



The Fourteenth Annual Report on the State of Human Rights in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan For the Year 1439 AH – 2017

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Introduction

I

Except for the widening divergence between the Government's policies and decisions, on the one hand, and the aspirations and expectations of citizens, on the other, the year 2017 witnessed no substantive developments in the human rights situation in Jordan; the relationship between the two sides was, in general, dominated by a state of disharmony and lack of trust.

Throughout that year, the public mood was marked by a high degree of tension, anxiety and even fear of the future. The decisions adopted by the Government in the areas of improving performance and combating petty and mid-level corruption did not produce the desired effect of changing the public mood and the prevailing state of anxiety among the public.

Nor did the Government's approach, which was generally characterized by exaggerating achievements, denying mistakes and concealing violations, undergo any noteworthy change. Many government departments confined themselves to activating the public relations mechanism, in addition to the excessive use of the authority of the law against persons involved in the popular movement (Hirak), not to mention resorting to warnings about the consequences of criticism voiced by citizens for the country's stability, which reflects the Government's impatience with such legitimate criticism.

Regional and international circumstances contributed to aggravating the domestic situation, particularly by deepening public anxiety regarding the Government's decisions, whether in respect of economic policies or those adopted in the field of education and public instruction, which targeted changes to the school curriculum, the status of the teacher and the Civil Service Regulation under the banner of reforming the educational process.

Voices critical of the anti-corruption measures, and of the laxity in uncovering and holding accountable the perpetrators of grand corruption, also grew louder. The most prominent criticisms leveled against the Government and its agencies were: the spread of corruption at various levels; the practice of favoritism and nepotism (wasta) by influential persons and senior officials; the Government's inability to exercise its general mandate; and the rise of unemployment to unprecedented levels.

It was natural that the result, in such circumstances, should be a decline in citizens' trust in the State to its lowest level since the period of the Arab Spring.

On the other hand, public trust in Parliament declined, and there were recurrent reports of interference in the affairs of the judiciary, particularly in a limited number of sensitive cases.

This was the distinguishing feature of 2017 in the field of human rights: accumulated doubts, recurrent accounts and circulating talk about the Government's domestic and foreign policies and the absence of transparency and of impartial and independent investigation into practices of grand corruption, set against blatant criticism and harsh accusations—exceeding the ceiling protected by international instruments—made by citizens directly against public figures; in addition to an arbitrary, albeit limited, use of legislation and the rule of law by the authorities, exercised selectively in response to this overstepping of limits, which substantively undermined the conditions of a fair trial.

Most of the complaints and violations monitored by the Center during 2017 were concentrated in six main areas, namely:

- Freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

- Freedom of expression and peaceful protest.
- Freedom to organize in trade unions.
- Economic and social rights (poverty, unemployment, education, health, transport and work).
- The freedom of civil society to carry out activities and obtain funding.
- Administrative detention under the Crime Prevention Law No. (7) of 1954.

Among the examples of violations of freedom of thought, conscience and belief that stood out markedly in 2017 were those relating to the treatment of detainees affiliated with the Salafi current (both jihadist and mainstream), who were tried on charges of terrorism, joining terrorist groups and promoting ISIS (Daesh); the majority of these persons are young people.

The judicial sentences handed down against them are considered severe and a reflection of the official policy of showing no form of leniency or tolerance toward what is known as religious extremism!

Although terrorism is a scourge that must be fought relentlessly, human rights may not, under any circumstances or on any pretext, be violated in the course of combating it; rather, respect for the human rights enshrined in the Constitution and in the international instruments to which Jordan is committed is considered an essential element in the success of national efforts to combat it.

It was therefore not surprising that popular complaints about government policies in the areas of combating international terrorism widened, as did complaints about policies relating to the handling of refugee and asylum issues, owing to their impact on the civil, political and economic, and even social and cultural, rights of broad segments of the host community, particularly in the governorates of Irbid and Mafraq.

Political and economic considerations at times resulted in restrictions on the Jordanian labor movement and limitations on the freedom to organize in trade unions. The General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions controls the labor movement in an unsound manner, and the Federation's long-standing administrative policies, which generally enjoy official support, have had a negative impact on workers' trade union rights and interests and on the freedom to organize in trade unions; these policies have drawn international criticism of this practice.

The general state of frustration that prevailed from 2014 to 2017 with regard to the performance of the executive and legislative authorities in achieving social justice, protecting against poverty and addressing unemployment, as well as the decline in public services, administrative slackness and the persistence of the phenomenon of wasta and favoritism—particularly in favor of senior officials and influential persons, their relatives and their cronies—contributed to driving citizens to depart from what is customary and permissible, and even to exceed the limits protected by international standards in the field of criticism and accountability.

With regard to freedom of expression and peaceful protest, the most prominent violations consisted of the detention of journalists and the holding of Hiraq activists because of tweets, appeals, letters and speeches addressed to the Head of State and his family. The inability of successive governments to exercise their general mandate, assume responsibility and take many important official decisions, particularly those of a political and economic dimension, drove citizens to address His Majesty the King to intervene to remedy the deteriorating situation; some of them went beyond what is permitted by the Constitution and what Article (15) provides as the "right of Jordanians to address the public authorities on any personal matters affecting them or on matters relating to public affairs". In some cases, these persons, in exercising the right to criticize and hold to account, exceeded the guarantees provided by Article (19) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, as these

communications in certain cases contained offensive language that may amount to accusation without evidence and, at times, character assassination. However, those who made them relied on information about corruption practiced by public figures or persons of political and social influence that was circulated on social media, or on media reports published abroad and recurrent remarks by former senior officials, repeated in public gatherings, alleging unlawful official interference in parliamentary elections and the commission of major acts of corruption, to which some of them had been witnesses!

The absence of an independent investigation, or of a clear and convincing official account refuting such talk, together with the weakness of the official media's tools, led to a widening circle of popular conviction in many of the accusations circulating about public figures, to the point that they could no longer be regarded as mere malicious rumors.

The manner in which law enforcement agencies dealt with a number of citizens who overstepped the limits with hurtful criticism—at times amounting to an affront to the dignity and reputation of persons—further complicated this situation. Charges of "undermining the system of government", "conspiring to overthrow the system of government" and "suspending the Constitution" were brought against persons merely for making statements and remarks that included criticism of officials without evidence. Moreover, a number of cases relating to insulting the Head of State and his family were handled in a manner inconsistent with fair trial standards or the presumption of innocence, and at times with the independence of the judiciary and the principle of the separation of powers. These persons were detained by the Public Prosecutor of the State Security Court under a criminal characterization different from what they had actually said, not to mention that the trial of such persons for such statements and remarks falls within the jurisdiction of the regular judiciary.

It is well known that all sound legislation (national and international) rejects affronts to human dignity and harm to the reputation of persons, whatever their rank and status, and that anyone who commits such an offense may be held accountable under the national legislation in force by the regular judiciary.

However, the absence of transparency and independent investigation made the trial of members of the public who repeat such talk a controversial matter. Such remarks—particularly in light of their repetition by persons who previously held public office and who are close to the institutions concerned around which talk of corruption circulates—could no longer be regarded as mere false accusations or character assassination, even if some of those who are the subject of these accusations may be innocent!

All of this put to the test the guarantees of freedom of opinion and expression and the right to criticize and hold to account, as well as the protection of dignity and reputation. Yet the clear divergence between the natural judiciary and the court of law—where the final word belongs to the principle of the rule of law and the presumption of innocence—and the "court" or judgments of public opinion in this regard posed a major challenge to the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) as a national human rights oversight mechanism that cannot disregard the principle of the rule of law and the presumption of innocence, yet at the same time cannot overlook, "or be indifferent to", the trends of public opinion and the convictions of the public, especially since talk of corruption has become general convictions and impressions that, in the view of the majority of society, need no support from judicial rulings and decisions—that is, if we exclude the corrupt themselves!

II

On another level, it must be noted that in 2017 the Government undertook measures and efforts to deal with violations affecting human rights. These efforts may be summarized as: (a) managing violations;

(b) measures in the field of protection; and (c) efforts in the field of promoting these rights. While the track of managing violations witnessed tangible progress, efforts in the field of awareness-raising and human rights education—that is, promoting these rights—remained at a minimum.

Decisions and policies relating to protection brought little achievement, whether in terms of amending and enacting the necessary legislation or developing appropriate policies. Such efforts aimed at protecting human rights may be summarized under three pillars, namely: **security, development and reform**.

Progress on the **security** track came mainly within the traditional concept of security (combating terrorism; detaining and imprisoning those described as affiliates of extremist organizations and ideologies; combating drugs; and pursuing many ordinary criminals and those who caused anxiety to citizens and threatened public tranquility and social peace), which is commendable and must be emphasized. However, these efforts were accompanied by serious abuses of human rights, the most prominent of which were the absence of fair trial guarantees in many cases (particularly at the preliminary investigation stage), prolonged detention, the harshness of the sentences handed down by the State Security Court—particularly against affiliates of the Salafi current and those convicted of supporting or promoting terrorism—and the expanded use of the Crime Prevention Law No. (7) of 1954 by administrative governors.

Numerous complaints were received alleging that detainees had been subjected to torture, and it was possible to verify a limited number of these complaints! Relatives of detainees and prisoners from the Salafi current submitted repeated complaints to the NCHR concerning violations that occurred during raids to arrest wanted persons, and appealed to His Majesty the King to issue a special pardon for their imprisoned sons.

As for the other two pillars of the concept of protection, namely **development and reform** (political, economic and legislative), they were dominated by stagnation and/or regression. This fluctuation between stagnation and regression in protection initiatives in the field of human rights in the Kingdom came mainly as a result of the nature of the existing political, security, legislative and social structures, which—collectively—have governed the performance and conduct of the State in general.

Legislation, like public policy, is affected in its nature and quality to a large extent by the political framework of the State, while also being affected—albeit to a lesser degree—by the internal structures of society.

Likewise, legislation in any State is affected by its economic approach, and traditions, heritage and social customs also play a role in determining the prevailing philosophy of legislation and in steering many public policies. Practical experience in managing public affairs, the level of public participation and the space granted to civil society, in addition to the level of effectiveness and vitality of civil society organizations, also play their role in this regard. All these factors play a fundamental role in developing legislation that shackles or frustrates freedoms and social progress. We therefore find that many national laws that negatively affect citizens' rights—whether in the area of discrimination on the basis of gender and inequality, or in the area of restricting fundamental freedoms (freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, and tightening the noose on associations with regard to foreign funding, etc.)—have resisted all efforts aimed at changing or amending them, including those undertaken by the NCHR and societal demands.

In the Jordanian case in particular, political structures have stood out as having the widest impact in determining the nature of most legislation relating to citizens' rights and freedoms and in determining the nature of policies. The role of political structures was thus the most prominent in slowing down the efforts required to amend legislation, change policies and end the practices that occurred in 2017 and affected human rights, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression and opinion and the right to peaceful assembly, the narrowing of the space for public participation by citizens in policy-making, and the restrictions on civil society activities. The NCHR therefore wishes to draw attention to this dimension as the decisive factor in the persistence of many major human rights violations in the Kingdom throughout the course of the Jordanian State spanning nearly a century, particularly with respect to legislation and policies.

Here the following question arises: why are political structures, among other structures and frameworks (economic, social, legislative and even security), the most influential on the state of human rights in Jordan?

The answer to this question in detail may be lengthy, but two main reasons can be identified for the control exercised by political structures over the reality and development of human rights in Jordan. The first is universal, shared by all States and entities, and relates to the nature of politics in general. The concept of politics is in itself a comprehensive concept, and its role is firmly established in managing public affairs and dealing with the rights and duties of all parties (the State, the government, society, the citizen, the authorities, etc.). Through political structures, with their tools and mechanisms—laws and legislation, legitimate force, and the collection of resources (taxation) and their distribution (or budget allocation)—it is determined "which category or group obtains which gains, at what time and place, and by what means and method, and what is expected or required of it in return". This means that politics is the "sorter" that determines duties on the one hand, and rights and gains among the various segments of society on the other, being the mechanism that structures opportunities, whether through the nature of legislation or through the allocation of resources (what is known as the distribution of capabilities or the sharing of influence and power). Accordingly, the economic and social rights of citizens are substantially affected by political decisions, as are civil and political rights.

Second, there is a historical duality that has marked the public policies of the Jordanian State, represented by the need to strike a degree of balance between the aspirations, ambitions and rights of citizens and the interests of the international powers that established the Arab regional order at the beginning of the last century, shaped the policies of the region and later provided care and material and political support to the Jordanian entity. The Hashemite vision played a fundamental role in managing and achieving such a balance, and it has continued to play the role of arbiter and manager of the process of balancing these opposing elements throughout the various stages since the establishment of the Jordanian State, although the contradictions currently existing between these interests have reached an unprecedented degree, and it is natural that these contradictions should find their way into government policies.

This reality, which has characterized the national situation in Jordan from the founding of the Emirate/Kingdom to the present day, has been reflected on human rights in particular, especially with regard to freedoms and civil and political rights (a government with general mandate, a strong and independent Parliament, a free, promising, professional and independent press, strong parties with popular bases, etc.), or the lack thereof.

However, human rights have not merely been affected by this structural factor. Conversely, the extent of commitment to, respect for and protection of these rights is considered an indicator of the nature of the political structures in any State, of their effectiveness and of the nature of the impact they have on the national situation as a whole, particularly the manner in which national resources and economic and fiscal policies are managed to achieve development, for example. Integrating human rights into public policies is an essential requirement for the success of State policies aimed at achieving sustainable development, which is supported by strong governorate councils that practice decentralization in the full sense of the word.

Hence, a qualitative change in the human rights situation in the Kingdom necessarily requires a structural and radical change in the management of this relationship between the internal and the external, in terms of objectives, priorities, means and tools collectively. Development policies were among the most affected by this situation, as there was a marked presence of the concept of the "rentier state" and its corollary, the principle of "client and patron", in these policies in Jordan, which were adopted over past decades and substantially affected the human rights of Jordanians. The concept of "paternalistic authority" generally manifests itself when the individual is viewed, in certain circumstances, as a mere "client" of the State, to whom the latter provides various services while he in turn grants the State his loyalty. The difference between this concept and the concept of citizenship—"one of the pillars of human rights"—is clear and evident.

In the case of citizenship, the individual is a partner and not a mere client of official institutions, and obtains services not in exchange for declaring loyalty or relinquishing political rights, but as a legal right that he exercises in the making of all policies and decisions. Likewise, the idea of loyalty and allegiance to the regime disappears, and loyalty and allegiance become owed to the homeland, with emphasis on the role of the citizen in making and evaluating policies and holding those in power to account; such participation and the accountability that accompanies it become the criterion of citizenship and, consequently, the indicator of allegiance and loyalty.

The Government has recently solved half of this problem by ending the rentier role of the State without providing the necessary social protection umbrella for the poor and vulnerable groups of Jordanian society, which were formed, grew and exercised their role and existence for several generations under that policy for nearly a century.

The Government has not completed this journey and dealt with the citizen as a full partner in decision-making in accordance with the right to public participation enshrined in both the Constitution and the international human rights instruments. The partnership recently developed between the State and the Jordanian citizen remains incomplete; this partnership is conditional, deficient and restricted by controls that make it, at best, a merely nominal partnership. The Political Parties, Decentralization and Elections Laws are the most prominent examples of this dimension. The shortcomings in these laws, and in many others like them, are the main source of many violations of the rights of Jordanians. One may view the repeated announcements about drafting a new social contract with optimism; however, the inability of successive governments to exercise their general mandate properly, and the continued influence of the existing traditional political and legislative structures, may turn such statements into a mere form of public relations. Such doubts about the chances of success of this orientation are reinforced by the haste of various officials to affirm that this concept of a social contract does not imply any intention to touch the Constitution! The citizen is therefore entitled to wonder about the nature of the political reform about which official statements have repeatedly been made, as well as the notion of the hoped-for social contract to restructure the relationship between the State and society on the one hand, and between the

legislative and executive authorities on the other. This relationship in its current form suffers from considerable imbalances and remains far from a state in which it would be reflected positively on citizens' rights; many constitutional articles relating to the formation of the authorities, their relationship and duties, and the formation of the government and Parliament and its responsibilities, are not appropriately and fully consistent with the principle that the nation is the source of powers, and, before that, with the principles of political pluralism, democracy and human rights.

Also prominent, in the context of the governing authority's efforts to maintain balance in the traditional role of the existing political structures, is the phenomenon of overlap between considerations of **development, democracy and national security**. These considerations have affected the concept of governance, its working mechanisms and the management of public affairs, particularly where the relationship between the State and society is concerned, since the view of society as one of the main sources of threat to the regime still prevails in the outlook of many of the State's pillars and officials at various civilian and military levels. This view also substantially affects the other two pillars of protection—democracy and development—as many officials refuse, or at least hesitate, to acknowledge that the process of managing the geopolitical duality, which has formed the essence of political life in Jordan, has required the adoption of approaches that on many occasions have not been consistent with the aspirations and expectations of citizens and, consequently, with their rights.

It was therefore not surprising that such approaches and the various efforts of officials did not rise to the level of removing the tension in the relationship between the State and society, as the concept of a State that seeks to control society and dominate its movement prevailed over that of a State that serves as a tool or mechanism for serving society. The nature of the various laws, policies and measures adopted in relation to the activities of civil society organizations is a clear and direct example of this approach, as are the policies that guide the distribution of resources within the framework of development and empowerment (such as taxes), social protection, etc.

Within the framework of such a relationship between the State and society, the developments that have occurred and become entrenched with respect to the rights of the Jordanian citizen cannot be concealed. The beginning was the lowering of the ceiling of the unionist and pan-Arab aspirations and ambitions of Jordanians, which were in one way or another surpassed at an earlier stage, with attention turning to building the nation-state—a phenomenon that prevailed in all Arab States without exception. Then came the stage of lowering citizens' expectations of attaining a national, political, pluralistic and democratic society and a genuine parliamentary system within the framework of the nation-state that prevailed throughout the Arab order. Yet even these expectations, and many others like them relating to the achievement of well-being, stability and prosperity, have recently disappeared from the priorities of the nation-state, to be replaced lately by strict economic and security legislation and measures that not only prejudice the citizen's political and civil freedoms but also limit his livelihood needs. This was accompanied by a state of social fragmentation and a degree of frustration and despair that have left this society not only predisposed to accept hard-line and extremist ideas, but also generally unable to form a critical mass to stand up to many official policies that conflict with its interests. The role of Arab circumstances and international interventions in the region in arriving at this situation also cannot be denied.

We therefore find that the nation-state in the Arab world today is either suffering from chaos, disintegration and collapse, or facing intense popular pressure because of its suppression of many human rights. The latter (i.e., human rights) flourish within a framework of (political and cultural) pluralism and partnership with civil society and serious and genuine networking with non-governmental

organizations, whereby an effective relationship takes shape between the government and both civil society and the private sector—something that Jordan is in dire need of today. This constitutes a large part of the NCHR's recommendations since its inception more than a decade ago, as well as of the demands of Jordanian society and even of the recommendations of what is known as the Universal Periodic Review accepted by the Government in 2013; however, only a small part of them has been implemented in practice, while the Government rejected a limited number of these recommendations, which are considered the closest to addressing the existing structural situation in Jordan.

The most prominent challenge to human rights arising from the requirements of managing the geopolitical duality was the violation represented by undermining the general mandate of the Council of Ministers and circumventing Article (51) of the Constitution.

This approach also affected fundamental concepts directly bearing on human rights, such as the "rule of law", which requires that whoever makes the law be the first to comply with it, and that any law that violates citizens' rights and fundamental freedoms is not a law in the actual and legal sense but rather an arbitrary practice. Nevertheless, there are today a number of laws in force in Jordan that are flawed and therefore cannot be considered consistent with the rule of law.

The political structures of the State have also affected fundamental principles, rules and values directly bearing on the human rights of Jordanians, most notably: the absence of linkage between accountability and responsibility, and between answerability and transparency; and the application of the rules and principles of equality, equal opportunities and genuine competitiveness, i.e., freedom of competition for all through free and fair parliamentary elections based on an election law that includes a fair electoral system and broader representation of electoral districts, providing the conditions for political outcomes in Parliament—such elections being the principal manifestation of an accomplished democracy, though not the only one.

Political structures are greatly affected by societal reality. An accomplished democracy also requires a national societal consensus on fundamentals; however, such consensus is also absent at the societal level. This is why the relevant international standards speak of the presumption of a democratic society, which in turn lays the foundation for the establishment of a democratic system of government whose existence then becomes a given.

Nevertheless, the decisive role in developing such societal consensus on the fundamentals of governance and the management of public affairs remains with the political structures themselves. If social structures constitute an obstacle to reform and change, overcoming such an obstacle is the responsibility of the political system and of politics. Hence, the laws governing public participation (political parties, elections, civil society, etc.), which affect the movement and development of society, have been incomplete in terms of guaranteeing the principle of public participation on the basis of a high degree of freedom of competition. By the same logic, this should be followed by amending much of the legislation relating to governance, the management of public affairs and the economy, including Article (195) of the Penal Code, as well as the recent constitutional amendments of 2016, which entrenched the sole will of His Majesty the King, on the basis that His Majesty reigns and rules directly and in practical and actual terms. This makes Article (195), within this constitutional framework and within the framework of the functioning of political structures, intersect with human rights. Such a structural imbalance has prejudiced the citizen's aspirations, expectations and even needs, although the actual reason for such an amendment—which the Government pushed forward at the time and which the Seventeenth House of Representatives approved shortly before its dissolution, in record time and

without conducting the necessary national dialogue on it or holding hearings for experts, interested parties and stakeholders—remains unclear.

III

The most prominent consequence of this general situation in Jordan, which is the source of many continuing and recurrent violations of the rights of Jordanians, is what may be described as the "crisis of gaps" that actually governs the reality of human rights in Jordan. The list of these gaps includes: the gap between the State and society, as is evident; between the rulers and the people; between the elites and the public; between women and men; between the private and public sectors; between different generations, etc. There is also the gap between the centers of societal power (the religious, "nationalist", "secular" and traditional conservative forces), not to mention the wealth gap between the haves and have-nots, which is currently deepening, and the power gap between those who hold decision-making authority and those whose role is mere implementation or, at best, token participation!

However, the greatest gap in this respect is that between the ambitions of the Jordanian citizen and Jordan's capabilities. Bridging and dealing with this gap is the greatest challenge to the human rights of Jordanians, which will remain hostage to this gap no matter how often (governments change), unless the political structures that govern the relationship between the parties to the equation in Jordan are addressed.

Yet the causes hindering any genuine breakthrough in the human rights situation in Jordan are not limited to a single factor but are structural; managing them in the traditional way and by the usual method (changing governments or individuals), consisting of implementing superficial political reforms to control the domestic situation and adapt it to the conditions of the external partner, will not achieve the required breakthrough and accomplishment in the human rights situation in Jordan. The continuation of the State's performance and the management of public affairs on this course will remain seriously detrimental to the components and requirements of social justice and to the foundations of the political legitimacy of the system.

This is what characterized the national situation in 2017, and before and after it since the period of the Arab Spring, as the number of marginalized areas in rural regions, on the outskirts of cities and in poor neighborhoods increased, and unemployment rates swelled. The state of economic decline and the weak productivity of the national economy contributed to exposing the weaknesses in the existing political equation and at its core: the well-known geopolitical duality. Pressures on this equation were further increased by the spread of corruption in all its forms, in addition to regional and international geopolitical changes that witnessed attempts by regional and international powers active in the region to transform the crisis in the country from a crisis between the aspirations and rights of citizens and the interests and designs of these powers into a crisis between citizens and the State. Of course, this does not detract from the fundamental policy of the State, based on openness to the world, the adoption of moderation and realism in Jordan's foreign relations, and respect for the rules of international law in dealing with States, whether in war or in peace.

In conclusion, in light of the wide influence of the existing political structures, as we have seen, coupled with the absence of societal consensus, the deep division between intellectual and ideological orientations and affiliations in society, and the gap in capabilities, the possibility of a genuine breakthrough in the state of human rights—as both an end and a means—depends on the State siding with those whom it represents and who granted it the "mandate", namely the people. Such alignment is

the fundamental starting point of the concept of the new social contract, which has become one of the key terms in managing the crisis at present.

Then the process of closing the gap between the State's capabilities and citizens' aspirations becomes possible, although it requires tangible changes in political structures and a reconsideration of many political practices in the relationship between the State and society that have persisted for nearly a century. The impact of many of the obstacles that have so far prevented a genuine breakthrough in the course of human rights in Jordan will also be lessened, as a result of the revival of the concepts of political legitimacy and social justice that this development, which will inevitably occur, will bring about. Political forces, the various centers of power and societal components must raise their performance to establish a societal lever capable of bringing about political change and the required political reforms, and of preserving political and societal stability, as well as the prospects not only of national survival but also of progress, prosperity and confidence in the future.

Amman

18 July 2018

First: Civil and Political Rights

1. The Right to Life and Physical Integrity

The concept of the right to life and physical integrity covers numerous issues, such as: the imposition and execution of the death penalty; torture and freedom from torture; suicide and deaths resulting from traffic accidents, drowning, electric shocks, excessive use of force and quarrels; as well as various other cases of physical harm.

The Death Penalty

The year 2017 saw the issuance of (17) death sentences, as shown in Table No. (1). Given that the death penalty may be commuted or remitted by special pardon, only two persons sentenced to death benefited from this in 2017, compared with two persons who benefited in 2016 and (10) persons in 2015. The number of inmates of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers sentenced to death in 2017 reached (128), including (16) female inmates. No death sentence was carried out against any person in 2017.

Table No. (1): Number of judgments imposing the death penalty during the years 2008–2017

Year	Grand Criminal Court	State Security Court	Total Judgments
2013	7	–	7
2014	1	–	1
2015	6	–	6
2016	3	5	8
2017	16	1	17

Table prepared by the Center on the basis of data issued by the State Security Court and the Grand Criminal Court.

It should be noted that international human rights law has not absolutely prohibited the death penalty. At a minimum, general international law calls for it to be treated as an exceptional penalty, applied in cases of the crimes most serious to society and only after the guarantees of a fair trial have been strictly met. Although Jordan has not acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which calls upon States Parties to abolish the death penalty,¹ the legal system in Jordan seeks to move closer to this global trend by not applying this penalty to persons under the age of (18), to pregnant women or to the insane. Moreover, the possibility of general and special amnesty exists and is provided for in the Constitution and the Penal Code,² and this penalty is carried out only after a series of legal procedures.

Nevertheless, the law governing the execution of the death penalty in Jordan is flawed in that there is intervention by the executive authority, albeit formal, in the matter of enforcing death sentences issued by the judicial authority.

The Right to Physical Integrity and Freedom from Torture

The year 2017 did not see implementation of the recommendation of the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) to amend national legislation regarding the need to compensate victims of torture, by expressly providing for their compensation and their psychological and physical rehabilitation.

¹Under Jordanian law, the death penalty is defined in Article (17) of the Penal Code as the hanging of the convicted person.

²Articles (50 and 51) of the Jordanian Penal Code No. (16) of 1960.

With regard to cases of torture and ill-treatment, the total number of cases registered against personnel of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) in 2017 reached (45) cases, compared with (269) cases in 2016. Of these, (4) cases were referred for trial before the unit commander, and in (12) cases a decision of non-prosecution of the accused was taken by the police public prosecutor, while two cases were referred to the Police Court, and (27) complaints remain under consideration.

The year 2017 also saw the regular (civil) Public Prosecution continue to investigate allegations of torture; in 2017 it received (34) complaints concerning torture and ill-treatment, compared with (23) complaints in 2016 and (7) complaints in 2015.

Meanwhile, in 2017 the National Center for Human Rights received (85) complaints from citizens concerning allegations that they had been subjected to torture and ill-treatment at the hands of law enforcement officials and the various security departments,³ compared with (63) complaints received by the NCHR in 2016, (92) complaints in 2015, (87) complaints in 2014 and (77) complaints in 2013.

In comparing the numbers of complaints registered against PSD personnel in 2017 with those of 2016, which indicate a decline, the NCHR is unable to comment on this remarkable and unprecedented decline in the number of complaints, and hopes that this decline represents genuine progress in the PSD's handling of this phenomenon, which is of concern to citizens.

Furthermore, the NCHR did not observe any serious, tangible measures to develop the legislation relating to the criminalization of torture, with the exception of the amendment made to Article (208) in 2017, under which the minimum penalty for the perpetrator of torture was raised from three months to six months. This indicates a serious deficiency in the legislation on the criminalization of torture and in addressing the issue of impunity.

The investigation of torture allegations and complaints by the police judiciary still constitutes a breach of international standards, of Jordan's obligations and of the conditions of a fair trial, and entrenches the concept of impunity, which affects the Public Security apparatus and its important role in upholding the rule of law.

Moreover, the absence of final judicial rulings under Article (208) on torture since torture was expressly criminalized in 2007 also points to legislative problems resulting in the failure to try and/or hold accountable the perpetrators of the crime of torture, and in their impunity.

Consequently, the totality of these observations calls for a convincing clarification from the PSD, especially since the complaints received by the NCHR equal twice the number reported in the official reports of the PSD. The Center therefore expresses its deep concern at this result and recommends that independent, neutral and impartial investigations be conducted into all complaints, and that officials proven to have committed, participated in, remained silent about or colluded in such acts be referred to the civil judiciary. Furthermore, in all cases where there is prima facie evidence of torture or ill-treatment, the suspect should be suspended from work during the investigation in order to avoid any possible obstruction of the investigation.

³The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) receives these complaints through the periodic visits conducted by its representatives to Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers and places of temporary detention, or through complaints submitted to it by various means (fax, e-mail, personal interview, and others).

As for allegations of beating, torture and other forms of ill-treatment inside Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, the Center received (17) complaints in 2017, compared with (12) complaints in 2016, (8) complaints in 2015 and (11) complaints in 2014, as shown in Table No. (2).

It must be noted here that practical problems continued in 2017 to limit the ability of the National Center for Human Rights to exercise its legal powers in following up allegations of torture and ill-treatment, namely 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 responses to complaints concerning allegations of torture and ill-treatment being confined to the final outcome of the investigations without setting out the series of measures taken by the police prosecution and the Police Court.

Table No. (2): Manner of settlement of complaints concerning torture and ill-treatment received by the Center during the years 2014–2017

Category	Settlement of Complaints	2014	2015	2016	2017
Complaints against the various security centers and departments	Complaints filed (archived) at the complainant's request	11	22	3	15
Complaints against the various security centers and departments	Complaints closed because the violation was not proven	14	25	20	8
Complaints against the various security centers and departments	Complaints referred to the Police Court	–	2	1	5
Complaints against the various security centers and departments	Complaints still under follow-up	62	43	40	57
Total		87	92	63	85
Complaints concerning beating and torture in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers	Complaints filed (archived) at the complainant's request	5	–	3	4
Complaints concerning beating and torture in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers	Complaints closed because the violation was not proven	–	5	4	2
Complaints concerning beating and torture in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers	Complaints referred to the Police Court	–	–	–	–
Complaints concerning beating and torture in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers	Complaints under follow-up	6	3	5	11
Total		11	8	12	17

Table prepared by the Center on the basis of the complaints it received.

The most prominent complaints and allegations of torture and ill-treatment received by the Center in 2017:

First: The relatives of (R.A.) alleged that he had been tortured by a group of personnel of the Criminal Investigation Department in the Badia of Al-Jiza District on 4 May 2017. It was established that there was a criminal suspicion that the victim had been subjected to torture and had died as a result.

Second: The relatives of (H.Sh.) alleged that he had been tortured by a group of personnel of the Criminal Investigation Department at the Tla' Al-Ali Security Center on 19 October 2017. The National Center for Human Rights formed a team to investigate the circumstances surrounding this complaint; after meeting the victim during his detention and hearing the security account, the team found that there was a criminal suspicion that he had been subjected to torture. The case of torture was documented, and H.E. the Director of Public Security was provided with a detailed report on this incident by virtue of the Center's letter No. (H.A/18/574) dated 15 November 2017. However, the NCHR was surprised by the reply of the Transparency and Human Rights Office at the PSD, by virtue of its letter No. (H/50/2017/1477) dated 15 February 2018, which stated that a decision had been issued by the Public Prosecutor of the Criminal Investigation Department ordering the non-prosecution of the accused for lack of evidence against them. This prompted the Center to address the Director of Public Security a second time by virtue of letter No.

(H.A/225/3-20) to take the necessary legal action against the accused, particularly after the case of torture had been documented by the Center's team. This calls for the immediate introduction of legal amendments that guarantee the independence of investigation and prosecution committees, in order to ensure that the perpetrators of torture are prosecuted and convicted and that the victims are compensated before the civil courts.

Recommendations

In light of the foregoing, the National Center for Human Rights reiterates the recommendations set out in its previous annual reports, including:

1. Removing the aspects of legislative deficiency referred to in the body of this report, by considering torture a felony, and guaranteeing the independence of the investigation and prosecution bodies by granting the regular courts subject-matter jurisdiction to hear torture cases, so as to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes are prosecuted and convicted, and that the victims of torture are compensated as provided for in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
2. Establishing specialized centers for the rehabilitation of torture victims in a manner that ensures the comprehensiveness of torture as set out in the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984.

2. The Right to Liberty and Security of Person

The year 2017 saw the amendment of certain national legislation relating to the application of fair trial guarantees for persons deprived of their liberty at the preliminary investigation stage, as new articles relating to detention were introduced into the Criminal Procedure Law. The recent amendments included the addition of Article (114) bis to the amended Criminal Procedure Law No. (32) of 2017, which set out justifications for detention that judges and public prosecutors are bound to observe.

The amendments to the same article also included alternatives to detention in order to limit its social, economic and legal effects, by providing for the following alternatives to detention: (a) electronic monitoring; (b) a travel ban; (c) residence at home or within a geographical area for the period determined by the public prosecutor or the court, with the police assigned to verify compliance; (d) the deposit of a sum of money or the provision of a judicial bail, the amount of each to be determined by the public prosecutor or the court; (e) prohibiting the accused from frequenting specified places.

However, there is a deficiency in national legislation in that the right to the assistance of a lawyer from the moment of arrest is not expressly provided for, despite the amendment of Article (32) of the Bar Association Law No. (11) of 1972 granting the lawyer this right. Moreover, the Criminal Procedure Law does not expressly provide for notifying the detainee's relatives of the place of his detention and the charge against him, for his being brought before the judiciary within a short period of time, and other such matters. It must be reiterated here what was stated in the NCHR's report for 2016 regarding the redrafting of national legislation to expressly provide for these rights.

Administrative Detention

The judiciary is the competent authority with jurisdiction to issue detention orders; however, the executive authority deliberately delegates certain powers to certain bodies, including the administrative governors, to issue detention orders. The detention issued by them is called administrative detention, based on the Crime Prevention Law No. (7) of 1954, as opposed to judicial detention issued by the judicial authority, which holds the original jurisdiction.

In 2017, the Center observed that the security departments continued to resort to the Crime Prevention Law No. (7) of 1954 by recommending to the administrative governors that police measures be taken against certain persons with criminal records or

repeat offenders, on grounds of security considerations and the preservation of public order in society.⁴ By virtue of the "security record",⁵ a person is held to account on the basis of entries recorded against him years ago, even if he was a juvenile at the time.⁶ This constitutes a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Juveniles Law. On the other hand, the Criminal Procedure Law permits persons against whom final judgments have been issued — after the lapse of a certain period depending on the type of crime — to apply for rehabilitation on the basis of the clearing of their criminal record. In view of this, the Ministry of Justice is now required to establish a judicial record based on final judicial rulings, instead of relying on the criminal records held by the security agencies, in order to ensure the proper

⁴This includes all the measures taken by the security departments, namely summoning any "persons with prior records" for questioning in every case committed in the area where they reside, and the security departments' placing their criminal record before the judge or the public prosecutor so that he may learn of the prior record of the person appearing before him, particularly in cases of fraud, breach of trust and theft, for the purposes of applying aggravating circumstances.

⁵It is a cumulative record, kept by the security departments, of persons who have engaged in conduct contrary to the law.

⁶Notwithstanding that the Juveniles Law provides in Article (6) thereof that "the conviction of a juvenile of an offense shall not be deemed a prior record."

implementation of the provisions of the law and to achieve equality and justice for all. The NCHR continues to record that administrative detention orders override the judicial decisions issued by the competent courts acquitting persons or declaring them not liable, as persons in whose favor such judgments are issued are frequently returned to the Correctional and Rehabilitation Center on the basis of administrative detention warrants.⁷ The decisions of administrative governors after the conclusion of judicial proceedings, under the "return" system followed, and in some cases in the absence of any offense or in the presence of an act not punishable by law, are still exercised against persons with "security records", in addition to their contravening and disregarding the principle that a person may not be prosecuted more than once for the same act.⁸

The year 2017 also saw an increase in the number of administrative detainees, reaching (34952) persons, compared with (30138) persons in 2016, (19860) persons in 2015, (20216) persons in 2014 and (12766) persons in 2013.

