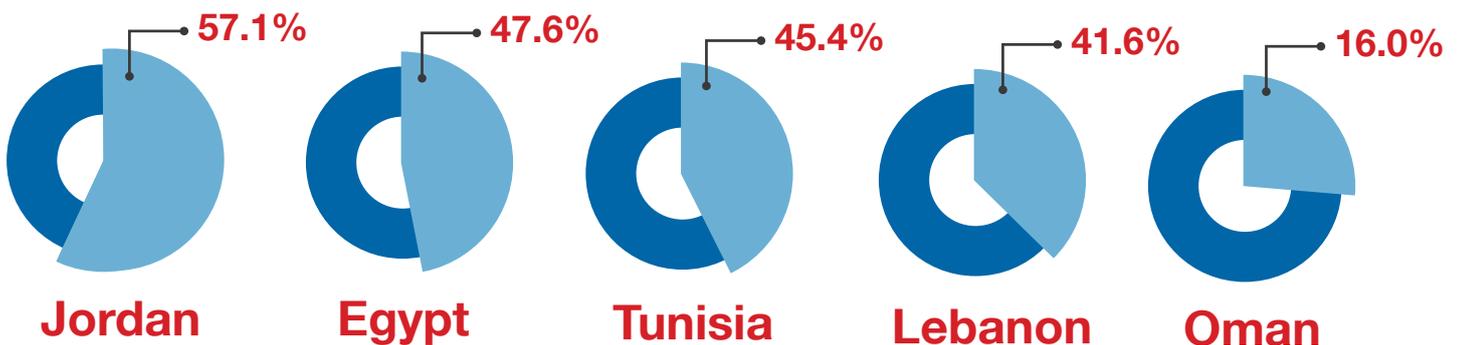


Tobacco in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) - Fact Sheet -

Tobacco use is deadly, killing half of its users. It is responsible for > 8 million deaths each year, and 7 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use, but it also kills around 1.2 million individuals as a result of second-hand smoking¹

WHO 2021 estimates²: Numbers of smokers are continuing to grow in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). The age-standardized current tobacco smoking prevalence among ages 15 years or older in the EMR range from 8.1% in Oman to 35.0% in Jordan and Lebanon.

Prevalence of tobacco use among men:



Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking has spread rapidly in the region over the past three decades, especially among young people: Various factors have contributed to the rise in waterpipe smoking rates, including the introduction of flavored tobacco, the perception of reduced harm and addiction relative to cigarette smoking, and inadequate policies and regulations addressing waterpipe smoking³.



COVID-19 has provided opportunities for advancing tobacco control measures: 17 of 22 countries in the EMR have banned the use of waterpipes (shishas) in public places (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Iran, and Pakistan⁴). Thus, proving that tobacco control policies, in this case smoke-free laws, are feasible and effective, even with strong resistance from the tobacco industry.

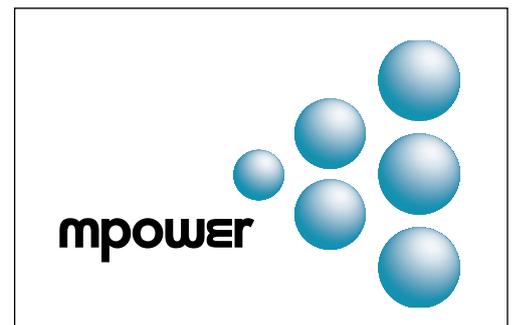
However, this ban has been temporary in most countries in the EMR⁵



What can Governments Do?

The EMR is the WHO Region making the least progress in prevalence reductions. Governments can encourage quitting and reduce smoking rates by endorsing and applying comprehensive national tobacco control laws that comply with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The EMR is also making very slow progress with the WHO MPOWER policies, and Governments should prioritize these **6** policies guidelines⁶:

- **M**onitor tobacco use & prevention policies
- **P**rotect people from tobacco smoke
- **O**ffer help to quit tobacco use
- **W**arn about the dangers of tobacco
- **E**nforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, & sponsorship
- **R**aise taxes on tobacco



