

Trust and confidence in institutions

% of respondents, 2019

- Trust and confidence in the courts
- Trust and confidence in the government (including politicians, public servants or any kind of government agency)
- Trust and confidence in the police
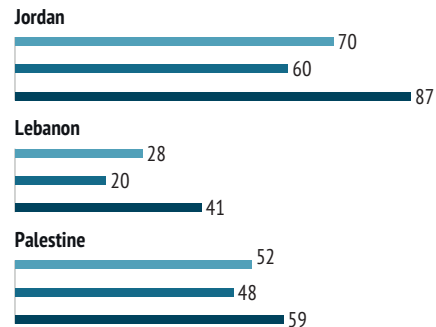
Data: Transparency International, 2019

AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP? THE MANY FACES OF VIOLENCE

"The first and most important mission of the police is to protect lives and people."

Life or death (Kamal El Sheikh, 1954)

As we stated earlier, the use of force, or threat thereof, is a legitimate and integral element of police work. Because police work is by definition potentially conflictual – dealing with conflicts among people, but also conflicts that people have with the state – there is frequently occasion for resorting to force.

The purpose of force, or threat thereof, is (normally) to affect civilians' conduct and can occur on a wide scale ranging from having a mere signalling effect to verbalisation, the use of firm grips, and the application of pain compliance techniques (which do not cause lasting physical injury). Impact techniques are the next level of escalation, involving actual physical contact (kicks or batons, for example), or the use of chemical sprays or Taser electronic weapons. Lastly, the most extreme use of force is, of course, deadly, and mostly involves firearms. Police violence will manifest itself in broadly three instances: when interacting with criminals, during riots and demonstrations, and during interrogations, when it mostly takes the shape of torture.

Coercive force comes with a paradox: even though a degree of iron-handed law enforcement might be effective in the short run, it also has limitations: where people will respond to a violent police with violence, the police has to increase violence in order to maintain effectiveness. "Police who rely on coercive force to make the world a less threatening place make it a more dangerous place for themselves and for other cops."[28]

It has become the norm to expect that police should always choose an amount of force that is *proportional to the threat*, *limited to the least amount required*, and *reasonable.*[29] Anything beyond this is considered excessive and unjustified. But while this sounds straightforward in theory, it is less clear in practice. For instance, the use of teargas, rubber bullets or water cannons, is often decried as excessive use of force even though such methods should not inflict lasting physical damage. The 'excessive' nature is therefore relative to the circumstances in which they were used rather than absolute. In addition, police officers are under no legal obligation to use less force than the attacker: the right to self-defence applies to police officers, as well. Lastly, mistakes can occur also because police officers often have to make decisions in split seconds, their threat perception will be subjective, and is often based on training and previous experience. In the case of torture, justice systems overvaluing confessions – e.g. because there is no forensic capability – also encourage police abuse.

Extreme forms of police violence therefore occur often at events with high levels of tension and threatening characteristics.

Types of violence

It is not easy to draw an accurate picture of Arab police violence: there are no official records, often there is poor reporting, and in too many cases, none at all. Even though we have anecdotal evidence, we struggle to identify the exact number of citizens killed, tortured or otherwise unnecessarily hurt by the police. Perhaps that

---

28 Jerome J. Skolnick and James J. Fyfe, *Above the Law: Police and the Excessive Use of Force* (New York: The Free Press), p.93.

29 Kenneth Adams, "What we Know about Police Use of Force", National Institute of Justice, 1999, p.1.

number is ultimately irrelevant as any case is one too many. That said, we know where police violence occurs: during demonstrations, and behind closed doors.

There are several reasons why police violence occurs particularly during demonstrations. One survey showed, for instance, that police presence is concentrated from the outset at those gatherings that have higher conflict potential: extreme forms of police violence therefore occur often at events with high levels of tension and threatening characteristics.[30] Lack of riot control training, too, can play a role, and was used by Saif al-Islam Gaddafi in 2011 to explain away the clashes between police and demonstrators in Benghazi. But even in contexts where police had riot control training, such as in Lebanon, ongoing protests over days and weeks led to frustration and fatigue among police officers, eroding patience and resistance to provocation. Between shifts, officers were seen sleeping on the pavement outside parliament. Perhaps most importantly, the use of live ammunition, or even snipers (as occurred in Iraq in 2019) are indications that the police from the outset used the most coercive tools available to not just manage demonstrations, but disperse them. Handing out flowers to police officers has consequently become a ritual employed to signal peacefulness in Tunisia before football games; it reappeared in Algeria and Lebanon during the 2019 protests as a sign of appeasement.[31]

One of the issues with police violence in the region is that the law pertaining to it is not always clear. Laws explicitly regulating means and use of force by the police either do not exist, or do not explicitly outlaw the rule of force. Even though the law alone does not solve the problem of violence, it is an important element in the clear delineation of acceptable and unacceptable violence.[32]

Stories of torture and impunity

In **Morocco** 151 individuals reported being tortured in 2017. The police investigated three officers implicated in torture allegations and nine in cases involving inappropriate use of violence. Three prison officials were tried in cases of torture of detainees, each receiving a four-month suspended sentence and a fine of 500 dirhams ($52). In **Algeria**, where the General Directorate of National Security received 131 complaints of violence or threats by officers, 163 investigations into those threats were conducted, but only six officers were investigated for torture and suspended. In **Egypt**, the al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence documented an average of 35 to 40 instances of torture *per month*. The United Nations Committee against Torture concluded that torture was "a systematic practice in Egypt."

In **Mauritania**, official statistics claim that 10 persons died in custody throughout the year of 2017. In **Jordan,** the Government Coordinator for Human Rights investigated fives cases of torture that year; one case lead to the suspension and detention of five officers, in another, eight officers were charged with torture after the death of 18-year-old Raed Amar at Jiza police station in May 2017. 11 cases of torture were reported in prisons.

---

[30] Jennifer Earl, Sarah A. Soule and John D. McCarthy, "Protest under Fire? Explaining the Policing of Protest", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 68, no. 4 (Aug., 2003): pp. 581–606.

[31] "Algeria leaders ready to discuss system based on 'will of the people'", *The Jordan Times*, March 14, 2019.

[32] Franklin E. Zimring, *When Police Kill* (London: Harvard University Press, 2017).

Police officers killed in terrorist attacks
2009–2018

- 🟥 on duty   🟧 off duty   🟦 family members
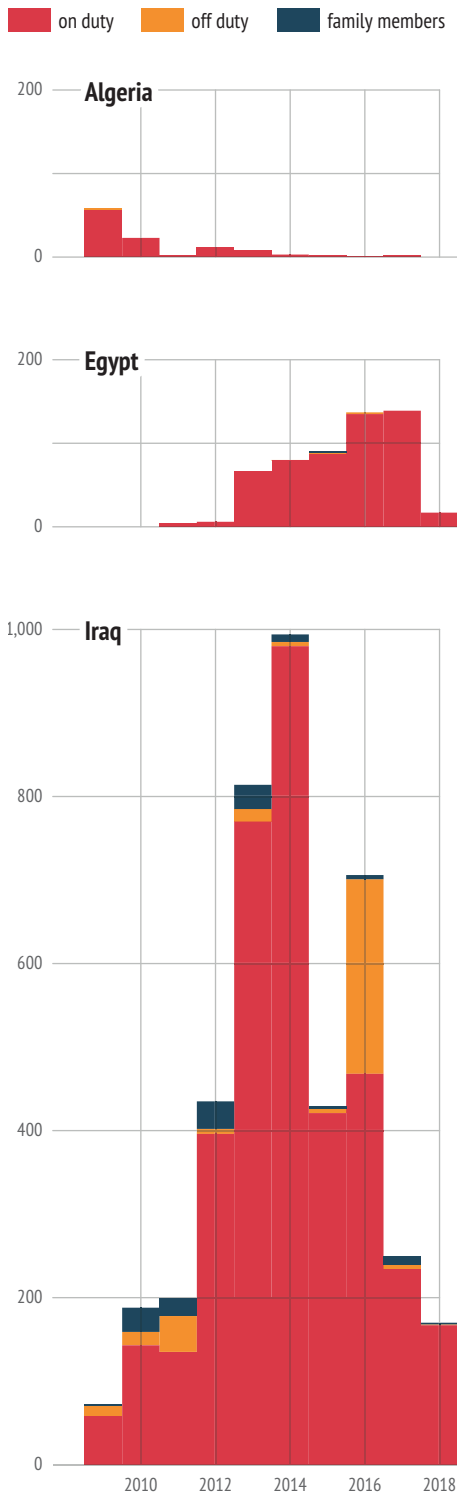
Data: Global Terrorism Database, 2019

Violence begets violence

One of the many problems with Arab police violence is that it is far from isolated: violence is a deeply entrenched phenomenon in the region, starting in childhood. Almost every child (between 82% and 88% of children under the age of 14) is regularly subjected to violent discipline at home. More than half of children experience violence at school. 82% of women experience domestic violence. High levels of conflict over the last 15 years means that violence has become the norm in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen.[33] Here, the police do not face regular levels of violence, but insurgencies and war – all of which cannot be dealt with by usual police methods.

To make matters more complex, high levels of violence feed into a vicious circle: where police officers, drawing on their past traumatic experience, are exposed to stressful situations, their cognitive function declines, which leads to errors in judgment, impulse control, and poor decision-making, at times when it is needed the most.[34] Over a longer period, police officers will even become vulnerable to psychotic experiences.[35] Police officers exposed to recurrent citizen violence, and without institutional measures in place to address this stress, will interpret every interaction with citizens in a negative light. Under the worst conditions, police officers will simply give up: in 2004, two thirds of Mosul's police officers abandoned their job in response to a wave of attacks on police stations.[36] At the same time, police violence reduces reporting of crime by citizens – making

33 UNICEF, "A profile of violence against children and adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa", July 2018, https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/2826/file/VAC%20in%20MENA.pdf.

34 Charles L. Gutshall et al., "The effects of occupational stress on cognitive performance in police officers", *Police Practice and Research*, vol. 18, no. 5, 2017.

35 "Psychotic experiences among police officers working in high-stress situations", *Schizophrenia Research*, no. 197, July 2018, pp. 613-14.

36 Robert M. Perito, "Police in Peace and Stability Operations: Evolving US Policy and Practice", *International Peacekeeping*, vol.15, no.1, February 2008, pp.51–66.

Perceptions of security
Global Terrorism Index score, 2019

Impact of terrorism
very low   low   medium   high   very high

0   2   4   6   8   10

Lebanon 4.39
Syria 8.01
Iraq 9.24
Tunisia 3.94
Palestine 5.18
Jordan 3.09
Kuwait 2.49
Bahrain 3.2
Morocco 1.22
Algeria 3.76
Libya 6.77
Egypt 6.79
Saudi Arabia 5.24
Qatar 0.03
United Arab Emirates 0.05
Oman 0
Mauritania 0
Sudan 5.81
Yemen 7.26
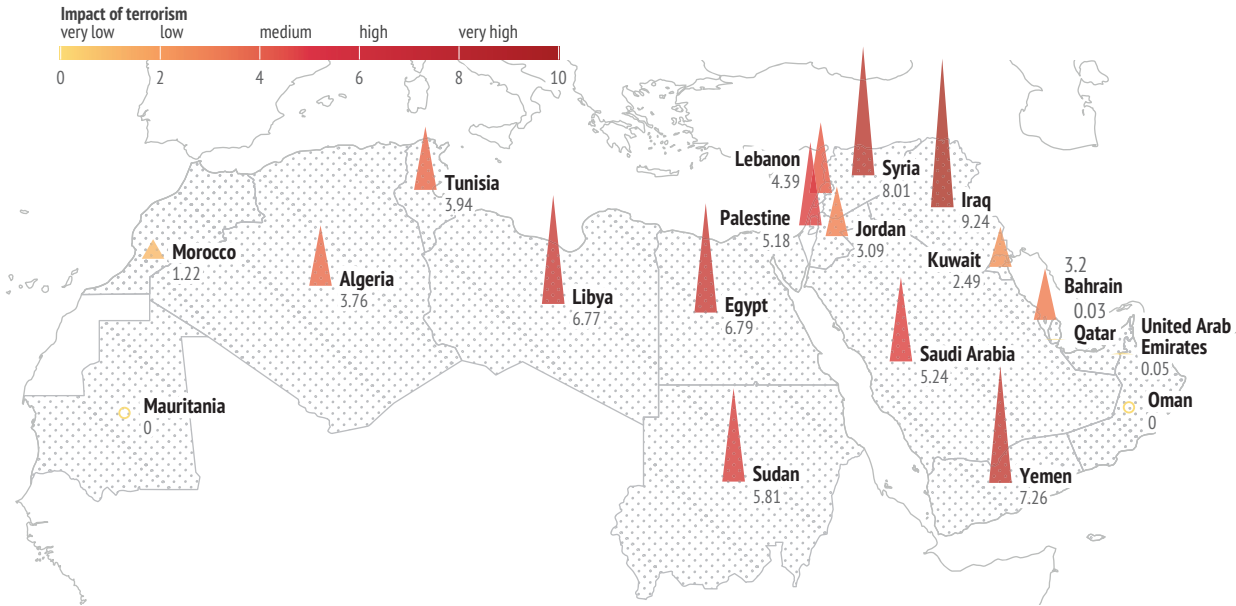
Data: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019; Natural Earth, 2020

it even more difficult for police to do their job effectively.[37]

In the region, police officers have been on the frontline between citizens and the state. Here, the distinction between citizens and terrorists is not one that is easy to make. As one Iraqi officer stated: "For over a decade we have been attacked by people carrying suitcases and riding on bicycles. Normal citizens have become the enemy. We want to get out of this mindset, but we don't know how."[38] To police officers that have become the target of what appears to be civilian violence, the distinction is unfortunately irrelevant. Matters are not made easier by the fact that both citizens and terrorists have targeted police, albeit for different purposes.

