

# Saudi Arabia

*Women, Business and the Law 2023 (WBL2023)* presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Riyadh). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **Saudi Arabia scores 71.3 out of 100**. The overall score for Saudi Arabia is higher than the regional average observed across the Middle East and North Africa (53.2). Within the Middle East and North Africa region, the maximum score observed is 91.3 (Malta).

## Saudi Arabia - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2023



## Relative Strengths

When it comes to laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, constraints on women starting and running a business, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, Saudi Arabia gets a perfect score.

## Areas for Improvement

However, when it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, constraints related to marriage, laws affecting women's work after having children, and gender differences in property and inheritance, Saudi Arabia could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for Saudi Arabia is on the indicator measuring constraints related to marriage (the WBL2023 Marriage indicator). To improve on the Marriage indicator, Saudi Arabia may wish to consider no longer requiring a married woman to obey her husband, allowing women to obtain a divorce in the same way as a man, and giving women the same rights to remarry as men.

## Recent Reforms

During the past year (October 2nd, 2021 to October 1st, 2022), Saudi Arabia restricted women's right to choose where to live and travel outside the home in the same way as men. Saudi Arabia enacted legislation mandating women to obey their husbands.



Further data details for Saudi Arabia are available at:  
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/saudi-arabia/2023>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	No	Royal Decree No. M73 of the Year 1443 Hijri, Arts. 42(4), 43, 55 and 56
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	Travel Document Law, Arts. 2 and 4; Passport Application Procedures
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	No	Personal Status Law No. M73, Art. 55
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	Guidelines for Employing Women in the Private Sector, Art. 1/1(3)
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 3
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Anti-Harassment Law, Arts. 1, 5 and 6(2)(c)(d)
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	<i>Criminal:</i> Anti-Harassment Law, Arts. 1, 5 and 6(2)(c)(d) <i>Civil:</i> No applicable provisions could be located
Pay	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	Yes	Decree No. 215739/1440
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Marriage	Is the law free of legal provisions that require a married woman to obey her husband?	No	Royal Decree No. M73 of the Year 1443 Hijri, Art. 42
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Status Law, as amended by Royal Decree No. M/134 of 1440H, Art. 91
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Law on Protection from Harm, Art. 1
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	No	Royal Decree No. M73 of the Year 1443 Hijri, Arts. 77 and 84(1)
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	No	Royal Decree No. M73 of the Year 1443 Hijri, Arts. 116 to 123
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	No	Labor Law, Art. 151
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	No	Labor Law, Art. 151
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 113
	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Entrepreneurship	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 155
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	Yes	Banking Consumer Protection Principles, Para. 19.6; Finance Companies' Consumer Protection Principles, Para. 12.3
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Assets	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Basic Law of Governance, Arts. 7 and 23
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	No	Royal Decree No. M73 of the Year 1443 Hijri, Art. 215
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	No	Royal Decree No. M73 of the Year 1443 Hijri, Art. 210
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Basic Law of Governance, Arts. 7 and 23
Pension	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	No	Basic Law of Governance, Arts. 7 and 23
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Social Insurance Law, Art. 38 (1)
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 74 (4); Social Insurance Law, Art. 38 (1)
Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	Yes	Implementation Regulations of the Registration and Contribution, Art. 21 (4,B); Labor Law, Arts. 151 and 152	

