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Introduction

I

Jordan is going through difficult and delicate circumstances, the like of which it has perhaps not witnessed since the founding of the State nearly a century ago. It is only natural that these unprecedented circumstances should affect the national mood and the state of human rights in the country in 2018, as was the case in previous years.

A state of anxiety and frustration prevails over Jordanian society, amid an atmosphere of expectation and waiting for something to come, most of which runs contrary to what citizens hope and aspire to, and which may dash all their hopes and aspirations. The difficult economic conditions and the state of economic stagnation cast their shadow over the lives of citizens. The Income Tax Law No. (38) of 2018 was not the only burden facing people; rather, the whole picture is cumulative. The general conditions in the country are difficult, and they have manifested themselves through a series of harsh measures taken by successive governments, as reflected in the continuous increase in prices, the wave of exorbitant price hikes, the rising cost of living, and the erosion of individual sources of income as a result of the continuous rise in fees and taxes and the decline in the performance of most productive sectors.

Unemployment rates also remained high; the National Employment Strategy did not achieve most of its objectives; and the policy of attracting foreign investment did not succeed either—indeed, there has been a flight of local capital abroad. Accompanying this economic situation, which is squeezing citizens' pockets, are other internal challenges, including rampant corruption, the worsening drug problem, and the humanitarian and social repercussions of the war on terrorism.

The political events and the deteriorating conditions in the region, particularly the divisions in Arab States and the expansionist policies of regional States at the expense of Arab interests, also had an impact on the situation in the country and on the public mood. Likewise, the international schemes and projects aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause, destroying the Arab order and controlling its resources and strategic location had their effect in heightening feelings of anxiety and fear of what lies ahead, while foreign interventions multiplied the fears and burdens borne by Jordanian citizens.

It is only natural that these circumstances, both internal and external, should affect the national mood and leave their mark on the reality of human rights in the Kingdom. Citizens' reactions to them varied, ranging from mere complaint and feelings of anxiety and frustration to criticism, protests and the popular movement (Hirak), which was concentrated in the capital area and around the Fourth Circle (the seat of the Prime Ministry).

The popular movement moved from the street to social media, whose space witnessed comments, writings and other forms of expression both worthless and worthwhile, some of which were not free from a form of hate speech and, at times, from infringement upon the rights and reputation of others. In certain cases, politicians and public figures who faced criticism and scathing comments affecting their character and reputation resorted to the courts, in addition to working to amend legislation in order to toughen penalties against such critics.

The most prominent targets of such criticism were public figures in decision-making positions. Accusations of corruption, laxity in combating it, illicit enrichment, cronyism, and failure to address the two issues of poverty and unemployment were the most prominent matters on which the criticism focused.

Meanwhile, these protests and criticisms—and the accompanying petitions and letters addressed to the Head of State, bearing the signatures of public figures, ministers, senior retired officers and tribesmen,

calling for radical reform and a change of approach, in addition to protesting acts of corruption, whether petty or grand, and what they described as the seizure of land by devious means by influential persons—were met with a mixture of security, judicial and legislative measures.

These measures came against the backdrop of a strict security policy towards the continuation of peaceful protest and criticism, and towards what is known as political Islam and extremism, relying markedly on the security dimension, which led to violations of individuals' rights by law enforcement agencies, committed in the absence of oversight and control by the civilian political administration over these agencies. This security dominance was accompanied by the absence of an effective role by successive governments in finding radical solutions to these problems, as the security institutions and agencies were entrusted with handling sensitive files having a wide impact on human rights, particularly the two phenomena of terrorism and drugs, in the near-total absence of effective government policies towards these major problems. Law enforcement agencies thus bore the burden of dealing with the consequences of the absence of effective government strategies and policies.

II

This routine was interrupted by terrorist acts in the cities of Al-Karak and Al-Salt, respectively, which claimed the lives of security personnel and civilians, as well as some of those who carried out these operations. Thereafter, the scathing criticism of officials in particular, at various levels, widened throughout the year.

These terrorist operations were accompanied by some strict security policies, alongside the continued enlistment of Jordanian youth in banned organizations that had carried out terrorist acts or planned others, which peaked in 2018.

Hundreds were detained at the detention center of the General Intelligence Department; the proportion of detainees from among popular movement activists and members of political parties rose; cases accumulated in the corridors of the courts; and harsh sentences were handed down against hundreds of persons, including juveniles and young people still enrolled in university; and the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers became overcrowded with detainees. This left its mark on society, on the performance of the security agencies, and on the perception of the judiciary. The major corruption case known as the "counterfeit cigarettes case", at the end of 2018, came to confirm popular conviction and concern over the spread of corruption and the weakness of oversight bodies, or perhaps their obstruction by influential persons and colluding officials.

This ambiguous government performance was coupled with another form of institutional sluggishness, namely the weakness of accountability on the part of the primary oversight authority, Parliament, whose members complain of the executive authority's domination over this authority. Consequently, the security establishment emerged as the only effective actor in confronting security and political challenges, including dealing with scathing criticism and citizens' protests.

In the course of this, these agencies lost a number of their personnel, killed or wounded at the hands of criminal elements and wanted persons while pursuing them and working to dismantle and deal with terrorist cells. The Center condemned these heinous crimes.

In the course of performing these duties and tasks, these agencies committed various violations, most notably prolonged periods of detention; failure to comply with fair trial standards and guarantees for persons deprived of liberty; and abuse of power, particularly in the application of unlawful administrative detention measures, whether by decision of the administrative governor on his own conviction or at the prior request of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) upon the recommendation of the heads of its departments and branches. Travel bans were issued by the PSD (Anti-Narcotics Department) against accused persons or persons under surveillance in drug cases. An expansion was

noted in the use of the charge of resisting public security personnel in many cases without any material basis. Complaints increased and protests recurred regarding such practices by members of the Public Security and the Gendarmerie, to a degree that raised concern among the human rights committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The number of complaints received by the Center regarding such arbitrary and inhuman practices increased, especially during security raids, in particular cruel and inhuman treatment (and even torture), as a number of persons alleged that their relatives had been subjected to torture in initial detention centers, in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, and at the Anti-Narcotics Department and the Criminal Investigation Department. The Center was able to document a limited number of cases in which the commission of the crime of torture was established in 2018.

The conditions at Al-Muwaqqar 2 Correctional and Rehabilitation Center are the most prominent example of such harsh conditions. One civil society organization announced that torture is practiced systematically by the security agencies. The National Center had a position on this matter, which it announced at the time; however, it affirms on this occasion the existence of widespread practice of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment against persons deprived of liberty, detainees and prisoners, especially against those described as members of organizations, at Al-Muwaqqar 2 Correctional and Rehabilitation Center.

There is no doubt that such an expansive role of the Public Security Directorate, backed by slogans that are not always justified, such as "restoring the prestige of the State", "applying the rule of law", "combating crime", "protecting the security of society" and "maintaining the morale of security personnel", which have been repeated since early 2018, prompted those concerned, especially lawyers and Members of Parliament, to raise their voices against what some of them described as a return of the "martial-law mentality", an imbalance in the equation between security and freedom, and doubts about the existence of a State of institutions in Jordan, and to draw attention to the necessity of civilian oversight and control over the security agencies.

The public relations approach adopted by the Public Security Directorate did not avail in this regard, since violations of citizens' rights and of the legal controls and constitutional guarantees established to protect those rights cannot be overlooked under any pretext, such as ensuring security and protecting public order, combating terrorism, and restoring the prestige of the State and the rule of law. Human rights must be respected in the context of enforcing the law, combating crime and imposing order; it is therefore unacceptable to justify such violations by invoking the very slogans in the context of which the violation of human rights is prohibited.

These practices by law enforcement agencies and the attempt to restrict freedom of opinion and expression, whether directly or indirectly—such as fencing off the public places where popular movement activists and protesters habitually gathered near the Kalouti Mosque in the Al-Rabiah area and opposite the Prime Ministry building at the Fourth Circle; pouring hot asphalt in the square opposite the Jordan Hospital between the Abdali Bridge and the Fourth Circle at one stage (without it being known which party did so); or security departments requesting popular movement activists not to participate in the popular protests and the weekly demonstrations held every Thursday near the Fourth Circle, and other soft means—all betray officials' intolerance of criticism, peaceful protest and manifestations of opposition.

The Center affirms what was stated in its statement of 18 December 2018 regarding the existence of practices aimed at containing the active opposition. It cannot be denied that these practices constitute a breach of the State's responsibility to protect freedom of opinion and expression and the right to peaceful assembly, at a time when political officials continually proclaim their respect for these rights!

It is noted that **law enforcement agencies apply measures restricting the right to peaceful assembly and protest, while the Prime Minister and ministers welcome peaceful protests and the popular movement.**

There are other violations concerning many rights, whether at the level of legislation, policies or practices (the latter in particular), especially in the criminal characterization in cases concerning persons charged with opposing the system of government or inciting opposition to it, and with lèse-majesté. The reader will find an accurate description of such violations throughout the report.

III

On another level, the executive agencies were active in attempts to present a reassuring picture of the general situation and of the opportunities available to citizens in the future. Through its follow-up, the Center observed that official agencies and institutions sought to raise the level of public services provided to citizens and attempted to invigorate the bureaucratic apparatus and activate government oversight, while the authorities' intolerance of popular oversight persisted.

The Royal Letter addressed by His Majesty King Abdullah II to H.E. Dr. Omar Al-Razzaz upon designating him to form the Government on 5 June 2018 set out the substance of the Royal vision, emphasizing the economic and service aspects and the performance of the government apparatus, and the need to overcome bureaucratic complexities.

However, achievement in this field was modest, frequently preceded by setbacks and stumbles; failures often overshadowed this achievement and perhaps cancelled it out in many cases. No fundamental change occurred in the structure or approach of the State's public administration, particularly given the rarity of adopting the principle of competence and merit in appointments to public office, or of applying the concepts of accountability by institutions so as to activate the principle of participation in decision-making that concerns citizens and to respect institutionalism. Indeed, the role of administrative officials grew at the expense of the authority and duties of the Council of Ministers and the Government, as occurred in addressing unemployment and poverty pockets, and in the official handling of unemployed persons coming from the governorates in the south and north. The situation of the municipalities and their suffering from weak resources and recurrent cases of corruption in a number of them, the faltering of decentralization from the very first moment of its adoption, the weak role of political parties and the attempt to co-opt some of them despite the frequent official statements about the important role of parties, are among the most prominent examples of this!

While the protection of human rights depends on the institutions that give these rights their form and course, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) observed that public institutions have been largely emptied of their substance. At the same time, a number of civil society organizations, which suffer from deficient legislation and restrictive official practices, rarely performed their role in defending human rights and raising awareness as required, as their activities remained governed either by weak sources of self-funding or by the requirements and conditions of foreign funding, to the extent that the activities of some of these organizations took the form of an investment in human rights issues rather than advocacy and action to protect these rights. As for the official media, despite some positive developments in this field, it was noted that its performance was characterized to a large extent by a lack of vision and professionalism, and above all by weak content and a lack of neutrality and independence on more than one occasion, which led to a revival of the role of social media, although this role generally remained inadequate in addressing human rights violations in their broader political and social contexts.

The impact of this weakness that has afflicted institutionalism cannot be excluded in the emergence of the phenomenon of citizens encroaching upon public funds, as is happening in incidents of unlawful

tampering with water and electricity lines, the widespread practice of wasta (favoritism) and nepotism, and even public servants sometimes soliciting bribes.

Although a number of positive steps were taken by the current Government in this regard, when the Council of Ministers adopted a code of conduct for the Government under which ministers commit to a high level of integrity and transparency, protection of public funds and avoidance of conflicts of interest, and a number of corruption cases, most of them petty corruption, were referred to the judiciary, achievement remained limited.

The executive authority led consultations with Parliament, professional associations and civil society on the new Income Tax Law after withdrawing the original text; however, the outcomes of these consultations, steps and initiatives did not rise to the level of the Government's recovery of the general mandate (al-wilaya al-amma) provided for in Article 45 of the Constitution. Nor did Parliament perform its role in effectively exercising legislative oversight and in halting many of the negative practices and phenomena of government institutions that have affected citizens' rights, in ensuring civilian control over the security agencies, in combating corruption, and in applying the concepts of transparency and good governance continually proclaimed by officials—which has had a negative impact on citizens' rights and freedoms.

The plain truth is that human rights in Jordan are still awaiting a real take-off. Progress in implementing recommendations, whether those issued by the National Center for Human Rights, those contained in the Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights, the reports of the Human Rights Council through the Universal Periodic Review, or the recommendations of the treaty bodies, is still slow. The gap has persisted between political discourse and the actual practice of official institutions regarding human rights violations and the breach of obligations set forth in the Constitution and in the international conventions to which Jordan acceded long ago. Security considerations and/or cultural specificity have repeatedly been invoked, in some cases, as a justification for avoiding the fulfillment of human rights obligations.

These considerations emerge clearly when addressing officials regarding women's rights; the need to respect the political and civil freedoms of Jordanians; the repeated assaults on children and what childhood in Jordan is generally exposed to in terms of school dropout, child labor and poor health care for children, especially in marginalized areas; and the high rate of assaults and deaths among this group.

However, the phenomenon that warrants attention is the existence of violations of a continuous nature for some time, which the "violation management" approach essentially followed by the authorities has been unable to address.

We therefore find it necessary to shed light in this Introduction on the challenges and obstacles that prevent a substantive take-off in the field of human rights, in application of the established principle that human rights, as defined by the Constitution and affirmed by the relevant international instruments and international law, are fundamental entitlements of citizens and residents vis-à-vis the State, and that the fulfillment of these rights, under a decisive and clear national law, is a barrier that may not be crossed under any justification or pretext whatsoever.

IV

Human rights are exercised and applied within a national political, economic, social and cultural framework; consequently, their fate and condition are determined essentially by the political structures prevailing in the State, without overlooking cultural and societal considerations in this regard. **What, then, is the nature of these political structures in Jordan?**

Answering this question requires returning to the issue of political reform in Jordan and its impact on the reality of human rights, particularly its role in delaying a real take-off of these rights in the Kingdom,

without belittling the efforts made here and there, which have remained far from having a real and radical impact on these structures—structures which, if reformed as required, would have a clear impact in bringing about the required social, cultural and even developmental change. The Center had raised this issue clearly in its 2017 report.

What is established today is that Jordan has barely completed the process of building the modern State. Such an achievement can be realized only in the presence of genuine political pluralism, cultural diversity, and a society characterized by consensus on fundamentals and the rule of law. These are the elements of the genuine political reform that is urgently required.

The fundamentals referred to, on which consensus is required as a prelude to launching the process of political reform, include major issues and headings, most notably: redefining the nature of the relationship between the monarchy and the people, and the relationship of the political system with society; the place of religion in public life (the nature of the desired civil State); a clear relationship among the three branches of government; the independence of the two branches—the legislature and the judiciary; the concept of social justice; and arriving at parliamentary government; in addition to substantive issues relating to Jordan's Arab relations, particularly the Jordanian–Palestinian relationship, and Jordan's role in resolving the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, where Jordanian diplomatic interventions on this issue have not had the desired effect.

Jordan has taken steps—albeit calculated ones—towards achieving political openness, pluralism and public participation, and towards attempting to build national consensus on a number of the fundamentals mentioned above, in the period preceding the outbreak of the Arab Spring revolutions. Following these revolutions and the escalation of the popular movement in Jordan, a reformist discourse was adopted by the regime based on the concept of gradual reform, and the political system implemented notable reform initiatives.

In addition to amending the legislation relating to the formation of political parties, the conduct of parliamentary elections, and the formation and regulation of associations, constitutional amendments were made, and steps were taken to facilitate public participation for citizens. His Majesty King Abdullah II issued several discussion papers addressing the importance of activating the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, constitutional monarchy, combating corruption, *wasta* and nepotism, and economic reform.

In line with this orientation, the period between 2011 and 2015 witnessed the formation of several committees and bodies, such as the National Dialogue Committee, which was tasked with drafting both the hoped-for Political Parties Law and Elections Law, the Royal Committee to Amend the Constitution, and the Royal Committee to Draft the National Integrity System. This heralded a new orientation on the part of the regime and strengthened hope for the achievement of comprehensive reform (albeit gradually), with all that this entails in terms of laying the foundations for an accomplished democracy in Jordan, including a balanced form of power-sharing in which its citizens enjoy full citizenship rights while fully bearing their duties under a democratic constitution.

In the summer of 2013, His Majesty also directed both the Government and the judicial authority (within the framework of the latter's independence) to study and implement the recommendations of the National Center for Human Rights, including the drafting of a Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights.

All of these recommendations emphasize the importance of guaranteeing "freedom of opinion, expression and peaceful assembly", "the independence of the judiciary", "freedom of the press and independent, professional media", "respect for the rule of law" and "combating poverty and unemployment", opening the way for political parties and enabling them to enter Parliament, as well as opening the way for civil society to work in a broader climate of freedom, and establishing the civil

State. Regulatory steps were taken to enhance press freedom and the role of the media, although this did not put an end to the detention and imprisonment of journalists, or to the subjection of the press corps not only to restrictions but also to self-censorship that often undermined the freedom of criticism, follow-up and accountability. Such reforms, which are demanded by the public, constitute the essence of human rights in the country.

There is no doubt that had such an orientation continued—even at a slow but studied pace—it would most likely have led to the establishment of a democratic political system guaranteeing social justice, equality, freedom and a balanced relationship among the branches of government, and to the creation of a free press and independent, professional media that champion the issues of society and the nation effectively and professionally. This would strengthen security and stability by increasing Jordanians' confidence in the future, thereby motivating them to work seriously and sincerely and to confront challenges and difficulties (internal and external) with confidence, determination and self-belief, "and trust in the leadership and the political system". The logical outcome of these reforms would be a fundamental change in the national human rights system.

However, that take-off soon suffered a setback. Notwithstanding the positive intentions and orientations of successive governments, the general situation in the country—politically, economically and socially—has recently reached a critical stage in terms of restrictions on public freedoms, curtailment of the possibility of an effective and strong opposition emerging, [the absence of] full independence of the two branches—the legislature and the judiciary—the domination of the executive authority over the legislative authority and interference (albeit partial and limited) in the work of the judicial authority, and the restriction of freedom of the press and media, as was evident from the proposed legislation on cybercrimes.

Whereas the negative external circumstances (regional and global) require those concerned and those in charge of public affairs to accelerate the steps of political reform and their implementation, rather than invoking external circumstances to slow down the reform process or even shelve it. A close observer of the reform process sees that progress along it has mostly been at the edges and has not gone into depth.

It is politics that structures opportunities, directs society, and brings out or brings about the required changes in society's priorities, orientations and choices, as individuals adapt to national circumstances and environment, particularly the usually prevailing political structures. Politicians are the ones who lead, influence and direct the general course of the nation, and their mission is successful, easy and effective only when it proceeds from the interests of society and the aspirations of citizens, respect for their choices, adherence to the rule of law, and the achievement of social justice. It is democracy that facilitates the management of sub-loyalties, contradictions, conflicts of interest and imbalances among interest groups and the intellectual and sectoral currents in society.

Linked to this reality and to the accompanying official approach is the conduct of the ruling elite, which for some time now has been behaving as if it had triumphed over society and over what it describes as the "popular movement", which it often accuses of obstructing the course of development or of being linked to foreign parties, and sometimes of both.

This elite has also begun to blame society for causing the existing imbalances in the country and their consequences for the general situation and for citizens, just as the same elite has sought to justify the deficiencies in the performance of both the State and the government by the impact of external, regional and international circumstances. Some of them justify not pursuing a genuine reform approach by society's unreadiness for democracy! There is nothing stranger than this proposition. Freedom, democracy and the right to choose are matters that mature through practice, and the only remedy for the mistakes of democracy is more freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. All this is set

against successive governments persisting in a state of denial of their role in what the general situation in the country has come to, and denying their responsibility for failing to devise effective and creative solutions to citizens' problems—with the sole exception of the agreements and programs concluded with the International Monetary Fund, the general lifting of subsidies on basic commodities, and the ending of the rentier role of the State. This might have been required and acceptable had it been accompanied by the implementation of a social protection program and effective development plans, without denying some limited attempts to enhance the concept of social protection for marginalized groups.

Thus, the official initiatives promising radical and serious change in political structures, public policies and legislation, which were adopted years ago, turned into formal reforms confined to the creation of bodies with appropriate names, such as political parties, a Constitutional Court, a Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate), a parliamentary government, the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, and an Independent Election Commission (IEC), as His Majesty the King promised at one stage—while their powers were restricted and curtailed, their role contained and their independence stripped away, whether by establishing them under laws and provisions falling short of the constitutional content and the relevant international standards, or by placing at their head non-reformist persons who are generally easy to control and influence most of the time, not to mention attempts at direct interference by influential parties in the work of these oversight bodies when those in charge of them insist on exercising their responsibilities as required. At best, when important recommendations are issued by these bodies, their implementation is circumvented. In this way, the role of many oversight institutions, which were announced and actually established in the wake of the Arab Spring revolutions and the popular demands movement in the Kingdom, has been reduced!

All of the above, and much more like it, came in the context of the attempt by the influential group to tighten its grip on State institutions and to impose a new concept of governance, consisting of the concentration of power, the narrowing of the space for human rights, and the curtailment of public participation having an impact on policies—despite the multitude of institutions and bodies bearing representative names, but "fat-free"—and within the framework of the Government and the political system relying essentially on a policy of venting tension, and continuing to avoid taking real steps in the field of reform to lead the country out of the crisis, in the absence of any tangible achievement or of a clear and convincing plan or strategy in this regard on the part of the regime, other than emphasizing what is usually described as the blessing of "security and safety", which, "despite its great importance", is not sufficient on its own to emerge from the prevailing general national situation; for true security is societal security, in which citizens feel hope and reassurance about the future, justice and equality prevail, and there is confidence in public policies and a conviction of being part of them, as well as confidence in institutions and in the rule of law in its true sense.*

** The current Prime Minister put forward a national renaissance project, promising that citizens would soon feel its results; however, the elements, content and components of such a project have not yet actually seen the light.*

The clear contradiction between official discourse and actual practice came as clear evidence of the dominance of this elitist approach, which was accompanied and leveraged by absolute reliance on security and complete control by the security agencies, not only to confront terrorism (which is a grave evil, and the Center supports efforts to combat it), but also to contain the opposition and the questioning and accountability of the authorities and officials. The conduct of security officials towards the popular opposition and opposition figures, and the interference of some of them by criticizing opposition personalities and popular movement activists, is a living example of this. Close to this is the process of demonization carried out by official agencies against the popular movement, its activists and opposition figures, and the attempt to co-opt them or remove them from the national political equation, whether this takes the form of enticement or intimidation, such as accusing them of obstructing public life and halting the wheel of production and/or of being linked to foreign parties. All this is in addition to the

policy of co-opting political parties, whose number has reached about 48 existing parties and about 18 others under formation; yet their influence on public life diminishes the more their number increases.

In fairness, it should be noted that the security policy adopted by the State to confront terrorism has succeeded well, notwithstanding the limited breaches that occurred in the cities of Irbid, Al-Karak and Al-Salt. However, the policy of dealing with the opposition, protests and popular movements has had a negative return.

With regard to counter-terrorism efforts, it must also be recalled that this policy, successful as it has been in confronting existing terrorism, has left clear humanitarian and social effects on large numbers of families and individuals in the country, especially as it has not stopped, and will not stop, Jordanian youth from rushing towards any call, group, organization or ideology, from joining unlawful organizations and accepting ideologies that espouse violence, which these young people see as possibly constituting an alternative to the situation the country is living through and as approaching or promising to meet their aspirations, ambitions and rights. Dealing with this challenge therefore requires reconsidering and mitigating these consequences of the strict security policy towards terrorism and religious groups of extremist doctrine. The National Center for Human Rights had earlier proposed considering the issuance of a special pardon for persons who did not take part in any terrorist attack and are not formal members of any terrorist organization or group, and giving them an opportunity to reassess their national course and to reintegrate into public life anew.

On the other hand, the various service sectors, such as health, education, transport, municipalities and labor, suffer from security interference, from misguided privatization policies and the negative roles of the pioneers and leaders of these sectors, and from the exploitation of these sectors by influential persons. This situation applies most of all to the two sectors of education and health; the education and medical sectors are in a real crisis.

It is no wonder that such developments lead to a deepening of the gap between citizens and the State; to the official outlook shrinking and turning in on itself, remote from the interactions of society; to legalized corruption and its figures, especially the major ones, being able to operate successfully under a thick veil of lack of transparency; to the inability of the State apparatus to create among citizens a strong sense, around the full range of vital issues, of a unifying identity and a shared outlook between the components of society and the leadership or political class; and to the failure to formulate practical plans on the fundamentals required to build an effective parliamentary system.

The strength of the constitutional checks that prevent the Government, the executive authority and law enforcement agencies from encroaching upon the other branches, especially the legislative authority, and upon citizens' right to public participation, particularly in formulating policies affecting their interests and rights, has weakened and receded; civil society has been restricted and its ability to exercise its right to question and hold public authorities and officials accountable has been curtailed; and the social and political consequences of the economic decisions taken by successive governments have been ignored.

V

In conclusion, it is evident that the manifestations of the crisis are many; and as popular anxiety and apprehension about them mount, citizens are the most capable of assessing their consequences, since they are the ones who suffer from them.

What is required of people of opinion, thought and experience, as well as of the elite, is to reassess their relationship with both society and the authorities, to engage in a serious national dialogue with society, to try to understand the essence and roots of this crisis, to identify the forces behind it or its underlying

causes, to propose successful solutions to address it, and to be truthful in telling the truth and in giving counsel and advice to the Head of State.

From an independent point of view that cares for this nation and for the future of the rights of its sons and daughters, we find that the most important underlying causes of this crisis are:

1. The scarcity of State resources in general, coupled with their misuse, especially with regard to management and genuine strategic planning based on accurate information about both capabilities and challenges.
2. The fading or absence of a unifying national goal that embodies the ambitions, hopes, aspirations and priorities of citizens and constitutes the essence, subject or focus of public policies and national strategies. No neutral observer can fail to notice the depth of the gap between the ambitions, aspirations and priorities of the latter and the priorities and choices of the influential group that is steering affairs, and the interests of the elite that supports it and revolves in its orbit.
3. The absence of national consensus on the fundamentals of the State, manifested in the fragility of national cohesion and societal fragmentation; the widening gap between the State and society, and among the forces of society itself; the emergence of negative tendencies among young people; and the fear of the domination of the ideological and doctrinal orientations of political parties should they assume power, and the consequent exclusion of others.
4. The concentration of power in the hands of specific groups, influential elites and a single institution in leading the current stage and controlling the rhythm of a society divided in more than one form; the dominance of a specific group or class and its control over the course of administration and the representation of the political system; and the besieging of reformist forces independent of the corruption alliance in order to keep them outside the circle of influence—which leads to delaying the actual launch of the hoped-for policy course for reforming the human rights system in a sound and radical manner.

Therefore, what is urgently required is a complete change of approach and a new start with new objectives, tools and means.

April 2019

First: Civil and Political Rights

1. The Right to Life, Liberty and Physical Integrity

The Right Not to Be Subjected to Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment

The total number of cases registered against personnel of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) relating to complaints of torture and other forms of ill-treatment in 2018 reached 332 cases, of which 10 cases were referred to the Police Court. The cases in which a conviction was obtained numbered 51, while a decision of non-prosecution of the accused was issued in 240 cases by the Police Public Prosecutor, and 31 cases remain under consideration.

By comparison, in 2017 the total number of cases reached 45, of which 4 cases were referred for trial before the unit commander; in 12 cases a decision of non-prosecution of the accused was issued by the Police Public Prosecutor, while 2 cases were referred to the Police Court and 27 cases remain under consideration; this compares with 269 cases in 2016, 239 cases in 2015 and 140 cases in 2014.

As for cases of ill-treatment committed against inmates of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers in 2018, they reached 29 cases, in which 6 persons were convicted, while the prosecution of 9 persons was barred by the Police Public Prosecutor and 14 cases remain under consideration, compared with 17 cases in 2017, 12 cases in 2016 and 8 cases in 2015, as shown in Table No. (26).

As for the complaints received by the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) from citizens concerning allegations that they or their relatives were subjected to torture and ill-treatment at the hands of law enforcement officials and the various security departments, whether in preliminary investigation centers or in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, during the periodic visits conducted by its delegates to such places or through complaints received by fax, e-mail, in-person interview and other means, they reached 68 complaints in 2018 containing allegations of torture and ill-treatment at the hands of law enforcement officials and the various security departments, compared with 85 complaints in 2017, 63 complaints in 2016, 92 complaints in 2015 and 87 complaints in 2014.

With regard to allegations of beating, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and complaints relating to the rights of inmates in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, the Center received 39 complaints in 2018, compared with 17 complaints in 2017, 12 complaints in 2016, 8 complaints in 2015 and 11 complaints in 2014.

The following are the most prominent complaints and allegations of torture and ill-treatment received by the Center in 2018:

- The relatives of (F.Sh.) reported that he had been assaulted while held at Swaqa Correctional and Rehabilitation Center on 24 May 2018. The NCHR formed a fact-finding team to look into the circumstances surrounding this complaint. After visiting the inmate at Prince Hamzah Hospital, the team found that there was suspicion of a criminal offense in that he had been assaulted, given the nature of the wounds and bruises visible on various parts of the victim's body. After documenting the case of torture and providing the Director of Public Security with a detailed report on this incident and on the inmate's psychological condition, in accordance with the medical report, by virtue of the Center's letter No. (H A/20/3/345) dated 29 May 2018, the Center was surprised to receive a letter from the Office of Transparency and Human Rights at the PSD, No. (Q/29150/21/1) dated 2 June 2018, which made no mention of holding accountable those who had assaulted the said person, or those who had erred in placing the victim in Rumaimin Correctional and Rehabilitation Center instead of placing him in the National Center for Mental Health, given that he suffers from mental disorders, as indicated by the medical reports issued by Prince Hamzah Hospital and Al-Rasheed Hospital. With regard to the statement of the Director of Public Security that the grievous bodily harm sustained by the said person resulted from a fight with another inmate, the NCHR considers, on the basis of the monitoring and verification carried out, that the nature of the injuries and wounds cannot be the result of a fight between two inmates. Moreover, the inmate's relatives affirmed during their interview that they had received information from inside the Correctional and Rehabilitation

Center in which their son is held that he had been subjected to a severe beating that nearly cost him his life.

- The relatives of (A.B.) alleged that he had been tortured by a group of personnel working in the Criminal Investigation Section of Central Amman on 8 June 2018. It was established that there was suspicion of a criminal offense in that the victim had been subjected to torture and had died as a result thereof, as the report of the Amman Public Prosecutor concerning the examination of the victim's body indicated that he had sustained blunt abrasion injuries on various parts of the body, and more severely in the area of the testicles.
- The relatives of (B.A.) reported that he had been tortured by a group of personnel of the Anti-Narcotics and Counterfeiting Department at Al-Ghuwairiyah Security Center, and that he died while held at Birain Correctional and Rehabilitation Center on 13 June 2018. The forensic physician's report was issued, and the PSD statement stated that the inmate's death resulted from "a perforation of the duodenum, caused by a bleeding ulcer in the duodenum, with the body bearing no traces of force or violence".
- The wife of (A.D.) alleged that he had been tortured by a group of personnel working in the Criminal Investigation Section at Al-Ghuwairiyah Security Center on 13 March 2018. The NCHR formed a team to visit him and look into the circumstances surrounding this complaint, in coordination with the Office of Transparency and Human Rights of the PSD, which confirmed that he was present at Al-Ghuwairiyah Security Center for the purpose of meeting him. Upon arriving at the security center, however, the team was surprised to be told that he was not present, as he had been sent to Irbid Governorate to carry out a crime-scene identification, notwithstanding the prior arrangement of the visit with the Office of Transparency and Human Rights. This led the NCHR to believe that the inmate had been concealed so that the veracity of his relatives' allegations that he had been tortured could not be verified, which prompted the Center to send letter No. (H A/44/S Sh) dated 18 April 2018 explaining the lack of cooperation of the Criminal Investigation Office at Al-Ghuwairiyah Security Center. However, the Center has not received a reply to its letter to date.
- (T.B.) alleged that he had been tortured by a group of personnel working in the Anti-Narcotics and Counterfeiting Department, Zarqa Section, after his house was raided on 22 February 2018 and he was taken to the Zarqa office, where he was tortured, resulting in his teeth being broken and bruises to various parts of his body. He was released two days later, as it was not proven that he had used any narcotic substance. The Center sent a letter bearing No. (H A/34/S Sh) dated 14 March 2018 to H.E. the Director of the Anti-Narcotics and Counterfeiting Department concerning the incident, and the Center has not received a reply to date.

The practical difficulties faced by the Center during 2017, which limited the ability of the NCHR to exercise its legal powers in following up on allegations of torture and ill-treatment, continued during 2018. These consist in the failure to provide the Center with the investigation records relating to the allegations of torture and ill-treatment contained in the complaints received by the Center, in addition to the PSD's replies concerning complaints of torture and ill-treatment being confined to the final outcome of the investigations, without setting out the sequence of measures taken by the Police Public Prosecution and the Police Court, which the Center considers insufficient.

The Right to Life

Death Sentences:

The number of judgments issued by the Major Felonies Court imposing the death penalty during 2018 reached 23 judgments, while the State Security Court issued no judgments imposing this penalty.

As regards the possibility of commuting the death penalty or granting exemption from it by special pardon, it should be noted that five persons sentenced to death benefited from a special pardon in 2018, compared with two persons in 2017, two persons in 2016 and ten persons in 2015.

The number of inmates of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers sentenced to death reached 151 in 2018, including 17 female inmates.

Table No. (1): Number of judgments imposing the death penalty during the years 2015–2018

Year	Major Felonies Court	State Security Court	Total judgments
2015	6	–	6
2016	3	5	8
2017	16	1	17
2018	23	0	23

Table prepared by the Center on the basis of data issued by the Major Felonies Court and the State Security Court.

Suicide

PSD statistics indicate an increase in suicide cases in 2018, which reached 142 cases distributed by age group as follows: under 18 years, 13 cases; 18 to 27 years, 44 cases; 28 to 38 years, 42 cases; 38 to 47 years, 25 cases; and 48 years and over, 18 cases; compared with 152 cases in 2017, 120 cases in 2016 and 100 cases in 2015.

- Deaths and injuries resulting from traffic accidents, the firing of gunshots on public and private occasions, drowning and other accidents.

Traffic Accidents

The year 2018 witnessed 10331 traffic accidents, resulting in the death of 562 persons and the injury of 12363 others.

Firing of Gunshots on Public and Private Occasions

- The death of the child (H.K.), aged 3 years, on 26 September 2018, from wounds sustained after his father's vehicle was attacked in Mafraq Governorate by persons taking part in a wedding procession; (H.K.) was injured and consequently admitted to hospital in a critical condition, and died a few hours later.

Drowning Incidents

Drowning incidents in 2018 numbered 82, resulting in the death of 101 persons and the injury of 84 others, according to the reports issued by the General Directorate of Civil Defense. In this regard, the Center urges the relevant authorities to take urgent and effective measures to monitor them and to ensure means of public safety, in order to safeguard the right to life of all individuals.

The year 2018 witnessed two tragic drowning incidents. The first, on 25 October 2018, in the area of Wadi Zarqa Ma'in / the Dead Sea, claimed the lives of 21 persons, most of them schoolchildren who were on a trip to the area, when the Kingdom was hit by a weather depression that caused heavy rains and floods in the valleys. The NCHR formed a fact-finding team to follow up on the course of the investigations into the incident. The team reached preliminary conclusions indicating that numerous parties had committed errors of varying degrees that led to this painful incident, that the authorities concerned with rescue were not equipped with the capabilities and equipment required in such a situation, and that their preparedness was below the required level. Both the Minister of Education and of Higher Education and the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities resigned in the context of moral responsibility.

On 29 October 2018, another incident occurred as a result of heavy rainfall in the central regions in Madaba Governorate (the areas of Mleih, Al-Wala and Dab'a) and in the southern governorates of Karak, Tafilah and Ma'an, resulting in the loss of life and damage to some property and infrastructure. Seven persons lost their lives, including 4 members of one family, as a result of a vehicle carrying the late (Z.D.), his family and a shepherd being swept away in the Mleih area. Four persons also died in the Dab'a area (the Desert Highway) as a result of being swept away by floodwaters, and a Civil Defense

diver was killed in the line of duty while searching for the bodies of the victims in this area. In addition, a two-year-old girl died after drowning in the floods that struck the village of Al-Amir Rashid in Ma'an Governorate. The total number of civilian deaths thus came to 12 persons, while the number of injured persons dealt with by Civil Defense personnel reached 23, and those trapped, numbering 4004 persons, were evacuated.

Other Incidents

- The death of five persons as a result of the collapse of a three-storey residential building in the Al-Ghuwairiyah area / Zarqa Governorate during maintenance works on the building in which the necessary safety procedures were not observed.

2. Losses of the Security Services in 2018

- The death of Captain Tareq Al-Sbeileh of the Anti-Narcotics Department on 8 June 2018, after he was shot in the head by one of the dangerous wanted persons involved in drug trafficking.
- The killing of retired Major General Habes Al-Hneiti of the General Intelligence Department on 23 October 2018 at the hands of a civilian.

Administrative Detention:

No amendments were made during 2018 to the Crime Prevention Law No. (7) of 1954. Consequently, this Law continued to contravene the fundamental constitutional principle of the separation of powers, as it grants the executive authority judicial powers, so that its continued force, even without recourse to it, constitutes an ongoing threat to the independence of the judicial authority and to the legal guarantees of rights and freedoms.

The NCHR considers that the prevailing argument that administrative detention decisions are administrative decisions subject to challenge before the Administrative Court does not constitute a legal guarantee justifying keeping the power of detention in the hands of administrative governors. Indeed, this arrangement and the legal status of these detention powers, despite the possibility of challenging them judicially, represent an inversion of the legal order, since this power should in the first place be confined to the judiciary alone, rather than retaining the power of detention and requiring recourse to the judiciary to annul such decisions, not to mention the financial costs borne by individuals in filing administrative lawsuits.

The Center further affirms that this Law constitutes a clear violation of Article 128/1 of the Jordanian Constitution, which provides that "the laws issued under this Constitution for the regulation of rights and freedoms may not prejudice the essence of such rights or affect their fundamentals". It also violates the international criminal-law principle prohibiting punishment twice for the same act, a principle adopted by the Jordanian criminal legislator under Article 58 of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960, which provides: "(1. The same act shall be prosecuted only once)".

The Center observed an increase in the number of administratively detained persons during 2018 compared with previous years, as the number of persons held in administrative detention during 2018 reached 37683 inmates, compared with 34952 inmates in 2017 and 30138 inmates in 2016. Most of these detainees were detained after serving the term of the penalty prescribed by law and/or after the issuance of a judicial decision ordering their release, on the pretext of preserving community security.

In 2018, the NCHR also received 31 complaints and requests for assistance relating to administrative detention, of which 28 complaints were closed after a satisfactory result was achieved; no violation was found in two cases, and one remains under follow-up.

In reviewing the recommendations made to Jordan by the Human Rights Council within the framework of the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review on 13 October 2018, many States called on Jordan to repeal the Crime Prevention Law, or to consider reviewing this measure and taking the necessary measures to ensure access to the necessary legal assistance for detainees.

Conditions of Initial Detention Centers:

As at 31 December 2018, the NCHR had carried out ten visits to initial detention and temporary holding centers. It became evident from the visits and from the complaints received by the Center that there are violations of the fair trial guarantees that must be afforded to a detainee at the preliminary investigation stage (inquiry and evidence-gathering).

The violations were as follows: not allowing the detainee to communicate with the outside world and preventing visits by his relatives; preventing him from telephoning his family to inform them of his whereabouts; not giving him the opportunity to seek the assistance of a lawyer; exceeding the legal periods of detention set out in Articles 112 and 113 of the Criminal Procedure Law No. (9) of 1961, namely 24 hours; continuing to detain accused persons for long periods on the basis of the Crime Prevention Law and holding them during the initial detention stage at certain security departments, particularly the Criminal Investigation Department and the Anti-Narcotics and Counterfeiting Department; and, in addition, the imposition of travel bans by the PSD (the Anti-Narcotics and Counterfeiting Department) on persons accused of drug trafficking or drug use without a judicial decision.

Reliance on the criminal records of the inmate or detainee during the investigation of human rights violations, as most of the oral replies received by the NCHR from the Transparency Office relate to criminal records, which are sometimes put forward as a pretext for violating the rights of the detained inmate.

Furthermore, these visits revealed that most of the buildings of the temporary detention centers visited are dilapidated, that heating is unavailable in most of them, and that foul odors emanate from some of them owing to lack of ventilation and poor lighting.

With regard to meals, only lunch is provided to detainees in these centers, while detainees obtain breakfast and dinner, as well as drinking water, at their own expense.

The sanitary facilities are old and lack washbasins, which are replaced by the use of jars. Moreover, health care is provided only when necessary, and there is no way of knowing the mechanism by which the concept of extreme necessity is determined. There are no medical records for detainees, nor are there designated places for detainees to perform religious rites, and the detainees' records contain no statement of the detainee's state of health.

Places of Temporary Detention at the General Intelligence Department:

In February 2018, the NCHR carried out an unannounced visit to the temporary detention center of the General Intelligence Department, during which it met with inmates, examined the actual conditions of the detention environment and inspected all the facilities of the center (cells, medical clinics, dental clinic, pharmacy, office, kitchen and exercise yards). It is worth noting that the capacity of the detention center is 350 detainees, while the number of detainees on the day of the visit was 143.

Complaints and Requests for Assistance:

The Center received 72 complaints and requests for assistance against the General Intelligence Department, of which 33 were closed after a satisfactory result was achieved, 3 owing to the absence of a violation and 2 owing to the complainant's lack of cooperation, while 34 remain under follow-up.

The subjects of these complaints and requests for assistance received by the NCHR were as follows: travel bans, 21 complaints; withholding of identity documents, 8 complaints; the right to a fair trial, 17 complaints; inmates' rights, 5 complaints, consisting of being prevented from communicating with the outside world by order of the State Security Court Public Prosecutor, being held in solitary cells and not allowing detainees to mix with others, and being denied visits; 6 complaints consisting of being prevented from obtaining security clearances, which resulted in deprivation of the right to work and to

enjoy a decent life; the right to freedom of opinion and expression, 7 complaints; the right to health, one complaint; and the right to physical integrity, 7 complaints.

Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers:

The number of persons who entered Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers in 2018 reached 75849 inmates, whereas the capacity of these centers is 12286 inmates. The actual number of inmates present in these centers reached 19412 inmates, which means that overcrowding in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers exceeded 158%, which adversely affects the conditions of inmates and their rights in all areas.

Through receiving complaints and requests for assistance and through the field visits it conducts to Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, the Center's teams observed a number of abuses and shortcomings, as follows: the occurrence of non-systematic cases of torture, and the widespread practice of cruel and inhuman treatment, including overcrowding; operating the heating for very limited periods; ill-treatment of inmates' relatives during visits; poor meals provided to inmates; shortcomings in the medical care provided to inmates; reduction of visits by relatives to inmates convicted of offenses of membership in unlawful organizations; shortcomings in the social care provided to inmates; the hardship suffered by inmates when transferred from one center to another or to hospitals or courts; interference during telephone calls; and the lack of equipment suited to persons with disabilities.

With regard to hunger strikes, the Center recorded numerous complaints in 2018, the most prominent of which were:

- A strike by 113 inmates and detainees of Al-Muwaqqar 2 Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, with 56 inmates refusing to eat the meals provided by the center's administration on 20 October 2018 until demands relating to the prison environment were met. The NCHR intervened following a complaint from the inmates' relatives and visited them; following this, the Center urgently addressed H.E. the Prime Minister, highlighting that the said inmates were subjected to cruel treatment and had received long sentences in a center where residence is in itself a punishment. The prison administration partially responded to the inmates' demands, whereupon they ended their strike.
- A strike by 95 inmates and detainees of Al-Muwaqqar 1 Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, who refused to eat the meals provided by the center's administration on 20 October 2018, confining themselves to eating food that they purchased from the center's canteen at their own expense, until their demands relating to visits, telephone calls and personal matters were met. The inmates ended this refusal after the administration of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers met some of those demands.

Deaths in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers and Suicide Cases:

In 2018, the Center recorded 53 deaths, compared with 34 deaths in 2017 and 44 deaths in 2016. The Center was unable to verify their causes adequately, or to determine whether any violation occurred that corresponded with the official data and forensic medical reports, and which of them resulted from a violation of inmates' rights.

Recommendations:

In light of the foregoing, the NCHR reiterates the recommendations set out in its previous annual reports, including:

- Amending Article 208 of the Jordanian Penal Code to provide that torture is a felony, and granting the regular courts subject-matter jurisdiction to hear torture cases.
- Expressly providing for compensation for victims of torture as set out in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Establishing specialized centers for the rehabilitation of victims of torture in a manner that ensures the comprehensiveness of the concept of torture as set out in the United Nations

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984.

- Repealing the Crime Prevention Law and confining the matter of detention to the judiciary.
- Ensuring that the law provides for allowing a detainee to inform his relatives of his place of detention, and that he is not prevented from communicating with the outside world except by virtue of a judicial decision.
- Activating the places designated for holding juvenile and female detainees.
- Keeping organized registers in places of temporary detention (admissions, deposited belongings, communications, medical care, meals and visits).
- Relocating the office of the State Security Court Public Prosecutor outside the building of the General Intelligence Department.
- Transferring supervision of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice.
- Abolishing the penalty of solitary confinement provided for in Article 38 of the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers Law No. (9) of 2004.
- Continuing the qualification and training programs for public prosecutors working in the Office of Transparency and Human Rights at the PSD on the relevant international human rights instruments and standards.
- Providing the NCHR with the results of the investigations conducted by public prosecutors into complaints referred by the Center to the Transparency Office or those received by the Office directly from inmates' relatives.

2. The Right to a Fair Trial (2018)

The year 2018 witnessed the amendment of a number of laws having a direct impact on the right of individuals to a fair trial. Some of these amendments and legislative proposals stemmed from the recommendations of the NCHR contained in its annual reports, while others constituted a threat to the guarantees of the right to a fair trial and a departure from constitutional rules and from the general rules of the legal principles guaranteeing this right, such as the presumption of innocence, the guarantees of effective criminal prosecution and the independence of the judicial authority.

The NCHR expressed its observations and reservations on these amendments and recommended that the Government, the House of Representatives and the Senate reconsider the provisions that constitute a departure from the Constitution and/or the relevant international conventions to which Jordan is a party. The most prominent of these legislative amendments are the following:

1. Draft Law Amending the Criminal Procedure Law of 2018

On 23 June 2018, the Government referred to the House of Representatives the Draft Law Amending the Criminal Procedure Law of 2018, which contained a single amendment confined to the text of Article 63 bis of the original law, providing as follows: "Article 63 bis of the original law shall be amended by adding paragraph 6 thereto with the following text: 'The provisions of this Article shall not apply to any terrorist acts committed in violation of the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Law and the Penal Code, to the financing of terrorism committed in violation of the provisions of the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Law, or to attempt, complicity or incitement to commit any of the foregoing acts.'"¹

This amendment contravenes the Constitution and international human rights standards, as it undermines the guarantees of the right to a fair trial for persons accused of terrorist offenses. The House of Representatives opposed this amendment, which compelled the Government to withdraw it. This position is to the credit of the House of Representatives, constituting a decisive stance in terms of protecting and promoting the human rights of persons tried before the State Security Court.

2. Jordanian Universities Law No. (18) of 2018

The Jordanian Universities Law completed its constitutional stages and was published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 5513, dated 2 May 2018. Under Article 27/B, the Law introduced a provision granting judicial police status to the employees charged with guarding public universities and their branches and facilities and maintaining internal security therein.

These powers exceed the basic purpose for which university security exists and adversely affect the freedom of student activity, not to mention the unjustified expansion in the granting of judicial police status.

¹Article (63) bis of the Criminal Procedure Law No. (9) of 1961, as amended, which provides:

1. The accused or his lawyer shall have the right to request in writing, before the commencement of the interrogation, to examine all investigation proceedings, except witness statements, on pain of nullity of the interrogation if the request is refused.
2. In felonies for which the minimum penalty is ten years or more, a lawyer must be present with the accused at every interrogation session; if the accused is unable to appoint a lawyer, the Public Prosecutor shall take the necessary measures to appoint a lawyer for him in accordance with the provisions of the legislation in force.
3. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (2) of this Article, if a lawyer does not attend the interrogation session of his client, the Public Prosecutor shall record in the minutes the means by which the accused was enabled to contact his lawyer at least one day before the interrogation, unless his lawyer was notified of its date at a previous investigation session.
4. Before every interrogation subsequent to the first interrogation, the Public Prosecutor shall ask the accused whether he continues to consent to his interrogation being completed without the assistance of a lawyer, and shall record this in the minutes on pain of nullity of that subsequent interrogation.
5. The Public Prosecutor may not conclude the investigation unless he has interrogated the accused, unless he is unable to do so owing to the accused's flight or if he considers that the evidence gathered is sufficient to bar prosecution regardless of the interrogation.

3. Draft Law Amending the Juveniles Law of 2018

The Ministry of Social Development undertook the preparation of a draft law amending the Juveniles Law. The NCHR participated in the technical committee charged with preparing this draft and presented a vision for a law that guarantees swift justice for juveniles and takes into account the possibility of rehabilitating juveniles and reintegrating them into society in a manner that takes into consideration the best interests of the child. This vision comprises the following principles:

- Establishing a specialized juvenile judiciary, given its contribution to establishing a judicial approach that develops judicial principles specific to juvenile justice.
- Establishing a special section for juveniles who have passed the age of eighteen, and not transferring them to Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers.
- Requiring that a decision to detain a juvenile be reasoned, and expressly providing for the juvenile's right to material and moral compensation for damage resulting from detention in the event of a judgment of acquittal or non-liability.

Judicial Detention:

The number of persons held in judicial detention reached 41144 persons in 2018, compared with 35906 persons in 2017, according to PSD statistics. Despite the issuance of the Law Amending the Criminal Procedure Law No. (32) of 2017, the progress achieved in the legal system and the inclusion therein of a number of positive principles, there are a number of criticisms of the legal regulation of this principle, the most prominent of which are:

1. Although the amending law established a procedural rule and a general standard for detention, treating it as an exceptional measure departing from the general principle, based on Article 101/4 of the Jordanian Constitution, which embodies the presumption of innocence, it nevertheless justified recourse to detention in order to protect the accused or to spare public order any disturbance resulting from the crime. This in itself is considered a departure from the requirements of a state governed by the rule of law, and this standard loses its significance because it contains vague expressions that make it possible to extend the power of detention without a legitimate legal reason.
2. The Criminal Procedure Law contains no explicit provision requiring that a detention decision be reasoned, that is, that it state the factual and legal grounds justifying it.
3. The Criminal Procedure Law does not recognize the principle of the right of individuals to material and moral compensation for damage resulting from detention in the event of a judgment of acquittal or non-liability, a right affirmed by the Human Rights Committee in its General Comment No. 35 of 2014, in which it stated: "(Compensation is a legally enforceable right and not a favor or a discretionary matter)".
4. With regard to the alternatives to detention set out in Article 114 bis, the legislator restricted the power of the judiciary to resort to alternatives to detention by two conditions: first, that the person not be a repeat offender; and second, that recourse to alternatives to detention be confined to misdemeanors only, excluding felonies.

It should be noted that in 2018 there was no application of alternatives to judicial detention, owing to the failure to provide the legal and material requirements for their implementation alike.

Alternative Penalties:

The Law Amending the Penal Code No. (27) of 2017 adopted the principle of alternative penalties, with restricted judicial discretion and within narrow limits, as Article 54 bis of the Penal Code requires, for the application of these alternative penalties, that the term of the sentence imposed, in respect of which a decision to suspend execution has been issued, not exceed one year, and that the person not be a repeat offender, in addition to requiring the consent of the convicted person.

Added to this is the deprivation of the sentence enforcement judge, as the supervisor of the enforcement of the penalty, of the power to issue a decision revoking the alternative penalty, this power having been vested in the trial court, which may in practice result in confusion and delay in deciding the matter.

The Center considers it necessary to amend Article 54 bis of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960, as amended, in a manner that eases the restrictions imposed on the power of the judiciary to resort to alternative penalties.

The legal and practical measures taken by the Ministry of Justice to activate alternative penalties consist of the enactment of the Instructions on the Functions of the Directorate of Community Penalties at the Ministry of Justice of 2018, pursuant to Article 10/A of the Administrative Organization Regulation of the Ministry of Justice No. (101) of 2015; the Directorate's work consists, in summary, of following up on judicial rulings imposing such penalties and implementing them.

In terms of practice, the NCHR observed limited application of alternative penalties during 2018, as the Jordanian regular judiciary issued eight judicial rulings ordering recourse to alternative penalties, seven of which were executed upon becoming final. These rulings required the convicted person to perform community service for periods ranging from forty to fifty hours.

The most prominent of these applications included requiring a university student specializing in mechanical engineering to work in one of the workshops of the Greater Amman Municipality for forty hours; requiring a worker of Arab nationality to work in agriculture and gardening for forty hours; and requiring a young man working as a cook to work in preparing meals at one of the juvenile care homes for forty hours.

On another level, following its review of Jordan's fifth periodic report on civil and political rights on 19–20 October 2017, the Human Rights Committee expressed its concern that the State Security Court still exists, as well as its concern at the extension of the scope of its jurisdiction to try civilians under the Prevention of Terrorism Law No. (55) of 2006, as amended. The Committee also raised the issue of the Court's lack of independence.

Imprisonment for Inability to Fulfil a Contractual Obligation:

During 2018, the problem of the imprisonment of insolvent debtors came to the fore during the preparation of the draft General Amnesty Law of 2018, through demands that indebted women (gharimat) be covered by the provisions of this Law. However, the possibility of covering them runs counter to the established philosophy of the General Amnesty Law, as its effect is confined to criminal matters, to the exclusion of civil matters. In addition to indebted women, there are individuals who have been imprisoned for the purpose of settling civil debts owed by them, whether personal debts or debts resulting from borrowing from lending institutions and others. These persons suffer as a result of being imprisoned for inability to repay a civil debt, which contravenes Article 11 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Access to Justice

With regard to access to justice, the NCHR commends the application of the system of specialized judicial chambers at the Amman Court of First Instance, where there are more than 14 judicial chambers, such as the chambers specialized in press and publications cases, the chambers specialized in corruption cases and others, and the recently established economic chamber. The Center recommends that this approach be generalized and applied in all the regular courts.

The Center carried out numerous field monitoring visits to the regular courts in the various governorates of the Kingdom, and concluded that it is necessary to provide the Courts of First Instance of Amman, Jerash, Ma'an and Aqaba with the following needs:

1. Reconsidering the number of judges at the Amman Magistrates' Court in accordance with statistical studies of the workload.
2. Constructing a new building for the Jerash Court of First Instance in accordance with the modern architectural design for courts.
3. Completing the project to build the Ma'an Palace of Justice, work on which began in June 2016.
4. Providing the courts with a number of administrative and technical staff to ensure the continuity and proper functioning of work.
5. Providing the modern technological equipment necessary for the continued effectiveness of the electronic programs relating to the work of the enforcement departments in particular.

Complaints Received by the National Center for Human Rights:

The number of complaints received by the NCHR in 2018 relating to the right to a fair trial reached 44 complaints, centering on the length of judicial detention, the rejection of release requests and grievances concerning certain judicial procedures. Of these, 20 were closed upon reaching a satisfactory result, 1 was closed as falling outside the Center's mandate, 2 were closed because no violation was established, and two complaints were closed owing to the complainant's lack of cooperation, while 19 complaints remain under follow-up and investigation.

As for requests for assistance, the Center received 18 requests for assistance in 2018, centering on the provision of legal assistance and requests for special pardon. Of these, 8 were closed upon reaching a satisfactory result, 1 was closed because no violation was established, 5 were closed as falling outside the Center's mandate, and 1 request for assistance was closed owing to the lack of cooperation of the person requesting assistance, while 3 remain under follow-up and investigation.

Recommendations:

In order to ensure the advancement of the judicial system, enable it to perform the functions entrusted to it, and harmonize the legislation relevant to the right to a fair trial with international standards and conventions, the Center affirms the following recommendations:

1. Abolishing the newly introduced and exceptional judicial police powers granted to the employees charged with guarding public universities and their branches and facilities and maintaining internal security therein.
2. Establishing a specialized juvenile judiciary, establishing a special section for juveniles who have passed the age of eighteen and never transferring them to Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, requiring that a decision to detain a juvenile be reasoned, and expressly providing for the juvenile's right to material and moral compensation for damage resulting from detention in the event of a judgment of acquittal or non-liability.
3. Amending the text of Article 114 bis in a manner that ensures the expansion of the power of the judiciary to resort to alternatives to detention.
4. Amending Article 54 bis of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960, as amended, in a manner that eases the restrictions imposed on the power of the judiciary to resort to alternative penalties.
5. Repealing the text of Article 22 of the Jordanian Execution Law No. (25) of 2007, which permits the imprisonment of a debtor for a civil obligation, owing to its clear contravention of Article 11 of the ICCPR, which prohibits the imprisonment of a person merely on the ground of inability to fulfil a contractual obligation, a right that is non-derogable and from which no derogation is permitted even in exceptional circumstances and/or upon the declaration of a state of emergency.