In 2017, the Center received a number of complaints and reports relating to administrative detention amounting to (124) complaints, compared with (102) complaints in 2016. It should be noted that most of these detainees were placed in administrative detention after serving their sentences. On the basis of the complaints received by the Center during the years 2003–2017 and their analysis, it is evident that there is a continuing and clear excess by administrative governors in exercising the powers granted to them under the provisions of the Crime Prevention Law of 1954.

Preliminary Detention and Temporary Custody

Temporary detention centers of the Public Security Directorate

In 2017, in cooperation and coordination with the Transparency and Human Rights Office, the NCHR carried out (34) unannounced visits to places of temporary detention in the south of the Kingdom, covering the governorates of Tafileh and Ma'an and the Aqaba Region, with the aim of examining those places and the conditions of the detainees held in them, including the type and level of services provided to them, reviewing their records and detention warrants, and evaluating these places in light of the relevant international and national standards.

The visiting team noted tangible improvements in the detention environment in those places compared with previous visits, which were observed through direct inspection and by hearing the testimony of detainees individually, including: attention to ventilation, lighting and space; the provision of the necessary sleeping items (mattresses and blankets); attention to records and keeping them precisely organized; and the introduction of new records relating to meals, medical care and communications.

Despite the tangible improvement and the attention paid to places of detention, many of the observations previously documented by the Center in its previous annual reports still exist, the most important of which are:

- The unsuitability of most of these places in terms of construction. Many of them suffer from problems such as limited space, old buildings and dilapidated infrastructure, the lack of adequate lighting and sanitary ventilation in some of them, and the spread of humidity in

⁷In its recent consideration of Jordan's third periodic report, the Committee against Torture, in its concluding observations Nos. (21 and 22), expressed its concern at the State's continued resort to administrative detention under the Crime Prevention Law, which permits detention without charge and raises questions regarding the separation of powers between the judicial and executive authorities.

⁸Article (58) of the Criminal Procedure Law provides that "a single act shall not be prosecuted more than once."

winter, in addition to a low level of cleanliness and their need for maintenance in order to conform with the relevant international and national standards.

- The violation of the law by some judicial police officers and their exceeding of the powers granted to them under Article (100) of the Criminal Procedure Law, by exercising the power of the public prosecutor to interrogate the accused, instead of adhering to their legally defined powers, namely hearing their statements and referring them to the competent public prosecutor within (24) hours.

This violation is one of the most prominent violations to which detainees are subjected, and constitutes a breach of the fair trial guarantees that must be afforded to the detainee at the preliminary investigation stage (inquiry and evidence-gathering).

- The detainee's loss of contact with the outside world and the difficulty of receiving visitors from among his family members and friends, and his being deprived at times by some security departments (the Anti-Narcotics Department and the Criminal Investigation Department) of making a telephone call to his family to inform them of his whereabouts, on the pretext of the confidentiality of the investigation.
- The failure in practice to keep accurate and orderly records in some places of detention, particularly the security centers, including recording the time and place of arrest, the identity of the officers, the actual place of detention, the person's state of health upon arrival at the detention center, the time at which contact was made with the family and the lawyer, the time of visits to the detained person, and information on medical examinations upon arrival at the center and upon transfer from it.
- The failure to allocate special places for holding juvenile and female detainees in most of those directorates and security centers, and the continued failure to provide basic meals to detainees, with what is provided to them being limited to lunch only.
- The cruel and inhuman treatment of some detainees at certain security centers, particularly persons with criminal records and repeat offenders, and certain persons subject to forced residence (compulsory residence orders), some of whom are forced to carry out cleaning work at the security center.
- The continuation of the phenomenon of exceeding and circumventing the provision on the legal custody period of (24) hours, as accused persons are held for long periods exceeding a week on the basis of the Crime Prevention Law, and sometimes without relying on that law. The NCHR team tasked with the visits observed a flagrant violation of Article (4) of the Crime Prevention Law, represented by the existence, in the security centers and departments, of ready-made detention warrants pre-signed by the administrative governors for extending the detention of persons week after week on the pretext of the investigation, and by the issuance of an order by the administrative governor to continue holding the wanted persons beyond this period.

Places of temporary custody at the General Intelligence Department

In 2018, an unannounced visit, the first of its kind, was carried out to the detention center of the General Intelligence Department on 8 January 2018. During the visit, the conditions of the detainees in the center and the conditions of the detention environment were examined in terms of the level of services and health care provided to them and the extent of their conformity with international standards and with the national legislation relating to ensuring that detainees enjoy their rights, in conformity with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and fair trial guarantees.

The visit included meeting a number of detainees individually and hearing from them about the procedures of arrest, search and detention, the treatment they received during their custody inside the detention center of the General Intelligence Department, and the mechanisms for bringing them before the military prosecution and for their meeting with lawyers and their families. The facilities of the center

were also inspected, namely (the visitors' waiting room, the medical clinic, the dental clinic, the pharmacy, the exercise yard, the place designated for food preparation, and the place designated for visits by detainees' relatives), as well as the records relating to detainees (the admission register, the medical register, and the deposits, visits and communications registers).

In 2017, the NCHR had received (12) complaints from inmates and their relatives, of which (4) complaints were closed for lack of jurisdiction, as they concerned the prohibition of family visits pursuant to a decision of the Public Prosecutor of the State Security Court; (3) complaints were closed at the complainant's request; (2) complaints were closed upon achieving the desired result; and (3) complaints remain under follow-up, compared with (7) complaints received in 2016 from the inmates themselves during meetings with them inside Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, relating to the following issues:

- The length of detention periods inside the detention center of the General Intelligence Department, which in some cases reach (90) days, without any of the detainees being allowed to mix with others in places of solitary confinement.
- The withholding of identity documents when attempting to travel, or requiring them to visit the Department to renew a document (passport, driving license) for non-Jordanians.
- Detainees sometimes being prevented from contacting the outside world under decisions issued by the Public Prosecutor of the State Security Court, which isolates them from their families on the pretext of the confidentiality of the investigation.
- The state of isolation inside solitary cells, without detainees being allowed to mix during the exercise period or meals.
- The detainee sometimes being prevented from receiving visits under a decision issued by the military public prosecutor in order to preserve the confidentiality of the investigation.

The NCHR renews its call on the General Intelligence Department to comply with the requirement of notifying the detainee's relatives immediately of the place of his detention and allowing them to visit him.

Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers

The number of inmates of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers in 2017 ranged around (96264) inmates, while the actual number of inmates as at 31 December 2017 reached (15086) inmates, whereas the capacity of these centers⁹ is (12286) inmates. It is noted that there is overcrowding in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, which adversely affects the rights of inmates in all fields.

In 2017, there was a tangible deterioration in the detention environment inside Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, the most important manifestations of which were:

- The riots and vandalism that occurred at Swaqa Correctional and Rehabilitation Center.

The National Center for Human Rights monitored the occurrence of riots at Swaqa Correctional and Rehabilitation Center on 22 September 2017. The Center formed a team to investigate the facts following those events, and an NCHR representative also attended a number of sessions of the investigation committee formed at the PSD to investigate the inmates involved in the said riots, which resulted in material losses and numerous human injuries. The Center concluded that the causes of the riots at the said center resulted from the poor conditions of the detention environment and the ill-treatment to which inmates were subjected during search and transfer operations prior to the riots, taking

⁹There are (16) Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers distributed across all governorates of the Kingdom, following the recent opening of Birein Correctional and Rehabilitation Center on 24 July 2016.

into account the existence of factors that contributed to the deterioration of the relationship between the inmates and the administration, including the transgressions of certain inmates and their dominance inside the center over some of the successive security administrations, and the desire of the new administration of the center to impose its authority over the inmates. After the failure of dialogue between the new administration and the inmates, and as a result of the new administration of the center carrying out strict and, according to the inmates, possibly provocative search procedures for the inmates, which coincided with the confiscation of many of their personal possessions and the transfer of many of them to other correctional centers without their personal belongings being transferred, many of them began a hunger strike. This prompted the new administration to force many of them to eat through the use of force, according to the inmates' statements, which led to an escalation by the inmates who incited riots in the dormitories and called for disobedience inside the center; a number of them harmed themselves and sent videos of this to the media. These events resulted in a group of inmates being injured as a result of the excessive use of force to control the acts of rioting they carried out. (12) inmates were referred to the judiciary for destroying property, setting fires and other acts. Through its continuous visits, the NCHR noted that other factors led to the occurrence of these events, including: transgressions committed by security personnel, consisting of (bringing in mobile phones), a number of which were seized in the possession of inmates, in addition to the sharp rise in the prices of certain basic goods available at the canteen, physical and verbal assault on inmates, the search and full strip-search procedures to which inmates were subjected, the conditions of detention and poor infrastructure.

Through receiving complaints and requests for assistance, and the field visits carried out by the Criminal Justice Unit to Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, certain transgressions and shortcomings were observed, the most prominent of which are:

1. Continued overcrowding in some centers despite the construction of new centers, and the failure to adopt a considered standard for determining the capacity of prisons that takes into account the total area of the prison and the area allocated to service facilities and to each inmate's sleeping space, which has led to the spread of the phenomenon of "selling the right to use equipment", "selling services" and "bribery and violence among prisoners", in addition to a shortage of supplies such as blankets and mattresses, particularly at Al-Juwaideh Correctional and Rehabilitation Center.
2. An increasing number of complaints about the suffering of inmates when referred to hospitals because of the shortage in the number of beds.
3. The operation of heating at varying times at Al-Muwaqqar (2) Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, despite the desert nature of the area in which the center is located, which is known for its extreme cold in winter; the Center received numerous complaints from inmates and their relatives in this regard.
4. An increasing number of complaints regarding the meals provided to inmates inside the centers, consisting of food not being cooked properly, the insufficiency of the quantity provided to them, and the absence of nutrition supervisors to oversee the meals provided to inmates, particularly those suffering from diseases requiring a special type of food.
5. Weak medical care services provided to inmates, owing to their increasing numbers and the unavailability of doctors specialized in orthopedics, dermatology and dentistry, in addition to the acute shortage in the number of psychologists and the insufficiency of medicines.

6. Depriving inmates belonging to unlawful organizations of visits by their second-degree relatives and their friends, and following search procedures for them that violate privacy and do not respect human dignity.
7. Weak social care services provided to inmates and their families and their ineffectiveness, and the failure of the relevant bodies to provide aftercare programs.
8. The continued suffering of inmates when transferred to hospitals in case of illness as a result of the administrative procedures followed, the most important of which is transporting them in restraints in a manner involving cruelty and humiliation and causing pain to persons suffering from chest diseases or spinal problems; moreover, the method of restraint (according to the level of danger) exposes them to bruises as a result of the movement of the vehicle (the "cell" van), its sudden stops or its passing over speed bumps.
9. The need of most Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers for renewed maintenance and restoration because of the spread of humidity and the lack of adequate ventilation and lighting, particularly at Al-Balqa Correctional and Rehabilitation Center.
10. The absence of beds, corridors and toilets suited to older persons and persons with disabilities; there is a need to provide such corridors and toilets in all centers.

In 2017, the Center also recorded the occurrence of (451) strikes in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, as was the case in 2016, in which (451) strikes were recorded, and (416) strikes in 2015 and (309) strikes in 2014.

As for deaths in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, the National Center for Human Rights recorded (34) deaths¹⁰ in 2017, compared with (44) deaths in 2016, of which (33) were natural deaths owing to the inmate's medical history and (1) was a non-natural death by suicide at Umm Al-Lulu Correctional and Rehabilitation Center. The number of suicide attempts that were foiled in 2017 reached (148) attempts, compared with (135) attempts in 2016.

The National Center for Human Rights notes that the decisions of the security committees formed to investigate these cases generally lack transparency; moreover, the forensic medicine reports issued in their regard are drafted in a vague and imprecise manner, and in most cases the NCHR is unable to obtain them directly from their source. In this regard, the Center stresses the need for the Ministry of Health, the doctors working in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers and the administrations in charge of those centers to pay greater care and attention to the health conditions of inmates.

Recommendations

1. Administrative Detention

1. Repealing the Crime Prevention Law and/or abolishing the power of the administrative governor to detain and restricting it to the judiciary, or working to amend certain provisions of the said law.¹¹

¹⁰The Center monitored the occurrence of (30) deaths in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers in 2015, of which (26) were natural or the result of illness, (1) case resulted from being beaten by another inmate, and (3) were suicides, compared with (24) cases in 2014, (25) natural deaths in 2013, and (12) deaths in 2012, of which (11) were natural deaths and one was a suicide, and (18) deaths in 2011.

¹¹(a) Extending judicial oversight over administrative detention decisions and the law-enforcement powers of administrative governors, and respecting and abiding by judicial decisions and final judgments of acquittal or non-liability. (b) Adopting the principle of the proportionality of the law-enforcement measure to the criminal danger when imposing house arrest, and transferring the power to impose house arrest to the judicial authority. (c) Requiring administrative governors to comply with

2. Places of Temporary Custody

1. Allowing the detainee to inform his relatives of the place of his detention, particularly if he is detained by the Anti-Narcotics and Counterfeiting Department or the Criminal Investigation Department, and not preventing him from communicating with the outside world except by virtue of a judicial decision.
2. Activating the places designated for holding juvenile and female detainees.
3. Keeping organized records in places of temporary custody (admissions, deposits, communications, medical care, meals, visits).

2. The General Intelligence Department

1. Moving the office of the Public Prosecutor of the State Security Court outside the building of the General Intelligence Department.
2. Increasing the number of weekly visits permitted to detainees' relatives, and not preventing them from contacting the outside world.
3. Activating inspection of the detention center of the General Intelligence Department by the presidents of courts and the Public Prosecution in accordance with the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers Law No. (9) of 2004, so that the bodies entrusted with this carry out visits periodically and effectively.

3. Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers

1. Transferring supervision of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice.
2. Abolishing the penalty of solitary confinement provided for in Article (38) of the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers Law No. (9) of 2004.
3. Implementation of aftercare programs by the competent bodies, and working to deepen the concept of rehabilitation in all its psychological, social and vocational aspects, so that it becomes a comprehensive and continuous process.

4. The Transparency and Human Rights Office / Public Security Directorate

1. Continuing the programs for qualifying and training the public prosecutors working in the Office on the international instruments and standards relating to human rights, and relating to prisoners, detainees and their places of custody, particularly with regard to the right to life and physical integrity and the right to liberty and security of person, in order to facilitate the Office's task of conducting investigations into and documenting violations committed against inmates.
2. Facilitating the task of the National Center for Human Rights in carrying out visits to temporary detention centers and Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers, in accordance with Article (10) of the NCHR Law and the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the PSD in 2009.

Article Four of the Crime Prevention Law as regards the procedures to be followed when resorting to administrative detention, with respect to issuing an arrest warrant against a person, hearing the statements of persons, and then issuing administrative detention warrants.

3. Providing the National Center for Human Rights with the results of the investigations conducted by the public prosecutors into the complaints submitted by the Center to the Transparency Office or those received by the Office directly from inmates' relatives.
4. Not relying on the criminal record of the inmate or detainee during the investigation of human rights violations, as most of the oral replies obtained by the NCHR from the Transparency Office relate to criminal records, which are sometimes used as a pretext for violating the rights of the detained inmate.

3. The Right to a Fair Trial

International instruments guarantee the right to a fair trial before an independent, just, impartial, speedy and effective judiciary. The Jordanian Constitution affirms the independence of the judicial power in Article (27) thereof, which provides that "The Judicial Power shall be independent and shall be exercised by the courts of law of their various types and degrees; all judgments shall be rendered in accordance with the law in the name of the King", as an indication of the adoption of the principle of flexible separation of powers.

The year 2017 witnessed the amendment of a package of legislation aimed at strengthening the right of individuals to a fair trial. These amendments came in response to the recommendations of the Royal Committee for Developing the Judiciary and Enhancing the Rule of Law¹², and these recommendations were consistent, to some extent, with the recommendations of the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) contained in its previous annual reports on the state of human rights on this subject, particularly in the areas of consolidating the independence of the judiciary and judges and developing criminal justice, including simplifying and expediting litigation procedures and strengthening fair trial guarantees at all stages of criminal proceedings. The most prominent of these legislative amendments were as follows:

First: Enactment of the Law Amending the Magistrates' Courts Law No. (23) of 2017¹³, the most prominent provisions of which include:

1. Expanding the pecuniary jurisdiction over claims heard by the Magistrates' Courts, so that the Magistrate Court may, in accordance with the law, hear cases with a ceiling of up to JOD (10) thousand instead of (7) thousand, in order to reduce the burden on the Courts of First Instance and thereby positively affect the speed of adjudicating cases.
2. Requiring the Courts of First Instance, in their appellate capacity, to rule directly on appeals against magistrates' judgments deciding the merits of the case, without remanding them to the Magistrates' Courts, in view of the wide geographical spread of the Courts of First Instance, to facilitate matters for litigants, and to reduce the burden on the Courts of Appeal and enable them to decide more quickly the remaining appeals falling within their jurisdiction.

Second: Enactment of the Law Amending the Independence of the Judiciary Law and its amendments No. (26) of 2017¹⁴, the most prominent provisions of which include:

1. Strengthening the independence of the judiciary by providing for the financial independence of the affairs of the Judicial Council so as to ensure that its needs are met, allocating to it an annual budget independent of the budget of the Ministry of Justice, and establishing a General Secretariat of the Judicial Council to handle the affairs of the Council, its budget and the affairs of judges, in order to achieve the financial independence of the Council.
2. Strengthening the independence of members of the Judicial Council, as Article (4) of the Independence of the Judiciary Law provides as follows:

¹²The Royal Committee for Developing the Judiciary and Enhancing the Rule of Law was formed on 18 October 2016 to develop a comprehensive strategy to address challenges, continue the process of modernization and development, and upgrade the performance of the judicial authority. The Committee concluded its work on 26 February 2017.

¹³Official Gazette, Issue No. (5474), dated 1 August 2017.

¹⁴Official Gazette, Issue No. (5475), dated 13 August 2017.

- a. The Council shall be composed of the President and the membership of each of: 1. The President of the High Administrative Court as Vice-President. 2. The Head of the Public Prosecution at the Court of Cassation. 3. The most senior judge of the Court of Cassation. 4. The Presidents of the Courts of Appeal. 5. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice. 6. The President of the Amman Court of First Instance. 7. Two presidents of Courts of First Instance outside the capital, according to the seniority of the date of establishment of those courts, who shall be replaced upon the expiry of their membership term by those who follow them on the basis of such seniority.
- b. 1. The term of membership of the two members specified in item (7) of paragraph (a) of this Article shall be two years, non-renewable.
2. During the term of membership in the Council, the members specified in items (4), (6) and (7) of paragraph (a) of this Article may not be transferred, seconded to other positions or have their service terminated except with their consent, upon their reaching the legal age, or after following disciplinary procedures.
3. Appointing the Head of the Public Prosecutions and the First Inspector by Royal Decree, which enhances their independence and impartiality in performing their duties, and removing the First Inspector from membership of the Judicial Council so as to ensure his independence and so that he does not act as both judge and adversary at the same time.

Third: Enactment of the Law Amending the Jordanian Penal Code No. (27) of 2017¹⁵, the most prominent provisions of which include:

1. Introducing alternative penalties, particularly for crimes classified as not being of serious gravity but which nevertheless merit punishment. The law therefore permits, for such crimes, the application of community sanctions without resorting to the imprisonment of the person who has violated the law.
2. Repealing Article (308) of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960, so as to prevent the perpetrator of the crimes of rape, indecent assault, acts contrary to modesty, abduction and seduction from escaping punishment, such that the penalty is applied to the perpetrator in all cases, whether or not the rapist marries the victim.
3. Amending Article (98) by adding paragraph (2) thereto, which provides that "The perpetrator of the crime shall not benefit from the mitigating excuse provided for in paragraph (1) of this Article if the act is committed against a female outside the scope of Article (340) of this Law."

Fourth: Enactment of the Law Amending the Execution Law No. (29) of 2017¹⁶, the most prominent provisions of which include:

1. Granting the execution judge the power to attach the movable and immovable property of the debtor before the expiry of the time limit specified in the execution notice, in cases where the debtor begins to smuggle his assets, and to curb certain notifications that obstruct execution procedures. The law also permits the execution judge to stay execution proceedings and requires the party requesting a stay of execution to provide a guarantee securing payment, in order to ascertain the seriousness of

¹⁵Official Gazette, Issue No. (5479), dated 30 August 2017.

¹⁶Official Gazette, Issue No. (5479), dated 30 August 2017.

the request and to curb delay and procrastination. In addition, it grants him the power to recover any amounts paid by the department without legal entitlement, without the need for a judicial ruling.

2. Facilitating the procedures for the execution of executory instruments, including commercial papers.
3. Limiting the executory decisions issued by the Execution Presidency that are subject to appeal, in order to curb unjustified appeals whose purpose is to delay execution transactions.

Fifth: Enactment of the Law Amending the Formation of Regular Courts Law No. (30) of 2017¹⁷, the most prominent provisions of which include:

1. Establishing specialized economic chambers within the Amman Courts of First Instance and the Amman Court of Appeal, in order to expedite the disposal of cases having a direct impact on investment and the economy.
2. The Courts of First Instance, in their appellate capacity, became competent to hear appeals against all judgments of the Magistrates' Courts, whether criminal or civil.

Sixth: Enactment of the Law Amending the Civil Procedure Law No. (31) of 2017¹⁸, the most prominent provisions of which include:

1. Adopting modern electronic means for effecting service of process by e-mail to the person to be served or his representative, or by sending a text message to the lawyer's mobile phone, in addition to service by ordinary means, which contributes to addressing the phenomenon of fictitious addresses.
2. Addressing service of process in cases adjourned administratively because the hearing date falls on a holiday for any reason whatsoever.
3. Abolishing the appeal of judgments dismissing interlocutory applications relating to pleas of lack of territorial jurisdiction, nullity of service papers, res judicata and the existence of an arbitration clause, except after the issuance of the judgment deciding the merits, which leads to expediting the procedures for adjudicating civil cases.
4. Developing the procedures relating to expert evidence, since expert evidence is one of the most significant forms of evidence affecting the determination of the merits of the case and leads to prolonging litigation.
5. Observing the principle of two-tier litigation, as the provisions governing appeal and cassation were amended so that the appeal stage is not lengthy and appeals are decided as quickly as possible. Judgments and decisions issued by the Magistrates' Courts are now appealed before the Court of First Instance, in view of the wide geographical spread of the Courts of First Instance, to facilitate matters for litigants, and to reduce the burden on the Courts of Appeal and enable them to decide more quickly the remaining appeals falling within their jurisdiction.

Seventh: Enactment of the Law Amending the Criminal Procedure Law No. (32) of 2017¹⁹, the most prominent provisions of which include:

¹⁷Official Gazette, Issue No. (5479), dated 30 August 2017.

¹⁸Official Gazette, Issue No. (5479), dated 30 August 2017.

¹⁹Official Gazette, Issue No. (5479), dated 30 August 2017.

1. Introducing new provisions aimed at limiting pre-trial judicial detention and permitting the use of alternatives to detention for certain crimes. These alternatives include electronic monitoring, a travel ban, the provision of a judicial bail bond, house arrest and others. Despite this positive development, however, the legislator restricted the powers of the judiciary to resort to alternatives to detention.
2. Introducing what is known as the sentence enforcement judge, and assigning one or more public prosecutors in each Court of First Instance (sentence enforcement judge) to increase the guarantees afforded to convicted persons, by supervising the enforcement of criminal judgments and monitoring the legality of the enforcement of the penalties imposed, which achieves quality in performance and streamlined procedures with the aim of reducing cases of unlawful detention and achieving justice.
3. Establishing procedural rules for searches, such as requiring that the search decision be reasoned and executed within seven days of its issuance, and requiring that the person whose home is to be searched be connected to the crime committed in accordance with the rules of criminal complicity, or be in possession of items related to the crime committed, or be harboring a person against whom a complaint has been filed, on pain of absolute nullity of the search procedures.

The year 2017 also witnessed a number of decisions issued by the executive authority to strengthen the right of individuals to a fair trial, in line with the recent amendments to a number of laws, the most prominent of which were:

1. Establishing the Community Sanctions Directorate, whose functions include laying down the practical foundations for the implementation of alternative penalties. It is expected to exercise its functions upon the entry into force of the Law Amending the Penal Code No. (27) of 2017.
2. Establishing the State Litigation Directorate, whose functions include handling the State's cases, whether as plaintiff or defendant, and which was expected to have commenced its functions immediately upon the entry into force of the State Litigation Law No. (28) of 2017.
3. Establishing the Expert Affairs Directorate, whose functions include regulating expert matters in the courts and preparing a register of experts pursuant to a regulation, to assist the judge in selecting the appropriate expert.
4. Preparing a draft regulation on legal aid before the courts, and establishing the Legal Aid Fund before the courts at the Ministry of Justice, as provided for in Article (208) of the Criminal Procedure Law No. (32) of 2017.

Notwithstanding the positive developments of 2017 referred to above regarding the right to a fair trial, which come close to international standards, a number of challenges still impede citizens' enjoyment of the right to a fair trial, **the most prominent of which are:**

First: The continued application of the State Security Court Law and its amendments No. (17) of 1959, despite the continuous demands to amend the articles that conflict with human rights standards, most notably: 1. The power granted to the Prime Minister to constitute this court, which amounts to interference by the executive authority in the work of the judicial authority and a departure from the requirements of the principle of flexible separation of powers. 2. Restricting the judges of the State Security Court to regular judges only, while leaving open the possibility of appointing members of the Public Prosecution at this court from the armed forces and other security agencies, provided that special

conditions are met by those appointed thereto and that the right of the Head of the Prosecution to supervise their work is preserved. 3. Departure from the general rules set out in the Penal Code with respect to: (a) the rules of criminal complicity and the liability of each of the principal, the instigator, the accessory and the accomplice in these crimes; (b) the powers of the judicial police/police to hold the detainee/person in custody, as set out in the Criminal Procedure Law No. (9) of 1961, for a period of (7) days instead of (24) hours; (c) extending the time limits for appealing judgments of the State Security Court in criminal cases, in line with the general rules on appeals.

Second: The continued application of the Prevention of Terrorism Law No. (55) of 2006 and its amendments²⁰. The Center considers that the current amended law contains numerous problems, the most important of which are:

- The broadening of the concept of a terrorist act under Article (2) of the Law, in contrast to the definition of a terrorist act under Article (147) of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960.
- Disregarding the concept of criminal intent in the text of Article (2) of the Law, which allows the judge to apply legal provisions to crimes and to attribute the description of terrorism to the accused for ordinary acts that may not actually constitute terrorist acts. This approach contravenes the international standards guaranteeing fair trial safeguards, in particular Article (14) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as Articles (7) and (11) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Describing terrorist acts in loose and broad terms, such as "public order", "the safety of society", "inciting sedition", "the security of society", "spreading terror" and "terrorizing people". All of these terms have broad connotations and can be manipulated when applying legal provisions so as to consider any act or activity falling within their scope a terrorist act. This contradicts international standards, specifically Articles (4 and 14) of the ICCPR.
- Article (3/b) of the Law considers any act that would disturb the relations of the Jordanian State with a foreign state to be a terrorist act, which makes it possible to classify any act as a terrorist act without specifying any objective or legal controls. This constitutes a violation of the right to freedom of expression (and the right to peaceful assembly and public participation), or even of the freedom of publication and the media to receive, publish, broadcast and transmit information.

Third: The failure to review legislation containing provisions that conflict with the provisions of the Constitution and the general principles of the right to a fair trial, in order to harmonize it with the international conventions ratified by Jordan and published in the Official Gazette. The most prominent of such legislation²¹ are: the Crime Prevention Law, the Customs Law, the Income Tax Law, the Collection of Public Funds Law and the Economic Crimes Law, as these laws grant judicial powers to officials of the executive authority.

Fourth: There are still some problems in the Law Amending the Execution Law No. (29) of 2017, in particular the failure to repeal the provisions permitting the imprisonment of an insolvent debtor, as required by Article (11) of the ICCPR.

Sharia Judiciary:

The Chief Justice Department undertook a number of measures aimed at saving citizens time and effort, **the most important of which are:**

²⁰Official Gazette, Issue No. (3365), dated 1 June 2014.

²¹The most prominent articles requiring amendment in the above-mentioned laws: 1. Amending Article (3) of the Crime Prevention Law No. (7) of 1954. 2. Amending Article (209) of the Customs Law No. 20 of 1998, as amended. 3. Amending Article (6/b) of the Economic Crimes Law No. (11) of 1993, as amended.

1. Establishing a building for the Irbid Sharia Court of Appeal and the Office of Family Reconciliation, Mediation and Conciliation in the Sharia Courts Complex in Irbid Governorate, in accordance with the amendments adopted under the Formation of Sharia Courts Law and the Sharia Procedure Law.
2. Preparing a comprehensive computerized system for the work of the Sharia courts, including linking the courts with the Department's headquarters and computerizing all types of Sharia court work (cases, notarizations, estates and execution), among other measures intended to provide the best service to clients.

Ecclesiastical Judiciary:

Despite the enactment of the Christian Denominations Councils Law No. (28) of 2014²², which included a set of provisions that would contribute to strengthening the right to a fair trial, the law still contains a number of problems, **the most important of which are:**

- a. Decisions of the Courts of Appeal of the Christian denominations are not subject to review by the Court of Cassation.
- b. The absence of a fixed procedural law applicable to all cases, which causes instability for citizens.
- c. The high fees for registering cases before the ecclesiastical courts.

Complaints Received by the National Center:

The number of complaints received by the National Center for Human Rights in 2017 relating to the right to a fair trial totaled (57) complaints, centering on the length of judicial detention, the rejection of applications for release, and grievances against certain judicial procedures. Of these, (5) complaints were closed after a satisfactory result was reached, (6) complaints were closed as falling outside the Center's mandate, (3) complaints were closed because no violation was established, and one complaint was closed due to the complainant's lack of cooperation, while (42) complaints remain under follow-up and investigation.

As for requests for assistance, the Center received (10) requests in 2017, centering on the provision of legal aid and requests for general and special amnesty. Of these, (2) were closed upon reaching a satisfactory result, one request for assistance was closed because no violation was established, one request for assistance was closed as falling outside the Center's mandate, and one request for assistance was closed without a satisfactory result, while (5) requests remain under follow-up and investigation.

Recommendations:

In order to ensure the advancement of the judicial system and enable it to perform the tasks entrusted to it, the Center reiterates the recommendations contained in its previous reports **and recommends the following:**

1. Amending Article (101) of the Jordanian Constitution to provide explicitly that the trial of civilians before civilian courts (the regular judiciary) is an absolute rule admitting no exception.
2. Reviewing legislation containing provisions that conflict with the provisions of the Constitution and the general principles of the right to a fair trial, in order to harmonize it with the international conventions ratified by Jordan and published in the Official Gazette. The most prominent of such

²²Official Gazette, Issue No. (5299), dated 1 September 2014.

legislation are: the State Security Court Law, the Prevention of Terrorism Law, the Customs Law, the Crime Prevention Law, the Collection of Public Funds Law and the Economic Crimes Law.

3. Broadening the scope of the concept of alternative penalties and granting the judiciary wider power in applying penalties than that provided for in Article (54) bis of the Law Amending the Penal Code No. (27) of 2017.
4. Notwithstanding the positive developments in the provisions governing the power of the judiciary with respect to detention, the Center stresses the need to amend the text of Article (114) of the Criminal Procedure Law No. (9) of 1961 in a manner that ensures that detention decisions must be reasoned, and to provide explicitly for the right of the injured party to material and moral compensation for unlawful detention.
5. Amending the Execution Law in a manner consistent with the substance of Article (11) of the ICCPR, which prohibits resorting to the imprisonment of an insolvent debtor.
6. The Center stresses the need for it to be involved by all parties in the drafting of draft laws and draft regulations directly related to the human rights system.

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

A large number of international human rights instruments recognize the right to a nationality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides in Article (15) that "Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality", and the ICCPR provides in Article (16) that "Everyone shall have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law".

At the national level, the Jordanian Constitution provides in Article (5) that "Jordanian nationality shall be defined by law", and the Jordanian Nationality Law and its amendments No. (6) of 1954²³ regulates the conditions for acquiring nationality and other matters related to this right, in implementation of the said constitutional provision.

At the Legislative Level:

No noteworthy legislative developments occurred with respect to the right to nationality in 2017. Nor were there any developments regarding the instructions for implementing Council of Ministers Decision No. (6415) of 2014 on granting facilities to the children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians, despite the protests of the beneficiaries of those facilities and the Center's reservations regarding some of the conditions for benefiting from them²⁴. The most important of these is the demand of Jordanian women that nationality be granted to their children rather than settling for the privileges announced by the government, as the children of Jordanian women married to foreigners still face numerous problems in obtaining the service privileges approved for them by the government relating to work permits, property ownership and driving licenses. It is worth noting that a total of (7491) identification cards for the children of Jordanian women had been issued as of 31 December 2017.

On the other hand, the problem of the persons residing in population clusters in the town of Al-Ruwaished and some other villages in the Eastern and Western Badia districts remains at a standstill, with the work of the committee formed to study their situation still suspended. Complaints have continued about their lack of any documents defining their legal status and enabling them to move and travel, despite the Center's emphasis in its previous reports on the need to address their complaints. On 3 January 2017, the Center met with a number of residents of the Northern Badia, who affirmed that the scale of the problem is constantly increasing and that their suffering is great; their number is estimated at (7000) persons.

The Right to Residence and Movement:

- In 2017, the Civil Status Department continued to issue smart identity cards in place of the old card, while the latter remains in use, given that not all citizens have yet obtained the new card due to the increased number of applicants and the congestion caused by the procedures for obtaining it at civil status offices and the other centers opened for this purpose. Some citizens have complained of the poor quality of the new card, the small font of the identifying data on it, and the lack of clarity of the personal photograph.
- The number of complaints received by the National Center in 2017 relating to the right to residence and movement totaled (32) complaints. Of these, (6) complaints were resolved with a satisfactory result and (1) with an unsatisfactory result, (9) complaints were closed because there was no violation, while (16) complaints remain under follow-up with the relevant authorities.

²³The Law was last amended by Amending Law No. 22 of 1987.

²⁴For more information, see the NCHR's Eleventh Report for 2014, pp. (50–51), and its Twelfth Report for 2015, p. (67).

Asylum:

Asylum issues have come to occupy great and growing importance, particularly in recent years, owing to their increasing scale, aggravation and spread across various continents of the world as a result of civil wars, internal conflicts, and political and security instability in some countries.

a. Palestinian Refugees:

On 1 May 2017, the Popular Committee of Gaza Strip Residents submitted a petition to His Majesty King Abdullah II calling for redress with regard to issues and pressing needs of their daily lives, particularly the collection of a fee of one hundred dinars for issuing a passport for the first time, valid for two years, while two hundred dinars are collected from them for renewing a passport valid for five years.

In addition, the instructions require them to obtain work permits like migrant workers, which has increased their humanitarian suffering. The signatories to the petition called for civil rights to be granted to them to facilitate their daily lives. In recent years, Gaza Strip residents living in Jordan have faced government decisions and measures in the areas of employment, education, health and services that have increased their hardship in living conditions. The petition referred to the succession of government measures against them, such as the non-registration of their property, closing employment opportunities to them in the public and private sectors, the difficulty of obtaining professional practice licenses, the difficulty of obtaining fee-paying university admission, their exclusion from medical care in government hospitals, and the difficulty of obtaining exemptions for incurable diseases.

It should be noted that UNRWA ended 2017 with a financial deficit of approximately USD (49) million. However, the refusal of the US Administration to transfer the payment allocated to it, amounting to USD (125) million, which was due to be provided as of December 2017, increased the deficit by USD (174) million. The declining trend in donor-state support to UNRWA threatens the level of services provided to Palestinian refugees, with the education sector being the most affected, and will place further burdens and pressures on Jordan as the largest host country for them.

b. Iraqi Refugees:

Despite the relative stability of the situation in Iraq, approximately (63024) Iraqis remain refugees in Jordan. No noteworthy development has occurred in the file of Iraqi refugees in Jordan, and their numbers and issues have remained as they were in 2016.

c. Syrian Refugees:

Jordan began embracing and hosting Syrians fleeing violence, as refugees and residents, since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, and their numbers continued to increase until they approached (1.5) million, as shown in Table No. (3). Jordan has presented a good model in protecting and assisting them despite the difficult economic conditions from which it suffers. The circumstances and conditions of Syrian refugees in 2017 remained as they were, with the exception of some changes, including the following:

Table No. (3): Status and Conditions of Syrians in Jordan as of 31 December 2017²⁵

Item	Number
Number of Syrians on Jordanian territory	1,368,102

²⁵ According to data issued by the Public Security Directorate (PSD)/Syrian Refugee Camps Affairs Department.

