

During its second Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2013, Jordan accepted numerous recommendations¹ to improve the human rights situation in the country. In this submission, Alkarama provides information regarding the implementation of these recommendations over the past five years, focusing on those relating to the issues of torture, arbitrary detention, counter-terrorism measures, and restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.²

1 GENERAL CONTEXT AND FRAMEWORK

1 Constitutional and legal framework

Jordan is a constitutional, hereditary monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. The king is the head of state and wields power over the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The Constitution stipulates that the appointments by the king of both the prime minister and cabinet are subject to parliamentary approval.³ The king signs, executes and can veto all laws, and can suspend or dissolve parliament. He also has the authority to approve and dismiss judges.

In March 2016, the authorities launched the Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights,⁴ a 10-year initiative that calls for changes to numerous laws and policies. In this context, the king established the “Royal Committee for Developing the Judiciary and Enhancing the Rule of Law”,⁵ which presented its first report in February 2017. The report included a set of recommendations to improve the judiciary and criminal justice sys-

¹ In the present report, we will refer to the recommendations accepted by Jordan during the second cycle of the UPR listed under paras. 118 and 121 of the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/25/9) while taking into account the views expressed by the state under review as published in the Report of the Human Rights Council on its 25th session (A/HRC/25/2, paras 600-615).

² Reference to relevant recommendations and citations is, where appropriate, provided in the footnotes.

³ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Jordan, Government and society, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jordan/Government-and-society> (accessed on 7 March 2018).

⁴ Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights, <http://petra.gov.jo/library/635974500772435385.pdf> (accessed on 8 March 2018).

⁵ Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: A Strong Move for Justice Reform*, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/14/jordan-strong-move-justice-reform>, 14 March 2017 (accessed on 8 March 2018).

tem. However, no recommendations were issued regarding the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), which is responsible for a wide range of human rights violations.

2 Institutional and human rights infrastructure

Created in 2002, the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) was re-accredited with the A status in November 2015 by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.⁶ Although the NCHR plays an active role in the country, it is still not provided with the adequate means to carry out its mandate.⁷ Key concerns include the lack of a clear, transparent and participatory selection and appointment process of its members as well as the high level of interference from the executive over the NCHR. Furthermore, the NCHR does not enjoy sufficient investigative powers, nor an effective complaint mechanism.

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure the NCHR's independence from the executive, and establish clear procedures to receive and investigate complaints of human rights violations.

⁶ Global alliance of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, *Report and Recommendations of the Session of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA)*, Geneva, 14-18 November 2016, pp. 29-31.

⁷ Recommendation 118.13 from Sierra Leone regarding the resources allocated to the Jordanian National Centre for Human Rights.

2 COOPERATION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

3 Treaty Bodies

Jordan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1975, but has not ratified its two Optional Protocols.

Jordan also ratified the Convention against Torture (UNCAT) in 1991, but has not made declarations under articles 21 and 22. It has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the UNCAT (OPCAT), which allows for visits to places of detention.⁸ Jordan's third periodic report to the Committee against Torture (CAT) was examined in December 2015, but the State Party has failed to submit its follow-up report, which was due on 9 December 2016.⁹

Jordan has not ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) despite pledging to do so during the last UPR.¹⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ratify the OPCAT, ICCPR-OP1, ICCPR-OP2, and ICPPED and make declarations under articles 21 and 22 UNCAT.

4 Cooperation with Special Procedures

⁸ Recommendation 120.13 from Costa Rica with regards to the ratification of the OPCAT was rejected.

⁹ Recommendation 118.29 from Bangladesh regarding cooperation with the Treaty Bodies.

¹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Jordan*, 6 January 2014, A/HRC/25/9, para. 116.

Although Jordan issued a standing invitation to all Special Procedures in 2006, its cooperation with the latter has remained limited since its last UPR. Jordan is yet to set a date for both the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (SRCT) and of the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression (SRFRDX), the latter of which was initially scheduled for 2015, and has been delayed *sine die*.¹¹ Furthermore, the requests of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association (SRFPAA) and of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (SRIJL) to carry out country visits both remain unanswered.

