



## Middle East :: Saudi Arabia

### Introduction :: Saudi Arabia

#### Background:

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and home to Islam's two holiest shrines in Mecca and Medina. The king's official title is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The modern Saudi state was founded in 1932 by ABD AL-AZIZ bin Abd al-Rahman Al SAUD (Ibn Saud) after a 30-year campaign to unify most of the Arabian Peninsula. One of his male descendants rules the country today, as required by the country's 1992 Basic Law. King ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz ascended to the throne in 2005. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saudi Arabia accepted the Kuwaiti royal family and 400,000 refugees while allowing Western and Arab troops to deploy on its soil for the liberation of Kuwait the following year. The continuing presence of foreign troops on Saudi soil after the liberation of Kuwait became a source of tension between the royal family and the public until all operational US troops left the country in 2003. Major terrorist attacks in May and November 2003 spurred a strong on-going campaign against domestic terrorism and extremism. King ABDALLAH has continued the cautious reform program begun when he was crown prince. The king instituted an interfaith dialogue initiative in 2008 to encourage religious tolerance on a global level; in 2009, he reshuffled the cabinet, which led to more moderates holding ministerial and judicial positions, and appointed the first female to the cabinet. The 2010-12 uprisings across Middle Eastern and North African countries sparked modest incidents in Saudi cities, predominantly by Shia demonstrators calling for the release of detainees and the withdrawal from Bahrain of the Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsula Shield Force. Protests in general were met by a strong police presence, with some arrests, but not the level of bloodshed seen in protests elsewhere in the region. In response to the unrest, King ABDALLAH in February and March 2011 announced a series of benefits to Saudi citizens including funds to build affordable housing, salary increases for government workers, and unemployment entitlements. To promote increased political participation, the government held elections nationwide in September 2011 for half the members of 285 municipal councils. Also in September, the king announced that women will be allowed to run for and vote in future municipal elections - first held in 2005 - and serve as full members of the advisory Consultative Council. During 2012, Shia protests increased in violence, while peaceful Sunni protests expanded. The country remains a leading producer of oil and natural gas and holds about 17% of the world's proven oil reserves. The government continues to pursue economic reform and diversification, particularly since Saudi Arabia's accession to the WTO in December 2005, and promotes foreign investment in the kingdom. A burgeoning population, aquifer depletion, and an economy largely dependent on petroleum output and prices are ongoing governmental concerns.

### Geography :: Saudi Arabia

#### Location:

Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, north of Yemen

#### Geographic coordinates:

25 00 N, 45 00 E

**Map references:**

Middle East

**Area:**

**total:** 2,149,690 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 13

**land:** 2,149,690 sq km

**water:** 0 sq km

**Area - comparative:**

slightly more than one-fifth the size of the US

**Land boundaries:**

**total:** 4,431 km

**border countries:** Iraq 814 km, Jordan 744 km, Kuwait 222 km, Oman 676 km, Qatar 60 km, UAE 457 km, Yemen 1,458 km

**Coastline:**

2,640 km

**Maritime claims:**

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**contiguous zone:** 18 nm

**continental shelf:** not specified

**Climate:**

harsh, dry desert with great temperature extremes

**Terrain:**

mostly uninhabited, sandy desert

**Elevation extremes:**

**lowest point:** Persian Gulf 0 m

**highest point:** Jabal Sawda' 3,133 m

**Natural resources:**

petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, copper

**Land use:**

**arable land:** 1.45%

**permanent crops:** 0.11%

**other:** 98.44% (2011)

**Irrigated land:**

16,200 sq km (2004)

**Total renewable water resources:**

2.4 cu km (2011)

**Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):**

**total:** 23.67 cu km/yr (9%/3%/88%)

**per capita:** 928.1 cu m/yr (2006)

**Natural hazards:**

frequent sand and dust storms

**volcanism:** despite many volcanic formations, there has been little activity in the past few centuries; volcanoes include Harrat Rahat, Harrat Khaybar, Harrat Lunayyir, and Jabal Yar

**Environment - current issues:**

desertification; depletion of underground water resources; the lack of perennial rivers or permanent water bodies has prompted the development of extensive seawater desalination facilities; coastal pollution from oil spills