Item	Number
Number of Syrians in the Kingdom before the Syrian crisis	750000
Number of Syrians who entered Jordan illegally	529843
Number of Syrians who returned voluntarily to their country	174551
Number of Syrians distributed among (5) camps, the largest being Al-Zaatari	115477
Number of Syrians registered as asylum seekers with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees	634155
Number of Syrians who obtained the magnetic card as of 31 December 2017	277591
Number of Syrian documents returned to their owners	80325
Number of Syrian students received by schools inside the camps	20000
Number of Syrian students in Jordanian schools outside the camps ²⁶	125000

- The Jordanian Government allowed food, medical and humanitarian aid to enter for those stranded on the Syrian-Jordanian border in Al-Rukban Camp after their problem worsened, despite the security threats that such a step may pose to Jordan owing to the presence of armed persons in that camp.
- The states participating in the Brussels Conference on Syria, held on 5 April 2017, pledged to provide humanitarian aid worth six billion dollars to Syrians, both residents and refugees, at the conclusion of the conference hosted by Brussels, which lasted two days.
- Jordan issued (43690) work permits to Syrian refugees in the camps and host communities, in sectors open to non-Jordanian workers.
- One thousand Syrian refugee children were vaccinated.
- Approximately one thousand Syrian students were integrated and enrolled in the formal education system in the 2016/2017 academic year.
- (8) additional double-shift schools were opened, bringing the total to (340) schools, in order to accommodate an additional number of Syrian students and raise the number of Syrian students in formal education to (125000).
- A school complex comprising approximately (44) schools was established in the camps to ensure that all refugees have access to education.
- (70) refugee children were enrolled in non-formal education accredited by the Ministry of Education, and approximately (50) specialized centers were established in double-shift schools to help students make up for missed schooling.
- The number of Syrian refugees who obtained the magnetic security card as of 31 December 2017 reached (591) thousand refugees.
- The number of Syrian refugees in refugee camps on Jordanian territory reached (115,477) refugees, as shown in Table No. (4).

Table No. (4): Number of Syrian Refugees in the Camps

Camp	Number
Al-Zaatari Camp	79307

²⁶According to data of the Ministry of Education.

Camp	Number
Mrajeeb Al-Fhood Camp (Emirati-Jordanian)	6077
Al-Hadiqa Camp	640
Cyber City Camp	265
Al-Azraq Camp	29188
Total	115477

In order to identify the most prominent methods and plans followed by the aforementioned bodies to mitigate the effects of the Syrian refugee crisis on local communities in the sectors of education, health, labor, water, environment and security, the Center held a conference entitled "Civil Society and Asylum Issues / The Syrian Refugee Crisis" on 10–11 September 2017 in the capital, Amman, at which representatives of the public sector, civil society organizations and international institutions supporting the efforts of the Jordan Response Plan to the Syrian refugee crisis spoke. Studies were presented and in-depth interventions on the effects of Syrian asylum were heard.

At the end of the conference, the participants concluded the following:

1. Jordan presented a good model in receiving and dealing with Syrian refugees and providing them with services and protection, exceeding what was expected of it.
2. Jordanian society, in all its components, has been and continues to be affected by the large influxes of Syrian refugees at the political, security, economic, cultural and social levels.
3. The response of the international community in supporting the Jordanian Government and enabling it to bear the burdens of Syrian refugees has been, and remains, weak and insufficient.
4. The success of the Jordanian Government's measures in addressing and managing the Syrian refugee crisis has been uneven and fluctuating, which has aggravated the challenges and negative effects on Jordanian society.
5. The absence of a clear strategic plan for dealing with the problem of the influx of large numbers of Syrian refugees.
6. The haphazard provision of assistance and the absence of a mechanism and reference framework (coupons, magnetic cards, iris scan).
7. The absence of a documented database of Syrian refugees enabling them to be followed up, their locations to be identified and their movements tracked.

A team from the National Center visited Al-Zaatari Camp, followed up on the conditions of all the other camps, and examined the realities of the lives of their residents. It found that the official agencies supervising the camps had resolved most of the problems previously faced by Syrian refugees that were referred to in its previous reports, such as regulating and establishing a clear mechanism for sponsorships, vehicle entry permits and voluntary return to Syria; regulating entry through the gates and equipping them with baggage inspection devices; increasing the number of distribution centers in coordination with the relevant international organizations; and curbing the sale of tents and caravans by having them handed over upon sponsorship or return and deposited with the competent international organization. The team also observed:

- a. The continued absence of the role of the Ministry of Health and other health oversight bodies, such as the Food and Drug Administration, in exercising oversight over commercial shops and the foodstuffs sold therein.
- b. The limited hours of electricity supply, which affects the level of services and hampers the lives of residents.
- c. The continued complaints of Syrian refugees residing outside the camps about the irregular payment of emergency assistance by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Recommendations:

The Center reiterates the observations contained in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following:

1. Reviving the work of the special committee formed to study the naturalization applications submitted by a number of persons residing in the Northern Badia, and studying their files in a manner that ensures a speedy solution to their problem; and addressing the problems facing the children of Jordanian women married to foreigners in obtaining the facilities approved by the Jordanian Government.
2. Addressing citizens' complaints about the poor quality of the new civil status card (identity card), owing to the small font of the identifying data on it and the lack of clarity of the personal photograph.
3. Reconsidering the mechanism for managing the refugee crisis in a manner that contributes to preserving the national gains represented by stability and social security, and to preventing the spread of hate speech and the deterioration of conditions, by contributing to the management of the crisis at all strategic, operational and technical-executive levels.
4. Reconsidering the fees for issuing passports for Gaza Strip residents, as well as passports for Jordanians.
5. Intensifying the efforts of Jordanian diplomacy in communicating with the international community and donor states and organizations to secure sufficient funding to cover the substantial needs of Syrian refugees in accordance with the principle of burden-sharing.

5. The Right to Vote and Stand for Election

The right to vote and stand for election is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Jordanian Constitution and affirmed by regional and international instruments and conventions, being 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 also regarded as an indicator of the existence of political will for reform. However, an objective assessment of the existence of such will depends on the nature of the election law, the degree of independence of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), and the holding of free, fair and transparent elections. All of these conditions, among others, should produce as one of their most prominent outcomes a parliament that enjoys the confidence of citizens and reflects their aspiration to bring about some change in government policies. Has this outcome been achieved in successive Parliaments? This is a question that still awaits a convincing answer.

The year 2017 witnessed a legal entitlement to hold elections for municipalities, local councils and governorate councils on 5 August 2017. This was the first time in the history of Jordanian political life that elections were held for governorate councils under the Decentralization Law. The Municipalities Law No. (41) of 2015 and its amendments and the Decentralization Law No. (49) of 2015 and its amendments constitute the main reference for this electoral process, in addition to the executive instructions issued by the IEC and its procedures setting out the details of implementing the electoral process in its various stages; the Electoral Districts Regulation for Governorate Councils and its amendments of 2016; the decision of the Minister of Municipal Affairs dividing municipal areas into local councils and determining the number of members of the various councils and the manner of filling their seats; and the Council of Ministers decision of 13 February 2017 to hold elections for the presidents of municipal councils, the membership of municipal or local councils, and the membership of governorate councils.

These elections were distinguished as being the first experience in which the IEC assumed responsibility for administering and supervising municipal, local and decentralization elections, pursuant to the constitutional amendments made in 2014, under which the role and responsibilities of the Commission were expanded in administering and supervising elections in the Kingdom in general, so as to ensure the highest levels of transparency, integrity and impartiality in the administration of electoral processes at the local level.

However, this first experience of the Commission, which it largely succeeded in managing, was not free of numerous shortcomings:

Although the IEC had, in theory, laid down a number of executive instructions on the rules of electoral campaigns to ensure fairness and equal opportunities among candidates, there are still flaws in the application of these instructions. It also did not establish a clear, effective and applicable mechanism for tracking candidates' spending on their electoral campaigns.

Moreover, the IEC and the relevant government bodies were unable to address the use of illegal (political) money that influences voters' convictions, whether directly or indirectly. Information was repeatedly reported during previous elections about the phenomenon of vote-buying in various electoral districts, which constitutes a serious affront to the electoral process as a whole. What increased the resentment was that none of the financiers or "recipients" of money was brought before the judiciary, and the Commission was unable to refute or disprove such repeated and widespread information.

The National Center monitored numerous violations of electoral campaigning rules committed by some candidates or their supporters during the period permitted for campaigning, consisting of the following: the spread of electoral advertising on traffic lights, traffic signs, directional signs on bridges and electricity poles; the use of electoral advertising (banners and pictures) on government buildings and on school entrances and walls; the use of the official State emblem in pictures; the use of the Commission's logo on "Facebook" pages by candidates; calling for electoral rallies; tampering with the electoral advertising of other candidates and tearing down banners; and the continuation of electoral campaigning during the electoral silence period and on polling day.

Despite these gaps, however, the National Center for Human Rights affirms that the municipal and governorate council elections held on Tuesday, 15 August 2017, with the exception of the breach of the security and safety of ballot boxes in the Al-Muwaqqar area, proceeded smoothly, were free and fair, and achieved a high rate of women's participation. Notwithstanding this positive outcome, **a number of observations may be recorded, the most prominent of which are:**

1. Weak coordination among the new bodies and entities (the governorate council, the municipal council and the local councils).
2. Low voter turnout in the three main cities.
3. The absence of clear programs in candidates' campaigns.
4. The weak role of political parties and society in supporting candidates or getting them elected to either municipal councils or governorate councils.
5. Breaches of ballot secrecy, as numerous cases of open voting, claimed illiteracy and group voting were documented in many electoral districts, particularly in sports halls.
6. The continuation of electoral campaigning at most polling centers. There were also some attempts to obstruct the voting process, and disorder at some polling and counting centers as a result of friction between supporters of some candidates; however, these remained limited, with the exception of the regrettable incidents that occurred in Al-Muwaqqar District, in which ballot boxes were attacked. In future elections, such cases must be dealt with by enforcing the electoral silence period and preventing its breach under any pretext or excuse.
7. Discrepancies and errors in the numbers of winners between what was announced in the Official Gazette and on the Commission's website.

Perhaps the most prominent outcomes of the electoral process were:

1. The lack of clarity of some of the main aspects of these elections for voters, and the insufficient clarity of their objectives for citizens. It was therefore necessary for this electoral process to be accompanied by awareness-raising and educational campaigns.
2. Insufficient understanding of the concept of administrative decentralization, which is a new concept, and a lack of understanding of whether the role of council members is service-oriented (developmental) or legislative.
3. Duplication of work owing to the lack of clarity as to whether the decentralization committees report to the Ministry of Interior or to the Ministry of Political Development, until the matter was settled by a decision of the Prime Ministry providing that the members of the decentralization committees report to the Ministry of Political Development.

4. The failure to provide the necessary resources and financial capacities to members of municipal and governorate councils, as very small monthly remunerations were paid to them. This led many of them to demand that these remunerations be increased and made equal to those of members of the House of Representatives, and that they be granted the title of "services deputy", with the privileges this title entails, such as vehicles with special plates and numbers ("red plates"), and other privileges that contravene the law. Some criticized these demands and considered them an expression of an entrenched societal culture that sees popular representation as a gateway to obtaining personal privileges.

Recommendations:

1. Raising societal awareness of respect for the inviolability of the electoral process by all members of society, and protecting this process from those who break the law, in a manner that preserves civil peace and safeguards rights and freedoms, in addition to enforcing the law against any parties attempting to tamper with the integrity of elections at all their stages.
2. Strengthening confidence in the electoral process in accordance with the best international standards and practices, by adopting an electoral system that contributes to promoting the formation of blocs.
3. Strengthening the approach of political reform, so as to enable political forces to come together in electoral blocs or groupings to represent social groups and intellectual and political trends.
4. Ensuring the integrity of the electoral process under the administration and supervision of the IEC, and ensuring the cooperation of all institutions and bodies whose participation is required, in order to support the role of the Commission in administering and supervising the electoral process.
5. Strengthening the independence of the IEC from the executive authority and allowing it to appoint its staff with full impartiality.
6. Amending the relevant legislation to guarantee the right to two-tier litigation with respect to judicial challenges.
7. Delimiting electoral districts under the Election Law or an annex thereto.
8. Including the names of expatriates in the voter lists to ensure their participation in the electoral process.
9. Displaying voter lists in open electronic formats to enable citizens to access and review them to verify their accuracy, and displaying the results electronically and in analyzable formats so that citizens can view the counting results and compare them with what was announced.
10. Educating citizens and candidates about the requirements and procedures contained in the law governing the electoral process.
11. Formulating a legal framework that ensures more effective resolution of electoral disputes and violations and deters anyone who may be tempted to commit acts that harm this electoral process.
12. Activating the role of the IEC in monitoring electoral campaigns, activating accountability and answerability procedures, and establishing clear mechanisms and controls to ensure candidates' compliance with electoral campaigning rules.
13. Addressing the use of illegal money and its influence on voters' convictions, whether direct or indirect, through methods that ensure it does not affect the will of voters.

14. Giving popular oversight the place and role it deserves in monitoring the performance of official bodies, including the IEC.
15. Dealing with full transparency with any violation or infringement affecting the electoral process, being candid with society about all details, and continuously providing public opinion with the facts within the framework of the principle of freedom of access to information.

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

Legislation Governing the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Access to Information, and Freedom of the Press and Media

In 2017, a number of pieces of legislation related to the right to freedom of opinion and expression were amended, including Article (68/h) of the Civil Service Bylaw, which was amended to add a new restriction on employees with respect to expressing their opinions, using broad and vague terms such as offending the State or those working for it through writing or making statements to social media websites²⁷.

The Student Discipline Instructions in Public and Private Schools No. (5) of 2017 reaffirmed the same approach, providing for the penalty of expulsion of a student who offends, verbally or physically, persons of high standing, the Jordanian flag or Jordanian symbols²⁸.

The draft bill amending the Cybercrimes Law of 2017 included the criminalization of hate speech, but with a broad definition that reads: "Any statement or act that would incite sedition or religious, sectarian, ethnic or regional strife, or discrimination between individuals or groups." The Center considers that the text, in its current wording, constitutes a new restriction on freedom of expression.

Practices Related to Freedom of Expression

A. Persons Detained for Expressing Their Opinions (Prisoners of Opinion)

The year 2017 witnessed an increase in the rate of detention and trial of individuals on the basis of expressing their opinions on social media websites, because of their participation in sit-ins and protests, or because of expressing their opinions through other means of expression. The Center also monitored the arrest of a number of individuals by the General Intelligence Department, some of whom were at times released without any charges being brought against them. The charges brought against those detained ranged from undermining the system of government or inciting opposition to it, to committing an act that would disturb public order and endanger the safety of society, contrary to the provisions of Article (2) and Article (7/i) of the Prevention of Terrorism Law. The most prominent of these cases were:

1. The arrest of about eight activists and members of the popular movement (Hirak) during the period 12–13 January 2017 by the General Intelligence Department because of posts they published on their "Facebook" pages or comments they posted on posts. The detainees remained under investigation at the Department for several days, after which seven of them were charged with incitement to undermine the system of government, contrary to the provisions of Article (149/1) of the Penal Code; the eighth person was charged with committing an act that would disturb public order and endanger the safety of society, contrary to the provisions of Article (2) and Article (7/i) of the Prevention of Terrorism Law No. (55) of 2006. They were placed in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers on 17 January 2017 and were then released on bail on 7 February 2017²⁹.

²⁷The former text in Civil Service Regulation No. (96) of 2014 read as follows: "(h) Writing or making statements to the media that offend the State or its employees, or disclosing work secrets." That is, the new text added social media alongside the media.

²⁸Article (8/2) of the Instructions on Student Discipline in Public and Private Schools No. (5) of 2017.

²⁹A team from the Center visited the detainees in their places of detention and prepared reports on the results of the visit.

2. On 19 January 2017, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) received a complaint from the Teachers' Syndicate concerning the arrest of (13) teachers by the security authorities and the referral of some of them to the State Security Court during the period from 18 December 2016 until 4 January 2017. The Center conducted the necessary preliminary verification and found that five teachers had been detained on charges ranging from incitement to oppose the system of government, to promoting the ideas of a terrorist group, to membership of an unlawful association³⁰.
3. On 31 January 2017, the Center monitored the detention of the creator of the "Jordanian Boycott" page on "Facebook"³¹ by the General Intelligence Department. He was released on 7 February 2017 without any charge being brought against him, and the page was closed on 1 February 2017.
4. The detention of an activist on 21 December 2017 by the General Intelligence Department while he was participating in a sit-in in front of the US Embassy in protest against the decision to declare Jerusalem the capital of Israel. He was released on 25 December 2017 without any charge being brought against him.

Complaints under the Cybercrimes Law

The year 2017 witnessed an expansion in recourse to Article (11)³² of the Cybercrimes Law by persons holding public office in cases related to freedom of opinion and expression, as more than one complaint was filed against media professionals, journalists, social media activists and others, in cases mostly related to public affairs. The most prominent of these are the following³³:

- A person holding public office filed a complaint against about (36) persons who had published posts, or commented on them, via "Facebook" that included questions and inquiries about the source of the property belonging to him and his sons. Among the defendants were seven media professionals, two of whom remained in detention until they were released on 29 November 2017.
- A female Member of Parliament filed a complaint against a social media activist because he published a post on his "Facebook" page that included a caricature relating to her; however, she later dropped the complaint.
- A Member of Parliament filed a complaint against an activist and member of the popular movement (Hirak) because he published a post on his "Facebook" page in which he attacked the Member of Parliament for defending a former Chief of the Royal Hashemite Court. However, he later dropped the complaint.
- A public figure filed a complaint against a group of persons after they published on their personal "Facebook" pages accusations of corruption against him and members of his family, following which the Amman Public Prosecutor, on 22 November 2017, detained nine of the defendants in Al-Juwaideh Correctional and Rehabilitation Center; subsequently, on 26 November 2017, the complaint was dropped and the detainees were released.
- A member of the House of Representatives filed a complaint against a former Member of Parliament for publishing posts on his personal "Facebook" page relating to a case of electricity theft, following which the former Member of Parliament against whom the complaint was filed was detained by the Amman Public Prosecutor in Al-Juwaideh Correctional and Rehabilitation

³⁰A complaint submitted to the NCHR on 19 January 2017 by the Teachers' Association.

³¹The number of members of the boycott page exceeded (1.3) million persons.

³²Article (11) of the Cybercrimes Law criminalizes publishing or republishing, via the Internet, any material involving defamation, slander or contempt.

³³The Center followed up on these cases in the media, communicated with some of the persons concerned, and prepared reports on some of them.

Center on 3 December 2017. He was released on bail on 5 December 2017, and the complaint was later dropped.

- A Member of Parliament filed a complaint against a cartoonist who had published a caricature about him that the Member of Parliament considered offensive.

Cases Related to Article (11) of the Cybercrimes Law

The number of cases related to Article (11) of the Cybercrimes Law in 2017 reached (1161) cases, as shown in Table No. (5). A conviction was entered in (1009) of these cases, at a rate of 87%, while the number of cases in which acquittal judgments were issued reached (86) cases, at a rate of 7%. As for the remaining cases, the judgments issued therein were distributed among non-liability, stay of prosecution, and the imposition of non-custodial measures³⁴.

Table No. (5): Number of cases related to Article (11) of the Cybercrimes Law in 2017

Offense	Number of cases	Conviction	Dropped	Acquittal	Non-custodial measures	Non-liability	Stay of prosecution
Offense of publishing or republishing material involving defamation, slander or contempt via the Internet	1161	1009	9	86	5	44	8

Detainees and Convicts for Offenses Related to Freedom of Expression under the Penal Code

The Penal Code No. (16) of 1960, as amended, contains a number of legal provisions related to freedom of expression of opinion. These provisions are characterized by broad legal wording and by a lack of clarity and precision in the formulation of the material element constituting the offense, which amounts to a breach of a fundamental principle, namely the principle of the legality of crimes and penalties. Table No. (6) shows the number of persons convicted of offenses related to freedom of expression in 2017³⁵:

Table No. (6): Number of persons convicted of offenses related to freedom of expression in 2017

Offense	Number of charges brought	Conviction	Dropped	Acquittal	Non-liability	Stay of prosecution	Non-custodial measures
Offense of committing acts that would expose the Kingdom to the danger of hostile acts, or disturb its relations with a foreign State, contrary to the provisions of Article (118/2)	13	None	1	3	9	–	–
Offense of defaming an official body, contrary to the provisions of Article (191)	360	253, at a rate of 70%	2	49	42	7	7
Offense of lèse-majesté (insulting the King), contrary to the provisions of Article (195)	296	241, at a rate of 81%		45	7	3	–

³⁴These figures are according to the statistics received by the Center by virtue of an official letter from the Judicial Council dated 21 February 2018.

³⁵These figures are according to the statistics received by the Center by virtue of an official letter from the Judicial Council dated 21 February 2018.

Offense	Number of charges brought	Conviction	Dropped	Acquittal	Non-liability	Stay of prosecution	Non-custodial measures
Offense of inciting strife, contrary to the provisions of Article (150)	40	23, at a rate of 58%		10	6	1	—

Persons Detained on the Basis of Terrorism Offenses Related to Freedom of Expression

The provisions relating to terrorism offenses contained in the Prevention of Terrorism Law and the Jordanian Penal Code are characterized by a lack of precision and clarity and by their susceptibility to broad interpretation, as a number of persons were detained on the basis of offenses related to freedom of expression:

- The number of cases referred to the State Security Court relating to 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 retaliatory acts against them or their property, contrary to the provisions of Article (3/b) of the Prevention of Terrorism Law, reached six cases in 2017³⁶, while the number of such cases in 2015 was one case; in 2016 no case was referred, according to the official statistics of the State Security Court up to 29 November 2016³⁷.
- The number of cases of persons convicted and detained for the offense of opposing the system of government or inciting opposition to it, pursuant to the provisions of Article (149/1) of the Penal Code No. (16) of 1960, as amended, reached six cases in 2017³⁸, while the total of such cases in 2016 was three cases in which the judgments became final.
- The number of cases referred to the State Security Court whose subject matter was promoting the ideas of a terrorist group, contrary to the provisions of Article (3/e) of the Prevention of Terrorism Law, reached (162) cases in 2017, while the total of such cases was (57) cases in 2016 and (64) cases in 2015³⁹.

Freedom of Expression in the Academic Sector⁴⁰

In 2017, the National Center continued to monitor the most prominent violations against university students on account of expressing their opinions. The most prominent of these cases was the harassment to which students at one of the colleges of technological engineering affiliated with Al-Balqa Applied University were subjected in May 2017 during their open-ended sit-in in protest against decisions to expel three of their colleagues from the college. Two of the students who had participated in the sit-in were subsequently detained by the security services, and the college summoned about ten students for investigation. The students later held sit-ins in front of the House of Representatives and in front of the Ministry of Higher Education to demand the lifting of the penalties imposed on their colleagues and the release of those detained. The families of the detained students also organized a protest in front of the Professional Associations Complex.

It is worth noting that in 2016 the National Center monitored (11) cases of violations against students because of expressing their opinions, consisting of either the expulsion of students, their administrative detention, harassment against them while exercising their right to sit-in, the issuance of circulars

³⁶Letter received by the Center from the Military Judiciary, No. (M.A./12/2/State Security/1088), dated (29) January 2018.

³⁷Letter received by the NCHR from the Military Judiciary Directorate, No. (M.A./12/2/State Security/16772), dated (29) November 2016.

³⁸Letter received by the Center from the Military Judiciary, No. (M.A./12/2/State Security/1088), dated (29) January 2018.

³⁹Letter received by the NCHR from the Military Judiciary Directorate, No. (M.A./12/2/State Security/16772), dated 29 November 2016.

⁴⁰The Center received a number of complaints in this regard and followed up on them, in addition to preparing specialized reports on some of the cases that had been subjected to violations.

prohibiting them from participating in any sit-ins or protests on pain of liability, or making them sign undertakings not to object to the amount of university fees in the future.

Prevention of the Holding of Events

In 2017, the Center monitored the prevention of a number of events by virtue of decisions issued by administrative governors, in violation of the Public Gatherings Law No. (7) of 2014, as amended, which provides that it is sufficient to submit a notification to the administrative governor without awaiting approval to hold the event. The number of cases of prevention monitored by the Center in 2017 reached about (13) cases, compared with (11) cases in 2016.

Freedom of the Press and Media

In 2017, the Center monitored a number of violations affecting freedom of the press and freedom of the media, the most prominent of which were:

- Charging the cartoonist Emad Hajjaj with insulting religious feelings, contrary to the provisions of Article (278) of the Penal Code, because of a caricature in which he criticized one of the issues that aroused public opinion in 2017.
- On 2 November 2017, a correspondent for a news website was arrested by the security authorities after preparing a report on hydroponic agriculture in the Deir Alla area, on the pretext that he was working for an unlicensed channel; he was subsequently placed in administrative detention.
- On 28 November 2017, a team from a satellite channel was assaulted by those in charge of an autism center while the team was attempting to prepare a report on the treatment of children at that center.
- A person working in the media field was assaulted and beaten in his home. According to the verification conducted by the National Center, the said person claimed that the reason for the assault was his publication of posts on his "Facebook" page that addressed and exposed sensitive corruption cases.
- An investigative journalist withdrew from publishing an investigation into illegal practices carried out by civil society organizations after he was threatened with dismissal by the owner of the institution for which he works⁴¹.
- On 16 January 2017, the broadcast of an episode of a television program aired on a satellite channel was cancelled. The subject of the episode was the activists and members of the popular movement (Hirak) who had been detained in February, and the episode was supposed to host the brother of one of the detainees. The episode began airing live and the broadcast was suddenly cut off, with an apology for the episode.
- The broadcast of a program on a satellite channel that was hosting the soldier Ahmad Al-Daqamseh was stopped, and shortly after the program was stopped, the channel's broadcast was suspended for about three days.

Audiovisual Media and News Websites

The year 2017 witnessed a positive development in the field of audiovisual media, represented by the Media Commission taking an internal decision not to issue any decision banning publication on any case or subject, and at the same time not to circulate any publication ban decision that the Commission is requested to circulate. On another level, and for the purpose of facilitating the work of foreign radio and television stations, the Commission amended the Bylaw on the Accreditation of Offices of Radio and Television Stations.

⁴¹ Al-Dustour newspaper, "Al-Sinnara" section, Monday, 2 January 2017.

Media Complaints Committee

The number of complaints considered by the Media Complaints Committee⁴² in 2017 reached (12) complaints. The number of complaints involving a violation of media content reached (5) complaints, ranging from broadcasting content offensive to public decency to broadcasting offensive news and advertisements promoting sorcery. The number of complaints involving infringement of intellectual property rights reached (4) complaints, one of which fell outside the Committee's jurisdiction as it concerned a foreign, unlicensed station broadcasting from outside the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In addition, (2) complaints came before the judiciary and thereby fell outside the Committee's jurisdiction by operation of law. By comparison, the total number of complaints received by the Committee in 2016 was (11) complaints, two of which fell outside the Committee's jurisdiction and came within the scope of labor complaints.

In 2017, a number of measures were taken with respect to audiovisual media and news websites, as follows:

- The number of electronic publications licensed in 2017 reached (22) publications, bringing the total number of licensed electronic publications as at the end of 2017 to (160) publications.
- The number of satellite stations licensed in 2017 reached (7) stations, bringing the total number of licensed satellite stations to (39) stations.
- The number of radio stations licensed in 2017 reached (2) stations, bringing the total number of licensed satellite stations to (45) stations.
- No radio rebroadcasting stations were licensed in 2017.
- (193) cinematic films were viewed by the Commission, and all of them were approved with the exception of two films that were not approved, the first because it contained a depiction of the Divine Being and the second because it contained material inciting sedition, pursuant to the provisions of the Bylaw on Works and the Approval and Censorship of Visual Works No. (63) of 2004.
- The number of book titles that entered the Kingdom in 2017 and were circulated reached (1270) titles, of which more than (578) samples were requested for review by the Commission. The entry and circulation of (540) titles was approved, while (44) titles were stopped from circulation because they contained material contrary to the provisions of the Press and Publications Law, pursuant to the provisions of Article (31/b) thereof.
- In 2107, no warnings were issued to satellite or radio stations or to electronic publications.
- In 2017, no violation was referred to the judiciary, while the Commission notified the Public Prosecution of (3) satellite stations promoting sorcery; it also stopped a radio program for promoting magic and sorcery⁴³.

The Right of Access to Information

In 2017, the Center monitored the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission's establishment of national integrity standards in the public and private sectors and in civil society organizations, which included, under the transparency standard, sub-standards including openness, clarity and the classification of information. Among the measurement indicators is the rate of approval of requests for

⁴²Among the positive developments contained in the Audio-Visual Media Law No. (26) of 2015, specifically Article (4/y), is the formation of a committee of specialists to consider complaints submitted by the public or any other party concerning media content or material broadcast or recorded for the purposes of display or public circulation, or by one licensee against another licensee. The committee commenced its work in 2015.

⁴³The above figures are according to the statistics of the Media Commission received by the Center by virtue of letter No. (Q.N./2952) dated 28 May 2018.

access to information⁴⁴. This is considered one of the positive developments affecting the right of access to information.

The number of requests for access to information submitted to the relevant authorities reached (13004) requests, of which (12975) requests were answered and (29) requests were refused, compared with (12101) requests submitted to the relevant authorities in 2016, of which (12077) requests were answered and (24) requests were refused, while the total of such requests in 2015 was (2140) requests, of which (2094) requests were answered and (47) requests were refused.

The number of complaints received by the Information Council in 2017 reached (7) complaints relating to the failure to provide information to those requesting it, while the number of complaints submitted in 2016 was (6) complaints, compared with (4) complaints submitted to the Information Council in 2015.

Table No. (7) shows the number of requests for access to information submitted to official departments and institutions in 2017 according to the data of the Information Council:

Table No. (7): Number of requests for access to information submitted to official departments and institutions in 2017

No.	Entity	Requests answered	Requests refused	Total number
1	Prime Ministry	–	(1)	1
2	Income and Sales Tax Department	9986	–	9986
3	Royal Jordanian Geographic Center	1386	–	1386
4	Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission	334	–	334
5	National Library Department	329	–	329
6	Ministry of Education	169	–	169
7	Civil Service Bureau	123	–	123
8	Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources	110	(1)	111
9	Meteorological Department	104	–	104
10	Greater Amman Municipality	93	(1)	94
11	Jordan Securities Commission	61	–	61
12	Judicial Institute	43	–	43
13	Ministry of Water and Irrigation	31	–	31
14	Agricultural Credit Corporation	28	–	28
15	Ministry of Justice	20	(5)	25

⁴⁴Letter received by the Center from the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission dated 13 February 2017, No. (2/4/A/380).

No.	Entity	Requests answered	Requests refused	Total number
16	Ministry of Social Development	23	(1)	24
17	Central Bank of Jordan	9	(10)	19
18	Water Authority	16	(1)	17
19	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	14	–	14
20	Vocational Training Corporation	12	–	12
21	Civil Status and Passports Department	11	–	11
22	Ministry of Information and Communications Technology	6	(5)	11
23	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates	11	–	11
24	Ministry of Health	10	–	10
25	National Aid Fund	9	(1)	10
26	Media Commission	9	–	9
27	Hejaz Railway	8	–	8
28	Department of Antiquities	6	–	6
29	Ministry of Transport	5	–	5
30	Energy and Minerals Regulatory Commission	3	–	3
31	Ministry of Interior	–	(3)	3
32	Ministry of Labor	2	–	2
33	Ministry of Environment	2	–	2
34	Telecommunications Regulatory Commission	2	–	2
	Total	12975	29	13004

As for the ministries and departments that informed the Council that they had not received any requests for access to information, they are: the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, the Social Security Corporation, the Jordan Food and Drug Administration, the Civil Consumer Corporation, the High Health Council, the General Budget Department, the Audit Bureau, the Postal Savings Fund, the Jordan Cooperative Corporation, the Housing and Urban Development Corporation, the Land Transport Regulatory Commission, and the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission.

The National Center received a complaint⁴⁵ from a person concerning the Prime Ministry's refusal to accept the registration of his request for access to information relating to a statement of the number of

⁴⁵The complaint was submitted on 16 March 2017.

senior-category positions in the first and second groups to which the Council of Ministers decided to make appointments; a statement of the number of senior-category positions in the second group to which the Council of Ministers decided to make appointments without advertising them and opening the door for candidacy; and a statement of the number of senior-category positions in the second group to which the Council of Ministers decided to make appointments after advertising them and opening the door for candidacy.

A person also filed a complaint⁴⁶ concerning the Prime Ministry's refusal to accept the registration of a request for access to information on 15 February 2017; his request was to obtain a copy of the gas agreement concluded between Jordan and the American company Noble Energy. The Center also received a complaint concerning the Ministry of Energy's refusal to provide a copy of the gas agreement to the same person⁴⁷.

Hate Speech

The Center monitored a decrease in the number of incidents and cases involving what is known as hate speech in 2017, compared with 2016, in which eight cases were monitored. The following are the most prominent cases and repercussions monitored in 2017:

- On 5 January 2017, in the context of pursuing persons who had offended the victims of the terrorist attack that claimed the lives of Jordanians while they were celebrating New Year's Eve in the Turkish city of Istanbul on 31 December 2016, the security services monitored several accounts on social media websites, as a result of which (16) persons were investigated and (12) of them were referred to the judiciary because of their offensive comments⁴⁸.
- At the end of October (10) 2017, a cartoonist received death threats because of a caricature he drew depicting Jesus Christ accompanied by a phrase declaring his disavowal of those involved in selling church property to the Israeli occupation. The said cartoonist informed the relevant security authorities.
- During September 2017, a journalist and a female writer filed a complaint with the relevant authorities because of posts on "Facebook" that included insults against them and indirect threats that they would meet a fate similar to that suffered by the writer Nahed Hattar. In this regard, it should be noted that the same female writer had also received death threats because of an article she published in 2016.

Number of Crimes Received by the Cybercrime Unit

The total number of complaints handled by the Cybercrime Unit in 2017 amounted to (5084) complaints, as shown in Table No. (8), compared with (3655) complaints in 2016. These ranged among cases of defamation, extortion, fraud, theft of information, sexual abuse of children, impersonation, and hacking.

Table No. (8): Number of complaints handled by the Cybercrime Unit in 2017

No.	Classification	Total
1	Impersonation (electronic defamation)	462

⁴⁶A complaint submitted to the National Center for Human Rights on 15 February 2017.

⁴⁷For more information, see the NCHR's Report on the State of Human Rights for 2016, p. (74).

⁴⁸The Center includes this case in the 2017 report, although it was mentioned in the 2016 report, because the incident occurred at the beginning of the year and its repercussions continued in terms of the detention of the offenders, their investigation and their referral to the judiciary.

No.	Classification	Total
2	Threats, extortion, insults and abuse	2331
3	Electronic financial fraud	139
4	Corrupting the marital bond	1011
5	Theft of electronic data	183
6	Hacking of websites	93
7	Communications applications	865
	Total	5084

The number of crimes related to hate speech registered within official complaints with the Cybercrime Unit in 2017 reached seven complaints, compared with six complaints registered in 2016⁴⁹.

The number of cases before the regular judiciary in 2017 relating to the offense of inciting sectarian or racial strife or inciting conflict between sects and the various components of the nation, pursuant to the provisions of Article (150) of the Penal Code, reached (40) cases, in (23) of which conviction decisions were issued, compared with (19) cases registered before the judiciary in 2016, in (16) of which conviction decisions were issued.

Recommendations

First: Review the laws related to the media in general, and to freedom of expression in particular, as a single legislative package in order to avoid contradictions and inconsistency between laws, as follows:

1. Amend the Press and Publications Law, particularly with regard to abolishing the requirement of prior licensing for publications and news websites; abolishing the presumed liability of the editor-in-chief and the owner of the newspaper or publication; and redrafting the texts of Articles (5, 7, 38), which contain acts that constitute offenses if violated, in a manner that ensures that the criminal provision is not overly broad and that adheres to the principles of legislative drafting, which require clarifying the nature of the criminal provision. The same Law should also expressly provide for journalists to be tried under the Press and Publications Law and no other law.
2. Amend the articles related to freedom of expression in the Penal Code, including:
 - a. Article (118/2), which criminalizes disturbing relations with a foreign State, by tightening the legislative text and clarifying the material act constituting the offense.
 - b. Amend the text of Article (150), which criminalizes inciting sectarian or racial strife or inciting conflict between sects, so as to remove the ambiguous and vague terms and to adhere to the text of Article (20/2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
 - c. Amend Article (191) on the criminalization of defaming an official body, in a manner that ensures that institutions handling public affairs are not immunized from criticism.