Over the last decade, more than 4,000 officers were killed in the region by civilians or terrorists appearing to be civilians – half of them in the line of duty, the other half off duty, but sought out because they were police officers. Officers and police stations alike were the preferred target of anybody opposed to the government in Iraq.[39] In the database of victims, police officers are represented more often than any other occupation, including politicians, religious leaders, and legal professionals.[40] Police officers were also deliberately targeted by terrorists in Egypt: in 2013, a car bomb outside the police headquarter in Mansoura killed 14, another in Cairo a month later killed four. Earlier that year, terrorists stormed a police truck and executed 25 conscripts.[41] But not all violence was terrorist in nature: the police were also the

---

37 Daniel Gingerich, "Police Violence and the Underreporting of Crime", *Economics and Politics*, vol. 30, no. 1, (March 2018): pp. 78-105.

38 Author interview, Tunis, December 2018.

39 Al-Mada, "Gunmen abduct Iraqi policeman in Baghdad", *BBC Monitoring*, October 10, 2016.

40 Mathieu Deflem and Suzanne Sutphin, "Policing post-war Iraq: Insurgency, civilian police, and the reconstruction of society", *Sociological Focus*, vol. 39, no. 4 (November 2006): pp. 265-83.

41 "Are Egypt's police outmatched in the war on terrorism?", *Ahram Online*, February 6, 2014.

target of citizens' anger. In the six months following the overthrow of Morsi alone, 150 police officers were killed.[42] (The government used these casualties to further its political cause: before the elections of 2018, pictures of murdered police and army personnel were printed by numerous newspapers with headlines such as "Vote in honour for the martyrs' blood."[43]) In post–Ben Ali Tunisia, 15 officers were killed and 1,500 injured in the 18 months that followed the uprising.

The unfortunate side–effect of this violence has been that police institutions have become even less inclined to engage in reform efforts. In Tunisia, numerous police unions have lobbied for increased protection for the security forces and have opposed any measures that could increase citizen input in their work. In Egypt, the police now has a right to be consulted about any laws that could affect it, giving it privileged legal status and hollowing out civilian oversight. Conversely, activists that have been exposed to police violence will feel disinclined to engage in any type of dialogue necessary to rebuild the relationship in the first place.

POLICE FOR SALE? THE EXTENT OF CORRUPTION

> "Ziad will never turn in his colleague, even if he has committed any crimes."
>
> *The Eagle of El–Se'eed* (2018)

Police violence is one of the two main grievances citizens have against the police; the second one is police corruption. Although this might appear to be primarily an economic endeavour, its impact in the security sector is far worse than 'just' economic: it creates inconsistency in the way the rule of law is applied, makes police behaviour unpredictable, and therefore adversely affects the relationship with the community in which they are embedded, leading to ineffectiveness and insecurity.

In the police, corruption has many faces: it can be financially insignificant or lucrative; it can be incidental or opportunistic; it can be procedural or internal. In all instances, it concerns the misuse of authority for personal gain; and in all instances it exploits routine functions of daily police work to that end.

What type of corruption?

We can broadly distinguish between four types of police corruption:

> **Gratuities:** This is the most widespread form of police corruption; it includes free meals, free goods, and bribes.

> **Opportunistic corruption:** police officers who engage in this type of corruption deliberately seek out and target offenders, often taking advantage of their vulnerable position. It concerns particularly construction contractors, liquor and drug sellers, but also small businesses such as street vendors lacking a permit.

> **Process corruption:** This type of corruption takes the form of influencing judicial procedures in exchange for personal benefits; it also includes 'framing' of citizens by planting narcotics on them or falsifying evidence.

---

42   "As Pressure Builds, Egypt's Police Experience a New Feeling: Fear", *The New York Times*, December 17, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/18/world/middleeast/a-new-feeling-for-egypts-bare-knuckled-police-fear.html.

43   "Egypt dailies link voter turnout to security forces sacrifices", *BBC Monitoring*, March 29, 2018.

Driving and corruption

Control of corruption and estimated road traffic death rate (per 100 000 population)
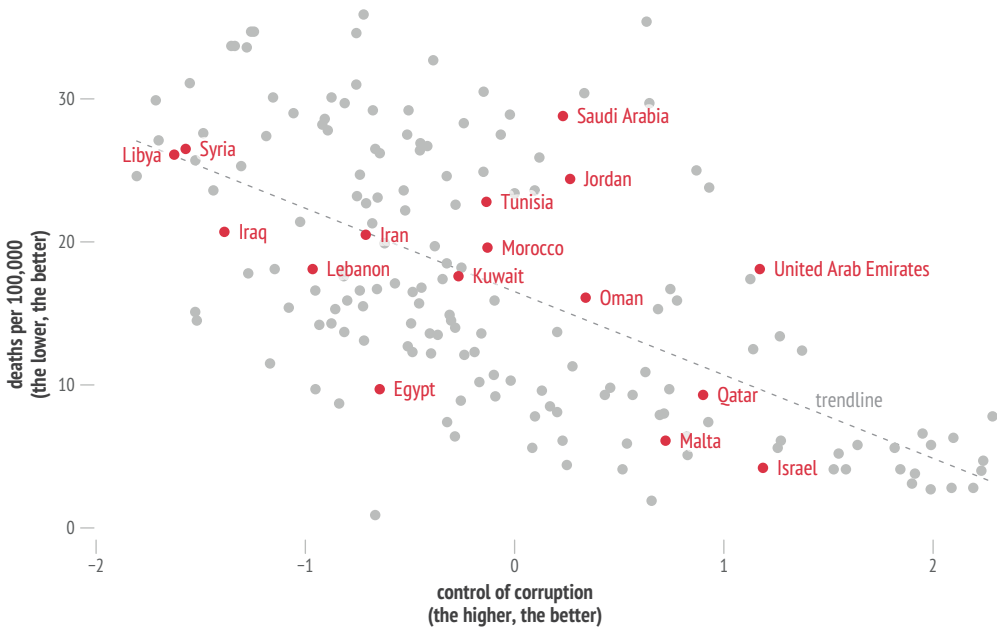
Data: WHO, 2020; World Bank, 2020

> > Internal corruption: this includes workplace favouritism or harassment depending on whether officers pay a bribe to a superior officer. It also includes misuse of workplace resources. [44]

In the region we are studying here, corruption not only has many faces, it also exists in many places: in the corruption ranking, the police are seventh below members of parliament, government officials, business executives or bankers. In other words: the police are embedded in a larger context that is overwhelmingly corrupt. 32% of people think that most or all of the police are corrupt, and 22% of respondents said that they had bribed an officer in the previous 12 months. This means that any efforts focusing only on reducing corruption within the police

are likely to be vitiated by the continuous presence of corruption in the wider system. To make matters more complex, an important component of systemic corruption in the region is not about exchanging money but favours, and not on a single occasion but repeatedly: a system known as *wasta*, whereby personal connections trump official procedures. This type of corruption is deeply entrenched in social and political mechanisms, and cannot be tackled by 'off the shelf' anti-corruption measures.

It is worth noting that how citizens perceive the police correlates also with how people feel about the government generally in corruption terms. Since corruption serves as the most corrosive element in the relationship between citizens and governments the police, as a representative of the government, bears the brunt of this perception.[45]

---

44 Tim Prenzler, *Police Corruption: Preventing Misconduct and Maintaining Integrity* (London: CRC Press, 2009), pp.3–13.

45 Stanley L. Albrecht and Miles Green, "Attitudes toward the police and the larger attitude complex", *Criminology*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1977, pp. 67–86; Paul R. Benson, "Political alienation and public satisfaction with police services", *Pacific Sociological Review*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1981, pp. 45–64.

Bribery and transparency
Corruption Perceptions Index score and rank, 2018

Bribes for police
Service users who paid a bribe to a
police officer in the past 12 months,
%, 2019
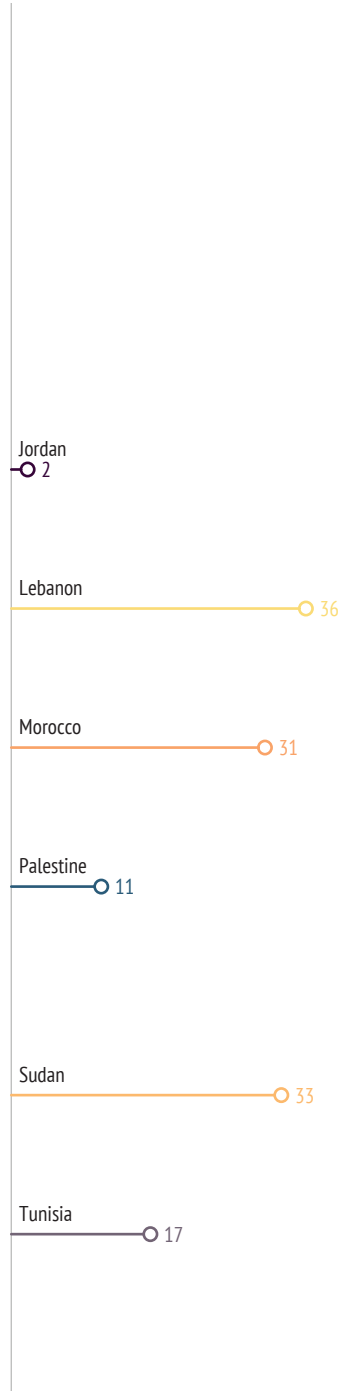
Bribes for services
Service users who paid a bribe
in the past 12 months,
%, 2017
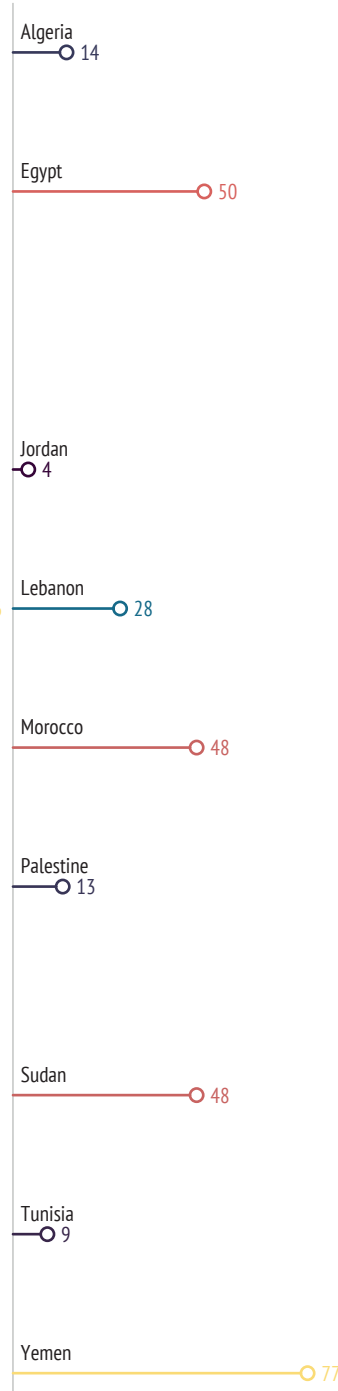
Transparency
Corruption Perceptions Index,
score (0 = highly corrupt, 100 = very clean)
and rank, 2018

Bribes for police	Bribes for services	Transparency	
	Algeria — 14	Algeria — 35	rank: 105
		Bahrain — 36	rank: 99
	Egypt — 50	Egypt — 35	rank: 105
		Iran — 28	rank: 138
		Iraq — 18	rank: 168
		Israel — 61	rank: 34
Jordan — 2	Jordan — 4	Jordan — 49	rank: 58
		Kuwait — 41	rank: 78
Lebanon — 36	Lebanon — 28	Lebanon — 28	rank: 138
		Libya — 17	rank: 170
Morocco — 31	Morocco — 48	Morocco — 43	rank: 73
		Oman — 52	rank: 53
Palestine — 11	Palestine — 13		
		Qatar — 62	rank: 33
		Saudi Arabia — 49	rank: 58
Sudan — 33	Sudan — 48		
		Syria — 13	rank: 178
Tunisia — 17	Tunisia — 9	Tunisia — 43	rank: 73
		United Arab Emirates — 70	rank: 23
	Yemen — 77	Yemen — 14	rank: 176

Data: Transparency International, 2018

Grass- or meat-eaters? The extent of police corruption

The majority of Arab police corruption falls into the 'grass-eater' category:[46] police officers accept small amounts of money in exchange for turning a blind eye to a range of infractions, for fast-tracking an application or dossier, or for forging a police report. Traffic police, for instance, have a reputation for being particularly well-placed to receive bribes from drivers (making such postings especially popular among the police) in Mauritania, Egypt and Tunisia. 'Open drawer' practices (where officers process documents for a payment) are common in all three states, as well as in Algeria and Lebanon.[47] Street vendors without a licence in Tunisia and Egypt are particular targets of police seeking out small bribes.[48] However, the modest size of these sums does not imply that their impact is equally modest: in fact, this type of corruption permeates the entire police force at all levels, and goes almost entirely unpunished. With the exception of the UAE (where officers have been indicted for forging reports and illegally running record checks), and to some extent Bahrain, most Arab states do not prosecute this type of corruption. And even on the occasions where they do, the accused officers are normally acquitted.

