

MOROCCO — Country Profile

Overview

Morocco has a surface area of about 710 850 km², extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, from the Atlas mountain to the desert in the South. Morocco is composed of 16 Wilayas, subdivided into 82 provinces, covering 1547 rural and urban districts. The different administrative regions are characterized by vast heterogeneity in terms of geographic, economic and socio-cultural characteristics. Morocco has a population of 32 million people, of which 58% live in urban areas and 42% in rural areas. The population of Morocco is composed primarily of Berbers, Arabs and Sahraouis.

Morocco is ranked 130 out of 187 countries on the UNDP human development index, with 2.5% of the population living below the international poverty line of \$US 1.25 (in purchasing power parity terms) a day. The country ranks ninth among the countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region in terms of total fertility rate. It is also among the 10 countries in the Region with highest child and maternal mortality rates.

Source: *extracted from Religious Fundamentalism and Access to Safe Abortion Services in Morocco*

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Key findings on the situation of SRHR in Morocco are as follows:

Maternal Health:

- There are 100 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births
- The main causes of maternal death in Morocco are haemorrhage (33%), followed by hypertensive disorders (18%), infection (8%) and uterine rupture (7%).
- Fistula, reproductive tract infections and infertility are among the common causes of morbidity in pregnant women.
- There are less than 30% of healthcare interventions related to breastfeeding.
- Coverage of healthcare was higher in urban than rural areas, except for breastfeeding indicators and oral rehydration therapy with continued feeding.
- There was a three-fold difference in skilled attendance at birth, delivery at health facility and care-seeking for under-5s with suspected pneumonia, and a two-fold difference for antenatal care between households in the highest wealth quintile and those in the lowest quintile.
- Anaemia is a major health problem affecting 38% of pregnant women.
- Skilled health personnel attended 77% of pregnant women and 73.6% of deliveries.

Contraception:

- Contraceptive prevalence was reported at 67.4%.
- Total fertility rate is 2.6 children per woman.

Abortion:

- A study by the National Institute of Solidarity with Women in Danger (INSAF) estimates that over 800 illegal abortions are performed daily in Morocco in 2010.
- Abortion is largely prohibited in Morocco unless it is to save the life of the mother.
- Abortion is especially inaccessible to unmarried women who become pregnant, as sex before marriage is illegal under the Moroccan Penal Code.
- There are estimates of 130,000 to 150,000 illegal abortions conducted each year in Morocco (Beamish and Abderrazik).
- Religious fundamentalism and fatwas make it difficult for citizens to gain access to safe and legal abortion services.

HIV & AIDS:

- The number of people living with HIV in Morocco in 2009 was estimated to be 26,000.
- The key populations most affected by HIV in Morocco are: Sex workers, with an HIV prevalence of 1.3%; Gay men and other men who have sex with men, with an HIV prevalence of 5.7%; People who inject drugs, with an HIV prevalence of 7.9%; Prisoners, with an HIV prevalence of 0.5%.
- Since 2010, new HIV infections have decreased by 2% and AIDS-related deaths have decreased by 42%.
- 48% of people living with HIV were accessing antiretroviral therapy.
- Among pregnant women living with HIV, 62% were accessing treatment or prophylaxis to prevent transmission of HIV to their children.
- An estimated <100 children were newly infected with HIV due to mother-to-child transmission.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Child Early & Forced Marriage (CEFM):

- An estimated 16% of girls are married off before the age of 18.
- Figures released by the Ministry of Justice in 2012 show that 41,098 underage marriages took place in 2010, an increase of 23% since 2007.
- However, data collection remains inconsistent as many underage marriages are not registered.
- Article 475 of the Penal Code allowed rapists to escape prosecution by marrying their victims even if they were under the legal age of marriage of 18.
- This was unanimously amended by the Moroccan Parliament in 2014 after the suicide of a child bride who was forced to marry her rapist, under Article 475.

Violence Against Women (VAW):

- 62.8% of women in Morocco age 18-64 had been victims of some form of violence during the year preceding the study; 48% have been subjected to psychological abuse.
- 55% of these acts of violence were committed by the victim's husband.
- The violence was reported by the wife in only 3% of such cases.

Current initiatives in Morocco

- ARROW works with the Morocco Family Planning Association to explore the impact of religious fundamentalism as a barrier to achieving universal access to SRHR. Their work is focused on presenting evidence on unsafe abortion practices and the influence of religion on the availability of safe abortion services in Morocco.