**Environment - international agreements:**

**party to:** Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution

**signed, but not ratified:** none of the selected agreements

## Geography - note:

Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the world without a river; extensive coastlines on the Persian Gulf and Red Sea provide great leverage on shipping (especially crude oil) through the Persian Gulf and Suez Canal

## People and Society :: Saudi Arabia

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### Nationality:

**noun:** Saudi(s)

**adjective:** Saudi or Saudi Arabian

### Ethnic groups:

Arab 90%, Afro-Asian 10%

### Languages:

Arabic (official)

### Religions:

Muslim (official) 100%

### Population:

26,939,583 (July 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 47

**note:** includes 5,576,076 non-nationals

### Age structure:

**0-14 years:** 28.2% (male 3,890,771/female 3,703,725)

**15-24 years:** 19.6% (male 2,823,458/female 2,450,629)

**25-54 years:** 44.8% (male 6,927,445/female 5,148,565)

**55-64 years:** 4.3% (male 639,051/female 524,058)

**65 years and over:** 3.1% (male 429,951/female 401,930) (2013 est.)

### Dependency ratios:

**total dependency ratio:** 46.9 %

**youth dependency ratio:** 42.6 %

**elderly dependency ratio:** 4.2 %

**potential support ratio:** 23.6 (2013)

### Median age:

**total:** 26 years

**male:** 27 years

**female:** 24.8 years (2013 est.)

### Population growth rate:

1.51% (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 81

### Birth rate:

19.01 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 95

### Death rate:

3.32 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 219

### Net migration rate:

-0.62 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 140

### Urbanization:

**urban population:** 82.3% of total population (2011)

**rate of urbanization:** 2.38% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

### Major urban areas - population:

RIYADH (capital) 4.725 million; Jeddah 3.234 million; Mecca 1.484 million; Medina 1.104 million; Ad Dammam 902,000 (2009)

### Sex ratio:

**at birth:** 1.05 male(s)/female  
**0-14 years:** 1.05 male(s)/female  
**15-24 years:** 1.15 male(s)/female  
**25-54 years:** 1.36 male(s)/female  
**55-64 years:** 1.22 male(s)/female  
**65 years and over:** 1.08 male(s)/female  
**total population:** 1.21 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

**Maternal mortality rate:**

24 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)  
**country comparison to the world:** 134

**Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 15.08 deaths/1,000 live births  
**country comparison to the world:** 111  
**male:** 17.31 deaths/1,000 live births  
**female:** 12.75 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 74.58 years  
**country comparison to the world:** 109  
**male:** 72.58 years  
**female:** 76.68 years (2013 est.)

**Total fertility rate:**

2.21 children born/woman (2013 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 103

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:**

23.8% (2007)

**Health expenditures:**

4.3% of GDP (2010)  
**country comparison to the world:** 162

**Physicians density:**

0.94 physicians/1,000 population (2008)

**Hospital bed density:**

2.2 beds/1,000 population (2009)

**Drinking water source:**

**improved:**

urban: 97% of population

**unimproved:**

urban: 3% of population (2010 est.)

**Sanitation facility access:**

**improved:**

urban: 100% of population (2010 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

0.01% (2001 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 165

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

NA

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

33% (2008)  
**country comparison to the world:** 19

**Children under the age of 5 years underweight:**

5.3% (2005)  
**country comparison to the world:** 87

**Education expenditures:**

5.6% of GDP (2008)

**country comparison to the world:** 51

**Literacy:**

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write

**total population:** 87.2%

**male:** 90.8%

**female:** 82.2% (2011 est.)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 15 years

**male:** 15 years

**female:** 15 years (2011)

**Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:**

**total:** 28.2%

**country comparison to the world:** 32

**male:** 23.6%

**female:** 45.8% (2008)

**Government :: Saudi Arabia**

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**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**conventional short form:** Saudi Arabia

**local long form:** Al Mamlakah al Arabiyah as Saudiyah

**local short form:** Al Arabiyah as Saudiyah

**Government type:**

monarchy

**Capital:**

**name:** Riyadh

**geographic coordinates:** 24 39 N, 46 42 E

**time difference:** UTC+3 (8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

**Administrative divisions:**

13 provinces (mintaqat, singular - mintaqah); Al Bahah, Al Hudud ash Shamaliyah (Northern Border), Al Jawf, Al Madinah (Medina), Al Qasim, Ar Riyad (Riyadh), Ash Sharqiyah (Eastern), 'Asir, Ha'il, Jizan, Makkah (Mecca), Najran, Tabuk