'Meat-eaters', officers involved in more extensive and often more expensive types of corruption, are rarer. However, they lend themselves particularly to public prosecution if their activities collide with social values that the political leadership claims to defend: this includes drugs, prostitution, but also alcohol and gambling. In reality, leaders often collude with organised crime in this regard, and only act against it when it becomes too visible, or when it comes in handy to uncover it in order to discredit a political opponent. This pattern has been observed in many states, including in the United States and Europe. In the region, similar examples abound: the indictment of the former head of the national police of Algeria, Abdelghani Hamel, for his role in a drug-smuggling ring, may very well be more about a power struggle rather than a genuine effort to combat corruption. Elsewhere, as in Morocco for example, highly publicised investigations into officers involved in extortion, drug trafficking and misappropriation of seized objects help bolster the public perception that corruption is being fought more strenuously than it actually is.

Police work comes by default with a territory that is littered with opportunities for corruption.

Procedural corruption, too, plays a role to some extent in the region, but less so than is often assumed because police officers do not wield the most power within the judicial system (judges display similar levels of corruption). The opportunity for corruption arises therefore less from fabricating evidence or framing individuals, and more from arbitrary detention. Cases of citizens arrested without a reason, and released against a payment, have been reported in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, but also Qatar.[49] The overcrowding of prisons all over the region provides an additional potential source of income: here, officers have been reported to reduce or drop charges, cut sentences, or release prisoners early in exchange for a fine – or a favour.

---

46 The terms 'grass-eater' and 'meat-eater' were coined to describe different categories of corruption among police officers in the report of the Knapp Commission, which investigated corruption in the New York Police Department in the 1970s. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knapp_Commission.
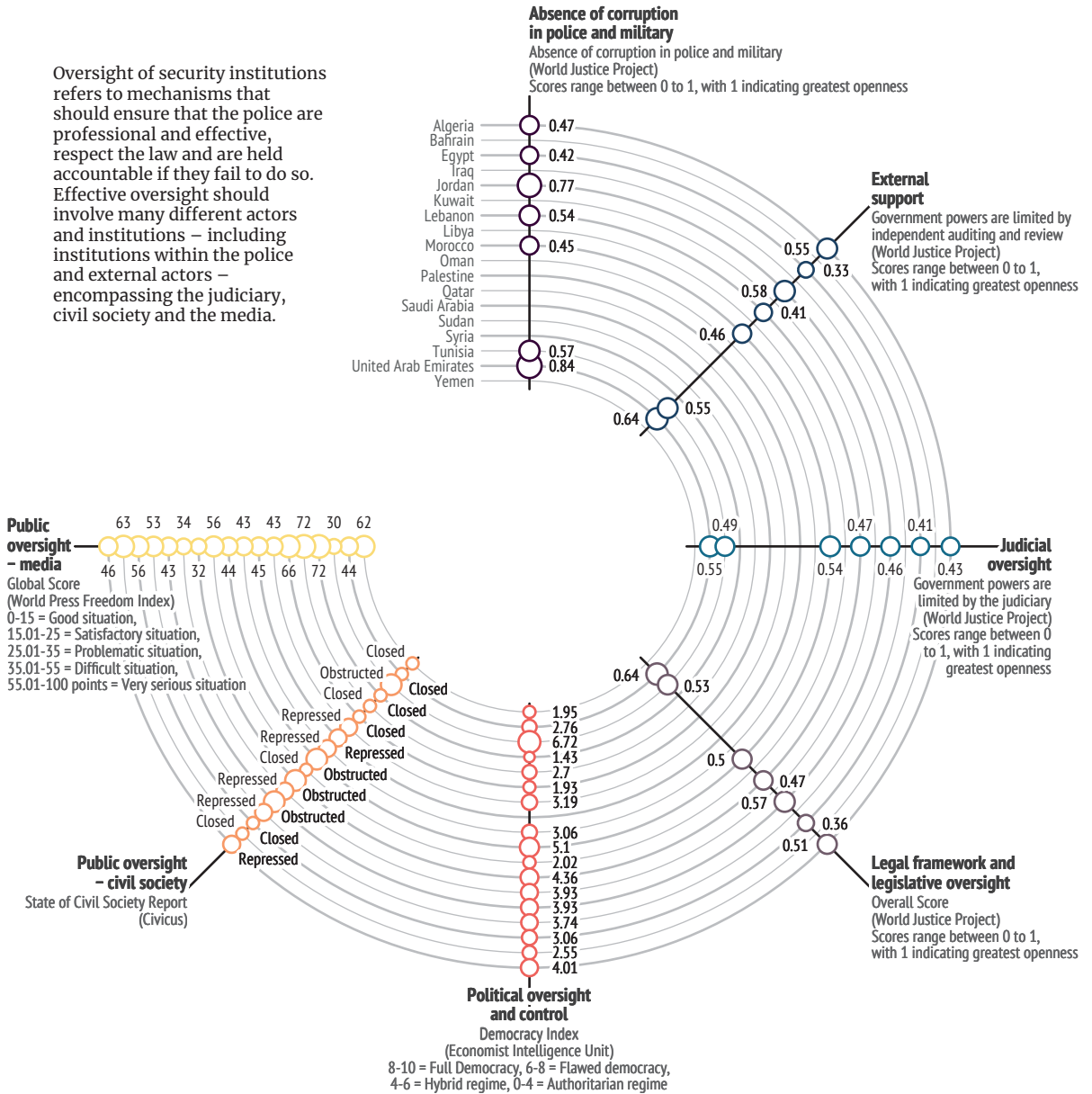
47 Op.Cit., "Dilemmas of Reform: Policing in Arab Transitions.".

48 "Illegal street vendors struggle for survival in post-revolution Tunisia", *Middle East Eye*, February 12, 2015, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/illegal-street-vendors-struggle-survival-post-revolution-tunisia.

49 Author interviews, Cairo, April 2018.

Oversight and accountability

Oversight of security institutions refers to mechanisms that should ensure that the police are professional and effective, respect the law and are held accountable if they fail to do so. Effective oversight should involve many different actors and institutions – including institutions within the police and external actors – encompassing the judiciary, civil society and the media.

Absence of corruption in police and military
Absence of corruption in police and military
(World Justice Project)
Scores range between 0 to 1, with 1 indicating greatest openness

Algeria 0.47
Bahrain
Egypt 0.42
Iraq
Jordan 0.77
Kuwait
Lebanon 0.54
Libya
Morocco 0.45
Oman
Palestine
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Sudan
Syria
Tunisia 0.57
United Arab Emirates 0.84
Yemen

External support
Government powers are limited by independent auditing and review (World Justice Project)
Scores range between 0 to 1, with 1 indicating greatest openness

0.55   0.33
0.58   0.41
0.46
0.64   0.55

Judicial oversight
Government powers are limited by the judiciary (World Justice Project)
Scores range between 0 to 1, with 1 indicating greatest openness

0.49   0.47   0.41
0.55   0.54   0.46   0.43

Public oversight – media
Global Score
(World Press Freedom Index)
0-15 = Good situation,
15.01-25 = Satisfactory situation,
25.01-35 = Problematic situation,
35.01-55 = Difficult situation,
55.01-100 points = Very serious situation

63 53 34 56 43 43 72 30 62
46 56 43 32 44 45 66 72 44

Legal framework and legislative oversight
Overall Score
(World Justice Project)
Scores range between 0 to 1, with 1 indicating greatest openness

0.64   0.53
0.5
0.57   0.47
0.51   0.36

Closed
Obstructed
Closed   Closed
Repressed   Closed
Repressed   Closed
Closed   Repressed
Repressed   Obstructed
Repressed   Obstructed
Closed   Obstructed
Closed
Repressed

1.95
2.76
6.72
1.43
2.7
1.93
3.19
3.06
5.1
2.02
4.36
3.93
3.93
3.74
3.06
2.55
4.01

Public oversight – civil society
State of Civil Society Report
(Civicus)

Political oversight and control
Democracy Index
(Economist Intelligence Unit)
8-10 = Full Democracy, 6-8 = Flawed democracy,
4-6 = Hybrid regime, 0-4 = Authoritarian regime

Data: World Justice Project, 2019 & 2020; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019; Civicus, 2019

Lastly, internal police corruption is often over-looked because it concerns 'only' the police, but it is equally damaging and encourages a larger culture of corruption. In Iraq, Yemen but also Egypt, and to a lesser extent in the Palestinian Territories, police officers had to hand over a share of their salaries to their supervisors; in 10 to 20% of the cases, they did not even show up to work.[50] In the absence of clear rules for promotion, officers resort to bribing of senior

---

50 Op. Cit., "Dilemmas of Reform: Policing in Arab Transitions."

officers in order to be promoted. In Tunisia, letters of recommendation from an 'influential personality' served as a basis for recruitment, but also for the entire career trajectory.[51] Since the system is vulnerable to this type of recruitment and promotion, officers can use it also to be appointed to particularly lucrative posts, such as border postings, which are useful for smuggling networks and provide ample opportunities for bribery and other forms of corruption.

And why?
Reasons for corruption

Police organisations are often quick to dismiss corruption as individual moral failure. What is known as the 'bad apple theory' brushes systemic and contextual reasons aside, and precludes systemic eradication efforts. But police work comes by default with a territory that is littered with opportunities for corruption: since the police encounter criminals interested in trading benefits for immunity, there is almost a demand-and-supply scenario applying to any type of illegal behaviour. In addition, police work is highly dispersed and remote from supervision: the frontline officer, often with his partner, retains high levels of discretion and spends the majority of his time outside the police station.[52] One of the problems of police corruption is that those who could report on it, i.e. other officers, normally refrain from doing so, even when they are not corrupt themselves. This phenomenon, the so-called 'blue wall' or 'blue curtain' of silence, is part and parcel of police occupational culture, which places a premium on secrecy and protective solidarity – both of which are necessary ingredients in a high-stress, dangerous and sensitive job.[53]

In addition, while most citizens dislike corruption, they tolerate it when it solves a problem with which they are confronted, for instance paying a small bribe instead of paying a larger fine or serving a sentence.[54]

Because corruption is ultimately an economic endeavour, it is linked, to some extent, to low wages that provide an impetus for motivation. Apart from in the Gulf, police officers' salaries in the region are average to low, their healthcare and insurance packages often paltry, while the risks to which they are exposed are elevated relative to other occupations in the broader employment market. Before the revolution, salaries of Tunisian police officers were kept low at around 300 Tunisian dinars (approximately $230) per month – less than the wage of a bus driver, or around half of that of a lower-level bank employee. In Egypt, the lowest-ranking officer receives about 800 Egyptian pounds ($115), and in Iraq, the average salary is $228 per month. There is some evidence that in several states – e.g. the Palestinian Territories, but also Tunisia – these salaries were deliberately kept low as they were expected to be supplemented by bribes. This has led some to the conclusion that increasing salaries would reduce corruption. Unfortunately, the link between the two is a bit of a one-way street: while low wages indeed feature in the

While low wages indeed feature in the onset of corruption, increasing them does not simply make it disappear.

---

51 Merouan Mekouar, "Police Collapse in Authoritarian Regimes: Lessons from Tunisia", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 40, no. 10 (2017), pp. 857–69.

52 Elizabeth Reuss-Ianni, *Two Cultures of Policing: Street Cops and Management Cops* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983).

53 Alain Marc et Geneviève Pruvost, "Police : une socialisation professionnelle par étapes », *Déviance et Société* 2011/3 (vol. 35), pp. 267–80.