Jordan Facts and Figures⁷

Current Tobacco Smokers

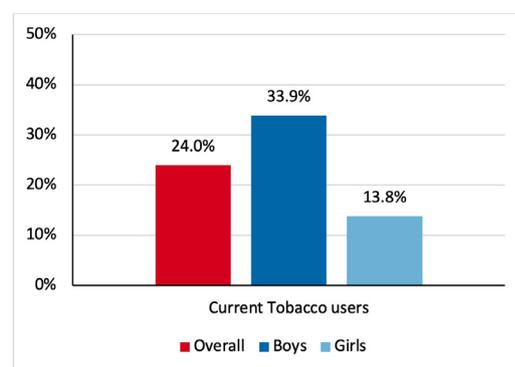
- **41%** (around **1.9** million) of adults aged **18-69** years are smokers in Jordan: **65.3%** of men and **16.4%** of women. Tobacco is the leading risk factor for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in Jordan, causing nearly **17%** of all deaths in **2019**

Secondhand Smoking

- Adults: **78.8%** of adults are exposed to second-hand smoking, **1** in **5** adults are exposed to it at the workplace and **6** in **10** adults (**63%**, **2.8** million) are exposed to it at home
- Students: **60.0%** of students are exposed to tobacco smoke at home and **62.4%** of students are exposed to it inside enclosed public places

Youth Smoking

Percentage of youth aged **13-15** years, enrolled in school, who use any tobacco product. Adapted from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey Jordan 2014- Fact Sheet



Tobacco Control Policies of Jordan⁸:

Jordan became a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control on February **27, 2005**

- **Smoke Free Places:** Smoking is prohibited in hospitals, health centers, schools, cinemas, theaters, public libraries, museums, governmental and non-governmental public premises, means of transportation, arrivals and departures halls at airports, enclosed stadiums, lecture-halls. and any other place deemed by the Minister as public. The law fails to list all indoor public places and workplaces, so smoking is completely unrestricted in some places. Further, the law authorizes the Minister of Health to allow designated smoking areas in public places. The Ministry of Health has allowed a phase-in of the smoking ban in restaurants. The current policy bans indoor smoking in all free public places, including restaurants, all kind of smoking should be realized outdoors.
- **Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship:** Almost all forms of tobacco advertising and promotion are prohibited, including in traditional and electronic media. However, some forms of indirect promotion, such as retailer incentive programs, may escape the ban. Tobacco sponsorship is not restricted by the law, but it is officially restricted by the Ministry of Health.
- **Tobacco Packaging and Labeling:** The law requires health warnings on all tobacco products. Tobacco products carry different percentage of warnings. On cigarette packs, the authorized text-only health warning must occupy **40%** of the front of the pack, placed lengthwise down the long edge of the pack. One of four authorized combined picture and text warnings must occupy **40%** of the back of the pack, placed along the bottom edge. Misleading terms, descriptors, trademarks, and figurative and other signs are prohibited. The warning message on e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products should cover the **30%**.
- **Tobacco Taxation and Prices:** The World Health Organization recommends raising tobacco excise taxes so that they account for at least **75%** of retail prices. Tobacco excise taxes in Jordan are 78%, however equally strong taxation policies are lacking for waterpipe tobacco.

Iraq Facts and Figures⁹

Current Tobacco Smokers

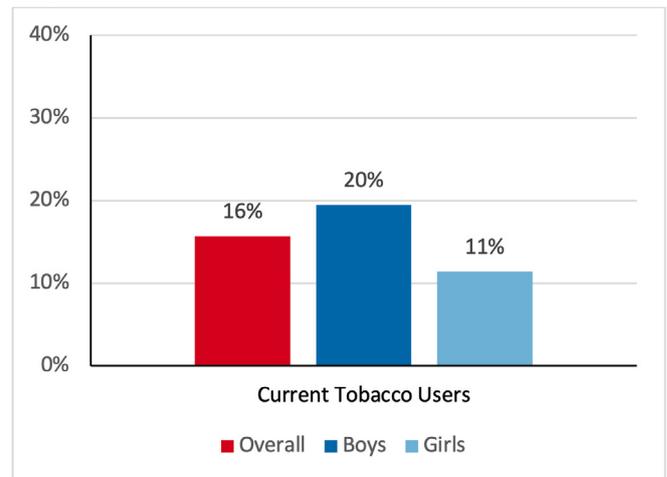
- **20.7%** of adults aged 18 years and older are smokers in Iraq: **38.0%** of men and **1.9%** of women

Secondhand Smoking

- Adults: **52.8%** of adults are exposed to secondhand smoke at home and **56.1%** are exposed to it at the workplace
- Students: **41.1%** of students are exposed to tobacco smoke at home and **52.0%** are exposed to it inside enclosed public places

Youth Smoking

Percentage of youth aged **13-15** years, enrolled in school, who use any tobacco product in Iraq. Adapted from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey Iraq **2019**- Fact Sheet



Tobacco Control Policies of Iraq¹⁰:

Iraq became a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control on June **15, 2008**.