Moreover, Alkarama regrets that the Opinions of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) calling for the release of Messrs Adam Al Natour¹² (Opinion No. 39/2016),¹³ Ghassan Mohammed Salim Duar¹⁴ (Opinion No. 17/2017)¹⁵ and Hatem Al Darawsheh¹⁶ (Opinion No. 46/2017)¹⁷ have not been implemented by the authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Set without delay a date for the visit of the SRCT, SRFRDX, SRIJL and SRFPAA;
Implement all WGAD opinions by releasing all those arbitrarily deprived of their liberty.

¹¹ View Country visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council since 1998, Jordan, <http://spinternet.ohchr.org/Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?Lang=en&country=JOR> (accessed on 7 March 2018).

¹² Alkarama, *Jordan: Student Adam Al Natour Detained Arbitrarily According to United Nations Experts*, 3 November 2016, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-student-adam-al-natour-detained-arbitrarily-according-united-nations-experts> (accessed on 15 March 2018).

¹³ Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 39/2016 (Jordan), adopted on 26 August 2016.

¹⁴ Alkarama, *Jordan: Civil Engineer Ghassan Duar Detained Arbitrarily According to UN Experts*, 11 July 2017, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-civil-engineer-ghassan-duar-detained-arbitrarily-according-un-experts> (accessed on 15 March 2018).

¹⁵ Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 17/2017 (Jordan), adopted on 21 April 2017.

¹⁶ Alkarama, *Jordan: UN calls for release of arbitrarily detained high school student while reiterating demand for abolition of State Security Court*, 4 October 2017, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-un-calls-release-arbitrarily-detained-high-school-student-while-reiterating-demand> (accessed on 15 March 2018).

¹⁷ Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 46/2017 (Jordan), adopted on 22 August 2017.

3 RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON

5 Fundamental legal safeguards related to the deprivation of liberty

Under Jordanian law, anyone who is arrested must be brought before a judicial authority within 24 hours.¹⁸ In practice, the time limit for detaining suspects before the involvement of the Public Prosecutor is frequently exceeded, in some cases by several months. There is no legal provision to protect the right to *habeas corpus*.

The Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) does not explicitly mention the right of arrestees to contact their family.¹⁹ Furthermore, the CCP does not guarantee the right of suspects to contact their lawyer from the moment of their arrest, but instead only once they are brought before the prosecutor. It also allows for prosecutors to interrogate detainees without the presence of a lawyer "in case of urgency".²⁰ The prosecutor can order the duration of custody to be extended to 15 days, which can be renewed up to a period of six months for serious criminal offences.²¹

Furthermore, the Crime Prevention Law grants wide powers to local governors to "detain an individual without charge, and without being brought before a judicial authority for an indeterminate period if he or she is about to commit a crime or represents a threat to others".²² This provision effectively deprives detainees of procedural guarantees contained in the CCP. Although detainees can challenge their detention before the Administrative Court within 60 days, the procedure is costly and highly restricted.²³ During

¹⁸ Articles 100 and 112 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

¹⁹ According to article 66 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the prosecutor may decide to prohibit the suspect from "contacting others", apart from his lawyer, for a renewable period of ten days, i.e. indefinitely.

²⁰ Article 64 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

²¹ Article 114 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

²² Article 3 of the Crime Prevention Law No. 7 of 1954.

²³ Human Rights Watch, *Guests of the Governor, Administrative Detention Undermines the Rule of Law in Jordan*, 26

its last UPR, Jordan accepted the recommendation to “limit the use and duration of administrative detention”.²⁴ However, the latest figures of the NCHR indicate that this practice has not diminished: in 2015, 19,860 individuals were administratively detained, some for longer than a year.²⁵

6 The practice of torture and ill-treatment

3.1.1 Legal framework

Torture is defined and criminalised under article 208 of the Penal Code (PC), which was amended in 2014 to remove the mention of “illegal torture”. However, the penalties applicable range from six months to three years of imprisonment. These penalties – normally attached to misdemeanours – do not reflect the gravity of the crime.