6. Holding training courses for judges on the importance of resorting to alternatives to detention and alternative penalties and their positive effects in achieving reform and the reintegration of persons into society.
7. Generalizing the approach of specialized judicial chambers, whether civil or criminal, in all the regular courts, so as to achieve speedy adjudication and shorten the duration of litigation.

3. The Right to Nationality, Residence, Movement and Asylum

The Right to Nationality

Article 5 of the Jordanian Constitution provides that "Jordanian nationality shall be defined by law." The Nationality Law No. (6) of 1954 likewise affirmed this right and regulated it in detail.

Article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 provides:

"The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant."

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states:

- "Everyone has the right to a nationality."
- "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality."

By contrast, at the legislative level, no notable legislative developments affecting the right to nationality took place during 2018, with the exception of the issuance of Council of Ministers Decision No. (2018/1112) dated 17 September 2018, which abolished the requirement that the Jordanian mother must have resided continuously in the Kingdom for a period of no less than 5 years prior to the date of benefiting from these facilities. The Council also decided that the card issued by the Civil Status and Passports Department to the children of Jordanian women for the purposes of benefiting from these facilities shall be deemed a personal identity card ("proof of identity"). The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) considers that this decision came in response to the numerous recommendations it had made, as well as those of the civil society organizations active in this field, and to the struggle of Jordanian mothers. However, the NCHR observed that a number of official bodies do not accept this identification card, and it recommends the prompt issuance of special instructions for the recognition of the card before official and non-official bodies.

The year 2018 also witnessed the issuance of a Council of Ministers decision dated 12 February 2018 concerning the granting of Jordanian nationality and the right of permanent residence to non-Jordanian investors, subject to conditions and controls set out in the decision, with the aim of stimulating investment in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The number of persons naturalized under this decision as of 31 December 2018 reached sixteen investors.

Although it has been referred to more than once in the Center's previous reports, the problem of persons residing in the Northern Badia who do not hold Jordanian nationality persists; their number is estimated at approximately 7,000 persons. It is worth noting that a committee was formed by the Government to resolve the problem of these persons, but its work ceased a long time ago. These persons belong to the category of stateless persons, and their problem remains unresolved, as they do not possess any documents enabling them to obtain their basic rights, including the rights of their children to education and health. During a visit conducted by the NCHR to these persons on 2 May 2018, it observed the continuation of their hardship in daily life, in terms of their inability to obtain work and to enroll in schools. In light of the recommendations made by the NCHR in its previous reports, the Center affirms the need to activate the role of the special committee tasked with considering applications for Jordanian nationality submitted by applicants from the Northern Badia. The Minister of the Interior affirmed that the Government had granted Jordanian nationality and temporary passports to a number of the people of the Northern Badia who do not hold any documents or the nationalities of other States, and the Director of the Mafrq Civil Status and Passports Department stated that the Government had decided to form a special committee to study all applications submitted by the people of the Northern Badia who do not hold Jordanian nationality or any Jordanian document.

He indicated that the committee is currently studying 753 applications from persons who do not hold Jordanian documents and who have resided for many years in a number of areas of the Northern Badia, particularly in the areas of Al-Ruwaished, Al-Safawi and Al-Ghayath, explaining that the new committee will submit its recommendations to the competent ministerial committee for the purpose of taking the appropriate measures regarding those families who do not hold any Jordanian document.

This issue continues to generate wide debate among members of Jordanian society regarding this group, and the Center considers it necessary to expedite the finding of solutions that would facilitate this group's acquisition of Jordanian nationality.

The Center notes that the withdrawal of national numbers on the basis of the instructions of the Disengagement Decision has remained suspended. However, it calls for the prompt determination of the cases raised in previous years which are still pending before the official bodies to date, numbering 18 cases. It should be noted that the NCHR has also received 18 complaints in this regard, which are still under consideration.

The number of complaints received by the Center in 2018 relating to the right to nationality was 2, both of which were closed with a satisfactory result, while the number of requests for assistance received by the Center in this regard was five, of which three were closed with a satisfactory result, one request for assistance was closed with an unsatisfactory result, and one other request for assistance remained under consideration.

The Right to Residence and Movement

The issuance of smart identity cards in place of the old civil status card continued, despite complaints from many citizens about the poor quality of the card and of the photograph on it. The Center indeed considers that the quality of the cards is not as hoped, in addition to the poor quality of the personal photograph on them.

The year 2018 did not witness any amendments with respect to the issue of tribal displacement (jalwa), which derives its legitimacy from the Crime Prevention Law No. (7) of 1954, despite calls by human rights organizations for its abolition.

The Center commended the initiative taken by a member of the Karak Governorate community, who refrained from applying jalwa following the killing of one of his sons. The Center visited him and honored him, and it is also working to disseminate this experience in all governorates of the Kingdom, given that there are dozens of jalwa cases affecting large numbers of families in the various governorates of the Kingdom.

At the legislative level, the year 2018 did not witness any notable amendment to the Residence and Foreigners' Affairs Law No. (24) of 1973.

On 29 November 2018, the NCHR organized a symposium at Mu'tah University in Karak Governorate entitled "Tribal Jalwa between Custom and Law," at which the participants affirmed that tribal jalwa constitutes a violation of the most basic human rights and of constitutional rules and norms and international instruments. The symposium adopted the following recommendations:

1. Working to end the custom of tribal jalwa, given the heavy burden it places on all economic, social and security aspects of society.
2. Agreeing to form a committee of sheikhs and notables of the Karak tribes to work under the supervision and with the participation of the National Center for Human Rights and the Governor of Karak in following up jalwa cases, which number 20 cases in Karak Governorate. The work of the committee that was formed and agreed upon during the symposium has been followed up, and appropriate conditions have been provided for its work.

3. Working to enforce the law, the Constitution and international instruments, and to uphold rights and rely on justice and Sharia with regard to the principle of the individual nature of punishment.
4. Affirming that there is no legal basis on which the matter of tribal jalwa may rest.
5. Holding similar symposia and extending them to all governorates of the Kingdom.
6. Raising awareness of the problems of jalwa and working to teach this subject in schools and universities in order to build a society that is more aware of the problems of tribal jalwa.
7. Affirming the role of the State in imposing security throughout the Kingdom firmly and without delay.
8. Finding solutions and legislation that guarantee a fair trial and speed in deciding cases connected with jalwa.

The number of complaints received by the Center in 2018 relating to the right to residence and movement was 76 complaints, of which 66 were closed with a satisfactory result, while one complaint was closed with an unsatisfactory result, and 9 complaints remained under follow-up with the relevant authorities. The number of requests for assistance in this regard was 37, of which 25 were closed with a satisfactory result, while 12 remained under follow-up with the relevant authorities.

Asylum

Asylum is one of the challenges facing Jordan and the world in general, and it constitutes the greatest challenge for Jordan owing to the difficult economic conditions the country is experiencing as a result of the scarcity of its resources. What adds further to the burden borne by Jordan, as a State and a society, is the weak response of the international community to this crisis and its failure to discharge the responsibilities it undertook, particularly at the donors' conference held in London in 2016, which pledged to assist the countries hosting refugees in the States neighboring Syria.

Palestinian Refugees

In 2018, the issue of Palestinian refugees took a serious turn, represented by the financial deficit in the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the direct cause of which was the decision of the US Administration to halt US assistance and financial commitments to UNRWA. This threatened the Agency's operations, particularly the educational and health services it provides to Palestinian refugees in Jordan for the year 2018–2019. However, following a meeting of its Advisory Commission in Amman, the Agency issued a decision concluding that students and teachers would return to its 711 schools on schedule without delay.

Despite the efforts exerted by Jordan with Arab States, UNRWA has not yet overcome the severe financial crisis it is facing. Although USD 238 million in additional funding was secured from the beginning of January 2018, the funds available are still insufficient for UNRWA to continue providing its services as required.

It is noteworthy that UNRWA needs an additional USD 217 million to ensure that its schools remain open until the end of the 2018/2019 school year. UNRWA is suffering the most severe financial crisis in its history, following the US decision to reduce its contribution to the Agency during the current year to USD 65 million, after it had been approximately USD 365 million in 2017. The National Center for Human Rights is closely and continuously monitoring developments in this matter.

Jordan is to be credited with its diligent follow-up of the crisis facing UNRWA: the Government requested the convening of an emergency meeting of Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo on 11 September 2018 to discuss means of empowering UNRWA at present, to affirm political support for it, and to intensify and mobilize Arab

and international efforts to ensure that UNRWA continues to provide its educational, health and relief services to Palestinian refugees in the Agency's five fields of operation.

Syrian Refugees

Syrian asylum constitutes the greatest burden on the Kingdom in terms of the number of refugees, which has reached approximately (1,360,797) refugees, as shown in Table No. (2). Health and educational services continue to be provided to them inside and outside the camps. During the monitoring visits it conducted to all camps for Syrian refugees, the National Center for Human Rights observed a qualitative improvement in the services provided to the residents of these camps.

Table No. (2): Status and Conditions of Syrians in Jordan as of 31 December 2018

Item	Number
Number of Syrians on Jordanian territory	1,360,797
Number of Syrians on the Kingdom's territory before the Syrian crisis	750000
Number of Syrians who entered Jordan illegally	557897
Number of Syrians who voluntarily returned to their country	208524
Number of Syrians distributed among 5 camps, the largest being Al-Za'atari	1,259,93
Number of Syrians registered as asylum seekers with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	169078
Number of Syrians who obtained the magnetic card as of 31 December 2018	476223
Number of Syrian documents returned to their owners	12462
Number of Syrian students received by schools located inside the camps	32857
Number of Syrian students in Jordanian schools outside the camps	142510

- As a result of the relative calm in southern Syria, the Jordanian Government announced that it supports the voluntary return of Syrian refugees to their country; the number of voluntary returnees as of 31 December 2018 reached 208,524 persons.
- The Jordanian Government still insists on not opening the borders to any new refugees. The problem of those residing in the Rukban area remains at a standstill: the number of residents of this camp on the border has reached approximately seventy-five thousand refugees, whose entry the Jordanian Government prohibits. It should be noted that this camp is located on Syrian territory, but there are security difficulties in reaching it from inside Syria. The Jordanian Government has permitted the passage of humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons residing in this camp.
- The Jordanian Government issued 94,074 work permits to Syrian refugees in sectors open to Jordanian workers from 2016 until 31 December 2018, of which 15,242 work permits were issued to Syrian refugees inside the camps and 34,806 agricultural work permits, in addition to 9,670 flexible work permits.
- 35,000 Syrian students were enrolled in schools for the 2018/2019 school year.
- The number of Syrians who obtained magnetic security cards as of 31 December 2018 reached 476,223 refugees.
- The number of Syrian refugees in refugee camps on Jordanian territory reached 125,513 refugees, as shown in Table No. 3.

Table No. (3): Number of Syrian Refugees in the Camps

Camp	Number
Al-Za'atari Camp	78348
Mrajeeb Al-Fhood Camp (Emirati Jordanian)	6193
Al-Hadiqa Camp	505
Al-Azraq Camp	40467

The most prominent problems facing Syrian refugees include:

The difficulties inside Syria that prevent the smooth and facilitated voluntary return of Syrian refugees. These difficulties include:

1. Security risks, destruction of infrastructure, and the absence of employment opportunities and adequate means of livelihood.
2. As for the problems facing refugees residing inside refugee camps in Jordan, they consist of power outages and weak water services and health supervision.

In light of the observations monitored, and in order to advance the rights to nationality, residence, movement and asylum, the Center recommends, and reiterates some of, the following recommendations:

- Working to improve the quality of the new identity cards and the photograph on them.
- Reviewing and amending the Crime Prevention Law to ensure that there is no expansion of the issue of tribal jalwa, which has become a phenomenon affecting all governorates of the Kingdom.
- Activating the special committee formed to study the naturalization applications submitted by a number of persons residing in the Northern Badia, studying the files of the applicants, and concluding this troubling file.
- Addressing the problems faced by the children of Jordanian women married to foreigners in obtaining the facilities approved by the Jordanian Government.
- Developing a national strategy for dealing with the refugee crisis in order to preserve national gains and combat any negative effects on Jordanian society and the Jordanian State, and extending the oversight of Jordanian oversight bodies to the Syrian refugee camps.
- Pursuing Jordanian diplomatic efforts to urge the international community to assume its moral and legal responsibilities towards refugees.

4. The Right to Vote and Stand for Election

The right to vote and stand for election is one of the most prominent civil and political rights and one of the pillars of democratic governance based on the principle that the people are the source of all powers. This is because the existence of a transparent and fair electoral process is one of the most important guarantees of the existence of a State governed by the rule of law, and the absence of this right, or the obstruction of its exercise, diminishes the legal elements on which such a State is founded.

The Right to Vote and Stand for Election from a Legislative Perspective

The Constitution guarantees the right to vote and stand for election by providing in Article 67: "The House of Representatives shall consist of members elected by general, secret and direct ballot in accordance with an Elections Law that shall guarantee the following matters and principles:

1. The right of candidates to monitor the electoral process.
2. The punishment of those who tamper with the will of the voters.
3. The integrity of the electoral process at all its stages."

To guarantee the enjoyment of this right, the Constitution provides for the establishment by law of an independent commission to supervise and administer the parliamentary electoral process at all its stages, as well as to supervise any other elections decided upon by the Council of Ministers.

The ICCPR also guarantees the right to vote and stand for election in Article 25, and it has been referred to in several conventions and instruments, which state: "(b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors." As it is one of the means of protecting and promoting human rights in the State, the State's respect for this right, which is linked to the right to participate in public life, is considered an indicator of the existence of political will for reform.

Proceeding from the Center's mandate of protecting and promoting human rights, as set out in its Law No. (51) of 2006 and its amendments, the Center pays special attention to elections in their various forms, as an expression of the right to participation and to the alternation of responsibility and power, being a fundamental human right. In continuation of this approach, the Center has monitored the elections held in the Kingdom, whether parliamentary, municipal or otherwise.

Re-run of the Municipal, Local Council and Governorate Council Elections in the Al-Muwaqqar District

In 2018, elections for the municipal, local and governorate councils in the Al-Muwaqqar District became due. The Board of Commissioners of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) set 20 October 2018 as the date for re-running the municipal and governorate council elections in the Al-Muwaqqar District. The IEC had previously cancelled the voting and counting processes in the Al-Muwaqqar District in the municipal, local council and governorate council elections held on 15 August 2017, after ballot boxes there were tampered with and smashed by outlaws, who damaged 7 boxes out of 10. The tampering included interfering with and violating ballot papers and attacking and destroying the boxes, in addition to threatening members of the election committees.

The elections were held on 20 October 2018, and the voter turnout reached 53.77%, from the opening of the boxes at exactly seven o'clock in the morning until their closing at exactly seven o'clock in the evening. A specialized team was formed by the National Center for Human Rights to monitor the conduct of the electoral process, and the team recorded the following observations:

1. Failure to open the ballot boxes on time at a number of polling centers.

2. The continuation of electoral campaigning inside a number of polling centers, and attempts by representatives and supporters of candidates present outside and inside the polling halls to influence the will of voters.
3. Failure to observe the secrecy of the ballot in many cases, including inserting the ballot paper into the ballot box without folding it, allowing those present to see it; some voters photographing their ballot papers and publishing them openly; and many voters attempting to vote openly, which was rejected by most committees, while other committees, which were limited in number, turned a blind eye.
4. Heads of polling committees at a limited number of boxes directing older women voters to vote for a particular candidate, which constituted interference with their will.
5. The lack of the necessary facilities for persons with disabilities at a number of polling centers to enable them to exercise their right to participate in the elections.
6. Tight and strict security measures to ensure the integrity of the voting process and to prevent a repetition of the tampering that occurred in the previous elections.
7. Repeated interruption of the electronic link and the suspension of the voting process at a number of polling centers, with recourse to paper lists at some of them throughout the period of the interruption of the electronic link.
8. The violations also included, albeit in limited cases, allowing a number of companions of illiterate and elderly voters to vote on their behalf without accompanying them to the polling booth; failure to clearly direct voters as to where to place each ballot paper, which led to ballot papers being placed in boxes other than those designated for them, meaning that the papers in these boxes were not sound; and failure of polling committees to require voters to dip the finger of the left hand in the indelible ink.
9. The Center concluded that the occurrence of the above-mentioned violations was limited and did not constitute a widespread practice affecting the final outcome of the elections.
10. Late in 2018, the elections of the Chambers of Industry and the representatives of the industrial sectors were also held on 10 November 2018 for the Capital Governorate, Zarqa Governorate and Irbid Governorate, under the umbrella of the Independent Election Commission, which fully administered the conduct of the electoral process. The National Center formed a specialized team to monitor the conduct of the electoral process, as follows.

Chamber of Industry Elections

On 9 September 2018, H.E. the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply decided to hold the elections of the Chambers of Industry and the representatives of the industrial sectors. This was followed by the issuance of Council of Ministers Decision No. (20649/1/11/31) dated 3 September 2018, based on the recommendation of H.E. the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply by virtue of his letter No. (21140/12/9) dated 2 September 2018, assigning the Independent Election Commission to undertake the administration and supervision of the elections of the boards of directors of the Chambers of Industry and the elections of the representatives of the industrial sectors. The IEC set 10 November 2018 as the date for holding those elections.

It is noted that the setting of the date for holding the elections constituted a violation of Article (8/A/3), which requires that the period of preparation for the necessary electoral procedures shall not be less than three months, whereas the IEC shortened this period and did not observe the mandatory nature of this legal provision.

On the set date, the elections of the Chambers of Industry and the representatives of the industrial sectors were held in the three cities (Amman, Zarqa and Irbid). The elections for the Amman Chamber of Industry were held at the headquarters of the Amman Chamber of Industry, while the elections of the Irbid Chamber of Industry were held at the headquarters of the Irbid Chamber of Industry, and those of the Zarqa Chamber of Industry at the headquarters of the Zarqa Chamber of Industry.

The number of candidates in these elections was 65, of whom 18 were candidates for membership of the board of directors of the Amman Chamber of Industry, 20 were candidates representing the industrial sectors, 18 were candidates for membership of the board of directors of the Irbid Chamber of Industry, and 9 were candidates for membership of the board of directors of the Zarqa Chamber of Industry.

It is noted that the number of candidates for the board of directors of the Zarqa Chamber of Industry was equal to the number of seats allocated to them; accordingly, the candidates for the board of directors of the Zarqa Chamber of Industry won by acclamation, and the names of the winners were announced together with the announcement of the final results of the elections.

With regard to the procedures for opening the boxes and commencing the voting process, the Center's team recorded the following observations:

1. Commitment to opening the ballot boxes on time.
2. The continuation of electoral campaigning, particularly at the headquarters of the Amman and Irbid Chambers of Industry.
3. Attempts by some voters to photograph ballot papers.
4. The lack of the necessary facilities for persons with disabilities at the polling center of the Irbid Chamber of Industry to enable them to exercise their right to participate in the elections, as the polling room was on the second floor.
5. Attempts by representatives and supporters of candidates present outside the polling halls to influence the will of voters.
6. Some persons obtaining more than one proxy and exercising the right to vote on behalf of more than one entity. Although this procedure is lawful under Article 3 of Executive Instructions No. 2 on Voting, Counting and Tabulation of Votes for the Election of Members of the Councils of the Chambers and Industrial Sectors, the National Center expresses its concern about this procedure because of the threat it poses to the principle of the freedom and integrity of the electoral process, and calls for amending the instructions to prohibit granting one person more than one proxy to vote.

The National Center makes a set of recommendations to improve the quality of the electoral process for the elections of the Chambers of Industry and the representatives of the industrial sectors, including:

1. Amending the legislative framework to adopt an electoral system in line with the best international standards and practices, by adopting an electoral system that contributes to promoting the formation of blocs, in order to promote a reformist approach enabling coalition in industrial blocs or groupings to represent the industrial sectors in all governorates of the Kingdom.
2. Supporting the role of the Independent Election Commission so that it continues to administer and supervise the electoral process, in order to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.
3. Strengthening the independence of the Independent Election Commission from the administration of the Jordan Chamber of Industry, so that it is permitted to appoint its staff with full impartiality.
4. Adopting a modern legal framework that separates the substantive framework, which is set by law, from the procedural framework, transferring the latter to the powers of the Independent Election

Commission, so that it may develop a plan and a consistent and precise timetable for the electoral process that ensures sufficient time to hold the elections, within an adequate timetable for all stages of the electoral process.

5. Amending the relevant legislation to guarantee the right to litigation at two levels with respect to judicial appeals.
6. Including the names of candidates and the pictures and logos of blocs on the ballot paper in more than one language, to enable voters of non-Jordanian nationality to vote by marking the ballot without resorting to a companion, so as to ensure that the will of voters is not influenced.
7. Early awareness-raising for voters, particularly voters of non-Jordanian nationality, and candidates regarding the requirements and procedures contained in the legislative framework governing the electoral process.
8. Establishing a legal framework that ensures the resolution of electoral disputes.
9. Activating the role of the Independent Commission in monitoring electoral campaigning, activating accountability and answerability procedures, and establishing clear mechanisms and controls to ensure candidates' compliance with the rules on electoral campaigning.

Hashemite University Student Council Elections

On 8 December 2018, the University administration decided on the dates and procedures of the electoral process, whereby candidacy for membership of the Student Council would open at nine o'clock in the morning on Monday, 12 December 2018, and close at three o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, 14 December 2018, and the withdrawal period would run from nine o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon on Thursday, 15 December 2018.

Administration and Supervision of the Electoral Process and Commencement of Voting

Supervision of the electoral process was entrusted to the staff of the Hashemite University, whether faculty members, employees or administrators, who had received specialized training in this regard. The Center also observed that gender was taken into account in the formation of the committees, which constitutes one manifestation of women's empowerment and their involvement in the administration of the electoral process.

The ballot boxes were opened at exactly nine o'clock in the morning on Thursday, 6 January 2018. The National Center's team observed that the ballot papers had been signed (by a committee, bearing three signatures) and stamped in advance by the Deanship of Student Affairs, contrary to the proper practice whereby the ballot paper is signed by the head of the polling committee.

With regard to the procedures for opening the boxes and commencing the voting process, the Center's team recorded the following observations:

1. The polling and counting committees complied with opening the ballot boxes at exactly nine o'clock in the morning, the time set for opening the boxes.
2. The continuation of electoral campaigning, particularly in the Department of Industrial Engineering, Box No. 4, in addition to the exploitation of children to help distribute electoral campaign materials at the Faculty of Information Technology.
3. The lack of the necessary facilities for persons with disabilities to enable them to exercise their right to participate in these elections.
4. Some polling centers experienced repeated overcrowding, particularly the Faculty of Economics, Box No. 3, and the Faculty of Medicine.

Recommendations

The monitoring team records a number of positive observations demonstrating the University's progress in electoral procedures compared with previous stages, represented in the good knowledge of the polling and counting committees, which indicated the professionalism and accuracy of the training they had received; the provision of ballot boxes meeting international specifications and standards; transparency in displaying the voter lists on the University's website at an early stage; familiarizing students with voting and counting procedures by producing an introductory video for students and displaying it on the Hashemite University's website; the adoption of the open proportional list system with a threshold; and taking gender into account in the formation of committees, which constitutes one manifestation of women's empowerment and their involvement in the administration of the electoral process. The Center makes the following recommendations:

1. Allowing students a longer period of time to decide whether or not they wish to run as candidates in the coming elections.
2. Increasing the number of polling and counting centers so as to ensure that no more than 500 registered voters appear on the lists of each polling center, in order to avoid crowding of students at the doors of polling centers.
3. Adding the signature of the head of the polling committee to the ballot paper during the voting process, in addition to the signatures approved by the Deanship of Student Affairs/Department of Student Bodies.
4. Amending the internal instructions on candidates' electoral campaigns so as to ensure respect for the electoral silence period.

Mu'tah University Student Council Elections

On 19 December 2018, the University administration decided on the dates and procedures of the electoral process, and the Center monitored the electoral process.

With regard to the procedures for opening the boxes and commencing the voting process, the team of the National Center for Human Rights recorded the following observations:

1. Variation in the polling and counting committees' compliance with opening the ballot boxes at nine o'clock in the morning, the time set for opening the boxes.
2. The continuation of electoral campaigning at all polling centers.
3. Some polling centers experienced repeated overcrowding, such as the Faculty of Business Administration and the Faculty of Engineering, which at most times led to gatherings of voters or students in front of and inside these centers.

Counting and Announcement of Results

The Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Tareq Al-Majali, announced the results of the elections of the Student Union Council (twenty-third session). The general assembly numbered approximately 17 thousand male and female students, and the turnout reached 69%. The elections resulted in six female students winning quota seats, in addition to six female students winning competitive seats. Twenty-three male and female students won by acclamation, and voting at the Faculty of Educational Sciences was extended by two hours, i.e. until 6:00 p.m., owing to the lack of a legal quorum.

Recommendations

The monitoring team records a number of positive observations demonstrating the University's progress in electoral procedures compared with previous stages, represented in making the term of membership of the Union Council two academic years from the date of announcement of the election results, so as

to allow Council members sufficient time to implement their electoral programs; the provision of ballot boxes meeting international specifications and standards, with locks bearing serial numbers; transparency in displaying the voter lists on the University's website at an early stage; familiarizing students with voting and counting procedures; the adoption of the open proportional list system at the faculty level; taking gender into account in the formation of committees, which constitutes one manifestation of women's empowerment and their involvement in the administration of the electoral process; and the provision of objection forms at all polling centers.

In the event of a tie in the votes of the candidates obtaining the seat of a single electoral district, the term of membership is divided between them by lot before the date of the elections of the members of the administrative body, unless one of them withdraws in favor of the other in writing. The National Center makes a number of recommendations to improve the quality of the electoral process:

1. Increasing the number of polling and counting centers in the two Faculties (Engineering and Business) so as to ensure that no more than 500 registered voters appear on the lists of each polling center, in order to avoid crowding of students at the doors of polling centers.
2. Providing an alternative polling center for students of the Faculty of Business, given the narrowness of the rooms and corridors of this faculty, in order to facilitate matters for student voters and avoid their crowding inside the polling center.
3. Amending the instructions on candidates' electoral campaigns so as to ensure respect for the electoral silence period, which according to international practice is 24 hours before polling day.
4. Granting the Higher Elections Committee discretionary power to determine the extension period in the event that a quorum is not reached in any electoral district, and abolishing the mandatory two-hour extension period.
5. If, after the counting of votes in a ballot box, it becomes apparent that the number of stamped and signed papers exceeds or falls short of the number of voters at that box, according to the lists approved for that box, by a percentage exceeding 3%, the head of the polling and counting committee shall immediately notify the head of the Higher Elections Committee thereof, so that the latter may take a decision to cancel the result at that box and re-run the election there within a period not exceeding two weeks from polling day.
6. Numbering all ballot boxes with serial numbers.
7. Establishing a code of conduct for candidates' representatives so that they comply with the instructions of the polling and counting committees, ensuring that they do not interfere with the conduct and procedures of the voting and counting process or influence the will of voters.

Summary of the Work of the Eighteenth House of Representatives in Its Ordinary Session and Extraordinary Session

The year 2018 witnessed the adoption of a package of legislation, in addition to the holding of numerous oversight sessions, as follows:

- The number of sessions held by the House was 64: 41 legislative sessions and 23 oversight sessions (during which 81 questions were discussed) (and 1 interpellation).
- The number of laws passed by the House of Representatives during 2018 was 42 laws, the most prominent of which were:
 1. The Draft Natural Resources Law of 2015.
 2. The Draft Education and Scientific Research Law of 2017.
 3. The Draft Jordanian Universities Law of 2017.

4. The Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2016.
5. The Draft Law Amending the Higher Council for Youth Law of 2017.
 - The number of laws before the standing committees was 45, in addition to a proposal to amend the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives.
 - Laws returned by the Senate and passed by the House of Representatives, as follows:
1. The Draft Law Amending the Civil Aviation Law of 2015.
2. The Draft Petroleum Products Law of 2017.
3. The Draft Higher Education and Scientific Research Law of 2017.
4. The Draft Natural Resources Law of 2015.
5. The Draft Jordanian Universities Law of 2017.
6. The Draft Law Amending the Arbitration Law of 2017.
7. The Draft Multimodal International Transport Law of 2011.
8. Draft Law No. (74) of 2002, a Law Amending the Companies Law.
9. The Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2016.
10. The Draft Law Amending the Higher Council for Youth Law of 2017.

Recommendations

- The Center reaffirms its previous recommendations on the need to reconsider the Elections Law so as to ensure the advancement of the democratic process in Jordan, the representation of all segments of society, and the access of political parties to the House of Representatives, in a manner that further curbs political money, while emphasizing the need for the division of electoral districts to be made by law rather than by regulation.
- Administering the electoral process in a manner that further curbs manifestations of electoral campaigning and attempts to influence the will of voters, and that ensures the secrecy of the ballot.
- Developing the electoral system in Jordanian universities, including amending the bylaws and instructions relating to elections, particularly with regard to regulating electoral campaigning and administering the electoral process so that it is more transparent.
- Raising university students' awareness of international standards for holding fair and transparent elections and of the importance of participating in student union elections.
- Raising the awareness of those in charge of administering the electoral process in universities of international standards for election administration.
- Providing the necessary facilities for persons with disabilities so as to ensure their participation in student union elections and in local elections of various kinds.

5. The Right to Freedom of Opinion, Expression, the Press and Media, and Access to Information

Legislation Governing the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression

In response to demands by the public and by human rights bodies, the Government withdrew a draft law amending the Cybercrime Law from the House of Representatives; however, within a few days the Government swiftly returned the draft law to the House of Representatives with new amendments, without holding any consultations on them.

Among the most prominent provisions of the amending draft law was a redefinition of hate speech, which repeated the text of Article 150 of the Penal Code with the addition of the phrase "or incitement to violence" to that definition.

It should be noted that the existence of two similar texts widens the scope of criminal prosecution, not to mention that the definition was drafted in general and loose terms that may be interpreted to cover numerous acts and forms of speech, which constitutes a new and unjustified restriction on freedom of expression.

The draft law also contained other articles that constitute a restriction on freedom of expression. The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) submitted its comments on the draft law to the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Prime Ministry.²

The Government also withdrew a draft law amending the Law on Guaranteeing the Right of Access to Information in order to conduct further consultations on it. In this regard, the Government agreed to review this law comprehensively so that it achieves its objectives of facilitating the smooth flow and circulation of information. The Center stresses that the law requires a comprehensive amendment that realizes the principle of maximum disclosure of information, the principle of proactive disclosure and the principle of limited exceptions; that the Law on Guaranteeing the Right of Access to Information be given priority in the event of conflict with other legislation; and that the Information Council be reconstituted in a manner that guarantees its independence and the balance of its composition, taking into account international human rights standards relating to the right of access to information.

The year 2018 also witnessed the drafting of the General Amnesty Law. The Center submitted several proposals for the inclusion of certain offenses related to freedom of expression of opinion, as well as certain terrorism offenses such as promoting the ideas of a terrorist group, disturbing relations with a foreign state, and undermining the system of government or inciting opposition to it. However, not all of the Center's proposals were adopted; some of them were adopted, including the offense of defaming an official body and the offense of lèse-majesté (insulting the King), and the offenses related to Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law were included.

Practices Relating to Freedom of Expression

First: Detention for Expressing Their Opinions (Prisoners of Opinion)

The year 2018 witnessed the detention and trial of a number of persons for expressing their opinions on social media, for participating in sit-ins and protests, or through other means of expression. The Center monitored the following:

- The detention and trial of approximately ten persons for reasons ranging from their participation in the peaceful protests witnessed by the Kingdom in 2018, to their posting of publications or broadcasting of videos calling for reform or criticizing certain public figures. The charges

²The Center set out its comments on Article Two of the draft law amending the Cybercrime Law, Article Ten, Article Eight, Article Thirteen and Article Fifteen of the amending draft law.

brought against them ranged from undermining the system of government or inciting opposition to it, to lèse-majesté.³

- The Center monitored the detention by the security agencies of a number of activists and members of the popular movement (Hirak) (approximately ten persons) and their interrogation on account of their participation in certain peaceful protests calling for the amendment of certain legislation, combating corruption and resolving the problem of poverty and unemployment. They were released without any charges being brought against them. These detentions included certain persons affiliated with political parties.⁴
- The Center monitored the detention of 19 persons who had participated in, or were present in the area that witnessed, a protest vigil held on 13 December 2018. They were charged with impersonating a public official by wearing a uniform or a special insignia, pursuant to Article (202/2) of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960 and its amendments, and with possession of a firearm without a license, pursuant to Article (11/d) of the Firearms and Ammunition Law No. (34) of 1952 and its amendments.

More than one of them alleged that they had been beaten during their arrest. The Center visited them and concluded, through the statements of a group of them and observation of traces of bruises on their bodies, that some of them had been beaten during their arrest.

Second: Complaints under the Cybercrime Law

The year 2018 witnessed continued detention under Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law, and complaints filed by persons holding public office in the State against a group of individuals active on social media also continued.

Detentions in 2018 included a journalist who is a member of the Council of the Jordan Press Association, as well as a media professional at a news website, following a complaint filed against them by a former Minister of Finance in connection with allegations of tax evasion that they had published on the website. They were detained by the Amman Public Prosecutor on 17 January 2018 pursuant to Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law and were released on 19 January 2018; the case is still pending before the judiciary.

The Center also monitored administrative governors detaining persons charged with violating Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law after their release by the Public Prosecutor. The Center stresses that the administrative detention of activists after their judicial release constitutes a flagrant violation of the principle of separation of powers and an encroachment by the executive authority on the powers of the judicial authority.

The table below shows the cases relating to the offense of sending, resending or publishing data or information via the information network, a website or any information system that involves defamation, slander or contempt of any person, which is punishable by imprisonment for not less than three months and a fine of not less than one hundred dinars and not more than two thousand dinars, pursuant to Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law No. (27) of 2015, for the year 2018:

Table No. (4)

Offense	Number of Cases	Detainees
The offense of sending, resending or publishing data or information via the information network, a website or any information system involving defamation, slander or contempt of any person, contrary to Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law.	1821	161

³They were detained at various intervals during 2018.

⁴They were detained at various intervals during 2018.

Third: Persons Detained and Convicted of Offenses Relating to Freedom of Expression under the Penal Code

Table No. (5) below shows the number of persons convicted of offenses relating to freedom of expression under the Penal Code for the year 2018:

Table No. (5)

Offense	Number of Cases	Number of Detainees
The offense of defaming an official body, contrary to Article (191) of the Penal Code.	452	2
The offense of lèse-majesté, contrary to Article (195) of the Penal Code.	275	112
The offense of inciting sectarian or racial strife, contrary to Article (150) of the Penal Code.	30	16

The Penal Code No. (16) of 1960 and its amendments contains a number of legal provisions relating to freedom of expression. These provisions are characterized by broad legal drafting and by a lack of precision and clarity in the formulation of the material element (actus reus) of the offense, which amounts to a breach of a fundamental principle, namely the principle of the legality of crimes and penalties, since a legal provision must be sufficiently clear and specific to enable individuals to regulate their conduct accordingly. In the same context, some of these provisions penalize the potential danger that may result from committing the act.⁵ These provisions include the offense of defaming an official body, the offense of lèse-majesté and the offense of inciting sectarian or racial strife.

Fourth: Persons Detained on the Basis of Terrorism Offenses Relating to Freedom of Expression

Table No. (6) shows the numbers of persons detained and convicted in terrorism cases relating to freedom of expression, according to information received by the Center from the Military Judiciary Directorate:⁶

Table No. (6)

Offense	Number of Cases	Numbers of Detainees and Convicted Persons
The offense of opposing the system of government or inciting opposition to it, pursuant to Article (149/1) of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960 and its amendments	2	2
Committing acts that would expose the Kingdom to the danger of hostile acts, disturb its relations with a foreign state, or expose Jordanians to the danger of acts of retaliation against them or their property, contrary to Article (3/b) of the Prevention of Terrorism Law.	5	9
Promoting the ideas of a terrorist group, contrary to Article 3/e of the Prevention of Terrorism Law.	52	75
Committing acts that would endanger the safety and security of society or disturb public order, contrary to Article (2) of the Prevention of Terrorism Law.	1	1

⁵Article (118/2) of the Penal Code is considered one of the offenses of danger rather than harm, in which the criminal legislator penalizes the mere probability of the occurrence of danger.

⁶Letter received by the National Center from the Military Judiciary Directorate dated 22 January 2019.

Fifth: Violations Relating to Freedom of Expression during the Period of Popular Protest against the Draft Law Amending the Income Tax Law of 2018

The popular protests in the Kingdom began on 30 May 2018 with a strike called by the professional associations in protest against the draft law amending the Income Tax Law and the Civil Service Regulation. This was followed by protests that took the Fourth Circle as their base and continued until 6 June 2018, when the Prime Minister-designate announced the new Government's intention to withdraw the draft law amending the Income Tax Law.

Within the framework of the Center's follow-up of freedom of expression and its examination of the violations that affected this right during the period of protests and popular events, which ranged from threatening employees with disciplinary penalties and issuing circulars to that effect, to banning and dispersing demonstrations and detaining persons, the most prominent violations of freedom of expression during the period from 30 May 2018 to 6 June 2018 are set out below:

1. Threats of Disciplinary Penalties

Following the call by the professional associations for public and private sector employees to hold a general strike on Wednesday, 30 May 2018, the management of the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization, represented by the Assistant Director General for Administrative Affairs, addressed a circular to its employees dated 29 May 2018, which included the following:

(In view of the requirements of the interest of work, we request that you remain at your workplaces and continue to provide services to clients and service recipients in the best manner in order to safeguard their interests, and that you not participate in the strike announced by certain union bodies, noting that this will be taken into account when granting bonuses and incentives and in the annual performance appraisal).

The other circular, issued on 30 May 2018, included the following:

(Subject: Not publishing or sharing photographs relating to the sit-in. With reference to the above subject, please be advised that any employee who publishes or shares photographs relating to the above subject on social media will be subject to the due procedures in accordance with the Civil Service Regulation).

2. Banning and Dispersing Sit-ins or Obstructing Them

3. The protest vigil held on the evening of Friday, 1 June 2018 near the Prime Ministry building (Fourth Circle area) was forcibly dispersed by personnel of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) and the General Command of the Gendarmerie Forces, pursuant to a decision of the Governor of the Capital.
4. The protest vigil that was intended to be held on the evening of Saturday, 2 June 2018 near the Prime Ministry building (Fourth Circle area) was forcibly prevented by personnel of the Public Security Directorate and the General Command of the Gendarmerie Forces.
5. On 2 June 2018, employees of Jerash Municipality switched off the lighting of the municipality square in the city center in order to prevent a protest vigil intended to be held in that area. The lighting remained off, on the pretext of a technical fault, from eight o'clock in the evening until a quarter past ten on the evening of the same day; the lighting was then restored and the protest vigil was held.

Detention

- Four young men who had participated in the protest vigil on 3 June 2018 were detained. The detainees were referred to the Public Prosecutor on a charge of resisting public security officers, and they were released and allowed to go free; however, the Governor of the Capital detained

them and required of them a judicial bail bond of JOD 100,000. Because they refused to provide it, he kept them in detention at Marka Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, and they were later released on 7 June 2018.

Sixth: Freedom of Expression in the Academic Sector

The academic sector witnessed several violations of freedom of expression of opinion, the most prominent of which were:

- The arrest of a student, the representative of the Faculty of Sharia in the University of Jordan Student Union, on 21 March 2018, after he posted a video clip on his personal page on the social networking site (Facebook) condemning the insulting of Sharia faculties by certain persons. He was taken to the headquarters of the Intelligence Department and interrogated about his student activities, and he was released on 4 April 2018 without being referred to the competent judicial authorities.
- The arrest of the President of the Student Council at the "Polytechnic" College on 7 March 2018, following his initiative since the beginning of March 2018 to adopt certain student demands, such as installing curtains in classrooms, replacing boards, improving lighting, and enabling students to photocopy documents in the offices instead of the sums collected from them as a printing allowance when paying university fees. Following these demands and the college administration's failure to meet them, the President of the Student Council called on his fellow students at the college to hold a peaceful protest vigil on campus on 24 February 2018. He was arrested and interrogated about these events at the headquarters of the General Intelligence Department and was released on 13 March 2018 without being prosecuted.

Seventh: Prevention of Events and Harassment of Individuals for Expressing Their Opinions

The Center has consistently monitored and verified the banning of events, as it constitutes one of the manifestations of a clear violation of the right to freedom of expression, since it entails preventing individuals from expressing their opinions by the means they deem appropriate and lawful, whether in the form of festivals, speeches, seminars or otherwise. The most prominent cases monitored and verified by the Center involving the banning of events or harassment of individuals for expressing their opinions were the following:⁷

- The Center monitored the termination of the services of a sanitation worker (Amal Al-Watan) in one of the municipalities on account of his participation in a work strike and his incitement of workers to participate in the strike on 11 February 2018.
- The banning of the launch event of the Democratic Civil Alliance on 22 December 2017, which was intended to be held at four o'clock in the afternoon at Al-Hussein Cultural Center / Ras Al-Ain area; the banning decision was issued by the Governor of the Capital.
- The banning of a protest vigil called by the Jordan Press Association near the Prime Ministry headquarters in condemnation of the decision to detain journalist Omar Mahareme and media professional Shadi Al-Zinati following the complaint filed against them by former Minister of Finance Omar Malhas on 17 January 2018. The Prime Minister and the Speakers of the House of Representatives and the Senate were addressed regarding the incident.
- The banning of two events of the Arab Nasserist Democratic Forum commemorating the centenary of the birth of the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, which were intended to be held at the headquarters of the Construction Contractors Association / Abdoun. The two events consisted of: an intellectual workshop on 24 February 2018 and a rally on 4 March 2018. Following verification procedures, it was established that the banning decision had been issued by the Governor of the Capital, and the Prime Minister and the Speakers of the House of Representatives and the Senate were addressed regarding the incident.
- The dispersal on 30 January 2018 of a sit-in by a group of farmers and the Farmers' Union, held in the area adjacent to the House of Representatives, condemning the failure of the Ministry of Labor to respond to their demands, namely reducing the fees for migrant workers employed in the agricultural sector to JOD 120, as they had been previously; reopening the recruitment of

⁷In addition to what is mentioned in the report under the item on violations relating to freedom of expression during the period of popular protest against the draft law amending the Income Tax Law of 2018.

Egyptian migrant workers; abolishing bank guarantees required of farmers; and abolishing the taxes imposed on agricultural production inputs and products. It was established that the dispersal was pursuant to a decision of the Governor of the Capital, and the Prime Minister and the Speakers of the House of Representatives and the Senate were addressed regarding the incident.

- The banning of a lecture by MP Huda Al-Otoun entitled "Women and Their Role in Society", which was intended to be held at the Professional Associations Complex in Irbid Governorate on 22 February 2018 and organized by the Islamic Action Front.
- It was established that the banning decision had been issued by the Governor of Irbid, and accordingly the Prime Minister and the Speakers of the House of Representatives and the Senate were addressed. Following this correspondence, the Center received a communication from the Prime Minister by virtue of his letter No. (1/11/18/9582), which referred the Center's report to the Minister of Interior for study and for the necessary action to be taken.
- The banning of a conference entitled "International Dialogue: Hate Speech, Media and Violent Extremism... Approach and Lessons Learned", which was intended to be held at the Grand Hyatt Amman Hotel on 14 March 2018, organized by the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD). It was established that the banning decision had been issued by the Governor of Irbid, and accordingly the Prime Minister and the Speakers of the House of Representatives and the Senate were addressed. Following this correspondence, the Center received a communication from the Prime Minister by virtue of his letter No. (1/11/18/9581), which referred the Center's report to the Minister of Interior for study and for the necessary action to be taken.
- The banning of a memorial rally for "Abu Ali Mustafa", which was intended to be held by the Popular Unity Party on 28 August 2018; however, the Government subsequently allowed the rally to be held a few days later and provided the necessary protection.

Eighth: Freedom of the Press and Media

At the outset, it should be noted that during 2018, offenses relating to press and publications were attributed to 401 persons, of whom 225 were convicted, the charges against 5 persons were dropped, 31 persons were acquitted, 130 persons were found not liable, and the prosecution of (10) persons was stayed.

Meanwhile, the Center monitored a number of violations affecting freedom of the press and freedom of the media, the most prominent of which were:

- The detention of journalist Omar Mahareme on 17 January 2018 for publishing press material on an electronic news website, on a charge of publishing content involving defamation, slander and contempt on websites, contrary to Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law; he was released on 18 January 2018.⁸
- The detention of media professional Shadi Al-Zinati on 17 January 2018 for publishing press material on an electronic news website involving defamation, slander and contempt, contrary to Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law; he was released on 18 January 2018.
- The holding of media professional Musab Al-Hasanat / Nour Al-Urdun channel while covering a tribal brawl in the Dawar Al-Qubba area of Irbid Governorate on 19 June 2018. Al-Hasanat was held for hours at the Al-Madina Security Center by personnel of the Preventive Security Department and was then released without being referred to the judiciary.
- Preventing photographer Fares Khalifa from entering the House of Representatives to perform his duties on 4 February 2018, on account of his photographing private correspondence between MPs and ministers and among MPs themselves.
- Certain journalists and media professionals were subjected to assault and harassment while covering the protest vigil held on 13 December 2018.

⁸The Center visited journalist Omar Mahareme and media professional Shadi Al-Zinati at Al-Juweideh Correctional and Rehabilitation Center on 18 January 2018.

Ninth: Audiovisual Media and Electronic News Websites

The audiovisual media sector witnessed several positive developments in 2018. The Media Commission established a national framework with an advisory role for the advancement of the media sector, comprising all relevant sectors. Within the framework of implementing Jordan's Third National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership initiative, under the pillar of strengthening the regulatory framework for media freedom, the Commission also collected and published recommendations and proposals relating to improving media freedoms from all sources. The Commission further established an interactive electronic platform to engage the public in the discussion on media freedom.

Media Complaints Committee

- The number of complaints considered by the Committee in 2018 was one complaint, relating to intellectual property, compared with 12 complaints in 2017; in 2016, the total number of complaints received was 11. The Media Complaints Committee is one of the positive developments introduced by the Audiovisual Media Law No. (26) of 2015, which provided for the formation of a committee of specialists to consider complaints submitted by the public or any other party relating to media content or material broadcast or recorded for the purposes of display or public circulation, or by one licensee against another licensee, pursuant to Article (4/y).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the year 2018 witnessed the following with regard to audiovisual media and electronic news websites:

- The number of electronic publications licensed was 25, bringing the total number of licensed electronic publications as at the end of 2018 to 182. Forty (40) electronic publications were blocked for failing to obtain the necessary license from the Commission, pursuant to Article (49/a/1) of the Press and Publications Law No. (8) of 1998 and its amendments.
- The number of satellite stations licensed was 3, bringing the total number of licensed satellite stations to 36 as at the end of 2018.
- The total number of licensed radio stations as at the end of 2018 was 39; no radio stations were licensed in 2018.
- No radio rebroadcasting station was licensed during 2018.
- 279 films were viewed, and the Commission did not object to the screening of any of them except for 5 films, which it banned⁹ for reasons relating to the presence of immoral scenes and violations of public order, pursuant to Article 4/a of the Regulation on Works and the Licensing and Censorship of Audiovisual Works No. (63) of 2004.
- The number of book titles that entered the Kingdom and were circulated was 500000 titles, of which 1202 titles were requested for follow-up; these were approved with the exception of 45 titles, the circulation of which was withheld because they contained material contravening the provisions of the Press and Publications Law.
- With regard to warnings, no warnings were issued to satellite stations, radio stations or electronic publications during 2018. Nor were any books printed inside the Kingdom referred to the judiciary, nor was any audiovisual program suspended during 2018.
- The Commission did not circulate any publication ban decision in 2018.

Publication Ban (Gag) Decisions

The Center monitored the cases in which decisions banning publication were issued during 2018, the most prominent of which were:

- A publication ban issued on 2 February 2018 in the case of the National Bank for Financing Small Projects by the Public Prosecutor of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, in order to prevent harm to the course of the investigation, according to the Commission.

⁹According to the Commission, the reasons for the ban relate either to the presence of sexual scenes and obscene language, or to religious reasons and the presence of material offensive to religions. Media Commission letter No. T/2611 dated 16 May 2017.

- A publication ban in the case known as the tobacco case, issued on 20 December 2018 by the State Security Court.

Tenth: The Right of Access to Information

The Center conducted field visits during which it monitored the reality of the right of access to information in institutions concerned with implementing this right, and recorded the following observations:

- Failure to appoint an information officer in a number of institutions, as required by the circulars issued by the Prime Ministry, and failure to establish precise and clear procedures for obtaining information.
- The absence in certain institutions of a special register entitled the "Information Register" containing all actions taken on requests.
- Expansion of the information classified as confidential, and the absence of clear and precise criteria for the classification process and procedures.
- Failure to provide applicants for information with a notification containing the date of the request, the date of follow-up, the nature of the information, the statutory response period, and the applicant's right to file a complaint with the Information Council or to appeal before the administrative judiciary in the event of refusal.
- Failure to post an index of public and confidential information on the ministry's website, and failure in general to practice proactive disclosure in a manner consistent with international standards and best practices.

On another level, the number of complaints received by the Information Council during 2018 was one complaint. As for the number of requests for access to information, it amounted to 6490 requests in 2018, compared with 13004 in 2017. A total of 39 requests were rejected out of the total number of requests submitted in 2018, according to the official statistics received from the Information Council.

Eleventh: Hate Speech

In 2018, the Center monitored a media professional being subjected to insults, abuse and death threats on account of an image shared on a website that was deemed offensive to one of the revealed religions. The media professional and a female employee of the website were detained on a charge of inciting strife, contrary to Article 150 of the Jordanian Penal Code.

The Center addressed the Public Security Directorate to ascertain the number of complaints received by the Cybercrime Unit relating to hate speech. According to the Public Security Directorate's letter, the number of cybercrimes classified as involving hate speech was 131 cases, while the number of cybercrimes relating to promoting the ideas of a terrorist group was 245 cases. The number of cases relating to defamation, slander and contempt was 184 cases, and the total number of complaints relating to cybercrimes was 2717 cases.

Universal Periodic Review Recommendations

Jordan underwent the Universal Periodic Review, and 226 recommendations were made to Jordan. Many of these recommendations related to freedom of expression, the most prominent of which were amending the Cybercrime Law, in addition to reconsidering the amendments proposed to the draft law, particularly those relating to the definition of hate speech. Jordan also received recommendations relating to not restricting the use of the Internet and not prosecuting journalists and activists in cases of opinion.

Among the most prominent recommendations made by the Human Rights Committee on Jordan's fifth periodic report relating to freedom of expression were the following:

- Requesting the Government to review the Prevention of Terrorism Law to ensure that its definition of terrorism and terrorist acts is consistent with international standards.

- Ensuring that suspects are tried before ordinary civilian courts with full respect for due process requirements.

The Committee indicated that it was concerned about the continued exposure of journalists to judicial prosecution and penalties under the Penal Code and the Prevention of Terrorism Law if they expressed critical views, including harsh criticism of the King.

The Committee recommended that the State take the necessary measures to protect journalists so as to enable them to carry out their activities in full freedom and without restrictions. It should investigate attacks against such persons who express critical views, and ensure that any restrictions imposed on the activities of the press and the media comply.

The Committee expressed its concern at the circumvention of the law in practice through the banning of numerous demonstrations, the detention of their organizers and participants under the Crime Prevention Law and the Prevention of Terrorism Law, compelling many of them to sign undertakings not to participate in demonstrations, and the imposition of severe restrictions on civil society organizations.

Recommendations

- Reconsider the amendments included in the draft Cybercrime Law, particularly with regard to the definition of hate speech, and avoid legislative duplication, which leads to imbalances in the national legislative system and to a widening of the scope of prosecution.
- Amend the Law on Guaranteeing the Right of Access to Information so as to guarantee the principle of maximum disclosure of information and to confine exceptions to the narrowest limits; reconstitute the Information Council in a manner that guarantees its independence and balance; and review the procedures for obtaining information to make them easier and more effective.
- Resort to judicial detention only within the narrowest limits and not treat it as the basic rule, release being the rule and detention the exception.
- Refrain from banning events that are conducted lawfully and by peaceful means.
- Establish clear policies on combating hate speech that focus on the values of human rights and citizenship and that strengthen economic and social rights and public freedoms; and review the National Plan to Combat Extremism, which in its initial form constituted further restrictions on public freedoms, particularly freedom of expression.
- Strengthen the exercise of freedom of expression in universities, including by amending university regulations and instructions, and refrain from imposing penalties on students for expressing their opinions in student protests or sit-ins or for posts on social media.

6. The Right to Peaceful Assembly

The standards guaranteeing the right to peaceful assembly are numerous, encompassing national, regional and international standards, which affirm the importance of this right for individuals.¹⁰

Most international instruments concur that freedom of assembly may not be subjected to procedural and organizational restrictions except in accordance with exhaustively defined bases and criteria, which may not be expanded in a manner that leads to the denial of freedom of assembly or obstructs its exercise; and that no restrictions may be imposed other than those that are in conformity with the law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety, morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

At the national level, the Jordanian Constitution guarantees the right of assembly under Article 28, which provides that: "Laws issued under this Constitution to regulate rights and freedoms may not affect the essence of such rights or prejudice their fundamentals".

The Public Gatherings Law No. (7) of 2004 regulates the right of Jordanians to public assembly. However, the Center considers that this law still contains certain legal provisions that are inconsistent with international standards, including Article 2 concerning the definition of a public meeting.¹¹ The Center considers that this article contains an absolute definition in terms of the breadth of its scope, the number of persons participating and the place where it is held. Accordingly, under the definition contained in the law, a public meeting is any meeting whose purpose is to discuss matters relating to the general policy of the State, without specifying the number of persons assembled or the place of the meeting. Consequently, the administrative authority is entitled to take measures and actions against any two or more persons who meet in any place to deliberate on a matter related to the general policy of the State. Moreover, the concept of general policy contained in the definition is a relative concept that varies among individuals, since the subjects of the general policy of the State encompass numerous matters, including the work and programs of the Government, authorities and public institutions relating to defining the supreme interests of the State, as well as the activities and gatherings carried out by individuals and civil society institutions and the discussion of matters of public interest.

In this regard, the Center reiterates the need to amend the text of Article 2 of the Public Gatherings Law in a clear and specific manner, taking into consideration the avoidance of an expansive definition of a

¹⁰This is set out in Article (20) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article (21) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), in addition to what has been affirmed regarding this right by the decisions of the international committees established under the international human rights conventions. This was stated by the Human Rights Committee, established under the ICCPR, in one of its comments, namely that citizens take part in influencing the conduct of public affairs through public debate and dialogue with their representatives and through their capacity to organize themselves, assemble and form associations. In the same context, the Human Rights Council affirmed the need for Member States to ensure the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration in its resolution No. 24/5 issued on 8 October 2013, which stated: "...of their obligation to respect and fully protect the rights of all individuals to assemble peacefully and associate freely... and to take all necessary measures to ensure that any restrictions on the free exercise of the right to peaceful assembly are prevented". Non-treaty bodies have also affirmed this; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, in her report to the United Nations General Assembly dated 10 August 2012, recommended that "it is essential that national legislation aimed at ensuring public safety and public order contain clearly defined provisions and not allow for any discrimination in the application of such legislation, particularly in responding to the right to peaceful assembly". The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union also affirmed the importance of citizens' enjoyment of this right in Article (12), noting the importance of guaranteeing the right to peaceful assembly at all levels, particularly in political, trade union and civic matters, and the right of everyone to form and join trade unions. The Arab Charter on Human Rights provides in Article (57) that every citizen has the right to freedom of assembly and freedom of peaceful gathering. The European Convention on Human Rights affirmed in Article (11) the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others, without any restrictions other than those prescribed by law as are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety, the maintenance of order and the prevention of crime. The Jordanian Constitution also guarantees the right to peaceful assembly; paragraph (2) of Article (16) of the Constitution provides that: "Jordanians shall have the right to establish associations, trade unions and political parties, provided that their objectives are lawful, their means peaceful, and their by-laws not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution". Article (23) of the Jordanian Constitution provides that: "The State shall protect labor and enact legislation therefor based on the following principles: free trade union organization within the limits of the law".

¹¹Article 2 defines a meeting as "a meeting held to discuss a matter related to the general policy of the State".

meeting so that it does not become a pretext for the executive authority to restrict the right of individuals to freedom of public assembly. On the other hand, it is necessary to work towards curtailing the powers of the administrative governor set out in the law relating to monitoring and dispersing public meetings and the subordination of the security agencies to his decision in dealing with public meetings, given that the law has not granted the administrative governor discretionary authority to ban a public meeting, but only the authority to disperse public meetings where the course of any of them may endanger lives or public or private property or prejudice public safety.