- **Smoke Free Places:** Smoking is prohibited in specified types of public places. As a result, certain types of places that are not on the list - such as indoor stadiums and arenas, bus stations and train stations - may escape the smoking ban either intentionally or unintentionally. Smoking is prohibited on all public transportation.
- **Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship:** Tobacco advertising and promotion is prohibited in print and audiovisual media, including outdoor advertising. Brand marking, brand stretching, and point of sale product display are also prohibited. However, many types of promotional activity are not prohibited. Although sponsorship by the tobacco industry is not prohibited, there are some restrictions on the publicity of such sponsorship.
- **Tobacco Packaging and Labeling:** On cigarette packaging, the implementing standard requires text-only health warnings to cover **40%** of the front surface and combined picture and text warnings to cover **40%** of the back surface. While the law requires combined picture and text warnings to cover at least **30%** of the front and back surfaces of all tobacco product packaging, the details of warnings required on packaging for products other than cigarettes are uncertain. Misleading cigarette packaging and labeling, including terms such as “light” and “low nicotine” and other signs, is prohibited.
- **Tobacco Taxation and Prices:** The World Health Organization recommends raising tobacco excise taxes so that they account for at least **70%** of retail prices. Tobacco excise taxes in Iraq are well below these recommendations.

Palestine Facts and Figures¹¹

Current Tobacco Smokers

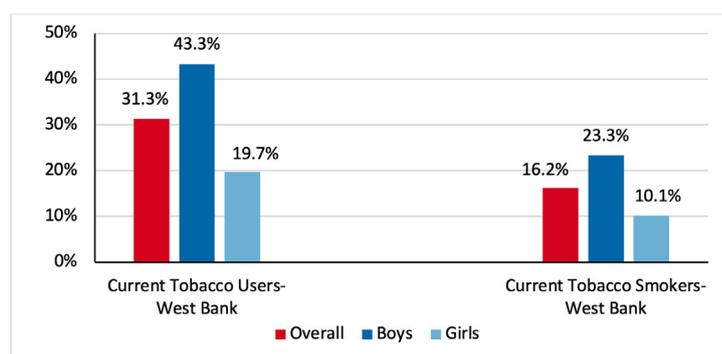
- West Bank: **24.0%** of adults aged > 18 years are smokers: **67.2%** of men and **12.2%** of women
- Gaza Strip: **40.1%** of adults aged > 18 years, are smokers: **33.3%** of men and **0.5%** of women

Secondhand Smoking

- West Bank: **47.7%** of students are exposed to tobacco smoke at home and **57.2%** are exposed to it inside enclosed public places.
- Gaza Strip: **38.1%** of students are exposed to tobacco smoke at home and **46.0%** are exposed to it inside enclosed public places

Youth Smoking

Percentage of youth aged **13-15** years, enrolled in school, who use any tobacco product in the West Bank and Gaza. Adapted from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey -Gaza Strip **2019** and West Bank **2016**- Fact Sheets



Tobacco Control Policies of Palestine¹²

The State of Palestine is not a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

- **Smoke Free Places:** The law enumerates types of indoor public places and indoor workplaces that are smoke free. Although this list is broad, some types of places may be intentionally or inadvertently excluded from the list. Public transportation is smoke free. Some outdoor places - including the yards of schools and nursery schools, and gas stations and gas cylinder points of sale - are smoke free.
- **Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship:** There is a ban on direct advertising and some forms of promotion; however, some types of indirect advertising and promotion escape the ban. There are some restrictions on tobacco sponsorship and the publicity of such sponsorship.
- **Tobacco Packaging and Labeling:** A single text warning must occupy **20%** of the front of all tobacco product packages. Misleading packaging and labeling, including terms such as “low tar,” “light” or “very light” and other signs, is prohibited.
- **Tobacco Taxation and Prices:** The World Health Organization recommends raising tobacco excise taxes so that they account for at least **70 %** of retail prices. Tobacco excise taxes in Palestine meet these recommendations