⁴⁹Public Security Directorate letter No. (J/9/27/20632) dated 13 April 2017, received by the National Center for Human Rights.

- d. Amend Article (195) of the Penal Code on lèse-majesté, in a manner that ensures its conformity with the principles of precise legislative drafting and removes unlawful restrictions on freedom of expression.
 - e. Amend Article (149) of the Penal Code on undermining the system of government, so that it is not considered a terrorist offense, and clarify the nature of the material act constituting this offense.
3. Amend the Prevention of Terrorism Law as follows:
- a. Amend Article Two on the definition of terrorism and refrain from expanding the definition in such a way that many acts may be considered terrorist acts.
 - b. Repeal paragraph (b) of Article Three, which provides that disturbing relations with a foreign State is a terrorist offense, given its inconsistency with international standards on counter-terrorism.
 - c. Amend paragraph (e) of Article Three on promoting the ideas of a terrorist group, in a manner that ensures the material element of the offense is defined precisely, enabling the individual to regulate his conduct in accordance with the legal text.
4. Amend the Cybercrimes Law by repealing the text of Article (11) thereof.
5. Amend the Public Gatherings Law, particularly with regard to limiting the authority of the administrative governor to disperse public gatherings to specific cases, and repeal the instructions issued under the Law that contain prohibitions relating to the holding of public gatherings that are not provided for in the Law itself, which renders them unconstitutional instructions.
6. Amend Article (68/h) of the Civil Service Bylaw in a manner that enables employees to express their opinions freely and ensures the legitimate restrictions set out in international human rights standards.
7. Amend the Student Discipline Instructions in Public and Private Schools No. (5) of 2017 by repealing paragraph (2) of Article (8) of the Instructions, which provides for the penalty of expulsion of a student who offends, verbally or physically, persons of high standing, the Jordanian flag or Jordanian symbols.

Second: Refrain from the pre-emptive prevention of events held lawfully and by peaceful means, as this constitutes a clear violation of the text of Article (7) of the Public Gatherings Law No. (7) of 2014, as amended, such events being one of the manifestations of freedom of expression of opinion; refrain from dispersing events by force in the absence of a legal justification requiring this in light of the principle of proportionality and necessity; and refrain from detaining individuals participating in such peaceful gatherings.

Third: Limit prosecutions against activists and members of the popular movement (Hirak) and refrain from detaining them because of expressing their opinions through various means, particularly via social media websites.

Fourth: Strengthen the exercise of freedom of expression in universities, and refrain from imposing penalties on students or faculty members because of expressing their opinions.

Fifth: Develop clear policies in the field of combating hate speech that focus on the values of human rights and citizenship and that strengthen economic and social rights and public freedoms; and reconsider the National Plan to Combat Extremism, which in its initial form constituted further restrictions on public freedoms, particularly freedom of expression.

7. The Right to Assembly

The Jordanian Constitution⁵⁰ guarantees citizens the right to assembly and organization, including the organization of marches, demonstrations and public events. This right is also guaranteed by international instruments owing to its close connection with other political rights, such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to form and join trade unions, associations and parties, and the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs.

The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) had previously submitted a number of recommendations and observations on the Public Assemblies Law in its annual report for 2013⁵¹, among them a recommendation to amend the Law, particularly with regard to the definition of a public assembly. The year 2017 witnessed no governmental initiative to review the legislation relating to the right of peaceful assembly; rather, this year witnessed a number of violations of this right, the most prominent of which were: (a) the issuance by some administrative governors of decisions prohibiting the holding of certain public assemblies, although such action is not provided for in the Law, which empowers the administrative governor to disperse⁵² public assemblies where they depart from the principle of peacefulness, but not to prohibit them; and (b) denial of receipt of the notification, according to the entities whose events, scheduled to take place in 2017, were prohibited.

Such an approach, however, did not prevent party and popular actors from continuing to organize peaceful marches and demonstrations in protest against the policies and practices of the Government. Numerous sit-ins and labor strikes were also carried out by employees and workers in the public and private sectors (Ministry of Health employees, teachers, farmers, workers, etc.). These protests converged on a single objective, namely: demanding the improvement of the financial situation and living conditions of citizens, particularly the poor and those belonging to the middle class.

Although the authorities dispersed a number of these protests by force, in addition to the number they prohibited as noted above, the handling of these protests (which were generally peaceful in nature) by law enforcement agencies was free of violence. The most prominent of these protests and incidents of prohibition are set out below:

1. On 3 January 2017, the security forces prevented the holding of an event commemorating the death of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein at the premises of the Club of Graduates of Iraqi Universities and Institutes in the capital, Amman, by cordoning off the venue and preventing the organizers and invitees from entering⁵³.
2. On 24 January 2017, the Governor of the Capital prohibited the protest stand of the National Campaign for Students' Rights "Thabahtoon" in front of the Ministry of Higher Education and

⁵⁰Article (16/1) of the Jordanian Constitution provides that "Jordanians shall have the right to hold meetings within the limits of the law."

⁵¹To view the report, see the following link: http://nchr.org.jo/User_Site/Site.

⁵²Article (7) of the Public Gatherings Law No. (7) of 2004, as amended, provides that: "The administrative governor may order the dispersal of the meeting or the breaking up of the march if he considers that the course of either of them may lead to endangering lives or public or private property or to prejudicing public safety."

⁵³To view the statement issued by the Jordanian Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party regarding the banning of the event, see the following link: <https://alb3th1947jordan.wordpress.com>.

Scientific Research, demanding the abolition of the trend towards direct admission⁵⁴ of students and the increase in university fees⁵⁵.

3. In May 2017, the Governor of the Capital prevented the Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies from organizing a seminar on torture⁵⁶.
4. In 2017, the Governor of the Capital prevented Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights from holding three events concerning the rights of migrants and trafficking in persons⁵⁷.
5. On 15 July 2017, the security forces prevented citizens and activists from holding a protest stand in front of Al-Fayha' Mosque in Irbid Governorate in solidarity with Al-Aqsa Mosque⁵⁸.
6. On 19 July 2017, the security forces prevented a march by members of the Huwaitat tribe from reaching the US Embassy in Amman to protest the decision issued by the Military Court sentencing a member of the tribe to life imprisonment after convicting him of killing three American soldiers⁵⁹. The Gendarmerie forces also dispersed protesters from this tribe who had closed the main road along the Desert Highway by firing tear gas in order to reopen it.
7. On 24 July 2017, the security forces dispersed and broke up, with tear gas, a sit-in by protesters from the Dawayimah tribe at the Middle East Circle in eastern Amman, after they protested the Government's failure to communicate with them and inform them of the course of the events that resulted in the killing of a member of the tribe by a guard at the Israeli Embassy in Amman. The protesters set tires on fire and closed the entrances to the circle near the house of condolence held for the murdered youth⁶⁰.
8. On 7 September 2017, the Governor of the Capital prevented the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party from holding a memorial festival for the martyr Abu Ali Mustafa⁶¹.
9. On 10 August 2017, the Administrator of Russeifa prevented a candidate in the municipal and decentralization elections from the National Alliance for Reform from holding an electoral rally in the city of Russeifa, on the pretext that the land on which the rally was intended to be held was state-owned⁶².
10. On 29 September 2017, the security forces prevented the completion of the march organized, with popular participation, by the Jordanian National Campaign to Bring Down the Agreement between the Refinery Company and the American company Noble Energy, known as the "Gas Agreement";

⁵⁴The University of Jordan and the Jordan University of Science and Technology each submitted a request to the Higher Education Council to adopt direct admission and abolish unified admission to the medical faculties for the academic year 2017–2018; however, the Higher Education Council rejected the two universities' request to depart from the unified admission list at its session held on 30 March 2017.

⁵⁵For details, see the official Facebook page of the National Campaign for Students' Rights "Thabahtoon" dated 24 January 2017.

⁵⁶Telephone call with the management of Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies on 18 December 2017.

⁵⁷Telephone call with the management of Tamkeen for Legal Aid on 24 December 2017.

⁵⁸Al-Wakeel News website, dated 15 July 2017; see the following link: <http://www.alwakaai.com>.

⁵⁹For details of the march, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

⁶⁰For the proceedings of the sit-in, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

⁶¹To view the statement of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party, see the following link: <https://www.wihdaparty.com>.

⁶²For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com/print.php?id=442513>.

the march was stopped at the Shmeisani Bridge while heading from the Professional Associations Complex to the Prime Ministry⁶³.

11. On 17 October 2017, the official authorities prevented the Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies from carrying out a "Study and Policy Brief on the Demographic Characteristics of Syrians in Jordan" and the Opportunities to Address the Challenges of Asylum to the Jordanian Labor Market.
12. On 5 October 2017, the security agencies detained (12) persons from Al-Ramtha District following the protests witnessed in the district, which involved the closure of the public road and the burning of vehicle tires, after the circulation of a video showing a number of Criminal Investigation personnel assaulting one of their relatives in Irbid Governorate⁶⁴.
13. On 15 October 2017, the security forces demolished a tent erected by a group of residents of Mo'ab Sub-District in Al-Mazar Al-Janoubi/Karak at the entrance of the town of Al-Omariyya, demanding the provision of job opportunities for them⁶⁵.
14. On 26 October 2017, the Governor of the Capital prevented followers of the Baha'i faith in Jordan from holding their religious celebration, on the pretext of preventing the incitement of sedition or the targeting of national unity⁶⁶.
15. On 4 November 2017, the security forces prevented truck owners from moving their sit-in from the Airport Road to the Fourth Circle in order to avoid traffic congestion. The sit-in was held to demand equality in the distribution of phosphate transport quotas from the Al-Abiad and Al-Hasa mines among all truck owners, and that priority not be given to trucks from Karak and Tafileh Governorates⁶⁷.
16. On 20 November 2017, the security and Gendarmerie forces prevented yellow taxi drivers staging a sit-in from moving their sit-in from the Dabouq area to the Royal Palaces area⁶⁸, in protest against the operation of smart application vehicles "Uber and Careem"⁶⁹.
17. On 7 December 2017, the security forces broke up a sit-in organized by national institutions and popular actors in front of the US Embassy, in protest against the US Administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist entity, by spraying the protesters who attempted to cross the barrier with "pepper spray"⁷⁰.
18. On 20 December 2017, the Governor of the Capital prevented the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists from holding a forum entitled "Jerusalem is Arab: The Role of the Media in Defending its Identity"⁷¹.

⁶³For details, see the main (Facebook) page of the Jordanian National Campaign to Drop the Gas Agreement dated 29 September 2017.

⁶⁴For details of the protest, see the following link: <http://www.roya.tv/videos/31036>.

⁶⁵For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com/article/452249>.

⁶⁶Al-Haqiqa Al-Dawliya (Fact International) website; see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=25153>.

⁶⁷For more information, see the following link: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article/339347>.

⁶⁸Yellow taxi drivers staged a series of sit-ins during 2017 in protest against the operation of the smart applications "Uber and Careem," which they described as unlawful, according to them, and which has affected their work and livelihood.

⁶⁹For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com/article/458301>.

⁷⁰For more information, see the following link: http://www.jfranews.com.jo/more-189985-1-dash_title.

⁷¹Telephone call with the management of the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists on 24 December 2017.

19. On 20 December 2017, the official agencies prevented the Muslim Brotherhood from holding a sit-in in front of the US Embassy⁷².

20. On 22 December 2017, the Governor of the Capital prevented the Civil Alliance from meeting to announce the establishment of a political party at Al-Hussein Cultural Center; the Center's management notified the organizers of the decision to cancel the hall booking⁷³.

The year 2017 also witnessed a number of protests carried out by various sectors in the Kingdom, as follows:

A. Protests by the Unemployed:

1. On 22 January 2016, dozens of unemployed young people from the Southern Badia in Al-Jafr Sub-District staged a sit-in in front of the Sub-District Directorate building, protesting the failure to provide them with job opportunities in the establishments and projects operating in the area⁷⁴.

2. On 3 January 2017, (unemployed) university graduates from Ma'an Governorate staged a sit-in in front of the Jordan India Fertilizer Company (JIFCO), demanding job opportunities⁷⁵.

3. On 20 February 2017, dozens of unemployed nursing college graduates from the Northern Badia staged a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Health, protesting the appointment mechanism followed by the Civil Service Bureau and demanding that the Civil Service system be restored to what it was in 2012, when appointment was made according to seniority of application and competition was at the level of the Kingdom⁷⁶.

4. On 23 July 2017, dozens of unemployed physicians held a protest stand in front of the Prime Ministry building, demanding that job opportunities be found for them⁷⁷.

5. On 19 September 2017, a number of special education graduates staged a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Education, demanding the cancellation of the decision to "suspend their appointment" to the Ministry's staff⁷⁸.

6. On 14 October 2017, a number of unemployed holders of postgraduate degrees in Al-Mazar Al-Janoubi District staged a sit-in at the entrance of the town of Al-Omariyya, demanding their right to work⁷⁹.

7. On 4 December 2017, a number of unemployed Jordanian pilots staged a sit-in in front of the House of Representatives, demanding that job opportunities be found for them⁸⁰.

⁷²To view the statement of the Muslim Brotherhood, see the following link: <http://royanews.tv/news/144157>.

⁷³For more information, see the following link: <http://ar.ammannet.net/news/293820>.

⁷⁴For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=9068>.

⁷⁵For details of the sit-in, see the following link: <http://videominecraft.ru>.

⁷⁶For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com>.

⁷⁷The protest was held with the support of the Jordan Medical Association. According to the Association, there are (1400) unemployed physicians awaiting appointment through the Civil Service Bureau. For more information, see the main (Facebook) page of the Jordan Medical Association dated 23 July 2017.

⁷⁸For more information, see the following link: <https://www.jo24.net/post.php?id=238111>.

⁷⁹For more information, see the following link: <http://www.alwakaai.com/post.php?id=266684>.

⁸⁰For more information, see the following link: <http://royanews.tv/news/142839>.

8. On 5 November 2017, a number of residents of Theiban District/Madaba Governorate held a protest stand at the Al-Wala Dam site because of the employment of workers from outside the governorate in the new dam-raising project⁸¹.
9. In 2017, a number of unemployed young people in the town of Al-Za'tari/Mafraq Governorate held several protest stands near the camp, demanding that job opportunities be found for them after refugees had taken over the job opportunities available in the area, and that wages of workers had been reduced by varying percentages as a result of refugees accepting work at salaries below the minimum wage⁸². Residents of the town of Al-Za'tari also staged a sit-in on 7 December 2017, demanding the employment of their sons.

B. Protests by Public Sector Employees:

1. On 7 February 2017, employees of Al-Shafa Municipality/Ajloun Governorate held a protest stand in front of the municipality building, demanding the disbursement of their financial entitlements from "incentives"⁸³.
2. On 14 February 2017, the teachers and administrators of Al-Qadisiyya Secondary School for Boys in southern Tafileh went on strike in protest against the penalty imposed on them because all Tawjihi (General Secondary Education Certificate) students at the school had failed, considering that penalty an arbitrary and unlawful decision against them⁸⁴.
3. On 13 March 2017, a number of employees of the Public Works Directorate of Tafileh Governorate staged a sit-in in front of the Directorate building, protesting the suspension of the travel allowance for employees and of bonuses for work in snow emergencies⁸⁵.
4. On 18 March 2017, dozens of teachers working as librarians and laboratory technicians staged a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Education, demanding a reconsideration of the decision to withhold from them the teacher's allowance amounting to 100%⁸⁶.
5. On 6 September 2017, at the call of the Jordan Nurses and Midwives Council (Nurses Association), the nurses of Karak Governmental Hospital stopped work in protest against an assault on one of the nurses by the relatives of a patient⁸⁷.
6. On 21 August 2017, at the call of the Jordan Medical Association, the physicians of Jerash Governmental Hospital held a protest stand expressing their rejection of assaults on physicians and health personnel at the hospital⁸⁸.
7. On 10 September 2017, the employees of Al-Hussein Bin Talal University staged a sit-in in front of the Presidency building, demanding the dismissal of the University President because of his refusal to listen to the employees' demands relating to their rights, such as end-of-service gratuity, health

⁸¹For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=25794>.

⁸²The sit-ins staged by unemployed young people in the town of Al-Za'tari in front of the camp were as follows: on 17 December 2017 and on 4 December 2017. For more information, see the following link: <http://www.alghad.com>.

⁸³For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com>.

⁸⁴For more information, see the following link: <http://www.petra.gov.jo>.

⁸⁵For more information, see the following link: <http://www.petra.gov.jo>.

⁸⁶For more information, see the following link: <http://www.khaberni.com/news/191359>.

⁸⁷For more information, see the following link: <http://petra.gov.jo>.

⁸⁸For more, see the official (Facebook) page of the Jordan Medical Association dated 21 August 2017.

insurance and the payment of their social security contributions. It is worth noting that the University's employees had staged a sit-in in March 2017 for the same reasons⁸⁹.

8. In 2017, the Ministry of Health Employees' Gathering held several protest stands demanding the improvement of the employment and living conditions of those working at the Ministry. The employees submitted their demands to the National Center for Human Rights, which in turn supported them in conveying their demands to the concerned parties through its official correspondence⁹⁰.
9. In 2017, teachers from several schools in the Kingdom held protest stands to denounce the repeated assaults on school teachers, including: the teachers of Al-Manshiyya Secondary School for Boys in the Northern Ghor District on 10 October 2017; the teachers of Iskan Al-Hashemiyya Basic School in Hashemiyya/Zarqa on 11 October 2017; and the teachers of Mohammad Bin Al-Qasem School, affiliated with the First Zarqa Directorate of Education, on 30 October 2017. All schools in the Kingdom also held a protest stand on 19 April 2017 to denounce the assault that took place at Al-Marqab Secondary School for Boys in Marka District⁹¹.
10. On 24 December 2017, at the call of the Jordanian Teachers Association/Capital Branch, hundreds of teachers held a protest stand in front of the House of Representatives, objecting to the amendments made to the Association's Law, which had been submitted by the Association's Council to the Government and agreed upon with the Legislation and Opinion Bureau, on the grounds that they were unlawful for bypassing the Association's Central Body⁹².

C. Student Protests:

1. On 11 January 2017, a number of Tawjihi students studying abroad staged a sit-in in front of the House of Representatives, demanding the authentication and recognition of their certificates issued by Egypt, Sudan and Turkey⁹³.
2. On 4 October 2017, the students of Al-Husseiniyat Basic School for Boys went on strike, demanding their right to move to the new school so as to attend in the morning shift instead of the evening shift, like other students⁹⁴.
3. On 25 September 2017, the female students of Burma Secondary School in Jerash held a protest stand in front of the school building, demanding the provision of water and electricity in the school building⁹⁵.
4. On 18 September 2017, the students of Mohammad Khattab Basic School in the city of Ma'an, with the participation of members of the teaching staff, staged a sit-in inside the school, protesting the shortage of subject-specialist teachers for students since the beginning of the school year⁹⁶.

⁸⁹For more information, see the following link: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article/330661>.

⁹⁰The Gathering staged several protest stands as follows: on 26 September 2017 in front of the Prime Ministry building, and on 27 November 2017 in front of the House of Representatives. For more, see the following link: <http://sawaleif.com>.

⁹¹For more information, see the website of the Teachers' Association at the following link: <http://www.jts.org.jo>.

⁹²For details of the protest stand and the statement issued by the Association, see the (Facebook) page of the Jordanian Teachers' Association – Capital.

⁹³For more information, see the following link: www.sarayanews.com.

⁹⁴For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=23656>.

⁹⁵For details of the protest stand, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=23030>.

⁹⁶For more information, see the following link: <http://www.alwakaai.com/post.php?id=262727>.

5. On 13 September 2017, the students of Ja'far Bin Abi Talib School and their parents in Al-Mazar Al-Janoubi District staged a sit-in demanding solutions to classroom overcrowding resulting from the high number of students at the school, and objecting to the school results and the failure rate among students⁹⁷.
6. On 19 February 2017, the National Campaign for Students' Rights "Thabahtoon" held a protest stand at Al-Balqa Applied University in rejection of the decision to raise diploma fees at the University. The Campaign and the Arab Renewal Student Bloc also staged a sit-in on 19 March 2017 in front of the Ministry of Higher Education in rejection of what they called the repressive measures practiced by the Faculty of Engineering Technology "Polytechnic" against its students, the latest of which was the dismissal of a student from the University on account of his participation in the sit-in organized by the "Thabahtoon" Campaign outside the university campus, according to those in charge of the Campaign⁹⁸.

D. Farmers' Protests:

1. On 1 February 2017, the Agricultural Committee, comprising agricultural federations, unions and associations, held a meeting to discuss the Government's failure to respond to the demands of the agricultural sector with regard to labor, transport and marketing⁹⁹.
2. On 14 February 2017, the Agricultural Committee emanating from the agricultural federations, unions and associations staged a sit-in in front of the House of Representatives in protest against the Government's decisions relating to migrant labor¹⁰⁰.
3. On 21 November 2017, hundreds of farmers staged a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Labor in protest against the conditions set by the Ministry for the recruitment of agricultural labor, which, according to them, would lead to the collapse of the agricultural sector¹⁰¹.
4. On 4 October 2017, hundreds of farmers and agricultural engineers met at the Professional Associations Complex to agree on the basic demands of the sector, namely: (a) opening the door to the recruitment of agricultural labor; (b) restoring permit fees to their previous level, i.e. (120) dinars instead of (300) dinars for those working in the agricultural sector; and (c) preserving agriculture and the national product¹⁰².

E. Labor Protests:

1. On 2 January 2017, a number of workers at the new Phosphate Port staged a sit-in in front of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company building, demanding that they be formally appointed as permanent staff of the Company¹⁰³.

⁹⁷For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=22361>.

⁹⁸For details, see the main (Facebook) page of the National Campaign for Students' Rights "Thabahtoon."

⁹⁹For more information, see the following link: <http://www.ammonnews.net/print/299222>.

¹⁰⁰For the proceedings of the sit-in, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

¹⁰¹For the proceedings of the sit-in, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=26920>.

¹⁰²For details of the meeting, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

¹⁰³For more information, see the following link: <http://royanews.tv/news/111511>.

2. On 25 January 2017, the workers at Al-Qimma Ready-Made Garments Factory in Al-Hassan Industrial Estate/Irbid went on an open strike in protest against the company's failure to comply with decent work standards¹⁰⁴.
3. In 2017, the employees of Jordan Cables Company/MESC held several protest stands demanding their rights after the company delayed paying their salaries and cancelled health insurance, and to pressure the management to prevent the dismissal of (165) employees without stating reasons¹⁰⁵.
4. On 5 March 2017, hundreds of workers at the Lafarge factory in Fuheis staged a sit-in to express their rejection of the company management's decision to grant the factory's workers paid leave for a period of three months¹⁰⁶.
5. On 12 March 2017, the employees of Al-Abiad Fertilizers and Chemicals Company staged a sit-in in front of the Phosphate Company, demanding the payment of their overdue salaries and all their labor rights¹⁰⁷.
6. In 2017, a number of workers at the Sanam Glass Company factory in Al-Rawda Industrial Estate, affiliated with the Ma'an Development Area, held three protest stands demanding the payment of their overdue salaries and the reinstatement of those of them who had been dismissed¹⁰⁸.
7. On 2 May 2017, the employees of the Arab Aluminium Industry Company "ARAL" went on strike for six days, demanding their financial rights to the annual increment and bonuses¹⁰⁹.
8. On 1 October 2017, a number of workers at the Al-Shidiyya mines of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company staged a sit-in at their workplaces, demanding that their salaries and the allowances granted to them, particularly the annual increment, not be affected¹¹⁰.
9. On 29 October 2017, a number of owners of insurance companies held a protest stand in front of the Drivers and Vehicles Licensing building in Marka/Amman, protesting the decision to move the unified insurance office into the premises of the Drivers and Vehicles Licensing building¹¹¹.
10. On 13 November 2017, dozens of workers in the tailoring profession staged a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, demanding decent job opportunities and the rescue of their profession from collapse¹¹².
11. On 16 November 2017, hundreds of employees of the National Electric Power Company and Samra Electric Power Generating Company held a protest stand in front of the House of Representatives,

¹⁰⁴The factory workers had previously gone on strike for the same reasons on 29 August 2016 and 8 September 2016. For more information, see the report of the Jordan Labor Watch at the following link: <http://www.labor-watch.net>.

¹⁰⁵Employees of MESC company staged several protests during 2017 at the call of the General Union of Electricity Workers, as follows: a sit-in on 5 February 2017, a work strike on 18 March 2017, and a protest stand on 2 May 2017 in front of the House of Representatives building.

¹⁰⁶To view the statement of the General Union of Construction Workers, see the following link: <http://www.ammonnews.net>.

¹⁰⁷For the proceedings of the sit-in, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

¹⁰⁸Workers at the factory of Sanam Glass Company staged protest stands demanding the payment of their wages and the reinstatement of those dismissed, on the following dates respectively: 3 December 2017, 26 August 2017, 22 May 2017 and 19 December 2017. For more information, see the following link: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article/328786>.

¹⁰⁹For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com>.

¹¹⁰For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=23408>.

¹¹¹For more information, see the following link: <http://www.ammonnews.net/article/338560>.

¹¹²For more information, see the video report at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

expressing their rejection of the Council of Ministers' decision to cancel their private health insurance and include them in the Ministry of Health insurance¹¹³.

12. On 23 October 2017, at the call of the General Union of Electricity Workers, the employees of the Electricity Company held a protest stand at all the company's sites in the Kingdom, protesting the company's rejection of their labor demands, namely raising wages and health insurance, and its closing the door to dialogue with them¹¹⁴. On 19 November 2017, the employees again held a protest stand for the same reasons.
13. On 3 December 2017, the merchants of Souq Al-Sukkar and Souq Al-Nada went on strike by closing their shops, in protest against the campaigns conducted by the personnel of the Greater Amman Municipality and the Public Security Directorate (PSD) against the street stalls set up in front of their shops¹¹⁵.

F. Protests by Public Transport Drivers and Truck Owners

1. On 2 January 2017, dozens of owners and drivers of buses and coaches operating on the Irbid–Ajloun line went on strike, protesting their being prevented from stopping at their usual queuing point (near the only traffic light in the center of the city of Ajloun)¹¹⁶.
2. On 22 January 2017, the service taxi drivers working at the North Bus Complex held a protest stand in front of the Complex, demanding an increase in transport fares¹¹⁷.
3. On 12 February 2017, (500) truck drivers staged a sit-in in front of the Al-Ramtha District Administration, protesting the deterioration of the sector's conditions and demanding: (1) reciprocal treatment of foreign trucks with regard to the payment of visa fees and the determination of the length of stay within the territory of the Kingdom; and (2) extending the length of stay of Jordanian trucks within Saudi territory to (14) days and opening a facilitation office in Irbid Governorate¹¹⁸.
4. In 2017, a number of Al-Ramtha "Bahhara" (cross-border traders) held several protests in front of the Al-Ramtha District Administration building, protesting what they described as the abuse of the law by the Al-Omari Customs administration¹¹⁹.
5. On 5 March 2017, the owners of public buses operating on the Madaba–Mleih line held a protest stand at the Madaba transport complex, demanding an end to the encroachment on the line by other buses not licensed to operate on it¹²⁰.

¹¹³To view the statement of the General Union of Workers in Electricity Companies regarding the subject of the protest stand, see the following link: <http://www.jo24.net/post.php?id=199722>.

¹¹⁴To view the Union's statement, see the (Facebook) page of the General Union of Electricity Workers in Jordan/Al-Wataniya Branch dated 22 October 2017.

¹¹⁵To view the video report, see the following link: <https://www.roya.tv/videos/36081>.

¹¹⁶For more information, see the following link: <http://royanews.tv/news/111530>.

¹¹⁷For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com>.

¹¹⁸According to statements by the President of the Jordanian Truck Owners Association, owners of Jordanian trucks must pay a visa fee of approximately (730) dinars for entry into Saudi territory, whereas foreign trucks pay no entry fees or visa fees of any kind upon entering Jordanian territory; moreover, a foreign truck may move around Jordan unchecked and unmonitored, unlike a Jordanian truck, whose stay inside Saudi territory is limited to one week, and if it exceeds that period a violation is issued against it and it is impounded. For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=10287>.

¹¹⁹Fishermen (sailors) in Al-Ramtha District staged sit-ins several times in 2017, as follows: on 8 February 2017, on 1 April 2017 and on 18 September 2017. For more information, see the following link: <http://www.alwakaai.com>.

¹²⁰For more information, see the following link: <http://www.petra.gov.jo>.

6. On 26 March 2017, the owners and drivers of trucks transporting imported crude oil from Aqaba Port to the Jordan Petroleum Refinery staged a sit-in lasting (22) days at the Federation yards/Al-Rashidiyya area, demanding that the sector be rescued and the losses stopped, owing to the monopoly of transport by Jordanian oil companies¹²¹.
7. In 2017, the owners and drivers of yellow taxis held several protests demanding a halt to the operation of the smart applications "Uber and Careem", an increase in transport fares, and their coverage by the Labor Law and social security¹²².
8. On 21 November 2017, dozens of public transport bus drivers on the Irbid–Northern Ghor line staged a sit-in, protesting the large number of traffic violations recorded against them by the external patrols and the Traffic Department¹²³.
9. On 21 October 2017, phosphate truck drivers staged a two-week sit-in near the Airport Bridge, demanding equality in the distribution of phosphate transport quotas following the issuance of what they described as an arbitrary decision giving priority to residents of Karak and Tafileh Governorates for transport from the Al-Abiad and Al-Hasa mines. The truck drivers again held a protest stand on 21 December 2017 in front of the Madaba Governorate building for the same reasons¹²⁴.

G. Trade Union and Party Protests

1. In 2017, the professional associations organized several events, including: (1) a protest sit-in on 14 January 2017 in front of the Professional Associations Complex in rejection of the Government's policies of raising taxes and prices; (2) a sit-in on 2 May 2017, with the participation of Members of Parliament and national and party figures, in front of the Professional Associations Complex in solidarity with prisoners on hunger strike; and (3) a mass stand on 10 December 2017 in front of the Associations Complex denouncing the US Administration's decision and affirming that Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine¹²⁵.
2. In 2017, the Coalition of Jordanian Nationalist and Leftist Parties organized several events, including: (1) a popular march on 24 February 2017 under the slogan "Yes to an alternative national salvation government, and no to the program of dependency, levying and impoverishment", setting out from in front of the Associations Complex, to demand that the Government reverse the economic decisions draining the citizen's livelihood; (2) a protest stand on 15 January 2017 in front of the House of Representatives in rejection of the draft budget for 2017; (3) a solidarity stand under the title "Together for Karak of the Martyrs" on 22 January 2017 in tribute to the martyrs of national duty from among the sons of the governorate; (4) a march under the slogan "Dignity" on 24 March 2017 from in front of Al-Husseini Mosque, demanding the cancellation of the agreement to import gas from the Zionist occupation; (5) a solidarity stand on 17 April 2017 in front of the United Nations headquarters on the occasion of Palestinian Prisoners' Day; (6) a solidarity stand on 29

¹²¹For details and the demands of the protesters, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

¹²²Taxi owners and drivers staged sit-ins during 2017: in front of the House of Representatives on 25 April 2017; in front of the Prime Ministry on 22 May 2017; in front of the Ministry of Communications on 13 August 2017; in front of the Ministry of Transport on 25 September 2017; near Al-Mashagel Roundabout in Amman on 16 November 2017; in the Khalda area of the capital, Amman, on 19 November 2017; and near the Sports City in Irbid on 18 December 2017 and on 26 December 2017. For the drivers' demands, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qn5A6FoE2Q>.

¹²³For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com/article/458415>.

¹²⁴For more information, see the following link: www.roya.tv/videos/34174.

¹²⁵For more information, see the official (Facebook) page of the Professional Associations Complex.

April 2017 with the steadfast prisoners in the occupation's prisons in front of the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross; (7) a mass march on 26 May 2017 in Al-Baq'a Camp in support of the prisoners' strike in the enemy's Zionist detention facilities; (8) a mass march on 21 July 2017 from in front of Al-Husseini Mosque towards Al-Nakheel Square, calling for adherence to the option of resistance, rejection of normalization, and condemnation of official and Arab inaction; and (9) a national meeting on 10 September 2017 at the headquarters of the Popular Unity Party in defense of public freedoms and freedom of expression and adherence to national unity, and in solidarity with the Popular Unity Party for having been prevented from holding a memorial festival for the martyr Abu Ali Mustafa. The protest events organized by the Coalition continued in succession to denounce the US Administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist entity in December 2017¹²⁶.

3. On 25 February 2017, the Association of Owners of Domestic Worker Recruitment and Employment Agencies went on an open strike, demanding that the increase in work permit fees for female domestic workers be reversed and that what the Government called the replacement fee, amounting to (100) dinars, be abolished¹²⁷.
4. On 27 September 2017, the Trade Unions' Palestine Committee held a solidarity stand in front of the Red Cross headquarters with the Jerusalemite "Murabitat" women held in the prisons of the Zionist occupation¹²⁸.

H. Popular Protests and Solidarity Marches:

1. On 20 January 2017, a number of members of the Al-Otoun tribe held a solidarity stand in front of Al-Nour Mosque in the town of Souf to express their protest against the arrest of a member of the tribe¹²⁹.
2. On 5 February 2017, a number of relatives of prisoners of conscience organized a protest stand in front of the Prime Ministry, demanding the release of their sons detained by the State Security Court on account of posts attributed to them on social media¹³⁰.
3. On 10 February 2017, a number of relatives of detainees in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers held a protest stand in front of Rasmi Abu Rukhayya Mosque in Ma'an, demanding the release of those detained in connection with the Karak events of December 2016, as well as the release of prisoners of conscience who had expressed their opinions and positions on the high cost of living and escalating price increases¹³¹.
4. On 10 February 2017, a number of residents of Ma'an Governorate held a protest stand following the accident that occurred on the Al-Shidiyya–Ma'an road, which claimed the lives of (6) citizens, (4) of them from Ma'an Governorate and (2) Saudi brethren, and to call on the concerned authorities to rehabilitate the road to protect lives from traffic accidents¹³².

¹²⁶For details, see the main (Facebook) page of the Coalition of Jordanian Nationalist and Leftist Parties.

¹²⁷To view the statement issued by the Union regarding the strike, see the following link: <http://alnasnews.com.jo>.

¹²⁸For more information, see the official (Facebook) page of the Professional Associations Complex.

¹²⁹For more information, see the following link: <http://ftp.felixnews.com/news8131634.htm>.

¹³⁰For more information, see the following link: <https://www.assawsana.com>.

¹³¹For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=10164>.

¹³²For more information, see the following link: <http://factjo.com/news.aspx?Id=23466>.

5. On 20 January 2017, the residents of Al-Jana'a neighborhood held a protest stand in front of the Municipal Stadium in Zarqa, demanding the protection of residents and the prevention of their eviction from their homes following the issuance of a decision by the Zarqa Magistrate's Court ordering the eviction of about 700 houses¹³³.
6. On 18 February 2017, hundreds of citizens in Karak Governorate held a solidarity stand beside Al-Omari Mosque in support of Member of Parliament Sadah Al-Habashneh and in protest against the Government's policy of raising prices, which has burdened the citizen¹³⁴.
7. On 24 February 2017, members of the Al-Ajarmeh tribe held a protest stand that denounced the price increases and demanded the immediate departure of the Government.
8. On 21 July 2017, members of the Huwaitat tribe held a large conference of sheikhs and notables of tribes from the various governorates and communities of the Kingdom in Al-Jafr District to discuss the repercussions of the trial of soldier Ma'arek Abu Tayeh for his conviction of killing three American soldiers.
9. On 28 July 2017, the capital, Amman, witnessed three marches in the following areas: Al-Rabiya, Downtown and Al-Wehdat Camp, demanding the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador from Amman and the closure of the Embassy in protest against the killing of two Jordanians shot by the Embassy guard, and also in protest against the measures of the Israeli occupation at Al-Aqsa Mosque.
10. On 19 August 2017, a number of members of the Al-Zatayimeh tribe staged a sit-in in front of the Jerash Governorate building, protesting the failure to include any of the tribe's notables in the delegation of Jerash notables meeting His Majesty the King¹³⁵.
11. On 25 August 2017, dozens of supporters of Dr. Salem Al-Jaradat held a solidarity stand in front of Al-Shuhada' Mosque in the Mu'tah area of Karak, demanding his release and the release of prisoners of conscience¹³⁶.
12. On 10 September 2017, the town of Al-Faisaliyya in Madaba Governorate witnessed several protests following the repercussions of a tribal "jalwa" (forced displacement) case, and members of the tribe published a statement in which they held the Ministry of Interior responsible for any repercussions that might arise should the decision be implemented¹³⁷.
13. On 29 September 2017, residents of Theiban District organized a protest march setting out from in front of the Grand Theiban Mosque towards Al-Hurriya Circle, protesting rising prices and demanding the formation of a national salvation government capable of reform, combating corruption and holding the corrupt accountable before resorting to the pockets of the poor¹³⁸.
14. On 1 October 2017, dozens of relatives of detainees from the Salafi movement staged a peaceful sit-in in front of the National Center for Human Rights, demanding the improvement of the

¹³³For more information, see the following link: <http://www.petra.gov.jo>.