Practical Exercise of the Right to Public Assembly

The year 2018 witnessed various forms of public participation. The Center closely monitored and followed up¹² the state of public protests, sit-ins, strikes and marches that spread throughout the Kingdom during that year, whether by employees of public and official institutions, by the private sector, or by students or civil society bodies, including parties, associations, coalitions and trade unions, and it issued several statements in this regard.¹³ The NCHR records the following observations, which had a bearing on the extent to which citizens enjoyed the exercise of their right to peaceful assembly:

1. The Center observed that at every protest, march or sit-in there was a heavy security presence of the Gendarmerie forces, the Public Security and the riot police.
2. The Center observed attempts by certain parties to place materials obstructing movement and assembly (a black petroleum substance – road asphalt – inside the area where sit-ins were held, in order to prevent sit-in participants from sitting or moving freely within the sit-in area; the authorities did not investigate the party that did so), which resulted in preventing protesters and sit-in participants from reaching the place designated for the protest (the Fourth Circle / in front of the Prime Ministry / the Jordan Hospital square / near the Al-Nisr traffic light / in front of the House of Representatives ...), prompting the demonstrators to sit and sleep in the streets, which led the security agencies to use force to disperse the gathering.
3. The majority of those who held the sit-ins, protests, marches and strikes were young people.
4. There was clear participation by women in the protests and sit-ins held against the amendment of the Income Tax Law.
5. Children participated, accompanied by their families, in the protests and sit-ins held against the amendment of the Income Tax Law.
6. Participants in the public protests were divided, and sought to organize separate marches at the same time, which means that the reference body calling for the protests was unified, but not the organizing body.
7. Members of the popular movement (Hirak) were active on social media, calling for protests, sit-ins and strikes in a semi-organized manner; examples include the organized "Park It and Switch It Off" (Saffha w Itfiha) campaign in objection to the draft Income Tax Law.

¹²The Center formed a specialized team to monitor manifestations of popular participation, and detailed reports were prepared in this regard and the relevant authorities were addressed concerning them. In addition, a specialized team was formed to monitor the state of the general strike on social media and in the daily newspapers. Furthermore, on 30 May 2018, the day of the general strike in Jordan, the Board of Trustees held a session to discuss a number of human rights issues, including discussion of the draft Jordanian Income Tax Law; following extensive discussions by the Board of Trustees, the Board issued a number of legal recommendations.

¹³Available on the Center's website.

8. A number of Hirak members participating in the various forms of popular protest were detained, among them party members, members of the popular movement and human rights activists.¹⁴
9. Protests, sit-ins and demonstrations were repeated in protest against the adoption of amendments to the Income Tax Law, the Cybercrime Law and the Civil Service Regulation, and to demand economic and political reforms, amendment of the Constitution and a constitutional monarchy.
10. The Center observed a delay in responding to the demands of demonstrators, sit-in participants and protesters, which contributed to the repetition of many sit-ins by the same party with the aim of obtaining an official response to its demands.

In order to ascertain the actual situation of peaceful assembly in the Kingdom in 2018, the Center monitored manifestations of popular participation in the form of protests, sit-ins, strikes, marches and popular movements, including the following:

First: Sit-ins, Protests and Strikes in the Agricultural Sector

The year 2018 witnessed the continuation of several sit-ins, protests and strikes by certain workers in the agricultural sector in Jordan, in condemnation of the poor living and sectoral conditions in the sector, as well as in condemnation of the imposition of new taxes on the agricultural sector. In this regard, the Center monitored the statement issued by the Committee for the Defense of Farmers on 3 February 2018,¹⁵ which explained what happened to the protesters during their sit-in in front of the House of Representatives. The Center contacted Mr. Odeh Al-Rawashdeh, President of the General Union of Farmers, to ascertain the demands of the sit-in participants and the extent of the government authorities' response to those demands. Al-Rawashdeh explained that the General Union of Jordanian Farmers had held 6 sit-ins on different dates, four of them in front of the House of Representatives and two in front of the Professional Associations Complex, while the farmers' demands were not met, and everything that happened did not go beyond official promises. The other sit-ins monitored by the Center were as follows:

1. Farmers announce an open-ended sit-in in front of the "House of Representatives".¹⁶
2. Suspension of the farmers' sit-in (expanded).¹⁷
3. Farmers abandon their land and threaten escalation.¹⁸
4. "Free Farmers: the sit-in continues and there is no leaving the street except with the abolition of the 10% tax on the agricultural sector".¹⁹
5. Farmers return to their sit-in in front of the House of Representatives.²⁰

¹⁴Statement issued by the Center on 18 December 2018 on the sit-in near the Jordan Hospital during the period from 6 to 13 December 2018. See the website www.nchr.org.jo

¹⁵The statement read as follows: "The Committee for the Defense of Farmers, comprising poultry, cattle, vegetable and fruit producers, has held an open-ended peaceful sit-in in front of the House of Representatives as of 30 January 2018, with the aim of demanding the abolition of the unjust tax imposed on all agricultural production inputs and supplies, which will raise the prices of most fresh foodstuffs and exhaust and drain the already depleted pocket of the citizen, after the Committee had informed H.E. the Minister of Interior and H.E. the Director of Public Security of the peaceful nature of the sit-in and the noble objectives it seeks. The farmers participating in the sit-in and the citizens who joined them were surprised when a group of Public Security personnel removed the sit-in tent, which increased the rallying of farmers, as well as the institutions overseeing the sector, around the Committee, adding legitimacy to its legitimacy and determination to pursue what it set out to achieve."

¹⁶Al-Bawsala News: 30 January 2018.

¹⁷Al-Ghad newspaper, 7 February 2018.

¹⁸Al-Ghad newspaper, 24 April 2018.

¹⁹Saraya website, 2 April 2018.

²⁰Al-Sabeel newspaper: 24 February 2018.

6. Farmers continue the sit-in.²¹
7. Farmers: we are continuing our open-ended sit-in even on holidays.²²
8. The farmers' sit-in continues until a government statement is issued confirming the abolition of the tax on the sector.²³
9. Farmers refuse to end their sit-in before the abolition of the recent taxes on the sector.²⁴
10. Al-Alimi to Sawaleif: on the sidewalk until the tax is abolished.²⁵
11. Farmers hold a renewed sit-in in protest against the tax.
12. The Jordan Farmers' Gathering called for an open-ended sit-in.²⁶
13. Farmers continue their sit-in in rejection of the income tax.²⁷
14. Farmers held a sit-in in front of the House of Representatives in rejection of the Government's recent decision to impose a tax on the inputs and outputs of the agricultural sector.²⁸

Sit-ins, Protests and Strikes in the Education Sector

The year 2018 witnessed the continuation of several sit-ins, protests and strikes by certain workers in the education sector, represented by the Teachers' Association, as follows:

1. A teachers' strike to discuss the teachers' demands, foremost among them the amendment of the Civil Service Regulation.²⁹
2. The Teachers' Association issued a statement³⁰ calling on civil society to stand by it against the amendments to the Civil Service Regulation.³¹
3. The Teachers' Association insisted on proceeding with its partial teaching strike in public schools in rejection of the amendments to the Civil Service Regulation.³²

Sit-ins, Protests and Strikes in the Industrial Sector

1. On 27 May 2008, workers in Jordan's factories held a partial strike in rejection of the draft Income Tax Law.³³
2. A general strike in rejection of the draft law amending the Income Tax Law.³⁴

²¹Zad Al-Urdun News Agency, 4 March 2018.

²²Al-Anbat newspaper, 28 February 2018.

²³Al-Rai newspaper, 1 March 2018.

²⁴Roya News, 2 April 2018.

²⁵Al-Ghad newspaper, 1 March 2018.

²⁶Al-Ghad newspaper, 9 January 2018.

²⁷Al-Ghad newspaper, 10 February 2018.

²⁸Roya News Agency, 4 March 2018.

²⁹Al-Ghad newspaper: 25 April 2018.

³⁰The statement issued by the Teachers' Association: "The new Civil Service Regulation is a devilish scheme targeting the security of the homeland and attempting to undermine the pillars of the Jordanian State, and we will not allow conspiracy against our homeland, our leadership and our people. Teachers are the first army of the homeland and the builders of generations and nations. We call on our colleagues to abide by all the decisions of the Association and to be prepared for all upcoming options, and we call on all civil society institutions to stand with the Teachers' Association to preserve the security of the homeland and to reject these schemes that target our homeland, its security and stability. The next few days will witness new measures by the Jordanian Teachers' Association in defense of our homeland, our people and our leadership."

³¹Al-Ghad newspaper, 21 April 2018.

³²Al-Ghad newspaper, 26 November 2018.

³³Al-Ghad newspaper, 27 May 2018.

³⁴Al-Ghad newspaper, 30 May 2018.

3. Dar Al Dawa company stops work to achieve their labor demands, including improved working conditions; for its part, the company threatened its employees participating in the strike, which it described as illegitimate, with a deduction of JOD 50 for the first day and JOD 5 for each subsequent day, in addition to deducting their wages for those days.³⁵
4. The Naour Hiraq decides to prevent the management of Dar Al Dawa company from entering the district following the strike by the company's workers, until their demands are met.³⁶
5. Hajj and Umrah companies hold a sit-in and accuse the Ministry of Awqaf of encroaching on the market.³⁷
6. Greater Amman Municipality sit-in participants hold on to all their demands and threaten escalation.
7. A sit-in demanding the issuance of a general amnesty.
8. A sit-in by Public Security retirees in an area, in rejection of the faltering of the Public Security Officers' Housing Fund.
9. A sit-in in front of the Jordan Bank in protest against the dismissal of dozens of workers without stating the reasons.
10. A sit-in at the Fourth Circle to condemn the policies of the economic approach, and the security forces prevent the "Park It and Switch It Off" event.
11. A sit-in by employees of the Jordan Valley Authority.

Sit-ins, Protests and Strikes in the Transport Sector

The year 2018 witnessed the continuation of several sit-ins, protests and strikes by yellow taxi owners; hardly a month of 2018 passed without yellow taxi owners holding a sit-in, seeking to have their demands met. These demands included that the Ministry of Transport work to limit the number of vehicles operating through smart applications to no more than 5,000 vehicles; place a "sticker" on the side of vehicles operating through smart applications; require smart application drivers to obtain a public driving license; abolish discount offers on trips; install devices and screens to monitor smart application vehicles at the Public Security Directorate and not only at the Transport Regulatory Commission; restrict the degree of kinship for using smart application vehicles to the first degree only, such as father and son; and require smart application vehicles to have the same specifications as yellow taxis.

1. A number of yellow taxi owners held a strike on 1 February 2018 in protest against the instructions issued by the Land Transport Regulatory Commission allowing private vehicles to operate through smart applications.³⁸
2. A number of taxi drivers held a sit-in near the Sports City Circle in the city of Irbid in protest against the operation of the smart applications "Uber and Careem" within the governorate.³⁹
3. Yellow taxi owners held a sit-in in front of the Anti-Corruption Commission.⁴⁰
4. "Yellow taxi" drivers continue their sit-in against "smart transport".⁴¹

³⁵Khabarni website, 18 July 2018.

³⁶Nour Al-Urdun website, 18 July 2018.

³⁷Al-Ghad newspaper, 12 February 2018.

³⁸Al-Wakeel News website, 11 February 2018.

³⁹Al-Ghad newspaper, 25 May 2018.

⁴⁰Al-Madina News, 30 July 2018.

⁴¹Al-Ghad newspaper, 29 October 2018.

5. A sit-in by "yellow taxi" owners and their threat to resort to the judiciary to halt the licensing of smart applications that rely on private vehicles.⁴²
6. A sit-in by yellow taxi owners in front of the House of Representatives.⁴³
7. An open-ended strike by yellow taxi owners in all governorates of the Kingdom.⁴⁴

Protests and the Popular Movement

1. A protest vigil in Karak demanding that the Government change its economic approach.⁴⁵
2. A group of the people of Karak organized a protest vigil within the framework of the ongoing Hirak in the governorate square, rejecting the Government's economic policies that led to a rise in the prices of many basic food commodities and public services, and demanding a change in the Government's approach and the reversal of the price increase decisions.
3. A central sit-in condemning the official economic policy, in protest against the draft Income Tax Law.
4. For the fourth consecutive day, Amman and some governorates witness marches and sit-ins to expedite the rejection of the draft Income Tax Law.
5. A night march in the Tafileh neighborhood (Hay Al-Tafayleh) in protest against price increases.⁴⁶
6. An open-ended sit-in by municipal employees.
7. A protest vigil in the square opposite the Jordan Hospital near the Fourth Circle demanded fundamental changes in the political and economic approach of the State, with a direct and tangible impact at all levels, foremost among them improving the living conditions of citizens.⁴⁷
8. A sit-in by the residents of Fuheis and Mahis against the Jordan Cement Company "Lafarge", demanding compensation for the environmental and health damage caused by the company.⁴⁸

Recommendations

- Redefine the public meeting and the general policy of the State contained in Article 2 of the Law, so that the definition of a meeting includes the recognized basic elements that form part of the definition of any public meeting, and so that the definition distinguishes between a public meeting and a private meeting, in addition to specifying what is meant by the concept of the general policy of the State.
- Abolish all manifestations of the absolute powers of the administrative governor over the right to public assembly contained in the Law, in particular deciding, of his own sole will, to use force to disperse a meeting and break up a march; and include in the Public Gatherings Law organizational and procedural restrictions on the powers of the administrative governor, in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution and international standards.
- Include in the Jordanian Public Gatherings Law specific rules on the standards governing the use of force by security personnel against persons assembled, in conformity with the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

⁴²Al-Rai newspaper, 14 February 2018.

⁴³Ammon News website, 2 November 2018.

⁴⁴Ammon website, 2 October 2018.

⁴⁵Al-Rai newspaper, 13 February 2018.

⁴⁶Al-Ghad newspaper, 11 February 2018.

⁴⁷Al-Ghad newspaper, 8 December 2018.

⁴⁸Al-Ghad newspaper, 16 December 2018. It is noted that the residents of Fuheis submitted a memorandum to the President of the Judicial Council in which they requested: (1) the imposition of oversight by the Court of Cassation on the conflicting decisions and cases faced by citizens and the prolongation of litigation; (2) instructing H.E. the President of the Court of Appeal to distribute new cases and cases remanded from Cassation among all panels of the Court of Appeal; (3) expediting the adjudication of compensation lawsuits against the company, despite settled jurisprudence for thirty years on the existence of the damage and the company's obligation to pay compensation for it, given that the area is environmentally polluted.

- Activate judicial oversight over the acts and powers of the administrative governor with regard to the exercise of the right to public assembly, and entrench the principle of proportionality between security measures affecting the right to public assembly and the magnitude of the anticipated threat to security and public order.
- Transfer the obligations imposed on participants in any public meeting or march from the Instructions on Organizing Public Meetings, Gatherings and Marches of 2011 into the body of the Public Gatherings Law.

7. The Right to Form and Join Political Parties

Constitutional and Legal Guarantees of the Right to Form and Join Political Parties:

The Jordanian Constitution and the international and regional human rights instruments⁴⁹ guarantee the right of individuals to form and join political parties. This right is regulated by the Political Parties Law No. (39) of 2015⁵⁰. The year 2018 did not witness any legislative action on the aforementioned Political Parties Law, and in this regard the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) continues to stress that many of the provisions contained in the current Law constitute a restriction on the constitutional right to form and join political parties⁵¹.

Financial Support for Political Parties:

Although the year 2018 witnessed several meetings organized by the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs with political parties to discuss amending the Regulation on Financial Contribution to Support Political Parties, the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs announced that the amendment to the Regulation on Financial Contribution to Support Political Parties would be approved at the beginning of February 2019⁵². The political parties participating in the meetings affirmed that the parties' demands of the Government of Dr. Omar Al-Razzaz were as follows⁵³:

1. Amending the legislative package regulating the right to form parties, comprising the Political Parties Law, the Elections Law, the Regulation on Support for Political Parties and the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives.
2. Halting the security prosecution of party members and affiliates.
3. Restoring confidence in party work and expanding the space of freedom for its opinions by strengthening partnership with the Government, and seeking to develop party and popular leaders capable of representing the views of party bodies within a parliamentary government.
4. Forming a national committee to draft a new National Charter based on the contents of the Royal Discussion Papers⁵⁴.

Although the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs disbursed financial support to a number of political parties that met the requirements, and withheld it from 11 parties for failing to meet the requirements⁵⁵, the Center monitored complaints from many political parties about the weakness of the governmental support provided to parties, whether the direct governmental support, which amounts to JOD 50,000 per party, or through the strict cap on the amount a party is entitled to receive from donations by natural or legal persons, which is set at JOD 10,000.

In this regard, the Center recommends amending the provisions of the Regulation on the Financing of Political Parties so that they are incorporated into the body of the Political Parties Law No. (39) of 2015 rather than into a separate regulation, in order to guarantee the enjoyment of this right by political parties and to entrench the right of a party to invest its funds by lawful means consistent with the purpose for

⁴⁹The most prominent international instruments guaranteeing the right to form political parties: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 20/1), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 22/1), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 8) and the Arab Charter on Human Rights (Article 24).

⁵⁰Published in the Official Gazette on 16 September 2015, Issue No. 5358, page 7835.

⁵¹The Center's observations on this Law can be found in its reports published during the period 2015–2017.

⁵²Ad-Dustour newspaper, 2 January 2019; as of the preparation of this report, no legislative amendment had been made to the Regulation.

⁵³This news item was published in Al-Ghad newspaper on 19 June 2018.

⁵⁴Al-Rai newspaper, 7 July 2018.

⁵⁵Al-Rai newspaper, 3 January 2018.

which it was established. A legal obligation should also be imposed on parties to disclose any amounts or donations they receive and the entities supporting and donating to them.

The Practical Reality of the Role of Political Parties:

This year, the Center presents the views of secretaries-general on the role of political parties in Jordanian society and the challenges facing their work, as follows⁵⁶:

1. Some secretaries-general of parties affirmed that the performance of parties remains below the required level in terms of effectiveness and citizens' membership, attributing this to the Government's policies of marginalizing them and the failure to enact elections laws enabling them, i.e. the parties, to reach Parliament, which has led to weak public membership in them, in addition to certain governmental policies that restrict public membership in them by banning some of their activities.
2. The failure of some parties to perform their role because of their reliance on individual personalities and the absence of genuine programs in their work.
3. The absence of governments formed on a party basis, for fear that parties would conflict with government policies.
4. Reluctance to join parties because of the prevailing popular culture that political parties work against the State, in addition to citizens' conviction that political parties do not express citizens' demands and that their role is absent from genuine reform in all programs.

Practical Exercise of the Right to Form Political Parties

The year 2018 witnessed the launch of the National Coalition of eight parties⁵⁷: the National Constitutional Party / Al-Shura Party / Jordanian Al-Shahama Party / Jordanian Al-Raya Party / National Congress Party (Zamzam) / Jordanian Musawa Party / National Al-Nahda Front Party / Islamic Centrist Party, in addition to the merger of three centrist political parties with the Justice and Reform Party⁵⁸, namely the Jordanian Arab Party, Al-Ahd Party and the Popular Action Party merging with the Justice and Reform Party. Three political parties also launched a popular campaign entitled "Halaktouna" ("You Have Worn Us Out"), through which they issued repeated calls for a series of popular protests demanding amendments to the "new income tax" and the amendment of the entire tax system, and the reduction of the sales tax on all essential goods, particularly fuel; "demanding the drafting of a new elections law producing programmatic parliamentary blocs leading to the formation of parliamentary governments"; and "a serious fight against corruption"⁵⁹.

The coalition of the Centrist Parties Current demanded that the Government of Dr. Al-Razzaz strictly reduce government spending, curb inflation, eradicate corruption and adopt policies that serve the interests of all citizens. The Jordanian Social Democratic Party also issued a statement calling for a review of the draft Civil Retirement Law in a manner that achieves justice and equality among all retirees, proposing that the suggested wording, which specified for ministers a minimum service of seven years to be entitled to a pension, be amended.

It was also proposed that ministers' retirement be brought under social security on a par with other State employees, in order to avoid placing additional burdens on the State budget. The Justice and Development Party also issued a statement calling on the Government to discuss the conditions

⁵⁶The Center was keen to conduct indirect interviews (by telephone), in addition to meetings at several gatherings with a number of party secretaries-general.

⁵⁷Al-Rai newspaper, 30 June 2018.

⁵⁸Al-Ghad newspaper, 14 January 2018.

⁵⁹The campaign's main page on the social media platform Facebook.

prevailing in the arena, with a view to addressing their causes on the basis of a developed methodology grounded in realism and programs. Secretaries-general of leftist, centrist and Islamist political parties issued a statement on the need to establish a collective participatory program to revive the relationship between parties and the Government, stressing the importance of reviewing the Political Parties Law and pushing for amendments that would enable parties to reach Parliament and form parliamentary governments⁶⁰.

In 2018, the NCHR also monitored many practices related to limiting the enjoyment of this right, as follows:

1. Suspension, for unknown reasons, of the financial support provided by the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs to the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party; the Party filed a lawsuit in this regard, which had not been decided as of the preparation of this report⁶¹.
2. The Governor of the Capital prevented the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party from holding a memorial event for the martyr "Abu Ali" for the second time⁶².
3. The Coalition of Nationalist and Leftist Parties was prevented from organizing a sit-in at the Fourth Circle to denounce the economic approach of the Government of Dr. Hani Al-Mulki⁶³.
4. The Coalition of Nationalist and Leftist Parties was prevented from organizing a sit-in in front of the US Embassy⁶⁴.
5. The Coalition of Nationalist and Leftist Parties issued a statement indicating that the headquarters of 3 parties in the Coalition had been "broken into under the pretext of theft; the competent authorities were informed and inspected the break-ins, vandalism and theft of a number of belongings, yet the perpetrators of these crimes and attacks have not been identified". This was verified with the official spokesman of the Coalition, Saeed Diab, Secretary-General of the Hashd Party, who confirmed that the headquarters of three parties of the Coalition of Nationalist and Leftist Parties had been attacked, namely (the Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party / the Jordanian Democratic People's Party "Hashd" / the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party).
6. Pressure, threats and summonses against some members of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party, the Jordanian Communist Party and the Jordanian Democratic People's Party because they carried out a movement (Hirak) criticizing the political approach of the Government of Dr. Omar Al-Razzaz⁶⁵.
7. The NCHR received a complaint from a citizen⁶⁶ stating that he had been arrested on the charge of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir.
8. The Coalition of Nationalist and Leftist Parties accused the administrative governors in Zarqa Governorate of taking "arbitrary measures" restricting political and party work and public freedoms, and of "targeting national and political figures through repeated summonses and threats of administrative detention"⁶⁷.

⁶⁰Ad-Dustour newspaper, 13 July 2018.

⁶¹The Center verified this matter by contacting the Party leader, Dr. Saeed Diab, who stated that the support had been suspended by the Ministry of Parliamentary and Political Affairs and that a case had been filed before the judiciary and is currently pending before the courts; correspondence also took place between the Party and the Prime Minister regarding the suspension of funding, but the Government has not yet responded to the Party's wishes.

⁶²Telephone interview with Dr. Saeed Diab, leader of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party.

⁶³Telephone interview with Dr. Saeed Diab, leader of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party.

⁶⁴Telephone interview with Dr. Saeed Diab, leader of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party.

⁶⁵Telephone interview with Dr. Saeed Diab, leader of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party.

⁶⁶Complaint documented with the Center on 23 April 2018.

⁶⁷Al-Ghad newspaper, 26 August 2018.

9. Citizens' lack of confidence in the programs and role of political parties, as reflected in the total number of citizens who are party members, which does not exceed 34,957 citizens in 2018.
10. Young people's reluctance to participate in party life, as inferred from the positions of the parties themselves⁶⁸, for several reasons:
 - Parties suffer from a programmatic vacuum.
 - There is no genuine party life.
 - Political parties have not formed the required political and social lever.
 - The political environment is not friendly to party life, noting that the number of young people who are party members does not exceed 12,748, a percentage of 36.47%.
11. The low number of women who are members of political parties and who hold leadership positions within parties, as the number of women reached 12,337 women, a percentage of 35%.

Recommendations:

1. Enacting a new elections law that takes into account the needs of parties in developing their standing in the State, and the establishment of a parliamentary government.
2. Adopting a notification system for the establishment of a party instead of an application for establishment, without requiring the approval of the Committee, in order to encourage party work.
3. Amending the Political Parties Law so as to explicitly provide for the bases of financial support, rather than merely regulating it by a regulation.
4. Calling upon decision-makers to engage in a genuine, organized societal dialogue with the various political entities in order to build broad national consensus as a prelude to drafting a new social contract and laying agreed foundations and rules for building the political process.
5. In order to gain confidence in party work, political parties must update their political programs, keep pace with developments in all fields, and ensure that their programs set out realistic solutions to the problems the country faces in its various economic, social and cultural aspects.
6. Encouraging political parties that have no political programs to formulate programs that provide answers to rights issues affecting individuals' rights, rather than relying solely on their statutes.
7. Pending the establishment of a parliamentary government, encouraging political parties to submit proposals to the House of Representatives for the development of legislation, rather than confining themselves to proposals to amend the current Elections Law or Political Parties Law.
8. Strengthening media communication between political parties and the public by having political parties publish their documents on websites, and calling upon political parties that do not have a website to create one.

⁶⁸Al-Rai newspaper, 28 July 2018.

8. The Right to Form and Join Trade Unions

The right of Jordanians to form and join trade unions⁶⁹ is guaranteed in the Constitution, as it is in international instruments⁷⁰. Professional associations and labor unions are long-established houses of expertise that have played an important role in regulating professions, raising their standards and safeguarding the rights and gains of their members. Unions also have an extremely important economic and social role, as they encompass the broadest segment of the middle class, and their funds can serve as a development arm if they are invested and managed wisely.

The year 2018 witnessed direct and clear recommendations made to the Jordanian Government by the States participating in the Universal Periodic Review process⁷¹ on the need to amend labor legislation in line with international labor standards, including the right to form trade unions, in addition to a recommendation that was rejected, namely amending the Labor Law to comply with international labor standards, including allowing foreign workers to form labor unions. The NCHR has previously called in its earlier annual reports for amending the Labor Law to bring it in line with international standards, which will be referred to below.

The year 2018 also witnessed the Government's continued rejection of manifestations of trade union pluralism, in violation of Article 23 and Article (16/2) of the Jordanian Constitution and of the two International Covenants, the first on Civil and Political Rights and the second on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, through the issuance of a decision by the Ministry of Labor on 1 October 2018 refusing to license a union for agricultural workers. This constitutes a violation of the Labor Law and the Tripartite Committee Regulation, given that the decision on the classification of occupations and industries issued by the Minister of Labor does not cover workers in the agricultural sector⁷².

As for legislation, the year 2018 witnessed the issuance of the Law Amending the Jordanian Teachers Association Law No. (12) of 2018⁷³, thereby resolving the dispute between the Central Body and the General Assembly of the Teachers Association, after a joint parliamentary committee of the Legal Committee and the Education and Culture Committee was formed to study the draft law⁷⁴.

On 26 December 2018, the Council of Ministers also approved a draft law amending the Jordan Bar Association Law⁷⁵ and the regulations relating to the Jordan Bar Association, namely: the Fees and Pleading Stamps Regulation, the Retirement and Social Security Regulation, the Bylaws of the Association, and the Cooperative Fund Regulation.

⁶⁹Article (16/2) of the Jordanian Constitution provides: "Jordanians shall have the right to establish associations, unions and political parties, provided that their objectives are lawful, their means peaceful, and their bylaws not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution." Article (23) provides: "2. The State shall protect labor and enact legislation therefor based on the following principles: ... free trade union organization within the limits of the law."

⁷⁰Article (23/4) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides: "Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." Article (8) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides for: the right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests... etc. Article (22) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests..." etc.

⁷¹The Universal Periodic Review session was held on 8 November 2018 with the participation of 95 States, during which 200 recommendations were made to the Jordanian Government to promote human rights.

⁷²For the letter of the Minister of Labor and the response of the President of the Jordanian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, see the following link: <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/402243>

⁷³For the Law Amending the Jordanian Teachers Association Law, see the Official Gazette of 14 March 2018, Issue No. (5506).

⁷⁴For more, see the National Center for Human Rights report on the state of human rights for 2017, p. (93).

⁷⁵On 8 December 2018, dozens of members of the General Assembly of the Jordan Bar Association held a protest vigil in front of the Professional Associations Complex in protest against the amendment of Article 86 of their Association's Law, which extends the term of the Association Council from two years to three years. This was preceded by a protest vigil held by lawyers inside the Palace of Justice on 5 December 2018 for the same reason.

Labor Unions

Under the Jordanian legal framework, unions are divided into labor unions (workers' unions and employers' unions) and professional associations. Labor unions are established through registration procedures in accordance with Chapter Eleven of the Jordanian Labor Law No. (8) of 1996, as amended. Although the aforementioned Law ostensibly provides for the right to organize, it contains numerous conditions that have emptied this right of its substance, in violation of the relevant international standards, including:

- Granting the Tripartite Committee the right to classify the occupations and industries whose workers are entitled to establish a union, in agreement with the General Federation of Trade Unions⁷⁶, and making the registration of a union contingent on the approval of the Registrar of Unions⁷⁷.
- Granting the Minister of Labor broad powers under Article (116) of the Labor Law to dissolve a union if it commits a violation of the provisions of the Law, instead of granting this power to the judiciary⁷⁸.
- Requiring that the number of applicants for establishing a union be fifty persons working in the same occupation or in similar occupations⁷⁹.
- Requiring that legal personality be acquired upon obtaining a license rather than by mere notification.
- The Law grants the General Federation the right to set the bylaws of both the Federation and the unions, and leaves no organizational role for the union (whether the general assembly or the administrative board); they are merely a tool for implementing the instructions of the General Federation of Trade Unions, against which many complaints have been made by numerous labor groupings, including the independent workers' unions. The Center hopes that the Labor Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate will take these issues into consideration when reviewing the draft law again.

The Center reiterates what it stated in its 2017 annual report: that the continuation of the same labor leaders and their winning by acclamation for many years, the reluctance of many workers to engage in union work owing to their conviction that the union's role in defending its members' rights is futile, and the restriction of labor unions to seventeen unions⁸⁰, all contribute to weakening the labor union movement, marginalizing its role in economic, social and political matters, and weakening its fundamental role of organizing the Jordanian labor market in a manner that serves the basic interests of workers in terms of wages, leave and other rights and insurances.

The Center also points to the weak participation of women in labor unions: there is no woman among the members of the administrative board of the General Federation of Trade Unions; the proportion of women's participation in all the administrative boards of the seventeen unions is 13.1% of the total members of the administrative boards; and the proportion of women in all the general assemblies of the seventeen unions is 11.0% of their total membership⁸¹. The Center considers it necessary to implement awareness programs for women in the workplace to raise their awareness of the importance of engaging

⁷⁶Pursuant to Article (98/d) of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996. It is worth noting that the number of labor unions has been limited to 17 unions since 1976, while the number of employers' unions reached 51, the most recent being the General Union of Cosmetics and Accessories Traders.

⁷⁷Pursuant to Article (102) of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996.

⁷⁸Although Article 116/b of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996 affirms that the Minister's decision to dissolve a union shall not take effect until a period of 30 days has elapsed, and that if the aggrieved party challenges the dissolution decision before the judiciary, the stay of execution of the decision shall continue until the case is decided, and although the aggrieved party is granted the right to challenge the dissolution decision, this costs the aggrieved party more time and effort and shifts the burden of resorting to the judiciary from the administrative authorities to the aggrieved party, namely the labor union or the employers. The most dangerous aspect of this provision is that it penalizes the union in the event of a violation of the bylaws, even though it is not granted the power to set those bylaws.

⁷⁹Article (98/a) of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996.

⁸⁰For the list of the seventeen labor unions and the list of employers' unions, whose number reached 52 after the approval of the establishment of the General Union of Toy Traders, see the following Ministry of Labor link: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>

⁸¹The number of women on the administrative boards of the seventeen labor unions is (21) women out of (153) members.

and participating in union work, and to form a women's committee within the General Federation of Trade Unions.

As for the recognition of independent unions⁸², a circular was issued by the Minister of Social Development on 16 October 2018 refusing to deal with independent unions on the grounds that they are not registered with the Ministry of Labor. The Center considers this a violation of what is affirmed by the articles of the Jordanian Constitution (128, 23, 16, 6), the provisions of international human rights conventions and the International Labour Organization, which affirm the legitimacy of independent unions and of the acts and activities they have carried out and continue to carry out, notwithstanding their lack of legitimacy under the Jordanian Labor Law, which granted the executive authority the right to confer legal personality on new labor unions. This requires the executive and legislative authorities to intervene and side with the principle of legality by amending the provisions of the Labor Law in line with the Jordanian Constitution and international conventions⁸³.

Professional Associations⁸⁴

Professional associations in Jordan lack the most important characteristic of civil society organizations, whose membership is based on freedom of choice, since compulsory membership is a condition for practicing the profession. The decision of the Special Bureau for the Interpretation of Laws⁸⁵ No. (11) of 1969 described professional associations as semi-governmental institutions. The Center reiterates what it stated in its 2017 annual report: that the foregoing constitutes a violation of the provisions of international instruments, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the two International Covenants and the conventions issued by the International Labour Organization, which established the concept of trade union freedoms in several respects, including:

- The right to form unions may not be restricted to specific activities or professions.
- The right of workers in a given profession may not be limited to forming a single union at the level of the profession or industry.
- Trade union unity may not be imposed by legislation, nor may members be compelled to join a union in order for a professional to be able to practice his or her profession.

The decision of the Constitutional Court⁸⁶, which provides that "employees in any government ministry, department, authority or institution may establish their own union, even if they are employees subject to the Civil Service Regulation, and regardless of whether or not they have counterparts in the private sector outside the framework of government, provided that this is done by virtue of legislation or legislations issued for this purpose as deemed appropriate by the legislative authority, which holds the

⁸²Article 16/2 of the Jordanian Constitution provides: "Jordanians shall have the right to establish associations and political parties, provided that their objectives are lawful, their means peaceful, and their bylaws not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution." Article 23/2/f also provides: "The State shall protect labor and enact legislation therefor based on the following principles: ... (f) free trade union organization within the limits of the law."

⁸³Independent Unions – Dr. Ali Al-Dabbas – at the link:

http://www.nchr.org.jo/User_Site/Site/View_ArticleAr.aspx?type=2&ID=2185

⁸⁴The membership of professional associations exceeds 300,000 members distributed among thirteen professional associations, namely: the Jordan Medical Association, the Jordan Dental Association, the Jordan Veterinary Medical Association, the Jordan Geologists Association, the Jordan Press Association, the Jordan Pharmacists Association, the Jordan Bar Association, the Jordanian Construction Contractors Association, the Jordan Nurses and Midwives Council Association, the Jordan Engineers Association, the Jordan Agricultural Engineers Association, the Jordanian Artists Association, and the Jordanian Teachers Association.

⁸⁵Decision of the Special Bureau for the Interpretation of Laws issued on 18 May 1969, which defined semi-governmental institutions as: "bodies established by law to look after the interests of certain groups of professionals and to represent the interests of these groups, having over their members powers derived from the law, namely regulatory power to organize their work and affairs, the power to issue administrative decisions in these affairs, and the power to impose fees on them, such as the chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture and the associations of the liberal professions such as the legal, medical and engineering professions and the like."

⁸⁶Jordanian Constitutional Court Decision No. (6) of 2013, published in the Official Gazette on 1 September 2013, Issue (5238).

original competence to legislate", also contravened international standards⁸⁷, which affirm the need to establish unions upon mere notification without the need for prior permission, by linking the establishment of professional associations to special laws. The same decision also contravened Article 16/3 of the Jordanian Constitution, which affirmed the need for a law regulating the establishment of unions, as is the case for political parties and associations, rather than the issuance of a separate law for each union to be established. It should be noted in this regard that the fundamental problem in establishing such unions is linked to the practical reality of enacting legislation, as the issuance of such legislation embodies the will of the Government, beginning with the submission of the draft bill. Accordingly, in this context we find no application of Article 95/1 of the Jordanian Constitution, which allows ten members of either House to propose laws⁸⁸.

In 2018, signs of deteriorating financial conditions also continued for a number of associations, such as the Jordan Medical Association and the Jordan Engineers Association, which the Center believes resulted from several reasons, including poor investment, the decline in the value of shares, and the general economic downturn in the Kingdom.

Elections of Association Councils:

In 2018, new councils of professional associations were elected to choose the president (naqib) and members of the association council, as follows:

1. Jordan Engineers Association elections⁸⁹.
2. Jordan Agricultural Engineers Association elections⁹⁰.
3. Jordanian Artists Association elections⁹¹.
4. Contractors Association elections⁹².

⁸⁷Article (23/4) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides: "Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." Article 8/a of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides for: the right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned... etc. Article (22/1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests." The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention No. 87 of 1948 also established trade union freedoms. For the International Labour Organization Convention, see the following link: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/arabic/ilo.html>

⁸⁸For more information, see the study "The Role of Civil Society Organizations (Associations and Unions) in Promoting the Right of Individuals to Public Participation", National Center for Human Rights, Dr. Ali Al-Dabbas.

⁸⁹These were held in three stages, namely: First: elections to choose the branch councils on 16 February 2018, where elections were held in seven branches and four branches were decided by acclamation; voter turnout in the branches where elections were held was 38% of those entitled to vote, numbering (6032) engineers. Second: elections of the engineering divisions, held in two stages: (a) on 28 February 2018 for the Architecture, Electrical and Chemical divisions, with a turnout of 23%, with the participation of (5559) engineers out of (24507); (b) on 2 March 2018 for the Civil, Mechanical, and Mining and Metallurgy divisions, with a turnout of 26.5%, with the participation of (7571) engineers out of (28738). Third: elections to choose the Association Council on 4 May 2018, in which the number of voters reached 14959 engineers. It is worth noting that the elections management committee of the Jordan Engineers Association did not cooperate with the NCHR and refused to allow the team access to the voter lists, the bases of voting and counting, and the bases adopted in selecting the election committee, etc.; accordingly, the NCHR declined to observe the Jordan Engineers Association elections.

⁹⁰Held on 23 March 2018, with a turnout of 28%, as the number of voters reached 1650 engineers, out of 5827 engineers entitled to participate in the elections, being those who had paid their annual subscriptions, out of approximately 18,000 members of the Association.

⁹¹Held on 23 March 2018, with a turnout of 77%, as 326 voters participated in the elections out of 423 paid-up members, out of a total Association membership of 610 members.

⁹²Held on 30 March 2018, with a turnout of 79.8%, as the number of voters reached 1162 contractors out of 1465 contractors entitled to participate in the elections, being those who had paid their annual subscriptions, out of approximately 18,000 members of the Association.

5. Nurses Association elections⁹³.

The Center considers that national legislation relating to the freedom of labor unions and professional associations to elect their boards is consistent with the international standards governing the freedom of civil society organizations to elect their boards; however, it remains incumbent upon the councils and bodies of the associations to activate their role in persuading their members, at both the professional and social levels, to participate in elections and to commit to paying annual subscriptions. As for labor unions, the year 2018 did not witness any elections of their councils.

Union Protests

The year 2018 witnessed a number of union protests stemming from the unions' role in participating in the conduct of public affairs, in guidance and awareness-raising on economic, social and political development plans, and in defending the rights of their members, the most important of which were the following:

1. On 17 January 2018, the Jordan Press Association held a sit-in in front of the Press Association building in protest against the detention of Jordan Press Association council member Omar Maharmeh and of Shadi Al-Zinati, and in protest against the Government's prevention of journalists from holding their sit-in in front of the Prime Ministry⁹⁴.
2. On 30 April 2018, the Jordanian Federation of Independent Trade Unions held a protest vigil in front of the Jordanian House of Representatives to demand the protection of social security and in defense of freedom of trade union organization⁹⁵.
3. On 5 May 2018, the Jordan Pharmacists Association held a protest vigil in front of the Professional Associations Complex to express their rejection of the proposed amendment to the Regulation on the Licensing of Pharmaceutical Establishments⁹⁶.
4. On 12 May 2018, the Pioneer Physicians Society held a protest vigil in front of the Professional Associations Complex in protest against the non-payment by the Jordan Medical Association of physicians' pensions for the months of March and April 2018⁹⁷.
5. On 30 May 2018, the professional associations organized a strike and a protest vigil in front of the Professional Associations Complex, with the participation of the public and association members, in rejection of the draft Income Tax Law and the Civil Service Regulation⁹⁸. The Council of Association Presidents presented to the Government a vision on the draft Income Tax Law that included 28 recommendations, the most important of which were:
 - Not touching the tax thresholds for taxpayers, in addition to 12,000 for the family, and setting a ceiling for dependents among the father, mother, sisters and persons with disabilities.
 - Not touching the profits of bonds and shares for individuals, because public shareholding companies deduct the tax directly before distribution.
 - Affirming progressive taxation, which the Government began at 5% ... etc.⁹⁹

⁹³Held on 20 April 2018, with a turnout of 34%, as the number of voters reached 3070 nurses, out of 8500 nurses and licensed midwives entitled to participate in the elections, being those who had paid their annual subscriptions, out of approximately 18,000 members of the Association.

⁹⁴For more information, see the following link: <http://3lnar.com/jonews/images-news/638792.html>

⁹⁵For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=38608>

⁹⁶For more information, see the Jordan Pharmacists Association page on (Facebook) dated 5 May 2018.

⁹⁷For more information, see the following link: <https://www.sarayanews.com/article/486512>

⁹⁸For more information, see the professional associations' page on (Facebook) dated 30 May 2018.

⁹⁹For the proposals submitted by the professional associations to the Government on the draft Income Tax Law, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=48614>

Demands to Establish New Unions:

The year 2018 did not witness any governmental initiative to issue a law regulating union work for public employees in response to the demands of several categories of public sector employees. In 2018, demands also continued for the establishment of a number of unions, the most important of which were: a union for workers in the allied health professions, a union for pharmacy technicians, a union for mosque imams, and a union for agricultural workers.

Official records¹⁰⁰ at the Ministry of Labor indicate the approval of the establishment of the Jordanian Calligraphers Union and the refusal to register each of the following:

- The General Union of Tax Consultants' and Tax Agents' Offices, since there is an association representing this sector, namely the Association of Income and Sales Tax Experts.
- A union for workers in the agricultural sector, referred to above.

Assaults on Medical and Teaching Staff:

Cases of assault on unionized professionals, whether physicians, nurses or teachers, recurred in 2018 in the absence of radical solutions proposed by the responsible authorities. The NCHR monitored the measures taken by the associations to curb the spread of the phenomenon of assaults on their members, through calls for work stoppages to demand harsher penalties for those who assault their members. The Jordan Medical Association also demanded the deployment of police and gendarmerie security detachments in certain hot spots in hospitals and ambulance and emergency centers, which was implemented by the competent authorities. According to statements by the Jordan Medical Association, the number of assaults on physicians reached 108 cases during the years 2016–2018, most of them in Ministry of Health hospitals.

By contrast, according to Ministry of Education figures, the number of assaults on teachers reached 133 cases, most of them in the capital, Amman, and the fewest in the southern governorates. These are attributable to several causes, including: a defect in the value system held by some students, and the incompatibility of the educational environment in schools with students' needs, among other causes that the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Association must study and examine in order to resolve them. The Center reiterates its call on the responsible authorities to examine the causes of the recurrence of such assaults and violations of the law, and to work to improve medical services and provide hospitals and health centers with qualified staff and equipment, particularly in emergency departments, commensurate with the size of hospitals and population density. The NCHR considers that an assault is not limited to the moral and physical assault on the victim, but is an assault on the right of others to receive treatment and health care, and the same applies to educational services. The Center also considers it necessary to disseminate awareness programs informing citizens that they can file complaints with the associations and the competent ministries against service providers without resorting to assault.

Recommendations:

To protect the right to form and join trade unions, the National Center for Human Rights reaffirms the recommendations contained in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following:

1. Empowering professional associations through:

- Reviewing the provisions of the professional association laws that set out exhaustively the objectives the associations must seek to achieve, by adding a final paragraph to those provisions enabling the associations to pursue any other objectives that would serve to regulate the professional affairs of each association.

¹⁰⁰Official letter from the Ministry of Labor dated 3 January 2019.

- Allowing associations to obtain aid and grants without the need for the approval of the Council of Ministers, while enabling the Council of Ministers to challenge the legality of such funding before the competent court, provided that the associations disclose the amounts of funding received, its sources and the ways in which it is used, supported by documentary evidence.
2. Empowering labor unions by making legislative amendments to the Jordanian Labor Law, including:
- Repealing the text of Article 116 of the current Labor Law, which gives the Minister of Labor the right to dissolve a union if certain grounds exist, and replacing it with the previous text (prior to the amendment), whereby the Minister of Labor has the right to file a lawsuit before the judiciary to dissolve the union if certain grounds exist.
 - Amending the text of Article 99 of the Labor Law by adding a final paragraph enabling unions to pursue any other objectives that would serve to regulate labor professional affairs.
3. To curb the phenomenon of assaults on medical staff, it is necessary to:
- Train medical staff in mechanisms for dealing with patients and their families and taking into account their psychological circumstances.
 - Provide hospitals and emergency and ambulance centers with medical equipment and qualified medical staff.
 - Raise the wages and bonuses of medical staff commensurate with the work pressure they bear.
4. To curb the phenomenon of assaults on teaching staff, it is necessary to:
- Improve the economic conditions of male and female teachers in terms of salaries and incentives, to empower them morally and economically and to make the teaching profession more attractive to competent individuals.
 - Reduce teachers' weekly teaching loads.
 - Toughen penalties against assailants, and circulate to all teachers that they should not waive their personal right, whatever the pressure, in order to preserve the standing of teachers.
 - Move away from rote learning towards interactive learning so that students become engaged in the educational process.

9. The Right to Form and Join Associations

The Jordanian Constitution and the international, regional and Arab human rights instruments guarantee the right of individuals to form and join associations. The Jordanian Constitution referred to the law the regulation of the formation of associations and the monitoring of their financial resources, and affirmed the promotion and protection of this right through Article 128, which provides that no law may be issued that affects the essence of the rights guaranteed thereunder.

First: Legislation and Policies

The year 2018 did not witness any amendment to the Associations Law No. (51) of 2008 regulating this right, even though this Law contains numerous gaps that would restrict the exercise of this right, as the Center has pointed out in its previous reports¹⁰¹. Meanwhile, the draft law amending the Associations Law, which was published in 2015 on the website of the Legislation and Opinion Bureau, has remained without any action to date¹⁰².

On the other hand, with the aim of preserving the integrity of the work of associations and protecting them from exploitation for money laundering and terrorist financing crimes, and combating corruption, a policy document for protecting associations from the risk of money laundering was adopted by the Associations Registry Directorate, given the serious consequences of these crimes, which threaten the national economy and security, and in compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing legislation in Jordan. The document included remedial and preventive policies, consisting of the governance of associations' work to ensure the excellence and transparency of their performance under the Associations Law, in addition to reviewing, evaluating and developing legislation related to voluntary charitable work to ensure that it supports efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing in associations. In this context, the Center hopes that the Ministry of Social Development will raise awareness of this document among all associations.

On the legislative side, and within the work of the Tripartite Dialogue Forum managed by the NCHR, which brings together the two parties of civil society and the Government, the NCHR launched in March 2018 a position paper submitted by numerous associations calling for the necessary legislative amendments regulating the work of associations in Jordan¹⁰³.

To examine the practical reality of the extent of enjoyment of the right to form and join associations, the Center prepared in 2018 a specialized study on "Civil Society Organizations in Jordan: Reality and Needs". The study, which consisted of a theoretical part and an applied part, aimed to examine general information about civil society organizations, the services they provide, the obstacles they face, the most important needs of the organizations, and their future aspirations for serving the local community.

The study concluded that civil society organizations are a means for citizens to exercise certain personal rights and an aid to State institutions in covering some of the charitable needs of citizens in remote areas. However, civil society representatives indicated that the laws regulating voluntary work, whether the Associations Law, the Political Parties Law or the Labor Law, and the regulations issued under those laws, do not meet the aspirations of citizens belonging to the various civil society organizations. Furthermore, the Associations Registry, under which the majority of civil society organizations fall, has not yet succeeded in becoming a comprehensive reference for all information and data relating to civil society organizations¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰¹The Center's observations on this Law can be found in its reports published during the period 2008–2017.

¹⁰²The Center's observations on the draft can be found in the reports published during the period 2015–2016.

¹⁰³The position paper is available on the Center's website: www.nchr.org.jo

¹⁰⁴The full study is available on the Center's website.

In this regard, the Center hopes that the management policy of the Associations Registry will be developed so as to meet the current challenges facing the work of associations, and the resulting actions that have led to a loss of confidence between the governmental side and civil work. On reviewing the data on associations published on the Associations Registry website, the Center found that most of the data available on the Registry, such as telephone numbers and associations' locations, are (inaccurate), differ from reality and need to be updated.

In addition, the Center noted the existence of a large number of organizations of a non-profit nature registered as non-profit companies with the Companies Controller at the Ministry of Industry and Trade; they are exempt from taxes and fees in many of their activities, do not pay the various taxes and fees, and carry out the activities of associations. This shows the overlap and conflict in description, competence and affiliation, since, as non-profit organizations, these organizations should in principle fall under the Associations Registry through the competent ministry.

Second: Formation of Associations:

A review of the provisions of the Associations Law No. (51) of 2008, specifically Article (5/a), shows that it gives the registration of associations a constitutive effect, as it provides that among the duties of the Registrar of Associations at the Ministry of Social Development is "approving the registration of the association and determining the competent ministry thereof in accordance with the instructions issued for this purpose". This is confirmed by Article (11/a) of the same Law, which provides that: "The Board shall issue its decision on the registration application within sixty days from the date the Registrar receives the application...". This restricts the right of individuals to exercise the formation of associations, as they cannot exercise this right except after obtaining the approval of the competent administrative authority, which means that the exercise of this right is subject to the prior approval of the Registrar and the competent minister.

In this regard, the Center continues to stress the importance of amending the text of paragraph (a) of Article 5 of the Associations Law in force in a manner consistent with international human rights standards.

On the other hand, the year 2018 witnessed the registration of 615 associations in the Associations Registry, while the number of associations that did not obtain registration approval was 40. Moreover, the number of associations dissolved in 2018 was 290, for various reasons, as follows:

- 172 associations were dissolved because the association had ceased its activities for more than one year¹⁰⁵.
- 89 associations were dissolved voluntarily at the wish of the members of the association's general assembly¹⁰⁶.
- 27 associations were dissolved because the interim administrative board was unable to convene the general assembly and elect a new administrative board¹⁰⁷.

Furthermore, the Center records the following observations on the formation of associations, including the thematic distribution of associations across all the various sectors¹⁰⁸:

¹⁰⁵Pursuant to the provisions of Article (20/a/1) of the Associations Law No. (51) of 2008.

¹⁰⁶Pursuant to the provisions of Article (20/b/4) of the Associations Law No. (51) of 2008.

¹⁰⁷Pursuant to the provisions of Article (20/a/1) of the Associations Law No. (51) of 2008.

¹⁰⁸Findings of the National Center for Human Rights study on "Civil Society Organizations in Jordan: Reality and Needs", which defined the thematic distribution of associations as their distribution according to their various objectives and competences, in terms of associations with social objectives, cultural associations, environmental associations, health associations, tourism associations, associations with development objectives, associations linked to the Ministry of Awqaf, agricultural associations, associations linked to the Ministry of Interior, associations linked to the Ministry of Justice, associations with industrial and commercial objectives, associations linked to the Ministry of Communications, associations affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education, and youth associations affiliated with the Ministry of Youth / Higher Council for Youth. See the Center's website: www.nchr.org.jo

1. The capital continues to witness congestion in the registration of associations, which has resulted in disparities in development programs compared with the other governorates.
2. The governorates of the Kingdom are devoid of associations affiliated with the Ministry of Justice, as there are only five such associations, all of which are located in the capital, Amman.
3. 90% of associations with political development objectives are located in the capital, Amman, and some governorates have no association with a political objective, particularly the governorates of Al-Balqa and Ma'an.
4. 74% of associations linked to the Ministry of Interior are registered in the Capital Governorate.
5. 80% of agricultural associations are registered in the capital.
6. 100% of associations with industrial and commercial objectives are registered in the Capital Governorate, while the other governorates have none.
7. 62% of associations linked to the Ministry of Awqaf are registered in the Capital Governorate.
8. 60% of environmental associations are registered in the Capital Governorate.
9. There is one association affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education as the competent ministry, and it is based in the capital, Amman.
10. There is one association affiliated with the Higher Council for Youth as the competent body, registered with the Associations Registry and located in the Capital Governorate, Amman.
11. The Center notes the existence of eight associations that are not affiliated with any competent body and are registered with the Associations Registry.

Financing of Associations

Although 154 associations obtained foreign funding, the year 2018 did not witness any legislative development regarding the system of financing associations. The Center records its observation in this regard, as many associations continue to rely on foreign funding in the absence of domestic funding for associations¹⁰⁹. The Center also affirms that the Instructions on Support for Spending on Associations issued under the Associations Law constitute a legal violation that leads to instability in the bases of support provided to associations, especially since these instructions are subject to amendment and change at any time; accordingly, the Associations Law should have set out these bases.

Practical Exercise of the Right to Form and Join Associations:

Practical exercise refers to the extent to which citizens enjoy the right to form and join associations and the extent of the governmental facilitation applied in this context. The Center monitored the following:

1. On 17 January 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented a solidarity sit-in with journalists Omar Maharmeh and Shadi Al-Zinati at the Fourth Circle, organized by the Jordan Press Association in protest against the detention of the two journalists.
2. On 30 January 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented the holding of a celebration of the centenary of the birth of the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, organized by the Arab Nasserist Democratic Forum, which was scheduled to take place at the Jordanian Construction Contractors Association.

¹⁰⁹One of the Center's recommendations was the establishment of a national fund to support the financing of associations according to specific bases and considerations.

3. On 1 February 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented a sit-in protesting government decisions related to price increases and tax hikes, organized by numerous groups, which was scheduled to take place at the Fourth Circle.
4. On 3 February 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented the holding of a festival entitled "Centenary of the Leader Gamal Abdel Nasser", organized by the Association Against Zionism and Racism, which was intended to be held at the Ammon Theater.
5. On 14 May 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented the holding of a solidarity event with Gaza entitled "Fly Your Kite"; the organizer of the event was also arrested and made to sign a judicial bail bond of JOD 200,000.
6. On 1 June 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented a sit-in protesting the draft Income Tax Law and high prices; those present at the sit-in were asked to leave the site, and the media were prevented from filming. The sit-in had been scheduled to take place at the Fourth Circle.
7. On 24 July 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented the holding of a sit-in in support of the Government's fight against corruption, which a group of activists intended to hold at the Fourth Circle.
8. On 25 August 2018, the Governor of the Capital prevented the holding of a sit-in protesting rising prices, organized by a group of activists and scheduled to take place at the Eagle (Al-Nisr) traffic light / Dabouq.

Recommendations:

In addition to the recommendations set out in this section and those contained in the Center's reports in previous years, the Center affirms the following recommendations:

- Expediting the amendment of the provisions of the current Associations Law, and incorporating the bases of spending support for associations into the Law rather than keeping them in the form of instructions.
- Unifying the authorities supervising the work of associations, since the continuing lack of coordination and duplication of work between the ministries and institutions supervising associations and the Registry Board, in terms of requiring any association that calls a general assembly meeting, takes any decision to amend its bylaws or opens offices in areas of the Kingdom to notify both the supervising ministry and the Registry Board at the same time, constitutes a clear conflict between official authorities. In this regard, the Center proposes the establishment of an independent commission to regulate the work of associations.
- Activating the oversight role over the performance of associations, as the Center has noted the absence of such oversight over many associations that carry out activities different from the competence stated in their objectives and the competence specified upon their establishment, and contrary to their objectives, particularly some foreign associations and some associations financially connected to them, which receive support and implement programs in the field of human rights, for example, even though they are licensed as charitable bodies or non-profit companies.
- Activating the role of field inspection teams regarding the location and premises of associations, as the Center has noted that the designated scope of work of many associations is a particular village while their actual location is in the governorate center.
- The Center reiterates its recommendation that the Ministry of Political Development build the capacities of associations on good governance issues, as some associations established nearly a quarter of a century ago have still not changed their president or administrative board.
- Calling for the institutionalization of voluntary work in Jordan and its organization within voluntary associations to prevent duplication of work, by merging voluntary associations with similar objectives into a single association in order to coordinate the services they provide, and for each association to operate within a scope specified in its bylaws.

Second: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

1. The Right to Development

International Legal Framework

Development is a human right under the Declaration on the Right to Development adopted in 1986. Accordingly, every member of society and all peoples are entitled to contribute to and participate fully in the achievement of economic, social, cultural and political development, and to enjoy such development, including the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. This right also encompasses the full realization of the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, through which peoples exercise their right to full sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources. Development aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population, individually and collectively, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom, together with the responsibility of governments, States and the international community to create conditions favorable to its achievement and to the realization of this right.

At the level of national legislation, the Jordanian Constitution contains no separate reference to this right, despite its importance. It does, however, devote a special chapter entitled "Rights and Duties of Jordanians"¹¹⁰, which addresses numerous civil, political, economic and social rights that intersect with this right and constitute one of the basic requirements for its realization. Furthermore, the Jordanian legal system lacks a dedicated law on development.

National Development Dimensions

Investment and the Investment Environment

Successful investment is one of the levers of the national economy and contributes to raising rates of economic growth, which in turn has a positive impact on improving the development situation. This contributes to improving the state of human rights in general and the right to development in particular, and is reflected in the lives of citizens and the improvement of their standard of living. The Jordanian environment enjoys numerous advantages that encourage the attraction of further foreign and domestic investment or the expansion of existing investments. The most prominent of these are its strategic location at the meeting point of the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa; a safe and stable environment amid surroundings saturated with security and political turmoil; accession to numerous trade agreements, particularly the Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America and the agreement on simplifying the rules of origin with the European Union; membership of the World Trade Organization; and the availability of qualified and trained human resources, Jordan being among the countries of the world with the highest numbers of engineers and physicians relative to population¹¹¹.