Egypt Facts and Figures¹³

Current Tobacco Smokers

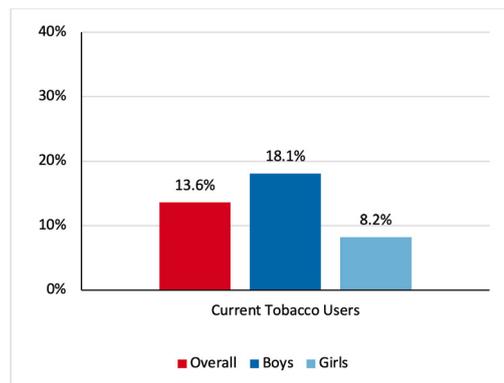
- **22.7%** of adults aged **15-69** years, are smokers in Egypt: **43.4%** of men and **0.5%** of women

Secondhand Smoking

- Adults: **48.9%** of adults are exposed to secondhand smoke at home and **30.3%** are exposed to it at the workplace
- Students: **34.9%** of students are exposed to tobacco smoke at home and **55.2%** are exposed to it inside enclosed public places

Youth Smoking

Percentage of youth aged **13-15** years, enrolled in school, who use any tobacco product in Egypt. Adapted from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey -Egypt **2014** Fact Sheets



Tobacco Control Policies of Egypt¹⁴:

Egypt became a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control on May **26, 2005**.

- **Smoke Free Places:** Smoking is prohibited in the following specified public places: health and educational facilities, governmental venues, sporting and social clubs, youth centers, and public transport. Smoking is permitted in specially designated areas in industrial establishments, tourism related establishments, and electricity production establishments.
- **Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship:** Egypt prohibits many forms of tobacco advertising and promotion, specifically in all means of publicity, including newspapers, magazines, stationary or moving pictures, television, and radio. The law does not specifically address financial contributions and other forms of sponsorship by the tobacco industry.
- **Tobacco Packaging and Labeling:** Health warnings are pictorial and text and must occupy **50%** of the front and back panels of tobacco product packaging. Misleading terms such as “light” and “low tar” are prohibited on tobacco packaging, but other misleading packaging (e.g., colors, numbers and symbols) is not prohibited.
- **Tobacco Taxation and Prices:** The World Health Organization recommends raising tobacco excise taxes so that they account for at least **70%** of retail prices. Tobacco excise taxes in Egypt meet these recommendations.



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references

- ¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>
- ² World Health Organization. WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2021: addressing new and emerging products, 2021.
- ³ Akl EA , Ward KD , Bteddini D , et al . The allure of the waterpipe: a narrative review of factors affecting the epidemic rise in waterpipe smoking among young persons globally. Tob Control 2015;24 Suppl 1:i13–21.
- ⁴ WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2021: addressing new and emerging products. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
- ⁵ <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/upload/assets/bY25u7FkWjmHqhixelRjOD9DM1OqcJ9iFtHGjkkNPxKVigEoR.pdf>
- ⁶ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/mpower>
- ⁷ Data is adapted from the 2019 -Jordan STEP survey and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey Jordan 2014
- ⁸ https://www.tobaccocontrolaws.org/legislation/factsheet/policy_status/jordan
- ⁹ Data is adapted from the 2015 -Iraq STEP survey and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey Iraq 2019
- ¹⁰ https://www.tobaccocontrolaws.org/legislation/factsheet/policy_status/iraq
- ¹¹ Data is adapted from the “Smoking and Tobacco Consumption Survey, 2021” by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the Global Youth Tobacco Survey-West Bank 2016 - and Global Youth Tobacco Survey-Gaza Strip 2019
- ¹² https://www.tobaccocontrolaws.org/legislation/factsheet/policy_status/palestine
- ¹³ Data is adapted from the 2017 -Egypt STEP survey and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey Jordan 2014
- ¹⁴ https://www.tobaccocontrolaws.org/legislation/factsheet/policy_status/egypt

GHD|EMPHNET: Working Together for Better Health

Global Health Development (GHD) is a regional initiative created to support countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and to strengthen their health systems to respond to public health challenges and threats. GHD was initiated to advance the work of the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) by building coordinating mechanisms with Ministries of Health, International Organizations and other institutions to improve population health outcomes. As an implementing arm to EMPHNET, GHD aligns its strategies with national policies and directions. Serving as a collaborative platform, GHD|EMPHNET is dedicated to serve the region by supporting national efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related services.

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