¹³⁴For the proceedings of the solidarity stand, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

¹³⁵For more information, see the following link: <http://www.alwakaai.com/post.php?id=258207>.

¹³⁶To view the protest stand, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81EU294IGew>.

¹³⁷To view the statement issued by members of the Abu Al-Ghanam clan, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com>.

¹³⁸For the proceedings of the march, see the Al-Haqiqa Al-Dawliya (Fact International) website at the following link: <http://factjo.com>.

conditions of detention of their family members, some of whom are serving their sentences on charges of belonging to terrorist organizations, or promoting or sympathizing with them¹³⁹.

15. On 13 December 2017, members of the Christian denominations in the Kingdom held a silent candlelight march from the Church of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple to the Church of the Virgin Mary of Nazareth, expressing their rejection of the decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel¹⁴⁰.

I. Protests by Activists and Civil Society Institutions

1. On 8 May 2017, the Jordanian Women's Union, with broad participation of women's bodies and organizations, staged a sit-in in front of the United Nations building in support of the Palestinian prisoners' open hunger strike, followed by the participants' delivery of a memorandum calling on the United Nations to play its role in ensuring a safe life for the prisoners by pressuring Israel to apply the international instruments and laws¹⁴¹ that protect the rights of this group.
2. On 30 July 2017, dozens of women and human rights leaders, representatives of a number of civil society organizations, and female and male human rights activists staged a sit-in lasting two consecutive days in front of the House of Representatives, demanding the repeal of Article (308) of the Penal Code¹⁴².
3. On 15 October 2017, the Academy for the Blind, in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, organized a march of a number of blind students from schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education, with the aim of raising awareness in society regarding blind persons¹⁴³.
4. On 10 December 2017, the Arab Renewal Student Bloc held several protest stands at: the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, the Jordan University of Science and Technology, Al al-Bayt University and the Polytechnic, under the title "With Blood We Write Palestine", to denounce the US Administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist entity¹⁴⁴.
5. On 10 December 2017, hundreds of Jordanian lawyers held a protest stand inside the Palace of Justice building to denounce the US Administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist entity¹⁴⁵.
6. On 11 December 2017, the employees of the National Center for Human Rights, with the participation of civil society institutions and party, civic and trade union actors, held a protest stand against the US Administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist entity¹⁴⁶.

Recommendations:

In view of the absence of any notable development at the level of legislation relating to this right, the National Center reiterates the recommendations contained in its previous annual reports in this regard, in particular:

¹³⁹For more information, see the following link: <https://www.assawsana.com/portal/pages.php?newsid=326410>.

¹⁴⁰For more information, see the following link: <http://petra.gov.jo>.

¹⁴¹To view the text of the memorandum, see the following link: <http://www.jo24.net/post.php?id=225354>.

¹⁴²For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com/print.php?id=440848>.

¹⁴³For details of the march, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

¹⁴⁴For more information, see the official (Facebook) page of the Arab Renewal Bloc.

¹⁴⁵For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sarayanews.com/article/461708>.

¹⁴⁶For more information, see the following link: <http://www.nchr.org.jo>.

1. Redefining public assembly in the Law to include the generally recognized basic elements that must form part of the definition of any public assembly¹⁴⁷, particularly in view of the distinction between a public assembly and a private assembly, given that the latter is not subject to the provisions of the Public Assemblies Law.
2. Expressly providing for the possibility of submitting notification of the holding of public assemblies electronically.

¹⁴⁷The element of organization, the element of timing, the element of the purpose of the meeting, the element of publicity and the public nature of the invitations, and finally the element of number.

8. The Right to Form and Join Political Parties

The Jordanian Constitution guarantees the right to form and join political parties in Article (16/2), and the Political Parties Law No. (39) of 2015 regulates this right¹⁴⁸. Regional and international human rights instruments have likewise affirmed this right¹⁴⁹.

The year 2017 witnessed no development in the legislation regulating this right, as the aforementioned Political Parties Law still contains a number of gaps which the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) has stressed in its previous annual reports must be remedied, given that the constitutional principle is clear in guaranteeing the freedom to form political parties¹⁵⁰.

On the other hand, 2017 witnessed certain shifts towards political polarization within the parties themselves and a tendency towards forming civil and social structures under the name of "party coalitions", with the aim of strengthening similar party platforms. Four coalitions were formed, namely: 1. the Coalition of Nationalist and Leftist Parties, formed by a coalition of (6) parties; 2. the Coalition of the Centrist Parties Current, formed by a coalition of (16) parties; 3. the Coalition of the Renewal Current, formed by a coalition of (5) parties; and 4. the Coalition of the Reformist Parties Current, formed by a coalition of (6) parties.

Furthermore, the 2017 municipal, local and governorate (central) council elections witnessed broad participation by political parties, with party representation in these elections reaching (33) parties out of (47)¹⁵¹.

Practical Exercise of the Right to Form and Join Political Parties:

Practical exercise constitutes one of the forms of enjoyment of the right to form and join parties. In 2017, numerous practices occurred that would limit citizens' enjoyment of this right, most notably:

1. Preventing the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party from holding the annual memorial event for "Abu Ali Mustafa", despite it being an annual event that the party has customarily held for several years¹⁵². When asked, the party officials stated that this decision was unjustified, particularly as the event was to be held inside the party's headquarters. Indeed, the matter escalated into interference by the competent security agencies in the membership of some members of this party, which contravenes the provisions of the law regulating party activity, which prohibits harassing or questioning any citizen on account of his or her party affiliation¹⁵³.
2. The announcement by the Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Current Party¹⁵⁴, in a press interview, of his intention to dissolve the party, stating that the reason behind this decision was the absence of political will for party work and the unsuitability of parties to political life in Jordan, in

¹⁴⁸Official Gazette, Issue No. (5358), dated 16 September 2015.

¹⁴⁹The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article (20/1); the ICCPR, Article (22/1); the ICESCR, Article (8); and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, Article (24).

¹⁵⁰For more information, see the National Center for Human Rights report, the section on the right to establish political parties, for 2015.

¹⁵¹Interview with Mr. Fakhri Shneikat, Secretary of the Political Parties Affairs Committee at the Ministry of Political Development, on 10 January 2018.

¹⁵²Al-Dustour newspaper, 12 September 2017: press statement issued by the Coalition of Nationalist and Leftist Parties.

¹⁵³The information was obtained through a telephone call with Dr. Saad Diab, Secretary General of the Party; it was not possible to verify this information from an independent source.

¹⁵⁴Statement by the Party President, Eng. Abdul Hadi Al-Majali, issued on 7 October 2017, Al-Dustour newspaper.

light of the inability to legislate certain articles in the Political Parties Law that would advance party work in Jordan.

3. The closure of the Irbid branch headquarters of the Islamic Action Front Party without any reasons being given¹⁵⁵, despite the branch premises being leased by the party until 2020.
4. Preventing a meeting of the Jordanian Civil Alliance Party¹⁵⁶ (under formation) from being held, for undisclosed reasons.
5. The weakness of government support provided to parties, whether the direct government support, estimated at JOD (50) thousand per party, or through the strict cap on the amount a party is entitled to receive in donations from natural or legal persons, set at JOD (10) thousand.
6. The large number of political parties, which is one of the main obstacles to a more credible representation of the Jordanian political scene, given the existence of (47) parties and (15) parties under formation¹⁵⁷. The large number of parties means that political forces are dispersed among the parties and that coordination among them is not possible.
7. Citizens' reluctance to join political parties and to engage in public affairs. The number of members of political parties reached (30492). The party with the highest membership is the United Front Party with (1769) members, followed by the National Current Party with (1367) members, then the Islamic Centrist Party with (1008) members, followed by the Islamic Action Party with (948) members, while the membership of the Conservative Party stood at (151) members, the lowest in terms of membership¹⁵⁸.
8. Banning party activity at universities. The National Follow-up Committee for Students' Rights, "Thabahtoon" (You Have Slaughtered Us), issued a statement condemning the government policy aimed at restricting party activity at universities, whereby students benefiting from the Royal Grant for the least fortunate (Makramat Al-Aqal Hathan) were forced to sign a pledge not to join parties and not to participate in any political activities, sit-ins or marches inside the university. The campaign stressed that forcing students studying under this grant to sign such a pledge constitutes a flagrant constitutional violation of the text of Article (16) of the Jordanian Constitution and of Article (4/a) of the Political Parties Law¹⁵⁹.
9. The weak role of women in party participation, which is characterized by weakness and limitation, as their overall party participation rate reached 35%¹⁶⁰ of the total number of members.
10. The absence of governance, transparency and equal opportunities in the internal organization of the parties themselves, as some parties revolve around a leading personality who monopolizes all party

¹⁵⁵Press statement by Hasan Al-Hasri, member of the Party's Administrative Board and Director of the Party's office in Irbid, published in Al-Ghad newspaper on 17 September 2017.

¹⁵⁶For more, see the following link: <http://www.raialyoum.com/?p=798552>, dated 27 December 2017.

¹⁵⁷Interview with Mr. Fakhri Shneikat, Secretary of the Political Parties Affairs Committee at the Ministry of Political Development, on 10 January 2018.

¹⁵⁸The information was obtained by the Center's liaison officer at the Ministry of Social Development, Mr. Shihab Al-Amawi.

¹⁵⁹For more information, see the Gerasa website: a statement by the "Thabahtoon" campaign published on 20 September 2017.

¹⁶⁰The information was obtained by the Center's liaison officer at the Ministry of Social Development, Mr. Shihab Al-Amawi.

activity and media appearances, with a clear absence of any popular presence or any ability of the remaining members to influence political reality¹⁶¹.

11. The continuation of the same general government approach and policy towards parties since 2010, as confirmed by the Government's response to the NCHR's recommendations contained in its 2014 report, namely the existence of a prevailing cultural legacy among citizens regarding the futility of party work and fear of prosecution by the security authorities¹⁶².
12. The receipt of several complaints from applicants for military and civil posts stating that they are deprived of competing for and obtaining such posts because of their relatives' affiliation with one of the Jordanian parties, particularly parties of Islamic, nationalist and leftist orientation.

Party Representation in the Municipal and Decentralization Elections:

Despite the participation of (33) parties in the 2017 municipal and local council elections, the results shown by a study prepared by the Ministry of Political Affairs on the results of the electoral process for the municipal and governorate councils revealed a clear decline in the proportion of young candidates under the age of (40) standing in the municipal and local council elections, at 10% of all candidates, and only one female party candidate stood among them at the level of the women's sector¹⁶³. This confirms the weak participation of youth and women in party work in Jordan.

Recommendations:

The Center reaffirms the recommendations contained in its previous reports, in addition to the following:

1. Working to bring the legal gaps in the current law regulating the right to form parties into line with international standards.
2. Halting all official practices that would affect affiliation with political parties or engagement in their activities, and applying the principles of legal justice to anyone who violates the law, by all parties.
3. Following the principles of governance, transparency and equal opportunities in the internal organization of parties, through specialized training courses for parties in the fields of governance and transparency, to be conducted by the Ministry of Political Development.
4. Encouraging the participation of women and youth in party membership and representation through media awareness and specialized courses in this field, to be conducted by the Ministry of Political Development and the Independent Election Commission (IEC).
5. The formed party coalitions announcing their party platforms and their plans for advancing party work, and publishing them on the websites of the parties belonging to the coalitions.

¹⁶¹Press statement published in Al-Rai newspaper on 30 May 2017 by the Deputy Secretary General of "Al-Nidaa Party," regarding the view that parties are marked by repetition and lack programmatic platforms.

¹⁶²See the Report on the State of Human Rights in the Kingdom for 2014, op. cit., p. (82).

¹⁶³A study published on the website of the Ministry of Political Development.

9. The Right to Form and Join Trade Unions

The right of Jordanians to form and join trade unions is guaranteed by the Constitution¹⁶⁴, as it is in international instruments¹⁶⁵. Professional associations and labor unions are among the most important sectors and institutions of civil society, as they represent broad segments of society. Their role goes beyond merely defending the interests of their members and the segment they represent; professional associations have become active bodies that participate in the management of public affairs and in guiding and actively raising awareness of economic, social and political development plans, in addition to regulating the practice of professions and preventing employers from acting unilaterally and controlling the fate of workers, or workers from being intransigent in exercising the right to strike and stop work in a manner that may threaten the production process and, consequently, the state of the national economy.

Although the greater influence in the tripartite relationship between workers, the Government and employers lies with the latter two parties, 2017 witnessed several initiatives in favor of unions. A judicial decision was issued by the High Administrative Court in the interest of members of professional associations, ruling that professional associations are public law persons and that their final decisions concerning their members are administrative decisions subject to appeal¹⁶⁶. In addition, the Council of Ministers, at its session held on 24 December 2017, approved **the amendments to the Engineers Association Retirement Fund Regulation**, which were drawn up on the basis of a study prepared by the Association. It should be recalled, however, that these amendments had been sent to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau on 10 July 2017 to proceed with the procedures for their adoption, yet they were not submitted to the Legal Committee of the Council of Ministers until after the Association had initiated escalatory measures, because failure to adopt the amendments and delay in implementing them at the beginning of 2018 would have harmed the interests of older engineers and the rights of new engineers¹⁶⁷.

In 2017, the Government also submitted the draft law amending the Teachers Association Law to the House of Representatives for discussion and adoption. The draft amending law angered hundreds of serving and retired teachers¹⁶⁸ for several reasons, including: (a) the lack of consultation with the Association's Central Body on the draft law, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the Jordanian Teachers Association Law No. (14) of 2011. This legislation included numerous matters affecting the rights of those working in the teaching profession, including: (1) excluding retired teachers,

¹⁶⁴Article (16/2) of the Jordanian Constitution provides that: "Jordanians shall have the right to form associations, trade unions and political parties, provided that their objectives are lawful, their means peaceful, and their bylaws do not contravene the provisions of the Constitution." Article (23/2/f) provides that: "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."

¹⁶⁵Article (23/4) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that: "Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." Article (8) of the ICESCR 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 ICCPR provides that: "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.

¹⁶⁶Decision No. (62/2017) issued by the General Assembly of the High Administrative Court on 1 March 2017.

¹⁶⁷To view the statement issued by the Jordan Engineers Association on 24 December 2017, see the following link: <http://www.jea.org.jo>

¹⁶⁸Hundreds of teachers staged a protest stand at the call of the Teachers' Association – Capital Branch on 24 December 2017, and on 21 January 2018, in front of the House of Representatives, objecting to the amendments submitted by the Teachers' Association Council to the House of Representatives, on the grounds that these amendments contravene Article (15/d) of the Association's Law, as they override the decision of the Central Body of the Teachers' Association at its first session, manipulate the recommendations of the Central Body, and disregard the will of teachers.

administrators, librarians, laboratory supervisors and school secretaries from membership of the Association, and merely providing that they benefit from the Association's services and funds; (2) depriving young teachers of the opportunity to stand for membership of the Association's council, as the draft amending law raised the years of experience required for candidacy from five years to ten; (3) reducing the number of seats allocated to the governorates from twelve to ten, to be filled by the open proportional list method; (4) abolishing the ratio of one seat per thousand teachers, which would reduce the number of members of the Central Body of the Teachers Association from (316) members to (182) members¹⁶⁹; along with other aspects of the curtailment of rights and privileges deemed necessary to strengthen this profession¹⁷⁰. It is noteworthy that a joint parliamentary committee composed of the Legal Committee and the Education, Teaching and Culture Committee was formed on 8 January 2018 to study the said draft law, in view of the wide controversy that arose between the Central Body and the General Assembly of the Teachers Association over the points mentioned above.

Labor Unions and Employers' Organizations:

Although the Labor Law ostensibly provides for the right to trade union organization, the said law still contains many conditions that have emptied this right of its substance. These conditions include: the legislator's requirement that the number of applicants for founding a union be fifty persons working in the same occupation or in similar occupations¹⁷¹; granting the Tripartite Committee the right to classify the occupations and industries whose workers are entitled to form a union, in agreement with the General Federation of Trade Unions¹⁷²; and making the registration of a union conditional upon the approval of the Registrar of Associations¹⁷³.

Notably, the General Federation of Trade Unions stands alongside the Government (against the demands of broad sectors of workers in numerous occupations). The lack of independence of the General Federation of Labor Unions, of a number of labor unions affiliated with it and of employers' unions manifests itself in several respects, including: the Jordanian Labor Law No. (8) of 1996, through Article (100), grants the General Federation the right to establish internal bylaws for both the Federation and the unions, leaving the union (whether its general assembly or its administrative body) no organizational role; they are merely a tool for implementing the instructions of the General Federation of Trade Unions, against which many complaints are directed by numerous workers' groupings, including the independent workers' unions. The Law also grants broad powers to the Minister of Labor under Article (116) of the Labor Law where a labor union, employers' union or administrative body commits a violation of the provisions of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996, instead of granting this power to the judiciary¹⁷⁴.

¹⁶⁹For the mechanism of calculating the number of members of the Central Body under the Association's Law prior to the proposed amendment, see the following website of the Teachers' Association: <http://www.jts.org.jo>

¹⁷⁰To view the draft law amending the Teachers' Association Law published on 23 May 2017 and the Association's administrative regulation published on 22 May 2017, see the following link of the Legislation and Opinion Bureau: <http://www.lob.jo>.

¹⁷¹Pursuant to Article (98/a) of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996.

¹⁷²Pursuant 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' associations has reached (51), the most recent being the General Association of Cosmetics and Accessories Traders.

¹⁷³Pursuant to Article (102) of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996.

¹⁷⁴Although 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 (30) days have elapsed, and that, should the aggrieved party challenge the dissolution decision before the judiciary, the stay of execution of the decision shall continue until the case is adjudicated, and although the aggrieved party is granted the right to challenge the dissolution decision, this nevertheless costs the aggrieved party additional time and effort and shifts the burden of resorting to the judiciary from the administrative authorities to the aggrieved party, namely the labor

The reality of labor unions indicates that a number of unions are unable to organize free elections that would allow for the renewal and emergence of leaderships capable of developing union work, given that the same labor leaders remain in place and win by acclamation for many years, as is the case, for example, with the President of the General Federation of Trade Unions, who has held this position since 1998. Many workers stay away from engaging in union work owing to their conviction that the union's role in defending its members' rights is futile, and labor unions are restricted to seventeen unions¹⁷⁵, with independent unions still not recognized to date¹⁷⁶. All of this has contributed to weakening the labor union movement and marginalizing its role in economic, social and political spheres, and to weakening its fundamental role of organizing the Jordanian labor market in a manner that serves workers' basic interests in terms of wages, leave, and observance of occupational safety conditions to protect them, and safeguarding their professional future by obtaining social insurance. The Center considers that the Government should facilitate the renewal of labor leaderships by amending the Federation's internal bylaws and not permitting the union head to stand for more than two consecutive terms, in order to promote the principles of democracy and transparency.

In 2017, a march was organized by the Federation of Independent Labor Unions on 30 April 2017 under the slogan "In defense of the interests of the working class and its right to trade union organization", demanding a law regulating union work in the Kingdom, based on Jordanians' right to trade union organization guaranteed to them by the Jordanian Constitution. 2017 also witnessed numerous labor protests, as the total number of labor disputes, according to the Ministry of Labor's 2017 report, reached (86) disputes and (16) strikes. (62) strikes were resolved through direct negotiation between workers and employers, (18) disputes were resolved through recourse to the conciliation officer, two disputes were resolved through the direct intervention of the Minister of Labor, and (4) disputes were referred to the Labor Court.

On the other hand, the Center observed in 2017 that some labor unions were able, albeit to a limited extent, to stand by their members, as several collective agreements were signed¹⁷⁷ under which companies undertook to implement a number of obligations in the interest of employees. Examples include what was achieved by the Independent Union of Workers in Air Transport and Tourism¹⁷⁸, the General Union of Electricity Workers¹⁷⁹, the General Union of Workers in Public Services and Free Professions¹⁸⁰, and the General Union of Workers in Mines and Mining.

union or employers' association. The most serious aspect of this provision is that it penalizes the union in the event of a violation in the bylaws, even though it has not been granted the power to draw up those bylaws.

¹⁷⁵For the list of the seventeen labor unions and the list of employers' associations, whose number reached (52) following the approval of the establishment of the General Association of Toy Traders, see the following website of the Ministry of Labor: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>.

¹⁷⁶Article (16/2) of the Jordanian Constitution provides that: "Jordanians shall have the right to form associations and political parties, provided that their objectives are lawful, their means peaceful, and their bylaws do not contravene the provisions of the Constitution." Article (23/2/f) further provides that: "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."

¹⁷⁷According to the report issued by the Ministry of Labor, the number of collective labor agreements and contracts signed in 2017 reached approximately (82) agreements, benefiting (371407) male and female workers, compared with (71) agreements in 2016, benefiting (115731) workers. To view the collective agreements concluded during 2017, see the website of the Ministry of Labor at the following link: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>.

¹⁷⁸To view the Union's statement, see the following link: <http://www.guatt.org.jo>.

¹⁷⁹For details, see the following link: <http://www.royanews.com>.

¹⁸⁰For more information, see the following link: <http://www.petra.gov.jo>.

Professional Associations:

Professional associations¹⁸¹ in Jordan lack the most important characteristic of civil society institutions, whose membership is based on freedom of choice. Compulsory membership as a condition for practicing the profession, and the requirement that associations be established by the issuance of a law regulating them, have made them closer to an administrative or functional entity. The Special Bureau for the Interpretation of Laws¹⁸², in its Decision No. (11) of 1969, described professional associations as semi-governmental institutions. The problem of defining the relationship of the associations with civil society and the Government also arises because of the two contradictory roles that the associations perform, namely: the official role of regulating the practice of the profession, and the union role that enables their members to defend their rights and interests and to secure a decent life for them and their families in case of need and old age by establishing retirement funds and other insurance schemes¹⁸³. Professional associations did not emerge as a voluntary expression of their members' will; rather, professionals were compelled to organize within their framework through compulsory membership, and they have consequently become, in one of their aspects, a mechanism for implementing relevant State legislation. The Center considers this to be a violation 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 freedoms¹⁸⁴ in several respects, including: (a) the right to form unions may not be restricted to specific activities or occupations; (b) the right of those working in a given occupation may not be limited to forming a single union at the level of the occupation or industry; (c) trade union unity may not be imposed by legislation, nor may members be forced to join the union in order for the professional to be able to practice his or her profession!

Of course, this dimension relating to freedom of organization and voluntary membership does not negate the fact that professional associations are active institutions that have contributed to training and employing their members and safeguarding their savings to ensure the sustainability of the funds in fulfilling the financial and administrative purposes they undertake. However, the past period has witnessed a deterioration in the financial situation of a number of them, such as the Medical Association, the Dental Association and the Engineers Association, owing to several reasons, including¹⁸⁵: poor investment, the decline in share values, and the general economic downturn in the Kingdom as a whole

¹⁸¹The membership of professional associations exceeds (300) thousand 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 of Nurses and Certified Midwives), the Jordan Engineers Association, the Jordan Agricultural Engineers Association, the Jordan Artists Association, and the Jordanian Teachers' Association.

¹⁸²The decision 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, and which have powers over their members derived from the law, namely a regulatory power to organize their work and affairs, the power to issue administrative decisions in these affairs, and then 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."

¹⁸³For more information, see, for example, the Jordan Bar Association Law at the following link: <http://www.jba.org.jo>.

¹⁸⁴Article (23/4) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that: "Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." Article (8/a) of the ICESCR further 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 ICCPR further provides that: "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. To view the International Labour Organization convention, see the following link: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu>.

¹⁸⁵For more information on the deficit of the associations' funds, see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com>.

resulting from the current situation in neighboring sister countries, etc. The NCHR considers that professional associations should: (a) carry out actuarial studies to serve as a reference for managing the assets of retirement funds in a manner that ensures the fulfillment of retirement obligations while guaranteeing their sustainability and continuity; (b) give a role to the general assemblies in managing the associations' affairs; (c) amend the conditions of membership of professional association councils so as to ensure equal representation therein for those with short, medium and long professional experience and to ensure greater participation in the electoral process and decision-making on the one hand, and to raise the standard of the profession on the other.

In the course of the NCHR's follow-up of the situation of these associations, the most prominent problems faced by the associations and their members were identified, namely: the presence of intruders from among expatriates and/or persons not licensed to practice certain professions, such as veterinary medicine, general medicine and specialist medicine; depriving certain professionals of joining the associations and benefiting from their services (for example, teachers working in the private sector, who are linked to the Ministry of Labor); following policies that have led a large number of professionals to refrain from joining their associations; and failing to respond to the demands of some of these professionals, in particular the rejection of the request of the Jordanian Association of Certified Public Accountants¹⁸⁶ to convert the association into a professional association (union), the association having submitted a proposed law to establish an association of auditors more than (15) years ago.

Elections of Association Councils:

In 2017, five new professional association councils were elected to choose the association head (president) and the members of the association council, as follows:

- a. Elections of the Jordan Press Association¹⁸⁷.
- b. Elections of the Jordan Bar Association¹⁸⁸.
- c. Elections of the Veterinarians Association¹⁸⁹.
- d. Elections of the Pharmacists Association¹⁹⁰.
- e. Elections of the Geologists Association¹⁹¹.

As for the role of associations in promoting participation in public affairs, it cannot be denied that union practices, in terms of periodic elections, engagement with public issues and following up on tripartite

¹⁸⁶The Jordan Association of Certified Public Accountants: an association established under a regulation issued by the Council of Ministers pursuant to Article 45/b of the Law Regulating the Profession of Public Accountancy No. 73 of 2003. To view the Association's regulation, see the following link: <http://www.jacpa.org.jo>.

¹⁸⁷The elections were held on 5 May 2017, with a turnout of 85% of those eligible to vote, as the number of journalists who had paid their annual subscriptions and were eligible to participate in the General Assembly meeting reached (1045) journalists.

¹⁸⁸The elections were held on 19 May 2017, with a turnout of 58% in the first round and 40.2% in the second round. The number of lawyers eligible to vote reached (12208).

¹⁸⁹The elections were held on 19 May 2017, with a turnout of 61% of the members eligible to vote. It is worth noting that these elections saw the victory of the sole female candidate among (18) physicians, representing women for the first time since 1972.

¹⁹⁰The elections were held on 12 May 2017, with a turnout of 41% of the members eligible to vote, who numbered (7427) pharmacists. It is worth noting that the Council of the Pharmacists Association was dissolved on 21 May 2016 pursuant to Article (41/e) of the Pharmacists Association Law No. (51) of 1972, as amended, following the resignation of six of the Council members at that time.

¹⁹¹The elections were held on 28 April 2017, with a turnout of 29% of the members eligible to vote, who numbered (1250) male and female geologists.

dialogue, represent a form, albeit a modest one, of democratic practice and perhaps, to some degree, of pluralism. Members' participation rates in elections appear acceptable in some associations but low in others. The same applies when considering the number of those paying annual subscriptions compared with the number of members, which indicates professionals' reluctance to pay their union dues. This calls for association councils and bodies to activate their role in persuading their members, at both the professional and social levels, of their vital role professionally and nationally. As for labor unions, 2017 witnessed no elections for their councils, and the Center notes that these unions suffer to a large extent from a lack of renewal and from relative weakness vis-à-vis the other two parties to social dialogue: the Government and employers.

Demands for the Establishment of New Associations:

In 2017, demands continued for the establishment of a number of professional associations, the most important of which were: an association for workers in allied medical professions, an association of pharmacy technicians, an association of university professors, an association of mosque imams, and an association of auditors.

Official records at the Ministry of Labor¹⁹² also indicate approval of the establishment of two employers' unions in 2017, namely: the General Union of Cosmetics and Accessories Traders¹⁹³ and the General Union of Toy Traders. The establishment of a union under the name of the Driving Instructors Union was rejected, as was the establishment of a federation of employers' unions submitted by these unions.

Assaults on Unionized Medical and Teaching Staff:

Assaults on unionized professionals, whether doctors, nurses or teachers, recurred in 2017 in the absence of radical solutions being put forward by the responsible authorities. The number of assaults on doctors who are members of the Association from April 2016 until the end of 2017 reached (89) assaults, excluding verbal assaults, according to the Jordan Medical Association. In parallel, the number of cases of assault on teachers reached (136) cases, while the number of assaults settled amicably or tribally within security centers reached (256) assaults, and (40) complaints were recorded concerning the smashing of car windows and physical assaults on teachers¹⁹⁴. In this regard, the Center considers that the responsible authorities should determine the causes of the recurrence of such assaults and violations of the law, which expose public service providers to the violence and whims of service users, patients' relatives or others, in matters in which the doctor or teacher has no role. Improving medical services and supplying hospitals and health centers with staff and equipment, particularly in emergency departments and commensurate with the size of hospitals and population density, would contribute to reducing the volume of assaults, as assault constitutes an affront to the prestige of the State, in addition to the damage caused to public and private property.

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:

¹⁹²The first semi-annual government report of 2017.

¹⁹³The decision issued by the Registrar of Trade Unions and Employers' Associations for 2017, at the following link: <http://www.qistas.com/legislations>.

¹⁹⁴By virtue of an official letter from the Jordanian Teachers' Association dated 27 April 2017 concerning assaults on teachers in 2016, noting that no figures or statistics are available on assaults that took place in 2017.

1. Amending the internal bylaws of labor unions so as to ensure the promotion of the principles of democracy, by not permitting candidacy for the presidency of the General Federation or of labor unions for more than two consecutive terms, as is the case in professional associations.
2. Activating the role of the general assembly in the union and raising the competence of its members, and establishing an investment unit in each union to undertake the investment of the union funds' monies in order to achieve returns that ensure their ability to meet their obligations while preserving the real value of the holdings and their assets.
3. Amending Chapter Eleven of the Jordanian Labor Law No. (8) of 1996 so that the amendment guarantees the right to form and join unions by abolishing all restrictions that deprive individuals of the right to take the initiative to form unions and that conflict with the Jordanian Constitution and international instruments, while affirming the right of individuals to establish unions by mere notification to the Ministry of Labor.
4. Recognizing independent labor unions and enabling them to open premises, to meet and to exercise their right to collective bargaining.

10. The Right to Form and Join Associations

The Jordanian Constitution, in Article (16/2) thereof, guarantees the right of Jordanians to form associations, providing that: "Jordanians shall have the right to establish associations, unions and political parties, provided that their objects are lawful, their means peaceful, and their bylaws not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution". This article is consistent with the international¹⁹⁵ and regional¹⁹⁶ standards regulating this right, in affirming that it shall not be subjected to any restrictions that would limit it, except in the cases specified by national law, provided that their purpose is legitimate.

The year 2017 witnessed no amendment to the legislation regulating the formation of and membership in associations, and the Societies Law No. (51) of 2008, as amended, remains the law regulating this right despite the problems it contains. In 2017, the Government did not complete the procedures necessary for adopting the draft law amending the Societies Law, on which the National Center for Human Rights and civil society institutions had previously submitted their comments¹⁹⁷.

It should be noted, however, that 2017 witnessed a number of positive developments to strengthen the right to form and join associations, as the Center observed the issuance of a number of official decisions and circulars that would promote dialogue and partnership between the Government and civil society organizations in various sectors (women, children and youth). These decisions include:

1. Council of Ministers Decision No. (2703) dated 19 April 2017, reconstituting the Higher Committee for Sustainable Development 2030 and its affiliated sub-committees, numbering (18) committees. The decision provided for the addition of two working groups to the Higher Committee, namely: the Gender and Gender Equality Working Group, chaired by the Jordanian National Commission for Women, and the Public Freedoms and Human Rights Working Group, chaired by the National Center for Human Rights, with the membership of a number of civil society institutions and relevant government institutions.

¹⁹⁵Article (20) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 provides that: "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and no one may be compelled to belong to an association." Article (22) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 further provides that: "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. 2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those which are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of the public interest or public morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on members of the armed forces and of the police in their exercise of this right." Correspondingly, Article (8) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 provides that States shall ensure the freedom to form and join trade unions.

¹⁹⁶Article (24) of the Arab Charter on Human Rights of 2004 provides that every citizen has the right to freedom of association with others and to join associations, and that no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those prescribed by law and required by necessity in a society that respects freedoms and human rights.

¹⁹⁷The Law did not adhere to applying the purpose of registration and deposit, which is based on regulation rather than restriction. The Law contains numerous administrative complexities that give registration a constitutive effect upon the establishment of an association, as establishment is made contingent on the will of the Registrar and the competent Minister; this procedure contravenes the provisions of the Constitution and the international human rights standards, which affirm that the purpose of registration is regulation. (2) The Law established the so-called "Board of the Registry of Associations," whose membership lacks genuine representation of civil society organizations and which gives the executive authority a free hand in forming this Registry. (3) The Law is marked by its inclusion of numerous regulations that must be followed when establishing an association, whereas the legislator ought to have set out the procedures for establishing associations precisely and clearly in the Law itself, in accordance with the requirements of Article 16 of the Constitution. (4) The Law does not contain a clear vision on the issue of funding for associations, whether domestic or foreign. (5) Associations are deprived of the right to privacy, as they do not enjoy banking secrecy. (6) The executive authority controls the dissolution of associations, as the Minister may dissolve an association under Article (19) and appoint a temporary administrative body for it from outside its members, which contravenes international human rights standards.

2. The circular issued by the Prime Ministry urging ministries and government institutions to follow a dialogue-based and participatory approach with civil society institutions and to hold sessions on what has been implemented in the field of the Universal Periodic Review of human rights and the preparation of Jordan's voluntary report in this field¹⁹⁸.

Formation of Associations:

The year 2017 witnessed an increase in the number of registered associations in all governorates of the Kingdom, reaching (5735) associations compared with (5280) associations in 2016, an increase of (455) associations, as shown in Table No. (9).

Table No. (9): Numbers of Local Associations for (2017) Distributed by Competent Authority¹⁹⁹

Competent Ministry	Number of Associations 2017	Number of Associations 2016
Ministry of Social Development	3546	3295
Ministry of Interior	1019	901
Ministry of Culture	667	634
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	43	35
Ministry of Environment	111	104
Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs	169	150
Ministry of Health	96	86
Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places	25	25
Ministry of Agriculture	32	27
Ministry of Information and Communications Technology	5	6
Ministry of Water and Irrigation	1	1
Ministry of Justice	6	5
Ministry of Industry and Trade	15	11
Total	5735	5280

In this context, the Center notes the continued absence of a single, specific reference authority for supervising the work of associations, which has led to the absence of a unified official approach on the part of the supervising ministries under the Societies Law No. (51) of 2008, which entrusted the task of supervising and following up the work of associations to numerous ministries. In addition, there is a multiplicity of national legislation regulating the work of associations and of the registration and licensing methods for establishing associations, whereby more than one method may be followed and more than one institution approached to license associations and regulate their work. The Societies Law permits this under its provisions under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Development before the Associations Board; the Companies Law permits the registration of not-for-profit companies under a special regulation before the Companies Control Department; and the opening of branches of foreign associations is also permitted by registering them with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in addition to the possibility of conducting activities through memoranda of understanding concluded with the

¹⁹⁸ A circular issued by the Prime Ministry on 28 February 2017.

¹⁹⁹ Registry of Associations/Ministry of Social Development, 2017.

Ministry of Planning. Table No. (10) shows the distribution of civil society institutions according to the nature of their work and the law governing their establishment and the exercise of their activities.

