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Revealed: the most ‘miserable’ countries in the Mideast and Muslim world

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A U.S. think tank has ranked 90 countries according to their levels of “misery”, with several Muslim-majority countries and Middle Eastern countries on the list.

The Cato Institute used data from the Economist Intelligence Unit to rank countries according to unemployment, lending, inflation and economic health.

The most “miserable” Muslim-majority country on the list was Iran, which came in second place after Venezuela in the full ranking of 90 countries.

Meanwhile Egypt, where tourism revenues have dropped 43 percent so far this year due to ongoing unrest, was ranked as the 6th most miserable country, and the second Muslim-majority country on the list.

Explaining why the ranking was drawn up, Steve Hanke, a professor at Johns Hopkins University who calculated the data, said that politicians seek information on the happiness of their citizens.

“The Great Recession grinds on. And as it does, politicians of all stripes ask, usually behind closed doors, ‘Just how miserable are our citizens?’ The chattering classes offer a variety of opinions. As it turns out, there is a straightforward way to measure what is termed the misery index,” he wrote in Globe Asia.

The Palestinian Territories, Turkey and Jordan were the next Muslim-majority countries on the list, placed 12th, 13th, and 22nd respectively. Pakistan, Indonesia and Tunisia also ranked.

Unemployment was cited as the main reason for “misery” in Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco (40th, 46th and 58th respectively), The Cato Institute said Japan was the least “miserable” country in the ranking.