Acts of torture are subject to statutes of limitations, and the legislation fails to make clear that the offence cannot be subject to amnesty or pardon. In addition, Jordanian law does not explicitly mention that no exceptional circumstances of any kind – such as a state of war, the threat of war, or any other state of emergency – can be invoked to justify the use of torture.

The CCP invalidates evidence or proof obtained by “means of physical or moral coercion” but does not refer to torture *per se*.²⁶ Such discrepancies between the UNCAT and domestic legislation were highlighted by the CAT following Jordan’s review in 2015.²⁷

May 2009, https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/05/26/guests-governor/administrative-detention-undermines-rule-law-jordan#_ftn103 (accessed 6 March 2018).

²⁴ Recommendation 1178.60 from France was not implemented.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: A Strong Move for Justice Reform*, 14 March 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/14/jordan-strong-move-justice-reform>, (accessed on 23 February 2018). However, the 2016 annual report is not available on NCHR’s website.

²⁶ Article 159 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

²⁷ CAT, Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Jordan, 29 January 2016, CAT/C/JOR/CO/3, para 10.

3.1.2 *Climate of impunity*

The main perpetrators of acts of torture and ill-treatment are officials from the GID as well as members of the Public Security Directorate (PSD). Torture and mistreatment occur frequently in police stations and systematically in facilities run by the GID, especially against individuals suspected of crimes of terrorism.

Acts of torture remain unpunished due to both a lack of efficient complaint mechanisms and the absence of prosecution of perpetrators. On rare occasions, cases of torture involving members of the PSD and the GID are brought before special courts, namely the Police Court and the GID military courts. These two bodies lack the necessary independence as they fall under the same authority as perpetrators of torture.²⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure that the definition of torture is in full compliance with the UNCAT;

Establish an effective mechanism to investigate acts of torture and ensure perpetrators are duly tried before civil courts and punished in a manner commensurate with the gravity of the crime;

Abolish the practice of administrative detention by amending the Crimes Prevention Law and ensure that all detainees are afforded all fundamental safeguards from the moment of their arrest.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 33.

4 HUMAN RIGHTS AND COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES

Jordan's Anti-Terrorism Law No. 55 of 2006 contains a broad definition of terrorism that allows the authorities to prosecute before the State Security Court (SSC) anyone who exercises his/her fundamental rights to freedom of expression or peaceful assembly.

In 2014, amendments were made to the law that further broadened its scope and criminalised nonviolent acts such as “disturbing the public order” or “posing an economic risk”.²⁹ The amendments add common crimes defined in the Penal Code under the definition of terrorism, such as “disturbing relations with a foreign country”.³⁰

Human rights violations committed under the pretext of counter-terrorism measures have been perpetrated primarily by the GID – whose director is appointed by the king and reports to the prime minister – and by the SSC.³¹

Although the GID is not a law enforcement agency, in practice it exercises powers of arrest and detains individuals at its headquarters. GID officers in civilian clothing usually carry out arrests without any warrant. Suspects are then taken to the GID headquarters where they are detained and denied the right to contact their family or lawyer.

The GID can detain a suspect for seven days before his/her first presentation before the SSC's General Prosecutor³² – a military officer who sits at the GID headquarters, meaning that both the GID and the General Prosecutor fall under the same administrative authority. The prosecutor may then order a detention of 15 days, renewable for the “purpose of the investigation”, which should not exceed two months.³³ Although the power of investigation is normally vested with the prosecutor once charges are laid, the latter systematically delegates this responsibility to GID officers, who then continue to

²⁹ Article 2 of the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 55 of 2006 as amended.

³⁰ Article 3(b) of the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 55 of 2006 as amended.

³¹ Alkarama has received numerous testimonies of victims that illustrate this dynamic between the GID and the State Security Court. See for example: Alkarama, *Jordan: Civil Engineer Ghassan Duar Detained Arbitrarily According to UN Experts*, 11 July 2017, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-civil-engineer-ghassan-duar-detained-arbitrarily-according-un-experts> (accessed on 20 March 2018); Alkarama, *Jordan: A 19-Year-Old Tortured to Confess his “Support to the Islamic State”*, 23 September 2016, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-19-year-old-tortured-confess-his-support-islamic-state> (accessed on 20 March 2018); Alkarama, *Jordan: Human Rights Activist Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison After Unfair Trial Before State Security Court*, 5 October 2015, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-human-rights-activist-sentenced-10-years-prison-after-unfair-trial-state-security> (accessed on 20 March 2018).

