

UAE, Kuwait among nations at 'extreme risk' of water shortages

- Monday, 21 March 2011 6:01 PM



Half of the 12 members of OPEC are seen to be at risk of water shortages, posing threat to global oil supplies

Gulf states the UAE, Oman and Kuwait have been named among the 10 nations with the “most extreme risk” of interruptions to water supply, risk-assessment consultants Maplecroft said.

After Mauritania, which has the highest risk ranking of the 162 countries surveyed, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Israel, Niger, Iraq, Oman, the UAE and Syria are the countries most vulnerable to having an insufficient quantity and quality of water “to enable normal societal and economic functioning,” authors Tom Styles and Fiona Place said in a report Monday.

Half of the 12 members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which supplies 40 percent of the world’s crude oil, are seen to have “extreme water security risk,” and an additional two have “high risk,” the company said.

Any disruption to the water supply in Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran and Qatar could reduce oil production because these nations use water to help extract crude, Maplecroft said. To help conserve water, oil producers in the Middle East also use other methods of recovery, including the injection of gas into crude reservoirs.

One factor in the company’s risk assessment is the volume of water available per capita, which the United Nations considers scarce if less than 1,000 cubic meters. Other factors include projected population increase, reliance on other nations for water, and groundwater supplies.

The countries least at risk of water shortages are Sweden, Guyana, Canada, Russia and Norway, the report said.