54 J. Octavio Gutierrez-Garcia and Luis-Felipe Rodríguez, "Social Determinants of Police Corruption: Towards Public Policies for the Prevention of Police Corruption", *Policy Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3, February 2016.

onset of corruption, increasing them does not simply make it disappear.[55]

In sum, Arab police corruption is systemic, partly cultural, and fuelled by contextual factors. Reform programmes addressing it will always have to take these three aspects into account, and should not expect quick wins.

This chapter has outlined the relationship between community and police across the region. It has shown that, based on the data that we have available, we can say that there is some positive capital the police can tap into despite uncertainty regarding their level of effectiveness. The two factors that undermine the relationship in the most visible fashion are violence as well as corruption.

---

55 Kweku Opoku Agyemang, "Higher Salaries Can Worsen Corruption", *Worldbank Blog,* June 23, 2015, https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/higher-salaries-can-worsen-corruption.

CHAPTER 3

CASE BY CASE: FOUR TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND POLICE

As the previous chapter has shown, data and surveys only give us a limited insight into the relationship between people and police in different Arab countries. Citizens in the region have different relationships with their police forces depending on context, security levels, history, resources, and more. Consequently, reform needs to take these differences in context into account in order to be effective. But how exactly are they different?

To get a better understanding of the nature of the relationship, a 're-indexing' is necessary that draws on these various dimensions and aspects. To understand how change might come about in policing in the Arab world, and who might drive it, it is instructive to consider both the extent to which citizens already provide input into police conduct, policy and strategy in one way or another, and the political context linking the police and the people. Aspects to consider when evaluating the relationship in depth include:

> *Degree:* the extent to which citizens can influence or define policy – from being kept out of the loop entirely, to being informed, to sharing concerns and information, to taking part in problem-solving, to being involved in some way in setting strategies and values.

> *Formality:* the formal mechanisms for citizens to take part in the policing process, including citizen assemblies, civilian-led reviews, parliamentary committees, ombudsman organisations, and other accountability institutions, while more informal methods would cover relationships between police officers and community members.

> *Directness:* the direct modes of interaction between citizens and the police, such as citizen-police working groups (advocacy work is more indirect).

> *Geographic mandate:* at what level does citizen input occur, e.g. at the local community and neighbourhood level – for instance through police-community meetings – or at the town or city level, or at the regional or national level?

> *Cooperative or antagonistic/contentious:* the extent to which cooperation mechanisms are considered legitimate by both police and citizens – including working groups or drop-in clinics. Where citizen input cannot feed into police work, or is not designated as legitimate by the police, critical citizen input can occur through protests, court cases, advocacy campaigns, arts and music, or indeed in the media.

Along these lines, four broad categories of Arab countries emerge when it comes to the relationship between people and police. These categories also present particular avenues for change.

Relationship types

There are broadly four ways in which police and people in the Arab world relate to each other. These categories reflect the level of exchange, input by civilians, and degree of openness among the police by country.
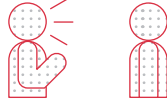
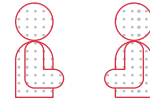| **Estranged Partners**	**The Abusive marriage**	**Renewal of Vows**	**In Counselling**
Libya, Syria, Yemen and Iraq	Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain	Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, United Arab Emirates and Oman	Sudan and Algeria

In the *Estranged Partners* countries – comprising Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen – policing is mired in the throes of violent and stubborn conflict. Policing institutions are outnumbered and outgunned by other armed actors. Once hegemonic and highly repressive, institutional policing here has retreated. State police institutions have in some cases been marginalised by other 'security actors', while alternative police forces have formed, or the police has split along conflict lines. As a result, the policing scene is highly fragmented, with the police having been infiltrated by militias in some cases. Citizens do make their voices heard, in ways that are informal, modest, local, both cooperative and contentious, even while there is a long way to go in these countries before citizen-centric policing can be achieved. Here change is possible from the top down *and* from the bottom up. Despite everything, there is a popular desire for a reformed police to return as the major instrument of security. In fact, the rehabilitation and reform of the police is a major part of the puzzle of national peace. Localised arrangements and agreements can lead to more citizen-centred policing, while internationally-backed political agreements on the national issues under discussion must set the framework.

In the *Abusive Marriage* countries, comprising Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia (in terms of its Eastern Province), the scope for citizen input into policing is very narrow. The relationship between the police and the respective populations has been especially fraught in the last decade, and the security of the state or ruling administration takes precedence over human and civil rights. Issues of police violence, impunity, corruption and ineffectiveness are all salient. The space for citizens to input into policing is exceedingly small. In response to police brutality, and in the absence of more cooperative interaction, citizen challenges to policing have taken antagonistic forms. Such endeavours are courageously pursued through popular mobilisation, activism and advocacy, and to some extent through judicial routes. However, even these avenues are narrowing, due to the fact that the nature of policing is closely bound up with regime survival. Today, almost all of the power to *directly* change policing is held by the state. Activism will persist, and international leverage could be a factor in positive change. Otherwise, broader sea changes in the role and structure of the state are necessary for changes in policing, although these are difficult to predict.

In the *Renewal of Vows* countries, covering Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia and the UAE, functional mechanisms exist for citizen input, through which people and police interact on constructive terms. They vary in intensity, and tend to be more informal and indirect, take place at the community level, and are not consistently binding. Antagonistic and critical

approaches are permitted to quite a minor extent. To a large degree, the power nonetheless remains with the state to permit and sanction all these modes of citizen input, most notably through community policing strategies. Another variable between these countries is the quality of the relationship between these populations and the police. Certain countries in this group have highly effective and respected police forces, while others do not. In all of these countries, police violation of human and civil rights remains a reality, albeit to different degrees, and less so than elsewhere. Here multiple avenues exist for initiating change, differing in aperture, from the democratic transition process to civil society mobilisation and arts and cultural production. International initiatives in support of police reform can have either positive or negative effects. Top-down change led by the state remains the most direct route.

The countries *In Counselling*, Sudan and Algeria, are beginning wider political transitions that will entail potentially enormous change. Historically, citizens in these countries have had very little input into policing at any level or intensity, and police abuse has beset the relationship. However, there is currently a real possibility for change. Here, civil society is engaging directly with the reform of the police for the first time, and the reform of the state more broadly. Change driven by mass movements has the capacity to transform policing, if it is a central plank of the transition and if it is supported by coalitions. The international community has some space to work in Sudan, but less so in Algeria.

ESTRANGED PARTNERS: IRAQ, LIBYA, SYRIA AND YEMEN

Together, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Iraq have been experiencing violent conflict for a total of 41 years. Prior to the current conflicts, these countries had sprawling, powerful and overlapping internal security institutions instrumentalised by repressive regimes. In addition, the ongoing internal conflicts have also drastically altered the relationship between people and police. Indeed, the conflicts have created new imperatives for police reform, and a new set of complex and varied opportunities. The reform of policing based on the principle of citizen security is one of the key aspects of transforming these conflicts at the local and national levels.

What has happened to policing during the conflicts? While the faultlines and dynamics of each of these conflicts are very different, there are some striking commonalities in how policing has evolved across this group.

Firstly, state police bodies have split and are now part of highly fragmented and localised security environments. Yemen, for instance, is divided into three competing political-military entities.[1] This has created a security patchwork where a diverse array of actors co-operate, compete and conflict. In addition to police, this includes tribal leaders and *aqils*, as well as militias. In Houthi areas, *mousharafeen* or 'supervisors' also operate, marginalising tribal leaders.[2] In Libya, the war of 2011 effectively led to the fragmentation of the security

---

1   Firstly, the internationally recognised government in Aden, secondly, the quasi-state of the Houthis in Sanaa (also formally controlling eastern Yemen), and thirdly the self-proclaimed secessionist Southern Transitional Council (STC) in Aden.

2   Ahmed Nagi, Eleonora Ardemagni and Mareike Transfeld, "Shuyyukh, Policemen and Supervisors: Yemen's Competing Security Providers",Carnegie Middle East Centre, March 27, 2020, https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/03/27/shuyyukh-policemen-and-supervisors-yemen-s-competing-security-providers-pub-81385.

sector across the country.[3] As a result, "civilian policing functions are split politically and structurally across a range of entities and allocation of responsibilities is neither well differentiated nor delineated."[4] Indeed, while some communities have a single 'security provider', in other communities, there is intense competition between different groupings – be they tribes, state institutions or militias. Turning to Syria, in regime-held areas, the civilian police are crowded out by intelligence agencies, quasi-state actors, national and international militias, and Russian forces. Meanwhile, in Idlib, still held by the opposition, the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Police also contends with militias of varying ideological shades. Of the states in this category, Iraq has the most intact ministry of interior, and in principle retains civilian and paramilitary police coverage of most areas. However, on the ground their power and influence is not consistent. Furthermore, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq exercises its constitutional right to maintain its own internal security forces, but these are not always a model of impartiality or unity.[5] In short, in each of the states in this category, conflicts have caused police institutions to split along geographic and political lines, often with idiosyncratic localised manifestations, which have rendered them far from hegemonic, independent or impartial. Rarely have civilian police complete freedom to act, and in many cases, civilians will have to refer to other security players to fulfil their needs.

Secondly, within this security environment, the police are often minor players, with serious resource shortages and authority deficits. This is partly due to these countries' common pre-conflict institutional histories, where policing institutions were hollowed out in favour of other security actors closely linked to the regime. In Syria and Iraq, before the conflicts, the civilian police were subordinated in terms of resources and power to the intelligence agencies, themselves closely tied to the ruling families. In Syria, this is a trend that has been exacerbated by the conflict in regime-held areas, where the police have lost more ground on even basic administrative tasks to intelligence agencies.[6] In Libya, the police were sidelined by alternative security brigades.[7] Generally, this trend of marginalisation has been exacerbated by conflicts, which have seen powerful non-state actors emerge, requiring police institutions to navigate the authority and preferences of other groups. For instance, in Tripoli, police have to consult with neighbourhood militia before carrying out patrols, while raids on suspects are carried out by militias.[8] In regime-held Syria, if you want a criminal investigation to make headway, and if you have the connections, you turn to intelligence agencies, not the civilian police. In Aden, a security clearance provided by one unit can be rejected by another.[9]

Thirdly, there has been a hyper-politicisation of policing, which has become a battleground in itself. While police forces were certainly never independent in these countries, the contest over territory and state institutions has brought

3   Virginie Collombier, "Make Politics, Not War: Armed Groups and Political Competition in Post-Qaddafi Libya", in *Out of the Inferno? Rebuilding Security in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen*, Arab Reform Initiative, 2016, https://s3-eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/storage.arab-reform.net/ari/2017/08/16145152/Arab_Reform_Initiative_Report_en_OUT_OF_THE_INFERNO_Rebuilding_Security_in_Iraq_Libya_Syria_and_Yemen.pdf.

4   Peter Cole and Fiona Mangan, "Policing Libya: Form And Function Of Policing Since The 2011 Revolution", United States Institute of Peace, August 25, 2016, https://www.usip.org/publications/2016/08/policing-libya-form-and-function-policing-2011-revolution.

5   Sardar Aziz and Erwin van Veen, "A State with Four Armies: How to Deal with the Case of Iraq", November 11, 2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/a-state-with-four-armies-how-to-deal-with-the-case-of-iraq/.

6   Line Khatib and Lina Sinjab, "Syria's Transactional State: How the Conflict Changed the Syrian State's Exercise of Power", Chatham House, October 10, 2018, https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/syrias-transactional-state-how-conflict-changed-syrian-states-exercise-power.

7   Frederic Wehrey, "Libya's Policing Sector: The Dilemmas of Hybridity and Security Pluralism", in *The Politics of Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Project on Middle East Political Science, 2018, https://pomeps.org/2018/09/11/libyas-policing-sector-the-dilemmas-of-hybridity-and-security-pluralism/.

8   Ibid.

9   Op.Cit., "Shuyyukh, Policemen and Supervisors".

policing directly into the repertoire of political contention, making the police an instrument of the contest for power. Syria provides one model of this, where warring sides maintained or created their own police forces as instruments of territorialisation and legitimising symbols of their state. In northeastern Syria, the Rojava Administration set up the Asayish or Internal Security Forces, while in opposition-held Latakia, Aleppo, Daraa and Idlib the Free Syrian Police were set up. The Islamic State created the Islamic Police, in addition to the *hisbah* patrols to enforce their religious and social norms.[10]

Thus, in Syria, alternative and separate police forces have served as expressions of alternative statehood. In Iraq, Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki installed cronies and supporters in key posts in the counter-terrorism units and special forces, provoking strong resentment among Sunni groups at the perceived Shia co-optation of the police services.[11] In Libya, the ministry of interior continues to function across the conflict lines only insofar as it maintains salaries and services, but is also the site of "a political and factional contest for control of policing bodies and access to state funds, resulting in the creation of parallel policing bodies."[12] It is also worth noting that police forces themselves have been tools of large-scale violent repression – as in Syria, where the police is part of a larger state 'security and justice' system that has detained, tortured, killed and disappeared over 120,000 people since the beginning of the conflict.