In addition, legislation regulating this sector has been enacted, particularly the Investment Law No. (30) of 2014 and the regulations and instructions issued thereunder, and a special body concerned with this field has been established (the Jordan Investment Commission), which aims to attract, encourage and promote domestic and foreign investment, ensure the sustainability of an attractive investment climate, stimulate economic activity, enhance confidence in the investment environment and increase exports. Numerous other bodies also operate in this field, such as the Free Zones Corporation, the Development Zones Commission, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority and the Industrial Estates Corporation.

In 2018, as part of its measures to encourage investment in the Kingdom, the Government took a number of incentive steps, the most prominent of which were:

¹¹⁰For more, see the Jordanian Constitution of 1952 and its amendments.

¹¹¹See Amman Chamber of Industry, Development of the Volume and Flows of Investment in Jordan.

- Approval to grant Jordanian nationality or permanent residence to any investor who places a deposit of USD 1.5 million with the Central Bank, interest-free, for a period of five years; or who purchases treasury bonds worth USD 1.5 million for a period of ten years at an interest rate determined by the Central Bank; or who purchases shares in Jordanian companies in the amount of USD 1.5 million, or invests in small and medium-sized enterprises in the amount of USD 1 million, for a period of not less than five years.
- Or who establishes or registers an investment project in any of the productive sectors with a capital of not less than USD 1.5 million outside the capital and USD 2 million in the capital, provided that the project provides not less than twenty genuine job opportunities for Jordanians, registered with the Social Security Corporation, and that the project is actually operated for a period of not less than three years.
- In addition, permanent residence is granted to an investor upon purchasing real estate worth not less than JOD 200,000 and retaining it for a period of not less than ten years. Jordanian nationality or permanent residence, as needed, is likewise granted to the investor's wife, his unmarried, widowed and divorced daughters living under his care, his children under 18 years of age, and his parents who are his dependents. These criteria will be applied to a maximum of 500 investors annually¹¹².

In this regard, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) considers that these government measures serve as an incentive for increasing investment flows, thereby contributing to higher rates of economic growth in light of this year's modest growth rates, which do not exceed 2.1%¹¹³. They also contribute to creating more job opportunities and reducing unemployment rates, in addition to increasing exports, supporting the trade balance, raising competitiveness and enhancing production, especially if these investments are directed to remote areas and pockets of poverty and their gains are distributed equitably among the Jordanian governorates, provided that restrictions and oversight measures are put in place to ensure their continuity and the achievement of the intended purpose.

On the other hand, despite the government measures to encourage investment and stimulate the investment environment, and the holding of numerous conferences and meetings to attract more investment, the Center considers that this field is still marred by certain shortcomings and obstacles, most notably: the multiplicity of bodies responsible for managing this area, owing to genuine conflicts in legislation that the current Investment Law has been unable to address; complex procedures, bureaucracy and a lack of transparency; the entrenchment of corruption in certain joints of the State and the existence of certain exploitative practices; and the complexity of the procedures for obtaining the licenses required for any investment activity, with the investor not dealing with a single point of reference, despite the existence of a special body for this purpose (the Investment Commission).

In addition, the high costs of production and energy constitute a factor that repels investment in the Kingdom, thereby limiting the competitiveness of the business environment and the national economy¹¹⁴. Some press data indicate that foreign investment flowing into Jordan declined by 53.9 percent year on year. In the first nine months of 2018, net foreign investment up to the end of September stood at JOD 538.9 million (USD 759.8 million), whereas net foreign direct investment had amounted to JOD 1.171 billion (USD 1.651 billion) during the same period of 2017¹¹⁵.

In this regard, the Center considers that development and investment projects that generate job opportunities and promote economic growth are scarce, despite the existence of numerous development zones in many governorates, which have cost the Treasury hundreds of millions of dinars and which are today unable to absorb the growing numbers in the labor force, particularly young people, whose skills and educational level are often incompatible with the needs of the labor market.

¹¹²See the decisions of the Council of Ministers dated 12 February 2018.

¹¹³<http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo>.

¹¹⁴Al-Ghad, article entitled "Distorted Legislation and Multiple Points of Reference Undermine the Investment Environment", Wednesday, 10 October 2018.

¹¹⁵www.sarayanews.com/, dated 18 February 2019, news item entitled "Decline of Foreign Investment in Jordan in 2018".

Organizational and productive challenges, difficulty of access to capital and an environment that does not support creativity lead to the obstruction of such projects and to the deprivation of many areas, particularly pockets of poverty.

The Investment Environment in Jordan According to Certain National and International Indicators

- Investor Confidence Survey in Jordan¹¹⁶: This survey showed that 62.1% of investors consider the investment environment in Jordan to be unencouraging, according to the following data:

Table No. (7)

Item	2018	2017
High taxes	29.2%	21%
Lack of encouragement for the investor	15.3%	14%
Complexity of laws	14.2%	11.2%
Economic stagnation	11.1%	15.4%
Political conditions	10.7%	4.6%
High operating costs	8.9%	11%
Corruption	1.3%	4%
Obstacles posed by government departments	3.7%	8.5%
Customs complications	2.4%	3.8%
Bureaucracy	0.3%	2.8%
Other reasons	2.3%	3.4%
No answer	0.5%	0.4%

As regards the economic situation, the survey results showed an increase in the proportion of investors who believe that matters are heading in the wrong direction, to 59.8%, compared with 46.5% in 2017.

FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index¹¹⁷

Jordan ranked 63rd out of the 68 countries covered by the report, with a score of 0.243. This index is based on four main pillars, as shown in Table No. (8).

Table No. (8): Jordan's scores on the sub-indicators of the FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index

Sub-indicator	Score
Foreign equity restrictions	0.181
Discriminatory screening and approval mechanisms	0
Restrictions on key personnel and representatives of foreign companies	0.008
Operational restrictions	0.053

In view of this index, Jordan occupied a low rank, which indicates the weakness of the legislative environment regulating this sector.

¹¹⁶Jordan Strategy Forum, Investor Confidence Survey in Jordan, July 2018.

¹¹⁷This index was issued by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in May 2018 and measures the degree of restrictiveness of legislation and laws on foreign investment in 68 countries of the world, with scores ranging from (0) zero, meaning no restrictions on investment, to (1), meaning investment is completely restricted. For more, see the link <http://www.jsf.org/ar>.

Doing Business Report¹¹⁸: Jordan ranked 103rd on this index out of the 190 countries covered by the report in 2018, thereby achieving an advance of 15 places compared with 2017, when it ranked 118th. The Center considers this positive and promising for the improvement of the national business environment. The sub-indicators were as follows:

Table No. (9)

Sub-indicator	Rank in 2018	Rank in 2017	Jordan's status
Getting credit	159	185	Advanced 26 places
Starting a business	105	106	Advanced one place
Dealing with construction permits	110	109	Declined one place
Getting electricity	40	48	Advanced 8 places
Registering property	72	96	Advanced 24 places
Protecting minority investors	146	166	Advanced 20 places
Paying taxes	97	79	Declined 18 places
Resolving insolvency	146	142	Declined 4 places

Global Competitiveness Index: In 2018, Jordan ranked 52nd on this index, compared with 56th in 2017, according to the ranking of the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Switzerland, thus achieving an advance of four places.

Meanwhile, the Global Competitiveness Report 2018 issued by the World Economic Forum¹¹⁹ indicates that Jordan ranked 73rd worldwide among the 140 countries covered by the index, with a score of 59.3/100, and ranked seventh among the 13 Arab countries also covered. This index consists of 98 sub-indicators grouped under 12 pillars on which the index is based, reflecting productivity and its drivers in the various economies. These pillars include the following:

Table No. (10): Jordan's score and rank on the pillars of the index for 2018

Pillar	Global rank	Score out of 100
Institutions	50	57.7
Infrastructure	73	66.6
ICT adoption	75	52.3
Macroeconomic stability	69.9	101
Health	78	78.4
Skills	61	64.4
Product market efficiency	88	53.8
Labor market efficiency	91	55.6
Financial system	32	70.7
Market size	48.7	81
Business dynamism	54.4	94
Innovation capability	38.9	59
Overall index	59.3	73

On examining and analyzing these pillars, it is clear that Jordan's performance varied across the different pillars of this index: it occupied middling ranks on some of them, but there is, by contrast, weakness in

¹¹⁸World Bank Group, Doing Business Report 2018. This report provides a number of indicators relating to property rights and commercial regulations. For more, see the link <http://arabic.doingbusiness.org/>

¹¹⁹An annual report issued by the World Economic Forum that assesses the ability of countries to achieve prosperity for their citizens through a set of indicators. For more, see the link: www.weforum.org

the macroeconomic environment indicator, the business dynamism pillar and the labor market size pillar. The Center therefore considers it necessary to study this index and other indicators in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and to develop appropriate policies to raise the competitiveness of the Jordanian economy in a manner that is reflected in its development path and in improving the welfare of citizens.

Global Gender Gap Index 2018¹²⁰

Jordan still occupies a low rank on this index in 2018, ranking 138th out of 149 countries with a score of 0.605 on a scale of 0–1, where a score of 1 means full equality and no gender gap, while a score of 0 means inequality and a vast gap.

It should be noted that Jordan ranked 135th out of the 144 countries covered by the report in 2017, and ranked tenth among the 16 Arab countries covered by the index.

The report covers four areas for measuring the gender gap, namely: economic participation, political participation, education and health. Jordan ranked 144th on women's economic participation, 129th on political participation and 102nd on health, while its ranking was advanced in education, where it ranked 45th. In view of the components of this index, and despite the declared government policies for empowering women and narrowing the gender gap, the Center considers that these government measures and policies in this regard suffer from numerous shortcomings and certain distortions, and that further measures and greater openness towards women's empowerment and effective participation are required.

United Nations Human Development Report 2018¹²¹

According to this report, Jordan ranked 95th in the level of human development, with a Human Development Index value for Jordan of 0.735 this year, thus falling one place from 2017, when it ranked 94th among the group of countries covered by the report. According to the report, this level falls within the lowest tier of the high human development category. The categories of development level are classified as follows: very high human development: 0.894; high human development: 0.757; medium human development: 0.654; low human development: 0.504. The average Human Development Index for the Arab States was 0.557, while the global average was 0.598.

Indebtedness

Indebtedness remains one of the most prominent obstacles facing the Jordanian State and the foremost challenge on the path of national development, owing to its negative effects resulting from the allocation of huge sums of public revenue to servicing this debt and its interest instead of directing them to investment in development projects that would improve the lives and living standards of citizens, despite the existence of numerous development plans and programs. Total public debt at the end of 2018 amounted to approximately JOD 28,308.3 million, or 94% of the estimated gross domestic product for 2018 of JOD 30,100 million, compared with JOD 27,269.2 million, or 94.3% of the estimated gross domestic product for 2017.

The indebtedness of the National Electric Power Company and the Water Authority rose from JOD 7.2 billion in 2017 to approximately JOD 7.4 billion in 2018¹²². The cost of servicing this debt, in interest and installments, is estimated in the budget at approximately JOD 1,767.2 million¹²³. This contributed

¹²⁰www.jo24.net/ – "Jordan Ranks 138th out of 149 Countries on the Gender Gap Index 2018".

¹²¹This index expresses the level of development as a standard indicator between 0 and 1, and reflects a wide range of data and indicators on the level of income and living, education, health, social welfare, equality and empowerment.

¹²²Ministry of Finance, General Government Finance Bulletin, January 2019.

¹²³Ministry of Finance, General Government Finance Bulletin, op. cit., p. 44.

to a rise in the cost-of-living index from 3.3 in 2017 to 4.5 in 2018¹²⁴, which was regarded as an indicator of a retreat from the declared government policies to reduce debt ratios and improve the lives of citizens.

The per capita share of public debt in Jordan rose in 2018 by 3.2%, reaching approximately JOD 3,768, compared with JOD 3,651 in 2017¹²⁵. Net public debt in the Kingdom in 2018 amounted to approximately JOD 26.9 billion, while the number of Jordanians at the end of last year, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS), was 7.138 million, whereas net public debt of the Kingdom in 2017 amounted to approximately JOD 25.4 billion and the number of Jordanians at that time was 6.965 million.

As for the per capita share of domestic debt in 2018, it amounted to JOD 2,075, compared with JOD 1,948 in 2017, while the per capita share of external debt last year amounted to approximately JOD 1,693, compared with JOD 1,703 in 2017¹²⁶.

The Center observed an increase in expenditure during 2018 of approximately JOD 394.1 million, representing an increase of 4.8% compared with 2017, as total expenditure in 2018 amounted to approximately JOD 8,567.3 million, compared with JOD 8,173.2 million in 2017. Ministry of Finance data indicated an increase in current expenditure of JOD 506.6 million and a decrease in capital expenditure of approximately JOD 112.5 million, which the Center considers inconsistent with the declared government policies of controlling expenditure and rationalizing consumption. This prompted the Government to adopt further austerity economic policies and measures in 2018 to serve debt purposes and reduce the budget deficit, which had a negative impact on the reality of human rights in the Kingdom and drove citizens to take to the streets to demand a change in the economic approach and the fight against corruption, instead of burdening citizens with additional burdens through these austerity policies, which contributed to a decline in their living standards.

Economic Growth

Figures and statistics still indicate that economic growth rates in 2018 fall short of the level required by the target set by Jordan Vision 2025 of raising real GDP growth to 4.9% in 2017 and then to 6.9% in 2021¹²⁷. GDP growth at constant market prices for the second quarter of 2018 stood at 2.1% compared with the same quarter of 2017¹²⁸. As for GDP per capita, Jordan ranked 120th worldwide, with USD 6,115 annually, out of the 187 countries covered by the report issued by the Economy and Business Forum/United Nations¹²⁹.

Jordanian Exports

Despite the unstable regional conditions, particularly in certain neighboring countries (Iraq, Syria and Yemen), and the closure of certain markets to Jordanian exports, 2018 witnessed a slight improvement in the Jordanian export market. The value of total exports during 2018 amounted to JOD 5,518.5 million, an increase of 3.5% compared with 2017.

The value of national exports during 2018 amounted to JOD 4,668.4 million, an increase of 3.6% compared with 2017, and the value of re-exports amounted to JOD 850.1 million during 2018, an increase of 2.6% compared with 2017. As for imports, their value amounted to JOD 14,353.2 million during 2018, a decrease of 1.4% compared with 2017.

¹²⁴Department of Statistics, Consumer Prices – Inflation Rate, December 2018.

¹²⁵The per capita share of debt is calculated by dividing the Kingdom's net public debt for a given period by the number of Jordanian population.

¹²⁶Khaberni, news item entitled "Rise in the Per Capita Share of Jordanians in Public Debt", dated 28 February 2019.

¹²⁷Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan Vision 2025, p. 75.

¹²⁸See the official website of the Department of Statistics.

¹²⁹United Nations, Economy and Business Forum, Report on Per Capita Gross National Income.

Accordingly, the trade balance deficit, which represents the difference between the value of imports and the value of total exports, amounted to JOD 8,834.7 million; the deficit thus decreased during 2018 by 4.2% compared with 2017. The coverage ratio of total exports to imports stood at 38.4% during 2018, while the coverage ratio stood at 36.6% during 2017, an increase of 1.8 percentage points¹³⁰.

Prices, Taxes and Fees

In 2018, the general price level was affected by a series of government decisions taken during the year, the most prominent of which were the liberalization of petroleum derivative prices, the amendment of the sales tax on many goods and services, and the imposition of further taxes and fees under various names, such as special taxes. These were reflected in the general price level during 2018, as the inflation rate, measured by the relative change in the consumer price index, rose during 2018 by 4.5% compared with 2017.

The most prominent commodity groups that contributed to this rise were transport, by 1.32 percentage points; cereals and their products, by 1.04 percentage points; tobacco and cigarettes, by 0.64 percentage points; rents, by 0.41 percentage points; and fuel and lighting, by 0.39 percentage points. By contrast, the prices of a number of commodity groups decreased, including vegetables and dried and canned legumes, by 0.07 percentage points; clothing, by 0.05 percentage points; and spices, food enhancers and other foodstuffs, and fruit and nuts, by 0.01 percentage points each¹³¹.

Overall Economic Participation

In this regard, certain government data indicate limited overall economic participation and scarce job opportunities created in the Jordanian economy during the third quarter of 2018. The revised economic participation rate (labor force as a proportion of the population aged 15 years and over) stood at 36.8%: 56.9% for males compared with 15.8% for females, compared with 39.2% in 2017: 60.7% for males and 17.1% for females¹³². This indicates the ineffectiveness of the declared government policies, at the level of implementation, in creating more job opportunities and increasing the economic participation rate, particularly among women and girls, and in reducing unemployment rates.

Climate Change

Jordan suffers from natural and environmental fluctuations due to climate change. In 2018, heavy rainfall occurred in some areas of the Kingdom, particularly the central areas (Madaba Governorate, the Mleih and Al-Walah area, and Dhiban) and the southern governorates of Karak, Tafileh, Ma'an and Aqaba, resulting in loss of life and material damage to certain property and infrastructure. This points to shortcomings in government policies in this regard, weakness in the measures taken to deal with such climatic phenomena and weakness in infrastructure, despite the obligations of the Jordanian State under international human rights law and its signature of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 and the Paris Agreement on climate change of 2016¹³³. Despite the existence of numerous plans and legislation at the national level for dealing with crises and natural disasters, the Center considers that there is weakness and insufficiency in the preparedness and precautionary measures for this and other natural phenomena, and a shortage of the personnel and equipment that must be available in such exceptional circumstances.

This is despite numerous studies and reports warning of climate change phenomena in Jordan¹³⁴, the most prominent of which is the Third National Communication Report to the United Nations

¹³⁰Department of Statistics, Monthly Report on Foreign Trade, 25 February 2019.

¹³¹Department of Statistics, op. cit.

¹³²Department of Statistics, press release, Unemployment Rate During the Third Quarter of 2018.

¹³³For more, see the link <http://moenv.gov.jo/AR/Agreements/Pages/default.aspx>.

¹³⁴For more, see the link www.alghad.com/, dated 11 November 2018.

Framework Convention on Climate Change of 2014. In addition, warning measures for citizens are insufficient, whether through the use of available means of communication such as mobile telephones, mosque minarets, church bells or the sirens deployed in various areas of the Kingdom for early warning, with such warnings being confined to the media through weather bulletins.

There is also weakness in awareness, education and empowerment programs for citizens regarding the measures to be taken in such abnormal phenomena, and weak and poor infrastructure, including streets, bridges and culverts, which are in any event old, dilapidated and of outdated design, incompatible with urban development, population growth and climate change phenomena.

Salaries and Wages

The year 2018 did not witness any increase in salaries and wages, apart from certain routine increases approved under certain legislation, such as annual increments. However, 2018 witnessed the annual inflation adjustment for Social Security retirees, at a rate of 1.59% as of 1 May 2018, as a legal entitlement, since the Social Security Law No. (1) of 2014 provides for linking the retirement pension and the disability pension to inflation or to the annual growth rate of average wages, whichever is lower, subject to a ceiling of twenty dinars, in May of each year.

The most important observations on these increases are that they did not cover early retirement pensions or partial occupational disability pensions; rather, coverage applies to those who have reached the age of 60 for males and 55 for females, or in the event of death¹³⁵. In addition, the salaries of sanitation workers employed in municipalities and joint services councils were increased by an allowance of 25 dinars per month, pursuant to the decision of the Council of Ministers at its session held on 14 May 2018¹³⁶. The Center considers these to be weak increases in light of rising costs, amounting only to a slight increase in the salaries of sanitation workers employed in some municipalities.

The Badia, Village and Rural Areas

These areas still face faltering economic and social conditions, particularly in light of the spread of poverty and unemployment, which afflict their inhabitants owing to the unavailability and scarcity of job opportunities and the weakness of government policies in establishing productive investment and development projects that generate job opportunities, are compatible with the cultural fabric of the inhabitants of these areas and contribute to improving their living conditions. The majority of the people of these areas, particularly young people, depend on the military sector as their largest employer.

Energy and Renewable Energy

The Energy Sector

This sector still faces numerous challenges despite the adoption of legislation, plans and programs regulating it, which creates problems and overlaps among them, particularly among the laws¹³⁷, the most prominent of which are:

- The General Electricity Law No. (64) of 2002 (a temporary law).
- The Law Regulating Natural Resources Affairs No. (12) of 1968.
- The Energy and Minerals Regulatory Commission Law No. (8) of 2017.
- The Renewable Energy Law No. (13) of 2012 and the Law Amending the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Law No. (33) of 2014.
- The Nuclear Energy Law No. (42) of 2007.
- The Natural Resources Law No. (19) of 2018.

¹³⁵For more, see the link www.ssc.gov.jo.

¹³⁶For more, see the link www.jo24.net, dated 2018/15.

¹³⁷See the official website of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

- The Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety and Security Law No. (43) of 2007.
- The Petroleum Products Law No. (11) of 2018.

On the other hand, the Jordanian State still relies on imports from abroad for most of its energy needs. The value of imports of crude oil and its derivatives rose from approximately JOD 2,089.6 million in 2017 to approximately JOD 2,700.1 million up to November 2018, a change of 29.2%. This contributed to raising the deficit in the State's general budget and the level of indebtedness, as the indebtedness of this sector exceeded five billion dinars by 2018¹³⁸.

This sector constitutes a burden on the Jordanian citizen and adds further burdens on him through the rise in the prices of fuel and petroleum products and the rise in electricity bills and the fixed taxes and fees they contain, the mechanism for the imposition of which and the manner of their expenditure are unknown to the consumer, particularly the fuel price differential item, which raises many questions about the legal basis for these fees, which the Government imposes without disclosing or explaining them to consumers. The Center considers this a breach of the principles of good governance and transparency.

The Center considers that these burdens, taken as a whole, have become a source of concern for consumers, prompting many of them to resort to illegitimate means of obtaining this essential commodity, whether through unlawful tapping or theft from the public networks. The number of cases detected during 2018 reached 19,962¹³⁹. This increases losses from the public electricity grid, infringes the rights of compliant citizens, raises the rate of loss on the electricity network, and deprives many citizens of the enjoyment of this service owing to frequent power cuts. In addition, many are unable to pay the amounts owed by them to the electricity company owing to their high value, which results in their power supply being disconnected because of their inability to pay these financial claims.

On the other hand, the environment in Jordan is conducive to the use of alternative energy, both solar and wind energy: the sun shines on the Kingdom 316 days a year, for an average of 8 hours a day. As for wind energy, it is considered one of the best renewable energy sources for electricity generation in the Kingdom, as many areas of the Kingdom have wind speeds ranging between 7 and 8.5 meters per second, a speed suitable for building stations that harness wind energy to generate electricity¹⁴⁰. It should be noted that the Comprehensive National Energy Strategy aims to raise this share to 10% in 2020. In addition, there are vast reserves of oil shale; some international studies have pointed to the high quality of Jordanian oil shale, indicating that the Kingdom's reserves range between 40 and 60 billion tons, making it the second-richest country in the world in this resource after Canada.

There is also a reserve of uranium ore estimated at approximately 40,000 tons, which could help reduce the burden of the energy bill on the Government and, in turn, on citizens and consumers, if properly invested. However, government efforts in this regard are still marred by certain shortcomings, particularly with regard to investment in this sector.

The contribution of the renewable energy sector to electricity generation is around 8%¹⁴¹, despite the existence of numerous national plans and strategies concerning this sector and the multiplicity of executive authorities regulating it, and despite the fact that in 2018 Jordan ranked third out of 103 countries for the best investment environment in the field of renewable energy, according to the Climatescope index, as stated by the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources¹⁴², and despite the government orientation to promote alternatives to conventional energy, encourage reliance on renewable energy and raise its contribution to the overall energy mix, as it is clean, safe and cheap

¹³⁸<http://www.albosala.com/News/Jordan/2018/6/22>.

¹³⁹<https://alghad.com/عام-كهرباء-سرقة-حالة-ألف-20-نحو-ضبط/>.

¹⁴⁰<http://www.emrc.gov.jo/>.

¹⁴¹<https://alghad.com>, dated 23 October 2018.

¹⁴²For more, see the link www.jo24.net, dated 22 January 2019.

energy, and given the favorable environment in the Kingdom in terms of wind and solar energy. Nevertheless, the Government decided to suspend the granting of licenses for renewable energy projects pending the completion of studies by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, without specifying a time frame for their resumption, on the grounds that the current electricity grid cannot absorb further supply¹⁴³. This raises questions as to the reason, why production at generating stations operating on conventional fuel has not been reduced in order to absorb the quantity of electricity generated from alternative energy, whether there is a conflict between renewable energy projects and the interests of the electricity companies, and the extent of the conflict between the agreements signed by the Government with suppliers of conventional energy such as oil and gas and its orientation towards relying on renewable energy sources. The Center considers this inconsistent with the official orientation towards diversifying energy sources in light of the volatility of conventional energy prices and their imports, their burden on the budget and their contribution to raising indebtedness and the deficit in the State's general budget, as the Government pays huge sums for this instead of directing them to development projects. As regards renewable energy prices and their impact on reducing electricity bills for consumers, this has not been reflected in lower electricity prices for consumers, in light of the statements of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, in which she explained that solar energy prices in Jordan had fallen to 1.7 piasters per kilowatt-hour for the third phase of solar energy projects.

The Center also notes the faltering of the nuclear program project, on which hundreds of millions have been spent from the State Treasury amid high indebtedness, a budget deficit and rising rates of poverty and unemployment, without it seeing the light of day or citizens feeling any positive effects from it.

Expenditure on this program since its establishment in 2008 has amounted to approximately JOD 112 million¹⁴⁴. The Center also observed weakness in government measures to guide citizens and motivate them to use energy-saving means, for example energy-saving light bulbs, encouraging the use of solar water heaters and building insulation. Had these been provided at reasonable prices commensurate with citizens' incomes, they would have had a direct effect in contributing to solving the energy problems from which consumers suffer.

The Center further observed weakness in awareness programs and in the measures taken regarding public safety standards in the electricity sector, particularly domestic electricity, as many citizens have fallen victim to electrocution. Moreover, reliance is still placed on tankers for transporting petroleum derivatives, which contributes to the deterioration of infrastructure, including streets and passageways, in addition to many tankers being involved in fatal and deadly accidents that have claimed the lives of many citizens, despite the official orientation towards transporting these derivatives through dedicated pipelines.

Despite citizens' discontent and their clear demands for the disclosure of certain agreements concluded with certain parties in this field, which directly affect their rights, particularly the gas agreement signed with the Israeli side, this agreement has not been disclosed and citizens have not been informed candidly of its most important provisions.

Repercussions of the Syrian Crisis

The phenomenon of refugees in general, and Syrian refugees in particular, continues to pose a major challenge to Jordan, owing to the enormous pressure their influx has placed on the State's already limited resources and on infrastructure. This has had a clear impact at all levels, especially on health, education, water and housing services and on job opportunities for Jordanian citizens, particularly low-income Jordanians, owing to competition from Syrian refugees, whether in the labor market or in housing. The cost of the burden of Syrian asylum alone is estimated at approximately USD 7.3 billion

¹⁴³www.jo24.net, op. cit., dated 25 March 2019.

¹⁴⁴Al-Ghad, op. cit., news item entitled "JOD 112 Million Spent on the Jordanian Nuclear Program", dated 10 June 2018.

for the years 2018–2020, at an average of approximately USD 2.4 billion annually. The international community provided actual funding for the plan's projects of approximately USD 1.6 billion in 2018, constituting approximately 63.9 percent of funding requirements, compared with approximately 65 percent in 2017¹⁴⁵.

Corruption¹⁴⁶ and Its Impact on the Right to Development

The continuity and sustainability of the development process require curbing corruption and combating all its forms and manifestations, through deepening awareness, the availability of serious and effective political will, the spread of quality education, raising the standard of living of citizens and their enjoyment of the elements of effective participation, among other requirements, with a view to achieving the enjoyment of human rights in general and the right to development in particular.

At the national level, Jordan ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2005, and Jordan has adopted a number of laws to combat corruption within the State, most notably the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law No. (13) of 2016, the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960 and its amendments, the Economic Crimes Law No. (11) of 1960 and its amendments, the Illicit Enrichment Law No. (12) of 2014, the Cybercrimes Law No. (27) of 2015 and the Investment Law No. (30) of 2014, in addition to many regulations relevant to this subject, and the adoption of the National Strategy for Integrity and Anti-Corruption for the years 2017–2025.

Nevertheless, the Center considers that the implementation of an effective anti-corruption program in Jordan is still marred by certain shortcomings and has not risen to the level of practices whose impact citizens can feel in the work of government departments and public services. Rather, further measures are required, most notably: activating the role of civil society organizations; dealing seriously and clearly with the reports of oversight institutions; cooperation between the public and private sectors; building a system of good governance; and identifying and addressing the social norms that encourage this phenomenon. It should be noted that corruption remains a national concern and a source of anxiety for Jordanian citizens, which has led to the erosion of trust between citizens and the Government. This was clearly evident in the many slogans raised during the wave of protests witnessed this year against policies of imposing further taxes and raising prices, the most prominent of which were fighting corruption, prosecuting the corrupt and recovering the funds plundered from the nation's resources. Corruption remains a phenomenon entrenched in Jordanian society and has created a conviction among citizens that they cannot obtain their rights without resorting to *wasta* (intermediation), favoritism or, at times, bribery.

In view of the importance of the phenomenon of corruption and its impact on the human rights situation, and given that combating it is itself a human right, the Center organized a seminar on 10 December 2018¹⁴⁷ entitled "Fighting Corruption Is a Human Right". Through the many papers presented, the participants pointed to the gravity of this phenomenon and to the fact that its spread leads to deprivation of the enjoyment of human rights; that citizens have come to perceive the existence of corruption amid the deterioration of the economic situation, the absence of social justice, disrespect for the rule of law and the absence of transparency in decision-making, particularly appointments to leadership positions, which has reinforced the lack of trust between citizens and officials; and that what has reinforced citizens' conviction of the existence and spread of this phenomenon in Jordan is the absence of legal accountability at the level of the top tier of leaders of the legislative and executive branches. The corrupt at the highest levels must be prosecuted, however senior their official positions and social standing. The gap remains wide between the cases committed, which number in the thousands, and the cases that are

¹⁴⁵Al-Hayat, news item entitled "Jordan Approves the Jordan Response Plan for the Syrian Crisis for 2019", 20 February 2019.

¹⁴⁶The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has defined corruption as the misuse of power for private gain.

¹⁴⁷National Center for Human Rights, "Seminar at the Amman Chamber of Industry".

detected, as not all corruption cases are referred to the Public Prosecution for investigation and subsequently to the judiciary. According to statements by the head of the Anti-Corruption Commission, 1,550 complaints had been submitted to the Commission up to 1 September 2018, of which 39% were malicious and unfounded, while 61% were investigated and a large proportion of them were referred to the judiciary¹⁴⁸.

On the other hand, the number of violations documented by the Audit Bureau for 2018 reached 616, committed by 84 institutions¹⁴⁹, noting that this number does not include violations committed in government-owned companies. His Majesty the King foresaw the gravity of this phenomenon and directed, through his Discussion Papers and on more than one occasion, that it must be fought and combated, emphasizing the values of justice, integrity and the rule of law. On the other hand, Jordan ranked 58th worldwide on the Corruption Perceptions Index for 2018, advancing one place from 2017, with a score of 49/100, thus registering positive progress of one place over the previous year. According to the index, this slight improvement is attributable to the benefits of automating certain government procedures, such as the issuance of licenses and electronic payment, in addition to improvement in the control of bribery and tenders¹⁵⁰.

The Municipal Sector

Despite the importance of this sector and the existence of a legal and institutional framework regulating it, represented by the Municipalities Law (the Municipalities Law No. (41) of 2015) and the establishment of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, this sector still faces numerous challenges, **the most prominent of which are:**

The weakness of municipalities' development and service roles as a result of the high level of debt of many of them, in light of the large increase in population due to waves of refugees resulting from the security conditions in certain neighboring countries; and the financial challenge represented by the budget deficits of many municipalities, which has led to a decline in the quality of the services they provide, because most of their resources go to salaries, wages and the repayment of debt installments, thereby weakening their capacity to implement development projects in accordance with the roles assigned to them by law. Municipal debts amounted to approximately (JOD 50 million) at the end of 2017¹⁵¹. In addition, there is the small size of some municipalities in most areas of the Kingdom, which has created municipalities incapable of performing their functions owing to their weak resources. There are 100 municipalities in the Kingdom, with 356 local councils affiliated to them, excluding the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority and the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority. Most municipalities also lack long-term strategic plans for establishing investment projects that would generate a steady income to help them manage their financial affairs, even though municipalities own land in commercial areas that they are able to invest, which affects the realization of the right to development and citizens' enjoyment of it.

Sustainable Development

In light of Jordan's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and strengthening national ownership of them, it has adopted institutional arrangements for their implementation, represented by the Higher Steering Committee for Sustainable Development chaired by the Prime Minister and the Higher National Committee for Sustainable Development chaired by the Minister of Planning, to which numerous coordination committees and sectoral working groups are linked. In light of Jordan's adoption of and commitment to this agenda, it submitted its First Voluntary

¹⁴⁸<http://www.jiacc.gov.jo/>.

¹⁴⁹www.addustour.com/, dated 1 February 2019.

¹⁵⁰For more, see the link www.transparency.org/.

¹⁵¹Al-Rai newspaper: <http://alrai.com/>

National Review report to the session of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July 2017. The report included Jordan's priorities for the coming phase, the most prominent of which are¹⁵²:

1. Strengthening the link between education and the labor market and supporting entrepreneurship in order to reduce unemployment and ensure decent work.
2. Combating stereotypes to ensure gender equality, reducing geographical disparities, reducing poverty rates and ensuring equitable access to social services.
3. Strengthening accountability and respect for human rights and contributing to regional stability.
4. Raising awareness of environmental issues, encouraging renewable energy and addressing the problem of water scarcity.

In this regard, the Center considers that no improvement occurred towards achieving these priorities during 2018: unemployment rates remain high; educational outcomes have declined, with a focus on academic education at the expense of technical and vocational education; the gap between educational outcomes and labor market needs has widened; and the development gap among the Jordanian governorates remains tangible, particularly in remote areas¹⁵³.

The human rights situation is still marred by numerous violations, despite the policies declared by the Government for its protection and promotion, and the energy and water situation remains a national concern and a burden on consumers in light of their rising costs and stagnant income and wage levels.

On the other hand, no government report or data was issued during 2018 on the extent of achievement with respect to these goals and their targets or with respect to national programs and plans, including the executive development programs, even though the issuance of such data and reports was provided for in the First Voluntary National Review report referred to above.

Sustainable Development Goals Index 2018¹⁵⁴

This index indicates that Jordan fell to 91st place worldwide, with a score of 64.4, out of the 156 countries covered by the report, whereas it ranked 80th in 2017 with a score of 66, thus falling 11 places worldwide. It also fell to seventh place among the 18 Arab countries covered by the report, having ranked fifth among Arab countries in 2017, thus falling two places at the Arab level. The United Arab Emirates ranked first among Arab countries (60th worldwide) and Yemen ranked 18th among Arab countries (152nd worldwide).

Recommendations

- Developing and strengthening the economic and development approach towards one more capable of creating and developing opportunities, with a focus on a productive State fortified by the rule of law and respectful of human rights, and with a focus on growth based on production, exports and investment.
- Reducing the burden of indebtedness and the budget deficit by pursuing effective economic policies to raise growth rates and increase the State's public revenues, by reducing current expenditure and increasing the capital expenditure that contributes thereto.
- Activating the partnership between the public and private sectors, raising the competitiveness of Jordanian goods and improving their quality, in addition to working by all means to improve the investment environment and to simplify and facilitate procedures, so as to arrive at an investment environment that encourages domestic investment and attracts foreign investment and enables investors to operate in a safe and stimulating environment.

¹⁵²Ministry of Planning, First Voluntary National Review Report on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹⁵³NCHR Report on the State of Human Rights for 2017, pp. 125–126.

¹⁵⁴An index developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, relying heavily on the Sustainable Development Goals indicators proposed by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The index covered 156 of the 193 United Nations Member States. For more, see the link: <http://sigijordan.org/ar/>

- Studying and analyzing Jordan's position on international indicators in order to identify the shortcomings and the reasons that led to Jordan's decline on some of them, and taking measures to improve Jordan's ranking.
- Investing State lands, particularly in remote areas and pockets of poverty, by establishing productive, job-generating projects to alleviate poverty and unemployment and improve the development situation of those areas, provided that they are compatible with the cultural composition of their inhabitants and their comparative advantages.
- Building the national capacities of municipalities to perform their development and service roles by increasing their financial allocations, particularly municipalities in the Badia, rural areas and villages.
- Conducting a comprehensive review of the education system and shifting towards technical education in line with labor market needs.
- Building a database on the progress made and achievements in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.
- Strengthening the national integrity system and combating corruption in all its forms and manifestations, while activating the oversight role to combat corruption before it occurs (the preventive aspect).

2. The Right to an Adequate Standard of Living in 2018

The Jordanian Constitution:

Notwithstanding the numerous constitutional amendments that have affected certain provisions of the Jordanian Constitution promulgated in 1952, no provision has been included that regulates this right as an independent right and guarantees it to citizens. The Constitution does, however, devote a dedicated chapter to the rights and duties of Jordanians, which intersect with this right. Likewise, the Jordanian legislative system lacks a specific law regulating this right; rather, numerous laws that intersect with it and address its various aspects fall under this concept, whether from the perspective of civil and political rights or of economic, social and cultural rights.

The International Legal Framework:

The right to an adequate standard of living is one of the most important requirements for realizing the human dignity of the individual, who should be enabled to attain that standard through the provision of his or her basic needs. Owing to the importance of this right and its impact on the system of other human rights, paragraph 1 of Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."¹⁵⁵ Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)¹⁵⁶ likewise refers to the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, sufficient to meet their needs for food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. In addition, the Covenant recognizes the right of everyone to be free from hunger and to have adequate food, and to the improvement of methods of production, conservation and distribution of food so as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources.

Although the Jordanian State ratified the ICESCR on 28 May 1975 and published it in the Official Gazette on 15 June 2006, the Jordanian State has not submitted any report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights pursuant to the provisions of Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant since the last report submitted to that Committee on 5 December 1997.¹⁵⁷ States parties are required to submit an initial report within two years of the Covenant's entry into force for them, and thereafter a report every five years.

Policies and Practices:

At the national level, it can be said that 2018 witnessed a decline in the enjoyment of this right as a result of a series of developments in government policies that increased the cost-of-living burdens on citizens and adversely affected the ability of Jordanian families to bear the basic expenses of living, particularly the middle and low-income classes. This took place against the backdrop of a decline in gross domestic product at real prices to 2.0% in 2018, compared with 2.1% in 2017,¹⁵⁸ a rise in the inflation rate to 4.5% compared with 2017, and a rise in the unemployment rate among Jordanians to 18.7% during the fourth quarter of that same year,¹⁵⁹ while income and wage levels remained unchanged.

¹⁵⁵See the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 25.

¹⁵⁶See Article (11) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

¹⁵⁷United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Document No. E/1990/6/Add.17.

¹⁵⁸Ministry of Finance, General Government Finance Bulletin, December 2018.

¹⁵⁹For more, see <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/ar/>.

In 2018, further taxes and fees were imposed through the adoption of the Law Amending the Income Tax Law No. (38) of 2018, which was met with popular rejection from all segments of Jordanian society and drove the majority of citizens to demonstrate and protest against it and against the economic approach pursued by the Government in general. Under this Law, the Government expanded the base of taxpayer brackets by lowering the threshold of taxable income and reducing the exemptions granted for medical, education and rent expenses and housing loan interest.¹⁶⁰ In addition, the sales tax on many goods and services, particularly basic ones, was amended at varying rates without regard to the different strata of society, especially the poor and marginalized classes and their living conditions. This tax does not distinguish between rich and poor, nor does it take the level of income into account when it is paid, as it is ultimately borne by the consumer.

On the other hand, some data indicate the diversity of taxes and fees borne by Jordanian citizens, the number of which exceeds 120 main types of taxes and fees, with their various branches and subdivisions reaching more than one thousand sections and types under different names,¹⁶¹ which is considered among the highest rates in the world, weighing heavily on Jordanian citizens and imposing additional burdens on them. A government study also revealed that the ratio of the tax burden to gross domestic product for 2018 reached 26.5%, and pointed to a structural imbalance in the components of the tax system: direct taxes such as income tax fall to 24% of total tax revenues, while indirect taxes such as sales tax and fees rise to 76% of total tax revenues.¹⁶² In this regard, the Center considers that the tax burden¹⁶³ does not achieve tax justice, particularly the sales tax, which is borne by all segments of society at the same value. It thus constitutes a means of pressure on the livelihood of Jordanians without regard to their living standards, and contributes to the depletion and erosion of citizens' incomes and to the deepening of poverty levels, in light of rising prices and the removal of government subsidies on some basic commodities. It burdens limited-income groups beyond their capacity, while being less severe on those with high incomes. This is inconsistent with universal, internationally recognized human rights standards. The majority of Jordanians stand helpless in the face of the high cost of living that has swept over their already weak incomes, such that most of the population has become unable to meet all their living obligations and unable to enjoy an adequate standard of living.

The National Center considers that there is a lack of clarity and effectiveness in the government measures to improve the standard of living of Jordanians and their enjoyment of this right, despite the declared policies and the statements of decision-makers on improving it, in light of the low income levels of the majority of them. Data of the Department of Statistics (DoS) indicate that the average annual current income of a family from all sources of income is approximately JOD 11,512 per year, i.e. approximately JOD 959 per family per month, while the average annual current income per individual is approximately JOD 2,378, i.e. approximately JOD 198 per month.¹⁶⁴ The Center considers these amounts meager in light of the successive increases in the prices of goods and services and in taxes and fees, which have added further burdens to citizens' cost of living. The Center considers this to be inconsistent with Jordan's international obligations arising from its ratification of the ICESCR, which was published in the Official Gazette in 2006.

Public Finance:

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy 2017–2021,¹⁶⁵ which aims to reduce total public debt to 81.7% of gross domestic product by the end of 2021, the past period

¹⁶⁰For more, see the Income and Sales Tax Department, Legislation, link: <http://www.istd.gov.jo/Arabic>.

¹⁶¹For more, see the link: <https://kenanahnews.com/?p=37299>.

¹⁶²Al-Dustour newspaper, "The Tax Burden in Jordan," 4 September 2018.

¹⁶³The tax burden: defined by the study as the total taxes paid by society relative to one of the indicators of society's income, such as gross domestic product.

¹⁶⁴Department of Statistics, Household Expenditure and Income Survey 2017/2018.

¹⁶⁵See Ministry of Finance, Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy 2017–2021.

of this year did not witness a decline in public debt; rather, it rose compared with 2017. Ministry of Finance data indicate that total public debt at the end of 2018 amounted to approximately JOD 28,308.3 million, i.e. 94.0% of the estimated gross domestic product for the same year.¹⁶⁶ This constitutes a violation of the provisions of Article 23 of the Public Debt and Its Management Law No. (26) of 2001,¹⁶⁷ and leads to a decline in capital projects that generate more job opportunities for citizens, a rise in the unemployment rate and a decline in the rate of economic growth, as huge sums of general budget revenues are directed toward servicing the debt and repaying its installments and interest. Moreover, the fiscal deficit in the general budget for 2018 amounted to approximately JOD 1,622.3 million before foreign grants, compared with a fiscal deficit of approximately JOD 1,455.9 million in 2017.¹⁶⁸ These data indicate a growing budget deficit in 2018, despite the Government's undertaking of numerous economic correction measures and the imposition of further taxes and fees on citizens to bridge the budget deficit; yet these data prove the opposite of these declared orientations.

Bread Prices:

The beginning of 2018 witnessed the lifting of the subsidy on bread, which is considered the basic food commodity for citizens. New price ceilings were set for its various types, with increases of up to 100%. After the lifting of the subsidy, its prices became as follows: one kilo of large kmaj bread at 320 fils, one kilo of small kmaj bread at 400 fils, and taboon, mashrouh, manqoush or warda bread at 350 fils.

To alleviate some of the burdens on citizens, the Government disbursed cash support to Jordanian families whose members' total income does not exceed JOD 12,000 per year, and to individuals whose annual income does not exceed JOD 6,000 per year. An amount of JOD 27 was allocated as annual support for eligible individuals who meet the support criteria, and JOD 33 as a share allocated per individual member of the families benefiting from the National Aid Fund, who number approximately 500,000 individuals in its various programs.¹⁶⁹

The instructions for disbursing direct cash support for 2018 also included the children of Jordanian women and the children of Gaza Strip residents living on the territory of the Kingdom, with cash support of JOD 27 for each individual meeting the eligibility criteria. The Government had allocated JOD 171 million in the budget as direct cash support for eligible persons, and the number of beneficiaries of the support according to the criteria of the Ministerial Committee for the Social Safety Net was nearly 6.2 million persons out of 7.8 million Jordanian citizens.¹⁷⁰

Consumer Price Index:

Data issued by the Department of Statistics indicate that the consumer price index for the whole of 2018 rose by 4.5% compared with 2017. The most prominent commodity groups that contributed to this rise were transport by 1.32 percentage points, cereals and cereal products by 1.04 percentage points, tobacco and cigarettes by 0.64 percentage points, rents by 0.41 percentage points, and fuel and lighting by 0.39 percentage points. On the other hand, the prices of a group of commodities declined, including vegetables and dried and canned legumes by 0.07 percentage points, clothing by 0.05 percentage points, and spices, food enhancers and other foods, and fruits and nuts by 0.01 percentage points each.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶Ministry of Finance, General Government Finance Bulletin, January 2019.

¹⁶⁷This Article provides that, notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the outstanding balance of public debt may not at any time exceed (80%) of gross domestic product at current prices for the most recent year for which data are available.

¹⁶⁸Ministry of Finance, General Government Finance Bulletin, op. cit.

¹⁶⁹Telephone call with the Center's liaison officer at the National Aid Fund, Sunday, 24 March 2019.

¹⁷⁰For more, see the link www.jo24.net/, dated 15 January 2018.

¹⁷¹Department of Statistics, Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index, December 2018.

Unemployment:

2018 did not witness any decrease in unemployment rates. Some government data indicate that unemployment rates during the fourth quarter of 2018 reached 18.7%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points over the same period of 2017, with the unemployment rate for males reaching 16.9% compared with 25.7% for females.

The highest unemployment rate was recorded in Madaba Governorate at 28.5%, and the lowest in Irbid Governorate at 15.7%. The data also indicate variation in the proportion of unemployed persons by educational level and sex: the proportion of unemployed males holding a bachelor's degree or higher reached 23.2%, compared with 78.2% for females.¹⁷² These data also showed that the unemployment rate was high among holders of university degrees, reaching 24.5% compared with other educational levels, and that the highest unemployment rate was recorded among young people, with the 15–19 age group recording a rate of 47.3% and the 20–24 age group a rate of 38.1%.

Some studies also estimate the number of Jordanian new entrants to the labor market at more than 100,000 individuals annually, while the public and private sectors together absorb no more than 45,000 in newly created job opportunities annually,¹⁷³ most of which are taken by migrant workers, who number approximately 950,000 workers, 450,000 of whom do not hold work permits, according to statements by the Minister of Labor.¹⁷⁴ Most of the jobs in which migrant workers are employed are in the agriculture and construction sectors and in certain industries and services that are unattractive to Jordanians because they lack the requirements of decent work, such as social security and health insurance, for example. This indicates the failure of the economic policies pursued and the decline in the national economy's capacity to create productive and job-generating projects for Jordanians, especially young people, which contributes to raising the rates of unemployment and of persons out of work, in the absence of clear and planned policies to address and confront this phenomenon.

In light of these indicators, the Center considers that unemployment is one of the most prominent challenges facing Jordanian citizens in securing the minimum requirements of a decent life, particularly basic needs such as health, education, housing, food and security. This is in light of the scarcity of available job opportunities, competition from migrant workers and Syrian refugees, slow economic growth and its weak link with employment, the misalignment of education policies, especially higher education, with the needs of the labor market, low levels of training and qualification, and weak uptake of vocational and technical training programs despite the spread of numerous training centers in various regions of the Kingdom, as well as the poor state of the public transport sector. This portends negative effects on societal security as a result of frustration among the unemployed, such as an increase in cases of delinquency, crime and other social ills. This requires directing all concerned authorities to implement the policies and programs relating to reducing unemployment, to focus on initiatives that reduce it, and to regulate the labor market so as to absorb new entrants, taking into account all groups and segments of society, such as persons with disabilities, women and young people, and targeting each of them with programs that serve them and harness their energies.

Poverty:

Poverty is a phenomenon with multiple economic and social dimensions. The concept expresses the inability to secure the minimum standard of living that is required and socially desirable. It is a state of material deprivation, some manifestations of which appear in reduced food consumption in quantity and quality, poor health status, low educational level and lack of adequate housing, deprivation of

¹⁷²Department of Statistics, Employment and Unemployment, Fourth Quarter 2018.

¹⁷³Gerasa News Agency, dated 20 April 2018.

¹⁷⁴Saraya, news item entitled "Minister of Labor Reveals Shocking Figures on Migrant Workers in Jordan," dated 13 March 2019.

ownership of goods and material assets, and the absence of reserves or security to face difficult situations such as illness, disability and unemployment, which are among the most prominent violations of human rights.

This phenomenon remains tangible for the majority of Jordanians, without government plans and programs contributing to curbing its worsening rates. According to official data announced at the beginning of the current year, the poverty rate in Jordan rose to 20%,¹⁷⁵ compared with the figures announced in the last published data for 2010, which estimated the poverty rate at 14.4%. Furthermore, the Director General of the Department of Statistics stated that the Department would, during August 2018, announce new poverty figures and rates in the Kingdom according to a new methodology that takes into account the "phenomenon of migration," noting that the new methodology was developed in cooperation with the World Bank and is being applied for the first time in Jordan, and that the new survey would cover Jordanians and non-Jordanians, unlike the previous survey, which was applied to Jordanian households only. Poverty rates would be announced at the level of the Kingdom and at the level of Jordanians and non-Jordanian refugees, and this would also be the basis for announcing poverty results on a quarterly basis in the coming years.¹⁷⁶ However, these rates and figures were not disclosed during 2018, except for certain aspects relating to income and expenditure. Some of these data indicate that the average expenditure of Jordanian households on food and non-food goods and services is approximately JOD 12,519, with expenditure on food goods constituting 32.6% of total expenditure and expenditure on non-food goods constituting 67.4% of total expenditure. At the individual level, the data indicated that the average annual per capita expenditure on all goods and services was JOD 2,586, of which food expenditure accounted for JOD 843, while expenditure on non-food goods and services amounted to JOD 1,743. Analyzing these figures against average income, we find the following:

- **At the household level:**

Average household income JOD 11,512 – average household expenditure JOD 12,519 = (– 1,007) JOD deficit in annual household expenditure.

- **At the individual level:**

Average income JOD 2,378 – expenditure JOD 2,586 = (– 208) JOD deficit in annual individual expenditure.

The survey indicated that 6% of Jordanian households fall within the first (poorest) decile, and that the expenditure of these households constituted only 2.4% of total household expenditure in the Kingdom. The highest average expenditure was in the Capital Governorate, at JOD 14,417, followed by Zarqa Governorate with average expenditure of JOD 11,957, while Tafileh Governorate was the least fortunate in terms of average household expenditure, at JOD 8,689.

The results showed that the highest household expenditure within the food groups was on the meat and poultry group, with average expenditure of approximately JOD 587 per year, followed by the tobacco and cigarettes group with average expenditure of approximately JOD 558, and then the vegetables and legumes group with an average of JOD 489 per year, while the lowest expenditure was on alcoholic beverages. The results also showed that the highest household expenditure within the non-food and services groups was on the housing, water, electricity and gas group, with average expenditure of JOD 2,921 per year, followed by the transport group with average expenditure of JOD 2,149, and then the education group with an average of JOD 579 per year, while the lowest expenditure was on the household utensils group.

Considering the relative weight of the food and non-food groups, which represents households' expenditure on each group as a share of total household expenditure, it emerged that the housing, water,

¹⁷⁵Economic Growth Stimulus Plan 2018–2022, p. 6.

¹⁷⁶Anba' Al-Watan, news item entitled "Poverty Rates in Jordan to Be Announced in August," dated 12 February 2018.

electricity and gas group accounts for the highest share of total household expenditure, followed by the transport group, then the meat and poultry group, followed by the tobacco and cigarettes group. Although poverty figures and rates have not been officially disclosed, the Center monitored certain press reports¹⁷⁷ indicating that the poverty rate in Jordan exceeds 80% of the population and that the poverty line is estimated at approximately USD 1,146 per month per family. These reports also stated that poverty rates are higher among households headed by women separated from their husbands, divorced women or widows, and that poverty among children under the age of eighteen stands at approximately 40%, i.e. 12% higher than the general rate. This drives some children to leave school and enter the labor market in order to help their families bear their living burdens, as a result of the steady increase in prices and services and rising inflation rates, coupled with a decline in the purchasing power of these families relative to modest income levels that do not secure the minimum requirements of a decent life and an adequate standard of living.

These circumstances have driven many Jordanian families to resort to banks and non-bank financial institutions for borrowing, or to rush to the National Aid Fund to request assistance. The Financial Stability Report issued by the Central Bank for 2017 showed that the balance of individuals' indebtedness to these financial institutions amounted to approximately JOD 10.44 billion, an increase of 8.9% over 2016, and that this indebtedness constituted 67.4% of the total annual income of borrowing Jordanian households.¹⁷⁸ The proportion of Jordanians borrowing from banks reached 24%, with 40% of their monthly income going toward repaying loan installments and interest.¹⁷⁹

Food Security and the Advancement of Agricultural Production:

Adequate and safe food is an essential element of a healthy life in accordance with universal human rights standards. Contaminated, spoiled or low-quality food is among the most important causes of the decline in people's living standards within the State and a direct cause of the spread of diseases and epidemics, constituting a direct violation of all human rights values and principles. The State bears the responsibility for securing sufficient, sustainable and healthy food and for realizing this right.

At the national level, and despite the comparative advantage that the Jordanian State enjoys in climatic diversity suitable for cultivating many types of food products that are imported, Jordan still imports the vast majority of its basic food crops, including approximately 100% of its cereals, wheat in particular.¹⁸⁰ The food import bill is estimated at approximately USD 7 billion annually,¹⁸¹ which imposes an increasing burden on the State Treasury and is reflected negatively on citizens' purchasing power with respect to many imported foodstuffs, in the absence of government subsidies for many of these commodities and materials, unless the Jordanian State is able to enhance agricultural productivity to achieve food security for citizens. The prevalence of severe food insecurity among the total population of Jordan between 2015 and 2017 reached 13.9%, up from 12.7% between 2014 and 2016, according to the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization¹⁸² entitled "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018." The report noted a rise in the prevalence of undernourishment among the total population of Jordan to 13.5% during 2015–2017, and the prevalence of severe food insecurity among the total population of Jordan (three-year average 2015–2017) reached 13.9%. The number of people in Jordan suffering from severe food insecurity reached 1.3 million persons,¹⁸³ while agricultural

¹⁷⁷Saraya, news item entitled "Poverty and Extreme Poverty," 11 March 2019.

¹⁷⁸For more, see the Central Bank of Jordan, Financial Stability Report 2017, Chapter Four.

¹⁷⁹Quoted from the link <http://alarai.com>, dated 8 October 2018.

¹⁸⁰Economic Growth Stimulus Plan 2018–2022, p. 15.

¹⁸¹Al-Araby, "The Widening Circle of Food Insecurity in Jordan," 23 December 2018. For more, see the link www.alaraby.co.uk/economy/.

¹⁸²Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018.

¹⁸³Al-Araby, "The Widening Circle of Food Insecurity in Jordan," 23 December 2018. For more, see the link www.alaraby.co.uk/economy/.

areas have declined significantly in recent years by as much as 60%, which has affected the quantities of agricultural production in light of the growing demand for food in Jordan, the increase in which is estimated at 25% to 30% owing to the natural growth of the population and refugees.¹⁸⁴ This points to a crisis in this sector, manifested in the decline of locally produced quantities, the growing reliance on imports, and the abandonment of agriculture in many areas, particularly in the Jordan Valley, which is considered Jordan's food basket.

As for Jordan's ranking on the Global Hunger Index¹⁸⁵ issued by the International Food Policy Research Institute, it ranked seventh in the Arab world and 48th globally, with 11.2 points, out of 119 countries covered by the Index.

This Index is based on four sub-indicators: undernourishment, meaning the proportion of the population suffering from insufficient food (13.5% of the total population in Jordan); child wasting, meaning the proportion of children under the age of five suffering from food deficiency – wasting (2.4% of children in Jordan); child stunting, meaning the proportion of children under five suffering from stunting due to food deficiency (10.6% of children in Jordan); and finally child mortality, meaning the mortality rate of children under five due to food deficiency (1.8 per hundred children in Jordan). All these sub-indicators relate to the period 2013–2017.

Despite the multiplicity of government bodies dealing with this important sector, it still faces numerous challenges and obstacles, most notably:

1. The weak contribution of agricultural production to gross domestic product, of which it constitutes only 3%.
2. Weak support for family projects that enhance food security, especially for the poorest groups in rural and Badia areas.
3. Weak programs encouraging farmers and directing them toward crops based on the requirements of local and foreign markets.
4. The shrinking area of agricultural land as a result of urban encroachment and its fragmentation, in the absence of clear policies to preserve and protect it.
5. High costs for farmers, whether in terms of production inputs or operating costs, which has driven many of them to resort to various lending institutions or to abandon farming altogether.
6. The absence of social protection, in the form of social security and health insurance, for workers in the agricultural sector.
7. Weak processing of agricultural products, especially surpluses, and reliance on importing processed materials from abroad.
8. Weak oversight of popular markets and street vendors, especially vendors in front of schools and places of worship.