Table No. (10): Distribution of Civil Society Institutions According to the Nature of Their Work and the Law Governing Their Establishment and the Exercise of Their Activities

No.	Category	Law Regulating the Work of the Institutions
1.	Associations registered with the Registry of Associations, covering (14) areas of competence distributed among the relevant ministries; associations of ambiguous affiliation (employers' associations and professional associations)	The Societies Law No. (51) of 2008, as amended; the Labor Law and the Industry and Trade Law
2.	Not-for-profit companies	The Companies Law No. 22/1997, as amended, and the Not-for-Profit Companies Regulation No. (73) of 2010, as amended
3.	Sports and youth clubs	The Higher Council for Youth Law No. (13) of 2005
4.	Chambers of industry	The Chambers of Industry Law No. (10) of 2005

Furthermore, the capital, Amman, still accounts for the largest share of the number of associations operating in it, numbering (2478) associations in 2017, followed by Irbid Governorate with (695) associations and then Zarqa Governorate with (478) associations, as shown in Table No. (11).

Table No. (11): Distribution of Registered Associations by Governorate

Governorate	Number of Associations
Amman	2478
Al-Balqa	279
Zarqa	478
Madaba	193
Irbid	695
Mafrq	508
Jerash	164
Ajloun	229
Karak	290
Tafilah	129
Ma'an	174
Aqaba	118
Total	5735

In 2017, (190) associations out of (5735) were also dissolved: (63) associations were dissolved voluntarily at the wish of the general assembly to dissolve, (27) associations were dissolved for violating

the provisions of the law, and (100) associations were dissolved by operation of law for ceasing to carry out their activities²⁰⁰.

To monitor the reality of associations' work on the ground, a special questionnaire was prepared by the National Center for Human Rights containing a number of questions on the organizational and knowledge-related nature of associations' work and the various challenges they face, in terms of: the extent to which administrative reports are submitted to the competent ministry and made available to the public; the organization of financial matters, in terms of whether or not the association has its own account, whether there is an auditor, and whether the association's financial records are kept in the custody of the secretary; the extent to which the association receives financial support, whether domestic or foreign, in accordance with the law; and the holding of free and fair elections within the association based on fair foundations and equal opportunities for all; in addition to knowledge-related matters of the association, in terms of the extent of association members' familiarity with international human rights standards, the Societies Law and related laws, the extent to which specialized training courses are held to raise awareness of human rights, and knowledge of the challenges facing the association's work, whether legal, administrative or societal. To answer these and other questions, many associations in the various governorates of the Kingdom were contacted, and the results were as follows:

1. Regarding the inquiry into the extent to which associations comply with submitting reports to the competent ministry, the results showed that most associations comply with submitting their reports to the competent ministry, while most of the associations contacted do not have their own website that would provide an opportunity to view the association's financial and organizational matters and the auditor's reports, in order to strengthen the foundations of transparency at work. This has led to the absence of the foundations of good governance in all its financial, administrative, executive and media elements, and to a widening gap of mistrust between the Government and associations in light of the lack of disclosure by those associations of their objectives, purposes and activities.
2. Regarding the holding of free and fair elections within the association based on fair foundations and equal opportunities for all, the answers showed that most associations tend to delegate decision-making authority to a small working team or to the president of the association rather than to the elected boards of directors. This indicates elite control over all the activities and work of associations, owing to the absence of provisions obliging associations to renew their leadership periodically and the absence from internal bylaws of any time limit for holding any leadership position.
3. Regarding the financial resources of associations, the answers indicated that most associations do not enjoy the minimum financial resources needed to cover their expenses, owing to the restrictions imposed on them, their deprivation of benefiting from foreign funding, and the absence of any national source of funding for associations.
4. Regarding the extent of associations' management's knowledge of international human rights standards, the Societies Law No. 51 of 2008, or other relevant laws, the answers revealed that the majority of associations' managements, particularly in villages and the Badia, are not familiar with the Societies Law, the international standards regulating the right to form associations, or the relevant international human rights standards.

²⁰⁰Statistics of the Registry of Associations for 2017.

Challenges Facing the Work of Associations in Jordan²⁰¹:

Associations in Jordan face many challenges and obstacles that have affected their main role in Jordanian society, the most prominent of which were: 1. The absence and lack of definition of a clear concept of voluntary social work for associations, as the concept of social work among some association founders is still conditional upon securing funding from any source in order for the association to be able to perform its role, which drives associations to obtain funding from various sources, the most important of which is foreign funding, a source that the Jordanian legislator has restricted in the law regulating the work of associations. 2. The lack among some associations of the foundations of good governance in managing the association, as management in some associations is still confined to a single individual who monopolizes all decisions relating to the association's affairs, which has led to a lack of transparency in the work of some associations. 3. The lack of trust in the relationship between associations and the competent official institutions, which is one of the main challenges that has led to the absence of associations' role in dialogue and in political, social and economic participation when formulating policies and strategies; this requires calling on the Government to move forward in providing an enabling and encouraging environment for associations and involving them in its programs. 4. Some associations obtaining a license to establish the association without having premises on the ground, which has raised suspicion and doubt regarding the association's work. 5. The absence of a unified coordinating umbrella for the work of associations, which has led to the establishment of many associations with similar roles and objectives. 6. The small number of associations specialized in specific fields.

Recommendations:

The National Center for Human Rights reaffirms the recommendations contained in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following recommendations:

1. Developing the legal environment regulating the work of associations by giving priority to expediting the harmonization of the provisions of the Societies Law No. (51) of 2008 so that it becomes more consistent with international principles and conventions, in accordance with the observations contained in the Center's reports in this regard.
2. Developing the capacities and tools of civil society so that it becomes more effective, and working to activate its role in the processes of dialogue and the formulation and analysis of public policies.
3. Calling on civil society institutions to establish websites through which they publish their ideas, mission, objectives and vision, and which serve as a means of communication with the relevant ministry, in application of the principles of good governance.
4. Working to develop the capacities of State employees, particularly those working in the field of civil society institutions, and to familiarize them with civil society, its activities and its working mechanism, so that they become more aware and conscious of the role of civil society and the spaces it seeks to fill.
5. Applying best practices in the field of good governance and promoting internal democracy within associations by preparing a code of conduct for good governance and transparency and training associations on how to apply it.

²⁰¹The results of the recommendations of the reports and activities implemented by the Center through the Tripartite Dialogue Forum and the Civil Society Support Project in Jordan throughout 2017.

6. Reconsidering the geographic and sectoral distribution of associations so as to cover the various regions and social groups.
7. Developing a methodology for evaluating and measuring the impact of civil society activities by each competent ministry, with the aim of improving the role of associations within the social framework.
8. Designing and implementing training programs on the laws regulating the work of associations and on human rights topics, in coordination with the relevant official and independent bodies.

Second: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

1. The Right to Development

The Jordanian Constitution contains no reference to the right to development, notwithstanding the three recent constitutional amendments that have affected a number of its provisions. Although this right intersects with civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, the national legislative system lacks any specific legislation regulating this right and guaranteeing it to citizens.

Policies and Actual Practices:

National policies reflect the Government's interest in the development process, as evidenced by the Government's adoption of numerous development plans and programs, most notably the Jordan 2025 document: A National Vision and Strategy, which sets out the general framework for economic and social policies based on providing opportunities for all; the Executive Development Program (2016–2018); the Governorate Development Programs for the years (2017–2019); the Jordan Economic Growth Plan (2018–2022)²⁰²; and the National Strategy for Human Resource Development (2016–2025)²⁰³. The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) considers that all of these plans and strategies constitute national frames of reference for the realization of this right, provided that they are actually implemented and applied on the ground.

However, the development process in the Jordanian governorates remains uneven, and the distribution of its gains is marred by inequity, particularly in the governorates remote from the capital, Amman. The Summary Report of the Ministerial Team's Visits to the Governorates in 2016, issued by the Ministry of Planning in 2017, pointed to a number of development problems and gaps, most notably²⁰⁴:

1. High rates of poverty and unemployment, demands for more projects that contribute to alleviating these two problems, and the need for government programs that help resolve them.
2. The inability of municipalities to perform their development role owing to the shortage of qualified technical staff, weak equipment and machinery, or the financial deficit from which some of them suffer.
3. Problems in the service sectors, such as education, specifically the problem of overcrowded classrooms; the health sector, such as the shortage of staff, specializations and medical equipment; and the vocational training sector, which suffers from a lack of qualified technical staff for training.
4. The inability of the structure of the local economy within the governorates and municipalities to generate employment opportunities by encouraging and creating major investments and small and medium-sized enterprises, whether by individuals, civil society organizations or municipalities, owing to the limited financing available to them to undertake such projects.
5. Weak awareness among young people and representatives of local community institutions of the possibility of resorting to the financing windows provided by the State, such as the Governorates Development Fund and other lending institutions and funds, together with the need for technical assistance to qualify young people to obtain financing.

²⁰²For more information, see the website of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation at the following link: www.mop.gov.jo.

²⁰³For more information, see the website of the National Committee for Human Resource Development at the following link: www.hrd.jo.

²⁰⁴Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Summary Report on the Visits of the Ministerial Team to the Governorates to Discuss the Governorates' Development Programs for the Years (2016–2018).

6. The existence of numerous plots of land expropriated for a particular government entity that are not invested in any productive or development projects.
7. The non-implementation of some projects, or slowness in the implementation process, owing to weak coordination or weak implementation follow-up mechanisms on the part of some of the entities concerned, such as the opening, paving and maintenance of secondary, village and agricultural roads; the construction and rehabilitation of water networks; the connection of unserved areas to the sewerage network; and the construction of gardens, parks and sports fields. The Center commends the Government's holding of the local and municipal council elections and the governorate council elections in 2017²⁰⁵, and regards this as a positive step towards strengthening the role of citizens in participating in the making of development decisions that concern their areas, and in selecting development needs and setting their priorities at the governorate level, in a manner that reinforces the participatory approach to planning and decision-making and contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This is reflected in an improvement in the human rights situation in general, and in the right to development in particular, which the Center considers to be consistent to some extent with universal human rights standards and the Declaration on the Right to Development²⁰⁶. The Government's explanatory response to the NCHR's recommendations for 2016 indicates that the overall ceiling of the governorates' capital budgets was set at an amount of JOD (220) million in the 2018 budget, with the aim of enabling citizens to participate in development decision-making by identifying their development priorities and needs.

Some International Indicators and Jordan's Actual Standing Therein:

In this context, the Center monitored a number of international indicators and Jordan's standing therein, given their importance in shaping development policies and in decision-making, since these indicators reflect the effectiveness of the government policies and decisions taken, whether by achieving progress or by regressing in certain aspects, which reflect either negatively or positively on the extent to which this right, and human rights and fundamental freedoms in general, are realized. The most prominent of these are:

Sustainable Development Goals Index: Jordan ranked fifth in the Arab region and (80th) globally in 2017 out of (157) countries covered by the report, with a score of (66) out of (100), whereas it had ranked fourth in the Arab region and (59th) globally on this index, with a score of (62.7) out of (100), out of (149) countries covered by the report in 2016²⁰⁷.

Higher Education and Training Index: This index is issued by the World Economic Forum. Jordan ranked (63rd globally), obtaining an average overall score of (4.5) out of (7), out of (137) countries covered by the report worldwide²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁵For more information, see the Report on the Conduct of the 2017 Municipal and Governorate Council Elections, at the following link: www.nchr.org.jo.

²⁰⁶Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted and proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. (41/128) of 4 January 1986.

²⁰⁷This is an unofficial index developed by the Bertelsmann Foundation (Bertelsmann Stiftung) in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network; it relies largely on the Sustainable Development Goals indicators proposed by the United Nations Statistical Commission. For more information, see the link: www.sdindex.org.

²⁰⁸In ranking higher education and training in the country under study, the index relies on several criteria, namely: quantity of education, which measures the gross enrollment rates in tertiary and secondary education; quality of education, which measures the quality of the education system, the quality of mathematics and science education, the quality of the management of schools and educational institutions, and Internet access in schools; in addition to on-the-job training, which measures the local availability of specialized training services and the extent of staff training. The index assigns a score to

Global Competitiveness Index²⁰⁹:

The index issued by the World Economic Forum indicates that Jordan's ranking fell by two places in 2017–2018, to rank (65th) out of (137) countries covered by the index worldwide, compared with 2016, when it ranked (63rd) out of (138) countries covered by the index, which comprises three groups, each encompassing a number of pillars, as shown in Tables Nos. (12), (13) and (14):

Table No. (12): Basic Requirements

Group name	Global rank – 2016	Global rank – 2017	Jordan's status
Basic requirements	70	73	Decline
Pillars of this group			
Institutions	34	36	Decline
Infrastructure	56	58	Decline
Macroeconomic environment	118	118	Stable
Health and primary education	80	80	Stable

Table No. (13): Efficiency Enhancers

Group name	Global rank – 2016	Global rank – 2017	Jordan's status
Efficiency enhancers	66	67	Decline
Main pillars of this group			
Higher education and training	51	63	Decline
Goods market efficiency	43	51	Decline
Labor market efficiency	87	90	Decline
Financial market development	68	70	Decline
Technological readiness	75	67	Progress
Market size	75	76	Decline

Table No. (14): Innovation and Sophistication

Group name	Global rank – 2016	Global rank – 2017	Jordan's status
Innovation and sophistication	39	45	Decline
Main pillars of this group			
Business sophistication	36	48	Decline
Entrepreneurship and innovation	40	46	Decline

Looking at these indicators and reading them carefully, we find that Jordan occupies a middle position in them. The Center therefore considers it necessary to intensify efforts to enhance the opportunities for progress and to overcome the obstacles facing its development process.

each criterion separately, and then assigns an overall score ranging from one to seven. The closer the score obtained by a country is to seven, the higher its ranking in the index, and vice versa: the closer the overall score obtained by a country is to one, the lower its ranking in the index. See the following link: www.weforum.org/reports.

²⁰⁹An annual report issued by the World Economic Forum that assesses the capacity of countries to achieve prosperity for their citizens. It measures the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the prosperity of the economy in countries. For more, see the following link: www.weforum.org.

The Gender Gap between the Sexes:

The Global Gender Gap Report 2017, issued by the World Economic Forum, confirmed that Jordan fell one place globally to rank (135th) out of (144) countries covered by the index in 2017, with a score of (0.6) on an index ranging from (0–1), where a score of (1) signifies full equality and the absence of a gender gap, while a score of zero signifies inequality and, accordingly, a vast gap. It should be noted that Jordan had ranked (134th) in 2016. According to the report, this decline is attributable to low economic opportunity and participation of women, in which Jordan ranked (138th); in the field of education it ranked (51st), in the field of health (113th), and in the field of political participation (126th)²¹⁰.

National Development Dimensions:

In 2017, the Center observed a number of challenges affecting Jordan's development process, most notably:

Indebtedness: Indebtedness is one of the most prominent obstacles facing the Jordanian State, given its negative effects on the realization of this right. Total public debt at the end of 2017 amounted to JOD (27,269.2) billion, i.e. (95.3%) of the estimated gross domestic product (GDP) for 2017, compared with (95.1%) at the end of 2016²¹¹. The debt of the National Electric Power Company and the Water Authority accounted for some JOD (7.2) billion of this total debt²¹². The cost of servicing the external debt on a cash basis amounted to approximately JOD (1,179.6) million at the end of 2017, of which JOD (888.3) million were installments and JOD (291.8) million interest²¹³. This prompted the Government to adopt numerous austerity economic policies that had a negative impact on the reality of human rights, through the imposition of further taxes that led to price increases for many goods and services in order to cover the budget deficit and to service the debt, which in turn adversely affected citizens' living conditions and the extent of their enjoyment of this right.

Economic Growth: Figures and statistics indicate modest economic growth rates in 2017, falling short of the target of 4.9% set by Jordan 2025²¹⁴: the growth rate of GDP at constant prices for 2017 was 2.0%²¹⁵, the same rate achieved in 2016. The Center considers this rate insufficient to address the high unemployment among Jordanians²¹⁶, the rate of which stood at 18.3% for the same year.

Jordanian Exports: The Center observed a decline in national exports and a tilt of the trade balance in favor of imports in light of the crises and conflicts in the region and the closure of many markets to Jordanian exports²¹⁷. The value of national exports in 2017 amounted to JOD (4,474.2) million, against imports worth JOD (14,488.6) million, with the trade balance deficit²¹⁸ reaching 9.9% compared with 2016. The ratio of total exports to imports (coverage ratio) stood at 36.6% in 2017, whereas the coverage ratio in 2016 had stood at 39.1%²¹⁹. This points to weak government policies in protecting and

²¹⁰For more information, see the following link: <http://sigi-jordan.org>.

²¹¹Ministry of Finance, General Government Finance Bulletin, Issue No. Twelve, p. 6.

²¹²General Government Finance Bulletin, op. cit., p. 6.

²¹³General Government Finance Bulletin, op. cit., p. 7.

²¹⁴For further details, see the Economic Policy Council, Economic Growth Plan 2018–2022.

²¹⁵For more information, see the Department of Statistics (DoS), Quarterly Estimates of Gross Domestic Product at Constant Market Prices.

²¹⁶For more information, see the Department of Statistics (DoS), Annual Unemployment Rate for Jordanians 2017.

²¹⁷For more information, see the Executive Development Program for the Years 2016–2018, p. 7.

²¹⁸The trade balance deficit represents the difference between the value of imports and the total value of exports.

²¹⁹For more information, see the Department of Statistics (DoS), Foreign Trade Statistics Report for December 2017.

encouraging local products and in searching for new markets for Jordanian exports in light of the above data, which further slows growth rates, with repercussions for the realization of this right and citizens' enjoyment of it.

Rising Prices, Fees and Taxes, Particularly on Certain Production Inputs: This prompted many industrial and craft companies to close down their activities. A total of (2,102) industrial and craft companies were legally closed for failing to renew their membership with the Amman Chamber of Industry, with a combined capital of approximately JOD (203.8) million, and which had employed some (10.3) thousand workers²²⁰.

Climate Change, Drought and Water Scarcity: Together with the shortcomings of the development, extension and marketing institutions, these factors contributed to an increase in the indebtedness of the agricultural sector, which reached approximately JOD (450) million in 2017, and to a 55% decline in its sales compared with 2016²²¹. This had a negative impact on the sector, with many people refraining from investing in it and seeking other opportunities or joining the ranks of the unemployed.

Overall Economic Participation: Data point to limited overall economic participation: the revised economic participation rate (labor force as a proportion of the population aged 15 years and over) stood at 39.2% in 2017, of which 60.8% for males against 17.3% for females, compared with 36% in 2016, of which 58.7% for males and 13.2% for females²²².

Energy and Renewable Energy: Jordan depends on imports from abroad for most of its energy needs, with external sources accounting for (97%) of the energy consumed in the Kingdom²²³. Imports of energy sources increased from JOD (727) million at the end of April 2016 to JOD (772) million for the same period of 2017²²⁴. Despite the availability in Jordan of an environment suitable for alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind energy, the contribution of this sector remains modest, not exceeding 5% of electricity consumption at the end of 2016²²⁵. In addition, there are vast reserves of oil shale estimated at (40–60) billion tons, making Jordan the second-richest country in the world in oil shale after Canada²²⁶, as well as uranium reserves estimated at approximately (40) thousand tons²²⁷. Despite all of these available resources and the suitable environment, government policies towards exploiting them still suffer from some shortcomings, and the Government turns to citizens' pockets to generate further revenue for the State Treasury instead of making optimal use of these resources.

Furthermore, the World Energy Council index²²⁸ shows that Jordan fell from (75th) place in 2016 to (87th) place in 2017 out of (125) countries covered by the index. This is attributed to Jordan's decline from (52nd) to (56th) place on the energy equity index, and from (106th) to (121st) place on the energy

²²⁰For more information, see Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 29 May 2017, at the following link: <http://www.alghad.com>.

²²¹For more information, see the Khaberni website, news item entitled "(450) Million Dinars: Farmers' Debts in Jordan", 15 March 2018.

²²²Department of Statistics (DoS), Report on the Employment and Unemployment Rate in the Kingdom for 2017.

²²³Executive Development Program for the Years (2016–2018).

²²⁴Department of Statistics (DoS), Foreign Trade Section, Report for December 2017.

²²⁵Al-Rai, article entitled "Will Jordan Benefit from the Renewable Energy Element?", 29 January 2018.

²²⁶For more information, see the following link: <http://www.startimes.com>.

²²⁷Saraya website, statements by the Chairman of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission, published on Tuesday, 24 April 2018.

²²⁸This index measures energy equity, i.e. the population's ability to access energy and afford its costs, whereas the energy security index measures the effectiveness of managing the energy supply from domestic and external sources, the reliability of the energy infrastructure, and the ability to meet current and future demand, while the environmental sustainability index measures efficiency in the production and use of energy and the development and increase of supply from renewable energy and clean energy sources. For more information, see the link: <http://alrai.com>.

security index, despite Jordan advancing four places on the environmental sustainability index to rank (78th). The main reason for Jordan's decline on this index is the marked decline in the energy security sub-index, owing to instability in the quantity of oil and natural gas available, slowness in diversifying energy sources, particularly renewable and clean energy sources, and repeated attacks on energy supply networks, which weaken the efficiency and effectiveness of energy supply management and increase the rate of losses therein.

Salaries and Wages: The low average income of workers, estimated at JOD (458) per month according to some international reports²²⁹, in light of the Government's austerity measures and its recourse to imposing further taxes and fees, bearing in mind that the Department of Statistics (DoS) has set the poverty line in Jordan at below JOD (580) per month per family²³⁰.

Education and the Labor Market: Weak linkages between the academic specializations studied by students and the needs of the labor market.

The Badia and Village and Rural Areas: These areas lack development projects, despite the natural and human resources they contain, which, if properly invested, would contribute to improving the standard of living of their inhabitants and the development situation in these areas in particular and in the Kingdom in general.

Repercussions of the Syrian Crisis: Jordan has received hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, which has increased the burden on certain sectors, especially service sectors such as water, education, health care, energy and labor. The cost of this refugee influx is estimated at approximately two and a half billion US dollars annually²³¹, which exceeds Jordan's modest capacities.

Corruption and Its Impact on the Right to Development: Corruption is the most conspicuous form of abuse of power or public office for private gain. It leads to an inequitable distribution of the gains of development, generates economic distortions and slows growth rates, undermines the democratic process and the rule of law, and reduces opportunities for accountability, in addition to causing numerous disruptions to societal security and peace. Despite the general orientation of the Jordanian State towards combating this phenomenon and the provision of numerous national mechanisms for this purpose, most notably the establishment of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission under the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law No. (13) of 2016²³², the NCHR considers that corruption still constitutes one of the most important challenges facing the Kingdom and impeding its development process, and that it is a flagrant violation of human rights, to the point that its manifestations have become rooted in the national culture, in particular the phenomena of **wasta** (connections) and favoritism, to which many citizens resort to obtain even their most basic rights.

The NCHR expresses its concern regarding the findings of the National Integrity System Assessment report issued by the Rasheed Center for Integrity and Transparency in 2016²³³, which aimed to assess

²²⁹The "numbeo" website is a website specialized in the cost of living around the world. For more information, see the following link: www.numbeo.com.

²³⁰For more information, see the Thirteenth Annual Report on the State of Human Rights in Jordan, p. 119.

²³¹Dialogue Forum on Asylum and Syrian Refugees in Jordan, the Dead Sea, 18 April 2017.

²³²Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, op. cit.

²³³Rasheed for Integrity and Transparency (Transparency International – Jordan), Assessment of the National Integrity System in Jordan as of 3 June 2016, p. 9. According to the Transparency International methodology, the integrity system in an institution scoring (81–100) is considered very strong, one scoring (61–80) strong, one scoring (21–40) weak, and one scoring (0–20) very weak. For more, see the following link: <http://rasheedti.org>.

the capacities of State institutions and the extent to which they perform their roles in combating corruption and promoting transparency, accountability and governance, as shown in Table No. (15):

Table No. (15): Assessment of the Capacities of State Institutions and the Extent to Which They Perform Their Roles in Combating Corruption and Promoting Transparency, Accountability and Governance

Institution	Score	Classification
Judiciary	63	Strong
Audit Bureau	58	Moderate
Anti-Corruption Commission	57	Moderate
Independent Election Commission	54	Moderate
Public sector	39	Weak
Private sector	43	Moderate
Political parties – civil society	38	Weak
Media	35	Weak
Executive authority	33	Weak
Legislative authority	32	Weak

A careful reading of this assessment shows that most of the entities assessed obtained a score between weak and moderate, which points to the weakness and slowness of progress in this system, and is reflected in the spread of corruption throughout the joints of the Jordanian State.

Likewise, the Corruption Perceptions Index issued by Transparency International showed that Jordan's ranking fell by two places in 2017, to rank (59th) globally out of (180) countries, down from (57th) out of (176) countries in 2016, with a score of (48 out of 100), thus maintaining the same score it had obtained in 2016²³⁴, despite Jordan's adoption of a package of anti-corruption laws. Jordan's obtaining the same score for two consecutive years is attributable to several reasons, including: the failure to fully implement the commitments made by the Jordanian Government at the 2016 Anti-Corruption Summit; the absence of periodic disclosure of data relating to anti-corruption matters; the lack of transparency principles governing the work of State-owned companies; the lack of transparency in appointments to senior leadership positions in the public sector; and the stalling of judicial proceedings at the enforcement stage in many corruption cases that were announced and investigated years ago, most of which have not been decided. In addition, the lack of clarity of the mechanisms for preparing the State's general budget and the non-disclosure of these mechanisms to citizens constitute an obstacle to their exercise of an effective role in accountability, as does the absence of oversight of military expenditure and military tenders.

Recommendations:

1. Work to resolve the problems of poverty and unemployment and of low income and wage levels.
2. Work to resolve the problem of indebtedness and the budget deficit.
3. Work to curb expenditure, particularly consumer spending and government spending.

²³⁴For more information, see the following link: www.transparency.org.

4. Strengthen the role of domestic and foreign investment and provide all forms of support to it. This requires the Government to adopt economic policies that take into account the facilitation of procedures and the attraction of investment, and to provide incentives such as: lowering interest rates on productive loans, reducing tax burdens, supporting the establishment of local industries, and facilitating procedures and avoiding their complication.
5. Encourage national exports, search for new markets for Jordanian products, and work to develop global quality requirements therein so that they can compete globally.
6. Study the needs of the labor market and link them to educational outputs, and move towards technical and vocational education in accordance with the needs of the labor market.
7. Raise awareness of the available lending windows and encourage citizens to benefit from them in productive projects, taking into account the comparative advantages of each governorate.
8. Take further measures and incentives to encourage a shift towards alternative energy and work to reduce its costs, instead of resorting to raising the prices of electricity and petroleum derivatives.
9. Provide further support to governorate councils and municipalities so that they can assume the development roles entrusted to them.
10. Activate the national integrity system; combat corruption in all its forms and manifestations; intensify programs and mechanisms aimed at raising citizens' awareness of its dangers and how to confront it; and work to dry up its sources and toughen the penalties imposed on its perpetrators.

2. The Right to an Adequate Standard of Living

The right to an adequate and appropriate standard of living is linked to a set of determinants that affect the Jordanian citizen's enjoyment of this right. The most important of these determinants are the small size of the Jordanian economy and the country's limited natural resources; high indebtedness relative to GDP; structural adjustment policies; very high levels of unemployment; the impact of economic transformations on the Jordanian economy; the decline in the value of exports owing to the closure of some traditional markets to Jordanian exports and, consequently, slower growth rates and a rising deficit in the general budget and the trade balance; and the decline in the value of grants and assistance provided by the international community; in addition to other determinants which many economic experts consider to have contributed to the economic contraction in 2017. This prompted the Government to resort to a policy of imposing further taxes and lifting subsidies on certain goods, most notably the lifting of the bread subsidy at the end of 2017, which entered into force at the beginning of 2018, and which had a direct impact on the decline in citizens' adequate standard of living. All of this resulted in rising prices, rising inflation and a diminishing purchasing power of the dinar, despite the currency maintaining a fixed exchange rate against the US dollar; this stability, however, does not reflect any real strength of the dinar, but merely helps protect the value of the frozen balances of major merchants in banks. This prompted citizens to organize numerous marches and sit-ins in protest against the Government's economic decisions and policies.

The Financial Situation:

Ministry of Finance data point to developments in indebtedness, both domestic and external. Total public debt at the end of 2017 amounted to approximately JOD (27.25) billion, i.e. (95.3%) of GDP, compared with JOD (26.1) billion, i.e. 95.1% at the end of 2016²³⁵. This is considered to exceed the upper ceiling for public debt under the provisions of Article (23) of the Public Debt and Its Management Law No. (26) of 2001. Furthermore, the consolidated deficit of the general budget and the budgets of independent government units for 2017 amounted to JOD (1,035) million, i.e. (3.6%) of GDP²³⁶.

Data issued by the Department of Statistics indicate that the average consumer price index for 2017 rose by 3.3% compared with 2016, as a result of price increases for a number of goods and services, most notably transport fares by 12.9%, or (1.7) percentage points; rents by 2.6%, or (0.4) percentage points; tobacco and cigarettes by 7.9%, or (0.3) percentage points; vegetables and dried and canned legumes by 5.0%, or (0.2) percentage points; and health by 8.5%, or (0.2) percentage points. Meanwhile, the most prominent commodity groups whose prices decreased were meat and poultry by 5.0%, fruits and nuts by 3.3%, clothing by 2.9%, and cereals and their products by 0.2%²³⁷. These data prompted the Government to follow an approach of resorting to citizens' pockets and imposing further taxes and fees on them, as a requirement of the economic and financial reform program adopted by the Government on the basis of the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund to close the budget deficit and ease the burden of public debt, which constitutes a source of concern preoccupying citizens.

²³⁵Ministry of Finance, Monthly Financial Bulletin, December 2017.

²³⁶Budget Speech before the House of Representatives, H.E. the Minister of Finance, 2017, p. 32.

²³⁷Department of Statistics (DoS), Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index for December 2017.

Poverty Rates and Means of Combating Poverty:

Despite the Government's efforts to combat poverty through the plans and strategies it has adopted, most notably the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013–2020, which aims to reduce the poverty rate to 6% by 2020 from the rates announced in 2010, the phenomenon of poverty²³⁸ continues to worsen in most areas of the Kingdom, with poverty pockets increasing markedly. The local press has documented a number of these areas whose inhabitants suffer severe deprivation. Poverty is a development problem that requires the Government to adopt comprehensive policies and genuine and realistic measures to improve the lives of the poor and the socially deprived, to provide them with more economic opportunities, and to integrate them into society.

Data of the Department of Statistics for 2010, contained in the Report on the Poverty Situation in Jordan²³⁹, which constitutes the most recent official data published to date, indicate that the poverty rate stood at 14.4% in 2010, whereas in 2008 it stood at 13.3%, an increase of (1.1%). The report shows that the absolute poverty line (food and non-food) is JOD (814) per person per year (i.e. JOD 67.8 per person per month). For a standard family of (4–5) members, the poverty line is JOD (4,393) per year (i.e. JOD 366.3 per month). The extreme poverty line (food poverty line) for a family of (4–5) members is JOD (151.2) per month, noting that the food poverty line stood at JOD (336) per person per year (i.e. JOD 28 per person per month). The data also indicate disparities in poverty rates among the Kingdom's (89) districts distributed across (12) governorates, with the highest rates recorded in Wadi Araba District in Aqaba Governorate at 71.5%, and Al-Ruwaished District in Mafraq Governorate at 69.6%. The report states that five districts had poverty rates exceeding 50%, namely the districts of Wadi Araba, Al-Ruwaished, Al-Muraygha, Al-Husseiniyya and Ghor Al-Safi, which points to weak government interventions to lift any of them out of poverty to date. This prompted citizens to flock to the National Aid Fund to request more of the assistance it provides. The total number of families benefiting from the Fund at the end of 2017 reached (92,519) families, and the number of families added to the assistance in 2017 reached (9,667) families²⁴⁰. Citizens have also resorted to borrowing from banks: the total value of individual loans in 2016 amounted to JOD (9.177) billion, of which JOD (7.678) billion was for male borrowers, at a rate of 83%, and JOD (1.499) billion for females, at a rate of 16.3%²⁴¹.

On the basis of these data, the Center considers that government policies consisting of raising taxes and prices to close the consolidated budget deficit, in addition to low wages, rising unemployment rates and the scarcity of new job opportunities in the economy, run counter to this direction, and have overburdened the Jordanian citizen and added a further burden to his cost of living and standard of life.

The Center considers that the private sector's contribution to poverty reduction programs remains weak, particularly in the declared poverty pocket areas, in addition to weak investment in these pockets, despite the Government's efforts to encourage investment and the establishment of a dedicated commission for this purpose.

Salaries and Wages: Although the Government imposed further taxes and the prices of many goods and services rose in 2017, this government policy, which affects the incomes of citizens, both employees and retirees, was not matched by any increase in their salaries, with the exception of raising the

²³⁸Poverty, in its general sense, is a person's inability to secure the income necessary to meet basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, education, health and transport) that enable him or her to perform his or her work in an acceptable manner.

²³⁹Report on the State of Poverty in Jordan, Department of Statistics (DoS), 2010.

²⁴⁰Ammon News Agency, statements by the Director General of the National Aid Fund, 8 January 2018.

²⁴¹Association of Banks Report, 2016.

minimum wage from JOD (190) to JOD (220)²⁴², which is a modest increase; the increase of the maximum amount allocated to families benefiting from the National Aid Fund from JOD (180) to JOD (200) per month²⁴³; and a token increase in the winter allowance for all families benefiting from the Fund, with a total amount of JOD (2.5) million disbursed once²⁴⁴, in order to contribute to some extent to relieving the hardship of the families benefiting from the Fund, albeit to a very limited degree compared with the level of need.

Unemployment Rates and Means of Combating Unemployment:

Unemployment is one of the most prominent challenges facing the Jordanian citizen, especially among young people and women, in light of the intense competition from migrant workers, the reception of hundreds of thousands of refugees in recent years, the failure to link educational outputs to the labor market, slowing economic growth, and declining investment, especially in areas remote from the capital, Amman. All of these factors have contributed to rising unemployment rates and an increase in the number of the unemployed. Official statistics²⁴⁵ indicate that the unemployment rate continues to rise, reaching 18.5% in the fourth quarter of 2017, as shown in Table No. (16). The unemployment rate among males stood at 16.1% against 27.5% among females. The unemployment rate varied according to educational level and sex: the rate among unemployed male holders of a bachelor's degree or higher stood at 24.8% against 73.0% among females. The highest unemployment rates were recorded in the age groups (15–19) years and (20–24) years, at 45.4% and 36.4% respectively. At the governorate level, the highest unemployment rate was recorded in Madaba Governorate at 29.6%, and the lowest in Karak Governorate at 15.4%.

Table No. (16): Unemployment Rates for the Fourth Quarter of the Years 2015 / 2017

Years – 2017	Years – 2016	Years – 2015
18.5%	15.8%	13.6%

With regard to newly created job opportunities, the survey issued by the Department of Statistics in August 2017 entitled "Job Creation Survey – First Half of 2016" indicated that the total number of jobs created during the first half of 2016 amounted to (26) thousand, of which (20) thousand were for males and (6) thousand for females. These opportunities are relatively meager in comparison with the proportion of the unemployed: according to the fourth quarterly report on the unemployment rate for 2017, holders of a general secondary certificate or higher accounted for 53.3% of the total unemployed among males, while 46.7% had educational qualifications below the general secondary level.

The Housing Sector

Among the most prominent legislative developments relating to this right was the amendment of the regulations governing the military housing funds for members of the Armed Forces and security services, under which the ceiling of loans allocated for housing purposes was raised from (20) thousand to (30) thousand for officers, and from (10) thousand to JOD (15) thousand for other ranks. On another level, the Government adopted the Amended Regulation of the Buildings and Zoning of Cities and

²⁴²Decision of the Council of Ministers at its session held on 5 February 2017.

²⁴³Al-Rai newspaper, news item on increasing aid allocations to JOD 200 for beneficiary families, dated 8 February 2017.

²⁴⁴Al-Rai newspaper, news item "Council of Ministers Approves Winter Aid for Families Benefiting from the National Aid Fund", dated 19 November 2017.

²⁴⁵Department of Statistics (DoS), Fourth Quarterly Report, Employment and Unemployment for 2017.

Villages Regulation No. (3) of 2017²⁴⁶, which will be applied in all governorates with the exception of the capital, Amman, and Aqaba. Under this regulation, cities, villages and the various neighborhoods will be treated with the same degree of importance: high fees have been imposed on all housing categories, which are divided into the following categories: (A, B, C, D), according to the same criteria and without distinction between a city, a village or a remote village. The same applies to fees, fines, parking-space requirements and licensing provisions, without taking into account the disparities in the levels, nature and intensity of activities between cities and villages.