³² Article 7(b)(1) of the State Security Court Law No. 17 of 1959.

³³ Article 7 of the State Security Court Law No. 17 of 1959.

detain suspects until they are either transferred to another prison or released. In practice, during this two-month period, individuals are detained *incommunicado* by the GID,³⁴ and, in some cases, this period even lasts for up to four months.³⁵ During this time, torture is used systematically as a means to extract confessions, which are used by the SSC General Prosecutor both to charge the suspect and as incriminating evidence during trials before the SSC.

Among the methods of torture employed by the GID are beatings on the body including the soles of the feet ("falaqa"), stress positions, sleep and food deprivation, injections that cause states of extreme anxiety, humiliation, threats of rape against the victim and family members, and electric shocks. The GID systematically places detainees in solitary confinement for prolonged periods of time.

Cases of terrorism fall under the SSC's jurisdiction, which functions in close collaboration with the GID. The SSC cannot be considered as competent, independent and impartial since it is composed of two military judges and one civilian judge who are appointed by the prime minister and may be removed or replaced at any time.

Trials before this jurisdiction are severely flawed: suspects are systematically denied contact with their counsel during the investigation stage, and lawyers cannot access their clients' judicial files. It is only after they are formally charged or during the first trial hearing that defendants can access their lawyers. In addition, as cases documented by Alkarama show,³⁶ the judge routinely accepts confessions extracted under torture even when the victim or his/her lawyer affirms that self-incriminating statements were made under duress. Lastly, trials are public but can be held in secret if it is deemed to be in the "public interest".³⁷

Despite repeated recommendations made by the Human Rights Committee, the CAT and the WGAD, the Jordanian authorities have not abolished the SSC.

³⁴ See for example: Alkarama, *Jordan: Pharmacist Reappears Two Months after Abduction by Intelligence*, 19 July 2017, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-pharmacist-reappears-two-months-after-abduction-intelligence> (accessed on 16 August 2017).

³⁵ See for example: Alkarama, *Jordan: University Student Released After 4 Months of Disappearance*, 20 October 2016, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-university-student-released-after-4-months-disappearance> (accessed on 10 August 2017).

³⁶ See for example the case of Adam Al Natour, a Polish and Jordanian student who was sentenced to four years of imprisonment by the SSC after a flawed trial on the sole basis of the statements he signed under duress. Alkarama, *Jordan: Student Adam Al Natour Detained Arbitrarily According to United Nations Experts*, 3 November 2016, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-student-adam-al-natour-detained-arbitrarily-according-united-nations-experts> (accessed on 8 March 2018).

³⁷ Article 13 of the State Security Court Law No. 17 of 1959.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Abolish the practice of administrative detention by amending the Crimes Prevention Law;

Bring the Anti-Terrorism Law into conformity with international human rights standards and abolish the SSC;

Place the GID under civilian authority and oversight.

5 RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

7 Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression in Jordan is restricted by a number of pieces of legislation including the PC, the Press Law, the Cybercrime Law and the Anti-Terrorism Law.

Since 2011-2012, the authorities – through the GID and SSC – have arrested, prosecuted and, in some cases, tortured critics and activists under terrorism charges, including disturbing “the public order” or “relations with a foreign country” and sentenced them to prison terms.³⁸ Individuals have also been brought before the SSC on the basis of article 149 PC, which criminalises acts that would “encourage the contestation of the political system” or “aim at changing the fundamental structure of society”, and punishes these

³⁸ See for example the case of Professor Amjad Qourshah, who was detained under this charge for three months in 2016 pending investigations by the GID, after posting a video on Youtube in which he criticised the participation of Jordan in the international coalition against the Islamic State as being part of the US agenda, which, in his opinion, was forcing Arab States to fight a war that is not theirs. Alkarama, *Jordan: Professor Amjad Qourshah Arbitrarily Detained for Comments on Jordan's Participation to the International Coalition Against the IS*, 5 February 2018, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-professor-amjad-qourshah-arbitrarily-detained-comments-jordans-participation> (accessed on 23 February 2018).

acts with imprisonment.³⁹ Such terrorism charges are often coupled with crimes of *lèse-majesté*, including “insult to the king”, which is punishable by one to three years of imprisonment under article 195 PC.