The Center considers that the circulation of spoiled food remains tangible, despite the existence of numerous oversight bodies concerned with food safety, most notably the Jordan Food and Drug Administration and the inspection sections of the health directorates and municipalities in the various regions of the Kingdom. Data of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration indicate the seizure of numerous cases of spoiled food during 2018,¹⁸⁶ including, for example:

¹⁸⁴ Al-Araby, "The Widening Circle of Food Insecurity in Jordan," *op. cit.*

¹⁸⁵ For more, see the link <http://sigi-jordan.org>.

¹⁸⁶ For more, see the link <http://www.jfda.jo>.

1. The seizure and destruction of approximately 4 tons of expired foodstuffs in a house in Russeifa District; the data indicate that these materials had been retrieved from garbage dumps to be resold in popular markets and on street stalls.
2. The seizure of 8.5 tons of adulterated olive oil, equivalent to 535 tins of oil, which some workshops had adulterated by adding prohibited dyes and chemicals for the purpose of reselling it to consumers.
3. The seizure of an unlicensed factory in the Shafa Badran area producing, filling and packaging food supplements in various forms. The data indicate the seizure of 10,000 packs of food supplements ready for sale, 3,000 filled capsules, 220 empty capsules and 3,000 spray bottles.
4. The seizure and closure of numerous butcher shops and restaurants in the Al-Juwaideh area owing to numerous irregularities, including selling imported meat as local meat, failure to comply with slaughtering inside licensed slaughterhouses, and raising sheep on the premises without regard to health and public safety requirements.
5. Foiling the entry of 26 tons of cashews, coffee, pistachios and various spices that were unfit for human consumption because they were moldy and contained the toxic substance aflatoxin.

In this regard, the Center calls for intensifying inspection visits to markets, food establishments and street vendors, and for apprehending violators and bringing them to justice.

The Housing Sector:¹⁸⁷

Although the draft Real Estate Ownership Law was sent to the House of Representatives in 2017 and given urgent status, the law had not been issued by the end of 2018. Among its most prominent features is the consolidation of more than 13 laws that used to regulate matters relating to the transfer and disposal of ownership into a single piece of legislation regulating its provisions.

Some government data indicated that 69.2% of Jordanian households live in dwellings they own, while the proportion of households living in rented dwellings reached 21%.¹⁸⁸

In this regard, the Center considers that this sector faces numerous challenges that prevent access to adequate housing, most notably:

1. High rents for apartments and residential buildings relative to the minimum wage, set at JOD 220 per month, and the difficulty of obtaining suitable housing within the financial means of Jordanian citizens.
2. High land prices and their impact on the prices of apartments and residential buildings, which prevents citizens, especially families with limited and middle incomes, from obtaining suitable housing.

¹⁸⁷Department of Statistics data showed a decrease in the total number of building permits issued in the Kingdom during 2018, which reached 32,484 permits, compared with 43,277 permits during 2017, a decrease of 24.9%. The area of buildings licensed for residential purposes during 2018 reached approximately 8,220 thousand m², compared with 10,987 thousand m² during 2017, a decrease of 25.2%, while the area of buildings licensed for non-residential purposes during 2018 reached approximately 2,697 thousand m², compared with 2,921 thousand m² during 2017, a decrease of 7.7%. The area of buildings licensed for residential purposes during 2018 constituted 75.3% of the total licensed building area, while the area of buildings licensed for non-residential purposes constituted 24.7% of the total licensed building area. At the governorate level, the Capital Governorate ranked first in terms of total licensed building area at 47.7%, followed by Irbid Governorate at 16.5%, Zarqa Governorate at 13.2%, Balqa Governorate at 6.7%, Jerash Governorate at 3.1%, Mafraq Governorate at 2.7%, Karak and Aqaba Governorates at 2.3% each, Madaba Governorate at 1.8%, and then Ajloun Governorate at 1.7%, while the licensed building area in the remaining governorates constituted 1.9% of the total licensed building area. For more, see the link <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/ar>.

¹⁸⁸Department of Statistics, Household Expenditure and Income Survey 2017/2018, p. 12.

3. The high costs of construction materials and labor, in addition to fees for building, plans and engineering supervision.
4. Weak infrastructure services, and at times their unavailability, especially in some areas located outside the boundaries of zoned areas, particularly water and electricity services.
5. Many citizens resorting to banks and various lending institutions to obtain housing loans at high interest rates, which imposes additional burdens on them, in the absence of suitable government financing windows for citizens in this sector.
6. Weak oversight of buildings and dwellings, especially old and informal ones. This year witnessed the collapse of some residential buildings in various parts of the Kingdom, most notably the collapse of a residential building in Zarqa Governorate, which resulted in five deaths and seven injuries; the collapse of house roofs in Deir Alla District, Balqa Governorate, also resulted in two persons sustaining various wounds and bruises.

The Water and Sanitation Sector:

Although human rights standards require that the water supply for each person be sufficient and continuous for personal and domestic uses,¹⁸⁹ Jordan still suffers from acute water scarcity and shortage, with average rainfall of less than 200 mm annually over 90% of its area, in addition to its lack of renewable water resources and the depletion of its water basins due to over-pumping to cover water needs¹⁹⁰ for all uses, these basins numbering 12.¹⁹¹ Owing to the acuteness of water scarcity in Jordan, it is classified globally as the second-poorest country in the world in terms of water, with per capita share of less than 88 m³ annually,¹⁹² compared with the global water poverty line of 1,000 m³. It is thus considered among the countries suffering from water scarcity and limited renewable resources, which has led to an imbalance between water supply and demand as a result of steady population growth, economic development and the negative effects of the Syrian asylum, which contributed to increasing water demand by 20% at the level of the Kingdom and by 40% in the northern governorates.¹⁹³

This has raised the water deficit to 400 million m³. Despite the shortage and scarcity of water, data of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation indicate that the coverage of water services for the current year, 2018, at the level of the Kingdom reached 98%, and the coverage of connection to sewerage networks reached 69%.¹⁹⁴ As for domestic water harvesting, some press reports referred to the issuance of a specialized study on rainwater harvesting, which stated that the quantities of water that can be harvested from house rooftops annually in the governorates of the Kingdom are estimated at 28.7 million m³,¹⁹⁵ the vast majority of which is wasted into streets, valley courses and dams. This reveals the weakness of the measures and incentives encouraging consumers to benefit from this water. The Center also observed that water supplies are intermittent and unsustainable in many Jordanian cities and villages, often reaching some consumers once a week, and in some areas only every two weeks or more, or not reaching some elevated areas at all.¹⁹⁶ There is also non-compliance by some distribution staff with water distribution schedules, in addition to attacks on water networks and their main or branch

¹⁸⁹General Comment No. 15 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, para. 12.

¹⁹⁰Saraya website, news item entitled "Seven Lean Water Years Did Not Deter Jordan from Receiving Refugees," 27 August 2018.

¹⁹¹<http://www.almadenahnews.com/article/575959>, news item entitled "Jordan: A Stifling Water Crisis," 7 May 2017.

¹⁹²Al-Ghad, news item entitled "Per Capita Water Share Falls to Less than 88 m³ Annually," 5 May 2018.

¹⁹³The Hashemite University, address by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Jordanian Water Day events, 20 March 2018.

¹⁹⁴www.mwi.gov.jo.

¹⁹⁵Al-Ghad, news item entitled "Rooftop Water Harvesting Provides 29 Million m³," 28 March 2018.

¹⁹⁶This year witnessed numerous water outages in various regions of the Kingdom, most notably in some areas of the Capital Governorate, Karak, Irbid, Jerash, Balqa and the Northern Badia. For more, see the link www.albosala.com.

transmission lines.¹⁹⁷ This contributes to depriving many of those connected to these networks of safe and sustainable water. All these factors contribute to the unsustainability of water supply, which drives consumers to adopt methods and means to overcome the problem of interruption and unsustainability, including purchasing water from private-sector water tankers at prices beyond their financial means, with the price per cubic meter sometimes reaching approximately five Jordanian dinars, as well as storing water in tanks on building rooftops, which is often accompanied by rust and impurities as a result of the oxidation of water due to weather factors and intermittent pumping. This results in many consumers, especially from the poor and marginalized classes, sometimes postponing the use of water for household and personal hygiene purposes until the day of water supply.

The Center also considers that government measures to maintain water networks are weak, in light of the deteriorating condition of many of them due to the poor quality of the pipes used or the expiry of their service life. This has contributed to raising the proportion of water lost as waste, depriving citizens of it and depriving the State Treasury of the revenues due on it, in light of the already high indebtedness of the water sector, estimated at approximately JOD 2.01 billion.¹⁹⁸ The latest government data indicate that the proportion of water loss may reach 53%.

In this regard, the Center stresses the need for the authorities concerned with this sector to adopt measures and policies to reduce water loss, modernize water networks, and hold accountable those who fail in their maintenance and sustainability, which would contribute to improving water supply services for consumers and to the realization of this right.

Drinking Water Quality:

Despite government efforts to monitor the quality of drinking water and of water intended for domestic use, the establishment of specialized laboratories for this purpose, whether belonging to the Ministry of Health or to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, and the conduct of disinfection and treatment operations at the main water pumping stations spread across the various regions of the Kingdom, intermittent pumping of water affects its quality and at times exposes it to contamination, accompanied by rust, sediment and impurities when it reaches the consumer, owing to its discontinuity in the distribution networks. In addition, awareness programs for consumers on how to clean domestic water storage tanks, on the methods of disinfecting them, and on the types and proportions of the materials used in disinfection are weak. All these factors have led consumers to lose confidence in this water and to resort to purchasing water for drinking and cooking from private-sector water treatment stations, which have become noticeably widespread in the various regions of the Kingdom, at exorbitant prices: the price of a 20-liter bottle ranges between half a dinar and approximately one Jordanian dinar, not to mention bottled water now sold in all kinds of shops, the prices of which vary according to the supplier, ranging between 250 fils and 400 fils per bottle of approximately 1 liter. This increases the living burdens on consumers and raises their costs, especially those with middle and limited incomes. Data of the Department of Statistics indicate that 17% of Jordanian households rely on the public network as a source of drinking water, out of the 95% connected to this network,¹⁹⁹ which the Center considers inconsistent with the requirement of water sustainability and of access to it at reasonable and affordable cost in accordance with international standards.

This year witnessed a rise in turbidity levels in some of the water sources supplying drinking water and water for domestic uses in some areas of the Kingdom, especially in the Al-Walah and Al-Haidan areas, as a result of weather conditions.

¹⁹⁷For more, see the link <http://www.waj.gov.jo>.

¹⁹⁸Water Authority, News, published on 23 May 2018.

¹⁹⁹Department of Statistics, Household Expenditure and Income Survey, op. cit.

Sanitation:

This aspect still represents a challenge, and access to it in accordance with human rights standards is marred by numerous imbalances and violations, most notably that 31% of the Kingdom's population are not connected to sewerage networks and rely on cesspits or open spaces to dispose of waste, whether personal or domestic, not to mention the inability of sewerage networks to absorb the incoming wastewater due to population growth and urban expansion.

This year, the Center observed the overflow of many of these lines onto citizens' homes and some streets and passageways, in addition to the decline in the operational capacity of wastewater treatment plants due to overloading and the age of some of them, which has had a negative impact on the environmental situation in general and on the health and living conditions of the population. In addition, the costs of constructing suitable and safe sanitary units when building housing units are high. Properties not served by sewerage networks still rely on cesspits constructed by the owners of these properties to discharge biologically untreated wastewater, with poor technical specifications and an inability, over time, to absorb the incoming flow due to soil saturation with this water and their limited storage capacity. This leads to their overflow, causing health and environmental nuisances and the spread of insects, rodents and mosquitoes, which adversely affects the health of the population and contributes to the spread of diseases and epidemics among them. Subscribers are at times unable to have these cesspits emptied due to the high costs involved, as the price per load by private-sector tankers equipped for this purpose ranges between JOD 50 and 100, bearing in mind that some of these cesspits need to be emptied and drained approximately monthly, depending on the capacity of the cesspit and the quantities of water flowing into it. This is in light of the weak and absent role of the concerned authorities and municipalities in addressing this aspect, whether in providing emptying services for these properties at prices commensurate with families' living conditions and income levels, or in regular spraying programs and the control of insects, rodents and mosquitoes to preserve the environment. The Center considers this a breach of the Government's obligation to provide sanitation services in accordance with the standards of international human rights law on access to this right. In addition, the costs of access to and subscription to sewerage networks are high: subscription fees of 25% of the property's valuation by the Ministry of Finance are collected, and the subscriber bears all the costs of connection to sewerage lines outside the zoning boundaries, or bears the costs of access and connection to the nearest manhole on the network within the zoning boundaries, if this service is available in the first place and the area is served by a sewerage network,²⁰⁰ not to mention the problems relating to water bills and their inaccuracy.

The Cost of Water and Sanitation:

In this regard, the realization of human rights requires that the cost of water services be affordable for all; no individual or group should be denied access to safe drinking water because of an inability to pay for it; the prices, costs and fees of these two services should be reasonable and should not undermine people's ability to meet their other needs, such as food, housing and medicine; and expenditure related to water and sanitation should not exceed 3 to 5% of household income.²⁰¹ Target 1 of Sustainable Development Goal 6 on water and sanitation requires universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030.²⁰²

The actual situation in this respect, measured against these standards, is that consumers still suffer from high financial cost burdens, especially when submitting an application for a first-time subscription, in light of low income levels and the modest minimum wage approved by the Government, amounting to

²⁰⁰Ministry of Water and Irrigation, telephone call with the Center's liaison officer, Sunday, 4 November 2018.

²⁰¹United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights et al., Fact Sheet No. 35.

²⁰²The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Guide to the Sustainable Development Goals, op. cit.

JOD 220 per month.²⁰³ For each transaction, the following is collected from the subscription applicant: payment of the cost of water meters; non-refundable deposits, which vary according to the type of building, its area and zoning provisions; payment of JOD 10 in stamp fees; and a contribution to implementation costs, as follows:

Area: outside the Capital Governorate, property area of 150 m² or less: contribution of JOD 150; area exceeding 100 m² at a rate of JOD 1/m².

Non-domestic subscription: Area: all regions of the Kingdom; property area: more than 100 m²; contribution: JOD 275.

Non-domestic subscription: Area: all regions of the Kingdom; property area: 100 m² or less; contribution: JOD 150.

Subscription outside zoning: connection fee of JOD 20, a contribution of JOD 68, and a subscription deposit of fifteen dinars if the building area is less than 200 m²; if the building area exceeds 200 m², an amount of ten dinars is collected for each 100 m² or part thereof, in addition to JOD 10 in stamps.

Housing projects located within zoning: the internal network is implemented by a classified contractor at the expense of the parties concerned, and an amount of one hundred dinars is collected as a contribution for each apartment or unit.

In light of the above data, these amounts are borne by the subscriber before a single drop of water reaches him or her, constituting an increasing financial burden that is reflected negatively on his or her living standards, as they deplete part of his or her income, especially for those with limited and middle incomes. Looking at the water bill, it constitutes an additional burden on consumers on top of these burdens, as it is issued quarterly, i.e. once every three months.

The Center observed disparities in tariff rates between bills issued by the Water Authority for the areas within its jurisdiction and bills issued by water companies (Miyahuna, Yarmouk Water Company and Aqaba Water Company), which the Center considers inconsistent with the provisions of Article 6/1 of the Constitution relating to the equality of all citizens before the law in rights and duties. In addition, water meters are not read regularly on schedule, and readings by water staff are at times inaccurate, which further raises the cost of these bills for consumers under the currently applicable tiered system. This results in consumers sometimes being unable to pay and, consequently, in their water being cut off, which the Center considers a clear violation of their rights to satisfy their basic needs at reasonable cost and in sufficient quantities.

The Electronic Linkage Agreement between the Public Security Directorate and the Water Authority:

The media circulated reports of the conclusion of an agreement between the Public Security Directorate (PSD) and the Water Authority under which Water Authority employees are permitted to use the database of all vehicles registered with the Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Department, such that a Water Authority employee is allowed to access the electronic databases of the Licensing Department and to place and lift precautionary attachment markers on any vehicle whose owner owes any amounts to the Water Authority. This is considered an encroachment on the powers of the judicial authority, which is the sole body authorized to take this measure, even if the agreement is consistent with the law.

The Transport Sector:

This year witnessed the issuance of the Regulation on the Organization of Passenger Transport through the Use of Smart Applications No. (9) of 2018, as well as the issuance of the Amended Regulation

²⁰³Council of Ministers decision published in the Official Gazette, Issue 5442, page 1132, dated 12 February 2017.

thereto No. (58) of 2018,²⁰⁴ under which private vehicles were permitted to transport passengers after obtaining the necessary legal licenses in accordance with the governing legislation. It should be noted that the phenomenon of many private vehicles transporting passengers for a fee was already tangible in all Jordanian cities and villages before the issuance of this legislation, in violation of the law. The most prominent violations in this regard include:

- The increasing demand for transport services, especially passenger transport, in light of demographic developments that have shown rapid population growth as a result of Jordan receiving large numbers of refugees owing to the surrounding circumstances.
- High rates of transport accidents and the resulting injuries and deaths.
- Traffic congestion remains evident and tangible, especially at peak times (morning and evening), as a result of the large increase in the number of private vehicles used by citizens, in the absence of a modern, integrated and safe transport system, despite what is stated in the Economic Growth Stimulus Plan regarding the development of high-quality and safe transport services that would have a positive impact on citizens, preserve safety and the environment, and provide the necessary transport services to the sectors of the national economy at the lowest cost.
- The absence of sustainable funding and financial support for this public sector, which has contributed to the dominance of individual ownership, alongside the facilities citizens obtain to finance the purchase of cars.
- Narrow and dilapidated streets, with a decline in their upkeep and maintenance.
- A shortage of public and private parking in commercial areas. Paid parking has become a tangible phenomenon, especially in the capital, Amman, and is exploited by some without obtaining the necessary licenses, in the absence of oversight and regulation.
- The establishment of major commercial projects on streets without regard to zoning provisions and the legal setbacks for such projects, which has resulted in some encroachments on streets, especially on pedestrian walkways.
- Failure to take into account the expected future increase in the number of vehicles when implementing traffic projects.
- Misuse of sidewalks, with its negative effects on road users.
- The lack of dedicated lanes for emergency services on main streets.
- The absence of the necessary means to serve persons with disabilities and older persons in the public transport sector, which constitutes an obstacle to their use of these means.

Recommendations:

1. Form a task force to manage the unemployment crisis and resolve outstanding issues radically within a clearly defined timeframe, to be made known to the public.
2. Link governorate and decentralization budgets to productive projects that contribute to solving the problems of poverty and unemployment and to employing the labor force in the governorates, rather than directing them to service matters, within clear plans for all citizens.
3. Link foreign-funded projects and those of international organizations and local community organizations to the creation of job opportunities for citizens in all governorates of the Kingdom in a clear and unambiguous manner, instead of much of the grant allocations going to remuneration and consultancies.
4. Support civil society organizations and charitable and cooperative societies through a clearly defined system at the level of the Jordanian State, by establishing small projects and facilitating procedures, coupled with close oversight and accountability for those who fall short, with the aim of creating job opportunities for citizens in local communities.

²⁰⁴It was published in the Official Gazette on 2 May 2018.

5. Activate the partnership between the public and private sectors, focusing on productive sectors that contribute to raising the rate of economic growth rather than focusing on service projects.
6. Work to alleviate the burdens of indebtedness and the budget deficit by controlling government expenditure rather than resorting to citizens' pockets and imposing more taxes and fees on them in light of low salaries and wages.
7. Support the agricultural sector through clear and well-studied policies and plans, as it is the principal sector for achieving food security, and work to issue legislation and regulations that limit the fragmentation of agricultural land and its use for non-agricultural purposes.
8. Take further measures to curb rising prices of real estate, housing, apartments and rents, reduce the fees imposed thereon, establish housing projects for those with limited incomes in the various regions of the Kingdom at reasonable prices commensurate with their income levels, and urge the various lending institutions, and reach understandings with them, to reduce interest rates on housing loans and grant borrowers facilities for repaying housing loans.
9. Provide incentives for citizens to benefit from rainwater by building water collection tanks, modernize water networks, reduce water loss, and expand water harvesting projects.
10. Upgrade the public transport system, especially mass transit, through clear strategies and plans linked to performance indicators, provide further financial support to this sector, and monitor and hold accountable those who encroach on walkways and sidewalks designated for pedestrians.

3. The Right to Work

The Jordanian Constitution, in Articles 6/3 and 23, guarantees the right to work for all citizens and obliges the State to provide it to them by directing and advancing the national economy. This right is likewise guaranteed by Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

In 2018, the Legal Committee of the House of Representatives discussed the draft bill amending the Labor Law; however, by the end of 2018 the House had not been able to adopt it. At the beginning of 2019, the House of Representatives adopted the amendments to the amending bill, which met with wide controversy and criticism for their incompatibility with international standards.²⁰⁵ The year 2018 also witnessed the adoption of a number of regulations and instructions related to the right to work, including:

- The Amending Regulation of the Regulation on the Establishment and Licensing of Private and Foreign Educational Institutions No. (103) of 2018.²⁰⁶ The Regulation included articles and clauses that organize and govern the relationship between the teacher and the private educational institution. It obliges the private educational institution to transfer the monthly salaries due to the teacher to his or her bank account or to an electronic wallet with a customer service provider, and makes the submission of documents proving this a basic condition for renewing the educational institution's license for the following academic year. This Regulation is expected to provide considerable protection and security for teachers working in the private sector and to curb the previous problems concerning the salaries they received.
- The Flexible Work Instructions of 2018, issued pursuant to Article 13 of the Flexible Work Regulation No. (22) of 2017.²⁰⁷ Article 7 of these Instructions permits the employer, directly and for the first time, to contract with a new worker from outside the establishment under any of the forms of flexible work applied in the establishment.
- The Instructions on Flexible Working Hours in the Civil Service of 2018,²⁰⁸ issued pursuant to Paragraph 3 of Article 96 of the Civil Service Regulation No. (82) of 2013. These Instructions grant employees a degree of freedom in choosing their daily working hours, in accordance with operational needs and with the approval of the administration. Under them, the employee chooses the time at which he or she starts work and the time of departure, while the institution, for its part, determines the official starting hours and the hours during which flexibility in attendance may be allowed for those who choose it.
- The Flexible Work Regulation No. (22) of 2017 provoked wide controversy in the House of Representatives, where its constitutionality was challenged on the ground that the Regulation has no legal basis in the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996 and its amendments. To resolve this, a definition of flexible work was introduced into the proposed amendments to the Labor Law, and the Minister of Labor promised to reissue the Regulation once the bill amending the Labor Law is adopted.
- The Amending Regulation of the Regulation on Private Offices Engaged in the Recruitment and Employment of Non-Jordanian Domestic Workers No. (79) of 2018, under which domestic work was redefined, and the period granted to the Minister to consider a license was set at 30 days instead of 60 days.

²⁰⁵ Among the most controversial amendments are those relating to the following articles: 1. Article (2), from which the phrase "any group of workers" was deleted from the definition of a collective labor dispute, thereby depriving workers of the benefit of collective dispute-resolution mechanisms. 2. Article (44), which deprived workers who have no union of the right to collective bargaining and restricted collective bargaining with employers to unions only (after the word "workers" was deleted from it). 3. Article (98), which entrenched restrictions on the right to form new workers' unions, as it prohibited the existence of more than one union for any industry or economic activity. 4. Article (116), which granted the Minister judicial authority to dissolve a union if it violates the provisions of the Labor Law.

²⁰⁶ Published in Official Gazette No. (5530), dated 15/8/2018.

²⁰⁷ Published in Official Gazette No. (5509), dated 1/4/2018.

²⁰⁸ Published in Official Gazette No. (5530), dated 16/9/2018.

Numerous factors continue to create imbalances in the labor market, such as the Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on the Jordanian labor market, and weak economic growth resulting from weak investment-promotion policies and their limited capacity to create jobs, together with the low capacity of the national economy to create new jobs owing to its declining growth rates. The number of new entrants to the labor market each year is double the number of jobs created, which means rising unemployment rates, particularly among young people.

The end of 2018 also witnessed the Jordanian Government's launch of the Renaissance Project (Al-Nahda) with three pillars (the State of Law, the State of Production, and the State of Solidarity). Through the production pillar, the Government pledged to provide 30,000 jobs annually, in addition to providing 825 entrepreneurial projects in the various Jordanian governorates. However, this and other projects will not solve the problem of unemployment, as the unemployment rate stands at 18.7, equivalent to approximately 300,000 unemployed persons, to whom nearly 70,000 graduates of Jordanian universities are added each year. This requires reforming investment policies and education policies and increasing networking between the Ministry of Labor and the private sector.

In 2018, the Ministry of Labor intensified its inspection campaigns, which resulted in the apprehension of 11,123 migrant workers in violation of either the Labor Law or the Residence Law. The campaigns also resulted in the deportation of 7,146 migrant workers, noting that the number of migrant workers deported in 2017 was 9,448.²¹¹ The Ministry of Labor estimated the number of migrant workers in Jordan holding work permits in 2018 at about 340,000, in addition to 680,000 migrant workers working in the Jordanian labor market without permits.²¹² The number of insured migrant workers reached only 158,000.

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and employment of migrant labor, especially the illegal movement of workers between the various sectors, and to curb brokering and the trafficking in persons to which workers are subjected.²¹³

Despite numerous demands for the issuance of a special regulation for agricultural workers, they continue to be subjected to many violations owing to the failure to issue a regulation protecting their rights as well as the rights of employers. These violations lie in their falling victim to brokers and traffickers in work permits, and in the low daily wages they receive, which range between one dinar and one and a half dinars per hour, such that the income of most workers in this sector does not exceed JOD 300 per month. In addition, they are not covered by social security or health insurance. Moreover, women workers in the agricultural sector, given the manner in which they are transported from their place of residence to the farms "by means of small pick-up trucks" originally intended for transporting agricultural tools and materials and not equipped for passenger transport, are still subjected to several violations, including working for low wages and long hours, as well as the absence of standards of decent work, public safety, health guarantees, compensation and paid leave. This is interpreted as employers taking advantage of women and girls under the constant threat of abandoning them.

The inspection visits carried out by the Ministry of Labor to this sector have not achieved the desired benefit, owing to the absence of a clear regulatory framework for inspections in this sector, the lack of adequate financial resources to monitor the sector, and weak logistical capacity; furthermore, these places are considered unsafe for labor inspectors. Farmers, meanwhile, suffer from numerous problems, namely the high cost of fertilizers, agricultural equipment and energy, and the difficult conditions set by the Ministry of Labor for the recruitment and replacement of migrant labor in this sector, represented by the retention of the bank guarantees for the worker.

In 2018, farmers staged numerous sit-ins demanding the abolition of the 10% tax on agricultural production inputs imposed by the Government on the agricultural sector, in view of the harm it caused to farmers and consumers, to the point that many farmers became wanted by the judicial enforcement departments because of their accumulated debts. The agricultural sector has come to experience a genuine crisis that has driven it to raise prices for citizens, as a result of the role of intermediaries between farmers and consumers in the local market and the decline in exports of quality agricultural products, especially by small farmers and owners of medium-sized agricultural enterprises.

In 2018, the Ministry of Labor, through its inspection directorates, carried out 94,451 inspection visits to industrial, commercial and service establishments and facilities, ranging from inspections of working conditions, occupational safety and health and compliance with conditions of work, in addition to visits related to sector surveys and visits related to combating child labor. During these visits, 3,767 labor violations and 4,410 warnings were issued to establishments in breach of the Labor Law. The directorates affiliated with the Ministry of Labor also handled 977 complaints through the Complaints Section and the hotline, of which 470 complaints were resolved and legal measures were taken in respect of them in the interest of the workers.²¹⁴

Despite the large volume of these visits and of the violations recorded against establishments and their owners, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) considers that these measures remain insufficient to address the violations to which workers are subjected, given their repetition by employers and the inability of trade unions to perform their role in protecting and defending workers' rights. This requires a review of the oversight legislation and of the measures and penalties to be taken against employers, and the toughening of penalties so that they translate into tangible results that serve the interests of workers and citizens on the ground, as well as a review of the legislation governing the work

²¹³Al-Ghad Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Human rights report calls for abolishing the sponsorship (kafala) system for migrant workers", published on 13 October 2018.

²¹⁴Report of the Inspection Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2018.

of trade unions so as to open the way for the establishment of new unions that undertake to defend workers and their rights.

In 2018, a ready-made garment factory in Busaira was closed following the spread of "bedbugs" in several of its facilities; this was considered a partial closure for the purposes of spraying.²¹⁵ Furthermore, the Mafraq Labor Directorate referred some 6,048 employers in Mafraq to the Mafraq and Northern Badia Magistrate's Court for committing violations of the Jordanian Labor Law No. (8) of 1996²¹⁶ and its amendments, from the beginning of the year until 15 July 2018; the most notable of these was the apprehension of 61 juveniles working for employers within the governorate.

The year 2018 also witnessed the closure and cessation of operations of 429 factories and companies for numerous reasons, some related to the investment policies pursued by the Government and rising taxes, which has had a negative impact through the dismissal of workers in these establishments, rising unemployment and an adverse effect on citizens' standard of living.²¹⁷

The NCHR considers it important to radically review the Government's economic and social policies, especially employment policies, to move away from policies of a propagandistic nature that have been recycling crises for years, and to focus on projects and investments that create large numbers of jobs under decent working conditions, especially for young people.

On the other hand, 2018 witnessed the registration of a new trade union for workers in the planning profession, raising the number of trade unions to 18. By contrast, the union of agricultural workers remained under consideration by the competent committee at the Ministry of Labor as of the date of preparation of this report.

Moreover, the Government did not disclose the new poverty indicators based on the Household Income and Expenditure Survey, which the Department of Statistics (DoS) completed in August 2018, noting that these indicators will contribute to the formulation of economic and social policies and will have an impact on setting the minimum wage, which is still determined on the basis of statistics issued in 2011.

Protests and Sit-ins

In 2018, the Ministry of Labor handled 63 labor disputes, of which 52 were resolved through direct negotiation between workers and employers, while five labor disputes were concluded through recourse to a conciliation officer, one dispute was resolved through the direct intervention of H.E. the Minister of Labor, and five labor disputes were referred to the court. The number of labor strikes in 2018 reached 16, while the number of collective labor agreements deposited reached 58, benefiting 44,292 workers.²¹⁸

Workers' demands mostly centered on raising wages and salaries, securing additional gains for savings funds and end-of-service gratuities, and improving the work environment and working conditions.

The year 2018 also witnessed numerous protests and sit-ins in Jordan, the most notable of which were:

1. The sit-in staged by farmers and trade unionists in front of the Parliament building, after they announced an open-ended sit-in in front of Parliament on 19 September 2018, in rejection of the Government's imposition of new taxes on agricultural production inputs and outputs; protesters continued their sit-in in the open air²¹⁹ for more than 10 days in protest against the tax imposed on the sector. (This was followed by the issuance of several government decisions, including: reducing

²¹⁵Roya News website, "Garment factory in Busaira closed because of 'bedbugs'", published on 19 September 2018.

²¹⁶Al-Rai Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Referral of (6.48) thousand employers in Mafraq to the judiciary", published on 21 July 2018.

²¹⁷<https://bit.ly/2Cn0vhG>

²¹⁸Report of the Labor Relations Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2018.

²¹⁹Al-Ghad Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Removal of the farmers' sit-in tent in front of 'the House of Representatives'... and protesters continue their protest", published on 31 January 2018.

the general tax on corn from 10% to 5%; abolishing the general tax on production inputs for the poultry sector, which had been subject to 4% before 2018, so that it became zero; and exempting local farmers from the general sales tax on their agricultural produce, provided that the tax is collected only upon importation.²²⁰)

2. The sit-in staged by a number of employees of the Greater Amman Municipality on 20 February 2018, in which they demanded justice and equality among all employees in salaries and allowances, the calculation of the institution allowance, and an increase in the annual raise for Municipality employees.²²¹
3. The sit-in staged by a number of pharmacists working for the "Dawaakum" pharmacy chain on 10 June 2018, demanding their financial entitlements, which had been in arrears for more than eight months.²²² The matter was handled through the Pharmacists Association until the entitlements were paid to the affected pharmacists.
4. The sit-in staged by nearly 900 employees of Dar Al-Dawa company on 17 July 2018, in protest against salary disparities, as the company had recently appointed more than one new employee at the expense of long-serving employees, with the salaries at which the new employees were appointed running into the thousands, while long-serving employees with more than 17 years of service receive only small amounts not exceeding JOD 350 to 400.²²³ The sit-in ended after 11 days of work stoppage, with many of the protesters' demands being met.²²⁴
5. The sit-in staged by a number of members of the Agricultural Engineers Association working at the Greater Amman Municipality on 16 October 2018, demanding their employment rights, including changing their job titles to correspond to the nature of the university degree they hold, "Agricultural Engineering", in addition to demanding an improvement in their financial conditions.²²⁵
6. The sit-in staged by dozens of "Ministry of Health doctors" on 6 August 2018 in front of Al-Bashir Hospital, coinciding with a partial work stoppage, in protest against the Government's "failure to meet" the financial and professional demands of the Jordan Medical Association.²²⁶
7. The sit-in staged by about 725 engineers of all engineering specializations working at the Ministry of Education on 12 October 2018, reaffirming their demands to raise the engineering (professional) allowance to 150% and to be treated on an equal footing with engineers in other sectors.²²⁷
8. The sit-in staged by workers in the Kingdom's municipalities, with the exception of the capital, Amman, over what they called the "disregard" by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Walid Al-Masri, of the demands they had submitted during the months preceding their strike. They repeated their strike several times, with their demands centering on obtaining an end-of-service gratuity, an increase in the monthly allowance, Saturday as a day off, and many other demands. At the meeting

²²⁰ Al-Rai Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Al-Hneifat: reducing the tax burden on farmers and abolishing registration procedures", published on 20 September 2018.

²²¹ Al-Rai Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Protest by employees of (the Municipality) demanding improvement of their conditions", published on 20 February 2018.

²²² Jordan Labor Watch, article entitled "'Dawaakum' pharmacists stage sit-in demanding their financial entitlements", published on 10 June 2018.

²²³ Al-Rai Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Sit-in by 900 employees of the Jordanian Dar Al-Dawa company over labor demands", published on 17 July 2018.

²²⁴ Al-Rai Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "End of the strike of 'Dar Al-Dawa' workers after 11 days of work stoppage", published on 26 July 2018.

²²⁵ Agricultural Engineers Association, "'Agricultural Engineers' stage a sit-in for the second time demanding the rights of their members at the Greater Amman Municipality", published on 16 October.

²²⁶ Al-Ghad Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "'Doctors' suspend their escalation and Al-Razzaz meets the 'health unions' tomorrow", published on 7 August 2018.

²²⁷ Al-Ghad Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Engineers of the 'Ministry of Education' go on strike today", published on 13 October 2018.

held on 30 October 2018, attended by most of the Kingdom's mayors, most of their demands were met.

9. On 30 December 2018, a number of drivers working at the Ministry of Health staged an open-ended sit-in in front of the Ministry's headquarters, in protest against the Ministry's failure to respond to their job-related demands, namely: the payment of overtime allowance, transportation allowance and incentives to all drivers who do not receive them, on a par with other employees of the Ministry of Health and other ministries; raising the technical allowance to 50% instead of 10%; increasing incentives by 50% or converting them from the bonus system to the points system on a par with the first and second categories; paying an infection allowance and an occupational hazard allowance; classifying the profession of "driving" at the Ministry of Health as a hazardous occupation under the Social Security Law; and confirming their job titles.

Child Labor

The number of inspection visits related to combating child labor carried out by Ministry of Labor teams in 2018 reached 7,883 visits, during which 737 cases of child labor involving Jordanian children and about 123 involving children of Arab nationalities were handled; 671 violations were issued against employers and about 625 warnings were addressed to employers.²²⁸

The project to combat child labor implemented by the National Center for Human Rights with the support of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF), entitled "Combating Child Labor", concluded that there is a need to conduct periodic survey studies to identify the causes of the phenomenon of child labor, targeting a representative sample from all governorates of the Kingdom; to adopt the draft Child Rights Law; to review and amend national legislation to bring it into line with international conventions and standards, in particular ILO Conventions No. 183 and No. 182 and the CRC; to activate the role of civil society organizations in raising the awareness of employers and the local community; to activate the role of mosque imams in preaching to and guiding the local community on the problems and dangers of child labor; to activate the role of the media in spreading awareness through its print and audio outlets; to activate the role of the bodies overseeing establishments, such as the Greater Amman Municipality, and the role of Ministry of Labor inspectors; to activate the role of the administrative governor in each area in combating the phenomenon of school dropouts entering the labor market; to activate the role of civil society organizations concerned with childhood and support their programs related to the psychological and physical rehabilitation of children; and to economically empower poor families so that they no longer depend on income derived from child labor.

Trafficking in Persons

The statistics on trafficking in persons cases issued by the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit/Public Security Directorate (PSD)²²⁹ show that the number of cases investigated in 2018 reached 307, of which 272 were labor cases. Of these, 20 cases were referred to the Public Prosecutor on suspicion of trafficking in persons, involving 40 victims and 37 perpetrators. Some 224 victims were sheltered in 2018 at Dar Al-Karama and the Jordanian Women's Union, compared with 317 victims sheltered in 2017, broken down as follows:

Table No. (11): Statistics on trafficking in persons cases for 2018.

Type of crime	Number of cases	Victims – Male	Victims – Female	Perpetrators – Male	Perpetrators – Female
Sexual exploitation	3	.	4	3	1
Organ removal (kidneys)	4	7	.	13	.

²²⁸ Al-Dustour Jordanian newspaper, article entitled "Reducing child labor among the priorities of the Ministry of Labor", published on 12 June 2018.

²²⁹ According to the statistics issued by the Criminal Investigation Department/Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, 2018.

Type of crime	Number of cases	Victims – Male	Victims – Female	Perpetrators – Male	Perpetrators – Female
Forced labor (domestic work)	10	.	11	7	8
Forced labor (workers)	3	17	1	4	1
Grand total	20	24	16	27	10
Grand total number of cases	77	Victims (male and female): 40		Perpetrators (male and female): 37	

It must be noted here that there is a problem in prosecuting perpetrators of trafficking in persons crimes. The hotline staff of the Inspection Directorate at the Ministry of Labor received 64 complaints from all nationalities since the beginning of 2018, distributed among labor in violation of labor laws, delayed wages, breaches of overtime conditions and other violations.

The hotline receives complaints in Sri Lankan, Filipino, Chinese, Indian, Bengali and English, in addition to Arabic; however, some nationalities, such as Bangladeshi nationals, have various dialects that cannot all be covered, which limits the capacity to receive complaints. The lengthy duration of litigation also enables perpetrators among employers to put pressure on the victim.

With regard to domestic workers, despite the existence of a special regulation governing their work, they continue to be subjected to numerous violations, ranging from deprivation of wages and exhausting working conditions to the confinement of their liberty inside homes, preventing them from communicating with their families, long working hours, deprivation of weekly and annual leave, delays in paying their wages, and, at other times, deprivation of their wages altogether and non-payment, in addition to the confiscation and withholding of their personal documents despite the existence of a law criminalizing these practices. In 2018, the National Center received 6 complaints from women workers stating that they had been subjected to numerous violations, the most important of which were deprivation of liberty, withholding of identity documents and delayed payment of their wages.

Here, the importance of legislative coordination between the Law on the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and the Penal Code must be stressed. Some of the acts included in the definition in the Law on the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons constitute separate crimes under the Penal Code, such as abduction, fraud and forcing a woman into prostitution, which encourages the judiciary to characterize a trafficking complaint under other legal descriptions that may be clearer, such as harm, indecent assault, deprivation of liberty or other crimes.

Occupational Safety and Health

The Jordanian Constitution provides in Article (23/2/e) for "subjecting factories to health rules", that is, it affirms the necessity of subjecting business establishments to health rules. Likewise, the Labor Law and its amendments, the Social Security Law and the Public Health Law include numerous standards related to occupational safety and health.²³⁰

The year 2018 witnessed numerous accidents that led to the death of a number of workers, including the death of several workers in the explosion that occurred in the Aqaba silos building during the implementation of its demolition project,²³¹ and the death of several workers as a result of building and earth collapses and drowning accidents.

²³⁰According to the Ministry of Justice website, under the item "Human Rights Awareness": <http://www.moj.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=14>.

²³¹As reported on the Roya News website under the title "Social Security: no decision to allocate death pensions to the victims of the Aqaba silos", dated 7 July 2018.

According to a statement issued by the Social Security Corporation, the number of injuries resulting from work accidents in 2018²³² reached 13,000 work injuries, while the number of deaths resulting from these accidents reached 150. The number of work injuries among non-Jordanians reached 1,839 work injuries and 18 deaths. The Social Security Corporation affirmed that, as of the beginning of 2014, it began activating the legal provisions requiring an increase in the rate of work injury insurance contributions for establishments that do not comply with occupational safety and health rules and conditions, up to a maximum of 4% instead of 2%, depending on the extent of the establishment's compliance with these rules and conditions, in addition to charging the establishment the costs of medical care where the injury occurred as a result of its violation of occupational safety and health conditions and standards. As of this moment, the report for 2018 has not been issued.

The Social Security Corporation stated that the number of insured persons who benefited from unemployment insurance during the first nine months of the current year reached 12,326 insured persons, with a total amount of JOD 11 million.

The cumulative number of insured persons who received death pensions arising from work injuries reached 3,139 insured persons, while 4,426 insured persons received a permanent total or partial work-injury disability pension.²³³

Qualifying Industrial Zones

In 2018, the National Center for Human Rights carried out field visits to the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) to examine the situation of workers and the extent of their enjoyment of their labor rights, as well as the environment of these zones. The visits revealed various violations to which workers in those zones are subjected, which the NCHR had previously addressed in its annual report for 2017. The Center reiterates what was stated in its previous reports, in addition to the following:

- The absence of the principle of gradation in the penalties imposed on workers in general, in terms of accountability for the violations they commit, not to mention that in many cases they are subjected to humiliation, particularly being shouted at and insulted.
- The spread of insects (bedbugs) in many factory facilities, clearly visible on the cardboard boxes loaded with fabric.
- Forcing many workers, through various means of pressure, to sign resignations so as to ensure that they do not claim their rights.
- Not allowing many workers to use their leave and short-leave entitlements, and complicating the procedures for obtaining sick leave.
- Overcrowding in the rooms of male and female workers' accommodation, as more workers are placed in rooms than the available space permits, in addition to beds being placed very close together so that air cannot circulate and ventilation is impeded inside them.
- Non-compliance with Article 25/8 of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which obliges public and private sector institutions employing more than 50 workers to allocate 4% of their workforce to persons with disabilities.
- The lack of cleanliness in some accommodation in general, with foul odors, humidity and insects inside them, in addition to most of them lacking the necessary ventilation and lighting.
- Low wage rates, increased working hours and delays in paying salaries beyond the legal period for doing so, in violation of the provisions of Article 46 of the Labor Law, which requires that the worker be paid his or her wage no later than the seventh day of the month.
- The absence of job security and stability and the absence of social and health protection in many workplaces.
- The failure to provide dedicated and equipped nurseries for childcare in many factories.

²³²As stated on the website of the Social Security Corporation.

²³³As stated on the website of the Social Security Corporation under the title "Average age of pensioners of work-injury deaths is (35) years": <https://www.ssc.gov.jo/Arabic/NewsSite/Pages/%D8%A7%D9>.

- Depriving workers of access to information on their rights and their employment contracts, and the absence of occupational health and safety conditions in many workplaces.

Social Guarantees

The unemployment rate during the last quarter of 2018 reached 18.7%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points over the last quarter of 2017, according to the Employment and Unemployment Report issued by the Department of Statistics for the third quarter of 2018.²³⁴

The 2018 annual statistical report issued by the Criminal Information Department sounded the alarm over the failure to find jobs for a large segment of Jordanians, most of them young people, which has been a cause of the commission of some crimes.

On the other hand, the number of social security beneficiaries in 2018 reached 1,300,445 participants (male and female), and the number of retirees 225,246 participants, while the number of those who retired in 2018 reached 16,082 participants, and the number of those receiving early retirement reached 108,000 participants.

The number of insured Jordanian women who resorted to claiming compensation for their previous periods of social security contributions during the first nine months of the current year, 2018, reached 10,695 insured women, and the largest proportion of those who have received a lump-sum compensation since the establishment of the Corporation did so on account of marriage, divorce or widowhood coinciding with the end of service.²³⁵

Recommendations

- Review and reconsider the proposed amendments to the Labor Law in a manner consistent with international standards on the right to work.
- Intensify inspection visits by the competent authorities and toughen penalties against violating entities, especially in the Qualifying Industrial Zones.
- Stimulate projects and investments that generate jobs commensurate with citizens' needs in order to reduce unemployment, through coordination between the public and private sectors.
- Develop and activate training and employment programs in cooperation with the private sector.
- Establish a unified database of migrant labor and unify the procedures for regulating its work.
- Encourage flexible work and provide legal protections for it.
- Monitor recruitment agencies and the conditions of domestic workers to ensure that they obtain their rights.

²³⁴Department of Statistics website.

²³⁵The official spokesperson of the Social Security Corporation, on the Corporation's website: (<https://www.ssc.gov.jo/Arabic/NewsSite/Pages/%D8%A7%D9%>).

4. The Right to Education

National legislation and international instruments guarantee the right to education, foremost among them the Jordanian Constitution of 1952, as amended, in Article 6/3 thereof²³⁶, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in Article 13 thereof²³⁷, and the Ministry of Education Law No. (3) of 1994, as amended up to the Amending Law No. (12) of 2008. All of them affirm the State's responsibility to guarantee the right to education within the limits of its means and on the basis of equal opportunity.

The Educational Process

By the end of 2018, the number of schools in the Kingdom stood at approximately 7,262, of which 3,835 were government schools, 3,211 private schools, 45 schools run by other government entities, and 171 schools affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The number of schools with 500 or more students reached 835, and those with 1,000 or more students reached 188. The number of Jordanian students, male and female, reached 2,051,840. On the other hand, the total number of personnel working at the Ministry of Education by the end of 2018 was 164,769, with the total number of school teachers being 132,882, of whom 40,529 were male teachers and 92,353 female teachers, while the total number of school administrative and technical staff was 31,887, of whom 10,902 were male and 20,985 female²³⁸.

Table No. (12) shows the total number of students, schools and teachers in all education sectors for 2018.

Table No. (12): Educational statistics for the 2018–2019 school year.

Details	Ministry of Education	Private Education	Other Government Entities	UNRWA	Grand Total
Total students	1378840	534800	18028	120163	2051840
Number of students in the basic education stage	825895	244770	1669	120163	1154487
Total teachers	86627	39994	1899	4362	132882
Number of schools	3835	3211	45	171	7262

Meanwhile, the total current and capital expenditure of the Ministry of Education for the 2018 fiscal year amounted to JOD (928,250,500), compared to JOD 882,517,000 in 2017, as shown in Table No. (13).

²³⁶Article (6/3) of the Jordanian Constitution of 1952, as amended, provides that: (The State shall ensure work and education within the limits of its possibilities, and shall ensure a state of tranquility and equal opportunities to all Jordanians).

²³⁷The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides for the right to education in Article (13) thereof, which states: (1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. 2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right: (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all; (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education; (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved).

²³⁸Statistical Report for the 2017/2018 school year issued by the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Center for Educational Technology and Information.

Table No. (13)

Description	2017	2018
Current expenditure	833,042,000	853,081,000
Capital expenditure	49,475,000	75,169,500
Total	882,517,000	928,250,500

Quality of Education: Literacy and Adult Education

According to the statement issued by the Department of Statistics (DoS), the illiteracy rate during the third quarter of 2018 stood at 4.8%. The illiteracy rate among males aged 15 and over reached 2.7%, while among females aged 15 and over it reached 7.0%²³⁹.

Likewise, the number of literacy centers in the Kingdom in 2018 reached 139 centers, distributed as 20 centers for males and 119 centers for females, while the number of enrollees at these centers in 2018 reached 1,823, of whom 306 were male and 1,517 female²⁴⁰. This positively reflects the extent of progress made in addressing illiteracy among Jordanian women more than among men.

School Activities

The Dead Sea incident, which occurred on 25 October 2018 and claimed the lives of a number of students (18 male and female students) and teachers and supervisors (3 persons), played a role in revealing the shortcomings of the School Trips Instructions No. (7) of 2008. The Ministry therefore moved to amend the School Trips and Visits Instructions of 2008 by virtue of the Amending Instructions No. (1) of 2019. These instructions set the dates for domestic school trips and visits at one day only during the school year, provided that school trips take place from 21/3 to 15/5 during the second semester, and school visits from 1/10 to 15/11 during the first semester and from 1/3 to 30/4 during the second semester.

The instructions stipulated that school trips and visits shall not be permitted except after ascertaining the weather conditions and obtaining the approved reports of the Jordan Meteorological Department confirming that the weather is suitable, and they are not permitted otherwise. The instructions prohibited trips to places containing floodways, water pools, valley areas, slopes and dams, such as Al-Mujib Dam, Wadi Shu'ayb and King Talal Dam, and valleys such as Wadi Zarqa Ma'in, the Zara hot springs, the King Abdullah (Founder) Canal and the Karamah Canal, as well as adventure, exploration and challenge trip areas. Vehicles designated for school trips were also required to install tracking devices on their buses, along with front and rear cameras and a video recording and archiving unit. The instructions granted directors of education the right to cancel a trip or visit at any time they deem appropriate, provided that the Civil Defense and the Public Security are notified and provided with a copy of the trip approval letter. The instructions prohibited schools from contracting with tourism companies to operate adventure, exploration and challenge trips, under penalty of legal accountability²⁴¹.

Practices and Policies

On 17 October 2018, the Council of Ministers approved the Regulation on Licensing School Transport Service Providers for Educational Institutions of 2018, with the aim of regulating the transport service for students and staff of educational institutions from their places of residence to schools and kindergartens and back. This regulation was introduced in view of the need of educational institutions for school transport due to the distance of some of them from students' places of residence, by providing

²³⁹Department of Statistics website / Economic and Social Indicators System.

²⁴⁰Statistical Report for the 2017/2018 school year issued by the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Center for Educational Technology and Information.

²⁴¹Amending Instructions to the School Trips and Visits Instructions No. (1) of 2019.

new job opportunities, encouraging investment in this field, reducing traffic congestion and providing a safe and sustainable environment to eliminate the problem of individual transport by unqualified means²⁴².

- The year 2018 also witnessed the emergence of the phenomenon of evacuating some schools for being unfit and at risk of collapse, in more than one location in the governorates of the Kingdom (Al-Dhulayl, Al-Za'tari, the Southern Ghor, Mafraq and others). Indeed, some of them have been subject to demolition orders issued by the competent authorities years ago and are still occupied by students.
- On the other hand, the 2018/2019 school year witnessed some positive practices in the course of the educational process: the Ministry of Education completed the addition of about 32 classrooms to government schools in various areas of the city of Aqaba to address student overcrowding in classrooms. These schools are the schools of the Ninth and Eighth Areas, Al-Masader and Queen Zein Al-Sharaf in Aqaba, bringing the total number of added and existing classrooms to about 112 in order to accommodate the annual increase in the number of students at the start of each new school year²⁴³.
- In 2018, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) met with the Education Committee of the Senate to review the state of education. The issue of inequality in the conditions of basic education was discussed, from the first to the sixth grade and perhaps the preparatory stage, which led to the granting of compensatory opportunities to the so-called "least fortunate." These compensatory opportunities created distortions in the quality of education, and consequently in the principles of competition and equal opportunity in education, and even in the reform of education and the enhancement of the status of technical and vocational education, which Jordan sorely needs. It was pointed out that this problem has produced three categories of schools: government schools, characterized by a dilapidated school environment, low school quality and high dropout rates; private schools with modest fees, which resemble government schools in terms of quality of education; and private schools with high fees and a high-standard school environment. This has also produced three categories of students, and has consequently created social disparities and different mentalities, and even different cultures and orientations, and hence different opportunities.

General Secondary Examinations

In 2018, the Ministry of Education reduced the number of General Secondary Examination (Tawjihi) subjects to seven subjects totaling 1,400 marks, at 200 marks per subject. The examination will be held once a year, and the Ministry will work to computerize the General Secondary Examination over the next two years, which will allow students to sit the examination more than once a year, in accordance with procedures and instructions that address many of the shortcomings that arise in paper-based examinations²⁴⁴.

Since the beginning of March 2018, a number of Tawjihi students staged several sit-ins in front of the Ministry building and in front of the Ministry of Education's directorates in the governorates, against the background of the Ministry of Education's application of the single Tawjihi session and the adoption of a single sitting per subject. The National Center for Human Rights expressed at the time its keenness to follow up on the matter with the Ministry in order to study the extent of the impact of this new examination system on students²⁴⁵.

The National Campaign for Students' Rights "Thabahtoon" criticized this measure in a statement in which it said that "the Ministry of Education has committed a strategic error by adopting the single Tawjihi session, without taking into consideration the consequences of this measure on the educational process, the outputs of the Tawjihi, students and their parents, especially since the single session means

²⁴² Al-Rai newspaper, 17 October 2018.

²⁴³ Al-Ghad / Saturday / 4 August 2018.

²⁴⁴ Al-Ghad / Tuesday / 8 May 2018.

²⁴⁵ Al-Mamlaka TV website / 8 March 2018.

that the student has one opportunity which cannot be made up, as was the case under the two-session system, in addition to the volume of material the student will be compelled to sit for in the examination in the case of the single session."

It pointed out that the single-session system had been tried previously and had proven an utter failure, and the Ministry had been forced to abandon it a few years after its application. Furthermore, the only pretext offered by the government to justify the single-session decision is the reduction of expenditure, without taking into consideration the negative repercussions of this decision on students and their educational future²⁴⁶.

Jordanian Tawjihi Students Studying Abroad

The Jordanian Government adopted an amended regulation on the equivalency of foreign general secondary certificates for 2018, with the aim of tightening the conditions for the equivalency of certificates issued by Arab schools outside their countries of origin²⁴⁷.

In March 2018, the Libyan Government decided to deem 385 Jordanian male and female students at Libyan schools in Turkey as having "failed," on the grounds that they had caused a riot and assaulted members of the examination committee verbally and physically, to the extent of using bladed weapons. The parents of these students staged a sit-in in front of the Libyan Embassy in Amman, on the basis that the proper course is to hold accountable the persons who caused that problem, and that 385 students should not be penalized for an individual wrong committed by 5 or 6 students.

They also stated that the school administration had not issued seat numbers for the Jordanian students, issuing them only for the Libyan students. When the students learned of this, they discussed the matter with the school administration, which in turn invented several pretexts, including that there were not enough seats; the students then brought seats, whereupon the administration once again informed the students that no seat numbers had been allocated to them, and the students were surprised to be expelled after they had sat the examination²⁴⁸.

The Ministry and the Parliamentary Education Committee resolved the problem of these students by holding the examinations for them and announcing the results in Jordan by the Libyan schools themselves, under Jordanian supervision and monitoring²⁴⁹.

Curricula and the Integration of Human Rights Concepts into Education

The National Center for Human Rights reaffirms its position on the need to work towards the gradual introduction of human rights concepts and principles into school curricula up to the second secondary grade, and to include a human rights course among the core requirements for obtaining a bachelor's degree or diploma in most specializations, particularly in education, since a teacher who is well-versed in the rights of the child is capable of bringing about a qualitative shift in children's lives.

The NCHR attributes the failure to achieve such integration to the lack of political will to adopt the idea of integrating human rights into school curricula and university courses, and to the high financial cost of teaching human rights in schools and universities in terms of providing specialized teachers in schools and universities and printing specialized curricula. However, in a positive step at the end of 2018, the Ministry of Education responded to an initiative launched by the NCHR on the need to integrate human rights as a subject into school curricula, and a joint committee was formed from the Ministry and the National Center for Human Rights to examine the mechanism for implementing this.

²⁴⁶ Al-Shahed / Thursday / 10 May 2018.

²⁴⁷ Al-Rai / Monday / 14 May 2018.

²⁴⁸ Al-Ghad / Tuesday / 30 July 2018.

²⁴⁹ Khaberni website / 13 September 2018.

Bullying in Schools

Some schools in the Kingdom witnessed incidents of rioting and disorder, news of which spread among the public, including through social media. Some of these were in protest against the transfer of the school principal, as happened at Al-Faisaliyah Comprehensive Secondary School for Boys/Madaba; others were in protest against overcrowding in schools, the double-shift system and poor infrastructure, as happened at Ruba Al-Dhulayl School for Girls; and likewise in other schools in Zarqa, Mafraq and the Southern Ghor in protest against the Tawjihi system.

On 26 September 2018, the Ministry of Education also decided to refer two employees of the Directorate of Education of the Northern Ghor District to retirement and to transfer 6 other employees outside the city, against the background of an earlier affront to the Director of Education in the area by a number of the directorate's employees, which the Ministry considered an affront to education in general²⁵⁰.

During a visit by a team from the NCHR to Al-Farouq Omar bin Al-Khattab Basic School for Boys in Aqaba Governorate, severe violence among students was observed, with the team recording several cases of violence among students. This is attributed to the overcrowding of the school, where the number of students per classroom ranges from 60 to 70.