On the other hand, the Government maintained the real estate exemptions in force, namely the exemption of the buyer from title-transfer fees for the first (150) square meters of a dwelling until the end of 2018²⁴⁷, which helps to ease some of the burdens on citizens. However, as a result of amending the sales tax on certain materials used in construction works, the Government contributed to raising the costs and prices of houses and apartments, leading to a growing number of people unable to buy or rent. Obtaining an empty apartment at a reasonable rent has become a distant dream for every young person wishing to settle down, in light of high unemployment rates and low wages and salaries, as the average monthly rent for medium-sized residential apartments has come to range between JOD (250–350) per month, without regard to the economic conditions in which the Jordanian citizen lives, particularly those with limited and low incomes.

Furthermore, in 2017 the NCHR monitored a number of building collapses and structural cracks in the Kingdom, most notably the collapse of a group of (3) buildings in Jabal Al-Jofeh in the capital, Amman, in addition to the cracking and fissuring of some other buildings adjacent to the collapsed ones. The total number of collapsed and cracked buildings reached (17), comprising buildings and residential apartments, some owned and some rented, inhabited by (55) families with a total of (381) members. Following this, a technical committee was formed from the entities concerned to determine the causes of the collapse; it concluded that the preliminary findings attributed the collapse to the age and deterioration of these buildings, their haphazard construction, the presence of numerous cesspits in the area, and the topographical nature of the area²⁴⁸. Some buildings in Al-Marj suburb in Karak Governorate, inhabited by (ten families), also cracked as a result of the sliding of the water-saturated soil beneath the foundations of their homes. This points to laxity in licensing and structural inspection processes on the part of the competent authorities, which requires activating the oversight exercised by the entities responsible for building safety and ensuring that buildings are constructed in accordance with the approved Jordanian building codes without violation.

The Center also observed that some citizens residing in the cities of Russeifa and Zarqa were prevented from connecting certain services, such as water and electricity, to their homes²⁴⁹, under a decision issued by the Council of Ministers on the ground that these dwellings are built on state-owned (*amiri*) land, although they had been supplied with water and electricity services at the time of their construction. However, as a result of the steady population growth in these areas and the expansion by their inhabitants through increasing the number of residential apartments, they have begun to demand additional water and electricity meters for the newly built apartments in order to ease the cost burden

²⁴⁶Regulation No. (3) of 2017, a Regulation Amending the Buildings and Zoning of Cities and Villages Regulation.

²⁴⁷Al-Rai newspaper, Sunday, 24 December 2017.

²⁴⁸Interview with the spokesperson of the Ministry of Social Development, dated 13 March 2017.

²⁴⁹For more information, see the following link: www.saraynews.com.

on them in light of the price increases for these services. Their demands were rejected by the entities concerned. The Center considers it necessary to find a fair and swift solution to this issue.

The Water Sector

Jordan suffers from a scarcity of natural resources, the most important of which is water scarcity, which constitutes a fundamental and strategic challenge and is regarded as a national concern in light of the high demand for water relative to the population. Jordan is classified as the third-poorest country in the world in terms of water, with per capita share standing at (61 liters/day)²⁵⁰, which is far below the international water poverty line estimated at approximately (1,000) cubic meters per year according to World Bank studies²⁵¹. Despite this challenge, which requires effective government policies for this sector, the NCHR considers that government measures to maintain water networks are weak, in light of the deteriorating condition of many of them owing to the poor quality of the pipes used or the expiry of their service life, which has contributed to raising the rate of water loss to 53% in 2017, of which 35% is lost through theft and illegal use. This is a high rate when compared with the international standard, estimated at a maximum of 15%²⁵². The NCHR also points to weak coordination with other entities concerned, such as municipalities, when maintaining and repairing these networks, which has a negative impact on infrastructure services, especially streets, roads and passageways.

Although the majority of dwellings are connected to the public water network and sewerage networks, pollution problems resulting from the poor management of wastewater, especially domestic wastewater on the outskirts of cities and in rural areas owing to their not being connected to sewerage networks, in addition to factory effluents and the chemicals used in agriculture, continue to affect water quality, especially groundwater.

The Center also observed the suffering of citizens in some governorates with regard to the poor distribution of water and its failure to reach their homes in a manner that meets their daily needs, as is the case in the Northern Badia areas and some areas of Ajloun, Balqa and Madaba Governorates.

The Center commends the campaigns carried out by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to curb violations and reduce water theft. Water Authority data indicate that (1,001) illegal wells were backfilled and (36,005) encroachments on water lines and networks were removed, in addition to the removal of (15,409) encroachments on the King Abdullah Canal in the Jordan Valley areas²⁵³.

Food Security and the Advancement of Agricultural Production:

The Government bears responsibility for securing adequate and sustainable food that is healthy and free of contaminants and harmful substances. The agricultural sector is one of the most important sources for achieving food security²⁵⁴; it is a source of livelihood for the vast majority of Jordanians and one of the sectors providing the most employment opportunities, and its exports constitute a large share of Jordanian exports. However, it still lacks the government attention that would qualify it for a greater share of GDP, as this sector's contribution does not exceed 3.2% of GDP²⁵⁵.

²⁵⁰Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Executive Development Program 2016–2018, p. 7.

²⁵¹For more information, see the website of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation at the following link: www.mwi.gov.go.

²⁵²Annual Report of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

²⁵³For more information, see the website of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation at the following link: www.mwi.gov.go.

²⁵⁴The concept of food security refers to providing the food items that individuals need on a continuous basis and at prices affordable to the consumer.

²⁵⁵Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation, workshop entitled "Enhancing Trade Exchange of Vegetable and Fruit Products between Jordan and the Countries of the World", May 2017.

The Center notes the issuance by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration of certain instructions that contribute to the enjoyment of this right, most notably:

- The Instructions on the Approval of Foods for Special Use of 2017²⁵⁶.
- The Instructions on Food Traceability and the Recall of Non-Compliant Food of 2017.

Despite government policies and decisions and the development of plans and strategies to advance this sector, it still suffers from numerous challenges and obstacles, most notably:

1. Continuous urban sprawl at the expense of agricultural land.
2. Weak legislation to limit the fragmentation of agricultural holdings.
3. The imposition of further taxes and fees on the inputs and outputs of the agricultural sector, both plant and livestock, in light of the sector's weak export opportunities to the countries of the Arab and regional neighborhood.
4. The high cost of production inputs for farmers, including pesticides, seeds, fertilizers, irrigation pipes, plastic covers, fodder and labor.
5. High operating costs for farmers owing to the rise in the prices of petroleum derivatives and electricity costs.
6. The abolition of customs protection for agricultural commodities.
7. Low prices of agricultural products relative to their operating costs, which has inflicted heavy losses on farmers and led many of them to cease activity in this sector owing to the high indebtedness they have incurred to various lending institutions, whether banks, agricultural companies or official bodies such as the Agricultural Credit Corporation.
8. The non-inclusion of agricultural landholders and workers in this sector in the social protection system, including health insurance and social security.
9. The limited number of water-harvesting projects to exploit rainwater, especially earth dam and excavated reservoir (*hafa'ir*) projects.
10. The insufficient availability of factories to process surplus agricultural produce, which compels its owners to destroy it owing to weak marketing opportunities and the low prices of some products; for example, there are only two tomato paste factories in the entire Kingdom, both privately owned²⁵⁷.
11. Competition from food imports with local products, and weak policies aimed at providing protection to local products to enable them to compete.

The Center warns against the phenomenon of trading in spoiled and expired foods, which are often repackaged and placed back on the market, whether through some shops, stall owners or street vendors, and which are difficult to distinguish from food fit for consumption. This trade has flourished in the markets as a result of rising rates of poverty and unemployment and the ease of generating financial returns for those who promote it, as well as weak oversight by the entities concerned. Through some

²⁵⁶Official website of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration.

²⁵⁷Office of the Government Coordinator for Human Rights, Clarificatory Response of Government Institutions to the Recommendations Contained in the Report of the National Center for Human Rights on the State of Human Rights in Jordan for 2016.

media outlets, the Center monitored numerous seizures of spoiled foodstuffs by the entities responsible for food and drug control, the most prominent of which include, by way of example:

1. Staff of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration seized (72) tons of spoiled chicken in Ma'an Governorate, of which (66) tons were destroyed by the Administration's staff, while the remainder had been distributed to charitable societies for distribution to poor families²⁵⁸ before being seized.
2. Large quantities of spoiled chicken (dead and live) were seized by citizens in the streets of Madaba Governorate²⁵⁹.
3. Staff of the Health Affairs Department of Irbid Municipality seized (half a ton of spoiled meat) at a butcher's shop²⁶⁰.
4. Health staff of the Greater Amman Municipality seized (4.3) tons of imported meat contaminated with kerosene, which was destroyed by the Municipality's staff²⁶¹.
5. Staff of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration seized expired meat, fish and poultry estimated at one hundred tons inside warehouses belonging to a company, where the company's employees were removing the original packaging bearing an expired date, re-cutting and marinating the products, and distributing them to restaurants and hotels²⁶².
6. The Jordan Food and Drug Administration, through its staff, seized (696) tins of adulterated olive oil²⁶³.

The Center calls for amending legislation and toughening penalties to curb tampering with food, intensifying inspection rounds of food establishments, vendors and markets, and apprehending violators and bringing them to justice.

The Transport Sector:

The transport sector is a vital sector in driving the economy and one of the largest employers of labor in Jordan, and safe and sustainable transport is one of the indicators of an adequate standard of living.

At the legislative level, the Passenger Transport Regulation Law No. (19) of 2017 was adopted, replacing the Provisional General Passenger Law No. (33) of 2010. Among its most prominent amendments was the establishment of an independent fund to support the sector, to be financed in part by two piasters deducted from every liter of gasoline and diesel sold in Jordan. However, the Council of Ministers decided to postpone this deduction until the projects of the Ministry of Transport are approved and the regulations and instructions for implementing the provisions of this Law are issued²⁶⁴. The Council of Ministers also approved the Regulation on the Provision of Passenger Transport Services Using Smart Cards of 2017, on 24 December 2017²⁶⁵.

²⁵⁸ Al-Rai newspaper, 2 June 2017.

²⁵⁹ Al-Ghad newspaper, 4 June 2017.

²⁶⁰ Al-Rai newspaper, 24 September 2017.

²⁶¹ Khaberni website, 4 June 2017.

²⁶² Al-Madina News website, 9 January 2017.

²⁶³ Al-Rai newspaper, 22 November 2017.

²⁶⁴ Session of the Council of Ministers, 24 May 2017.

²⁶⁵ Smart applications: electronic programs for paid passenger transport services.

Despite the importance of this sector, it still requires a serious will to develop, advance and support it, in light of the numerous challenges it faces, which have a direct impact on the enjoyment of this right, most notably:

1. Weak government measures to address the imbalances from which this sector suffers, owing to the constant turnover of the ministers holding the transport portfolio: the Government of Dr. Hani Al-Mulki saw (5) ministers succeed one another in this portfolio since its formation on 1 June 2016.
2. A marked weakness in the upkeep and maintenance of the road network, whether main or secondary roads, in the Kingdom, many of which have become unfit for travel. The year 2017 witnessed numerous traffic accidents that resulted in many injuries and deaths.
3. The existence of a transport network operated by individual owners for commercial rather than service purposes, beyond oversight and regulation, which controls more than 80% of public transport lines in the Kingdom²⁶⁶.
4. Certain negative behaviors and violations committed by some of those working in this sector, especially some drivers and conductors working on some buses, which reflects weakness in the qualification and awareness-raising programs they receive before entering the labor market.
5. This sector has become an additional burden on the citizen's monthly income, especially after public transport fares were raised by 10% at the beginning of 2017²⁶⁷.
6. Users of passenger buses and shared taxis (service cars) suffer from the absence of time and place schedules for their departure and the failure to tie them to fixed departure times, relying instead on filling them to full capacity, which constitutes an obstacle to users reaching their destinations on time.
7. Competition faced by those working in this sector from some owners of privately registered vehicles who operate them for hire, which constitutes a violation of the Traffic Law and the Vehicle Registration and Licensing Regulation in force.
8. Many shop owners encroach on streets and sidewalks to display their stalls and products for marketing purposes, which adversely affects the flow of traffic, obstructs it and causes severe traffic congestion, in addition to endangering the lives of pedestrians.
9. Demographic developments that have shown rapid population growth, especially in light of the waves of refugees to which Jordan has been exposed in recent years and the marked influx of migrant workers into the labor market, which has generated growing demand for means of transport.

Recommendations:

The NCHR reaffirms the recommendations made in its previous reports, in addition to the following:

1. Activate the provisions of Article (111) of the Constitution regarding the imposition of progressive taxation, taking into account the means of citizens and their ability to pay.
2. Combat tax evasion through legislative and executive mechanisms that curb this phenomenon.

²⁶⁶ Amer Al-Bashir, article on the Ammon News website entitled "The Public Transport Sector: Towards Reform and Building Trust", 16 July 2017.

²⁶⁷ Land Transport Regulatory Commission, www.ltrc.gov.jo.

3. Reduce the sales tax rate on basic goods and services, especially foodstuffs.
4. Take incentive steps to encourage citizens to shift to alternative energy, in order to ease the burden of energy bills.
5. Create greater space for the private sector to enter into partnership with the public sector, and stimulate investment by simplifying the related procedures, especially in poverty pocket areas.
6. Increase the financial support allocated to the transport sector and intensify oversight to apprehend violators.
7. Establish companies and factories for the marketing and processing of agricultural products, and search for new markets for Jordanian products in light of the closure of some traditional neighboring markets to Jordanian exports, such as (Syria, Iraq, and some Arab Gulf states).
8. Grant the farming sector interest-free loans to alleviate its hardship, and include farmers under the umbrella of social protection, including health insurance and social security.
9. Increase and activate housing programs for persons with limited incomes and the poor, and allocate the necessary funds for this in the general budget.
10. Modernize water networks, reduce water losses therefrom, monitor water basins, and halt their over-pumping.
11. Intensify food control and amend the necessary legislation to toughen the penalties imposed on those who tamper with citizens' food.

3. The Right to Work

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

The year 2017 witnessed the adoption of a number of regulations, legislative instruments and decisions related to the right to work, most notably the following:

- The Instructions Regulating the Affairs of Labor and Migrant Workers in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone No. (169) of 2017²⁶⁸, which regulate the process of certifying and authenticating employment contracts between workers and employers in the Zone, in addition to regulating work permits and determining the service fees collected by the Authority.
- The Amended Regulation of the Regulation on Work Permit Fees for Non-Jordanian Workers No. (14) of 2017²⁶⁹, which set the fees for issuing work permits for non-Jordanian workers, payable by the employer, at (500) dinars for a domestic worker, gardener, cook or persons in a similar position, and for a worker on a private farm; the fee for issuing a work permit for building cleaning workers at (400) dinars; an issuance fee of (300) dinars for each temporary work permit not exceeding six months, payable by the employer in all economic sectors and activities; and the fee for issuing a work permit for workers in establishments and companies operating in the garment and textile sector registered with the Investment Commission at (175) dinars. In addition, an amount of (100) dinars is collected from the employer for each work permit or renewal thereof in all economic sectors and activities for the benefit of the Fund for Employment and Vocational and Technical Education and Training.

Much criticism has been directed at this Regulation, as it is considered an avenue for increasing the scale of violations against workers and burdening them with further financial costs, which adversely affects the various sectors, in addition to the difficult and harsh conditions in which workers live. The Ministry of Labor, for its part, affirmed that these measures are intended to control and regulate the recruitment and employment of migrant workers, particularly the issue of the illegal movement of workers between different sectors, and to curb the brokering and human trafficking to which workers are exposed.

- The Flexible Work Regulation No. (22) of 2017²⁷⁰, which defined the forms of flexible work, including part-time work and work within flexible hours in a manner consistent 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.
- The Council of Ministers' decision to raise the minimum wage from (190) dinars²⁷¹ to (220) dinars for Jordanians. This modest increase in the minimum wage came five years after its last adjustment in 2012, despite the marked rise in the cost of living and prices throughout that period.

Practices and Policies

The Jordanian labor market suffers from major gaps in the application of fundamental standards, principles and rights in terms of legislation, policies and practices. The former Minister of Labor (Ali

²⁶⁸Official Gazette, Issue No. (5444), dated 16 February 2017.

²⁶⁹Official Gazette, Issue No. (5442), dated 12 February 2017.

²⁷⁰Official Gazette, Issue No. (5450), dated 16 March 2017.

²⁷¹Decision of the Council of Ministers published in Official Gazette Issue (5442), page (1132), dated 12 February 2017; the mechanism for implementing the decision was published in Official Gazette No. (5455), page (2808), dated 16 April 2017; in addition to the effective date of the decision, published on page (1658) of Official Gazette Issue No. (5447) dated 1 March 2017, pursuant to the decision of the Tripartite Committee for Labor Affairs dated 12 February 2017.

Al-Ghazawi) issued a circular "prohibiting a migrant worker from renewing his work permit if he does not wish to continue working for the employer before the expiry of the work permit" and "prohibiting a migrant worker from renewing his permit with another employer, and deporting him, in coordination with the employer and the Residency and Borders Directorate"²⁷². This measure contradicts the international conventions ratified by Jordan, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article (8/3/a), the ICESCR, Article (6/1), and International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. (105) concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour. It reinforces, in more than one way, the concept of forced labor, in addition to denying the worker the opportunity to litigate, bearing in mind that a worker's refusal to work may be due to his having been subjected to numerous violations.

In order to regulate the labor market and control the movement of labor between the productive and service sectors, the Ministry of Labor intensified its inspection campaigns²⁷³ in 2017. These campaigns resulted in the apprehension of (12948) migrant workers in violation of either the Labor Law or the Residency Law, and the deportation of (9448) migrant workers. It should be noted that the number of migrant workers deported in 2016 was (8139)²⁷⁴. The Ministry of Labor estimated the number of migrant workers in Jordan holding work permits in 2017 at approximately (340995), while the total number of migrant workers in Jordan without work permits is estimated at approximately (800) thousand²⁷⁵.

In 2017, the Ministry of Labor, through its inspection directorates, carried out (79589) inspection visits to industrial, commercial and service establishments and facilities. These ranged 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, (4415) labor violations and (6157) warnings were issued to establishments in breach of the Labor Law. The directorates of the Ministry of Labor also handled (2297) complaints through the Complaints Section and the hotline, of which (798) complaints were resolved and legal action was taken in the interest of the workers²⁷⁶.

Notwithstanding the large volume of these visits and the violations recorded against establishments and their owners, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) considers that these measures are not sufficient to address the violations to which workers are subjected, given their repetition by employers and the inability of labor 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 that must be taken against employers, and the toughening of penalties so that they translate into tangible results in the interest of workers and citizens on the ground, as well as a review of the legislation governing the work of trade unions so as to allow the establishment of new unions that undertake to defend workers and their rights.

²⁷²Jordanian Al-Ghad newspaper, article entitled "Expatriates Prevented from Renewing Their Permits upon Change of Employer", dated 15 January 2017.

²⁷³Report of the Inspection Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2017.

²⁷⁴The Thirteenth Annual Report on the State of Human Rights in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan – National Center for Human Rights / page (140).

²⁷⁵Jordanian Al-Ghad newspaper, article entitled "Minister of Labor: 32 Million Dinars to Support the Industrial Sector under the Empowerment and Employment Program", dated 5 November 2017.

²⁷⁶Report of the Inspection Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2017.

As for workers in the agricultural sector²⁷⁷, they continue to be subjected to numerous violations owing to the failure to issue a regulation protecting their rights as well as the rights of employers. These include their falling victim to brokers and traffickers in work permits, and the low wages they receive on a daily basis, ranging between (1–1.5) dinars per hour, such that the income of most workers in this sector does not exceed (300) dinars per month, in addition to their exclusion from social security and health insurance coverage²⁷⁸.

Farmers, on the other hand, suffer from numerous problems, represented by the high cost of fertilizers, agricultural equipment and energy, and by the difficult conditions set by the Ministry of Labor for recruiting and replacing migrant workers in this sector, namely maintaining bank guarantees of (5000) dinars per worker, in addition to raising work permit fees for migrant workers in the agricultural sector to (350) dinars, whereas they were previously (120) dinars. The agricultural sector is thus experiencing a genuine crisis, which has led to higher prices for citizens as a result of the role of intermediaries between farmers and consumers in the local market, and to a decline in the export of quality agricultural produce, particularly by small farmers and owners of medium-sized agricultural enterprises.

In another area, 2017 saw the Ministry of Labor issue a decision obliging Bangladeshi agencies to attach to each female worker a document confirming that she has no security record, and another guaranteeing that she does not suffer from any mental illness. This decision was issued following the killing of a child no older than four years at the hands of a Bangladeshi domestic worker in July 2017, in addition to the killing by hanging of a woman in her eighties at the hands of a domestic worker in the Mleih area – Madaba Governorate in April 2017. An increase was also observed in the number of female workers of this nationality infected with infectious and communicable diseases, with (210) such cases detected in 2017²⁷⁹. The number of domestic workers in Jordan is estimated at (51443)²⁸⁰. Numerous breaches and violations also resulted in a recommendation to close (5) recruitment agencies for domestic workers, in addition to issuing (36) warnings against such agencies for failing to comply with recruitment controls and rules, as well as failing to comply with the contracts concluded with clients. Ministry of Labor statistics regarding domestic workers further indicate that the Ministry handled (971) complaints, of which (814) were settled and (88) were referred to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, in addition to (2090) cases of refusal to work and absconding from the employer's home²⁸¹.

On the other hand, in light of the violations and abuses committed by the management of the "Qimmat Al-Khiyata Ready-Made Garments" factory company in Al-Hassan Qualifying Industrial City – Irbid Governorate against its workers, and after the NCHR had sent numerous letters to the Ministry of Labor drawing attention to the scale of the violations and abuses at the factory, a decision was issued on 23 February 2017 to close the said factory.

The NCHR considers it necessary to undertake a radical review of labor and employment policies and to develop them in an effective and fair manner so as to gradually reduce poverty rates, by focusing on the formation, training and rehabilitation of local labor, as well as improving working conditions, which

²⁷⁷Based on a monitoring visit conducted by the National Center for Human Rights on 17 April 2017 and interviews with agricultural workers.

²⁷⁸For more information on the conditions of workers in this sector, see "The Eleventh Annual Report on the State of Human Rights in Jordan for 2014" of the National Center for Human Rights, page (125).

²⁷⁹Ammon News website, news item entitled "Ministry of Labor Commits a Security Breach in the Recruitment of Bangladeshi Female Workers", dated 17 September 2017.

²⁸⁰Report of the Communication and Community Media Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2017.

²⁸¹Report of the Inspection Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2017.

will naturally lead to increased efficiency and productivity, in addition to the need to improve the management of employment services in the public sector.

The Center recommends improving access to training programs, raising their quality and diversifying their sources of funding, particularly through joint financing arrangements and the participation of the private sector in financing, designing and implementing these programs. The Center further recommends working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda by promoting development-oriented policies that support productive activities, the development of capacity for creativity and innovation, decent work opportunities and entrepreneurship.

Protests and Sit-ins²⁸²

In 2017, the Ministry of Labor dealt with (86) labor disputes, of which (62) were resolved through direct negotiation between workers and employers, while (18) labor disputes were settled through recourse to a conciliation officer, two labor disputes were resolved through the direct intervention of the Minister, and (4) labor disputes were referred to the court. The number of labor strikes in 2017 reached (16), while threats of labor dispute action numbered (86). The number of collective labor agreements deposited reached (82), benefiting (371407) workers²⁸³. Workers' demands were mostly focused on increasing wages and salaries, achieving additional gains for savings funds and end-of-service gratuities, and improving the working environment and conditions.

Forms of protest varied, extending to attempted self-harm and suicide or threats thereof. Some vendors working at stalls in the "Al-Muqabalain Market" in Amman threatened to set themselves on fire in protest against the Greater Amman Municipality's decision to close the market because it had handed over the land they had been using to the Social Security Corporation without providing an alternative²⁸⁴. Some workers on the petroleum products storage tanks project in the Al-Ghabawi area, affiliated with the Ministry of Energy, threatened to commit suicide²⁸⁵ because Al-Awsat Contracting Company had not paid their salaries for more than (90) days. In addition, an employee of the Mafraq Municipality set himself on fire in protest against not being granted his employment entitlements and the approval of his transfer²⁸⁶; a young man in Jerash threatened to commit suicide because of the removal of the stall on which he worked²⁸⁷; and a number of yellow taxi drivers attempted suicide in protest against the "Uber" and "Careem" applications²⁸⁸. In this context, public taxi drivers staged several sit-ins throughout the year in protest against the Government's intention to approve the licensing of the "Uber" and "Careem" applications. They also demanded a reduction in the guarantee amount charged by office and vehicle owners, in addition to an adjustment of transport fares (meters).

²⁸²For more information on protests and sit-ins, see the Right to Assembly in this report, page (74).

²⁸³Report of the Labor Relations Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2017.

²⁸⁴See: JO24 website, news item entitled "Street-Stall Owners Threaten to Set Themselves on Fire in Front of the Municipality", dated 9 January 2017.

²⁸⁵See: Al-Wakeel News website: news item entitled "Suicide Attempts Using Al-Ghabawi", dated 12 January 2017.

²⁸⁶See: Al-Rai newspaper: news item entitled "Employee at Mafraq Municipality Sets Himself on Fire", dated 20 February 2017.

²⁸⁷See: Al-Madina News website: news item entitled "Young Man in Jerash Threatens Suicide after His Stall Is Removed", dated 16 March 2017.

²⁸⁸See: Roya website: news item entitled "Demand for Uber and Careem Drives Taxi Drivers to Threaten Suicide", dated 23 May 2017.

The year 2017 also witnessed a sit-in by more than (300) workers of the Middle East Cables Factory Company (MESC Jordan) in protest against the factory management's dismissal of (165) workers²⁸⁹, as a result of the losses incurred by the company and its inability to meet its obligations in the face of the workers' numerous demands.

Workers of the Al-Abyad Jordanian Fertilizers and Chemicals Company staged several protest vigils in front of the Prime Ministry building and the Ministry of Labor, demanding the payment of financial compensation by the company's management for the termination of the services of (225) employees under the agreement signed with the General Union of Workers in Mines and Mining. The new management paid all the entitlements due to them, amounting to approximately (2) million dinars.

In the second half of 2017, hundreds of phosphate truck drivers also staged sit-ins at the entrance to the city of Karak, in protest against their deteriorating situation owing to the lack of fairness in the allocation of phosphate transport turns from the mine to the Port of Aqaba by the mine's distribution management committee, and its granting of priority to residents of Karak and Tafileh Governorates for transport from the Al-Abyad and Al-Hasa mines.

Child Labor

Despite the efforts made by various official and unofficial bodies to curb the phenomenon of child labor, 2017 witnessed the continuation of this phenomenon, particularly in the craft sectors, in addition to begging, which, by its nature, together with work in the craft sectors, constitutes hazardous work for children. Field visits by inspection committees and the Child Labor Section of the Ministry of Labor revealed the existence of factories and premises employing children in violation of the national legislation in force and international human rights standards. The number of child labor cases detected reached (420), and (328) warnings and (356) violations were issued to employers²⁹⁰.

In this regard, the NCHR organized a training workshop on child labor as part of the activities of the Combating Child Labor Project, which is managed and implemented by the NCHR with the support of the Asia Pacific Forum. The project aims to assess the phenomenon of child labor in Jordan, raise awareness of it, and strengthen the capacity of governmental and non-governmental bodies to curb it and ultimately eliminate it gradually.

The most recent survey studies prepared by the International Labour Organization in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and the Center for Strategic Studies in Jordan²⁹¹ indicate that the number of working children aged between (5–17) years is approximately (76) thousand out of approximately (4) million children, of whom approximately (45) thousand are engaged in hazardous work.

Trafficking in Persons

The statistics on trafficking in persons cases issued by the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit/Public Security²⁹² show that the number of cases investigated in 2017 reached (317), while the number of cases classified as trafficking in persons cases in 2017 was (23), as detailed in Table No. (17). This represents

²⁸⁹See: Jordanian Al-Rai newspaper, news item entitled "Employees of Jordan Kilometer Survey Hold Sit-in to Demand Their Rights", dated 5 February 2017.

²⁹⁰Report of the Inspection Directorate – Ministry of Labor for 2017.

²⁹¹National Child Labor Survey: Summary Report of the Main Results, Center for Strategic Studies, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, the Jordanian Ministry of Labor and the Jordanian Department of Statistics, August 2016.

²⁹²According to the statistics issued by the Criminal Investigation Department / Anti-Human Trafficking Unit on 12 February 2018.

a decrease compared with 2016. It is worth noting that in 2017, (78) cases were sheltered in Dar Al-Karama, a government shelter designated for housing victims of trafficking in persons, in addition to (136) cases sheltered in another home run by the Jordanian Women's Union²⁹³.

Table No. (17): Statistics on Trafficking in Persons Cases for 2017

Type of crime	Number of cases	Victims – Male	Victims – Female	Perpetrators – Male	Perpetrators – Female
Sexual exploitation	10	7	17	19	7
Organ removal (kidneys)	1	1	0	1	0
Forced labor (domestic labor)	11	1	20	15	5
Forced labor (laborers)	1	2	0	2	0
Total	23	11	37	37	12
Grand total	23	48 (all victims)		49 (all perpetrators)	

The NCHR considers that this gap between the number of cases reported and the cases actually classified as trafficking in persons is due to the lack of clarity in the legislation relating to this crime, particularly the definition of the crime of trafficking in persons, which impedes victims' access to justice and results in perpetrators escaping punishment. The NCHR therefore recommends that there be a specialized public prosecutor to investigate such complaints, and that the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Law be amended to bring it into line with the Penal Code, particularly with regard to the definition of certain acts set out in the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Law that constitute independent crimes under the Penal Code, such as abduction, fraud and forcing a woman into prostitution. This would give the judiciary broader powers to classify a trafficking complaint under other, possibly clearer, legal descriptions, such as harm, indecent assault, deprivation of liberty or others. The NCHR further recommends establishing a fund to support victims of, and persons harmed by, trafficking in persons.

Occupational Safety and Health

Data issued by the Social Security Corporation indicate that the number of injuries resulting from work accidents in 2017 reached (13000), and that these accidents resulted in (150) deaths²⁹⁴. The Social Security Corporation affirmed that, as of the beginning of 2014, it began activating the legal provisions requiring an increase in the work injury insurance contribution rate 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 if the injury occurs as a result of its violation of occupational safety and health conditions and standards²⁹⁵.

In less than two weeks in July 2017, the local labor market witnessed four workplace deaths, all caused by non-compliance with occupational safety and health conditions. The first incident ended in the death of electrician (Sh.H.), aged (36), by electrocution while repairing an electrical fault at the top of an

²⁹³ According to the statistics issued by the Criminal Investigation Department / Anti-Human Trafficking Unit on 12 February 2018.

²⁹⁴ Preliminary data provided in a telephone call with Mr. Firas Shatnawi, Director of the Work Injuries and Occupational Safety Department at the Social Security Corporation, on 7 March 2018, noting that these figures are subject to update as there are cases still under treatment; the final data will be adopted in the second half of 2018.

²⁹⁵ Al-Sabeel newspaper: article entitled "Government Report: 49% Increase in Deaths Resulting from Work Injuries", dated 14 November 2017.

electricity pole, in addition to the death of worker (H.A.) at the main Al-Bayader station. The third incident was the death of a migrant worker and the injury of (30) others in a factory in Al-Hassan Industrial City – Irbid Governorate following a boiler explosion caused by high temperatures and the failure to maintain the factory's equipment and machinery on a regular basis. Less than three days later, worker (M.H.), aged (18), who worked for the cleaning contracting company at the government-run Al-Bashir Hospital and who had a moderate visual impairment preventing him from seeing beyond three meters, died. A worker of the electricity company also died, and another was seriously injured, after they fell from the top of a medium-voltage pole on which they were working in the Al-Ghabawi area. Through the NCHR's own monitoring, it became apparent that one of the main causes of these and other deaths was non-compliance with occupational safety and health conditions, including: failure to provide work helmets, in addition to the heavy workload placed on workers and the lack of a sufficient number of workers. Moreover, the clothing and gloves used in certain types of work do not conform to specifications, particularly with regard to the efficiency required for electrical insulation. Most of these cases are also linked to some deficiency in oversight and managerial responsibility and to a failure to ensure preventive safeguards and safety procedures when carrying out work that is hazardous to life.

The NCHR considers that the main causes of accidents in general revolve around the following:

- Weak compliance by establishment managements and workers with occupational safety and health conditions.
- Inadequate training.
- The weak oversight role of the bodies concerned with occupational safety and health.
- The unavailability of the equipment required to meet occupational safety and health conditions.

Qualifying Industrial Zones

In 2017, the NCHR carried out field visits to the Qualifying Industrial Zones to examine the situation of workers and the extent to which they enjoy their rights, as well as the environment of these zones. These visits revealed various violations to which workers in these zones are subjected, which the NCHR had previously addressed in its 2016 annual report, 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, in addition to their being subjected in many cases to humiliation, particularly being shouted at and insulted.
- Overcrowding of the rooms in male and female workers' dormitories, with workers placed in rooms in numbers exceeding what the available space permits, in addition to beds being placed very close together in a manner that does not allow air to circulate and the rooms to be ventilated.
- Failure to comply with the provisions of Article (25/8) of the Law on the Rights of Disabled Persons, which obliges public and private sector institutions employing more than (50) workers to allocate 4% of their workforce to disabled persons.
- The lack of cleanliness in some dormitories in general, and the prevalence of foul odors, dampness and insects inside them, in addition to most of them lacking the necessary ventilation and lighting.
- Low wages, increased working hours and delays in the payment of salaries beyond the period specified by law, in violation of the provisions of Article (46) of the Labor Law, which requires that the worker's wage be paid 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.
- Denying workers access to information on their rights and their employment contracts.

- The total absence of occupational health and safety conditions in many workplaces.

Social Safeguards

Despite the plans and strategies developed by the Government, particularly the National Employment Strategy, which aims to increase employment opportunities and raise wages in order to improve citizens' standard of living, the job opportunities created in the local market remain weak and unemployment rates remain high. Department of Statistics (DoS) data indicate that the unemployment rate rose to 18.5% during the last quarter of 2017, an increase of 2.7% over the same period of 2016. The rate for males reached 16.1% compared with 27.5% for females during the same period. It is therefore evident that the unemployment rate rose among males by (0.7) points and fell among females by (2.5) percentage points compared with the third quarter of the same year. The results showed that the unemployment rate was high among university degree holders (unemployed persons holding a bachelor's degree or higher divided by the labor force with the same educational qualification), reaching 22.8% compared with other educational levels. The results indicated that 53.3% of the total unemployed were holders of a secondary school certificate or higher, and that 46.7% of the total unemployed had educational qualifications below secondary level. The proportion of unemployed males holding a bachelor's degree or higher reached 24.8%, compared with 73% for females. On the other hand, the highest unemployment rates were recorded in the (15–19) and (20–24) age groups, at 45.4% and 36.47% respectively. At the governorate level, the highest unemployment rate was recorded in Madaba Governorate at 29.6%, and the lowest in Karak Governorate at 15.4%²⁹⁶.

The NCHR commends the Social Security Corporation's call on Jordanian housewives who are not working in the labor market to take the initiative to subscribe voluntarily to social security, in order to benefit from the benefits and advantages provided under the Social Security Law, to strengthen their protection and to enable them to obtain retirement pensions on an equal footing with insured working women.

Recommendations

The NCHR reaffirms the recommendations contained in its previous reports, in addition to the following recommendations:

1. Amending the Labor Law in line with international human rights standards.
2. Undertaking a radical review of labor and employment policies and developing them in an effective and fair manner so as to gradually reduce poverty rates, by focusing on the formation, training and rehabilitation of local labor, as well as improving working conditions, which will naturally lead to increased efficiency and productivity, in addition to the need to improve the management of employment services in the public sector.
3. Improving access to training programs, raising their quality and diversifying their sources of funding, particularly through joint financing arrangements and the participation of the private sector in financing, designing and implementing these programs.
4. Working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda by promoting development-oriented policies that support productive activities, the development of capacity for creativity and innovation, decent work opportunities and entrepreneurship.

²⁹⁶Department of Statistics (DoS) / Labor Force Survey Report, <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo>.

5. Reviewing the oversight legislation and the measures and penalties that must be taken against employers, and toughening penalties so that they translate into tangible results in the interest of workers and citizens on the ground.
6. Reviewing the legislation governing the work of trade unions so as to allow the establishment of new unions that undertake to defend workers and their rights.