With regards to freedom of the press, restrictions are such that in a 2016 survey, 93.6% of journalists affirmed practising self-censorship.⁴⁰ Censorship is common and journalists are aware of red lines they must not cross, including issues related to the royal family or state security. Under the Press Law,⁴¹ only journalists registered with the Jordanian Press Association (JPA) are allowed to operate⁴² and those critical of the government have been routinely excluded from JPA membership.⁴³ The law also prohibits publications which are deemed “inconsistent with the principles of freedom, national obligation, human rights and Arab and Islamic values”.⁴⁴

In 2012, the law was amended to impose restrictions on electronic publications, and to require new websites to obtain licences from the Media Commission (MC),⁴⁵ which falls under the supervision of the Council of Ministers. The Commission has the authority to order the blocking – without a court order – of unlicensed websites and electronic publications that “violate Jordanian laws”.

This system has been used to curtail online freedom of information. In fact, it is on this basis that the MC, particularly since 2013, has issued hundreds of gag orders to block foreign and domestic websites, arguing that they had not obtained a licence.⁴⁶ In 2016, the MC prohibited any independent reporting of news about the king or the royal family.⁴⁷

Lastly, the 2010 Cybercrime Law⁴⁸ further restricts the right to freedom of speech of not only media professionals but also ordinary citizens. In 2015, a new provision was included

³⁹ See for example the case of Eyad Qunaibi who was detained for a year for “incitement against the political regime” because he posted an article criticising Jordan’s ties with Israel. Alkarama, *Jordan: Release of Eyad Qunaibi After One Year in Detention for a Facebook Post*, 18 May 2016, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-release-eyad-qunaibi-after-one-year-detention-facebook-post> (accessed on 19 March 2018).

⁴⁰ Mohammad Ghazal, *80 per cent of journalists consider press freedoms ‘low to medium’ — report*, Jordan Times, 25 April 2017, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/80-cent-journalists-consider-press-freedoms-low-medium%E2%80%99-%E2%80%94-report> (accessed on 15 March 2018).

⁴¹ Press and Publications Law No. 8 of 1998.

⁴² Articles 2 and 10 of the Press and Publication Law No. 8 of 1998.

⁴³ On the grounds that they have not reported “within the law and the framework of protecting public freedoms, rights and obligations and respecting the privacy of others” under article 4 of the Press and Publication Law. Freedom House, *Jordan: Freedom of the press 2016*, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/jordan> (accessed on 8 March 2018).

⁴⁴ Article 5 of the Press and Publication Law.

⁴⁵ Article 49 of the Press and Publication Law as amended.

⁴⁶ Reporters Without Borders, *Jordan blocks access to nine more news websites*, 9 July 2014, <https://rsf.org/en/news/jordan-blocks-access-nine-more-news-websites> (accessed on 19 March 2018).

⁴⁷ Middle East Eye, *Amman bans independent coverage of Jordan’s royal family*, 2 September 2016, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-bans-media-publishing-about-royal-family-531467385> (accessed on 1 September 2016).

⁴⁸ Information Systems Crimes Law No. 30 of 2010.

punishing online defamation with a fine as well as a prison sentence of at least three months,⁴⁹ and superseding the Press Law, as confirmed in 2015 by the Law Interpretation Bureau.⁵⁰ As a result, journalists face harsher penalties for online publications than printed media, since they cannot be imprisoned if they violate the Press Law. Moreover, journalists may be prosecuted under the Cybercrime Law for printed articles appearing online.⁵¹ It is under this provision that a journalist was detained for one month in June 2017 for having criticised corruption within the Jordanian government on Facebook.⁵²

8 Freedom of peaceful assembly and association

The Constitution only protects the freedom of assembly of Jordanian citizens, which is particularly concerning in a country that hosts a high number of refugees.