What does this mean for the place of the citizen in policing?

The effect of these changes on the citizen's experience of policing is varied, to say the least. Unsurprisingly, the politicisation, weakening and fragmentation of policing has damaged the relationship between people and police. In Yemen, in 2014, three quarters of survey respondents lacked confidence in the security sector due to its "blatant corruption and favouritism," and an overwhelming majority stated that they did not resort to the police to solve their problems.[13] In 2017, only around one in seven Yemenis mentioned the police as the actor providing security in their areas. In Syria, where the police were not well trusted before the conflict, "the perception of the police's involvement in violence and repression even doubled."[14] In Iraq, a 2018 poll returned over eight in ten people expressing no confidence in the police. However, another Iraqi poll reveals a more nuanced picture of the effect of politicisation. In Hamdaniyeh, an area with a Sunni Arab majority in the north of Iraq, nine in ten respondents said they trust the police somewhat or substantially. Meanwhile, in Baradiyeh, a majority Shia Arab area, only two in ten respondents felt the same way. And even in Hamdaniyeh, where people are very likely to report crime to the police, a large majority of them would prefer to contact the police indirectly, through an intermediary. [15] The map of relations between police and people is thus intricately mottled and inflected by local and national allegiances.

Proper policing is seen by many as a central part of the puzzle of national peace.

---

10 Mara Revkin, "The Legal Foundations of the Islamic State", The Brookings Project on US Relations with the Islamic World, Brookings Center for Middle East Policy, July 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Brookings-Analysis-Paper_Mara-Revkin_Web.pdf.

11 Andreas Krief. "ISIS' Success in Iraq: A Testimony to Failed Security Sector Reform." Centre for Security Governance, July 22, 2014. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CSG-Isis%20success%20in%20Iraq.pdf.

12 Op. Cit., 'Libya's Policing Sector'.

13 Dimitris Soudias and Mareike Transfeld, "Mapping Popular Perceptions: Local Security, Insecurity and Police Work in Yemen", Sana'a: Yemen Polling Center, 2014, http://www.yemenpolling.org/Projects-en/YPC-Security_Report_2014.pdf.

14 Nora-Elise Beck and Lars Döbert, "The Syrian Police - Security Provision and Good Governance in Post-War Syria: A Security Needs Assessment among the Syrian Diaspora in Germany", Working Paper no. 9, LANOSEC, Berlin, 2020.

15 Iraq Mission - International Organisation for Migration, "Perceptions of Security and Police in Iraq - Baseline Survey Findings", April 2020, https://iraq.iom.int/publications/perceptions-security-and-police-iraq-baseline-survey-findings.

The localisation and decentralisation of policing functions marks a significant change. Historically, policing structures in these countries, and the Arab world generally, were extremely centralised. With the weakening and fragmentation of policing, there has been decentralisation of decision-making and priority setting. In rare instances, this has led to greater civilian input. The Free Syrian Police operations in Idlib and Aleppo governorates worked closely with the Local Councils, the most effective and legitimate governance bodies in the opposition territories. On the basis of the Free Syrian Police's community policing methods, civilians and officers worked together solving problems such as the replacement of destroyed road signage, for instance. (Although their mandate in more sensitive issues such as arresting criminals was severely constrained by the power of militias.) In Bani Walid, Libya, local tribal leadership established their own security brigades to increase their autonomy from the competing sides in the conflict. In Yemen, "local communities fluctuate between bottom-up decentralisation (quite autonomous but still connected with the recognized government) and self-governance (with minor or no connections with the recognized government), with security providers trying to strike a balance between these poles."[16] However, decentralisation often if not always certainly means an improvement of security services for ordinary people. What is certain is that in each of these countries, the local security situation and the police's role therein should be understood as its own political economy, distinct but connected to the larger conflict.

There is faith in the institution of policing. Despite, or perhaps because of the instability, economic and human cost, and the wide array of security actors involved in these conflicts, there is a broad desire to see the police regain supremacy as the providers of security. In a 2018 survey in Libya, "Respondents overwhelmingly put their trust in formal bodies – the security directorate (87%) and the municipal council (80%)" while considering armed groups a security threat.[17] In Yemen, two thirds of respondents to a 2019 survey want police to have authority across the country,[18] where the police have actually become generally more popular since 2017. Surveying Syrians living in Germany shows that nine in ten fully agree that the police should be the entity responsible for providing security for citizens in post-war Syria.[19] Proper policing is seen by many as a central part of the puzzle of national peace. There is a strong groundswell of ambition for the return of institutional policing, and the police have a central role to play in rebuilding peaceful statehood.

16 Op.Cit., "Shuyyukh, Policemen and Supervisors".

17 Floor El Kamouni-Janssen, Hamzeh Shadeedi, and Nancy Ezzeddine, "Local Security Governance in Libya", CRU-Report, Clingendael, October 2018, https://www.clingendael.org/cru/Libya%20website/Synthesis%20report.pdf.

18 Op.Cit., "Shuyyukh, Policemen and Supervisors".

19 Op.Cit., "The Syrian Police – Security Provision and Good Governance in Post-War Syria".

THE ABUSIVE MARRIAGE: BAHRAIN, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA

Flirting with its bars, the birds sing
and the cell, for your sake, hates the jailer.
Come taste with us the sweetness
of the prison cell.

On its floor, you stretch your legs
your jailer, at a loss to describe you,
however hard he tries, will never know you.

'The Prisoners' Laughter'
composed by Abdel Rahman al-Abnudi and
dedicated to the imprisoned activist
Alaa al-Aswany.[20]

Although Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are grouped together here for good reason, there are some considerable differences between the police in these countries that bears pointing out. The technical police ratings vary widely as indeed do the country contexts. In absolute terms, the sheer scale of the Egyptian ministry of interior dwarfs the other two, as does its charge sheet of police violence and misconduct. Furthermore, while each of these countries have felt the effects of the protest wave of the last decade, the Saudi and Bahraini administrations were able to weather the storm, unlike Egypt.

However, policing in these countries shares two common features. First is the narrowness of the space for citizen input into policing. And second is the tension embodied in the relationship between the people and the police. Altogether, when looking for ways forward towards a more citizen-centric policing approach, the commonalities of the *Abusive Marriage* countries offer a tenuous set of options.

This section surveys the relationships between the people and the police in these states, and does so with some caution. Concerning Bahrain and especially Saudi Arabia, there is a lack of information and analysis on the subject. A lot of what is known publicly comes from a human rights advocacy perspective, or from police public messaging. Moreover, for Saudi Arabian policing, much of the available analysis is based on studies of the troubled Eastern Province, where relations between people and police are particularly bad, so this naturally dominates the view. This common information gap is, of course, not a coincidence. The curtailment of public discussion, debate, and analysis on policing is part of the wider policing approach that unites this group, where security is imposed in lockdown fashion from above. However, it means that we tend to end up with a focus on the most antagonistic aspects of policing – of which there are no shortage.

With due caution then on account of the information gap, there are a few generalisations that can be made about the relationship between the police and citizens in these countries.

Firstly, police have a massive and intense presence relative to the state and the population. In Bahrain, there is one police officer for every 53 people. (In the EU, the average stands at 1 for every 307 citizens in 2017.)[21] In Egypt, numbers are hard to come by, but estimates of the strength of the ministry of interior forces at the beginning of 2011 stood at between 1 million and 1.7 million individuals, including police officers, investigators, paramilitary units and informants.[22] This would mean that about one in every 80 Egyptians was being employed by the ministry of interior at that time. Saudi Arabia's average stands at a more modest one officer for every 316 residents.

---

20 'A Poem from Shaimaa El-Sabbagh: "I'm the Girl Banned from Christian Religion Classes"', *Arablit*, January 30, 2015, https://arablit.org/2015/01/30/a-poem-from-shaimaa-el-sabbagh-im-the-girl-banned-from-christian-religion-classes/

21 'Police, Court and Prison Personnel Statistics - Statistics Explained', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Police,__court_and_prison_personnel_statistics.

22 Op.Cit., "Missed Opportunity".

Allied to this intensity of presence is hegemony. In contrast to the states in the first category, where police forces compete with other security actors, police in these countries are embodied in hegemonic and highly centralised institutions that place them at the heart of political and communal life. If they are in competition with any group, it is with other armed institutions of the state.

Relationships between the police and people are therefore quite tense, and have seen many troubled episodes in the last decade. Bahrain and Egypt provide the strongest examples here. In Egypt, the public at large inflicted considerable admonishment on the internal security forces during the 2011 uprisings. With chants such as "Egypt's police, Egypt's police, you have become the dogs of the palace!" demonstrators singled out the police as cruel and corrupt, and drove them off the streets of Cairo and many other cities. In Bahrain, at points within the protest period of 2011-2012, the internal security forces and defence forces required the support of Saudi military units and Emirati police to regain control of the streets. These incidents speak broadly of an asymmetry in power, and a shortfall in legitimacy within the people police-relationship.

Police in *Abusive Marriage* countries are often popularly represented as untrustworthy and best avoided. There is somewhat conflicting data on this. As we have seen earlier, public surveys return positive trust ratings – around three quarters of respondents say they trust Egyptian police for instance. This trust may not be entirely distinguishable from fear, given the constraints on freedom of expression. A rare – over a decade old but probably still accurate - survey

of attitudes to reporting to the police in Egypt would challenge this. It found that fewer than one in three people would report such crimes as assault, robbery and burglary with entry to the police.[23] In Saudi Arabia, another study reported that the people thought that the police abused their authority, were slow to respond and obsessed with bureaucracy; as a result, people refrained from providing information and cooperating with the police.[24]

There is somewhat more certainty around the perceptions of the police among those involved in critical political activism. Such activists are frequently victims of police abuse, and Egyptian activist groups often describe the attitude of the police as 'legal cynicism'. From their perspective, the police are not entitled to be obeyed, fail to protect people's rights and provide public safety, and in fact represent a threat to safety.[25] Contact with the police can indeed cause more problems in Egypt than it solves, exposing citizens to the risks of extortion through bribery, theft and even kidnapping. [26]

In the *Abusive Marriage* countries, sectarian identities and conflicts shape the relationship between the police and sub-groups of the population. This is most significant in the cases of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. One of the few rigorous studies on policing in Saudi Arabia focuses on the relationship between the police and the Shia population of the country's Eastern Province, where police continue to arrest and mistreat members of the Shia community for religious activities and speech, as well as for their opposition to the government.[27] In Bahrain, the sectarian dynamic between the internal security forces and the population is perhaps the best known, and aggravates

23 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Victimization Survey in Egypt: Executive Summary", October 2009, http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2006/0607R.html.

24 A. Tayyar, 'Ijjithat Aljumhour', (Riyadh: Nayef Arab University for Security Sciences,1996), quoted in Zuhair Abdul-Rahman Sharaf,"Community Policing: Prospects of Integration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Aberdeen, 2009.

25 Magda Boutros, "A Multidimensional View of Legal Cynicism: Perceptions of the Police Among Anti-Harassment Teams in Egypt", *Law & Society Review*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2018: pp. 368–400, https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12326.

26 Leila Khaled, "Five Ways Egypt's Corrupt Police Profit from Their Jobs", *Alaraby*, June 9, 2016, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2016/6/9/five-ways-egypts-corrupt-police-profit-from-their-jobs.

27 Staci Strobl, "Policing in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia: Understanding the Role of Sectarian History and Politics", *Policing and Society*, vol. 26, no. 5, July 3, 2016: pp. 544–62, https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2014.989153.

alienation between the two groups. According to a study of the protest movement in Bahrain from 2011, "not only is state violence carried out by a predominantly Sunni-staffed security force operating on behalf of a predominantly Sunni government, but violence against the security forces is usually carried out by members of Bahrain's disenfranchised Shia community."[28] In turn, violent attacks on police come from the more radical Shi'ite opposition, such as in January 2017, where a police officer was murdered.[29] This in turn led to death sentences being imposed on four Shi'ite Muslims charged with the crime.[30] Bahrain's sectarian dynamics also underpin a peculiar human resources policy. To exclude Shi'ite Bahrainis, and to maintain sufficient manpower, Bahrain's security sector hires Sunnis from abroad, including from Jordan, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen.[31] This leads to a situation where Bahraini nationals are policed by foreigners. According to an old adage "you can expect to be arrested by a Pakistani, interrogated by a Jordanian, tortured by a Yemeni, and judged by an Egyptian, but at least you can expect your fellow prisoners to be Bahraini."[32] In Egypt, Coptic Christians have long accused the security forces of criminal neglect of their security needs, in the face of abuse at the hands of extremist groups,[33] and at the hands of sectarian elements in their own neighbourhoods

and communities.[34] Coptic communities have also suffered at the hands of the police itself.[35]

Beyond sectarian troubles, wider police violence and impunity also mark the police-people relationship. Especially in Egypt and Bahrain, police have been involved in serious large-scale abuses, while there has been a distinct lack of accountability for these crimes. Since 2011, Egyptian internal security forces, in collaboration with the military, have been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of protestors. In the infamous Rabaa al-Adawiya massacre of 2012, around 900 demonstrators staging a sit-in to protest against the removal of President Morsi were killed by security forces. Besides public order, the Egyptian security forces also have a particularly appalling record of torture and forced disappearances. This even includes child victims, according to a Human Rights Watch report of March 2020.[36] In Egypt, accountability has been minimal: prosecutions of police officers for crimes committed since 2011 have been very limited, and sentences even rarer. In fact, there have been more prosecutions of protestors than police officers,[37] and more death sentences for the latter too. Bahrain shows some a similar pattern, albeit on a much smaller scale. Advocacy groups have reported dozens of deaths at police hands during protests and in police custody. For the period between February

---

28 Ala'a Shehabi and Marc Owen Jones, *Bahrain's Uprising: Resistance and Repression in the Gulf* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

29 "BTI 2018 Bahrain Country Profile", Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018, https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/BHR/.