**Independence:**

23 September 1932 (unification of the kingdom)

**National holiday:**

Unification of the Kingdom, 23 September (1932)

**Constitution:**

governed according to Islamic law; the Basic Law that articulates the government's rights and responsibilities was promulgated by royal decree in 1992

**Legal system:**

Islamic (sharia) legal system with some elements of Egyptian, French, and customary law; note - several secular codes have been introduced; commercial disputes handled by special committees

**International law organization participation:**

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt

**Suffrage:**

21 years of age; male

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** King and Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since 1 August 2005); Heir Apparent Crown Prince SALMAN bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, born 31 December 1935) ; note - the monarch is both chief of state and head of government

**head of government:** King and Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since 1 August 2005); Deputy Prime Minister SALMAN bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since 19 June 2012); Second Deputy Prime Minister MUQRIN bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since February 2013)

**cabinet:** Council of Ministers appointed by the monarch every four years and includes many royal family members

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#) )

**elections:** none; the monarchy is hereditary; note - an Allegiance Commission created by royal decree in October 2006 established a committee of Saudi princes that will play a role in selecting future Saudi kings, but the system will not take effect until after King ABDALLAH's successor inherits the throne

#### **Legislative branch:**

Consultative Council or Majlis al-Shura (150 members and a chairman appointed by the monarch to serve four-year terms); note - though the Council of Ministers announced in October 2003 its intent to introduce elections for a third of the Majlis al-Shura incrementally over a period of four to five years, to date no such elections have been held or announced

#### **Judicial branch:**

**highest court(s):** High Court (consists of the court chief and organized into circuits with 3-judge panels except the criminal circuit which has a 5-judge panel for cases involving major punishments)

note - in 2005, King Abdullah issued decrees approving an overhaul of the judicial system and which were incorporated in the Judiciary Law of 2007; one change was the replacement of the Supreme Council of Justice with the High Court

**judge selection and term of office:** the High Court chief and chiefs of the High Court Circuits appointed by royal decree following the recommendation of the Supreme Judiciary Council, a 10-member body of high level judges and other judicial heads; new judges and assistant judges serve 1- and 2- year probations, respectively, before permanent assignment

**subordinate courts:** Court of Appeals; first-degree courts composed of general, criminal, personal status, and commercial courts, and the Labor Court; hierarchy of administrative courts

#### **Political parties and leaders:**

none

#### **Political pressure groups and leaders:**

Ansar Al Marah (supports women's rights)

**other:** gas companies; religious groups

#### **International organization participation:**

ABEDA, AfDB (nonregional member), AFESD, AMF, BIS, CAEU, CP, FAO, G-20, G-77, GCC, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM (observer), IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, LAS, MIGA, NAM, OAPC, OAS (observer), OIC, OPCW, OPEC, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNRWA, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

#### **Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Adil al-Ahmad al-JUBAYR

**chancery:** 601 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037

**telephone:** [1] (202) 342-3800

**FAX:** [1] (202) 944-3113

**consulate(s) general:** Houston, Los Angeles, New York

#### **Diplomatic representation from the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador James B. SMITH

**embassy:** Collector Road M, Diplomatic Quarter, Riyadh

**mailing address:** American Embassy, Unit 61307, APO AE 09803-1307; International Mail: P. O. Box 94309, Riyadh 11693

**telephone:** [966] (1) 488-3800

**FAX:** [966] (1) 488-7360

**consulate(s) general:** Dhahran, Jiddah (Jeddah)

#### **Flag description:**

green, a traditional color in Islamic flags, with the Shahada or Muslim creed in large white Arabic script (translated as "There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God") above a white horizontal saber (the tip points to the hoist side); design dates to the early twentieth century and is closely associated with the Al Saud family which established the kingdom in 1932; the flag is manufactured with differing obverse and reverse sides so that the Shahada reads - and the sword points - correctly from right to left on both sides