The year 2018 also witnessed the continuation of the phenomenon of assaults on teachers by some students and parents. The number of cases referred to the judiciary reached 133 cases of assault, most of them in the capital and the fewest in the southern governorates²⁵¹. Among these was the assault on a teacher from the village of Kufr Kanna by a student while he was invigilating the Islamic Education examination, when he tried to prevent the student from cheating in the examination and the student responded violently. Furthermore, the family of a student assaulted teachers at Al-Shaheed Ahmad Al-Zyoud School in Hashemiyyeh, Zarqa, with obscene language and blasphemy within the school premises²⁵².

School Dropout

The 2018/2019 school year witnessed an increase in the number of students dropping out of school at the basic education stage, reaching 6,182 male and female students, compared to 4,035 male and female students in the 2017/2018 school year. The total number of Culture Enhancement Centers for Dropouts reached 150 centers, and the number of learners registered at these centers is 4,009, of whom 2,490 are male and 1,519 female. School dropout is attributed to economic and social reasons and, to some extent, to multiple administrative reasons, including family problems, family disintegration, poverty, and the weak performance of school administrations and counseling in schools. The Ministry of Education continues its efforts to provide supplementary educational programs to meet the needs of this category of students and to rehabilitate them appropriately for enrollment in the Vocational Training Corporation within the non-formal education program.

In this context, the Ministry established catch-up education centers, the total number of which reached 92 centers. The number of students continuing in the program reached 1,925, of whom 1,120 were male and 805 female, while the number of learners referred to formal education reached 1,150, of whom 611 were male and 539 female²⁵³.

²⁵⁰ Al-Rai / Wednesday / 26 September 2018.

²⁵¹ Jordanian Teachers Association /

²⁵² jo24 website / Thursday 29 November 2018.

²⁵³ Statistical Report for the 2017/2018 school year issued by the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Center for Educational Technology and Information.

Kindergartens

The number of government kindergarten sections in the 2018/2019 school year reached 1,665 kindergartens, with 33,763 children enrolled. The enrollment rate in the second kindergarten grade (KG2) in the pre-school education stage reached 62.2% for the 2018/2019 school year²⁵⁴. The most significant challenges facing kindergartens are the following:

- The lack of sufficient financial resources.
- The insufficient number of educational supervisors for the kindergarten stage in the directorates of education.
- The disparity in the level of service between the capital and the other governorates, as the latter still need a great deal of support in the area of kindergartens.
- The non-participation of kindergarten teachers in committees, projects and conferences related to childhood.
- Delays in the procedures for tendering, building, furnishing and equipping kindergarten wings.

The Teachers Association

In 2018, substantive amendments were made to the Teachers Association Law No. (14) of 2011, the most prominent of which were the following:

1. The amended law retained the article on compulsory membership of the Association. It also stipulated a prohibition on practicing the profession before obtaining a teaching license from the Ministry of Education, in accordance with the Education Law, and registering in the Association's register; that is, the teacher must hold a teaching license and be a member of the Association (Article 6/A of the law as amended by Law No. (12) of 2018).
2. The amended law permitted granting engineers a teaching license without membership of the Association, provided that they are members of the Jordan Engineers Association (Article 6/A–B of the law as amended by Law No. (12) of 2018).
3. The amended law prohibited combining membership of the Teachers Association with membership of any other professional association; where such cases exist, the teacher must choose between the two associations.
4. The amended law allocated 10 members to the branch bodies for each governorate, to be elected by the general assembly through the open proportional list system. It also allocated one member for each directorate of education in the governorate, with an additional seat added to each directorate of education for every two thousand teachers in that directorate, to be elected directly by the directorate's general assembly (Article 11/B of the law as amended by Law No. (12) of 2018).
5. The amended law required that a member of a branch body have ten years of service, and amended the term of office of the Association's Council to three years (Article 12/B and Article 16/B of the law as amended by Law No. (12) of 2018).

On the other hand, the response of the teachers opposing the amendments to their Association's law was as follows:

1. The current Teachers Association Law contains an article that was not deleted and which nullifies the effectiveness of the Association and the essence of its function. They stressed that Article (5/D), which was not touched by the amendment, provides that the Association may not interfere in regulating the affairs of the profession or interfere in educational affairs, the curricula or the practice of the profession, thereby undermining the role of the Association in regulating the teaching

²⁵⁴Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Dr. Alia Arabiyat, Kindergarten Section, Ministry of Education, on 5 February 2019.

profession or the practice of the profession, as claimed in the government's justifications for the amendment.

2. The amendments introduced by the government to the Association's law did not address the redefinition of "teacher"²⁵⁵. Administrative teachers remained outside the definition of teacher and outside the scope of membership of the Association, thereby threatening their teaching allowance and the Royal Grant (Makrumah) for the children of administrative teachers. The amendments also excluded retirees from the definition of teacher and from membership of the Teachers Association²⁵⁶.
3. The condition of ten years of service, instead of five years, was introduced for candidacy for membership of the Central Body of the Teachers Association, which deprives the Association, its bodies and the teaching field of the presence of the youth element, who are the most capable of working, mobilizing, serving teachers and following up on their various educational, union and service-related issues.
4. The amendments to the electoral system in Article Eleven of the Teachers Association Law established an exclusionary electoral system that clearly seeks to exclude entire governorates from fair representation in the Central Body of the Teachers Association, by dropping the numerical representation of teachers (the number of teachers in the governorate) from the calculation of the number of Central Body members²⁵⁷.

On 19 November 2018, a meeting was held at the headquarters of the National Center for Human Rights with members of the Teachers Association Council to discuss the course of education and the affairs of the Association, particularly the controversy over the need to exempt teachers from the performance (bell) curve under the recent amendments to the Civil Service Bureau system. On the same day, the Association threatened a partial strike on 27 November 2018 in protest against the government's failure to honor the agreement signed between the Association's Council and the Minister of Education, the most important provisions of which were raising the teacher's allowance to 200% instead of 150% and exempting teachers from the performance curve. On 26 November 2018, the partial strike was suspended before it took place, owing to an understanding reached between the government and the Association and the approval of some of their demands, most importantly exempting teachers from the performance curve of the Civil Service Bureau.

Private Education

- In 2018, appeals by parents and students' families continued for halting the unjustified increase in private school enrollment fees, even after the amendment of the Regulation on the Establishment and Licensing of Private and Foreign Educational Institutions and its amendments No. (130) of 2015, which had permitted private schools to raise fees by 5% annually according to justifications approved by the Ministry; under the Amending Regulation No. (73) of 2017, approval of fee increases was made subject to the approval of the Minister based on the recommendation of a special committee formed by the Minister for this purpose.
- In 2018, the government issued the Amending Regulation to the Regulation on the Establishment and Licensing of Private and Foreign Educational Institutions. The amendment of the regulation came to control increases in tuition fees and link them to approved bases and criteria, and to make it mandatory to transfer the salaries of private-sector teachers to banks or e-wallets, in order to curb the violations of some private educational institutions.

²⁵⁵The definition contained in the Decision of the Special Bureau for the Interpretation of Laws, Decision No. (3) of 2014, issued on 14 July 2014.

²⁵⁶Decision of the Special Bureau for the Interpretation of Laws, Decision No. (1) of 2016, issued on 22 February 2016.

²⁵⁷Al-Rai newspaper / Monday / 5 February 2018.

- The adoption of the regulation also comes, according to informed sources, in line with the Ministry of Education's policy of expanding kindergartens and raising enrollment rates, particularly in underserved areas.

School Nutrition and Health

The Ministry of Education implemented several projects through its School Nutrition and Health Section, including the government school children feeding project for students in grades (1–6) of basic education and government kindergartens in poverty pockets. The number of students covered by the project in the first semester of the 2018/2019 school year reached 375,000 male and female students, distributed among 1,805 schools in 31 directorates of education and 3 UNRWA camps²⁵⁸, with each student provided daily with a healthy meal containing vitamins, minerals and protein. The Ministry also, in coordination with the School Health Directorate at the Ministry of Health, conducts periodic comprehensive medical examinations of students covering both general health and dental health.

On 1 December 2018, the Ministry of Health approved instructions permitting the sale of "chips" in schools, after the Ministry had banned the sale of all types of chips in school canteens 7 years earlier, following the affirmation of a technical committee of the Ministry "that the dental problems faced by school students are linked to that product." However, under these instructions, the ban continued on "chips not manufactured from natural potato and corn flakes, and which contain preservatives or coloring agents and are high in salt." The Jordan Food and Drug Administration had previously recommended banning the sale or circulation of all types of chips in government and private schools owing to the oils and dyes they contain, which affect students' health and lead to tooth decay²⁵⁹.

For its part, the Jordan Chamber of Industry commended the decision of the Minister of Health to amend the instructions on the sale of potato and corn chips in school canteens, affirming that Jordanian factories rely in their production on the latest manufacturing methods while taking into account the preservation of consumer health and safety, through the application of best health practices²⁶⁰.

Higher Education²⁶¹

The year 2018 witnessed the issuance of an Amending Law to the Jordanian Universities Law No. (18) of 2018²⁶², the most prominent provisions of which are the following:

- The Council of Ministers shall issue three new regulations: a regulation on the accountability and performance evaluation of academic leaders in higher education institutions; a regulation on the practice of academic work in universities and university colleges; and a regulation on the relationship between the owners and the administration of private universities.
- Linking domestic borrowing to the approval of the Council of Higher Education, and foreign borrowing to the approval of the Council of Ministers.
- Granting university security personnel in higher education institutions the status of judicial police in accordance with the legislation in force.
- Setting the number of members of the Board of Trustees of public and private universities at (12) members plus the chairman.
- The Board of Trustees of public universities shall be composed as follows:
 - The Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
 - Four academic members holding the rank of professor from outside the university.
 - Three members from the industry and trade sector.

²⁵⁸Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Eng. Khitam Hatar, School Health and Nutrition Section, Ministry of Education, on 5 February 2019.

²⁵⁹Sawaleif news website, 27 November 2018.

²⁶⁰jo24 website / Wednesday 28 November 2018.

²⁶¹On 6 January 2019, the Council of Ministers decided to merge the Ministries of "Education" and "Higher Education."

²⁶²Published on page 2343 of Official Gazette issue No. 5513 dated 2 May 2018.

- Four members of expertise and standing.
- The President of the University.
- The membership of a member of a university's Board of Trustees shall automatically terminate if he/she is absent from sessions three times without an excuse acceptable to the Chairman of the Board.
- Granting faculty members at public universities the right to combine what they receive from their universities with their military retirement pension.
- Considering the funds of public universities as public funds to be collected in accordance with the Collection of Public Funds Law in force; for this purpose, the President shall be granted the powers of the administrative governor and the powers of the Public Funds Collection Committee stipulated in the said law.

The new Jordanian Universities Law of 2018 granted some university security personnel the status of judicial police in Article 27/B thereof, which will allow them to refer students to the police station or the court without recourse to the Deanship of Student Affairs, by virtue of an official report and according to their assessment of the situation, on the basis that this will contribute to reducing the phenomenon of university violence. The Thabahtoon Campaign considered that this decision would be followed by similar decisions at most Jordanian universities. There appears to be clear haste in its application, as it serves the governmental orientations and policies relating to universities, in light of imminent decisions to raise university fees that require controlling the student street and restricting the freedom of student activity²⁶³.

The year 2018 witnessed the issuance of an Amending Law to the Higher Education and Scientific Research Law No. (17) of 2018²⁶⁴, which set the number of members of the Council of Higher Education at 9 members plus the Chairman of the Council (the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research). The Council is chaired by the Minister and composed of the following members:

- The Secretary General of the Ministry.
- The Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, named by the Minister of Education.
- The President of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions.
- Three academics of expertise and specialization holding the rank of professor.
- Two persons of expertise and standing from the private sector.
- The Director of the Directorate of Military Education and Culture in the Jordan Armed Forces²⁶⁵.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research allocated 394 university seats annually to Palestinian students at the bachelor's and postgraduate levels. On 4 July 2018, an agreement was signed between the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Palestinian Ambassador in Amman, providing that Jordan would take into consideration the needs and priorities of the Palestinian side in the various specializations, and that an increase in the number of seats would be reconsidered every two years²⁶⁶.

The most important practices relating to higher education in 2018 are as follows:

1. On 6 January 2019, the Council of Ministers decided to merge the Ministries of "Education" and "Higher Education." The opinions of experts specialized in the fields of education and higher education varied regarding the government's move to merge the two ministries. Some considered it an "ill-considered" decision that weakens the implementation of development policies and adversely affects the outputs of the educational process, and that the particular nature of the Ministry

²⁶³ Al-Rai / Thursday / 12 July 2018.

²⁶⁴ Published on page 2333 of Official Gazette issue No. 5513 dated 2 May 2018.

²⁶⁵ Article (5) of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Law No. (17) of 2018.

²⁶⁶ Al-Dustour newspaper, 5 July 2018.

of Education differs from that of higher education; despite the overlap in work, which does not mean an absence of coordination and cooperation, the Ministry of Higher Education is distinguished by the particular nature of "scientific research," for which a special budget is allocated and whose development, together with the development of higher education outputs, must be given the highest priority. Others, meanwhile, saw it as an opportunity for educational institutions to carry out their activities, and an opportunity to resolve contradictions according to a coherent approach that serves the outputs of general education and the inputs of higher education and scientific research²⁶⁷.

2. In 2018, Jordan ranked second in the Arab world in the higher education sector according to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, under the heading of figures on the level of services provided in the field of higher education. The same indicators showed the actual cost of university teaching in Jordan, which reached JOD 160 million, of which universities bear 50%, while the number of students enrolled in the regular program at government universities reached 140 thousand male and female students. It was affirmed that the Ministry of Higher Education deducts 1% of company profits in support of the Scientific Research and Innovation Support Fund, in an amount of up to JOD 10 million, and it was stated that the Ministry intends to establish 3 medical universities and 5 technical colleges, considering this part of the government's role in raising the quality of the services provided by the Ministry and public universities and supplying the Jordanian economy with the necessary human resources²⁶⁸.
3. On 27 January 2019, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research announced the completion of the full automation of the Ministry in all details of its sites, its directorates and the Scientific Research and Innovation Support Fund, such that there is no longer any need to use paper in the Ministry. This will facilitate citizens' transactions, speed up completion and ensure verification and a high level of transparency²⁶⁹.
4. On 15 July 2018, the government issued the Regulation on the Practice of Teaching Professions of 2018, which requires every instructor wishing to practice the teaching profession at higher education institutions to obtain a license to practice the higher education teaching profession, by subjecting the instructor to courses on modern teaching methods and information technology. The regulation also provided for the formation of a committee to grant licenses to practice teaching at higher education institutions, chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Higher Education and comprising the Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education, the President of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, and six academic members holding the rank of professor. With regard to faculty members working before the adoption of the regulation, a provision of the regulation deemed them to be license holders; they number 10,291 instructors currently in service. As for those on scholarship from universities, a provision stated that, upon completion of their scholarship, they must take temporary leave for a period of six months to obtain the required courses if they have not obtained them, and in the event of their refusal, the provisions on breach of the scholarship shall apply to them²⁷⁰.

Syrian Students

The Ministry of Education facilitated the procedures for registering Syrian students in evening and morning government schools by taking several measures, including accepting the security card alone

²⁶⁷ Al-Rai newspaper, 7 January 2019.

²⁶⁸ Al-Ghad / Tuesday / 22 May 2018.

²⁶⁹ Ammon News Agency, 27 January 2019.

²⁷⁰ Al-Dustour / Monday / 16 July 2018.

for registration purposes, continuing to admit students in the second semester, and opening compensatory programs during the summer holiday²⁷¹.

On the other hand, a large group of Jordanian teachers in evening schools for Syrian students complained about their low wages, which amount to JOD 250²⁷².

The Reality of Educational Services in Schools

The National Center for Human Rights carried out a series of visits to schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education with the aim of examining the reality of these schools in terms of the level of services and care available therein, and ascertaining the extent of their readiness to achieve the desired educational mission. The visits covered the north, center and south of the Kingdom, and during the monitoring visits it conducted the Center documented the obstacles to the educational process, which were as follows:

Challenges Relating to Infrastructure

The visits revealed weaknesses in the infrastructure of some schools, such as the absence of fans in summer and the use by some of kerosene heaters in winter. Some schools also lack sports facilities, and there are some problems regarding sanitary facilities, which are insufficient compared to the number of students and are generally unclean and not subject to periodic maintenance.

Safe drinking water is not secured in some schools; rather, students drink from the tanks. It is also evident that some schools lack canteens compliant with the school canteen instructions, and there are continuous power outages in some schools. It was further observed that some schools do not contain a health clinic and there is no first-aid pharmacy, as is the case at Al-Shuhaibi Mixed Basic School/Aqaba Governorate, which lacks the basic elements of infrastructure. The team noted clear challenges and dangers in the school's infrastructure, as a floodway runs directly through the school with no wall or fence to protect children from falling into it.

With regard to the extent to which public health and safety conditions are met, the problem of non-application of these conditions appeared in more than one school, as evidenced by the absence of serviceable fire extinguishers. Some schools also lack an emergency plan (evacuation plan) known to the teaching staff and students, as is the case at Tariq bin Ziyad Mixed School/Aqaba Governorate, which has only one emergency exit, no fire extinguishers, and no emergency plan (evacuation plan) known to the teaching staff and students, nor has any training on such a plan been conducted previously.

We likewise find that Al-Muzaffar Mixed Basic School, affiliated with the Aqaba Directorate of Education, suffers from power outages due to the theft of cables by local residents. The school also lacks fans and heating, having only (two old heaters with no kerosene in them). It is evident that the window glass is broken and there are no curtains, the walls are unpainted, and the classroom floors are broken, some being mere pitted concrete floors. There is no wall around the school and no prepared yard for the students, merely a dirt yard.

As for Al-Khashafiyeh Comprehensive Secondary School for Boys, affiliated with the Directorate of Education of Sahab District/Capital Governorate, it lacks a resource and learning difficulties room and lacks any kind of sports facilities that could contribute to building students' athletic and cultural capacities.

²⁷¹Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Mr. Abdul Karim Al-Shobaki, Special Education Section, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

²⁷²International Projects Fund Section, Ministry of Education, Mr. Amin Dawoud Al-Sayed, 24 March 2019.

Curricula

A number of teachers stated that the amendments made to the curricula have created a clear gap in them, as they have come to lack coherence and sequence in the topics presented, and that the Islamic Education curricula have been condensed, and that the ninth-grade material is not appropriate for the ages and level of male and female students but is rather suited to younger grades, such as the topics of night prayer (Qiyam Al-Layl), the science of Qur'anic exegesis (Tafsir) and the science of jurisprudence (Fiqh). As for the Arabic language curriculum, some teachers complained of excessive brevity in Arabic grammar for the preparatory grades, and in rhetoric and syntax for the secondary grades. There is also a large gap in the methodology of presenting topics between the primary and preparatory stages.

On the other hand, the Curricula Department at the Ministry of Education asserts a view contrary to that of the teachers, affirming that the curricula were developed by consensus of a large committee of specialists for the purpose of moving towards the concept of e-learning, and that the scientific content of the curricula has not been subjected to distortion or contradiction with sound values²⁷³.

Overcrowding

The problem of overcrowding appears at Al-Farouq Omar bin Al-Khattab Basic School for Boys in Aqaba Governorate, where the number of students per desk ranges between two and three. At Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi Comprehensive School for Boys, complaints were made of the severe overcrowding in some classes and its impact on the educational process in general, with the number of students reaching 37 per class.

At Al-Muraigha Basic School for Boys in the Southern Badia area/Capital Governorate, a number of teaching staff members made several observations during the visit, including complaints of the severe overcrowding in some classes and its impact on the educational process, with the number of students reaching 52 male and female students, which causes poor academic achievement among some students.

As for the conditions of the teaching staff: there are delays in filling the shortage of teachers in some schools, particularly in areas far from the city center. One teacher complained that the housing allocated to teachers at one of the schools is overcrowded, with ten teachers in a single room. There is also an evident need for teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge of the educational system in Jordan issued by the Directorate of General Education.

An observation was also made regarding the high teaching load of some teachers in terms of class periods, and some teachers complained of low income compared to the high cost of living.

On another note, female teachers complained about the compulsory government health insurance system, as it does not provide many specialist physicians, in addition to the shortage of many medicines that are not always available, as well as complaints about the duplication of government health insurance, in that the insurance contribution is deducted from both spouses.

Resource Rooms

Some schools lack an educational resources and learning difficulties room that could help students, particularly those suffering from poor academic achievement, to acquire learning and knowledge. For example, at Jalwakh Mixed Basic School in the Directorate of Education of the Wadi Musa/Petra Region, the resource room needs more furniture, painting and heating, and contains an expired fire extinguisher.

²⁷³Meeting with the Director of the Curricula Department / Ministry of Education, Dr. Osama Jaradat, Sunday 24 March 2019.

At Jalwakh Mixed Basic School, the problem also appears that, although the school has a resource and learning difficulties room, it is not fully equipped and lacks many tools, such as a computer, desks, chairs, tables and guidance boards.

Facilities for Persons with Disabilities

It is evident that most school buildings are not equipped to receive students with disabilities. For example, during a visit to Tariq bin Ziyad Basic School for Boys, it was found that the building is not equipped to receive students with disabilities, as it is clear that the building was originally designed as residential apartments.

Recommendations

The National Center for Human Rights stresses the need to act upon the recommendations contained in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following:

1. Eliminating the phenomenon of rented schools and schools at risk of collapse, which do not meet the requirements of the educational process and suffer from a shortage of space allocated to students and of sanitary facilities.
2. Training and qualifying teachers to acquire special skills that enable them to become capable of innovation.
3. Providing schools with an equipped educational resources and learning difficulties room that can help students, particularly those suffering from poor academic achievement, to acquire learning and knowledge.
4. Resorting to e-learning skills instead of rote learning, in a manner that ensures students acquire thinking skills.
5. Building more schools, replacing schools at risk of collapse as soon as possible, and ending reliance on rented schools and the double-shift system.
6. Developing the services provided in schools, particularly in winter, which requires providing appropriate heating, in addition to the need to provide playgrounds, sports fields and laboratories.
7. The need to work towards adopting a public policy on integrating human rights concepts into the curricula and plans of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, with the necessary financial support from the Ministries of Finance and Planning for this financially costly project.
8. Working to amend the laws so as to ensure stricter disciplinary measures and penalties against the offending student or teacher in cases of school bullying or school violence and disorder.
9. Working to address the economic and social causes of school dropout, such as family problems, family disintegration, poverty and weak educational counseling, and providing supplementary educational programs to meet the needs of students who have dropped out and to rehabilitate them appropriately.

5. The Right to Health

The Jordanian Constitution makes no reference to the right to health or to guaranteeing it for citizens, even though international instruments have accorded the right to health special attention given the importance of this right to human life. This is provided for in paragraph 1 of Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948²⁷⁴ and in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Public Health Law No. (47) of 2008 and its amendments, together with the regulations and instructions issued thereunder, have likewise addressed this right.

On the Level of National Legislation:

The year 2018 witnessed the enactment of the Medical and Health Liability Law No. (25) of 2018²⁷⁵. The Law defines medical error as any act, omission or negligence committed by a service provider that is inconsistent with the professional rules prevailing within the available work environment and that results in harm. For the establishment of medical and health liability, the Law relies on the extent of the service provider's compliance with the relevant professional rules, which are approved by the Medical and Health Standards Committee, chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Health and composed of a number of relevant persons, such as the Secretary General of the Jordan Medical Council, a representative of the Royal Medical Services, a representative of the Private Hospitals Association on a rotating basis, a representative of the public university hospitals on a rotating basis, the President of the Jordan Medical Association, the President of the Jordan Dental Association, and the President of the Jordan Pharmacists Association.

The Law also vested the Higher Technical Committee with the power to consider complaints filed against service providers. The Law established the Medical and Health Liability Error Insurance Fund²⁷⁶ and made the enrollment of service providers mandatory.

It is worth noting that, under Article 12 thereof, the Medical Liability Law prohibits the detention of service providers during the investigation and trial stages. The maximum penalty under this Law is imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years and a fine not exceeding fifty thousand dinars.

The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) expresses its reservation regarding the text of Article 25 of this Law, which provides for the lapse of the public right action in the event of reconciliation between the complainant or his/her heirs and the defendant, and the impossibility of prosecuting the defendant, in addition to the suspension of the execution of the penalty if reconciliation takes place after the judgment in the case has been rendered.

The Center also notes that, under Article 6/c thereof, the Law refers the determination of the meetings of the Medical and Health Standards Committee and the manner in which it takes its decisions to instructions issued by the Minister for this purpose. Given the importance of the Committee's work and decisions, the Law should have provided for the legal quorum of its sessions and the mechanism for adopting its decisions, as it did for the Higher Technical Committee.

The year 2018 also witnessed the issuance and amendment of a number of legal regulations at the Ministry of Health, including the Regulation on the Renewal of Licenses of Health Professionals No.

²⁷⁴Paragraph (1) of Article (25) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services."

²⁷⁵Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3420), dated 4 May 2018.

²⁷⁶The Legislation and Opinion Bureau published the draft Regulation of the Medical and Health Liability Error Insurance Fund on 9 December 2018, under which the non-profit mutual (takaful) fund will be established at the Higher Health Council and will enjoy a legal personality with financial and administrative independence, and will have the capacity to undertake all legal acts necessary to achieve its objectives, conclude contracts and litigate. The Regulation has not been adopted to date.

(46) of 2018²⁷⁷, the Regulation on the Practice of the Anesthesia Profession No. (62) of 2018²⁷⁸, the Regulation on the Practice of the Speech Therapy Profession No. (63) of 2018²⁷⁹, the Regulation on the Practice of the Dental Health Educator Profession No. (64) of 2018²⁸⁰, the Regulation on the Practice of the Dental Technician Profession No. (65) of 2018²⁸¹, the Regulation on the Practice of the Occupational Therapy Profession No. (67) of 2018²⁸², the Regulation on the Practice of the Traditional (Hikmah) Medicine Profession No. (68) of 2018²⁸³, the Regulation on the Practice of the Paramedic Profession No. (71) of 2018²⁸⁴, the Regulation on the Practice of the Audiology Profession No. (72) of 2018²⁸⁵, and the Regulation on the Practice of the Associate Nurse and Assistant Nurse Professions No. (69) of 2018²⁸⁶, among others. This will have a positive impact on citizens' enjoyment of the right to health, as these regulations will govern the work of health service providers and control the quality of their services in the interest of citizens.

On the Level of Practices and Policies:

The National Center for Human Rights met with the Health, Environment and Population Committee of the Senate. The meeting discussed health conditions and highlighted the most significant health problems, including the increase in the rate of communicable diseases (viral hepatitis, chickenpox, meningitis); the spread of food poisoning cases; overcrowding in hospitals; the shortage of specialist physicians; the absence of even a single vascular specialist in government hospitals in both the Northern and Southern Regions; problems with the referral of patients from government hospitals; the great but scattered effort in the health sector; and the responsibility of the Health Insurance Administration, which does not achieve the required fairness and effectiveness; in addition to the unclear relationship between the three health bodies (the Ministry of Health, the private health sector, and the Royal Medical Services).

The meeting also examined the need to provide specialized training for physicians, particularly in sub-specialties, the weak coordination among the three health sectors, and the lack of adequate financial support for health care.

- Among its strategic objectives for the years 2018–2022, the Ministry set out to: provide health care services with quality and fairness; increase the efficiency of human resources management; increase the rate of citizens' coverage by universal health coverage; increase the efficiency and effectiveness of infrastructure management; increase the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge management based on digital transformation and technology; and maximize governance and the oversight role of the Ministry and implement decentralization²⁸⁷.
- Commencing the implementation of a plan to strengthen medical specialties in hospitals, particularly in the outlying areas, in light of the severe shortage, ranging from 30% to 40%, suffered by medical staff, especially sub-specialties, at the Ministry of Health. The Government's measures consisted of recommending that the retirement age for specialist physicians be raised to 67 years; retaining physicians over the age of 60 who are needed by their departments in administrative positions; and not emptying hospitals of expertise and competencies through retirement, transfer and termination of services, which had deepened the

²⁷⁷ Regulation on the Renewal of Licenses of Health Professionals No. (46) of 2018, published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5509), page (1935), dated 1 April 2018.

²⁷⁸ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁷⁹ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3447), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸⁰ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3451), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸¹ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3454), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸² Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3461), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸³ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3464), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸⁴ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3473), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸⁵ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3476), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸⁶ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. (5517), page (3467), dated 31 May 2018.

²⁸⁷ Ministry of Health.

scale of the problem, as specialist physicians, despite their small number, are concentrated in the large hospitals.

- The year 2018 also witnessed the Ministry's response to the demands and issues of the members of the Specialist Physicians Society regarding the training of qualified residents and holders of foreign degrees. The General Assembly of the Society was consulted, and it was agreed to grant every person who successfully completes residency a job title commensurate with the nature of work at the Ministry ("Specialist in Training"), thereby providing them with legal protection in light of the application of the Medical Liability Law. The Government also promised to amend and reform the policies of the Medical Council, particularly with regard to examinations, on scientific and fair bases, and to establish an academy for education, training and distance learning that would grant a diploma from the Jordan Medical Council upon completion of a six-month study period and passing the prescribed examination. As for holders of foreign degrees who were enrolled in their studies before the amendment of the Jordan Medical Council Law on 31 December 2001, the fairness of their demand and their entitlement to the recognition of their degrees were affirmed²⁸⁸.
- Issuing circulars to all pharmacies in the accident and emergency departments of hospitals to operate around the clock, 24 hours a day. However, the NCHR team monitoring the state of health services in hospitals did not observe compliance with this circular by these pharmacies.
- Issuing and regulating preliminary forensic medical reports, as well as sick leave.
- Accreditation standards were also applied in 18 hospitals and 120 health centers, including numerous standards focusing on the rights of patients of all groups and ages, among them:
 - The right to choose the service provider.
 - The right to choose the family planning method.
 - The right to receive safe care.
 - Handling cases of domestic violence and not neglecting them.
 - The right to participate in the treatment plan.
 - Informing the patient of the mechanisms for filing complaints and obtaining feedback.
 - Establishing family clinics and training on domestic violence in the accident and emergency departments of Ministry of Health hospitals.

Preventive Health: The NCHR recorded a number of measures undertaken by the Ministry of Health in 2018 to curb the spread of diseases of both types, communicable and non-communicable, most notably the following²⁸⁹:

- Issuing instructions and adopting new policies for screening expatriates to ensure they are free of communicable and infectious diseases.
- Holding awareness seminars and lectures for citizens in local communities, in cooperation with the health directorates, to raise awareness and educate about non-communicable diseases (diabetes, hypertension, obesity, smoking) by conducting awareness campaigns on diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.
- Epidemiological surveillance of communicable diseases and taking the necessary preventive measures to curb the spread of these diseases.

Table No. (14): Number of persons infected with communicable diseases for the years 2016–2018[²⁹⁰]

Name of disease	Number of cases in 2016	Number of cases in 2017	Number of cases in 2018
Viral hepatitis (A)	251	266	621
Hepatitis (B)	---	---	1
Food poisoning	311	567	151
Brucellosis (Malta fever)	441	467	---
Malaria*	51	44	41

²⁸⁸ Al-Dustour newspaper, 7 November 2018. Link: <https://www.addustour.com/articles/1039795>.

²⁸⁹ Ministry of Health.

Name of disease	Number of cases in 2016	Number of cases in 2017	Number of cases in 2018
Schistosomiasis (Bilharzia)*	---	44	35
Cutaneous leishmaniasis	281	354	156
Measles	35	---	105
Rubella (German measles)	18	70	31
Chickenpox	4071	6880	6211
Epidemic meningitis	4	9	13
Non-epidemic meningitis	358	657	881
AIDS	103	94	116

Nevertheless, the year 2018 witnessed an increase in the number of persons infected with certain communicable diseases. The number of cases of viral hepatitis (A) reached 621, compared with 266 cases in 2017, and there was one case of viral hepatitis (B). The number of measles cases also rose to 105, whereas no case was recorded in 2017; cases of epidemic meningitis rose to 13, compared with 9 cases in 2017; cases of non-epidemic meningitis rose to 881, compared with 657 cases in 2017; and AIDS cases rose to 116, of whom 41 were Jordanians and 75 were non-Jordanians, compared with 94 cases in 2017.

This requires the Ministry to undertake early diagnosis and to adopt more effective measures and policies for screening expatriates to ensure that they are free of diseases, in addition to implementing the necessary health education campaigns. Meanwhile, the number of food poisoning cases decreased to 151, compared with 567 cases in 2017; the number of malaria cases decreased to 41, compared with 44 cases in 2017; and the number of schistosomiasis cases decreased to 35, compared with 44 cases in 2017, noting that the vast majority of those infected with malaria and schistosomiasis are expatriates²⁹⁰. The number of cutaneous leishmaniasis cases likewise decreased to 152, compared with 354 cases in 2017, in addition to a decrease in rubella cases to 31, compared with 70 cases in 2017, and a decrease in chickenpox cases to 6211, compared with 6880 cases in 2017, as shown in Table No. (14).

Curative Health:

The Ministry of Health provides its primary, secondary and tertiary health services through an interconnected network of health centers and public and private hospitals distributed throughout the Kingdom, as follows:

A. Primary Health Care²⁹¹:

Primary health care services in the Kingdom are administered through a wide network of health care centers, which numbered 676 centers in 2018, distributed as follows: 102 comprehensive centers, 380 primary centers, 194 sub-centers, and 505 maternal and child health centers. The Royal Medical Services, through its field clinics, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), through 143 medical clinics dedicated to serving the beneficiaries among Palestine refugees registered with the Agency, also participate in providing primary health care services, in addition to the contribution of the private and charitable sectors in this field²⁹².

²⁹⁰The number of persons infected with malaria reached (41), of whom (17) cases were Jordanians and (24) cases were non-Jordanians, while the number of persons infected with schistosomiasis reached (35) cases, of whom two cases were Jordanians and (33) cases were non-Jordanians.

²⁹¹Primary health care services are based on the concept of comprehensive care, in addition to the basic services provided in primary and comprehensive health centers, such as: "health education, maternal and child health, water safety, food control, environmental sanitation, early detection of diseases, school health, occupational health, control of communicable diseases, dental health, health of older persons and persons with disabilities, prevention of accidents and addiction, anti-smoking, and others."

²⁹²Ministry of Health statistics / Communicable Diseases Directorate.

The National Center for Human Rights considers it important to convert the primary centers and sub-centers into comprehensive health centers, given their importance in detecting diseases at an early stage and their contribution to relieving pressure on hospitals.

B. Secondary and Tertiary Health Care:

The number of hospitals in the Kingdom in 2018 reached 115 hospitals, as shown in Table No. (15), with a total of 14712 beds, at a rate of 15 beds per 10000 population. The number of health personnel working in the Kingdom in 2018 reached 30901 physicians, of whom 1131 were specialist physicians, 2251 resident physicians, and 1542 general practitioners²⁹³. Despite the large number of hospitals, beds and physicians, they do not meet the real health care needs of citizens, in light of the low level of the health services provided to them and their high cost.

Table No. (15): Number of hospitals and number of beds in the Kingdom in 2018

Health sector	Number of hospitals	Number of beds	Percentage %
Ministry of Health	32	5170	35.1%
Medical Services	17	3476	23.6%
Jordan University Hospital	1	542	3.6%
King Abdullah the Founder University Hospital	1	599	4.3%
Private sector	64	4925	33.4%
Total	115	14712	100%

Mental Health:

The year 2018 witnessed the launch of the National Plan for Mental Health and Addiction for the years 2018–2021, in cooperation with the World Health Organization and the relevant national institutions. The Plan aims to accelerate the implementation of the Jordanian National Mental Health Policy for the years 2011–2021 and to introduce the addiction component in order to address the perceived need and demand. The Mental Health Unit was also upgraded to the Directorate of Mental Health and Disabilities, in addition to the preparation of 7 new trainers on the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP), the training of 71 physicians, and the enrollment of 66 physicians from the staff working in comprehensive and primary health centers in refresher courses on the Mental Health Gap Action Programme. This had a positive impact, raising the number of health centers providing mental health services to 55 centers throughout the Kingdom, alongside the implementation of numerous workshops and awareness lectures in the field of mental health on various topics, including, by way of example and not limitation, psychological first aid, the stigma associated with mental health, and the field of narcotics, for Ministry of Health staff and the local community. Work is also under way to prepare liaison officers as trainers in the field of self-care and staff care, and to train nursing staff and mental health specialists on the package for the provision of psychosocial and health support services to psychiatric patients.

It should be noted that mental health still faces a number of challenges, represented in the following:

1. A shortage of health personnel, particularly multidisciplinary mental health personnel (specialist physicians, mental health specialists, occupational therapists, social workers, etc.), and of the staff of the Directorate of Mental Health and Disabilities.

²⁹³The above figure includes physicians in each of: (the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, the private sector, King Abdullah I the Founder Hospital, Jordan University Hospital, and UNRWA).

2. Increased demand for curative mental health and rehabilitation services with the arrival of large numbers of Syrian refugees in the Kingdom²⁹⁴; mental health specialists believe that mental illnesses affect no less than 25% of members of society.
3. Weak coordination among the bodies providing mental health services.
4. Stigma and discrimination against patients with mental disorders and their families constitute an obstacle to seeking mental health services.
5. The high consultation fees in private psychiatric clinics compared with public sector clinics, which is a reason for patients' reluctance to visit them. According to Ministry of Health statistics, these clinics number 44, distributed as follows: 36 clinics in Amman, 3 clinics in Zarqa, and 5 others in Irbid Governorate²⁹⁵.
6. The high prices of psychiatric medicines in the private health sector, noting that Jordanian psychiatric patients are treated and dispensed medicines free of charge in public health sector clinics.

The Center considers it necessary to continue adopting the shift from the biological approach to the integrated bio-psycho-social approach for psychiatric patients, and to move towards establishing inpatient units and community mental health clinics in hospitals and health centers.

Assaults on Medical Staff:

The year 2018 witnessed an aggravation of the phenomenon of assaults on medical staff in hospitals and health centers, reaching the point of attacks on health facilities and the smashing and destruction of their contents. Cases of physical and verbal assault during the years 2016–2018 reached 108 cases, at an average of 35 cases annually²⁹⁶.

Assaults on medical staff most often occur in the accident and emergency departments of hospitals crowded with patients and emergency cases, at the hands of patients' relatives and visitors.

Despite the presence of security detachments in hospitals to control the actions of assailants or the attempts of certain individuals to file malicious complaints against physicians, these detachments have not curbed the phenomenon of assaults on physicians or health personnel in general. The Center considers it necessary to take deterrent measures to curb the phenomenon of assaults on medical staff and equipment.

Food and Drugs:

The year 2018 witnessed a decline in the stringency of health oversight of food establishments and factories by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA). In 2018, 31745 warnings were issued, compared with 41222 warnings in 2017 and 44210 warnings in 2016. In 2018, 983 food establishments and factories were referred to court, compared with 1213 food establishments and factories in 2017 and 1872 food establishments and factories in 2016, while 1754 food establishments and factories were closed and suspended in 2018, compared with 2767 food establishments and factories in 2017 and 3652 food establishments and factories in 2016, due to the seizure of quantities of spoiled and expired foodstuffs and their destruction, in addition to the failure of those food establishments and factories to comply with public health and safety requirements. Table No. (16) shows the measures taken against

²⁹⁴200 thousand persons visited psychiatric clinics in 2016, according to a statement by the Director of the National Center for Mental Health on 15 January 2018.

²⁹⁵Despite the existence of a "tariff" set by the Jordan Medical Association for the consultation fee paid to physicians in private sector clinics, ranging between (20) and (40) dinars, with a margin for an increase of "(10) dinars," there are violations by some physicians, as confirmed by patients and physicians from the same sector, whose consultation fees may reach around fifty dinars at least, coupled with the high prices of the medicines prescribed to the patient.

²⁹⁶As stated by Dr. Hisham Al-Fatyani.

violators in light of the food oversight activities carried out by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration in various regions of the Kingdom in 2018, compared with 2017 and 2016²⁹⁷.

Table No. (16): Number of establishments and factories closed, referred to court or issued warnings by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration during the years 2016–2018

Measure	2016	2017	2018
Warning	44210	41222	31745
Referral to court	1872	1213	983
Closure and suspension	3652	2767	1754
Total	49734	45202	34482

The year 2018 also witnessed a decrease in the number of inspection visits to 138421 field visits, compared with 155430 inspection visits in 2017, noting that the number of establishments subject to oversight in 2018 reached 58872 establishments, of which 1891 were food factories and plants. Table No. (17) shows the number of inspection visits carried out by the teams of the Food and Drug Administration.

Table No. (17): Number of inspection visits carried out by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration for the years 2017–2018

2017	2018
155430	138421

The Center considers it important to continue focusing on effective inspection and oversight by the Ministry of Health and the Jordan Food and Drug Administration to ensure that all food establishments and factories and restaurants throughout the Kingdom comply with public health and safety requirements.

Table No. (18) shows the quantity of foodstuffs destroyed by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration in 2018, compared with 2017 and 2016²⁹⁸.

Table No. (18): Quantity of foodstuffs destroyed by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration for the years 2016–2018

Relevant oversight category	Weight of destroyed items/ton – 2016	Weight of destroyed items/ton – 2017	Weight of destroyed items/ton – 2018
Foodstuffs in circulation	3693 tons	4681 tons	2655 tons
Imported foodstuffs	7933 tons	3588 tons	5647 tons
Total	11626 tons	8269 tons	8302 tons

On the other hand, in 2018 the Jordan Food and Drug Administration reduced the prices of 563 medicines, compared with reducing the prices of 544 medicines in 2017, most notably antibiotics and medicines for chronic diseases such as those of the digestive system, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart and arteries, lipids, cancer medicines and antibiotics, in addition to medicines for psychiatric illnesses²⁹⁹. The Center observed that in 2018 the Jordan Food and Drug Administration closed 42

²⁹⁷According to the statistics of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration.

²⁹⁸According to the statistics of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration.

²⁹⁹It should be noted that the Jordan Food and Drug Administration refers pharmacists who do not comply with medicine prices to court in accordance with Article (88/a/8) of the Drug and Pharmacy Law No. (12) of 2013 and its amendments, and imposes "price difference fines" on violating establishments pursuant to paragraph (c) of Article (37) of the same Law, which provides as follows: "a. A pharmaceutical establishment is prohibited from violating the price of a medicine set by the Administration, and in the event of a change in the price of a medicine, the medicine warehouse shall change the new price labels within forty-five days from the date of the change. b. A pharmaceutical establishment shall submit the correct

pharmacies, out of approximately 3331 pharmacies operating in the Kingdom, after counterfeit, expired and smuggled medicines were seized in their possession. In addition, 4 pharmaceutical factories were suspended from production until they rectify their status, out of 24 factories operating in Jordan³⁰⁰.

In 2018, the Jordan Pharmacists Association received several complaints from its members indicating that pharmacies or hospitals were not complying with the minimum wage. This prompted the Pharmacists Association to prepare a memorandum, circulated to all institutions, companies and hospitals employing its members, calling on all pharmacists receiving less than the minimum wage for pharmacists, which amounts to 350 dinars for the private sector and 500 dinars for universities, to contact the Association so that it may identify the violating entities and address them directly. It should be noted that the number of pharmacists in Jordan amounts to 18 thousand male and female pharmacists, most of whom are female, while the number of pharmacies in the Kingdom is estimated at approximately 3331 pharmacies. This figure is among the highest ratios worldwide, where the ratio is one pharmacy per 8 thousand people, while the ratio in the Kingdom is one pharmacy per (2750) citizens³⁰¹.

In 2018, the Ministry of Health referred 42 medical establishments to the Attorney General, closed 200 other violating establishments, and issued 97 warnings to health establishments for failing to comply with the provisions of the Public Health Law and the instructions and regulations in force. It also effectively closed 3 health associations and recommended the dissolution of 8 others, according to the Director of the Directorate of Licensing and Health Professions at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Nasser Al-Khashman.

The Directorate of Licensing and Health Professions at the Ministry of Health received 103 complaints, centering on increases in the amount of medical bills, the absence of licenses for health establishments, failure to obtain practice permits for persons working in the health fields in accordance with the law, and the apprehension of migrant workers working in various Jordanian medical, pharmaceutical and laboratory sectors without obtaining a license to practice the profession in accordance with due process. They and the owners of those establishments were referred for legal action under the Public Health Law of 2008 and its amendments³⁰².

Universal Health Coverage:

The concept of universal health coverage means the coverage of the entire population by health services of adequate quality without causing them any financial hardship³⁰³. The following are the most prominent challenges hindering the attainment of the required universal health coverage: increasing demand for health services as a result of population growth; the epidemiological transition in Jordan, which means a decline in the prevalence rates of communicable diseases and a rise in the prevalence rates of non-communicable diseases; the influx of refugees, in addition to the expected rise in the proportion of the population, particularly among youth and older persons; the rising costs of health care in light of the current economic situation; in addition to inequity in access to health services and

information necessary for pricing the medicine in accordance with the pricing bases issued by the Administration. c. Without prejudice to the penalties prescribed under this Law, a pharmaceutical establishment violating the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Article shall pay the medicine price difference to the Administration, calculated on the basis of the difference between the violating price and the price set by the Administration during the period of the violation and for the quantity disposed of."

³⁰⁰ According to the statistics of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration.

³⁰¹ Jfra News website, 14 October 2018. Link: http://www.jfranews.com.jo/more-214914-1-dash_title

³⁰² Al-Ghad newspaper, 3 December 2018. Link: Al-Ghad newspaper <http://www.alghad.com/articles/2028382-إغلاق-200-مخالفة-طبية-مؤسسة>

³⁰³ For more information on universal health coverage, see the World Health Organization website at the following link: [https://www.who.int/ar/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-\(uhc\)](https://www.who.int/ar/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-(uhc)).

fragmentation, weak coordination among the components of the health sector, and deficiencies in the efficiency of the health system.

Among the challenges facing the implementation of universal health coverage is the absence of competent authorities responsible for issuing accurate statistics on insurance coverage in the Kingdom, which makes calculating the rate of duplication in health insurance and determining the numbers and characteristics of insured citizens a difficult matter that hampers the development of reform policies and decision-making for attaining comprehensive health insurance.

Cancer Patients:

The beginning of 2018 witnessed the issuance of a decision to stop the exemptions granted by the Prime Ministry to cancer patients. This led to escalating protests by cancer patients against the decision, as it deprived them of the medical exemptions that opened the way for them to receive treatment at the King Hussein Cancer Center.

The Friends of Cancer Patients Society met with the relevant authorities, namely: the Prime Ministry, the Minister of Health, and the Parliamentary Health Committee in the House of Representatives, with a view to seeking the cancellation of the decision issued on 10 January 2018, but to no avail. This led cancer patients to stage a sit-in at the Fourth Circle on 20 February 2018, which prompted the Government to respond to the protesters, exempt all patients and return them to continue their treatment at their previous places of treatment.

The Parliamentary Health and Environment Committee held a series of meetings, during which the deputies presented a number of issues and problems facing cancer patients in particular and the health sector in general, and submitted a set of proposals to reduce the problems facing the health sector in fighting cancer. Most notably, these included establishing clear bases and criteria for the process of exempting patients; establishing centers specialized in treating these diseases in all governorates of the Kingdom rather than limiting them to the King Hussein Cancer Center; and rehabilitating and developing the governmental Al-Bashir Hospital. They also proposed "imposing a special tax on tobacco to support cancer patients."

In June 2018, the Government decided to announce new procedures for dealing with cancer patients and to include all cancer patients under the umbrella of health insurance. Accordingly, every cancer patient in Jordan will obtain a special card enabling him/her to visit the nearest government hospital to undergo the necessary tests, and based on the results of the tests, the treatment providers are determined "in a manner that guarantees the dignity of the patient."

The treatment providers are:

The King Hussein Cancer Center, Jordan University Hospital, the Royal Medical Services, King Abdullah the Founder University Hospital, Al-Bashir Hospital, and the other government hospitals that have cancer treatment units. This is rejected by the members of the Cancer Patients Society and by the patients themselves, owing to the lack of readiness of some of these hospitals to provide treatment, in their view. This led the Society to intensify its efforts and launch the "Himmatna" (Our Resolve) campaign to fully rehabilitate the Oncology and Hematology Department at Al-Bashir Hospital, through the support of civil society organizations, national companies, businesspeople and individual donations from benevolent Jordanians, and to begin the rehabilitation of the department, for the sake of the right of cancer patients to a safe environment in accordance with internationally approved health standards in cancer treatment centers.

The National Center considers that the patient's right to treatment is not limited to the provision of treatment and its place only; rather, it must include the right to obtain quality service fairly and without any discrimination at any time, within the proper rules and with an integrated service chain, while

guaranteeing the quality of care in the environment and place where it is provided, and the patient's right to obtain a safe and high-quality health service.

On the other hand, the year 2018 witnessed important amendments to the Health Insurance Regulation No. (83) of 2004, pursuant to Article 31 of the Jordanian Constitution and based on the Council of Ministers' decision of 25 July 2018, by Regulation No. (94), to Article 21/d, which entered into force upon its publication in the Official Gazette. Most notably, it granted spouses who are both subscribed to health insurance the higher health insurance class. It is worth noting that under the provisions of the Regulation, the health insurance card is issued at the higher class for its period of validity in return for a fee of five dinars for each subscriber or beneficiary wishing to subscribe at the higher class. The card used to be renewed annually in return for five dinars per person; it was amended to become five dinars for the card's period of validity, in order to ease the burden on subscribers.

The year 2018 witnessed the discussion of the third national report of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism for human rights, in which Recommendation No. 6/86 called for "continuing its efforts to improve health coverage for the population," and Recommendation No. 6/87 called for "continuing efforts to improve the health care system in the country, especially for children."

Physicians' Fees:

On 16 August 2018, the Jordan Medical Association announced a new schedule of medical fees for 2018. In its schedule, the Association also set the fees for consultations, medical supervision consultations, and certain clinic procedures for some specialties.

Under the schedule, a general physician's consultation fee ranged between (8–12 Jordanian dinars, and a specialist physician's between 15–25 Jordanian dinars). The schedule included the bases for calculating physicians' fees and the names of the medical procedures for each specialty. Under the instructions, the medical procedures for each specialty were valued in two ways: the first covers consultation fees, consultations, medical supervision and certain clinic procedures for some specialties in Jordanian dinars; the second assigns points giving each procedure its weight, with the minimum value of a single point calculated at two dinars and eight hundred fils, and the maximum value of a single point at three dinars and five hundred fils. As soon as it was announced, a state of dissatisfaction and rejection prevailed among the Jordanian public, which prompted the Association to suspend its application pending its review. The National Center considers it necessary to take measures that would reduce, not raise, the cost of medical treatment for citizens.

The State of Health Services in Hospitals:

Despite the efforts made by the Ministry of Health to develop and improve the health and medical services provided to citizens, the NCHR team that visited hospitals³⁰⁴ and health centers in 2018 observed that some hospitals and health centers still suffer from a number of problems that hinder the achievement of their objectives. The Center reaffirms the observations made in previous reports, in addition to the following:

1. There is a shortage of nephrologists in most government hospitals.
2. There is a shortage of modern and essential medical equipment and supplies, such as modern endoscopy equipment, blood testing and analysis equipment, hormone testing devices, and X-ray film processing equipment.

³⁰⁴Visits were carried out to 26 hospitals, and the Ministry of Health was provided with detailed reports on the proceedings of these visits during the years 2016 and 2018.

3. There is a shortage of personnel working in hospitals, particularly nursing staff, pharmacy assistants and accountants.
4. Some hospital departments lack an isolation room, and where one is available in certain other departments, it lacks all the requirements for isolation.
5. There is a shortage in the number of incubators in the neonatal (premature) units of many government hospitals, such as the governmental Al-Bashir Hospital and Abu Ubaidah Hospital / Irbid Governorate, resulting in more than one infant being placed in the same incubator.
6. There is a shortage of oxygen devices and outlets in the neonatal units of many hospitals, resulting in infants taking turns to receive oxygen, except in emergency cases.
7. Lack of paramedics in accident and emergency departments, specifically in outlying hospitals.
8. Weak awareness and lack of knowledge among the nursing staff working in most outlying hospitals of the national goals, such as the prohibition of smoking inside the ward, the handover process between health care providers, and placing the identification bracelet on the patient's wrist.
9. Many hospitals, particularly outlying ones, do not receive cases requiring cardiac surgery and neurosurgery, owing to the lack of physicians and departments dedicated to them.
10. The existence of an exposed and unsafe distance in some hospitals between the delivery room and the neonatal unit, whereby the infant is transported from the delivery room through the companions' waiting area to the place where it is kept, particularly at the governmental Ramtha Hospital, the governmental Muath Bin Jabal Hospital, and Abu Ubaidah Hospital in Irbid Governorate.
11. A shortage of beds in accident and emergency departments, given the increasing number of patients visiting daily.
12. The dilapidated infrastructure of most government hospitals, such as Muath Bin Jabal Hospital, Abu Ubaidah Hospital, Al-Nadeem Hospital, and the governmental Ramtha Hospital.
13. Lack of qualified cleaning workers trained in cleaning and disinfection.
14. Disparities in the level of quality of services among hospitals.
15. Most hospitals lack the necessary cleanliness.

Recommendations:

In order to enable citizens to effectively enjoy the right to health and to provide the highest attainable standard of health, the Center reiterates its recommendations contained in its previous reports, in addition to the following:

1. The importance of converting the primary centers and sub-centers into comprehensive health centers, given their importance in detecting diseases at an early stage and their contribution to relieving pressure on hospitals.
2. Adopting the shift from the biological approach to the integrated bio-psycho-social approach for psychiatric patients, and moving towards establishing inpatient units and community mental health clinics in hospitals and health centers.
3. The Center considers it necessary to take deterrent measures to curb the phenomenon of assaults on medical staff and equipment.
4. The Center considers it important to continue focusing on effective inspection and oversight by the Ministry of Health and the Jordan Food and Drug Administration, to ensure that all food

establishments and factories and restaurants throughout the Kingdom comply with public health and safety requirements.

5. The need to take measures that would reduce the cost of medical treatment for citizens.
6. Adopting more effective measures and policies for screening expatriates to ensure that they are free of diseases, in addition to implementing the necessary health education campaigns.
7. Working to improve the type and quality of health services in accordance with international standards, as well as the infrastructure of hospitals, and ensuring fairness in the geographical distribution of health services, such as (human resources, medical devices and equipment, and expertise).
8. In light of the monitoring visits carried out by the team of the National Center for Human Rights and the detailed reports submitted to H.E. the Prime Minister, the Center hopes that the Government, represented by the Ministry of Health, will implement the recommendations contained in those reports, part of which the Center has included in this report.

6. The Right to a Healthy Environment

The Jordanian Constitution contains no provisions explicitly stipulating the right to a healthy environment, even though Jordan has ratified numerous international conventions that guarantee this right. The Environmental Protection Law No. (6) of 2017, together with the regulations and instructions issued thereunder, has also guaranteed this right.

First: National Legislation

Over recent decades, the legislative system for environmental protection in Jordan has evolved from a multitude of inconsistent provisions contained in various sectoral laws into an advanced system of integrated and harmonized legislation, based on national and global legislative development and responsive to scientific developments and the main environmental challenges in Jordan. This system has been distinguished by the Jordanian Government's adoption of a set of legal rules relating to the environment, the most important of which is the amending law to the new Environmental Protection Law No. (6) of 2017.

In 2018, the Ministry of Environment issued a number of laws, regulations and instructions, the most important of which is the Environmental Protection Administration Regulation No. (37) of 2018, which aims to define the tasks and duties of the Royal Department for Environmental Protection (the Environmental Police) technically and in a specialized manner, so as not to depart from the objectives and purposes for which it was established, and to regulate the relationship between the bodies concerned with the environment and the Royal Department for Environmental Protection, in order to avoid duplication and overlap in the powers and duties stipulated in the legislation in force.

The Environmental Protection Fund Regulation No. (18) of 2018 was issued with the aim of supporting projects and activities aimed at improving environmental conditions and achieving the sustainability of natural resources in Jordan, by providing financial support for projects implemented by the private sector and/or other entities seeking to achieve this objective, and enhancing and strengthening compliance with national environmental laws. Finally, the Instructions on the Selection of Sites for Development Activities of 2018 were issued and published in the Official Gazette on 16 April 2018.

Second: Policies and Practices

1. Waste Management:

There are currently 23 waste landfills in Jordan, including a hazardous waste landfill in the Swaqa area. Although there has been an improvement in the field of solid waste collection, with collection rates ranging between 70% and 90%, waste management in Jordan still lacks sound environmental procedures, as these landfills lack appropriate infrastructure, with the exception of the Al-Ghabawi landfill, which is managed by the Greater Amman Municipality. The Kingdom produces approximately 2.5 million tons of solid waste annually, the rate of municipal solid waste generation being 1 kilogram/day/person according to the National Solid Waste Management Strategy, in addition to 45 thousand tons of hazardous industrial waste, part of which is recycled, such as (used mineral oils and used lead-acid batteries).

In the field of waste management, the Jordanian integrated system for the management and control of hazardous materials was established; olive mill waste is disposed of through the construction of evaporation ponds in several areas; implementation of the national plan to combat flies in the Jordan Valley continued; the private sector was encouraged to establish stations for treating natural manure on farms; the operation of the hazardous waste treatment center was sustained; and waste resulting from emergencies was dealt with. A national-level policy was also developed to reduce and limit the use of plastic bags, an action plan was developed to improve the management of electronic and electrical waste in the Kingdom, and a set of studies was prepared showing the impact of pesticides on the environment.