30 "Bahrain Sentences Four to Death for Police Killing", *France 24*, November 12, 2018, https://www.france24.com/en/20181112-bahrain-sentences-four-death-police-killing.

31 Jodi Vittori, "Bahrain's Fragility and Security Sector Procurement", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 2019, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Vittori_Bahrain_final.pdf.

32 Nazgol Kafai and Ala'a Shehabi, "The struggle for information: revelations on mercenaries, sectarian agitation, and demographic engineering in Bahrain", *Jadaliyya*, May 29, 2014, www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/17912/the-struggle-for-information_revelations-on-mercen.

33 "Egypt: Sectarian Attacks Amid Political Crisis", Human Rights Watch, July 23, 2013, https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/23/egypt-sectarian-attacks-amid-political-crisis.

34 "Egypt jails Coptic rights activist on charges of 'terrorism''', *Middle East Eye*, November 25, 2019, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-jails-coptic-rights-activist-charges-terrorism.

35 Mi'at al-aqbat al-masriyin yahtajun 'ala qatal shurti li-rajal wa-ibnu' [Hundreds of Copts protests against the killing of a policeman and his son], *Reuters*, December 13, 2018, https://ara.reuters.com/article/ME_TOPNEWS_MORE/idARAKBN1OC27M.

36 "No-one cared he was a child", Human Rights Watch, March 23, 2020, https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/03/23/no-one-cared-he-was-child/egyptian-security-forces-abuse-children-detention.

37 "[N]ot a single police officer has been convicted for the killing and injuring of protestors during or after the uprising. In politically motivated trials, El-Adly and his close aides were acquitted of the killing of almost 1,000 protestors and the injury of 6,000 more during the 18-day uprising." Maha Abdelrahman, "Policing Neoliberalism in Egypt: The Continuing Rise of the 'Securocratic' State", *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 1, January 2, 2017: pp. 185–202, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1133246.

2011 and May 2014, the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights documented 98 deaths as a result of excessive police force.[38] Hopes for justice were raised with the establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), in 2011, set up to respond to allegations of police brutality towards protestors. It found that 13 civilian deaths were attributable to the security forces – from shotgun wounds (seven), wounds from other types of firearms (five), and one death by beating.[39] However, as in Egypt, charging and sentencing of police officers is minimal, and much of the reform suggested by BICI has been implemented superficially or not at all.[40]

What does this mean for the place of the citizen in policing?

Since 2011, some limited change to policing has been seen in the *Abusive Marriage* countries. For instance, in 2011-2012 Egypt reconstituted the particularly hated State Security Investigations Service as the Homeland Security Service. However, the overall situation is well summed up as follows: "Despite the disenchantment among a majority of the population with the police following its increasing use of brutality, the success of the counter-revolution since the downfall of Mubarak in February 2011 has enabled successive governments to ignore calls from different quarters to reform the police force."[41] Apart from the purely cosmetic changes of name and uniform, the doctrinal,

procedural and personnel changes between the State Security Investigations and Homeland Security Services were minimal.

Today, citizens' capability to contribute in collaborative ways to police policy or indeed the transformation of the police is minimal. Police forces are highly centralised, constraining the space for regional or local input. There are no formal functioning independent police accountability organisations,[42] nor parliamentary security committees. Indeed, needless to say, democratic structures more broadly are weak or non-existent, with all of these states classed as authoritarian regimes.[43] Reporters without Borders' Freedom of Expression Index places all three countries in the bottom fifteen of 180,[44] and civil society is classed as 'closed'.[45]

This lack of civic space pushes the natural disaffection with the police into more antagonistic forms, as the wave of unrest in 2019 and 2020 has shown. Mass mobilisation against the police, in the form of demonstrations against police brutality, did not stop in 2011, but has been becoming progressively more difficult and dangerous due to harsher security responses, and tighter laws governing protests and affiliation, often delivered through counter-terror legislation. Action from *within* the police is peculiar to Egypt within this group. In 2011, both police industrial action and police-civil society collaborations were attempted. However, they were quickly contained by the state. Demands for greater professionalism, accountability and the rights to unionise were not met.[46]

38   Op.Cit., *Bahrain's Uprising.*

39   Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, Nigel Rodley, Badria Al-Awadhi and Mahnoush H. Arsanjani, "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry", Bahrain Independent Commission of Enquiry, December 10, 2011.

40   Staci Strobl, "Bahrain's Sectarian Police Force", Carnegie Middle East Centre, July 30, 2015, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/60897.

41   Op.Cit., "Policing Neoliberalism in Egypt".

42   Law on police use of force worldwide: https://www.policinglaw.info/

43   "Democracy Index 2019", The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2020, https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index.

44   "2020 World Press Freedom Index", Reporters without Borders, 2020, https://rsf.org/en/ranking.

45   "State of Civil Society 2020", Civicus, 2020, https://www.civicus.org.

46   Op.Cit., "Policing Neoliberalism in Egypt."

Three's a crowd: the case of the Palestinian Territories

Policing in the Palestinian Territories falls into none of the other categories, as it does not occur in an even remotely similar environment as the other cases. Until the Oslo Accords, the territories had no Palestinian security force and were policed by Israeli security actors. Since then, an internal security force has been established that is 80,000 strong and co-operates, at least in the West Bank, with Israeli security forces. Probably because it symbolises the possibility of an independent Palestinian state, it generally scores highly in surveys.

But cooperation with Israel has come at a price for relations between the Palestinian people and the police. Because it regularly arrests suspects and is said to thwart about 30-40% of terrorist attacks targeting Israelis, it has been accused of treason.[47] 64% of Palestinians would like this cooperation to end. To make matters worse, the Palestinian police also demonstrate the negative traits common to its regional colleagues, such as corruption, abuse, and arbitrary detention.

RENEWAL OF VOWS: JORDAN, LEBANON, MOROCCO, OMAN, TUNISIA AND THE UAE

I won't be scared of your guns

I swear by God I won't give in

I didn't come to shut my mouth

I throw my word bombs.

Some are scared of our mouths,
Some are scared of our words.

Lines from Moroccan rapper Gnawi, sentenced to imprisonment for insulting the police and the king.[48]

In the *Renewal of Vows* countries, aspects of policing are moving, albeit slowly and unevenly, towards including citizen-centred approaches.

To begin with, the politics between police and population are certainly less negatively charged than in the other groups. The police themselves are less frequently the targets of street mobilisation and protest than in the *Abusive Marriage* countries, although there continue to be exceptions. Of the group, Morocco and Tunisia have the most vocal protest or advocacy movement that is specifically critical of police conduct.[49] Conversely, the Jordanian and Emirati police forces are the most popular and most respected in the region, judged on the basis of public surveys (see the previous chapter). By the same measure, the Lebanese police have a more

47 Julia Lisiecka, "Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation: what next?", *EUISS Alert* no. 12, December 2017, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_12_Israel_and_Palestine.pdf.

48 "Moroccan rapper Gnawi sentenced to prison after music video criticising police", *Complex.com*, November 26, 2019, https://www.complex.com/music/2019/11/morocco-rapper-gnawi-sentenced-to-prison-music-video-criticizing-police.

49 "Fish vendor's death sparks anti-police protests in Morocco", *France 24*, October 31, 2016, https://www.france24.com/en/20161031-fish-vendors-death-sparks-anti-police-protests-morocco.

tumultuous relationship with the public at large; and, more than in any other country in this group, popular perceptions are closely tied to political and sectarian identity, and indeed geography. In Lebanon, trust in the police also rises and falls with national political crises, as illusrated by the YouStink Movement of 2015 and the 'Whatsapp' and fiscal crisis protests of 2019-2020. In Tunisia, the police rack up a lowly score on trust ratings, and are undergoing a process of redemption and rehabilitation after the era when they held sway as the chief enforcers of the regime overthrown in the 2011 Uprising.

Perhaps because of this less conflictual relationship, there are some broad commonalities that characterise the relationship between police and people in these countries. The rights of the individual have improved to a certain extent. The police commit fewer human and civil rights abuses than in any other group of countries, albeit with some exceptions. Indeed, there are significant, if imperfect, commitments to human rights standards in policing. These include doctrinal commitments to work with communities, as embodied in the Strategic Plan of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF), which commits to deliver a police service that "promotes trust, respects human rights and safeguards freedoms, preserves order and security and combats crime efficiently in partnership with the community."[50] These also include institutional innovations, such as the creation of human

> **Tunisia has undergone the most systematic transition phase of all the countries that underwent the Arab uprisings.**

rights units, as in the Lebanese ISF in 2008, and in the Dubai Police in 2002, and Jordan's Public Security Directorate now has a Transparency and Human Rights Bureau. These also include regulatory and legislative guarantees that are respected to different degrees – such as the Lebanese ISF's Code of Conduct (2011)[51] or the human rights guide promulgated among the Tunisian Sûreté Nationale (2014).[52]

Another important feature of the policing in the *Renewal of Vows* countries relates to the supporting security cast. The police in these countries generally do not have 'competitors' in the security field, and therefore they are normally a hegemonic actor.

The mediation situation is related to the fact that in these countries, as in much of the world, practical relationships with police hinge to a lesser or greater degree on axes of geography, class, ethnicity or sect, or some other politically or economically charged element of identity. In the UAE, a study found that the police are likely to under-police those who are members of the ruling family, government ministers or members of rich and prominent families.[53] Lebanon stands out distinctly in terms of how such markers affect communities' attitudes towards the police. For instance, a 2015 survey showed how trust in the ISF varies from over 90% in Rashaya, a predominantly Druze locality in the southeast, to just 10% in Sour, a predominantly Sunni city on the Mediterranean coast in the south.

---

50 Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces, " ISF Strategic Plan 2018-2022", http://www.isf.gov.lb/files/ISF%20SP%20 Booklet%20English.pdf.

51 "Internal Security Forces Code of Conduct", Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces, 2011, http://www.isf.gov.lb/ files/1582100364CoCEnglish.pdf

52 'The Standards of Human Rights for the Internal Security Forces in Tunisia' (pocket book), Ministry of Interior with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Tunisia, January 27, 2014, in: Haykel Ben Mahfoudh, *Security Sector Reform in Tunisia Three Years into the Democratic Transition*, Arab Reform Initiative, July 2014, https://www.arab-reform.net/en/node/602.

53 Khalifa Rashid Al Shaali and Neil Kibble, "Policing and Police Accountability in the UAE: The Case for Reform", *Arab Law Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2000: pp. 272–303.

What does this mean for the place of the citizen in policing?