**note:** one of only three national flags that differ on their obverse and reverse sides - the others are Moldova and Paraguay

#### **National symbol(s):**

palm tree surmounting two crossed swords

#### **National anthem:**

**name:** "Aash Al Maleek" (Long Live Our Beloved King)

▶ [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

**lyrics/music:** Ibrahim KHAFAJI/Abdul Rahman al-KHATEEB

**note:** music adopted 1947, lyrics adopted 1984

## **Economy :: Saudi Arabia**

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### **Economy - overview:**

Saudi Arabia has an oil-based economy with strong government controls over major economic activities. It possesses about 17% of the world's proven petroleum reserves, ranks as the largest exporter of petroleum, and plays a leading role in OPEC. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 80% of budget revenues, 45% of GDP, and 90% of export earnings. Saudi Arabia is encouraging the growth of the private sector in order to diversify its economy and to employ more Saudi nationals. Diversification efforts are focusing on power generation, telecommunications, natural gas exploration, and petrochemical sectors. Over 5 million foreign workers play an important role in the Saudi economy, particularly in the oil and service sectors, while Riyadh is struggling to reduce unemployment among its own nationals. Saudi officials are particularly focused on employing its large youth population, which generally lacks the education and technical skills the private sector needs. Riyadh has substantially boosted spending on job training and education, most recently with the opening of the King Abdallah University of Science and Technology - Saudi Arabia's first co-educational university. As part of its effort to attract foreign investment, Saudi Arabia acceded to the WTO in 2005. The government has begun establishing six "economic cities" in different regions of the country to promote foreign investment and plans to spend \$373 billion between 2010 and 2014 on social development and infrastructure projects to advance Saudi Arabia's economic development.

### **GDP (purchasing power parity):**

\$921.7 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 20

\$863 billion (2011 est.)

\$795.5 billion (2010 est.)

**note:** data are in 2012 US dollars

### **GDP (official exchange rate):**

\$727.3 billion (2012 est.)

### **GDP - real growth rate:**

6.8% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 31

8.5% (2011 est.)

7.4% (2010 est.)

### **GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$31,800 (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 46

\$30,400 (2011 est.)

\$28,900 (2010 est.)

**note:** data are in 2012 US dollars

### **Gross national saving:**

53.5% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 4**

54.8% of GDP (2011 est.)

49.7% of GDP (2010 est.)

#### **GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption: 26.4%**

**government consumption: 19.7%**

**investment in fixed capital: 26.6%**

**investment in inventories: 4.3%**

**exports of goods and services: 55.9%**

**imports of goods and services: -28.6%**  
(2012 est.)

#### **GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture: 1.9%**

**industry: 64.8%**

**services: 33.3% (2012 est.)**

#### **Agriculture - products:**

wheat, barley, tomatoes, melons, dates, citrus; mutton, chickens, eggs, milk

#### **Industries:**

crude oil production, petroleum refining, basic petrochemicals, ammonia, industrial gases, sodium hydroxide (caustic soda), cement, fertilizer, plastics, metals, commercial ship repair, commercial aircraft repair, construction

#### **Industrial production growth rate:**

7.1% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 27**

#### **Labor force:**

8.012 million

**country comparison to the world: 60**

*note:* about 80% of the labor force is non-national (2012 est.)

#### **Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture: 6.7%**

**industry: 21.4%**

**services: 71.9% (2005 est.)**

#### **Unemployment rate:**

10.6% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 113**

10.9% (2011 est.)

*note:* data are for Saudi males only (local bank estimates; some estimates range as high as 25%)

#### **Population below poverty line:**

NA%

#### **Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%: NA%**

**highest 10%: NA%**

#### **Budget:**

**revenues: \$326.5 billion**

**expenditures: \$234.8 billion (2012 est.)**

#### **Taxes and other revenues:**

44.9% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 25**

#### **Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

12.6% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 6**

#### **Public debt:**

11.5% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 142

11.2% of GDP (2011 est.)

**Fiscal year:**

calendar year

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

4% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 124

4.9% (2011 est.)

