



Catalyzing Innovation

ANNUAL WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY
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PRINDEX: PUTTING GLOBAL TENURE INSECURITY INTO PERSPECTIVE WITH RESULTS FROM 33 COUNTRY SURVEYS IN 2018

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Abstract

The right to live and work securely on one's land is the indispensable foundation of economic growth and personal dignity. Hundreds of millions of people worldwide worry about losing their homes or other land. As a result, they may struggle to plan for the future, make dependable investments, and might stay in their homes even when it's unsafe to so.

We know property insecurity is a problem, but we don't know enough about who is affected, where or how. The lack of global and comparative data has prevented us from better understanding the scale of tenure insecurity and knowing how to improve it.

Prindex seeks to quantify the problem and provide the first ever global assessment of people's perceptions of their property rights and security. Prindex provides the data that allows governments, business, and civil society to understand the problem and take effective, targeted action to fix it.

Key Words:

Data; Land Rights; Perceptions; Prindex; Property Rights



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WHY LAND RIGHTS MATTER:

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WHAT IS THIS REPORT FOR?

With data from more than 33 countries, representing a combined population of over 1.4 billion people, this latest round of data collection presents the clearest, most definitive picture of how secure people around the world feel in their homes and property.

It is the largest data set of its kind, and includes the first high-income country in the Prindex sample, the UK. These findings tell us how secure people feel about their land and property rights in those countries, providing a launchpad for deepening and intensifying processes of policy review and reform around the world.

FINDINGS:

- HOW SECURE DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THEIR LAND AND PROPERTY?

The key finding is that **1 in 4 people interviewed feel insecure about their land and property**. That indicates that **178 million adults** in 33 countries think it is 'likely' or 'very likely' that they will lose their home against their will in the next five years.



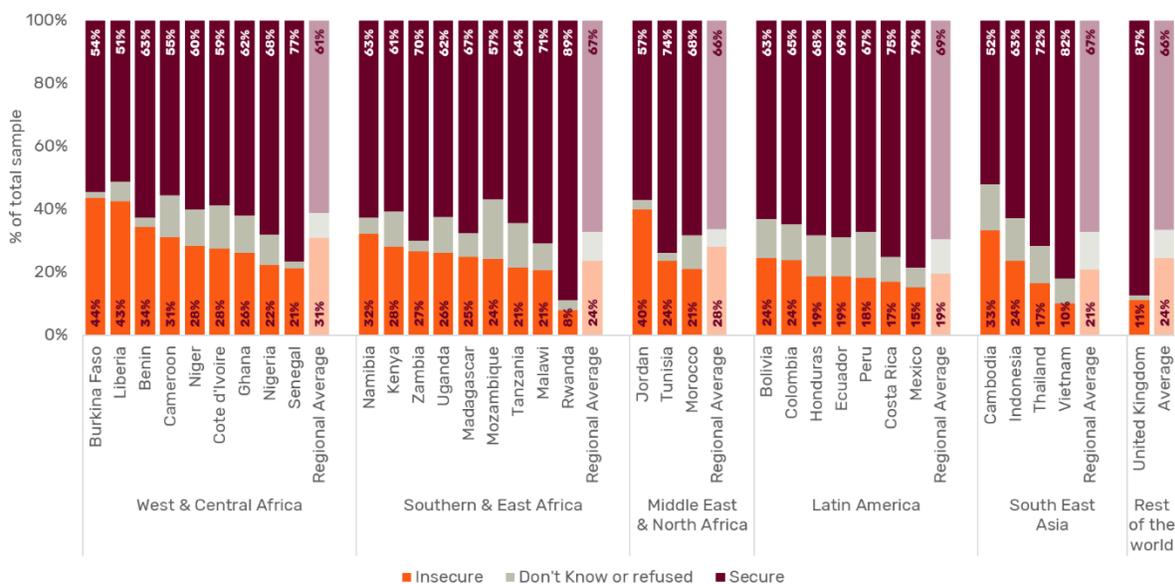
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West and Central Africa have the highest regional average rate of tenure insecurity while Latin America continues to have the lowest regional average rate. People in **Burkina Faso** feel least safe (44% said they felt likely to lose their homes) in the whole sample, closely followed by **Liberia and Jordan** (see Diagram A). **Rwanda presents** the lowest rate of insecurity (8%) in the sample, even lower than the **UK** (11%).