Since 2011, Jordanians no longer need government permission to hold public meetings or demonstrations, instead they must submit a simple notification to the governor.⁵³ However, the Crime Prevention and Anti-Terrorism Laws have been invoked to arrest and prosecute peaceful demonstrators.⁵⁴ Another concerning trend is the practice of arresting and forcing individuals to sign pledges not to engage in demonstrations.⁵⁵

In addition, freedom of association remains limited in the country. In March 2016, the Social Development Ministry proposed some amendments⁵⁶ to the already restrictive 2009

⁴⁹ Article 11 of the of the Cybercrime Law No. 27 of 2015.

⁵⁰ International Press Institute, *Jordan's Online Media Freedom at Stake*, 2015, p.14.

⁵¹ Daoud Kuttab, *Losing the Arab Spring accomplishments?*, Jordan Times, 9 March 2016, <http://www.jordantimes.com/opinion/daoud-kuttab/losing-post-arab-spring-accomplishments> (accessed 16 March 2018).

⁵² See the case of Hussam Al Abdallat: Alkarama, *Jordan: Journalist Arbitrarily Detained for Criticising Corruption Released on Bail but Charges Still Pending*, 5 July 2017, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-journalist-arbitrarily-detained-criticising-corruption-released-bail-charges-still> (accessed on 19 March 2018).

⁵³ Article 4 of the Public Assemblies Law No. 5 of 2011.

⁵⁴ See for example the cases of Thabet Assaf and Bassem Al Rawabedah: Alkarama, *Jordan: Release of 2 Activists Charged with "Insulting the King" for Participating in Peaceful Demonstration against Charlie Hebdo's Cartoon*, 5 June 2015, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-release-2-activists-charged-insulting-king-participating-peaceful-demonstration> (accessed on 19 March 2018). See also: UN Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Jordan*, 4 December 2017, CCPR/C/JOR/CO/5, para. 32.

⁵⁵ This is the case of Mahdi Suleiman, who was arrested in front of the Israeli Embassy in Amman while peacefully protesting against the detention of his son in Israel. The governor of the Amman province told him that he would be released if he signed a statement in which he would commit to never take part in any demonstration or carry any sign with the picture of his son in public. See: Alkarama, *Jordan: 57-year-old Mahdi Suleiman forced to forfeit his right to assembly after protesting against the detention of his son*, 4 April 2016, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/jordan-57-year-old-mahdi-suleiman-forced-forfeit-his-right-assembly-after-protesting> (accessed on 7 March 2018).

⁵⁶ The draft law is available in Arabic here: <http://www.mosd.gov.jo/Images/files/Societies%20.pdf> (accessed on 6 March 2018).

Law on Societies.⁵⁷ These new provisions would significantly constrain the ability of civil society organisations in Jordan to form and operate, granting the government broad discretion to either prohibit the establishment of organisations whose objectives violate “national security, public safety, public order, public morals, or the rights and freedoms of others”, or to dissolve any group if the government deems its activities to violate these criteria in practice.⁵⁸ Since dissenting voices are systematically prosecuted under the pretext of having “disrupted the public order”, such provisions could open the door to banning associations that the authorities see as too critical. As of March 2018, the amendments have not been approved.⁵⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Repeal provisions of the Press Law, Cybercrime Law, the Anti-Terrorism Law and the PC to ensure that dissenting voices, including journalists, are not prosecuted for having expressed critical views;

Cease the persecution of journalists, political opponents, critical voices and peaceful demonstrators;

Amend the Law on Societies to lift current restrictions on freedom of association.

⁵⁷ Law on Societies No. 51 of 2008 as amended by Law No. 22 of 2009.

⁵⁸ International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, *Civic Freedom Monitor: Jordan*, 1 October 2017 <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/jordan.html> (accessed on 6 March 2018).

⁵⁹ Social Development Ministry, *قوانين و تعديلاته*, http://www.mosd.gov.jo/?option=com_content&view=article&id=731&catid=13:13 (accessed on 6 March 2018).