**Central bank discount rate:**

2.5% (31 December 2008)

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

6.8% (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 124

7.2% (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of narrow money:**

\$236.6 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 18

\$202.9 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of broad money:**

\$360.3 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 28

\$326.3 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$74.71 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 61

\$27.54 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$338.9 billion (31 December 2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 25

\$353.4 billion (31 December 2010)

\$318.8 billion (31 December 2009)

**Current account balance:**

\$150 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 3

\$158.5 billion (2011 est.)

**Exports:**

\$395 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 15

\$364.7 billion (2011 est.)

**Exports - commodities:**

petroleum and petroleum products 90%

**Exports - partners:**

US 14.3%, China 13.7%, Japan 13.7%, South Korea 9.9%, India 8.2%, Singapore 4.3% (2012)

**Imports:**

\$136.8 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 31

\$120 billion (2011 est.)

**Imports - commodities:**

machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, motor vehicles, textiles

**Imports - partners:**

China 13.5%, US 13.2%, South Korea 6.7%, Germany 6.5%, India 6.3%, Japan 6% (2012)

#### **Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$656.9 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 4**

\$541.1 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

#### **Debt - external:**

\$134 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 41**

\$113.7 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

#### **Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:**

\$221.2 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 24**

\$204.1 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

#### **Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:**

\$20.81 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 46**

\$17.72 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

#### **Exchange rates:**

Saudi riyals (SAR) per US dollar -

3.75 (2012 est.)

3.75 (2011 est.)

3.75 (2010 est.)

3.75 (2009)

3.75 (2008)

### **Energy :: Saudi Arabia**

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#### **Electricity - production:**

212.3 billion kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 20**

#### **Electricity - consumption:**

186.1 billion kWh (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 19**

#### **Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 122**

#### **Electricity - imports:**

0 kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 125**

#### **Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

44.49 million kW (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 20**

#### **Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

100% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 33**

#### **Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 169**

#### **Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 192**

#### **Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 180**

**Crude oil - production:**

10 million bbl/day (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 2**

**Crude oil - exports:**

6.88 million bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Crude oil - imports:**

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 115**

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

264.6 billion bbl (1 January 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

1.914 million bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 11**

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

2.817 million bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 7**

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

951,000 bbl/day (2008 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 6**

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

160,100 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 35**

**Natural gas - production:**

99.23 billion cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 9**

**Natural gas - consumption:**

99.23 billion cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 8**

**Natural gas - exports:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 170**

**Natural gas - imports:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 122**

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

8.028 trillion cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 5**

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

478.4 million Mt (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 11**

**Communications :: Saudi Arabia**

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**Telephones - main lines in use:**

4.633 million (2011)

**country comparison to the world: 32**

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

53.706 million (2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 25

#### **Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** modern system including a combination of extensive microwave radio relays, coaxial cables, and fiber-optic cables

**domestic:** mobile-cellular subscribership has been increasing rapidly

**international:** country code - 966; landing point for the international submarine cable Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe (FLAG) and for both the SEA-ME-WE-3 and SEA-ME-WE-4 submarine cable networks providing connectivity to Asia, Middle East, Europe, and US; microwave radio relay to Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Yemen, and Sudan; coaxial cable to Kuwait and Jordan; satellite earth stations - 5 Intelsat (3 Atlantic Ocean and 2 Indian Ocean), 1 Arabsat, and 1 Inmarsat (Indian Ocean region) (2011)

#### **Broadcast media:**

broadcast media are state-controlled; state-run TV operates 4 networks; Saudi Arabia is a major market for pan-Arab satellite TV broadcasters; state-run radio operates several networks; multiple international broadcasters are available (2007)

#### **Internet country code:**

.sa

#### **Internet hosts:**

145,941 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 79

#### **Internet users:**

9.774 million (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 30

### **Transportation :: Saudi Arabia**

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#### **Airports:**

214 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 26

#### **Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 82

**over 3,047 m:** 33

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 16

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 27

**914 to 1,523 m:** 2

**under 914 m:** 4 (2013)

#### **Airports - with unpaved runways:**

**total:** 132

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 7

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 72

**914 to 1,523 m:** 37

**under 914 m:**

16 (2013)

#### **Heliports:**

10 (2013)

#### **Pipelines:**

condensate 209 km; gas 2,940 km; liquid petroleum gas 1,183 km; oil 5,117 km; refined products 1,151 km (2013)