Through monitoring many of these sites and interviewing many specialists, the National Center observed that there are challenges in the field of waste management, as follows:

- The limited and inefficient procedures followed in waste disposal.
- Losses in solid waste management in Jordan due to high costs that are not charged to the producers (households, commercial, industrial and agricultural facilities, etc.), with the loss being compensated from the State budget.
- Weak public interest in reducing the volume of waste, or recycling or reusing it, in accordance with the waste management hierarchy.
- Gaps in the solid waste management system, including the stages of sorting, recycling and final disposal.
- Low participation of the private sector in solid waste management.

2. Climate Change:

Jordan is experiencing multiple climate events, such as temperature fluctuations, dust storms and others, all of which contribute to economic, agricultural, environmental and water losses. This climate change also has repercussions on the agricultural sector and water resources, and it has become imperative to combine national efforts to address the phenomenon of climate change seriously. The National Center observed the preparation of a national policy to address the phenomenon of climate change and the approval of projects, including the Clean Development Mechanism project, through their approval by the National Committee for the Clean Development Mechanism, whereby 4 projects were registered with the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism. The (Monitoring, Reporting and Verification) project was also launched in order to record carbon emissions from the various sectors, the existing projects to reduce these emissions, and their sources of funding; a program for adaptation to the impacts of climate change on water resources was developed; preparation of the National Adaptation Plan on the impacts of climate change commenced, which will be completed during the coming year; in addition to the preparation of the Second National Communication Report under the Climate Change Convention.

3. Combating Pollution:

The Ministry of Environment implements monitoring programs to measure the concentrations of gaseous air pollutants and fine particulate matter suspended in the ambient air, as well as pollutant emissions from stationary sources, in the most polluted areas, by distributing monitoring stations across the Kingdom's major governorates, including the capital, Amman, which has six stations: the North Complex station in Tabarbour, the Greater Amman Municipality station, the Al-Mahatta station, the Wadi Al-Rimam–Yarmouk Park station, the Al-Hussein Gardens station, and the Industrial City–Sahab station. Each monitoring station contains devices measuring the concentrations of suspended dust particles, ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxides. In addition, the Ministry has begun implementing a project to monitor the environmental situation of waste landfills in the Kingdom (the landfills of Al-Ghabawi/Amman, Al-Ukaider/Irbid, and Al-Husainiyat/Mafraq), which includes monitoring groundwater, surface water and leachate, as well as the gases emitted from them.

The National Center for Human Rights considers that overcoming the problem of air pollution requires the following:

1. Developing public transport systems and encouraging citizens to use them, and spreading a culture of car sharing, whereby more than one person travels in a single car.
2. Rationalizing the consumption of electrical energy, which means reducing the amount of fossil fuel that must be burned to generate electricity.
3. Replacing fossil fuels with clean energy sources, such as solar energy, wind energy and geothermal energy.

The Environmental Situation in Practice

The Ministry of Environment, the Royal Department for Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Jordan Food and Drug Administration, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Greater Amman Municipality, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, the Natural Resources Authority, and the Water Authority work to monitor the environmental situation through the oversight tools they exercise, as follows:

- **Licenses:** In 2018, the Central Licensing Committee granted 1608 environmental licenses, compared with 1476 licenses in 2017. On the other hand, the Committee rejected 404 applications for licensing industrial, agricultural and craft projects and warehouses, compared with 339 applications for project licensing.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment and Audit Studies:** 48 environmental impact assessment studies were reviewed, distributed among service, industrial and agricultural projects, mining projects and power generation projects, and 5 environmental audit studies were reviewed for violating establishments, all of them industrial projects.
- **Environmental Violations:** In 2018, 156862 environmental violations were recorded, and fixed inspection points were set up at the five entrances to the Jordan Valley (Al-Aghwar) to prevent the entry of untreated organic manure, and 26 thousand tons of untreated organic manure were seized.
- **Complaints and Closures:** The number of environmental complaints in 2018 reached 533 complaints, the number of environmental closures 64, the number of field visits by the inspection directorates at the headquarters 433 visits, and the number of field visits by the environment directorates in the governorates 1392 visits.
- **Cases:** The number of environmental cases referred to the Attorney General in 2018 reached 553 cases. On another level, the National Center carried out many field visits to numerous sites in various governorates after receiving information about the deterioration of environmental conditions in many of them, some of which are presented as follows:
 - A team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a field visit to the Souf and Gaza camps in Jerash Governorate on 28 August 2018 to verify the accuracy of reports that the Souf and Gaza camps had turned into a public health nuisance, especially during the days of Eid Al-Adha. The visiting team found large quantities of waste in the alleys, on both sides of the roads and in the markets, which caused foul odors to be emitted in the area, in addition to the proliferation of flies and mosquitoes, creating an unhealthy situation for the residents, especially the children present in the streets, particularly as the municipal slaughterhouse is also considered an environmental disaster in the governorate and constitutes a public health nuisance due to the accumulation of slaughterhouse waste and the spread of stray dogs and insects.
 - On 11 October 2018, a team from the National Center carried out a monitoring visit to the solid waste landfill in Madaba Governorate and to livestock selling areas to monitor the environmental situation and the problems suffered by residents. The team's observations were as follows:
 - Scientific bases are not followed in the waste landfilling process, as waste is piled up in the form of mounds, which contributes to air and soil pollution.
 - Poor management and disposal of waste, as waste of all types (domestic, industrial, commercial and medical) is dumped in the open without treatment, leading to the proliferation of flies, harmful insects and rodents and the emission of foul gases harmful to the environment.
 - The spread of butchers' tents along the street in the livestock market located east of Madaba Governorate and close to residential neighborhoods, where livestock are slaughtered inside the butchers' tents and outside the municipal slaughterhouse without any oversight or supervision by the competent official authorities, and the remains and waste of slaughtered animals and dead livestock are disposed of on the roadside, causing a public health nuisance and contributing to the spread of stray dogs and harmful insects.

The National Center reiterates its recommendation that the waste landfill be relocated to another site far from residential communities, and that a mechanism be found for disposing of waste instead of landfilling or burning it, as this causes extensive environmental damage and pollution of groundwater and soil.

- A team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a visit to Karak Governorate on 11 October 2018 to monitor environmental problems and violations at the solid waste landfill. The team's observations were as follows:
- The accumulation of large quantities of waste in the form of large mounds and the emission of foul odors, in addition to nylon bags flying outside the landfill.
- The team observed a group of children under the age of ten inside the landfill collecting certain materials from within it for the purpose of selling them. When the landfill supervisor was asked about the presence of persons other than workers, he informed the team that a group of them were persons with criminal records who use the landfill as a hideout and refuge to escape the security services, which constitutes a health hazard to their lives in the absence of oversight.
- The presence of large numbers of stray dogs in the landfill, and birds feeding on the remains of waste, which contributes to the spread of diseases.
- A team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a monitoring visit to Tafileh Governorate on 12 October 2018, covering the Hamad bin Jazi Forest and the Ain Lahza site. These sites are considered tourist sites and a tourist destination, yet they lack services and suffer from weak attention to cleanliness by the competent official authorities, as waste accumulates on the roadsides, in addition to the spread of insects, rodents and stray dogs, turning them into a public health nuisance.
- A team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a visit to the Zarqa River (Sail Al-Zarqa) area on 29 August 2018 to determine the causes of environmental pollution. When a group of persons present near the Zarqa River were asked, they attributed the causes of pollution to the lack of oversight of sewage tankers and of industrial establishments that discharge factory waste into the water, owing to the absence of sewerage networks serving these factories.

On another level, the National Center for Human Rights met with the Health, Environment and Population Committee of the Senate in 2018. The meeting discussed pollution issues, including the suspension of water pumping from the Al-Mujib and Al-Haidan wells because of their exposure to pollution due to the seepage of wastewater into the water basin, owing to the lack of sewerage in the areas and towns surrounding the valley and the dumping of their loads by sewage tankers into the tributary valleys, not to mention the lack of safety of crops in the Zarqa River area, and food and drug oversight.

Recommendations:

In the Field of Waste Management:

1. Following scientific bases in the process of landfilling solid waste, in addition to working on the sorting of waste (domestic, industrial and commercial), and introducing a mechanism for tracking sewage tankers upon their entry and exit and the unloading of their loads at the wastewater treatment plant, as most tankers unload their loads haphazardly and without any oversight.
2. Involving the local community in making policies that affect the environment, in addition to holding courses and seminars to raise awareness of the dangers of environmental pollution and how to preserve the environment, both with owners of industrial and commercial establishments and with the local community.
3. Taking the social, economic and environmental dimensions into account in an integrated manner when drafting environmental legislation (repeated from 2017).
4. Establishing a comprehensive system for the management of hazardous industrial waste, in addition to establishing an efficient system for the management of medical waste in accordance with international standards.

In the Field of Combating Pollution:

1. Expanding the scope of monitoring of ambient air in all Jordanian cities by increasing the number of stations monitoring emissions from industries.

2. Preserving the quality of water in dams and the valleys leading to them so that it remains within the permissible limits, and limiting the access of all types of water pollutants to them in all their forms and sources.

In the Field of Climate Change:

1. Incorporating the concept of climate change, its impacts and its consequences when implementing any project.
2. Developing a legislative framework to regulate climate change action so as to maximize benefits and minimize impacts.
3. Building national institutional expertise in the field of climate change.

7. Cultural Rights

National legislation and international instruments guarantee cultural rights, foremost among them the Jordanian Constitution of 1952 and its amendments, which guarantees freedom of cultural creativity and freedom of scientific research. Article 15/2 thereof provides that: "The State shall guarantee freedom of scientific research and literary, artistic, cultural and sporting creativity, provided that it does not contravene the provisions of the law or public order and morals." This is likewise affirmed by Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)³⁰⁵. Jordan has also signed a number of conventions in the field of the protection of cultural rights³⁰⁶. Cultural rights include the right to take part in or contribute to cultural life, the protection of intellectual property, the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, freedom of scientific research, and creative activity.

The year 2018 witnessed the selection of the Jordanian Cities of Culture³⁰⁷, as the Ministry of Culture announced the selection of three districts from three regions to be the Jordanian Cities of Culture, namely: Al-Ramtha District for the Northern Region, Ain Al-Basha District for the Central Region, and Southern Ghor District for the Southern Region. It was noted that this year the Cities of Culture project moved from the governorate centers to the districts in line with the implementation of decentralization in the Kingdom, with the aim of bringing cultural activity to the districts and distributing the gains of cultural development outside the capital³⁰⁸.

The year 2018 also witnessed the implementation of numerous local cultural and artistic events by the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated culture directorates in the governorates, numbering (more than 1,784 events and activities), and in (the capital, Amman, more than 785 events and activities). These included the activities relating to the Jordanian Cities of Culture for 2018, which totaled 300 activities distributed equally among the three districts, and comprised conferences, forums, theatrical and artistic performances, various exhibitions, lectures, artistic and cultural evenings, courses, children's carnivals, camps, cultural days, national celebrations and others³⁰⁹. Among them was the Reading for All Festival / Twelfth Edition of 2018 (the Jordanian Family Library) held from 7 to 11 October 2018, which issued 178 thousand copies of 52 titles of books and stories on a variety of subjects³¹⁰.

The year 2018 also witnessed an increase in the number of cultural bodies registered with the Ministry, which reached 672 cultural bodies compared with 637 cultural bodies in 2017. Table No. (19) shows the number of bodies registered with the Ministry during 2018:

Table No. (19)

Governorate	Associations	Troupes	Forums and Gatherings	Centers, Leagues and Clubs	Total
The Capital	146	15	54	57 + 2 hosted bodies	274
Irbid	50	13	52	3	118
Zarqa	11	2	11	7	31
Mafrq	19	3	15	2	39

³⁰⁵There is also Article (15) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its General Comment No. (21), shed further light on the scope and content of this right.

³⁰⁶The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 2005, which Jordan ratified on 16 February 2007; the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003; and the Arab Convention for the Protection of Folklore of 2010.

³⁰⁷On 27 November 2018, Al-Rusaifa District was selected as a Jordanian City of Culture for 2019 at the level of Zarqa Governorate, to compete with the other districts of the Kingdom to be nominated at later stages.

³⁰⁸Al-Rai newspaper, 14 January 2018.

³⁰⁹Ministry of Culture, Mr. Osama Al-Kiswani, Director of the Secretary-General's Office, visit on 3 December 2018.

³¹⁰Ministry of Culture, Dr. Ahmad Ismail Rashed, Adviser to the Minister, visit on 3 December 2018.

Governorate	Associations	Troupes	Forums and Gatherings	Centers, Leagues and Clubs	Total
Karak	11	2	11	7	31
Ma'an	11	6	4	5	26
Aqaba	8	2	3	1	14
Balqa	11	5	16	3	35
Jerash	5	1	13	1	20
Madaba	1	1	15	3	20
Ajloun	13	2	23	5	43
Tafileh	8	4	9	—	21
Total	294	56	226	96	672

The Right to Take Part in or Contribute to Cultural Life

First: Tangible Cultural Heritage³¹¹:

The indicators of the tourism sector for 2018 show a marked increase in the total number of tourists arriving in the Kingdom, as the number of overnight tourists in 2018 reached 4,150,173 tourists compared with 3,843,533 tourists in 2017, an increase of 316,640 tourists³¹². The number of same-day visitors to the Kingdom in 2018 reached 771,996 tourists compared with 721,625 tourists in 2017, an increase of 50,371 tourists.

The year 2018 also witnessed the launch by the Ministry of Tourism of the National Strategy for the Development of the Tourism Sector for the years (2018–2022), the most prominent objectives of which are:

1. Providing numerous job opportunities for Jordanian youth, given that tourism is an industry based on the provision of services in various fields and in all regions and local communities.
2. Achieving local development in the communities hosting tourist sites, in a manner that enables these communities to be positively affected.
3. Offering promising investment opportunities.
4. Preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the Kingdom.
5. Stimulating domestic tourism in order to raise citizens' awareness and encourage them to get to know their country better.
6. Stimulating inbound international tourism to the Kingdom in order to improve its image in the world as an attractive tourist destination.

The challenges facing the tourism sector continued in 2018, including: the linkage of tourism performance in general to the political conditions in the region; the linkage of the operation of many tourist sites to the municipal sector, which needs technical and financial support; and the linkage of the development of the tourism product to numerous institutions, including the private sector, which makes it difficult to steer policies and decisions in the interest of the tourism sector; as well as the lack of feedback channels that would help facilitate decision-making in the processes of developing tourist sites and developing the Jordanian tourism product.

³¹¹Tangible cultural heritage includes sites, structures and remains of archaeological, historical, religious, cultural or aesthetic value, which fall directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism and the Department of Antiquities.

³¹²Visit to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Mr. Ataallah Al-Rahamneh, 28 January 2019.

Second: Intangible Cultural Heritage³¹³:

The budget of the Ministry of Culture for 2018 amounted to JOD 8,187,000 compared with JOD 9,072,000 for 2017, a decrease of JOD 885,000³¹⁴.

Under its publishing program, the Ministry issued 90 books, namely: 16 books for the Cities of Culture, 50 books with partial support, 18 published books, and 6 creative sabbatical (full-time creative work) books³¹⁵.

The challenges facing Jordanian artists that were referred to in the Center's previous reports continued in 2018, most notably: the limited participation of the private sector and capital in the television industry; the low material and moral return for the Jordanian artist; the deprivation of artists of professional stability as a result of weak production; in addition to the lack of adequate health insurance and the limited financial support provided to cultural bodies³¹⁶.

The Right to Benefit from Scientific Progress and Its Applications:

The content of the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications includes enabling everyone, without discrimination, to benefit from the advantages of science, providing opportunities for everyone to contribute to scientific projects, and the freedom necessary for scientific research, creativity and innovation.

The problems afflicting the scientific research sector continued in 2018, the most important of which are:

1. The absence of joint postgraduate programs with distinguished and prestigious international scientific institutions.
2. The absence of a culture of scientific research and a culture of innovation and creativity among the majority of members of society and university and school students. This was clearly reflected in the low number of research papers published in peer-reviewed journals, which reached 298 papers in 2018 compared with 305 in 2017.
3. The financial claims of the Fund against the universities, which by the end of 2018 amounted to approximately JOD 8.8 million, whereas at the end of 2017 they amounted to approximately JOD 10 million from public universities and JOD 5 million from private universities, owing to the failure to disburse those financial dues on scientific research and scholarships during past years.
4. Scientific research has been, and continues to be, driven by the need of university faculty members for promotion; once a faculty member reaches the rank of full professor, all of his research endeavors cease.
5. The emigration of competent researchers to societies in which their living and research needs are met, owing to the low financial return.
6. The financial problems afflicting scientific research, such as low expenditure. It is noted that there is a clear shortfall in the funding of this important area, as expenditure on scientific research in 2017 amounted to 19% of the total actual expenditure for the period from 2008 to 2017, approximately JOD 41.3 million, in addition to the weak participation of the private sector in funding scientific

³¹³Intangible cultural heritage includes traditions, customs, spiritual beliefs, vernacular languages, forms of artistic expression and folklore, and falls directly within the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.

³¹⁴General Budget Law for the Fiscal Year 2018, Chapter ???, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

³¹⁵Ministry of Culture, Mr. Mukhled Barakat, Director of the Studies and Publishing Directorate, visit on 3 December 2018.

³¹⁶For more information, see: the National Center for Human Rights Report for 2017.

research. This reflects low confidence in the value of scientific research, which calls for an industrial policy that supports and encourages scientific research.

7. The Director of the Scientific Research Fund indicated that the number of faculty members in national universities is approximately 12 thousand, and although this number is considered relatively acceptable in Jordan, their scientific output is low compared with global output³¹⁷.
8. In the scientific research records, Jordan ranked 79th globally and 9th in the Arab world with regard to the innovation indicator, which signifies a clear decline in the level of scientific research and innovation in Jordan³¹⁸.

With regard to the possibility of accessing information and scientific works, there is a good number of libraries in Jordan: the number of public libraries reached 107 libraries, including the libraries affiliated with the Greater Amman Municipality and the municipalities in the governorates of the Kingdom and the Shoman Library, in addition to 422 school libraries and no fewer than 15 libraries in the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers throughout the Kingdom, as well as the libraries affiliated with public and private universities.

As for guaranteeing access to information and communications technology and the rate of internet use, thereby strengthening the right to benefit from scientific progress and opportunities to obtain information, it should be noted that the information technology policies adopted by the Government in past years have contributed to creating an enabling environment. The year 2018 witnessed an increase in the internet user base, which expanded to include approximately 6.6 million users, raising the penetration rate to 65.7% relative to the population³¹⁹.

Third: Intellectual Property Rights³²⁰.

The number of works registered with the National Library Department in 2018 reached 6,239 works, a decrease of 331 works from 2017, which witnessed the registration of 6,570 works, while only 2,477 works were actually deposited with the National Library³²¹. The number of cases referred to the competent courts relating to infringement of copyright reached 126 cases, referred to the competent courts from various regions of the Kingdom, a decrease of 48 cases from 2017, which witnessed the referral of 174 cases. These included the confiscation of more than half a million pirated works, most of them involving (decryption cases, counterfeit works, and books); accordingly, the piracy rate for 2018 stood at 45%³²².

Recommendations:

1. The need to convene a national conference on culture with the participation of all concerned stakeholders, for the purpose of unifying the efforts and views that ensure the development of cultural rights in all their dimensions.
2. The need to work towards establishing a cultural development fund, to ensure the availability of financial support for cultural projects at any time.

³¹⁷ During an interview with the Director of the Scientific Research Fund, Dr. Abeer Al-Bawwab, on 30 April 2018.

³¹⁸ Ammon News Agency, 27 January 2019.

³¹⁹ Al-Ghad (Jordan), 1 December 2018.

³²⁰ The Kingdom is a member of a number of international conventions, including: the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, the WIPO Copyright Treaty, and the Arab Convention for the Protection of Copyright and Neighboring Rights.

³²¹ National Library Department / Deposit Section / Ms. Aida Al-Da'jah / visit on 30 January 2019.

³²² National Library Department / Head of the Copyright Section – Mr. Ahmad Al-Khalayleh / visit on 30 January 2019.

3. Introducing amendments to the Culture Promotion Law and the regulations issued thereunder, so as to ensure the expansion of freedom of scientific research and literary, artistic, cultural and sporting creativity.
4. Developing instructions on the use of archaeological sites by citizens in order to regulate activities within archaeological sites.
5. Restoring and maintaining archaeological sites and making them accessible to persons with disabilities.
6. Promoting the principle of innovation and creativity in applied research and increasing the budgets allocated to scientific research, particularly in the governorates.
7. Providing professional stability and adequate health insurance for Jordanian artists.
8. Establishing a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture to foster a love of reading among students, by developing school libraries and encouraging students to frequent them, particularly in remote areas.

Third: Rights of the Most Vulnerable Groups and Their Need for Protection

1. Women's Rights

The Jordanian Constitution guarantees the principle of equality among all Jordanians, as Article 6 thereof provides: "Jordanians shall be equal before the law, with no discrimination between them in rights and duties, even if they differ in race, language or religion." The same Article provides: "The family is the basis of society, founded on religion, morals and love of the homeland; the law shall preserve its legitimate entity and strengthen its bonds and values; and the law shall protect motherhood, childhood and old age, care for young people and persons with disabilities, and protect them from abuse and exploitation." Article 23 of the Constitution also refers to the necessity of specifying special conditions for the employment of women and juveniles.

On another level, the Government published the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the Official Gazette on 1 August 2007, whereby it became part of the body of national legislation. However, as of the date of preparation of this report, Jordan still maintains its reservations to Articles (9/2, and 16/c, d and g) of the Convention, despite the recommendation made to the Government in 2017 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to withdraw its reservations to the Convention upon the consideration of its sixth periodic report on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention³²³.

The Committee stated that Jordan must submit, within two years of the date of the Committee's recommendations, written information on the steps it has taken to implement the recommendations relating to activating the role of the Jordanian National Commission for Women by opening branches in the governorates, as well as amending the discriminatory provisions of the Penal Code and amending the Crime Prevention Law. The Government is expected to submit its report on the implementation of these recommendations in 2019. It is worth mentioning that Jordan's seventh report is due in February 2021.

On another note, a decision of the Prime Minister was issued on 3 October 2018 forming a committee chaired by the Minister of Justice to analyze the body of international human rights conventions, compare them with the provisions of national law, and determine the extent of the need to intervene by way of amendment, change or the enactment of laws in line with the requirements of international conventions³²⁴.

- The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) submitted its report on the Universal Periodic Review of human rights in 2018, through which it monitors the extent of implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Jordanian Government upon the adoption of the recommendations of the second Universal Periodic Review report on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The report showed that Jordan had accepted recommendations Nos. (118/5, 9, 15, 19, 22, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 45, 48, 55, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93) relating to women's rights and calling for the amendment of certain laws, the protection of women from violence, and the strengthening of their rights and their role in participation in public and political life, etc. Article 308 of the Penal Code was repealed; however, Article 10/b of the Personal Status Law of 2010 still permits early marriage, no amendment has been made to the Nationality Law to allow women to confer their nationality on their

³²³For more information on the observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the sixth periodic report, please see the link:

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=ar&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=5

³²⁴The Committee's membership includes: the Commissioner General for Human Rights; the Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs; the Minister of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places; the Minister of State for Legal Affairs; the President of the Legislation and Opinion Bureau; the Government Coordinator for Human Rights; the Secretary-General of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD); the Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women; the Secretary-General of the National Council for Family Affairs; the President of the Jordan Bar Association; a representative of the judicial authority; and a representative of the legislative authority.
<http://www.pm.gov.jo/content/1448363383/الإنسان-لحقوق-الحكومي-التنسيق>

children on an equal footing with men, and rural women have not received increased attention with regard to access to health and educational services. On the other hand, the women's quota in the House of Representatives was increased. The report made a set of recommendations, including:

1. Increasing women's participation in decision-making positions, improving the services provided to rural women, and spreading and promoting awareness of women's rights.
2. Amending national legislation in line with international human rights obligations and within a gender-equality-sensitive approach, including the Penal Code and its amendments, the Personal Status Law, the Labor Law and the Nationality Law.
3. Ratifying the Optional "Protocol" to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; amending the Temporary Personal Status Law No. (36) of 2010, in particular repealing paragraph (b) of Article 10 relating to early marriage; and activating the alimony advance system in all governorates of the Kingdom.

The Government submitted its Universal Periodic Review report and discussed it on 8 November 2018 before the Human Rights Council in Geneva³²⁵, where the Government accepted 149 recommendations and implicitly did not accept 76 of them. Among the recommendations relating to women that the Government rejected were: Jordan's accession to the Optional "Protocol" to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the repeal of Article 10/b of the Temporary Personal Status Law No. (36) of 2010 relating to early marriage and the exceptions permitting it. It likewise did not agree to repeal Article 340 of the Penal Code, and refused to lift the reservation to Article 9/2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women relating to women conferring their nationality on their children.

On the Legislative Front:

The year 2018 witnessed certain amendments to national legislation affecting women's rights, including:

1. Law No. (34) of 2018 Amending the Civil Retirement Law.

The NCHR commends the Government's responsiveness in issuing the Civil Retirement Law in Official Gazette No. 5535 dated 1 October 2018, taking into account the Center's observations set out in its previous reports³²⁶.

2. "Amended Instructions to the Instructions for the Implementation of the Council of Ministers' Decision on Granting Facilities to the Children of Jordanian Women Married to Non-Jordanians of 2018".

The National Center for Human Rights commends the Government's efforts in issuing the instructions in Official Gazette No. 5531 dated 17 September 2018, which include the abolition of the requirement that the Jordanian mother have permanent residence in the Kingdom for a period of no less than five

³²⁵For more information, please see the website:

<http://www.pm.gov.jo/content/1448363383/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86.html>

³²⁶Available on the Center's website: www.nchr.org.jo. Article (31) was amended to read: "The following persons shall be considered members of the family of a deceased employee or retiree who are entitled to the retirement salary, gratuity or compensation under the provisions of this Law: a. the husband / the wife or wives; b) sons who have not completed eighteen years of age; c) unmarried, widowed or divorced daughters; d) the mother and father." Likewise, in Article 33 the phrase "and upon their remarriage the salary shall be permanently discontinued" was deleted; and Article 34 was repealed, which provided: "The retirement salary of a female employee who has acquired a retirement salary for her service shall not be discontinued in the event of her marriage, and if she dies her salary shall pass to those entitled to it in accordance with the provisions of this Law if their need is proven and it is also proven that the female employee was directly responsible for supporting them."

years in order to benefit from the facilities provided to the children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians.

On 10 September 2018, the Council of Ministers decided that the card issued to the children of Jordanian women by the Civil Status and Passports Department for the purpose of benefiting from these facilities shall be deemed a personal identity card ("proof of identity").

3. Flexible Work Instructions of 2018.

The Flexible Work Instructions of 2018 were issued in Official Gazette No. 5509 dated 1 April 2018, providing that every employer who employs 10 or more workers and applies the flexible work system shall amend the internal regulations governing work in his establishment to include the forms of flexible work applied in the establishment, the categories of workers to whom flexible work applies within the establishment, weekly rest days and annual leave, in a manner consistent with the flexible employment contract, and to include the procedures for converting a permanent employment contract into a flexible one or vice versa. Article 4 provides that the employer may refuse a request to convert the original employment contract of any worker into the flexible work category in the establishment only if his decision is based on one of the following reasons:

- If converting the nature of the contract would entail additional financial costs for the employer.
- If this would have a negative effect on the quality of work and the worker's performance.
- If the nature of the worker's job requires his daily presence at the workplace within normal working hours.

It is worth noting that the regulation was issued and published in the Official Gazette, and it defined the forms of flexible work, including part-time work and work within flexible hours in a manner commensurate with the worker's needs. The provisions of this regulation do not affect any of the rights granted to the worker under the Labor Law. This regulation primarily serves women, as it defined the categories it covers as workers who have served with the employer for three consecutive years and workers with family responsibilities, namely: women, pregnant women, or women caring for their children. Despite the positive nature of this regulation, it is unconstitutional, as the Government issued it without a legal basis, which constitutes a constitutional violation. It is also criticized in that its provisions apply only if the employer wishes to apply it, in addition to its requirement that the worker have completed three years of service with the employer in order to benefit from its provisions. The National Center for Human Rights recommends the adoption of the draft law amending the Labor Law and the inclusion of a provision on flexible work.

This is in order to give effect to the rights of working women, whose conditions the National Center for Human Rights has monitored, and it found the following:

- Insufficient provision of nurseries in the work environment.
- Women's limited awareness of their economic rights.
- Women's low wages in the private sector.
- Refusal to employ pregnant women and women with disabilities.
- Weak application of the legal provision granting women maternity leave and a nursing hour.
- Weak monitoring and supervision of workplaces in the private sector to curb violations of women's rights.
- Women's suffering from the dual burden of reproductive and productive roles.

4. Instructions on Shelters for Women at Risk of 2018.

The National Center for Human Rights commends the issuance of the Instructions on Shelters for Women at Risk in Official Gazette No. 5517 dated 31 May 2018³²⁷, issued pursuant to Article 20 of the Regulation on Shelters for Women at Risk No. (171) of 2016. The instructions provide that any woman shall be considered at risk if the following two conditions apply to her:

- That her life is threatened with killing by a member of her family.
- The absence of a person capable of protecting her.

Article 4 provides that the following are required for a beneficiary to be admitted to the shelter:

- A preliminary social study by the Family Protection Department, or adequate explanations of the reason for referring the beneficiary to the shelter.
- A preliminary medical report explaining the health condition of the beneficiary before her admission to the shelter.
- Medical reports explaining the psychological and mental condition of the beneficiary, if any. The beneficiary's period of stay is six months, extendable as circumstances require.

Article (8) provides that the shelter shall receive a child accompanying his mother under the following conditions:

- That the child's age does not exceed 6 years.
- That the child is free of communicable and infectious diseases.
- The written consent of the beneficiary mother to the child's admission to the shelter.
- That the mother is psychologically and mentally capable (qualified) of caring for her child, as attested by a medical report.

The year 2018 also witnessed some positive developments in support of women's rights, the most important of which were:

- Raising the share of women in the Council of Ministers to 25% in the Government of Dr. Omar Al-Razzaz, after the proportion of women's representation in the Council of Ministers in the second Government of Hani Al-Mulki had been 6.6%.
- The appointment of the first Jordanian woman to head the Judicial Institute of Jordan in October 2018. The proportion of women's participation in the judiciary also rose in 2018 to 20%, whereas in 2017 there were 181 female judges out of 953 male and female judges, a proportion of 18.9%, and in 2016 there were 178 female judges out of 974 male and female judges, a proportion of 18.2%.
- Women won 8 of the local council seats and 12 seats by acclamation in the municipal councils and governorate councils in the elections held in Al-Muwaqqar District on 20 October 2018, as a re-run of the previous elections for the 13 local council seats of Al-Muwaqqar Municipality, the governorate council seats in the two constituencies of the capital, Amman (28 and 29), and the seat of the mayor.
- Jordanian women retained their seats on the council of the Agricultural Engineers Association, whose elections were held in March 2018, where women won two seats on the association's council, as was the case in the previous council; and two of the seats on the council of the Jordan Nurses and Midwives Council (Association), which consists of ten seats, for the midwifery category, in the elections of the nurses' association council held on Friday, 20 April 2018, where 36 candidates stood for election, among them only six women.
- The National Center for Human Rights commends the opening of the "Amna" shelter for women at risk, which was inaugurated on 31 July 2018 and commenced its work in September 2018. In the same year it received 23 women who had been detained in the Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, six of whom have left after the completion of the necessary intervention plans and the elimination of the risk factors, in cooperation with the Family Protection Department and the Ministry of Interior.
- The commencement of the implementation of the National Action Plan for the activation of Resolution 1325 on the role of women in peacekeeping and ending conflicts. The National

³²⁷The National Center for Human Rights contributed to the preparation of the instructions through its membership of the committee.

Center for Human Rights took part in the coalition formed by the Jordanian National Commission for Women to prepare this plan, which included four main objectives: responding to gender needs and the effective participation of women in the security and military sectors and peacekeeping missions; achieving their participation in countering extremism and violence and peacebuilding; providing psychological, social, legal and medical services; and creating a societal culture supportive of gender needs, gender equality and the role of women in achieving security and peace. Its implementation came after the Council of Ministers adopted the plan in December 2017.

- The commencement of the implementation of the Instructions No. (1) of 2017 on Granting Permission to Marry to Persons who Have Completed Fifteen Solar Years of Age and Have Not Completed Eighteen³²⁸. The instructions tightened the matter of approving early marriage, requiring the court to verify that the marriage will not be a cause of discontinuing education and that the suitor is not already married, and requiring the court to inform the fiancée of her right to stipulate any condition that serves her interest and to have it included in the contract. Article 8 thereof also provides that the prospective spouses must produce a certificate proving that they have completed the pre-marriage course organized by the Department, and that the court shall refer marriage applications for persons under eighteen years of age to the Family Reconciliation and Mediation Office for its opinion.
- The instructions also require, for approval of the marriage of a male who has not completed eighteen years of age, that he produce to the court the approval of the Minors' Affairs Section of the Chief Justice Department. Despite the strictness in granting permission to marry to persons under eighteen years of age, the Center considers it necessary to repeal paragraph (b of Article 10) of the Personal Status Law, which permitted the marriage of persons who have completed fifteen years of age and have not completed eighteen years of age, given the adverse health and psychological effects of early marriage on the child, in addition to depriving the child of his or her rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

On the other hand, the National Center for Human Rights observed certain shortcomings affecting women's right to participate in public life, the most important of which are:

1. Several elections for professional association councils were held in 2018. The National Center for Human Rights observed that no woman reached the council of the Jordan Engineers Association, whose elections were held in May 2018; the same was true of the councils of the Jordan Artists Association and the Jordanian Construction Contractors Association, whose elections were held in March and April of the same year. Women did not run as candidates for the Amman Chamber of Industry, whose elections were held on 10 November 2018, and the National Center for Human Rights has observed that women have not run as candidates for the Amman Chamber of Industry since 2009.
2. No woman has been appointed as a marriage registrar (ma'dhun) in the Sharia courts, despite the existence of women qualified to do so and society's need for this.
3. The National Center for Human Rights continues to reiterate its observations set out in its previous reports concerning Jordan's failure to ratify the Optional "Protocol" to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the failure to appoint any woman to the Constitutional Court, the Sharia Court and the General Iftaa' Department; and the failure to amend the Civil Service Regulation to provide for the mandatory provision of nurseries for the children of female employees and for the family allowance to be paid to female employees on the same terms as it is paid to male employees. Moreover, erroneous customs and traditions still at times prevent women from enjoying their rights, particularly in the field of inheritance; women's ignorance of the laws and procedures, and their fear of being ostracized by their families or of being subjected to various forms of violence, often lead them to refrain from claiming their share of the inheritance.

³²⁸The instructions were issued pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (b) of Article 10 of the Personal Status Law No. (36) of 2010, whereby the previous instructions were repealed.

Situation of Women in Remote Areas:

The National Center for Human Rights follows up on the situation of women in remote areas deprived of services. The Center's previous reports referred to the challenges and violations to which women in villages are subjected³²⁹. The Center made a number of recommendations, including urging the Government and the concerned authorities to improve the level of services in municipalities, villages and elsewhere, so as to ensure the promotion of local development and raise the economic standard of their inhabitants. In light of the Center's follow-up of remote areas, we find that the challenges hindering women's enjoyment of their rights mentioned in previous reports still persist, and that any improvement, if it exists, is very slow. The Government has attributed this to the fact that, in light of the application of the provisions of the Decentralization Law, setting development priorities and identifying projects have become the prerogative of the elected governorate councils, starting with the 2018 budget.

Violence against Women:

Through its hotline, the National Center for Human Rights has observed that women are subjected to all forms of violence, whether inside or outside the home, and it has become apparent that societal culture and erroneous customs, traditions and social inheritances prevent women from disclosing their identities when reporting the cases of violence to which they are subjected.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women issued a study on the phenomenon of harassment in Jordan, which was conducted on a sample of 1,366 persons (86% female and 14% male), of whom 322 were allocated to a purposive sample of perpetrators of harassment. The study showed the percentage of members of the study sample, aged 15 years and over, who had been subjected to one or more acts and behaviors of the various types of harassment throughout their lives.

Type of Harassment	Subjected	Not Subjected
Electronic harassment	80.8%	19.2%
Psychological harassment	52.3%	47.7%
Physical harassment	68.7%	31.3%
Verbal harassment	88.4%	11.6%
Gestural harassment	89.1%	10.9%

The study concluded with the adoption of a national public policy and/or a comprehensive national strategy to combat sexual harassment, to be formulated jointly by all relevant governmental and national bodies and institutions and civil society organizations, horizontally and vertically, alongside the media, and the development of executive plans and programs for it, taking into account prevention, protection and response.

Through its legislative monitoring of the concept of sexual harassment in the Penal Code, the National Center for Human Rights considers that it is not defined, but is instead punished under the name of an act contrary to public decency under the provisions of Articles (305, 306, 320). The National Center hopes that the Penal Code will be amended so as to define the concept of sexual harassment in order to remove the confusion and ambiguity between the concepts of harassment and an act contrary to public decency.

On another note, the figures and statistics issued by the Family Protection Department of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) indicate that crimes of violence against women from 2014 to 2018 were as shown in Table No. (20), which shows the number of cases against women and the number of female victims.

³²⁹For more information, please refer to the reports on the state of human rights in Jordan for previous years on the website www.nchr.org.jo

Table No. (20)

Year	Type of Assault	Number of Cases against Females	Overall Total of Female Victims
2014	Sexual assaults	717	725
2014	Physical assaults	1557	1557
2015	Sexual assaults	757	790
2015	Physical assaults	1865	1873
2016	Sexual assaults	936	945
2016	Physical assaults	2192	2194
2017	Sexual assaults	994	1159
2017	Physical assaults	2171	2202
2018	Sexual assaults	1156	1186
2018	Physical assaults	2545	2583
Total		14890	15214

The table shows an increase in the reporting of cases of violence against women as a result of awareness programs on women's rights and their protection from violence, and the existence of Family Protection Department sections in the governorates of the Kingdom. However, there are still cases of violence against women that are not reported because of erroneous customs, traditions and societal culture, and for fear of the consequences, particularly where the violence is domestic.

Recommendations:

To promote and protect women's rights, the National Center recommends taking a set of legal and practical measures that were mentioned in previous reports, in addition to the following recommendations:

1. Empowering women economically and socially, providing them with job opportunities and developing their skills in line with the labor market's needs for manpower, particularly in remote areas.
2. Cooperation among all concerned bodies to confront violence against women through various legal, social, cultural and educational tools and means.
3. Giving special attention to women in marginalized areas and introducing gender-responsive budgets.
4. Adopting further temporary special measures, including the adoption of a quota system and preferential treatment to promote the integration of women in education and the economy, and continuing to provide incentives to promote and employ women in the private sector.
5. Developing a national plan to ensure an increase in women's participation in the management of public affairs by raising the women's quota in the House of Representatives, increasing their representation in senior leadership positions in the State, and considering the possibility of amending the laws of labor unions and professional associations so as to explicitly provide for seats reserved for women on association councils.
6. Amending national legislation in line with international human rights obligations and within a gender-equality-sensitive approach, including the Penal Code, the Personal Status Law, the Labor Law, the Nationality Law and others.
7. Adopting the draft law amending the Labor Law.
8. Urging the Government and the concerned authorities to work to improve the level of services in municipalities, villages and elsewhere, so as to ensure the promotion of local development and raise

the economic standard of their inhabitants, which will be reflected positively in women's enjoyment of their rights.

2. Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Jordanian Constitution, in Article 6 thereof, guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities and the protection of their dignity from abuse and exploitation³³⁰. Jordan has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). For the further protection of their rights, there is a need to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRPD, as emphasized by the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) in its previous reports³³¹.

The Government submitted the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report and discussed it before the Human Rights Council in 2018³³². The report indicated that Jordan accepted recommendations Nos. (7, 36, 19, 11, 111, 115, 110, 112, 113). The Council's recommendations relating to the rights of persons with disabilities in the UPR centered on developing or improving national strategies, as follows:

1. Developing or improving national strategies.
2. Technical support for the implementation of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities³³³.
This is consistent with the recommendations of the NCHR in its 2017 report³³⁴. The NCHR also submitted its parallel report on the Universal Periodic Review of human rights in 2018³³⁵, in which it referred to the issuance of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017 and the development of the strategic plan for the period 2017–2021 to develop services in the voluntary sector for persons with disabilities; the poor availability of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in both the public and private sectors; and the deprivation of women with disabilities of their rights, such as the right to education, communication with the outside world, and their right to marry.

The Center recommended the adoption of the regulations necessary to implement the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2017, and the taking of measures to ensure the employment of persons with disabilities, particularly women, on the basis of equal opportunity, equality and non-discrimination, and the implementation of inclusive policies for persons with disabilities in the education sector, participation in political and public life, and the provision of environmental facilities, reasonable accommodation and accessibility for persons with disabilities in all sectors³³⁶.

A Royal Decree was also issued approving the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled of 2018³³⁷. The Treaty aims to make documents and artistic and cultural publications accessible to blind persons in a format suited to their needs, by converting them into Braille and enlarging them for persons with severe low vision.

³³⁰Article (6/5) of the Jordanian Constitution provides that: "The law shall protect motherhood, childhood and old age, shall care for young people and persons with disabilities, and shall protect them from abuse and exploitation."

³³¹See the Report on the State of Human Rights for 2012 and 2013.

³³²For more information, please see the link: <http://www.pm.gov.jo/content/153725601>

³³³UPR recommendations to Jordan from Turkmenistan (6.33), the recommendation of the Sultanate of Oman (6.50), and China (6.118).

³³⁴The Fourteenth Report, p. 219, second recommendation: adopting regulations to implement the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20/2017. The recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have been published so that all relevant authorities, in particular the ministries, Parliament and the judiciary, may implement them, noting that Jordan's due date for submitting its second report is April 2021.

³³⁵See the website www.nchr.org.jo

³³⁶For more information, please see the Center's website www.nchr.org.jo

³³⁷Published in Official Gazette No. 5503 dated 1 March 2018; adopted at the international conference on 27 June 2013.

Although the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017³³⁸ has been issued, the regulations necessary to implement all of the provisions of this Law have not yet been issued, as required under Article 51 thereof. However, the following instructions have been issued:

- Instructions of the Equal Opportunities Committee at the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) No. 2 of 2018³³⁹.
- Instructions for Licensing Early Intervention Centers for Children with Disabilities of 2019³⁴⁰.
- Furthermore, the Income Tax Deduction Instructions No. 2 of 2019 were issued, Article 9 of which provides that: "An amount of JD 2,000 of the taxpayer's income shall be exempted for each person with a continuous and permanent disability, whether the taxpayer himself, his spouse or his dependent children, who holds the identification card issued under the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in force, provided that a written letter issued by the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is produced proving that he is a person with a continuous and permanent disability during the relevant tax period."
- The NCHR considers it necessary to raise the amount exempted from the income of a taxpayer who has persons with continuous and permanent disabilities.
- The Government issued the Flexible Work Regulation³⁴¹ and the Flexible Work Instructions³⁴², which set out the forms of flexible work, including part-time work and work within flexible hours in a manner consistent with the worker's needs. Despite the positive nature of this Regulation, there are problems and shortcomings in it, in that:
 - The Government issued it without a legal basis, which constitutes a constitutional violation.
 - Its provisions apply only if the employer wishes to apply them, and it stipulates that the worker must have completed three years of service with the employer in order to benefit from its provisions.
 - Article 3 thereof applies to a worker who is responsible for supporting a person with a disability, but does not apply to a worker with a disability himself, which affects the exercise by male or female workers with disabilities of their right to work.
- The NCHR monitored developments in policies relating to the rights of persons with disabilities and developed monitoring follow-up tools by setting sustainable development indicators for the rights of persons with disabilities, starting with defining their attributes³⁴³, and observed the following:

Indicators of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Social Inclusion

- The Ministry of Social Development developed a comprehensive national plan for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their families, including solutions and alternatives, with the participation of the NCHR, in implementation of the content of Article 27/C/1-2 of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20 of 2017³⁴⁴. It issued a decision prohibiting the

³³⁸Published in the Official Gazette: Issue 3710, dated 9 May 2017.

³³⁹Published in Official Gazette Issue 5555 dated 16 January 2019. The Committee assumes the functions and powers provided for in Article 14 of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee adopts a complaint form, which may be submitted by e-mail, through the Council's website, at the Council's public service office or at the Council's liaison offices, and the Committee examines it.

³⁴⁰Issued under Article (29/7) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Early intervention is defined as the set of services and programs provided by the early intervention center to children with disabilities of all categories and degrees of disability under the age of (6) years and to their families. Article 3 sets out the building requirements, namely that the entrance be away from main roads, that there be a separate room for the psychologist and a separate room for the administration, and that the building be modern, environmentally safe and away from health hazards, flammable materials, noise and the like. The instructions set out the procedures for benefiting from the services and the conditions for the center's staff.

³⁴¹Regulation No. (22/2017) issued under Article (140) of the Labor Law No. 8/1996, published in the Official Gazette, p. 1924.

³⁴²Instructions issued under Article (13) of the Flexible Work Regulation, published in the Official Gazette, p. 5509, dated 1 April 2018.

³⁴³The monitoring tools were developed by setting indicators according to the following scale from 1 to 5: weak, average, good, very good, excellent.

³⁴⁴Letter from the Ministry of Social Development to the National Center for Human Rights, No. T Kh/20/135, dated 4 January 2018.

registration of any residential (shelter) center for persons with disabilities, in addition to prohibiting the registration of any person with a disability in residential centers.

- The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities formed the Equal Opportunities Committee, of which the NCHR is a member, in implementation of the provisions of Article 14 of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee undertook to receive complaints relating to discrimination on the basis of or by reason of disability in the field of employment, to verify them and to settle them with the relevant authorities. The number of complaints followed up by the Committee this year reached 12 complaints, which is a good indicator of the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities to equal opportunities in accordance with international standards.

Indicators of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Inclusion in Education

The number of students with disabilities in government schools reached approximately 23,000 male and female students with various disabilities³⁴⁵.

Availability of an Inclusive Educational Environment

There are 13 schools in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, distributed across the governorates of the Kingdom, for the education of children with visual and hearing disabilities from kindergarten to the General Secondary level. The Ministry of Education is currently developing a ten-year plan comprising nine pillars for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in education, relating to the following topics: awareness, legislation, rehabilitation, training programs, school equipment, environmental facilities, and others, to be implemented over ten years. It is also developing a five-year plan with UNESCO that includes support for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in education³⁴⁶. Students with disabilities are included in government schools geographically distributed across the governorates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which is a good indicator of the realization of their right to inclusion in education, in implementation of Sustainable Development Goal No. 4: Quality Education³⁴⁷ and the following target: equality in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education for the most vulnerable groups in need of protection, including persons with disabilities residing in remote areas, by 2030³⁴⁸.

The Center considers that the principle underlying the right to inclusive education is the enrollment of students with disabilities in government schools equipped with educational resources and with specialists in their education, while the exception is the provision of special schools for them, which clearly reveals discrimination between them and students without disabilities.

Rights of Children with Disabilities to Quality Education³⁴⁹

The Center followed up on the Government's response to its observations contained in its report on the situation of children with disabilities in nurseries, and found that its efforts bore fruit with the issuance of the Nurseries Regulation No. 77 of 2018, which includes in Article 5 the provision of the environmental conditions necessary to enable children with disabilities to exercise their rights and to enable them to access the services provided by the nursery on an equal basis with the other children therein, in accordance with Article 12, which provides: "The nursery shall be bound to admit children without discrimination between them on grounds of race, sex, religion, language, color, origin or disability."

³⁴⁵Through communication with the Ministry of Education / Special Education Section.

³⁴⁶Through communication with the Head of the Special Education Section at the Ministry of Education.

³⁴⁷Achieving quality and inclusive education for all affirms the conviction that education is one of the most powerful and proven means of achieving sustainable development. This goal ensures that all girls and boys complete free primary and secondary education by 2030. It also aims to provide equal access to affordable vocational training, to eliminate disparities in access to education based on gender or wealth, and to achieve universal access to high-quality education.

³⁴⁸The Center's reports on monitoring the situation in remote areas.

³⁴⁹In realization of the "Quality Education" indicator and the following target: ensuring access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that children are ready for primary education by 2030.

The Right to Training and Rehabilitation

The NCHR continued the field monitoring of the situation of students with disabilities in a number of governmental and non-governmental training and rehabilitation centers, including the following centers:

1. **A center for blind girls in West Amman:** The Center found, through follow-up monitoring, that there are efforts to regularize its situation in terms of registration in the first place, financial support from the donor state, and the rehabilitation of a floor to prevent overcrowding; however, there is still a need to cover the heating appliances to protect the female students.
2. **A school for persons with visual disabilities located in East Amman**³⁵⁰: The Center monitored the situation of students with visual disabilities therein and observed that it comprises two schools allocated a single wing of the building, in which males and females of the 6–12 age group are mixed, and that it includes a single sanitary facility, which does not ensure the child's privacy and affects their right to health, in addition to the absence of a psychiatrist at the school, which affects the psychological condition of the students.
3. **A training and rehabilitation center in Irbid Governorate**³⁵¹: The Center found through monitoring that the training and rehabilitation environment, in terms of the building, is unfit for use, in addition to the lack of environmental facilities such as ramps³⁵², which affects the rights of the students and of the staff providing the service to the female students.
4. **A training and rehabilitation center in Zarqa Governorate**³⁵³: The Center found that development and modernization efforts are noticeable, in implementation of the Royal directives to improve it, in terms of the quality of the physical environment, such as the building from outside and inside, equipment, educational resources and training aids; however, it still needs chairs and shades to provide a recreational environment for them, which would improve their training and educational performance.
5. **A center dedicated to persons with cerebral palsy in Al-Balqa Governorate:** The NCHR followed up on monitoring the situation of the students after the closure of their center due to the lack of financial resources to cover the building rent. The administration transferred the students to a branch of the center in the Capital Governorate, which affected the rights of students with disabilities to inclusion in training and rehabilitation, as their parents were unable to transport them to the center³⁵⁴.
6. **The Center monitored the situation of students in a rehabilitation and training center in Karak Governorate**³⁵⁵: It found that the physical environment surrounding the building requires treatment of the infrastructure because of its impact on their health, which intersects with the right to health and the implementation of Goal No. 3³⁵⁶; maintenance of the building, such as painting and treatment of dampness; the provision of gloves for training persons with speech disabilities in order to realize their right to rehabilitation and training; the scarcity of extracurricular activities to integrate students into society owing to the lack of means of transport adapted for persons with

³⁵⁰Report on follow-up monitoring of the situation of female students in a school for blind girls in the West Amman area, and in the East Amman area, 2018.

³⁵¹Report on monitoring the situation of students with disabilities in a training and rehabilitation center / Irbid Governorate, 2018.

³⁵²Verification with the Ministry of Social Development showed that the reason for not regularizing the situation is that there are efforts between the Ministry of Social Development and the Vocational Training Corporation to conclude an agreement transferring training and rehabilitation powers to the Vocational Training Corporation, 2018.

³⁵³Report on follow-up monitoring of the situation of students in Zarqa Governorate, 2018.

³⁵⁴Monitoring memorandum on the closure of a center for persons with cerebral palsy in Al-Balqa Governorate, 2018.

³⁵⁵Report on monitoring the situation of students in a rehabilitation and training center, Karak Governorate, 2018.

³⁵⁶Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

physical disabilities; and the lack of companions specialized in dealing with persons with disabilities, which affects their growth and cognitive development and weakens their communication skills and integration into society.

The Center concludes from the foregoing the Sustainable Development (2030) indicators for the rights of persons with disabilities to quality education, as shown in Table No. (21):

Table No. (21)

Goal 4	Quality education: ensuring equality in education, training and rehabilitation between students with disabilities and students without disabilities			
Target	Equality in education and ensuring equal access for persons with disabilities to all levels of education and vocational training, including for those residing in remote areas, 2018			
Result	Low level of availability of an adequate educational and training environment for all persons with disabilities	Low level of availability of educational resources and training aids	Low level of availability of environmental facilities and accessibility to training and rehabilitation centers	Poor availability of extracurricular activities for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society
Remarks	These interim results will, should numerical statistics become available and relevant policies on the provision of training and educational services be implemented, affect the results of the indicators of the rights of persons with disabilities under the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in education and training up to 2030.			

Indicators of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Care, in Realization of the Principle of Leaving No One Behind, in Residential Centers

The NCHR developed a monitoring and follow-up questionnaire on the situation of persons with disabilities, in which it defined the attributes of their right to social inclusion in accordance with the CRPD and the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and included therein indicators for realizing the principle of leaving no one behind in the following residential centers³⁵⁷:

Table No. (22)

Care and Residential Centers	Location
Care and Rehabilitation Center	Jerash Governorate
Care and Residential Center / private sector	Capital Governorate
Care, Rehabilitation and Residential Center / private sector	Capital Governorate
Care and Residential Center	Capital Governorate
Cerebral Palsy Center / private sector	Al-Balqa Governorate
Residential Center for Persons with Special Needs	Tafileh Governorate

The Center reiterates its observations contained in its previous reports³⁵⁸ on the above-mentioned centers, and adds:

1. Weak communication by some families of persons with disabilities and their failure to follow up on the situation of their sons and daughters who are beneficiaries residing in care homes affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development.
2. Poor availability of specialized human resources, particularly in residential centers, which are considered an unattractive work environment due to insufficient salaries and incentives for workers in care and rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities, in addition to reluctance to engage in care work in the belief that the value of such work is low in society.
3. High monthly fees charged by private-sector care and rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities, in light of the economic conditions facing society, including the high cost of living and rising prices.
4. The shortage and obsolescence of most means of transport at the centers, which affects the functioning of the centers affiliated with the Ministry, particularly day centers, and weakens the level of services provided to beneficiaries.
5. The weak presence of any voluntary effort by civil society institutions and volunteers to assist persons with disabilities, care for them and provide them with recreation.

The Center considers that the foregoing indicators do not ultimately lead to the realization of the principle of leaving no one behind, which can be achieved only by realizing the rights of persons with disabilities to family inclusion, which improves their lives and protects them from neglect and abandonment. Moreover, the indicator of violence against persons with disabilities is: parents' neglect and abandonment of their children in residential homes and their weak communication with them to follow up on their situation, which is a form of violence under Article (30)³⁵⁹ of the Law on the Rights

³⁵⁷The Center monitored private-sector residential homes on 10 May 2017, a private-sector home on 21 May 2017, and on 12 July 2017.

³⁵⁸Published on the website of the National Center www.nchr.org.jo

³⁵⁹Article (30) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20/2017: "A. Any act or omission that would deprive a person with a disability of a right or freedom, restrict his exercise of any of them, or inflict physical, mental or psychological harm on him on the basis of or by reason of disability shall be deemed violence."

of Persons with Disabilities, in addition to society's view of the person with a disability and the culture of shame that prevents disclosing his or her existence and presenting him or her to society.

Indicators of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the Sustainable Development Goals on Inclusion in Employment

In implementation of Goal No. 8³⁶⁰, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities formed the Equal Opportunities Committee, of which the Center is a member, and the Ministry of Labor implemented a project for the employment of persons with disabilities, under which the Qaws factory employed approximately 15 workers with various disabilities and the Hirfat Al-Ibra factory approximately 15 workers.

The Al-Dhulail Labor Directorate recorded the highest rate of employment of persons with disabilities, with 249 workers employed. The Center considers that these data also constitute an indicator for Goal No. 1: "No Poverty", which will grow if employment continues to be followed up until 2030.

The NCHR's monitoring concluded with an indicator of a low level of availability of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, whether in the public or private sector³⁶¹.

Recommendations

The NCHR reaffirms its recommendations in the Fourteenth Annual Report for 2017³⁶².

First: Reviewing the Flexible Work Regulation, since its provisions apply only if the employer wishes to apply them, in addition to its requirement that the worker must have completed three years of service with the employer in order to benefit from its provisions, and since it does not apply to the worker with a disability.

Second: Ensuring the empowerment of persons with disabilities in legislation relating to the granting of loans to persons with disabilities, owing to the low level of availability of soft loans for implementing productive projects for persons with disabilities.

Third: Implementing the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled of 2018³⁶³ in order to achieve its objective, namely making documents and artistic and cultural publications accessible to blind persons in a format suited to their needs, by converting them into Braille and enlarging them for persons with severe low vision.

Fourth: Issuing instructions for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the family and society, in preparation for the activation of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which provides for the dismantling of residential homes and the establishment of alternatives to them.

³⁶⁰Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and to achieve the following target: developing policies supporting the provision of employment opportunities for all persons with disabilities. For more information, please see the Center's website www.nchr.org.jo.

³⁶¹For more information, see the Annual Report on Human Rights for 2017 published on the official website of the National Center for Human Rights, p. 219.

³⁶²For more information, see the Annual Report on Human Rights for 2017 published on the official website of the National Center for Human Rights, p. 219.

³⁶³Published in Official Gazette No. 5503 dated 1 March 2018; adopted at the international conference on 27 June 2013.