The police authorities in the *Renewal of Vows* countries have accepted that the citizen must play a role in policing, but remain part of a political system that struggles with this concept in general terms – a fact reflected in their respective democracy indexes, rated as 'authoritarian' or 'hybrid'.[54] Leading the group in terms of the degree and the formality of citizen input into policing is Tunisia. The country has undergone the most systematic transition phase of all the countries that underwent the Arab uprisings, and 2011 brought policing and security into public debate for the first time since independence. The establishment in 2014 of two parliamentary committees for security and defence formalised citizen input into security matters. One is tasked "with drafting legislation to oversee the public sector, administrative decentralization, and the military" and the other "with monitoring all security and defence-related issues, including holding discussions and hearings with government security officials to implement national security policies or to hold them accountable," and while they both certainly have weaknesses, they represent a very significant step in institutionalising the centrality of citizens in policing.[55]

The other members of the group either do not have parliamentary security committees or do not have particularly well-functioning ones. Security committees do exist – such as Morocco's Superior Council of Security, but are governmental rather than parliamentary,[56] or composed of senior officials in the case of the UAE. In the past, Lebanon's parliamentary defence and security committee ensured accountability, but since the civil war has not been particularly effective. For instance, so far it has levelled no scrutiny at the ISF to check its progress against its own Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

Indeed, in general terms in the *Renewal of Vows* countries, citizen input mechanisms also exist lower down the geographic and power scale, towards the level of the local community or neighbourhood. This comes about largely through police-run community policing or proximity policing strategies, which all of these countries have implemented, albeit in varied ways. In Abu Dhabi, Community Approaches started in around 2005, and the police organise a host of outreach activities, from visiting children in hospital, engagement of high school students, to social media outreach to youth.[57] Abu Dhabi Police's 'Happiness Patrol' congratulates drivers on instances of good driving.[58] According to some, this approach goes well beyond window dressing, with concepts of respectful communication, trust-building, and understanding of different cultures engendered in the police forces.[59] In Lebanon, a community policing approach has been attempted at least twice, in different places and different ways. The ongoing campaign seeks to expand the approach tested in a pilot project in West Beirut to a handful of stations in the city. Emphasis is placed on improving police accessibility, enhancing policing understanding of community concerns through citizen-police forums, and

54 "Democracy Index 2019", The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019, https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=democracyindex2019.

55 Hamza Mighri, "Barriers to Tunisia's Security and Defense Reform", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 11, 2018, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/77214.

56 Such a body is composed of the President of the Chamber of Representatives; the President of the Chamber of Councillors; the President-Delegate of the Superior Council of the Judicial Power; the ministers responsible for the Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, and the administration of National Defence, and others. Ahmed El Morabety, "Is There a Conflict between Security and Democracy in Morocco?", *Contemporary Arab Affairs* vol.12, no. 4, December 1, 2019: pp. 17–36, https://doi.org/10.1525/caa.2019.12.4.17.

57 Charles W. Choi, Gholam Hassan Khajavy, Rana Raddawi and Howard Giles, "Perceptions of Police-Civilian Encounters: Intergroup and Communication Dimensions in the United Arab Emirates and the USA", *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, vol. 12, no. 1, January 2, 2019: pp. 82–104, https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2018.1503317.

58 "Stopped by Police" (video), April 13, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g01LE0At0pA.

59 Mohamed Saif Alhanaee,"Using Soft Power for Crime Prevention and Reduction: The Experience of Abu Dhabi Police", Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018, https://repository.canterbury.ac.uk/download/d43f35ca70318c3c82c97b13c41b03ad13408110a6eb2100bc668cfbeb4b1181/1381995/Final%20thesis.pdf.

information-gathering processes such as community assessments. Joint problem-solving activities have also been attempted, with varied success.[60] Oman's police have reportedly been trained in community policing approaches by British officers, although data on the impact is not available. Jordan furnishes an example of community policing with the community in mind being refugees. In December 2013, Jordanian community policing approaches in the refugee camps at Zaatari and Azraq increased police accessibility for refugees, and are being rolled out to other communities.[61] In Tunisia, a community policing project started with six pilot stations from June 2014.[62]

Each of these examples show, in different ways, how community policing strategies, bringing citizen-input into policing, can bring great advantages. In the pilot police station in West Beirut, for instance, between 2013 and 2018, the public sense of safety grew 20 percentage points, while public trust in the station was higher than in all surrounding stations. This was the only locality in the area where a majority of respondents felt that safety had generally improved. In the Jordanian town of Zaatari, the community policing approach helped transform the relationship of mutual suspicion and fear between the Public Security Directorate and the camp residents such that officers were able to patrol the entire camp unarmed. According to one assessment, "The community police became resources for solving myriad problems from medical emergencies to water and sanitation issues, to family and neighbourhood disputes."[63] Thus the *Renewal of Vows* countries provide positive case studies to the

sizeable literature examining the outcomes of community policing.

While these are hopeful beginnings, there is still some way to go. The police's outreach with people tends to be at the 'endear and engage', 'inform' and sometimes 'consult' level rather than the 'collaborate' level. Additionally, many of the mechanisms, as they stand, are largely informal and unstable – unlike, for instance, sitting parliamentary committees. Moreover, they rely to some extent on the police designating 'who is the (authentic) community' and 'who is *not* community', and this may end up reproducing existing and inequitable hierarchies.[64] In the context of the UAE, it is also important that community policing is about more than just policing. It is also part of a wider nation-building project. "These top-down 'soft policing' projects have developed in countries where authoritarianism persists and where governments are seeking to recalibrate social pacts, as well as to cope with new economic challenges and elite generational change."[65] Community policing thus makes these countries rather remarkable in terms of cooperative citizen input, but it relies on 'citizenhood' and citizen input within bounds well managed by the police, and in the case of the UAE, within a larger strategic ambition of what citizenhood *should be*.

When it comes to more 'antagonistic' modes of citizen input into policing, there is somewhat less space allowed for manoeuvre. This is recognisable in the state's containment of the transitional justice processes in Tunisia and Morocco, where commissions led processes of mass citizen truth-telling on the violent

---

60 See contrasting opinions in Alan McCrum, "Lebanon's Sensible Pilot Projects", Carnegie Middle East Centre, July 30, 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/60898; and Leila Seurat, "Public Order and Community Policing in Beirut. Ras Beirut Police Station as a Case Study", *Les études du CERI*, July 4, 2016, http://sciencespo.fr/ceri/en/content/public-order-and-community-policing-beirut-ras-beirut-police-station-case-study.

61 Jessica Watkins, "Policing and Protection for Syrian Refugees in Jordan", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 16, 2018, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/77511.

62 Lea Lavut, "Building Partnerships Towards a Democratic Police Force in the Post-Revolutionary Tunisia Context", *Journal for Deradicalisation*, 2016, http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/viewFile/67/62.

63 Op.Cit., "Policing and Protection for Syrian Refugees in Jordan".

64 Op.Cit., "Public Order and Community Policing in Beirut. Ras Beirut Police Station as a Case Study".

65 Eleonora Ardemagni, "The Abu Dhabi Policing Laboratory: Building Security, Forging Community", Middle East Institute, July 16, 2019, https://www.mei.edu/publications/abu-dhabi-policing-laboratory-building-security-forging-community.

excesses of the security forces in the preceding regimes. In Tunisia's case, the independent Truth and Dignity Commission sought "to investigate human rights violations in Tunisia between 1955 and 2013", and propose "practical recommendations related to institutional reforms on non-recurrence of these violations".[66] It released its final report in March 2019, submitted over 170 cases to courts, and named officials responsible for crimes, including Beji Caid Essebsi, the previous president at the time (now deceased). In Morocco's case, the Equity and Reconciliation Commission was set up as an independent commission tasked with investigation of past human rights violations in the period 1956-1999 and making recommendations for change. It submitted its final report in November 2005, presenting a set of recommendations formulated through consultations with civil society actors.

These commissions' outcomes have met with considerable resistance. The findings of Tunisia's Truth and Dignity Commission elicited controversy, and met with only partial success. Many trials have opened, but have been postponed multiple times and have moved very slowly. [67] The Commission's work itself

allegedly encountered much resistance from within the Tunisian ministry of interior. When it comes to the recommendations of Morocco's Equity and Reconciliation Commission, it is notable that the perpetrators were not named.[68] Furthermore, its recommended changes "are yet to be applied" fifteen years later. [69]

Indeed, raising public criticism of the police often provokes serious consequences even in these best case states. Public criticism of the Emirati state as a whole is curtailed, and military and security forces are particularly sensitive subjects. Indeed, laws or practices to protect the public honour of the security forces are well established across the *Renewal of Vows* countries, as across the Arab world. Making light of the police, or publicly complaining about mistreatment can result in jail time – as recently happened to Moroccan rapper Gnawi, who was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for a video insulting the police.[70] Judicial routes are more reliable than anywhere else in the Arab world, although they are not always straightforward. In Tunisia, police actors have disrupted trials of those accused of torture, taking their colleagues out of the court.[71]

---

66 Alexander Mayer-Rieckh and Howard Varney, "Recommending Change: Truth Commission Recommendations on Institutional Reform", Geneva Centre for Security Governance, 2019, https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/ International%20study%20%28ENG%29%20-%20Mapping%20of%20TRC%20recommendations%20-%20publication%20 version.pdf.

67 Lilia Blaise, "Tunisia Truth Commission Brings One Court Case in Four Years", *The New York Times*, June 8, 2018, https://www. nytimes.com/2018/06/06/world/middleeast/tunisia-torture-trial-zine-el-abidine-ben-ali.html.

68 Blanca Camps-Febrer, "Layers of Security", *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, vol.12, no.1, March 2019.

69 Brahim Saidy, "Security Sector Reform in the Maghreb: Finding a Realistic Approach", Moroccan Institute for Political Analysis, April 27, 2020, https://mipa.institute/7767.

70 "Moroccan Rapper Gnawi Sentenced to Prison After Music Video Criticizing Police", *Complex*, November 26, 2019, https://www. complex.com/music/2019/11/morocco-rapper-gnawi-sentenced-to-prison-music-video-criticizing-police.

71 Sharan Grewal, "Time to Rein In Tunisia's Police Unions", Project on Middle East Democracy, March 2018. https://scholar. princeton.edu/sites/default/files/grewal/files/grewal_final_180329.pdf.

IN COUNSELLING: ALGERIA AND SUDAN

"Toxic, toxic, the air tastes toxic

And they keep saying, stay away from politics

We'll get rid of you with a peaceful revolution.

Your Honour, now we want the justice to be equal for all.

We have watched for years

Between rule by a mummified man and the terror of your killers."

From Raja Meziane's track *Toxic*[72]

Although differing in numerous ways when it comes to policing, Algeria and Sudan share an important similarity: the potential for change in their policing practices is greater than ever before.

In both countries, the police have historically been involved in large-scale and systematic violence, as part of civil conflicts and as an instrument of regime survival and domination. There has been only very limited accountability for this violent past in both countries. After Algeria's 'Black Decade' of the 1990s, when approximately 7,000 people were disappeared at the hands of the security forces,[73] the Charter for Peace and Reconciliation of 2006 allowed families to make compensation claims for their relatives who had disappeared or died

during this period. However, it also rendered the security and military forces immune from prosecution. Similarly, although the dissolution in 2013 of the powerful secret intelligence service responsible for 'monitoring crises', the *Département du Renseignement and Sécurité*, marked a positive change,[74] some observers see signs that they continue to operate under the surface.[75]

In 2019, both police forces encountered large-scale civil unrest, but responded differently. In comparison to neighbouring states, Algeria's internal security forces' response to protests has been relatively moderate, with some exceptions, and both sympathy and animosity are evident in protestor-police relations. Unlike in Egypt or Tunisia in 2011, the Hirak protests themselves are not particularly directed at the police *per se,* rather at the ruling administration and the wider official state. In comparison, Sudanese protest movements have been making specific calls for changes in policing and denouncing police brutality, partly in reaction to the violent state response (approximately 120 civilians were killed during the protests), and partly as a reaction to the country's history of state impunity.[76]

Algeria's and Sudan's security sectors have different capacities in terms of engaging effectively with society. Algeria's internal security agencies – the *Sûreté nationale* (reporting to the ministry of interior) and the *Gendarmerie* (reporting to the ministry of defence) – are superior in numbers and equipment to their Sudanese counterparts. The Algerian state fields around one police officer for every 250 citizens,[77] while Sudan fields about one for every 802.[78]

---

72   Raja Meziane, "Toxic" (video with English Subtitles), April 28, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1iEJwvT5lI.

73   "Time for reckoning: Forced disappearances in Algeria", Human Rights Watch, February 2003, https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/02/26/time-reckoning/enforced-disappearances-algeria.

74   Kouceila Zerguine, "The Transformation of the Security Sector in Algeria", Background Paper, Carnegie Middle East Centre, June 15, 2015, p.17.

75   Rachid Tlemçani, "Algeria: Inventing New Political Rules", *Arab Reform Initiative* (blog), April 9, 2019, https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/algeria-inventing-new-political-rules/.

76   "They were shouting 'kill them!': Sudan's violent crackdown on protestors", Human Rights Watch, November 17, 2019, https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/11/17/they-were-shouting-kill-them/sudans-violent-crackdown-protesters-khartoum.

77   Hanspeter Mattes, "Domestic Security in the Maghreb: Deficits and Counter-Measures", German Institute of Global and Area Studies, 2012, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07542.

78   George Thomas Kurian, *World Encyclopedia of Police Forces and Correctional Systems* (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2nd ed, vol. 2, 2006).