#### **Railways:**

**total:** 1,378 km

**country comparison to the world:** 81

**standard gauge:** 1,378 km 1.435-m gauge (with branch lines and sidings) (2008)

#### **Roadways:**

**total:** 221,372 km  
**country comparison to the world:** 22  
**paved:** 47,529 km (includes 3,891 km of expressways)  
**unpaved:** 173,843 km (2006)

#### **Merchant marine:**

**total:** 72  
**country comparison to the world:** 61  
**by type:** cargo 1, chemical tanker 25, container 4, liquefied gas 2, passenger/cargo 10, petroleum tanker 20, refrigerated cargo 3, roll on/roll off 7  
**foreign-owned:** 15 (Egypt 1, Greece 4, Kuwait 4, UAE 6)  
**registered in other countries:** 55 (Bahamas 16, Dominica 2, Liberia 20, Malta 2, Norway 3, Panama 11, Tanzania 1) (2010)

#### **Ports and terminals:**

Ad Dammam, Al Jubayl, Jeddah, Yanbu al Bahr

### **Military :: Saudi Arabia**

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#### **Military branches:**

Ministry of Defense and Aviation Forces: Royal Saudi Land Forces, Royal Saudi Naval Forces (includes Marine Forces and Special Forces), Royal Saudi Air Force (Al-Quwwat al-Jawwiya al-Malakiya as-Saudiya), Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces, Royal Saudi Strategic Rocket Forces, Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG)

#### **Military service age and obligation:**

17 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2012)

#### **Manpower available for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 8,644,522  
**females age 16-49:** 6,601,985 (2010 est.)

#### **Manpower fit for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 7,365,624  
**females age 16-49:** 5,677,819 (2010 est.)

#### **Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:**

**male:** 261,105  
**female:** 244,763 (2010 est.)

#### **Military expenditures:**

9.1% of GDP (2012)  
**country comparison to the world:** 5

### **Transnational Issues :: Saudi Arabia**

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#### **Disputes - international:**

Saudi Arabia has reinforced its concrete-filled security barrier along sections of the now fully demarcated border with Yemen to stem illegal cross-border activities; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia continue discussions on a maritime boundary with Iran; Saudi Arabia claims Egyptian-administered islands of Tiran and Sanafir

#### **Refugees and internally displaced persons:**

**refugees (country of origin):** 291,000 (Palestinian Territories) (2009)  
**stateless persons:** 70,000 (2012); note - thousands of biduns (stateless Arabs) are descendants of nomadic tribes who were not officially registered when national borders were established, while others migrated to Saudi Arabia in search of jobs; some have temporary identification cards that must be renewed every five years, but their rights remain restricted; most Palestinians have only legal resident status; some naturalized Yemenis were made stateless after being stripped of their passports when Yemen backed Iraq in its invasion of Kuwait in 1990; Saudi women cannot pass their citizenship on to their children, so if they marry a non-national, their children risk statelessness

#### **Trafficking in persons:**

**current situation:** Saudi Arabia is a destination country for men and women subjected to forced labor and, to a lesser extent, forced prostitution; men and women from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and many other countries voluntarily travel to Saudi Arabia as domestic servants or other low-skilled laborers, but some subsequently face conditions indicative of involuntary servitude (many are forced to work months or years beyond their contract term because employers withhold passports and required exit visas); women, primarily from Asian and African countries, are believed to be forced into prostitution in Saudi Arabia; others were reportedly kidnapped and forced into prostitution after running away from abusive employers; Yemeni, Nigerian, Pakistani, Afghan, Chadian, and Sudanese children were subjected to forced labor as beggars and street vendors in Saudi Arabia, facilitated by criminal gangs

**tier rating:** Tier 3 - Saudi Arabia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; fewer victims were identified and referred to protection services than in the previous reporting period; the sponsorship system, including the exit visa requirement, continues to restrict the freedom of movement of migrant workers and hamper the ability of victims to pursue legal cases against their employers; however, the government has implemented regulations mandating the formation of unified recruitment companies to replace the sponsorship model; no specialized shelter was available to victims of sex trafficking or male victims of trafficking (2013)

#### **Illicit drugs:**

death penalty for traffickers; improving anti-money-laundering legislation and enforcement