3. Rights of the Child

The Jordanian Constitution guarantees the rights of the child, as Article 6 thereof provides: "The law shall protect motherhood, childhood and old age, shall care for young people and persons with disabilities, and shall protect them from abuse and exploitation." Article 23 thereof also refers to the necessity of setting special conditions for the work of women and juveniles. Jordan has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the two Optional Protocols thereto, which were published in the Official Gazette. However, Jordan still maintains its reservation to Article 14/A concerning the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as to Articles 20 and 21 of the Convention concerning the system of adoption. At the international level, the NCHR had recommended in its previous reports that the Government accede to the third Optional Protocol to the CRC, but to date its request has not been met³⁶⁴.

It is worth noting that the NCHR submitted its report on the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in which it monitors the extent of implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Jordanian Government upon the adoption of the recommendations of the second UPR report on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which, as of the date of preparation of this report, had not been implemented. Jordan accepted recommendations Nos. (118/8, 15, 24, 39, 40, 45) **relating to the rights of the child**. The Juveniles Law No. 32 of 2014 was issued; however, there are challenges relating to reducing child labor and violence against children³⁶⁵. The report recommended the adoption of the draft Law on the Rights of the Child in line with the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the development of a national strategy to protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation and labor, and the activation of national plans of action for childhood.

The Government also submitted the UPR report and discussed it on 8 November 2018 before the Human Rights Council in Geneva³⁶⁶. Regarding the implementation of recommendations (8, 24, 59, 58), the report indicated the issuance of the Juveniles Law No. 32 of 2014, which calls for special courts and prosecution for juveniles and special police to deal with them, and the issuance of the implementing regulations and instructions of the Law. As for the implementation of recommendations (95, 39, 4), it indicated that working children have been included within the category of those in need of protection and care under the Juveniles Law, and that a draft regulation on protecting children from work in violation of legislation has been prepared.

Legislation Relating to the Rights of the Child

1. Laws

The year 2018 did not witness the adoption of laws specifically promoting and protecting the rights of the child. At the same time, there is still a set of pieces of legislation relating to the rights of the child that require amendment and adoption, including the Labor Law, the Temporary Personal Status Law No. 36 of 2010³⁶⁷, the Juveniles Law, and others.

The NCHR participated in the preparation of the draft Law on the Rights of the Child in cooperation with the National Council for Family Affairs, ministries, government departments and civil society

³⁶⁴The third Optional Protocol to the CRC enables children and their representatives to submit complaints and communications.

³⁶⁵For more information, please see the Center's website www.nchr.org.jo

³⁶⁶For more information, please see the website:

<http://www.pm.gov.jo/content/1448363383/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86.html>

³⁶⁷The draft amending law for each of the Labor Law and the Personal Status Law is still being discussed before Parliament.

institutions. The preparation of the draft has been completed, and the NCHR hopes that its passage through its constitutional stages will be expedited.

Furthermore, the NCHR participated, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice, ministries, government departments, the Juvenile Police, civil society institutions and independent experts, in the preparation of the draft Juveniles Law of 2018, and the committee is still discussing the draft law.

2. Regulations

A. Nurseries Regulation No. 77 of 2018:

The NCHR commends the Government's response in issuing the Nurseries Regulation No. 77 of 2018, which was published in Official Gazette No. 5520 dated 14 June 2018, and which sets out the conditions for a child's admission to a nursery and defines the ages of children as those under four years of age. The Regulation affirmed that the purpose of the nursery is to raise and bring up children and develop their physical, spiritual, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and psychological characteristics and abilities.

The Regulation laid down provisions relating to the conditions and procedures for licensing nurseries, their physical and human preparation, and the supervision and oversight of the Ministry of Social Development over them. Article 3 provides that the Ministry of Social Development may, in exceptional cases and upon the request of the child's guardian, permit the nursery to provide care for the child up to four years and eight months of age, whereas under the previous regulation this was limited to four years only. In Article 5, it tightened the conditions for licensing nurseries, adding to the previous conditions the provision of a camera surveillance system and the provision of the environmental conditions necessary to enable children with disabilities to exercise their rights and to enable them to access the services provided by the nursery on an equal basis with the other children therein. In Article 16, the Regulation prohibited refusing to admit children with disabilities.

The legislator considered a nursery to be a nursery licensed in accordance with this Regulation; accordingly, an unlicensed home-based nursery is considered illegal and is not subject to the Regulation or to the oversight and supervision of the Ministry. The NCHR considers that such nurseries constitute a violation and affect the rights of children, which requires the imposition of penalties on nurseries operating without a license and on those that commence their operations without completing the licensing procedures or regularizing their status. The legislative vacuum in the field of supervision and oversight policies over home-based nurseries in Jordan has led to a general belief among owners of licensed nurseries, or those intending to establish nurseries, that the legal regime governing the nursery sector is unfair and that the penalties are not proportionate to the violations therein, which has led to reluctance to submit licensing applications. The legal regime does not criminalize opening a nursery without a license, while at the same time it imposes obligations on licensed nurseries and subjects them to possible penalties. The Center recommends expediting the issuance of the implementing instructions as provided for in the Regulation.

3. Instructions

A. Instructions for Licensing Nurseries of 2019:

The NCHR commends the efforts made in issuing the instructions in the Official Gazette. They were issued under Article 25 of the Nurseries Regulation No. 77 of 2019, and address the conditions for licensing nurseries, the procedures for applying for a license and the conditions for nursery staff. They repealed the instructions relating to the licensing of nurseries, the licensing of institutional nurseries in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and government school nurseries.

B. Amended Instructions to the Instructions for Implementing the Council of Ministers' Decision on Granting Facilities to the Children of Jordanian Women Married to Non-Jordanians of 2018.

The NCHR commends the Government's efforts in issuing the instructions in Official Gazette No. 5531 dated 17 September 2018, which include the abolition of the condition that the Jordanian mother must have resided permanently in the Kingdom for a period of no less than five years in order to benefit from the facilities provided to the children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians. On 10 September 2018, the Council of Ministers decided that the card issued to the children of Jordanian women by the Civil Status and Passports Department shall be deemed, for the purposes of benefiting from these facilities, an identity card ("proof of identity").

C. The Instructions for Licensing Early Intervention Centers for Children with Disabilities of 2019 were issued under Article 29/7 of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They define early intervention and provide for the set of services and programs offered by the early intervention center for children with disabilities of all categories and degrees of disability under the age of 6 years. Article 3 sets out the building requirements, namely that the entrance be away from main roads, that there be a separate room for the psychologist and a separate room for the administration, and that the building be modern, environmentally safe and away from health hazards, flammable materials, noise and the like. The instructions also set out the procedures for benefiting from the services and the conditions for the center's staff.

Child Labor

The NCHR issued a study on "Child Labor in Jordan"³⁶⁸, which aimed to monitor child labor, identify the social, economic and health effects of child labor, and examine the living conditions of families in the Kingdom in general and of the families of working children in particular.

The results of the study showed that the social and economic effects ranged between high, medium and low degrees. The most important social problems were family disintegration, large family size and the modest educational level of the family. The economic cause ranged between high and medium degrees of poverty and low living standards; hence, children turn to the labor market out of a desire to increase family income or because of their parents' inability to provide for the child, particularly in the current economic conditions.

The health effects ranged between high and medium, as the working child is exposed to many health hazards, occupational diseases and work accidents, such as increased "mechanical" hazards, and work injury accidents are more frequent among juveniles than among adults. The study concluded that it is necessary to expand legislative protection for working children, to expand social security networks so as to cover most of the poor families that are forced to push their children into the labor market to secure the income they need, and to train the officials responsible for enforcing the law.

The NCHR had included in its previous report that in 2017 the Center prepared an analytical paper on the legislation governing child labor, given the infringement it constitutes on children's rights according to international standards and the breach and violation it entails of the principle of the best interests of the child provided for in the CRC, recommending the importance of reviewing and amending national legislation in line with the CRC and its two Optional Protocols. However, to date, no preventive or precautionary measures have been taken by the Government to reduce child labor.

Situation of Children in Remote Areas

The NCHR follows up on the situation of children in remote areas deprived of services in all governorates of the Kingdom. The monitoring results showed a lack of places for children's recreation and entertainment, such as parks, public libraries and children's playgrounds, which drives them to play in the streets and between neighborhoods and residential clusters in unsafe conditions, exposing them daily to traffic accidents or fights with their peers, in addition to weak health care services provided to

³⁶⁸For more information about the study, please see the website of the National Center for Human Rights www.nchr.org.jo.

them, reflected in the shortage of medical staff and medicines in health centers and the absence of pediatricians.

Children in Conflict with the Law

- The NCHR commends the issuance of the first judicial decision by the Amman Juvenile Court imposing non-custodial measures (alternative penalties), in accordance with Article 24 of the Juveniles Law of 2014, against a juvenile for a period of 20 hours at one of the associations in the Capital, on 13 November 2018.

This judgment is considered the first since the Juveniles Law entered into force in 2014, and is one of the important steps towards reforming and rehabilitating the juvenile instead of custodial penalties, as such measures serve the best interests of the juvenile and his protection. However, a judicial decision alone is not sufficient; rather, we need to put in place procedures to activate the legal provision on alternative measures, issue instructions for the application of the penalties, and set standards for partnership between government institutions and community service institutions for the application of alternative and non-custodial penalties.

- The NCHR monitored the situation of children in conflict with the law and found that there is a need for disciplinary instructions in juvenile education homes and for distributing juveniles among the various homes to prevent overcrowding, as well as for opening a new juvenile home in the Southern Region.
- The NCHR monitored the findings of the investigation committee formed by the Ministry of Social Development concerning the escape of 10 juveniles from the Juvenile Education Center in Rusaifa. The findings of the investigation revealed negligence and dereliction of official duties by one of the supervisors at the home, who had handed one of the juveniles the key to the dormitory, while the juveniles took advantage of the supervisors being preoccupied and obtained a chisel with which they cut the rear fence wire of the home, which helped them escape. The supervisor in question was referred to the disciplinary council for the appropriate legal action against him, in addition to imposing the penalty of a warning on two other supervisors who were with him on the same shift and depriving them of bonuses for one month. The Ministry of Social Development developed an integrated plan to develop juvenile education and rehabilitation homes according to coordinated procedures, the implementation of which commenced by reviewing the legislation in force in juvenile education and rehabilitation homes and the procedural manuals and amending them in line with the nature of the juveniles in these homes. It was found that the escaped juveniles were repeat offenders with aggressive behaviors.

Furthermore, the challenges faced by children in conflict with the law, which were mentioned in 2017 in the Council's annual report, persist, including the following:

1. Poor availability of psychological care services, as most homes lack psychologists despite the juveniles' need for them.
2. The scarcity of rehabilitative, awareness-raising and recreational programs for delinquent juveniles, which gives rise to boredom, imbalance and psychological tension and isolates them from their community.
3. Weak family communication by juveniles' families with their children due to neglect and dereliction.
4. Juvenile homes and detention facilities are not equipped to receive juveniles with disabilities in terms of the availability of environmental facilities and reasonable accommodation.
5. Ill-treatment of juveniles, in addition to the practice of physical and verbal violence against them by some Public Security personnel during the stages of their arrest and interrogation.
6. Most juvenile residential homes do not comply with the principle of separation on the basis of age group, separation being made only on the basis of convicted and detained persons.
7. Low level of cleanliness in most detention facilities, in addition to old furniture and sanitary facilities.

The number of crimes committed by juveniles in 2018 reached 3,643 crimes, compared to 4,867 crimes committed in 2017. Table No. (23) below shows the statistics of cases committed by juveniles in 2018.

Table No. (23): Statistics of Cases Committed by Juveniles in 2018

Type of Crime	2017	2018
Felonies and misdemeanors against persons	250	2411
Crimes against public trust	7	0
Crimes against property	1642	1066
Crimes against public administration	185	62
Crimes endangering public safety	85	87
Crimes against public morals	253	17
Other crimes	2445	0
Total	4867	3643

Early Marriage

Implementation began of the Instructions for Granting Permission to Marry to Persons Who Have Completed Fifteen Solar Years of Age but Have Not Completed Eighteen, No. 1 of 2017³⁶⁹. The instructions tightened the acceptance of early marriage, requiring the court to verify that the marriage will not cause discontinuation of education and that the suitor is not already married; the court must also inform the fiancée of her right to stipulate any condition that serves her interest and to include it in the contract. Article 8 thereof provides that both parties to the engagement must produce a certificate proving that they have completed the pre-marriage course organized by the Department, and that the court shall refer a marriage application for persons under eighteen years of age to the Family Reform and Reconciliation Office for its opinion.

The instructions require, for approving the marriage of a male who has not completed eighteen years of age, that he produce to the court the approval of the Minors' Affairs Section at the Chief Justice Department. Despite the stringency in granting permission to marry to persons who have not completed eighteen years of age, the Center considers it necessary to repeal paragraph (B) of Article 10 of the Personal Status Law, which permits the marriage of a person who has completed fifteen but not eighteen years of age, given the adverse health and psychological effects of early marriage on the child, in addition to depriving the child of his or her rights provided for in the CRC.

The NCHR considers that early marriage has negative effects not only on the girl but also on the man, including economic, social, health and psychological effects, and these effects are not limited to the spouses but extend to the family, society and the State. The Center calls for the repeal of paragraph (B) of Article 10 of the Personal Status Law, which permits early marriage for both sexes.

Violence against Children

Figures and statistics issued by the Family Protection Department of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) indicate that crimes of violence against children in 2018 were as shown in Table No. (24):

³⁶⁹The instructions were issued pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (B) of Article 10 of the Personal Status Law No. 36 of 2010, under which the previous instructions were repealed.

Table No. (24)

Year	Type of Assault	Number of Cases against Children	Number of Victims – Male Children	Number of Victims – Female Children	Total Number of Child Victims (Male and Female)
2016	Sexual assaults	741	281	474	755
2016	Physical assaults	238	94	162	256
2017	Sexual assaults	846	369	696	1065
2017	Physical assaults	167	101	119	220
2018	Sexual assaults	1027	429	665	1094
2018	Physical assaults	295	147	178	325
Total		3314	1421	2294	3715

It is noted from Table No. (24) that the number of cases of sexual assault against children exceeds the number of cases of physical assault, and that the number of female child victims exceeds the number of male victims, which means that girls are more vulnerable to physical and sexual assaults, and the relevant efforts must be concerted to protect children from violence.

Recommendations

To promote and protect the rights of the child, the Center reaffirms the recommendations contained in its previous reports, in addition to:

1. Establishing a juvenile education and rehabilitation home in the Southern Region.
2. Repealing paragraph (B) of Article 10 of the Temporary Personal Status Law No. 36 of 2010, which permits early marriage.
3. Establishing nurseries in all government schools and allowing teachers to place their children in girls' schools.
4. Increasing oversight of nurseries operating outside the framework of the law and intensifying oversight and inspection campaigns by the relevant authorities on licensed nurseries.
5. Creating a child-friendly environment in order to bring about social change, through continuous training and awareness programs for the family and society.
6. Adopting the two draft laws, the Law on the Rights of the Child and the Juveniles Law, and proceeding with the constitutional procedures.
7. Developing a national strategy to protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation and labor, and activating national plans of action for childhood.

4. Rights of Older Persons

Legislative Protection of the Rights of Older Persons

- The Jordanian legal system has afforded protection to the rights of older persons, foremost among which is the Jordanian Constitution and its amendments³⁷⁰, in which the legislator guaranteed their rights in Article 6 thereof, on the basis of the principle of equality among all Jordanians irrespective of age, which constitutes protection of the rights of older persons, as well as equality before the law and non-discrimination among them in rights and duties, even if they differ in race, language or religion. The constitutional amendments of 2011 likewise guaranteed the protection of the rights of older persons, as paragraph 5 of the same Article provides as follows: "The law shall protect motherhood, childhood and old age, shall care for the young and persons with disabilities, and shall protect them from abuse and exploitation."
- Jordan discussed its third periodic report under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism in 2018. Although the rights of older persons were not mentioned in the national report, Jordan accepted one recommendation addressed to it by Bulgaria, No. 6.117, namely: "Continue to strengthen its efforts in the area of promoting and protecting the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities." This indicates weak international and national attention to the rights of older persons, which supports the recommendation of the NCHR, consistent with the international trend, on the need to adopt an international convention on the rights of older persons in order to realize their rights, harmonize national legislation therewith, integrate the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, and monitor their implementation.
- The Law Amending the Civil Retirement Law No. (34) of 2018 was issued in Official Gazette No. 5535 dated 1 October 2018. Article 31 was amended to read as follows: "The following persons shall be deemed members of the family of the deceased employee or retiree who are entitled to the retirement pension, gratuity or compensation under the provisions of this Law," among them the father and the mother, whereas under the previous law it was the father, provided that the deceased was single and the sole provider for his father.
- The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) considers that, in order to give effect to the principle of "leaving no one behind" on which the Sustainable Development Goals 2020–2030 are based, the legislation governing the rights of older persons must be reviewed and reconsidered in order to protect their rights and to unify the terminology used therein, namely "old age", "the infirm" and "older persons", including the following:
 1. The Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor No. (14) of 1956³⁷¹: Article 13/4 thereof provides that "The Council of Ministers, upon the recommendation of the Minister of Social Development and with the approval of the King, may issue regulations relating to the establishment, financing and management of any institution that achieves any of the objectives of the Ministry of Social Development, such as homes for the infirm." The NCHR considers that this Law needs to be reconsidered, as it is not consistent with international legislation, so as to change the expression "homes for the infirm" to the expression "older persons".
 2. The Provisional Personal Status Law No. (36) of 2010³⁷²: Article 74 thereof provides for "the residence of poor parents with their married children if they are unable to support them independently." The NCHR considers it necessary to delete the word "poor" from the text of the said Article, given that parents need social, health and economic care from their children regardless of their economic situation. Article 197 of the same Law also provides for obliging children, whether male or female, to provide maintenance for their poor parents. The NCHR considers it necessary to oblige children to provide maintenance for their parents according to their circumstances and those of their peers, regardless of the economic situation of the parents.
 3. The Public Health Law No. (47) of 2008 does not provide for the rights of older persons to home care; moreover, the Medical Council Law No. (17) of 2006 does not recognize the specialty of

³⁷⁰Published on page 3 of Official Gazette issue No. 1093 dated 8 January 1952.

³⁷¹Published on page 1367 of Official Gazette issue No. 1265 dated 17 March 1956.

³⁷²Published on page 5809 of Official Gazette issue No. 506 dated 16 October 1910.

geriatric medicine³⁷³, and the Ministry of Higher Education does not accredit the specialization certificate in geriatric medicine, which weakens the provision of health services to older persons.

4. The Social Security Law No. (1) of 2014³⁷⁴: Article 62 thereof provides that the insured person shall be entitled to a retirement pension upon reaching the age of 60 for males and 55 for females. The NCHR considers that retirement at this age should be optional; if the person wishes to continue working, he or she may do so, provided that he or she is medically fit for work, in which case entitlement shall arise on the date of termination of his or her work, provided that this does not exceed seventy years of age for both sexes.
5. The Labor Law No. (8) of 1996 and its amendments³⁷⁵: Article 21 thereof addresses the termination of the employment contract upon reaching the old-age retirement age under the Social Security Law, and Article 56 of the same Law addresses the number of weekly working hours of the worker, which shall not exceed eight hours per day or forty-eight hours per week. The NCHR considers that a clause should be added to the Article enabling older persons to participate in the labor market under special conditions, such as reduced working hours, in a manner that serves their best interests.
 - The Government issued the Flexible Work Regulation³⁷⁶; however, it does not apply to working older persons but rather to those who provide for them. The Flexible Work Instructions³⁷⁷ were likewise issued, defining the forms of flexible work, including part-time work and work within flexible hours in a manner consistent with the needs of the worker. The Regulation specified the categories it covers, namely workers who have served with the employer for three consecutive years and workers who have family responsibilities. Despite the positive nature of this Regulation, it affects the rights of older workers.
 - There is no special law protecting the rights of older persons, and there are no legal provisions criminalizing or holding accountable children who fail in respect of the economic, social and health rights of their parents, and those charged with caring for them, where they refrain from fulfilling their obligations towards their parents, with the exception of the general criminalization provisions in the Penal Code. There is a need to adopt a special law to protect the rights of older persons in order to keep pace with the efforts of the international community seeking to adopt a convention to protect their rights.

Policies Supporting the Realization of the Rights of Older Persons:

1. Jordan developed the document "Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy", which charted and defined the integrated general framework that will govern economic and social policies based on providing opportunities for all. Its principles include equal opportunity, increased participation in policy-making, achieving fiscal sustainability and strengthening institutions, by raising the level of health and providing an enabling environment to that end³⁷⁸.
2. The Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights for the years 2016–2025 included programs achieving its sub-objective, namely: developing the legislative system so as to guarantee the protection of the rights of older persons; "promoting and protecting the rights of older persons and ensuring their enjoyment thereof"; taking the issues of older persons into account when formulating national policies, strategies, plans, standards and frameworks; strengthening oversight of care and shelter homes for older persons; improving the level of services provided to older persons so as to

³⁷³Symposium on the rights of older persons at the National Council for Family Affairs; comment by a physician specializing in geriatric medicine.

³⁷⁴Published on page 493 of Official Gazette issue No. 5267 dated 29 January 2014.

³⁷⁵Published on page 1173 of Official Gazette issue No. 4113 dated 16 April 1996.

³⁷⁶Regulation No. (22/2017) issued under Article (140) of the Labor Law No. 8/1996, published in the Official Gazette, p. 1924.

³⁷⁷Instructions issued under Article (13) of the Flexible Work Regulation, published in the Official Gazette, p. 5509, dated 1 April 2018.

³⁷⁸For further information, see the document: <http://www.pm.gov.jo>

ensure them a dignified life in society; and strengthening their capacities to continue their contribution and to increase their contribution to and participation in public life³⁷⁹.

3. Work began in 2018 on implementing the national plan of the Jordanian National Strategy for Older Persons for the years (2018–2022), prepared by the National Council for Family Affairs through a participatory approach with the NCHR and all governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with the issues of older persons. The Strategy aimed to provide security and dignity and to achieve well-being for older persons in Jordan, and included priority aspects and actions required to be worked on within each of its following main pillars:

- Contribution of older persons to the development process.
- Achieving health care for older persons.
- Providing a supportive physical environment and social care for older persons.

The National Strategy for Older Persons came in response to the requirements of the Jordanian Constitution regarding the protection of old age, and to the Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights for the years (2016–2025), which addressed in its third pillar the rights of older persons as one of the groups most vulnerable to violation.

4. Practices supporting the realization of the rights of older persons.

Realization of the Right to Social Inclusion

In order to realize the rights of older persons on the basis of the principle of independence, the Center considered it important to monitor their right to social inclusion by enabling them to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to their personal preferences and changing capacities, and enabling them to continue residing in their homes for as long as possible. The Center continued to monitor the conditions of older persons in all governorates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan³⁸⁰, where it found that customs and traditions still value the presence of the older person in the family, and society regards him or her as a reference point; at the same time, the challenges they suffer were not apparent owing to the culture of shame regarding disclosure of any deprivation of or failure in respect of their rights.

There is a need to convert the shelter homes previously monitored by the NCHR into day clubs in order to integrate older persons into their families, to provide places for recreation and education, and to tighten oversight of the existing day clubs, which the Center continued to monitor during 2018 and which number four operating clubs. A day club was registered in 2018 in Ajloun Governorate³⁸¹, and it was found that their level of development has been weak since the NCHR monitored them³⁸².

The Ministry of Social Development has not established a governmental day club for older persons; rather, its role has been limited to registering and licensing them, noting that the number of older persons is 540,000, and the number of care beneficiaries is 374 male and female beneficiaries, of whom 185 are female and 170 are male. The Ministry sponsors 132 older persons through care and financial support to care institutions³⁸³.

- The NCHR participated in the special session of the Working Group on Ageing held in Seoul, Korea, in 2018. The topics of discussion centered on the right to non-discrimination and continuity of education, autonomy and independence, long-term care and palliative care. It

³⁷⁹For further information, see the Plan, p. 25: <http://rjgc.gov.jo>

³⁸⁰Follow-up reports on monitoring remote areas in the governorates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

³⁸¹Through communication with and an interview with the Head of the Family Section at the Ministry of Social Development, November 2018.

³⁸²Periodic Report on Older Persons for 2017: the number of clubs was 7, of which four were closed (Golden Age in Amman, Al-Nubala' Club in Madaba, Fuheis Club in Fuheis, and Al-Birr wal-Ata' Club in Karak) by the Ministry of Social Development for failure to renew their licenses and regularize their status.

³⁸³Communication with the Ministry of Social Development: 18 September 2018.

concluded with a number of recommendations, the most important of which were: the need to provide health, social, home and long-term care, and to provide health and psychological services for older persons wishing to end their lives as a result of their suffering from illness³⁸⁴.

- The right to health care: in order to give effect to the principle of health care and to make health care accessible to older persons so as to help them maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental, emotional and psychological well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness, the inclusion of older persons under the health insurance umbrella began on 16 January 2018. The decision of the Prime Minister and the Instructions³⁸⁵ were issued, providing for the coverage of the health insurance subscription fee of individuals over sixty from public expenditure. The Instructions shall enter into force from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette³⁸⁶. There is a need for specialized health centers for the health care of older persons, as their care requires physicians specialized in geriatric medicine.

Rights of Older Persons to Care and Protection from Violence

The NCHR continued to monitor the conditions of older persons in shelter homes and day clubs, on which it issued its second periodic report³⁸⁷. The psychological condition of older persons remains very poor owing to the infrequency or absence of visits by their children and relatives at their place of residence. There are still cases suffering from neglect and exploitation, in addition to weak intervention by psychiatrists in treating beneficiaries to overcome their condition and coexist positively with their reality, as well as the absence of recreational programs to occupy the time of older persons, and the scarcity of voluntary efforts by civil society organizations and young men and women to assist, care for and entertain older persons.

Furthermore, the limited use of the experience and energies of older persons in shelter homes and clubs leads to a weak level of transfer thereof to future generations and of communication between them. There is weakness in employing these to meet the needs of older persons for work, and the realization of their right to communicate with the outside world is confined to celebrating occasions and religious holidays.

The figures and statistics issued by the Family Protection Department of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) indicate that crimes of violence against older persons in 2018 were as shown in Table No. (25):

Table No. (25)

Type of case	Cases referred to the judiciary	Cases referred to the administrative governor	Cases referred to the Social Service Office
Sexual assaults	8	1	2
Physical assaults	15	2	30
Total	23	3	32

From the table, the Center found that the total number of physical and sexual assaults against older persons was 58 cases: 11 older persons were sexually assaulted, and there were 47 physical assaults. These represent the cases that reached the Family Protection Department and do not represent the reality of violence in society, as the table contains no cases of psychological, verbal, economic or health-related violence, neglect or deprivation of rights.

³⁸⁴For further information, see the official website of the National Center for Human Rights.

³⁸⁵On 28 December 2017, pursuant to the provisions of Article (30) of the Civil Health Insurance Regulation, approval of Instructions No. (6) of 2017, Instructions Amending the Instructions on the Coverage of Individual Citizens by Civil Health Insurance of 2004.

³⁸⁶Issued in Official Gazette No. 5496 dated 16 January 2018.

³⁸⁷Periodic Report on the Conditions of Older Persons 2017, published on the official website of the National Center for the Rights of Older Persons.

- The case of an older man was monitored; it was found that he was born in 1929 and works as a sanitation worker in the municipality³⁸⁸, receiving a monthly salary of JOD 295. He was appointed under humanitarian cases in 1992, as he is unable to work and supports four of his daughters. The necessary measures were taken to remedy the violation against him.
- The NCHR implemented a two-month project, which began on 1 October 2018, on "contributing to involving older persons in livelihood activities", in furtherance of the principle of care and to enable older persons to enjoy their rights with full respect for their dignity, their needs and their right to take decisions relating to the quality of their lives, in the villages of Al-Mashare' and Jisr Al-Sheikh Hussein / Northern Jordan Valley, Irbid Governorate. Four associations that took part in the training were supported to implement small economic empowerment projects, from which 34 older persons benefited. The training workshops focused on activities relating to food processing skills, sewing, home gardening, mushroom cultivation, and drying of vegetables and fruit, in addition to packaging and marketing skills.

Recommendations:

To promote and protect the rights of older persons, the NCHR reaffirms its previous recommendations in the report on the state of human rights in Jordan³⁸⁹ and adds the following:

1. Support international efforts aimed at drafting an international convention on the rights of older persons, along the lines of the international conventions relating to the rights of the groups most in need of protection.
2. Review the national legislation relating to the rights of older persons in order to protect them, and work on preparing a special law on the rights of older persons.
3. Adopt a special provision criminalizing and holding accountable those who fail in respect of the rights of their parents through abandonment and neglect, by means of the Penal Code, rather than confining matters to what is set out in the law in terms of the general treatment of cases of harm, since moral and psychological violence is more severe in impact than physical violence in many cases.
4. Provide employment opportunities for older persons who are able and willing to continue working, through flexible employment conditions for the period after the age of sixty, and make the greatest possible use of their expertise at all levels.
5. Establish specialized health centers for the health care of older persons, staffed by physicians specialized in geriatric medicine.
6. Establish day clubs to absorb the energies of older persons during daytime hours in order to activate their social roles, in all governorates of the Kingdom.
7. The competent authorities should prepare national social policies and plans specific to older persons in the fields of awareness, education, work, training, the family and others, including strengthening the participatory approach aimed at involving older persons in development and in taking the decisions that concern them, as well as involving the private sector, exchanging expertise and purposeful media promotion.

³⁸⁸ A documented report held by the National Center for Human Rights in 2018 on the case.

³⁸⁹ See the Report on the State of Human Rights 2016, pp. 206–207, and that of 2017.

Annex: Number of Complaints and Their Analysis

Table No. (26): Total number of complaints received by the National Center for Human Rights, according to the rights allegedly violated, for 2018

Right violated	No. of complaints	Closed – satisfactory result	Closed – unsatisfactory result	Outside mandate	Violation not proven	Complainant non-cooperation	Nationality – Jordanian	Nationality – Foreign	Under follow-up	Percentage per right
Right to residence and freedom of movement	76									
Administrative detention	31	28	0	0	2	0	30	1	1	8.4%
Judicial detention	9	8	0	0	1	0	8	1	0	2.44%
c. Travel ban	12	5	0	1	1	0	10	2	5	3.25%
d. House arrest	21	17	1	0	0	0	21	0	3	5.7%
f. Deportation by administrative decision	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0.81%
Right to life and physical integrity	68									
Torture	19	4	0	0	1	1	16	3	13	5.14%
Degrading/ill-treatment	49	23	0	0	2	1	47	2	23	13.27%
Right to an adequate standard of living	3									
Income	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0.54%
Housing	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.27%
Rights of the child	6	3	1	1	1	0	6	0	0	1.62%
Right to a fair trial	44	20	0	1	2	2	43	1	19	11.92%
Right to liberty and security of person	29	8	0	1	7	0	28	1	13	7.86%
Right to education	9	4	0	1	1	0	9	0	3	2.44%
Rights of persons with disabilities	3	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0.81%
Rights of inmates	39	15	0	0	1	0	38	1	23	10.57%
Right to compensation	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0.54%
Labor rights	35	12	0	0	2	2	30	5	19	9.49%
Right to social insurance	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0.54%
Right to practice religious rites	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0.27%
Right to a healthy environment	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.54%
Right to health	11	5	1	0	1	0	11	0	5	2.98%
Right to hold public office	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0.27%
Right to life	6	2	0	0	1	0	6	0	3	1.62%
Right to acquire a nationality	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0.54%

Right violated	No. of complaints	Closed – satisfactory result	Closed – unsatisfactory result	Outside mandate	Violation not proven	Complainant non-cooperation	Nationality – Jordanian	Nationality – Foreign	Under follow-up	Percentage per right
Right to freedom of opinion and expression	10	5	0	0	0	0	10	0	5	2.71%
Right to obtain identity documents	8	5	0	1	0	0	6	2	2	2.16%
Right to property	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	2	0.8%
Rights of juveniles	4	2	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	1.08%
Rights of refugees	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0.8%
Right to join political parties	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0.5%
Grand total	369	181	3	6	31	4	339	30	144	100%
Percentages	100%	49.05%	00.8%	1.62%	8.4%	1.08%	91.9%	8.1%	39.02%	100%

Analysis of Complaints Received by the Center in 2018

In 2018, the NCHR received 369 complaints, compared with 337 complaints in 2017, of which 278 complaints related to civil and political rights and 78 complaints to economic, social and cultural rights, while the number of complaints relating to the rights of the groups most in need of protection was only 13 complaints. The results of their follow-up were as follows:

A satisfactory result was achieved in 181 complaints, representing 49.05% of the total number of complaints; 3 complaints were closed without reaching a satisfactory result, representing 00.8%; 6 complaints were closed because they fell outside the Center's mandate, representing 1.62%; 13 complaints were closed because no violation was proven therein, representing 8.4%; in addition, 4 complaints were closed owing to the non-cooperation of the complainant, representing 1.08%; while the number of complaints still under follow-up reached 144 complaints, representing 39.02% of the total number of complaints, as shown in the attached table. The reasons why complaints remain under follow-up at the NCHR are as follows:

1. The failure of the bodies concerned to respond to the Center's correspondence, delays in their replies or their provision of perfunctory replies thereto, or the failure to provide the Center with the documents necessary to complete the verification process in certain complaints, particularly complaints of torture and ill-treatment, namely the investigation records and the decisions issued by the Police Court.
2. The unwillingness of complainants to pursue the complaint and/or their non-cooperation in some cases, and their fear of pursuing their complaints as a result of pressure exerted on them by certain parties.
3. The difficulty of proving complaints of torture and ill-treatment, and the absence of a clear national system for the protection of witnesses and compensation of victims.

Annex: Requests for Assistance and Their Analysis

Table No. (27): Total number of requests for assistance received by the National Center for Human Rights, according to the rights allegedly violated, for 2018

Right violated	No. of complaints	Closed – satisfactory result	Closed – unsatisfactory result	Outside mandate	Violation not proven	Complainant non-cooperation	Nationality – Jordanian	Nationality – Foreign	Under follow-up	Percentage per right
Right to residence and freedom of movement	37	17	0	5	1	2	26	11	12	19.4%
Right to life, physical integrity and security of person	17	4	1	1	1	0	16	1	10	8.9%
Right to an adequate standard of living	15	9	0	0	0	1	13	2	5	7.85%
Rights of the child	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1.04%
Right to a fair trial	18	8	0	5	1	1	14	4	3	9.4%
Right to education	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1.6%
Rights of persons with disabilities	4	2	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	2.1%
Rights of inmates	25	5	0	0	3	0	25	0	17	13%
Labor rights	28	13	0	1	5	1	26	2	8	14.65%
Right to social insurance	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1.04%
Right to a healthy environment	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1.04%
Right to health	9	5	0	0	0	1	7	2	3	4.71%
Right to life	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1.04%
Right to acquire a nationality	5	1	1	0	2	0	0	5	1	2.6%
Right to asylum	5	3	0	1	0	1	0	5	0	2.6%
Right to form and join associations	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.5%
Right to obtain identity documents	10	6	0	1	1	1	6	4	1	5.23%
Right to property	4	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	2.1%
Rights of older persons	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1.04%
Grand total	191	85	2	16	14	9	153	38	65	100%
Percentages	100%	44.5%	1%	8.03%	4.3%	4.7%	80.1%	19.9%	34%	

Analysis of Requests for Assistance Received by the NCHR in 2018

1. In 2018, the NCHR received 191 requests for assistance, compared with 135 requests in 2017, of which 119 requests related to civil and political rights and 64 requests related to economic, social

and cultural rights, while the number of requests for assistance relating to the rights of the groups most in need of protection was 8 requests. A total of 85 requests were closed with a satisfactory result, representing 44.5%, and two requests were closed without reaching a satisfactory result, representing 1%. The number of requests still under follow-up reached 65 requests, representing 34%. The Center received 16 requests falling outside its mandate, representing 8.3%; 14 requests were closed because the violation was not proven, representing 7.3% of the total number of requests for assistance. In addition, 9 requests for assistance, representing 4.7%, were closed owing to the non-cooperation of the persons who submitted them.

2. The reason why requests remain under follow-up, or why a number of requests for assistance were closed with an unsatisfactory result, is the non-cooperation of the body from which assistance was requested, or its provision of perfunctory replies that do not lead to a satisfactory result.
3. The Center notes a tangible increase in requests for assistance in 2018 compared with 2017, reaching 191, an increase of 56 requests: requests for assistance relating to economic, social and cultural rights increased by 25 requests, and requests for assistance relating to civil and political rights likewise increased by 29 requests.
4. Receipt of complaints through the applicant's attendance in person at the NCHR's headquarters still ranks first among the means of receiving requests for assistance, with 130 complaints, representing 68.6%, followed by receipt by fax with 29 complaints, representing 15.2%. The Center received 18 requests through the hotline, representing 094%, and 6 requests by ordinary mail, representing 031%, while the number of requests by e-mail decreased to 4 requests, representing 020%. Requests were received through press monitoring in 3 complaints, representing 015%, and the mechanism of receiving requests through liaison officers in the governorates came last with 1 request, representing 005% of the total number of requests for assistance.

Summary of the NCHR's Achievements in 2018

First: Monitoring and Verification

- Monitoring the environmental situation in seven governorates, preparing a detailed report on each governorate, and addressing the competent authorities regarding the observations recorded.
- Conducting four monitoring visits to the regular courts (the Amman Court of First Instance, the Jerash Court of First Instance, the Ma'an Court of First Instance and the Aqaba Court of First Instance); a detailed report on these visits was prepared and their outputs were documented.
- Conducting 16 visits to Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers in 11 governorates and preparing specialized reports.
- Monitoring, and conducting a substantive and qualitative analysis of, the state of peaceful assembly as published in the media for the years 2015–2017.
- Monitoring the twenty-fifth (evening) legislative session held to discuss the Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2016, convened on Tuesday, 20 March 2018, and dedicated to discussing the Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2018.
- Monitoring the conditions of women farmers and analyzing the legislation regulating their work.
- Preparing an analytical research paper entitled "Analysis of National Legislation Relating to Child Labor" and publishing it on the Center's website.
- Monitoring the joint legislative session held to discuss the disputed articles of the Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2016 on Monday, 30 April 2018, dedicated to settling the legal dispute between the House of Representatives and the Senate over the Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2018.
- Preparing monitoring reports on the conditions of women in remote villages (Falha, Al-Nahda, Aliya, Al-Mathlutha, Al-Shaqiq, Eastern Al-Dhuhaiha and Western Al-Dhuhaiha) in Madaba Governorate, which were visited in late 2017, and submitting them to the Prime Ministry and the relevant authorities.
- Continuing to monitor and assess the conditions of women in remote areas deprived of services.
- Conducting a field visit to the Ministry of Justice on 10 December 2018 to review the measures taken by the Ministry of Justice to develop the justice system in both its criminal and civil branches, in response to the amendments introduced to a range of legislation during 2017.
- Preparing the NCHR's response to the questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.
- Monitoring the state of the right of access to information at the Ministry of Agriculture on 21 March 2018; the competent authorities and the Information Council were provided with a detailed report on the visit, with the aim of developing procedures to enable individuals to exercise the right of access to information.
- Monitoring the conditions of juveniles at the Osama bin Zaid Center/Russeifa (the juvenile escape incident), the Irbid Juvenile Center, and the southern region: Karak, Ma'an and Aqaba.
- Monitoring the state of the right of access to information at the Ministry of Environment on 9 April 2018; the competent authorities and the Information Council were provided with a detailed report on the visit, with the aim of developing procedures to enable individuals to exercise the right of access to information.
- Monitoring the state of the right of access to information at the Ministry of Education on 1 May 2018; the competent authorities and the Information Council were provided with a detailed report on the visit, with the aim of developing procedures to enable individuals to exercise the right of access to information.
- Monitoring the conditions of persons with disabilities at the rehabilitation and training centers in Russeifa and Irbid, the Community Rehabilitation Center in Al-Wehdah, and the Saudi Center for Blind Women.
- Monitoring the conditions of students with disabilities at the Al-Manar Centers for Intellectual Development in Karak Governorate and Amman, and the Cerebral Palsy Center in Aqaba.
- Monitoring the protest stands held at the Fourth Circle.
- Monitoring the protest stands held in front of the Professional Associations Complex.

- Monitoring the protest stands held by lawyers at the Palace of Justice.
- Monitoring the sit-in by municipal employees.
- Monitoring the sit-in by employees of the Sharia courts.
- Monitoring the sit-in held in front of the Ministry of Tourism.
- Monitoring the sit-in held in front of the House of Representatives demanding the expansion of the general amnesty.
- Monitoring the sit-in by yellow taxi drivers.
- Monitoring the sit-in by Armed Forces retirees in Dabouq.
- Monitoring the protest stand held at the Al-Nisr traffic light.
- Monitoring the sit-in by the families of detainees held at Al-Muwaqqar 2 Correctional and Rehabilitation Center.
- Monitoring the strike by workers of the Mu'jizat Al-Asr ready-made garments factory.
- Monitoring the strike by Ministry of Health employees.
- Monitoring the strike by workers of the Al-Haditha factory who were transferred to the Al-Waha factory and wished to travel.
- Monitoring the strike by workers of the Abwab Al-Khair factory.
- Monitoring the strike by workers of the "Classic" factory in Al-Hassan Industrial City in Ramtha.
- Monitoring the state of health services provided to patients with H1N1 influenza and the precautions taken to prevent infection at the Jordan University Hospital, Prince Hamzah Hospital, Al-Bashir Hospital and the Islamic Hospital.
- Conducting a monitoring visit to the Al-Mutafawwiqa ready-made garments factory in the Industrial Estates City, Sahab.
- Monitoring the strike by workers of NWE, a company affiliated with "Eco", for oil shale exploration in the "Swaqa" area near the hazardous waste landfill.
- Monitoring the state of health, curative and preventive services provided to citizens at the Al-Yarmouk Government Hospital in Irbid Governorate.
- Conducting a monitoring visit to the Qaws Quzah (Rainbow) ready-made garments factory operating in the Al-Dhulail area of Zarqa Governorate.
- Monitoring the sit-in by pharmacists working for the Al-Khumasiya company (Dawakum), together with the Jordan Pharmacists Association.
- Monitoring the issues between the "Thabahtoon" campaign and the Ministry of Education regarding vocational education.
- Following up on the financial deficit of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which threatened to halt the educational process in the Agency's schools.
- Conducting a visit to the King Hussein Cancer Center, Al-Bashir Hospital and the headquarters of the National Committee for the Support of Cancer Patients, to review developments relating to health insurance for cancer patients and the procedures followed for their treatment.

Second: Awareness, Training and Capacity Building

- Implementing 10 training courses, each lasting between two and five days, for members of civil society organizations, independent institutions, official agencies, the judiciary and professional associations. The courses focused on international human rights standards, the role of the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) in protecting and promoting human rights in the Kingdom, and monitoring, documentation and report writing.
- Implementing a comprehensive capacity-building training program for the Center's new staff, which lasted for more than 6 months.
- Delivering 60 various lectures to Public Security personnel on human rights standards and the role of law enforcement agencies.
- Delivering 22 lectures on human rights to students of Ministry of Education and UNRWA schools, within the framework of ongoing cooperation with the Ministry of Education and UNRWA to raise students' awareness of human rights.

- Delivering 25 lectures on human rights at a number of civil society organizations, the Greater Amman Municipality and the local community.
- Implementing a training course for members of the Jordanian National Observatory for Human Rights Association in Irbid Governorate on 29–30 January 2018, with the aim of spreading a culture of human rights, particularly in the governorates; the course resulted in the graduation of 25 male and female human rights activists.
- Implementing a human rights training course for members of the Centrist Parties Current Coalition on 28–29 March 2018.
- Implementing the first human rights course for members of the Jordanian Center for Political Studies on 6 and 8 May 2018.
- Implementing the second human rights course for members of the Jordanian Center for Political Studies on 7 and 9 May 2018, with the aim of raising awareness of the culture of human rights; 15 male and female activists graduated from each course.
- Implementing the first phase (7–30 January 2018) and the second phase (25 January – 25 February 2018) of the capacity-building program for the staff of the National Center for Human Rights.
- Implementing the activities of the second phase of the Child Labor Project.
- Implementing 3 training courses for staff of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) on monitoring, documentation and report writing (each course lasting 3 days) during July 2018.
- Implementing a training course for members of Al-Sa'ada Association on 24–25 July 2018.
- Implementing a workshop for staff of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation on 26 July 2018.
- Implementing a human rights training course for members of the Union of Charitable Societies/Zarqa Governorate on 29–30 August 2018.
- Holding a meeting with the Police Academy to discuss and institutionalize cooperation between the Center and the Academy on 10 September 2018.
- Implementing a training course for staff of the Royal Maritime Authority in Aqaba Governorate on 7–9 October 2018.
- Implementing a training course for members of Turab Al-Watan Association on 24–25 October 2018.
- Holding a seminar at the Raymoun Cultural Forum/Jerash on 4 November 2018.
- Holding a seminar on tribal displacement (jalwa) in Karak Governorate on 29 November 2018.
- Implementing the activities of the Karama Project in Mafraq Governorate on 29 November 2018.
- Holding a seminar entitled "Combating Corruption Is a Human Right" in celebration of International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2018.
- Implementing the activities of the Older Persons Project, which extended for more than a month starting from mid-September 2018.
- Implementing the judges' training program on 8 and 15 December 2018.
- Implementing the training course for engineers in Karak Governorate on 22 December 2018.
- Implementing a series of workshops for members of the Vocational Training Institute, totaling 5 workshops over two months.
- Implementing a series of workshops on the rights of older persons over two months.
- Delivering an intervention entitled "Women's Rights Are Human Rights" at the Sisterhood Is Global Institute (SIGI) on the occasion of International Human Rights Day.
- Implementing an awareness workshop on "Building the Capacities of Greater Amman Municipality Staff on the Rights of Older Persons", held at the Municipality for 20 of its employees, who were made aware of the rights of older persons under international standards and national legislation, and of the role of governmental institutions, the National Center for Human Rights and civil society organizations in protecting and promoting the rights of older persons.
- Implementing an awareness workshop, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, the National Council for Family Affairs and HelpAge International, in the form of a seminar on

the occasion of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, held on 26 June 2018, with the aim of shedding light on the issue of abuse against older men and women, the legislation protecting older persons from violence, and the judicial and administrative measures taken to strengthen the protection of older persons from abuse, violence and neglect; discussing the legislative, service-related and policy challenges associated with reducing abuse of older persons; and putting forward a number of proposals and recommendations to overcome these challenges.

- Implementing weekly awareness workshops.
- Implementing several awareness workshops throughout the year at the Police Academy on the rights of the groups most in need of protection.
- Preparing the proceedings of the second day of the conference entitled "International Conference on the Prolonged Israeli Occupation and the Reality of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967", held from 12 to 13 May 2018 in cooperation between the National Center for Human Rights and the Arab Network for Human Rights.

Third: Studies, Research and Reports

- Preparing the shadow report on Jordan's report under the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism.
- Preparing a study on the state of peaceful assembly in Jordan during the period 2015–2017.
- Preparing a study of the recommendations issued by the National Center for Human Rights during the period 2012–2017.
- Preparing an analytical study of the legal and social dimensions of administrative detention in Jordan under the Crime Prevention Law.
- Presenting a peer-reviewed research paper at the international conference on refugees held by Yarmouk University on 14–15 March 2018.
- Preparing a police manual on international and national human rights standards at the preliminary investigation stage.

1. Working Papers

- Preparing a working paper on gender-based violence against women and girls and presenting it at the First National Conference.
- Preparing a working paper on the state of sustainable development in Jordan.
- Preparing a working paper on the state of civil society in Jordan.
- Preparing a monitoring tool on the role of the national human rights institution in monitoring reproductive rights.
- Preparing a position paper on the view of the National Center for Human Rights regarding the rise in the unemployment rate.
- Preparing a position paper on the view of the National Center for Human Rights regarding the draft income tax law.
- Preparing a position paper on the view of the National Center for Human Rights regarding health and its problems.
- Preparing an analytical paper on early marriage.
- Preparing a working paper on "The Role of the National Center for Human Rights in Realizing the Human Rights System" at the celebration held by the Jordanian National Observatory for Human Rights Association on the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- A working paper entitled "Human Rights Guarantees in Security Centers" at the workshop implemented by the Public Security Directorate (PSD) at the Royal Police Academy.
- Preparing a concept paper on combating corruption, 12 November 2018.

2. Informational Publications

- Preparing a brochure on the role of the National Center for Human Rights in protecting women and girls from gender-based violence.

- Preparing and designing a brochure on the Center and a media flash (short promotional clip) about the Center, to be presented to the Community Media Network at the celebration of International Human Rights Day.
- Preparing brochures on the international human rights conventions and printed booklets.

Fourth: Domestic and International Participation

- Participating in the global meeting on the role of national human rights institutions in monitoring women's sexual and reproductive health rights, held in Istanbul on 5–6 December 2018, and preparing a detailed report.
- Participating in the evaluation of the government performance monitoring report prepared by Al-Hayat Center/Rased on 12 November 2018, held at the Geneva Hotel.
- Participating in a training-of-trainers course on advocating for equality from an Islamic and gender perspective, organized by the Jordanian National Commission for Women, held in Aqaba Governorate during the period 16–23 September 2018.
- Participating in a training-of-trainers course to build the capacities of national human rights institutions on monitoring sexual and reproductive rights, held during the period 23–27 May 2018 at the Kempinski Hotel, organized by the United Nations Population Fund office and ESCWA.
- Participating in the training workshop on policy analysis held at the Geneva Hotel on 22 March 2018.
- Participating in the Ninth International Forum of NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO, under the title "Another Look at Migration", and the International Day of Peace, "Drones and Robots in the Service of Peace", Tunis, 26–29 September 2018; a detailed report on the forum was submitted.
- Attending a meeting to discuss the completion of the European Union roadmap for engagement with civil society organizations on 16 September 2018, held at the European Union building, and preparing a detailed report.
- Participating in the meeting organized by the Economic and Social Council on evaluating the experience of decentralization in Jordan, held on 28 November 2018.
- Participating in the Thirteenth International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions, entitled "Expanding the Civic Space and Promoting and Protecting Human Rights Defenders, with a Specific Focus on Women: The Role of National Human Rights Institutions", held on 10–12 October 2018 in Marrakesh, Morocco, and preparing a detailed report on the participation.
- Participating in the meeting of the committee concerned with training women factory workers on their rights, formed by the Business Women Forum, 20 June 2018.
- Participating in the preparation and review of the final draft of the Mental Health Strategic Plan 2018–2022, in which the National Center will be a partner in implementing its second pillar, on health care, and its fourth pillar, on oversight, monitoring and research.
- Participating in the workshop held at the Dead Sea on the Universal Periodic Review report.
- Participating in the panel discussion on "The Reality of Occupational Injuries and Occupational Safety and Health in the Manufacturing Industries Sector", organized by the Social Security Corporation on Monday, 12 February 2018, and preparing a report on it.
- Participating in the training course on the Sustainable Development Goals and the mechanisms for implementing them at the national level, and implementing a two-day participatory workshop for the team concerned with freedoms and human rights at the Kempinski Hotel, in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and ESCWA, Amman, during the period 14–15 March 2018.
- Participating in the launch ceremony of the National Plan for Mental Health and Addiction on the occasion of International Nurses Day, in the implementation of which the National Center will have a role.
- Meeting with the Committee on Women and Family Affairs of the House of Representatives and providing it with the obstacles facing women in the field of employment, 21 March 2018.

- Participating in the workshop organized by the Social Security Corporation on the social security coverage of workers in the bakery and confectionery sector, submitting proposals to include the largest possible number of them in social security, and preparing a report thereon.
- Attending two sessions of the parliamentary Labor and Development Committee during its discussion of the Provisional Law amending the Labor Law of 2010, and submitting the Center's observations and recommendations on the Provisional Law.
- Attending a regional conference entitled "Law in a Changing World", held at Yarmouk University on 25–26 May 2018.
- Preparing and organizing the panel discussion on the Draft Law Amending the Income Tax Law of 2018, on 11 June 2018.
- Preparing and organizing the second panel discussion on the Draft Law Amending the Income Tax Law of 2018, on 13 August 2018.
- Attending a panel discussion on the Personal Status Law No. (36) of 2010 on 27 January 2018, organized by the Sisterhood Is Global Institute – Jordan (SIGI).
- Attending a dialogue session on the role of civil society in legislative reform in Jordan on 18 March 2018, organized by the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Institute.
- Attending a course on outcome harvesting organized by Karama and the Danish Institute for Human Rights; this is the method through which the final reports measuring the project's impact will be prepared, as compared with the traditional method of measuring project impact.
- Participating in the thematic meeting on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), held in cooperation between the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP), the Danish Institute Against Torture (DIGNITY), the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the National Center for Human Rights, which was held at the Center's headquarters on Thursday, 22 November 2018.
- Participating in the national dialogue on the rights of women, girls and youth for the purposes of the Universal Periodic Review report being prepared by the Government.
- Participating in the committee on the deinstitutionalization of care homes/Ministry of Social Development, and on alternatives to care homes.
- Setting out the Center's observations on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Setting out the Center's observations on the Asia Pacific Forum paper for the conference on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Setting out the observations of the National Center for Human Rights on the State of the Country Report issued by the Economic and Social Council.
- Participating in the dialogues on the Jordanian Personal Status Law (early marriage).
- Participating in case studies with the Family Protection Department and the relevant authorities.
- Setting out the Center's observations on a study issued by the National Council for Family Affairs on sexual harassment.
- Participating in the 16 Days campaign against violence and sexual harassment through awareness sessions implemented throughout the Kingdom.
- Completing a questionnaire on the rights of rural women for the Human Rights Council.
- Participating as a member of the committee for drafting the Working Child Protection Regulation, emanating from the Ministry of Social Development.
- Participating with the Higher Population Council in preparing the National Plan to Reduce the Marriage of Persons under 18 Years of Age for the years 2018–2022.
- Participating in the Best Interests of the Child conference organized by the National Council for Family Affairs.
- Continuing to monitor the conditions of children in nurseries.
- Participating in the conference on the rights of older persons in the Republic of Korea.
- Participating as a member of the National Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Older Persons, established by the Sisterhood Is Global Institute and HelpAge International.
- Participating as a member of the committee for developing the National Executive Plan for the Jordanian National Strategy for Older Persons for the years 2018–2022, emanating from the National Council for Family Affairs; this membership resulted in the issuance of the Strategy, which aims to give the issues of older persons the importance they deserve within the policies

and plans of the Jordanian State so that they are placed on the scale of national priorities, in addition to improving the quality of life of older persons and enabling them to live in dignity in society.

Fifth: Legal Opinions

The legal opinions comprise the Center's observations and recommendations on draft laws, provisional laws and drafts of draft laws placed on the agenda of the House of Representatives, as well as on some regulations. The legal opinions completed are as follows:

- Preparing a draft of the Draft Law on Guaranteeing the Right of Access to Information.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Civil Retirement Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Law on the Formation of Municipal Courts of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law on the Fund for Martyrs of the Armed Forces and Security Services of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the second Draft Law Amending the Income Tax Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the procedural provisions relating to custody and judicial detention and its alternatives.
- A legal opinion on the scope of the power to convene extraordinary sessions under the Jordanian Constitution, compared with other Arab constitutions.
- Preparing a legal opinion and presenting it during participation in the technical committee for preparing the Draft Law Amending the Juveniles Law of 2018, held at the Ministry of Social Development.
- A legal opinion on Provisional Law No. (26) of 2010, a law amending the Labor Law.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Weapons and Ammunition Law of 2013.
- A legal opinion on the Flexible Work Regulation of 2017.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2016.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Income Tax Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the normal distribution curve set out in Regulation No. (51) of 2018, the Draft Regulation Amending the Civil Service Regulation of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Instructions on Family Integration of Persons with Disabilities of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Jordan Bar Association Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Agriculture Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Juveniles Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the School Discipline Instructions No. (5) of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Criminal Procedure Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the draft amending the Provisional Universities Law No. (16) of 2010.
- A legal opinion on the Legal Aid Draft of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the draft of the Provisional Personal Status Law No. (36) of 2010.
- A legal opinion on the Public Health Law No. (11) of 2017.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law on Guaranteeing the Right of Access to Information of 2012.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Cybercrimes Law of 2017.
- A legal opinion on the draft instructions of the Audiovisual Media Complaints Committee.
- A legal opinion on the draft of the Draft Child Rights Law.
- A legal opinion on the Draft General Amnesty Law of 2018.
- A legal opinion on the Draft Law on the Fund for Martyrs of the Jordan Armed Forces and Security Services of 2018.

Sixth: Memoranda of Understanding

- Signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Center for Human Rights and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.
- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Center for Human Rights and the Jordan Press Association.

Seventh: Projects

- Implementing the project "Contributing to the Inclusion of Older Persons in Livelihood Activities".
- Completing the implementation of the fourth phase of the Karama Project and the Project's activities during 2018, under which 12 training workshops were implemented as part of the Karama Project's activities for 2018 in all governorates of the Kingdom, under the title "Combating Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment", focusing on lawyers, human rights activists and university students.
- Implementing the Women's Economic Empowerment Project in the village of Suwaimeh/Southern Shuneh, funded by the Asia Pacific Forum, for a period of two months, with the aim of building the capacities of local community women on women's economic rights under international standards and national legislation, and on how to prepare small projects.
- Completing the implementation of the Civil Society Support Project in Jordan.
- Implementing specialized foundational training courses for judges on international human rights standards and conventions, targeting 70 judges.