In addition, in comparison to the Sudan Police, the Algerian agencies are more internally cohesive and better integrated with other state institutions. For the time being, they are able to exert authority over the entirety of the country (with some minor exceptions). This does not mean that the police is a fully unified body: police industrial action in 2014 reflected dissent in the ranks and tensions between agencies, even if it did not come to much.[79] In Sudan, by contrast, the internal security situation is in flux. State policing units are not in step operationally or politically with military units, and have to compete for territorial control with regional militias. This is a security marketplace,[80] where there is considerable competition and disconnect between police units themselves.[81]

This contrast in police cohesion reflects a more general picture of state fragmentation and instability in Sudan, where the *status quo* and elite coalition has been disrupted, and where there is a struggle for power. The security forces are divided and in competition, and give way to, or try to co-opt, militias, depending on the locality. Police have also involved themselves in industrial action for better conditions and in protesting against corruption. This fragmentation has had a part to play in the violent and disordered response to protests.

When it comes to police–people relations, comparative and good quality data is sparse. A public survey conducted in 2018-19 suggests Sudanese are split down the middle in terms of whether they trust the police.[82] In Algeria, by contrast, police fare relatively well compared to other state institutions, coming second only to the military. However, what is clear is that in both countries the gap between police and citizens has been and remains wide, with very limited citizen input into policy at any level, or any degree of formality. Budgetary transparency on security spending is minimal in both Algeria and Sudan. Parliamentary and judicial oversight of security matters is also scant, and so space for citizen input into policing has historically been very narrow. Lack of transparency in policing and indeed in the wider state apparatus is widespread, and corruption is a salient facet of public perceptions of police in both countries, especially Sudan.[83] Furthermore, at least historically speaking, antagonistic approaches to pushing police reform – through protest, advocacy or judicial means – have certainly occurred, but have met with little success due to tight restrictions on criticism of the state and on political mobilisation.

> The period of flux that state security actors are currently experiencing is both a cause for optimism and concern.

What does this mean for the place of the citizen in policing?

Political space is opening in both Algeria and Sudan. In both countries, there is huge will to transform the state, and in both countries demands include strong claims concerning the dignity and rights of the person. The current moment is a period where the ground is shifting in a way that will facilitate future change: it is a period of possibility. In both countries

79 "Algeria police protests sign of deep divisions", *The Washington Times*, October 28, 2014, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/oct/28/algeria-police-protests-sign-of-deep-divisions/

80 Sarah Detzner, "Security Sector Reform in Sudan and South Sudan: Incubating Progress", The London School of Economics Conflict Research Programme, December 10, 2019, https://www.lse.ac.uk/international-development/Assets/Documents/ccs-research-unit/Conflict-Research-Programme/crp-memos/SSR-Sudans-Incubating-Progress-final.pdf.

81 "#SudanUprising Briefing: Slow Progress on Security Sector Reforms and Human Rights, as the RSF Complains of Marginalisation", *Sudan In The News*, March 3, 2020, https://www.sudaninthenews.com/sudan-peace-and-security-briefings/sudanuprising-briefing-slow-progress-on-security-sector-reforms-and-human-rights-as-the-rsf-complains-of-marginalisation.

82 Arab Barometer, "Wave V, 2018 – 2019", https://www.arabbarometer.org/surveys/arab-barometer-wave-v/

83 "People and Corruption: Middle East and North Africa Survey 2016", Transparency International, 2016, https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/people-and-corruption-mena-survey-2016.

there is a strong resentment of the past actions of security actors, and a desire to recast the involvement of security actors in politics and everyday life.

Sudan offers the most immediate prospects for change. The role of the police has been in the spotlight due to their record of violence against protestors. Civil society actors are well prepared, having been working on SSR issues for some time. Demonstrations explicitly protesting against abuses committed by the security forces featured as a large part of the recent revolution, and security sector reform became a watchword of the protests, and may indeed already have started in principle. Indeed, reforming the police has become part of the rhetoric of the Himmedti government, and even if they have not yet taken significant steps in this direction, it could be taken as an encouraging sign of norm making. [84]

The period of flux that state security actors are currently experiencing is both a cause for optimism and concern. As the loyalty of state and non-state actors is not assumed, it must be bargained for at the national, regional and local levels. This creates insecurity, but it makes it more difficult for the previously prevailing situation to be reconstituted. Equally, divisions and resentment within the security forces lead to friction, but weaken their power as a bloc and undermine their ability to establish autonomy.

In Algeria by contrast, the situation is somewhat more stable, and so the opportunities for effecting change are less immediately obvious. The security sector certainly is not in flux, nor have security entrepreneurs or competitors emerged. The relative forbearance of the internal security forces deflects attention from security sector reform. If anything, the state security sector is more resistant to change than pre-February 2019. For the time being, changes to policing appear frozen within the stalemate between the Hirak and the government. At the current point in time, direct change in policing can only come about through the will of the key power players.

---

84 Op. Cit., "Security Sector Reform in Sudan and South Sudan"'.

CONCLUSION: POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Frustration with the police can reach dramatic levels: the calls for the abolition of the police force altogether in Minneapolis following the killing of George Floyd in June 2020 could not express any more clearly the breakdown of the relationship between people and police. It is worth noting in this case what it will be replaced with, though: the 'Department of Community Safety and Violence Prevention'. This brings us back to the very origins of modern policing, with its focus on the community.

The four categories of relations between people and police in the Arab world described in this *Chaillot Paper* have shown that while there is much cause for lament, there is also scope for improvement. When devising future police reform programmes, the EU, its member states or other actors should consider the following points.

FOR ALL THE COUNTRIES IN QUESTION

> The relationships between the police and the peoples of the region vary widely, as do their contexts. What is common is that this relationship is a function and reflection of the degree of just peace and security, a matter of considerable interest to Europe. It is a set of relationships that have become, to different degrees, distant, and in need of some repair or improvement through growing citizen input into policing.

> This diversity means that the modes of citizen input that are possible and appropriate will differ from country to country and between localities. No matter the overarching term used – be it community policing, democratic policing or others – the point is to bring citizen input into policing that is contextually relevant and effective in building two-way feedback and trust.

> There is a tendency in certain international security sector reform programmes to focus on security assistance and police institutions to the exclusion of citizens' voices, undergirding the overall trend of low citizen engagement in policing. Such an approach can also prioritise problems that matter little to citizens, such as counterterrorism and border management, in comparison to issues such as corruption, a problem that burdens already struggling economies as well as personal budgets. Such programming is unlikely to change the underlying drivers of insecurity in the form of bad police–people relationships.

> At the same time, police resistance to change can be reduced by involving the force in a constructive and cooperative, rather than confrontational and antagonistic, manner. This can come about if international partners have a better understanding of the daily reality of being an Arab police officer. This can emerge from better research into, for instance, the political economy of police institutions.

> Coalitions that bring together different types of actors will increase the chances of success. Like security actors anywhere, police will be resistant to change, as will those that benefit from the current *status quo*. Larger

coalitions, especially those which include members of the security services as well as non-state organisations, are much more able to overcome this resistance.

> In any international engagement with the police, they should be understood as politicised entities, and at the centre of economic, political, sectarian and conflict currents. As it stands, how they exist within these dimensions is scantily researched. Research on police institutions in the region should therefore be encouraged. The political economy of policing is both especially relevant to international programming (which injects large sums of money into the equation) and particularly neglected as a topic of study.

> The process of developing or rebuilding the relationship between citizens and the police is one that will take decades. While EU programmes are short in time-span, it would be beneficial for programme design to be considered within timeframes longer than the typical 3-year time horizon.

FOR THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF COUNTRIES

Estranged Partners: Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen

> There is undeniably much desire for the emergence of a reformed police as an institution of a unified or federalised state even across conflict lines; to acknowledge and take advantage of this, police reform and broader SSR reform need to be anchored in the political process as far as possible.

> The sense of security at the local level improves when citizens have platforms to interact and work with the police and other armed actors; programming that supports this has shown much potential even before a national deal has been reached.

> In parallel such programming can support voices from local communities to enter the national political process.

> In these conflict-afflicted countries, the nature and role of the police in both the local and national contexts frequently fluctuates and shifts; understanding this fluid mosaic is important for getting the national security deal right.

> The examples of Germany, Bosnia Herzegovina, East Timor and Kosovo[1] show that post-conflict police reconstruction facilitated foreign military presence to provide minimum security.

> After years of conflict, flight and state failure, levels of trauma among people and police officers are high, institutions are weakened or shattered and the chances of future human rights violation recidivism are high. Police reform can be interwoven into broader transitional justice measures, including truth commissions, truth telling, rewriting of constitutions, victim acknowledgement and restorative justice.

Abusive Marriage: Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia

> All of the power to change policing directly lies with the state authorities; meanwhile, activists continue to contest policing practices, highlight abuses and advocate alternative ways of policing. These activists, who as well as organising campaigns and protests express their ideas through

---

1　This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

writing, music and art and other mediums, often suffer deprivations and repression, but can be honoured internationally for their contributions.

> On the fringes of the more sensitive areas of policing policy, there nonetheless remains scope to support changes that bring in citizens' needs and voices. Areas where states permit international involvement, such as anti-trafficking, prisoner rights, sexual and gender-based violence, judicial development and others, are of key importance in this regard.

> There are also opportunities for direct cooperation between European and Arab states on policing matters – for instance forensic investigation and public order management – which nonetheless entail the risk of increasing the repressive capabilities of police forces.

> Forging closer trade and diplomatic links with governments can facilitate positive engagement on policing. Supplying materials and technologies that enable oppressive policing is counterproductive in this regard. Since the power lies mostly with the administration hierarchy, overtures to these administrations can be made in terms that appeal to them. Highlighting the link between prosperity and security and stability and the rule of law might make state authorities more inclined to reappraise policing approaches. This may resonate with their interests in stability and economic development.

> The law on the use of force by police is often vague, weak or non-existent: codification of such parameters would be a step in the right direction.

Renewal of Vows: Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia and the UAE

> To varying degrees, contentious debate over and critique of the police remain constrained by law and custom, especially in public fora such as in the media. Fruitful and contextually appropriate channels for such conversations can be established at the local level. The empowerment of NGOs which serve as a localised meeting platform between people and police is a constructive way forward.

> While citizen input into police priorities exists, too often this is fragile and ephemeral. Any support to the institutionalisation and normalisation of civilian input into policing, at local, regional and national levels would make it more durable and effective.

> As elsewhere, a type of transition or indeed transitional justice would naturally include police matters, including the addressing of past crimes.

> The implications of surveillance technology in the richer Gulf States are considerable and worrying; the authorities in these states are also in a position to pioneer governance concepts and mechanisms that will be replicated across the region.

In Counselling: Algeria and Sudan

> The potentially huge changes in the distribution of power and the organisation of the state will require a transformation of the style of policing, even while experiences elsewhere suggest it will take some time for this process to play out. Bringing policing matters into the centre of the wider political transition is key to the success of police reform endeavours.

> Justice for the victims of both historical and recent crimes committed by police forces

must be a basis of a new era in relations between people, the police and the wider state. But collective punishment, as occurred in Libya, must be avoided at all cost: accountability must be individual. In both countries, truth-telling processes are also critical if the gap between citizens and the police is ever to close.

> To ensure against recurrence of past abuses, oversight and accountability mechanisms must be implanted firmly into and around the police. In Sudan, this would involve ensuring that the income streams of police units are not independent but controlled by the state. In Algeria, this would involve bringing parliamentary oversight to security budgets.

> To ensure that the police of putative transition states serve the people and not a ruling elite, the principle of citizen input into policing must be written into the reconstituted police forces, providing channels of communication at the local, regional and national levels, and allowing both cooperative and antagonistic approaches.

> For the time being, citizen 'input' into police work is often wary or antagonistic in nature. Working with NGOs to break down communication barriers and an 'us versus them' mentality can pave the way for improved relations.

> Police are more likely to engage in local cooperative security if there are incentives of greater meritocracy. In Algeria, discontent within the ranks, evident in the police's industrial actions of recent years, also represents an opportunity.

ABBREVIATIONS

BICI
Bahrain Independent
Commission of Inquiry

CSDP
Common Security and
Defence Policy

ESS
European Security Strategy

ISF
Internal Security Forces

MENA
Middle East and North
Africa

NGO
Non-governmental
organisation

SSR
Security Sector Reform

UAE
United Arab Emirates

WISPI
World Internal Security &
Police Index

This *Chaillot Paper* looks at the police in the Arab world –
an institution at the centre of political life but one that is
very much under-researched. After years of attempts at
reform, it seems that not much progress has been made
in reducing corruption and violence, or increasing police
efficiency. Why is it so hard to reform an institution so
deeply embedded in the daily lives of citizens?

The paper contributes a new way of looking at police reform
in a region where the rule of law is not fully implemented.
It argues that it is not the institution itself that lies at the
heart of the problem, but its relationship with society at
large. Any reform attempts focusing solely on the police will
therefore always miss half of the problem's equation. This
approach therefore opens new avenues for reflection, and
invites a revision of existing reform programmes. It also
considers that this type of police-community engagement
is a way to reduce the democratic deficit long-term. Lastly,
it finds that different Arab states show different degrees of
reform potential.