Diagram A: Tenure insecurity and security by country and region



- WHY DO PEOPLE FEEL INSECURE?

Across the majority of countries, there were two main reasons why people felt insecure: renters are concerned that the owner/renter may ask them to leave while family disagreements are a frequent source of worry for landowners and people who stay with permission in their dwellings. Respondents in some countries also gave lack of money or fears that the government might seize their property as common issues.

The latter was particularly dominant in a few countries; linking data on large-scale land acquisitions to tenure insecurity hotspots could tell us whether such acquisitions are an important driver.



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- WHO FEEL INSECURE?

Across the 33 countries, **tenure insecurity tends to be higher among:**

- **Renters than owners:** in nearly all countries, renters are significantly more likely to feel less secure in their homes compared to owners, with the difference in insecurity rates ranging from 10 percentage points in Rwanda to 46 percentage points in Tunisia.
- Individuals located in **urban areas:** in eight of the 33 countries, respondents in urban areas reported tenure insecurity rates that were significantly higher than in rural areas. This is likely due to the fact that those in urban areas are more likely to rent than in rural ones. Our thematic report on the distribution of urban tenure insecurity discusses this in more detail.
- People **without formal documentation** of their property rights: in 16 of the 33 countries, owners and renters who said they have formal documentation reported feeling significantly more secure than those who said they did not. However, in other countries there is not a strong relationship between formal documentation and perceived tenure security.
- People who are **poor, young or live by themselves:** The findings show they are at particular risk of tenure insecurity, especially in the world's rapidly growing urban areas which we explore further in our thematic report on urban land. Younger respondents aged 18-24 are, on average, more insecure than their older (55+) counterparts. We also observed percentage point differences of at least 5% between the tenure insecurity of the poorest 40% and the wealthiest 40% in 14 of the 33 countries. However, the data suggests that wealthier respondents in some countries may also be susceptible to conflict over their valuable land.
- Respondents that have the right to use at least one **additional property:** This could have implications for agricultural productivity in rural areas if the additional property is used for growing crops or livestock. Insecurity over additional properties can also suppress rental markets in urban settings.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is no significant difference between **men's** and **women's overall** perceptions of tenure security at a cross-country level. However, this changes substantially when respondents were asked about the impact of a potential **divorce or spousal death**. Women were, on average, more than 12 percentage points more likely than men to express worry in this instance. Across the countries, women are between two and 35 percentage points more likely to worry in the event of spousal death, and between two and 46 percentage points in the event of divorce. The Prindex thematic report on gender provides more details on these differences.



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A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY:

We measure perceptions for three principal reasons:

First, they influence how people behave economically. If a farmer fears that her land will be seized before the coming harvest, for example, she is less likely to invest in improvements that make her and her community's land more productive for years to come.

Second, perceptions make possible accurate international and local comparisons of tenure security. In some countries, a legal title might be a powerful source of tenure security, whereas in others it might be meaningless if the government can revoke it at a moment's notice. In others still, traditional systems of property rights may provide meaningful security even without legal documentation. Measuring citizen perceptions makes it possible to compare across such diverse systems.

Third, perception measurement of randomly selected individuals within households enables women and young people's voices to be part of the land rights conversation. Surveying perceptions provides the opportunity to ask women and younger adults - not just the household heads most likely to hold official titles - about the formal and informal barriers to their security. Listening to a representative sample of a whole country encourages government, civil society and business to design solutions for everyone.