4. The Right to Education

National legislation and international instruments guarantee the right to education²⁹⁷, affirming the State's responsibility to ensure the right to education within the limits of its capabilities on the basis of equal opportunities. Despite the constitutional protection of the right to education, the Education Law remains deficient owing to the failure of the executive authority to issue the implementing regulations for the provisions of this Law.

The Educational Process

By the end of 2017, the number of schools in the Kingdom reached approximately (7263), of which (4052) were government schools and (3211) private schools. The number of schools with (500) or more students reached (879), and those with (1000) students numbered (145). The number of Jordanian students is (one million and 992) thousand, while the number of Syrian students is (200) thousand in the various schools of the Kingdom, of whom (58) thousand receive education in the evening shift²⁹⁸. On the other hand, the total number of employees of the Ministry of Education by the end of 2017 reached (165273)²⁹⁹. The total number of school teachers is (126262), of whom (39076) are male and (87186) female, and the total number of school administrative and technical staff is (29719), of whom (9804) are male and (19915) female³⁰⁰.

Table No. (18) shows the total number of students, schools and teachers in all education sectors for 2017.

Table No. (18): Educational Statistics for the Academic Year 2016–2017[⁴⁰⁰]

Details	Ministry of Education	Private education	Other government bodies	UNRWA	Total
Total students	1336367	515432	17991	122682	1992481
Number of students at the basic education stage	41313	18767	517	3214	63811
Number of schools	3791	3211	44	171	7263
Total teachers	83653	36076	2004	4529	126262

²⁹⁷The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) provides for the right to education in its Article (13), which stipulates: (1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education, and 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). – The Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan of 2011, in Article (6/3): "The State shall ensure work and education within the limits of its capabilities". – The Ministry of Education Law No. (3) of 1994 and its amendments up to Amending Law No. (12) of 2008.

²⁹⁸Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 14 September 2017.

²⁹⁹This figure includes staff at the Ministry's headquarters, teachers, supervisors, school principals, and administrative and technical staff, both male and female.

³⁰⁰Statistical Report for the Academic Year 2016/2017, Ministry of Education, issued by the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Center for Education and Information Technology.

Total current and capital expenditure of the Ministry of Education for the 2017 fiscal year amounted to (882.517.000) Jordanian dinars, compared with (906.130.750) Jordanian dinars in 2016, as shown in Table No. (19):

Table No. (19): Educational Statistics for the Academic Year 2016/2017^[401]

Description	2016	2017
Current expenditure	842.381.000	833.042.000
Capital expenditure	63.749.750	49.475.000
Total	906.130.750	882.517.000

Practices

A number of practices occurred in 2017 relating to the education sector, including the following:

1. In 2017, the Ministry of Education issued the Student Discipline Instructions No. (5) of 2017³⁰¹ to put an end to assaults by students and their families on teachers and to establish a state of general discipline among students. However, a number of experts stated that these Instructions are insufficient and that everyone must share responsibility, foremost among them parents and the supervisors concerned. The courts heard more than (400) cases of assault on teachers and schools from 2016 to 2017³⁰².
2. In 2017, the Ministry of Education adopted the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination Instructions No. (8) of 2017³⁰³, which set a minimum mark of 40% for each subject of the track in the General Secondary Examination, with the overall total calculated out of (1400) marks.
3. In line with the Royal vision for developing public education in Jordan by providing a suitable learning environment for students in government schools, the Ministry of Education opened in 2017 a new school for the deaf with a capacity of up to (400) students, namely the Marka School for Hearing Challenges, which was established with a grant from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) at a total cost of (5.2) million US dollars (approximately 3.5 million Jordanian dinars)³⁰⁴.
4. In 2017, the Minister of Education decided to approve granting teachers casual leave of seven non-consecutive days during the academic year for incidental reasons, provided that the casual leave granted to a teacher does not exceed two days in a single month, that the school principal is notified (24) hours in advance, and that the number of teachers on leave at the school does not exceed three teachers on that day.
5. In 2017, an educational center and two private schools in the city of Ma'an, bearing the name "Othman Bin Affan Center", were closed on the recommendation of the Ministry of Education, after it emerged that those running them were teaching religious curricula contrary to the curricula and

³⁰¹Official Gazette, Issue No. (5455), dated 16 April 2017.

³⁰²Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Mr. Nasser Hashem, Protection and Safe Environment Section, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

³⁰³Official Gazette, Issue No. (5483), dated 1 October 2017.

³⁰⁴Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 19 September 2017.

philosophy of the Ministries of Education and Awqaf, and close to the ideas of an extremist religious current³⁰⁵.

Quality of Education: Literacy and Adult Education

The illiteracy rate declined between the beginning of 2000 and 2016 by 4.2%, bringing the illiteracy rate among the Kingdom's population in 2016 to 6.8%. According to the statement issued by the Department of Statistics on the occasion of International Literacy Day, the illiteracy rate among males reached 3.5%, while among females it reached 10%. The highest illiteracy rate was concentrated in the age group of (65) years and above, where it reached 39% at the national level. The statement also showed a decline in the illiteracy rate among young people to 0.8% in the (15–24) age group, which means that illiteracy is almost non-existent among young people. The results of the 2017 Unemployment Survey showed variation in illiteracy rates among governorates for both males and females, with the highest illiteracy rates recorded in Ma'an and Ma'raq Governorates, while the Capital Governorate recorded the lowest illiteracy rate³⁰⁶. UNESCO statistics confirm that Jordan ranks (52) out of (158) countries in the field of literacy in general, and ranks seventh in the Arab world after Qatar, Palestine, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Oman. However, these figures confirm the continued discrimination against females (women and girls) in the vital field of education, as well as among the governorates of the Kingdom in terms of the provision of opportunities and the distribution of resources.

School Dropout

The phenomenon of school dropout continued in the 2016/2017 academic year, with the number of students dropping out of basic education in 2017 reaching (4035) male and female students. This figure is considered high, even though it is lower than in the preceding year, when it reached (4870) male and female students. The total number of Culture Enhancement Centers for Dropouts reached (150) centers, and the number of learners enrolled in these centers is (3128) male and female learners, of whom (1781) are male and (1347) female³⁰⁷. School dropout is attributed to multiple economic, social and, to some extent, administrative causes, including family problems, family breakdown, poverty and the poor performance of administrations and counseling in schools³⁰⁸. The Ministry of Education's efforts continue in providing complementary educational programs to meet the needs of this category of students in order 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 (101) centers, while the number of Syrian learners in them is (2320) male and female learners, of whom (1299) are male and (1021) female³⁰⁹.

Syrian Students

The Ministry of Education has consistently facilitated the procedures for registering Syrian students in government schools by taking several measures, including accepting the security card alone for registration purposes, continuing to admit students in the second semester, and opening remedial

³⁰⁵ Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 11 September 2017.

³⁰⁶ Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 6 September 2017.

³⁰⁷ Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Mr. Abdullah Al-Nasser, Formal Education Section, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

³⁰⁸ For more information, see: Report of the National Center on the State of Human Rights for 2015, p. 162.

³⁰⁹ Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Mr. Khaled Al-Mahareb, Formal Education Section, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

programs during the summer vacation³¹⁰. The number of Syrian students is (200) thousand in the various schools of the Kingdom, of whom (58) thousand receive education in the evening shift.

Educators have unanimously agreed on the decline in the quality of education as a result of the repercussions of Syrian asylum and its impact on both the teaching process and the school environment, particularly in schools experiencing overcrowded classrooms. They considered that the rise in the number of students in classrooms to the point of overcrowding, and the shortening of the time allocated to each class period, have clearly affected the quality of education provided to students in schools, particularly government schools, and have also affected students' level of comprehension and understanding, as the student no longer receives sufficient time to enable him to absorb the lesson. Furthermore, the increase in the number of students in schools beyond their capacity places great pressure on the school's own facilities, such as laboratories, libraries, service facilities, particularly sanitary facilities, and playgrounds³¹¹.

The double-shift system has long been one of the solutions adopted by the Ministry to address the problem of overcrowding, but it is not the best solution, as this system puts time pressure on the student, especially in winter, and does not allow him to interact with his peers. The problem requires a programmed plan that ensures the construction of new schools and the expansion of existing schools in densely populated areas³¹².

Kindergartens

The number of government kindergarten sections in the 2016/2017 academic year reached (1611) kindergartens, with (33451) male and female children enrolled. The enrollment rate in the second kindergarten grade (KG2) at the pre-school education stage was 63% for the 2016/2017 academic year³¹³. The most significant challenges facing kindergartens include the following:

- a. The non-participation of kindergarten teachers in committees, projects and conferences related to childhood.
- b. The unavailability of sufficient financial resources.
- c. The insufficient number of educational supervisors for the kindergarten stage in the education directorates.
- d. Delays in the procedures for tendering the construction, furnishing and equipping of kindergarten wings.
- e. Disparity in the level of service between the capital and the other governorates, as the latter still require considerable support in the area of kindergartens.

School Nutrition and Health

The Ministry of Education implemented several projects in the School Nutrition and Health Section, including the Government School Children Feeding Project for students in basic grades (1–6) and government kindergartens in poverty pockets. The number of students covered by the project in the first

³¹⁰Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Mr. Abdul Karim Al-Shobaki, Special Education Section, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

³¹¹Al-Rai newspaper, dated 15 March 2017.

³¹²Al-Sabeel newspaper, dated 28 September 2017.

³¹³Meeting at the Ministry of Education: Kindergartens Section, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

semester of the 2016/2017 academic year reached (355,000) male and female students, distributed among (1806) schools in (31) education directorates and (3) camps affiliated with UNRWA³¹⁴, with each student provided with a daily healthy meal containing vitamins, minerals and protein.

However, the Government School Children Feeding Project faced a financial challenge in the 2016/2017 academic year, represented by the absence of financial allocations in the project budget to cover expenses. To address this, part of the financial support provided by the World Food Programme was transferred to this project, as of the first semester of the 2016/2017 academic year, to secure date-filled biscuits and to expand the production kitchen³¹⁵. The Ministry also coordinates with the School Health Directorate at the Ministry of Health to conduct periodic comprehensive medical examinations of students in both their components (general health and dental health). On the other hand, human rights activists and observers consider that the school feeding program does not achieve equality among all students, as the principle should be to include all schools regardless of the project's limitations, and that the Jordanian Government should review its policies towards providing comprehensive school nutrition for all students³¹⁶.

Educational Counseling

In 2017, the Ministry of Education held training workshops for the national campaign program (Together... Towards a Safe School Environment), and the (Safe School Environment Council) was formed, consisting of (the school principal as chair, four teachers as members, the educational counselor, a representative of the Parents and Teachers Council, a representative of the Educational Development Council, and student representatives). Its most prominent tasks include discussing the ethical charter, the code of conduct and the rules of classroom ethics³¹⁷. The Ministry applies a monthly electronic survey questionnaire to measure the extent of the decline in cases of school violence in the various schools, and the rates for the last three years were as shown in Table No. (20):

Table No. (20): Rates of Violence in Ministry of Education Schools from 2014/2015 to 2016/2017

Details	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Verbal	21.46%	19.48%	17.94%
Physical	13.52%	11.66%	10.85%
Positive measures	43.41%	42.04%	40.47%

However, the shortage of specialists in the field of psychological and social counseling persists despite schools' need for psychological and social counseling, as those who are retired are not replaced by new specialists in counseling, resulting in a clear shortage in this field, which in turn affects the educational process, which focuses on the student's intellectual balance alongside his psychological balance. In addition, there is a need to work towards ensuring the integration of specialized applied programs into

³¹⁴Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Ms. Mervat Akroush, Health and Nutrition Division, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

³¹⁵Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 29 October 2017.

³¹⁶Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 26 May 2017.

³¹⁷Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Dr. Fatima Arabiyat, Educational Counseling Division, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

students' curricula at all stages of education, and to introduce advanced and modern curricula reflecting modern psychology and sociology³¹⁸.

Teachers' Syndicate

In May 2017, the Teachers' Syndicate announced its intention to strike at the beginning of the following academic year. The teachers' demands at the time consisted of ("rejecting the amendments to the Civil Service Regulation, approving amendments to the Syndicate Law, approving the Practice of the Profession Regulation and the Health Insurance Regulation, increasing the end-of-service gratuity to (15) times the salary, and raising the teaching allowance from 100% to 150%"). Thereafter, on 25 August 2017, the Syndicate announced the suspension of the strike following the meeting between the Syndicate Council and H.E. the Prime Minister, who promised to study their demands. The Government submitted a draft law amending the Syndicate Law, which is still under consideration by the House of Representatives³¹⁹.

The Situation of Schools

In 2017, the NCHR carried out a series of monitoring visits to schools of the Ministry of Education with the aim of examining their situation and the level of services and care available in them. These visits covered the north, center and south of the Kingdom, and the visiting team's observations were as follows:

1. A shortage of seats and whiteboards in classrooms in most schools.
2. Overcrowding of classrooms with students.
3. The dilapidation of the buildings of many schools.
4. The poor condition of sanitary facilities in the buildings of many schools.
5. Many schools lack basic services such as heating, fans and grounds for sports activities.
6. Delays in filling the shortage in the number of teachers, particularly in areas remote from governorate centers.

Private Education

Private education suffers from many problems, including the termination of teachers' services by some private schools during the summer vacation. In the summer of 2017, (11) thousand male and female teachers were dismissed, 90% of them female teachers, and their social security subscriptions were suspended, only to be re-contracted at the beginning of the new academic year, which constitutes a deprivation of their insurance rights³²⁰. The idea of a unified contract for all private schools has still not been activated to date. Likewise, differences of opinion persist as to the body that should consider grievances of private school teachers, as complaints of teachers in this sector are considered by the Ministry of Labor, whereas they should be considered by the Ministry of Education.

On the other hand, appeals by parents and students' families have continued to halt the unjustified increase in private school enrollment fees, even after the amendment of the Regulation on the

³¹⁸ Meeting at the Ministry of Education with Dr. Fatima Arabiyat, Educational Counseling Division, Ministry of Education, on 7 February 2018.

³¹⁹ Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 26 August 2017.

³²⁰ Saraya News website, dated 25 March 2018.

Establishment and Licensing of Private and Foreign Educational Institutions and its Amendments No. (130) of 2015, which permitted private schools to raise fees by 5% annually according to justifications approved by the Ministry. Under the Amended 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 he forms for that purpose. However, the annual justifications for increases put forward by school administrations are not sufficient to warrant such increases, given the absence of genuine oversight by the relevant committees of the justifications put forward before granting approval, in addition to the absence of genuine accountability on the part of many private schools for the academic and educational content they provide to students, particularly in the areas of the Arabic language, religious and national education, and the skills necessary to build the student's personality and culture. This requires a review of the mechanism for overseeing these schools and the educational programs they provide to students.

Higher Education

Jordanian universities suffer from the absence of a clear vision and an agreed definition of their autonomy. Recent years have witnessed extensive breaches and multi-level interference by security and political bodies, representative institutions and social forces, which have worked to weaken the academic and administrative structure of universities and have harmed the efficiency of academic and administrative performance at all levels, in addition to the harm caused to the effectiveness and adequacy of universities in achieving their aims and objectives. The university admission system also suffers from many distortions, most notably the exceptional lists, which take up more than one third of university seats and fail to take into account the market's need for specializations. Although some of the exceptional lists have fair justifications, the expansion in the manner of their application has undermined the entire admission system and deprived it of fairness and competitiveness. Jordanian universities have likewise failed to build a successful economic model relying on sustainable sources; approximately 75% of government universities suffer from a recurring annual financial deficit, there are only modest self-initiatives to attract funding and investment, and there is a distortion in the university fee structure system³²¹. The high cost of public university education in Jordan has caused thousands of low-income students to discontinue their academic studies, as the universities' policy of establishing "parallel" programs that allow students to enroll in university with lower grade averages but at higher fees appears insufficient to cover the shortfall in government support. Although university administrations acknowledge that the salaries of administrative staff consume the largest part of university budgets, they are unable to reduce their numbers, which drives them to continually increase university fees to provide the required funding.

On the other hand, 2017 witnessed the proposal of two draft laws: the first, the draft law amending the Higher Education and Scientific Research Law³²², and the second, the draft law amending the Jordanian Universities Law No. 20 of 2009. The most prominent provisions of the proposed amendments were the following³²³: 1. The Council of Ministers shall issue three new regulations, namely: 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

³²¹Economic and Social Council, Reforming Higher Education in Jordan, Public Policy Paper, October 2017, pp. 3–5.

³²²Law No. (17) of 2018 amending the Higher Education and Scientific Research Law was issued and published in Official Gazette Issue (5513) dated 2 May 2018. Its most prominent provisions include increasing the number of members of the Higher Education Council to ten members in addition to the Minister, instead of eleven members; the new Council is also distinguished by the addition of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education to the Council and two members with expertise and insight from the private sector.

³²³Al-Rai newspaper, dated 11 March 2017.

the relationship between the owners and the administration of a private university. 2. Making domestic borrowing subject to the approval of the Higher Education Council, and foreign borrowing subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers. 3. Granting university security staff in higher education institutions the status of judicial police in accordance with the legislation in force. 4. Reducing the number of members of the board of trustees of a public university from (13) members, including the president, and of a private university from (15) members, including the president, to (9) members each, including the chair of the board. 5. The membership of a member of a university board of trustees shall terminate by operation of law if he is absent from three consecutive meetings, or five consecutive meetings, without an excuse accepted by the chair of the board of trustees. 6. Granting faculty members at public universities the right to combine what they receive from their universities with military retirement pensions. 7. Considering the funds of a public university to be public funds 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 provided for in the said Law. 8. The university board of trustees shall be constituted as follows: a. The chair of the board of trustees. b. Three academic members holding the rank of professor from outside the university, selected by the Council. c. Two members from the industry and trade sector. d. Two members of expertise and standing. e. The president of the university³²⁴.

Immediately upon the announcement of the draft amending law, observers and human rights defenders warned of the danger of the proposed amendments, particularly the article granting the president of a public university the powers of the administrative governor and giving him the authority and task of collecting university fees from students, pursuing those in arrears and seizing the funds of their parents. They also expressed fears that the purpose of granting university security the status of judicial police is to restrict student forces and pursue student activists, and to give university security the power to refer offending students to security centers without reference to the university administration and the Deanship of Student Affairs. They warned that most of the amendments relating to private universities served the interests of the owners of these universities at the expense of the academic and scientific dimensions, and strengthened their powers and interference in university affairs, starting with the composition of the boards of trustees and the manner of appointing their members, giving dominance and the upper hand to non-academic members at the expense of academic members. In addition, any financial oversight by the Higher Education Council over these universities was eliminated, and the draft law amending the Jordanian Universities Law made no mention of any article relating to student freedoms³²⁵.

On the other hand, 2017 witnessed the allocation of (150) seats in Jordanian universities for the children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians³²⁶. The Higher Education Council also adopted a method for selecting the presidents of three public universities (Yarmouk, Science and Technology, and Al-Hussein Bin Talal) through applications submitted to a special committee formed for that purpose

³²⁴Law No. (18) of 2018 amending the Jordanian Universities Law was issued and published in Official Gazette Issue (5513) dated 2 May 2018. Its most prominent provisions include the following: 1. Granting university security staff at higher education institutions the status of judicial police in accordance with the legislation in force (Art. 27/b of the Law). 2. Keeping the number of members of the Board of Trustees of a public university at (13) members, although the draft law had proposed reducing it to (9) members including the chairperson (Article 9 of the Law). 3. Granting faculty members at public universities the right to combine the salary they receive from their universities with their military retirement pension (Art. 21/a of the Law). 4. Treating the funds of public universities as public funds collected in accordance with the Public Funds Collection Law in force (Art. 26/a of the Law).

³²⁵Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 30 January 2018.

³²⁶In 2017, the World Islamic Sciences University was added to the unified admission list (with 1181 students nominated for admission to it). See: Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 19 September 2017.

from outside the Higher Education Council³²⁷. The Council set the conditions for applying for the post of university president: that the applicant be of Jordanian nationality and hold the rank of professor from a recognized university, and have spent a period of not less than (5) years at this rank in academic work. It was further stipulated that the applicant have experience in university administration, have distinguished scholarly output in the form of publications, books and research published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, enjoy an eminent academic and professional reputation, and submit a plan demonstrating his ability to attract external funding for university projects³²⁸.

Recommendations

The NCHR reaffirms the recommendations contained in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following:

1. Issuing the regulations necessary to implement the Education Law in a manner that ensures education is directed towards strengthening respect for human rights.
2. Training and qualifying teachers to acquire special skills that enable them to become capable of innovation.
3. Developing established teaching methods and means in a manner that ensures students acquire thinking and analytical skills.
4. Building more schools, and ending reliance on rented schools and the double-shift system.
5. Creating additional class sections in some schools experiencing overcrowding.
6. Developing the services provided in schools, such as adequate heating in winter, grounds, playgrounds and laboratories.
7. Providing sufficient numbers of specialists in the field of psychological and social counseling.
8. Improving the conditions of teachers in general and increasing salaries and allowances.
9. Designating the competent body to consider grievances submitted by private school teachers.
10. Adopting a comprehensive reform movement for university education in Jordan that offers radical solutions to several issues, including autonomy, university fees and unified admission.
11. Finding practical alternatives that achieve equality among students by unifying university fees and moving away from the parallel education system.
12. Increasing the Government's financial support for public universities, particularly those in peripheral areas, to avoid raising credit-hour fees for students.

³²⁷ Ad-Dustour newspaper, dated 15 December 2017.

³²⁸ Al-Anbat newspaper, dated 4 March 2018.

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 right is enshrined in paragraph (1) of Article (25) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948³²⁹ and in Article (12) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

National Legislation

The year 2017 saw the adoption of the Law Amending the Public Health Law No. (11) of 2017, which expanded the definition of "public place" set out in Article (52) of the Law to include all public places, with a view to broadening the scope of the smoking ban. The penalty prescribed in Article (63/a and b)³³⁰ was also increased for anyone who smokes, or allows any person to smoke, any tobacco product in public places where smoking is prohibited.

Preventive Health

In 2017, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) recorded a number of measures taken by the Ministry of Health to curb the spread of both communicable and non-communicable diseases, most notably the following³³¹:

- Issuing instructions and adopting new policies for screening expatriates to ensure they are free of communicable and infectious diseases.
- Epidemiological surveillance of communicable diseases and taking the necessary preventive measures to curb the spread of such diseases.

Nevertheless, 2017 saw a rise in the number of persons infected with these diseases. The number of persons infected with hepatitis A reached (266) cases compared with (251) in 2016; the number of rubella (German measles) cases rose to (70) compared with (18) in 2016; the number of chickenpox cases rose to (6880) compared with (4071) in 2016. Likewise, the number of non-epidemic meningitis cases rose to (657) compared with (358) in 2016, in addition to an increase in the number of food poisoning cases to (567) compared with (311) in 2016, as shown in Table No. (21).

Curative Health

The Ministry of Health provides its primary, secondary and tertiary health services through an interconnected network of public and private health centers and hospitals distributed throughout the Kingdom, as follows:

³²⁹Article (25), paragraph (1), 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".

³³⁰Article (63/a and b) of Law No. (11) of 2017 Amending the Public Health Law provides that: "a. Anyone who smokes any tobacco product in public places where smoking is prohibited shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not less than one month and not more than three months, or by a fine of not less than one hundred dinars and not more than two hundred dinars. b. Anyone who commits any of the following shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not less than three months and not more than six months, or by a fine of not less than one thousand dinars and not more than three thousand dinars: 1. The person responsible for a public place where smoking is prohibited allowing any person to smoke any tobacco product therein. 2. Failure to announce the smoking ban in a public place in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (c) of Article (53) of this Law. 3. Selling cigarettes individually. 4. Selling cigarettes to persons under eighteen years of age. 5. Distributing or selling imitation tobacco products".

³³¹Ministry of Health, the Center's liaison officer at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Mohammad Abu Jumaa.

Table No. (21): Number of persons infected with communicable diseases, 2016–2017³³²

Disease	Number of cases 2016	Number of cases 2017
Hepatitis (A)	251	266
Hepatitis (B)	---	---
Food poisoning	311	567
Brucellosis (Malta fever)	441	467
Malaria*	51	44
Schistosomiasis (bilharzia)*	---	44
Cutaneous leishmaniasis	281	354
Rubella (German measles)	18	70
Chickenpox	4071	6880
Epidemic meningitis	4	9
Non-epidemic meningitis	358	657
AIDS	103	94

A. Primary Health Care

Primary health care services are based on the concept of comprehensive care, in addition to the basic services provided at 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, communicable disease control, dental health, health of older persons and persons with disabilities, prevention of accidents and addiction, anti-smoking efforts, and others. Primary health care services in the Kingdom are administered through a wide network of health care centers, which numbered (676) centers in 2017, distributed as follows: (102) comprehensive health centers, (380) primary centers and (194) sub-centers, as well as (464) 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 Palestine refugee beneficiaries registered with the Agency, also take part in providing primary health care services, in addition to the contribution of the private and charitable sectors in this field³³³. The National Center for Human Rights considers it important to convert 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.

In 2017, the Ministry of Health recorded (95) new cases of AIDS, of which (26) cases were Jordanians and (69) cases were non-Jordanians. Accordingly, the total number of AIDS cases according to Ministry of Health records from 1986 until 2017 reached (1439) cases, of which (392) cases were Jordanians and (1047) cases were non-Jordanians. The number of deaths from this disease since that date reached (129) cases among Jordanians³³⁴. This requires the Ministry to ensure early diagnosis, the screening of expatriates and the provision of the necessary treatment to infected persons, and to carry out the necessary health education campaigns.

³³²Ministry of Health / Communicable Diseases Directorate, noting that the epidemiological surveillance of diseases covers arrivals from African countries.

³³³Based on information provided to the Center by Dr. Mohammad Abu Jumaa, the Center's liaison officer at the Ministry of Health.

³³⁴Based on information provided to the Center by Dr. Mohammad Abu Jumaa, the Center's liaison officer at the Ministry of Health.

B. Secondary and Tertiary Health Care

The number of hospitals operating in the Kingdom in 2017 reached (110) hospitals, with a total of (13731) beds, at a rate of (16) beds per (10000) population, as shown in Table³³⁵ No. (22). The number of physicians in the Kingdom in 2017 reached (31820), at a rate of (14.1) physicians per (10000) population, while the number of dentists reached (8849), i.e. a rate of (7.1) dentists per (10000)³³⁶. The year 2017 thus witnessed a marked decline in the ratio of physicians and dentists compared with previous years, as a result of the sudden and rapid increase in the Kingdom's population.

Table No. (22): Number of hospitals and number of beds in the Kingdom in 2017

Health sector	Number of hospitals	Number of beds	Percentage %
Ministry of Health	32	5177	37.7
Royal Medical Services	14	2917	21.2
Jordan University Hospital	1	542	3.9
King the Founder Abdullah University Hospital	1	599	4.4
Private sector	62	4496	32.7
Total	110	13731	100

By contrast, the total number of kidney failure patients receiving treatment in all dialysis units in Jordan reached (5352) patients by the end of 2017, of whom (5130) were Jordanians and (222) were non-Jordanians. In 2017, (829) new cases were recorded, of which (797) were Jordanians and (32) were non-Jordanians³³⁷. Breast cancer ranked first among the five most common types of cancer among Jordanians of both sexes, with the total number of cases registered among women reaching (1040) cases, or 36.5%, followed by colorectal cancer with a total of (268) cases, or 9.4%, then thyroid cancer with (175) cases, or 6.1%, then uterine cancer with (152) cases, or 5.3%, then leukemia with (134) cases, or 4.7%³³⁸. Among men, the number of colorectal cancer cases was (325), or 12.7%; lung cancer (283) cases, or 11%; bladder cancer (214), or 8.3%; prostate cancer (197) cases, or 7.7%; and leukemia (169), or 6.6%.

Mental Health

A review of the Public Health Law shows that it has not given mental health sufficient attention, as it has other diseases. However, in 2017, (45) general practitioners from the Ministry of Health's staff were trained in the field of mental health, and (12) trainers and supervisors from various specializations were trained for mental health service providers; (3) community mental health clinics were opened in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO). The year 2017 also saw the preparation of the draft National Mental Health Plan for the years (2018–2021) in cooperation with the World Health Organization and the relevant national institutions.

³³⁵Ministry of Health.

³³⁶The above figure includes physicians at each of: (the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, the private sector, King Abdullah I Founder Hospital, the Jordan University Hospital, and UNRWA).

³³⁷Ministry of Health / Non-Communicable Diseases Directorate.

³³⁸Ministry of Health / Non-Communicable Diseases Directorate.

It should be noted here that mental health still faces a number of challenges, as follows:

1. A shortage of mental health staff, particularly multidisciplinary staff such as (specialist physicians, mental health specialists, occupational therapists, social workers, etc.).
2. Increased demand for curative mental health services and rehabilitation with the arrival of many Syrian refugees in the Kingdom.
3. A lack of coordination among the entities providing mental health services.
4. Stigma and discrimination against patients with mental disorders and their families, which constitute an obstacle to seeking mental health services.

Medical Accountability

The year 2017 saw no progress on the Draft Medical and Health Liability Law of 2016. The Parliamentary Health and Environment Committee began considering the draft law in mid-December 2017, and the law remains stalled in the legislative channels³³⁹, despite the pressing need to adopt it in order to curb the phenomenon of medical errors.

The Jordan Medical Association has insisted on rejecting the draft law in the absence of a suitable health environment and in light of decisions that contribute to increasing the workload of medical staff, while the Consumer Protection Society is calling for the adoption of the law as a guarantee of the rights of service recipients and as a means of improving the quality of the Jordanian health sector's services, on the basis that the patient's health is more important than any other interests.

The year 2017 also saw the competent public prosecution begin investigations in many cases against physicians suspected of committing medical errors, whether in hospitals or in their private clinics, which resulted in a number of complications and deaths.

Assaults on Medical Staff

The year 2017 saw an aggravation of the phenomenon of assaults on medical staff in hospitals and health centers, to the point of attacking health facilities and smashing and destroying their contents. Cases of physical and verbal assault reached (95) cases in 2017³⁴⁰. Assaults on medical staff mostly occur in the emergency and accident departments of hospitals that are overcrowded with patients and emergency cases, and are committed by patients' relatives and visitors³⁴¹.

Physicians' Problems

Physicians working in the public sector suffer from many problems; they have submitted numerous observations to the National Center for Human Rights regarding the problems they face and the nature of their work, the most prominent of which are: (a) More than (800) physicians work without pay in hospitals of the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, Jordan University Hospital and King the Founder Abdullah University Hospital for the purpose of obtaining a specialization. (b) The low monthly income of physicians working at the Ministry of Health and the non-payment of overtime allowances to them. (c) The small number of specialist physicians, such as neurosurgeons and vascular

³³⁹The Medical and Health Liability Law of 2016 was passed by Parliament after a joint session of the two Houses (the House of Representatives and the Senate) was held and the points of disagreement over the draft law were resolved, on 30 April 2018.

³⁴⁰Interview with a member of the Jordan Medical Association, Dr. Hisham Al-Fityani.

³⁴¹For more information on assaults against medical personnel, see the Right to Form Trade Unions in this report, p. (93).

surgeons (in Ministry of Health hospitals, particularly in the governorates). (d) The unfairness of the Ministry of Health's instructions on the specialty examination, under which those who fail the examination are required to change their specialty instead of being converted to qualified residents. (e) The low level of service and the poor housing allocated to physicians in the public sector. (f) Low salaries and services for physicians in medical schools. (g) The weakness of the services and facilities provided by colleges and teaching hospitals for conducting and developing research.

Food and Drugs

The year 2017 saw the Jordan Food and Drug Administration tighten health oversight of food establishments and factories, issuing warnings and violation notices and closing many of them, as a result of seizing and destroying quantities of spoiled and expired foodstuffs, in addition to the failure of those food establishments and factories to comply with public health and safety requirements. Table No. (23) shows the measures taken against violators in light of the oversight activities on foodstuffs carried out by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration in the various regions of the Kingdom in 2017 compared with 2016³⁴².

Table No. (23): Number of establishments and factories closed or issued violation notices and warnings by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration, 2016–2017

Measure	2016	2017
Warning	44210	41222
Violation	1872	1213
Closure	3625	2767
Total	49707	45202

Table No. (24) shows the quantity of foodstuffs destroyed by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration in 2017 compared with 2016³⁴³.

Table No. (24): Quantity of foodstuffs destroyed by the Jordan Food and Drug Administration, 2016–2017

Source of the material	Weight destroyed/ton 2016	Weight destroyed/ton 2017
Locally circulated foodstuffs	3693 tons	4681 tons
Imported foodstuffs	3794 tons	2733 tons
Total	7487 tons	7414 tons

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, factories and restaurants throughout the Kingdom comply with public health and safety requirements.

On another note, in 2017 the Jordan Food and Drug Administration reduced the prices of (544) medicines, compared with reducing the prices of (639) medicines in 2016, most notably antibiotics and medicines for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and lipid disorders, as well as cancer medicines. The Center also observed that the Jordan Food and Drug Administration closed (52) pharmacies in 2017, out of approximately (3213) pharmacies operating in the Kingdom, after

³⁴²Jordan Food and Drug Administration.

³⁴³Jordan Food and Drug Administration.

counterfeit, expired and smuggled medicines were seized in their possession. In addition, two pharmaceutical factories, out of (23) factories operating in Jordan³⁴⁴, were suspended from production until their status is rectified.

Health Insurance

The year 2017 saw the Council of Ministers decide to extend health insurance coverage to citizens over (60) years of age. This decision came as a continuation of the Government's policy of expanding health insurance coverage to all Jordanians. It is worth noting that the proportion of citizens with health insurance reached 68% in 2017, according to information issued by the Health Insurance Directorate at the Ministry of Health, including residents of remote and poorest areas, the social safety net, children under six years of age, recipients of assistance from the National Aid Fund, persons with disabilities, blood and organ donors, older persons and pregnant women.

The Reality 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 hospitals³⁴⁵ and health centers in 2017 observed that some hospitals and health centers still suffer from a number of problems that hinder the achievement of their objectives, most notably:

- A shortage of the necessary medical staff and equipment in some hospitals and health centers throughout the Kingdom.
- A shortage of some vaccines and some essential medicines, particularly medicines for chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and heart disease, in some of the Kingdom's hospitals, which forces patients to purchase them at their own expense from pharmacies.
- Long waiting times for appointments at outpatient clinics.
- Severe overcrowding in the emergency and accident departments of some public hospitals, specifically Al-Bashir Hospital, owing to a shortage of physicians and technicians.
- Many hospitals, particularly peripheral ones, do not admit cases requiring cardiac surgery and neurosurgery, owing to the unavailability of physicians and departments for such cases.
- A shortage of staff working in hospitals, particularly nursing staff, pharmacist assistants and accountants.
- Almost daily overcrowding in hospitals owing to the large number of visitors and patients, in the absence of a clear and specific visiting schedule, as visitors are received throughout the day.
- The absence of dedicated sterilization rooms in the operating departments of most hospitals.
- Some hospital departments lack a dedicated resuscitation (CPR) room, and also lack a specialized, designated (CPR) team that can be called upon and relied on at any time.
- Hospital departments lack instructional signs on hand washing and another sign setting out patients' rights.
- The unavailability of waiting lounges for visitors, which causes overcrowding inside these departments.
- Many hospital departments lack cleanliness in terms of the cleanliness of sanitary facilities, bed sheets and floors.
- Many hospital departments suffer from widespread humidity and the lack of the necessary lighting and ventilation, and their beds are old and unsuitable for patients.

³⁴⁴Jordan Food and Drug Administration.

³⁴⁵The Ministry of Health was provided with detailed reports on the conduct of these visits.

- The dialysis unit in most public hospitals lacks a nephrologist; cases are followed up by an internist, and some cases are referred to hospitals in the capital to be followed up by a nephrologist, which causes hardship and fatigue for the patient.
- In many hospitals, laboratory work is limited to the following laboratory tests: CBC and Full Chemistry.
- Most hospitals suffer from a shortage of medicines such as: vasopressors (Levophed); medicines for strokes (Nootrpil) and (Somozing); inhalation medicines such as (Atrovent) and (Pulmecort); intravenous antihypertensives; and medical supplies.
- The lack of oversight of the mechanism for dispensing medicine to patients, in the absence of electronic records, and the reliance on the Hakeem system in some public hospitals.

Recommendations

The Center reaffirms the recommendations made in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following:

1. Increasing the share of government spending on primary health care as part of promoting the right to health, since it is the foundation for preventing the aggravation of diseases, spreading the culture of family medicine and the early detection of diseases.
2. Focusing on improving the quality of health services in accordance with international standards, and ensuring fairness in the geographical distribution of health services (human resources, equipment and expertise).
3. Establishing an effective quality system, whether in relation to the work of public and private laboratories, physicians' diagnoses, or other procedures such as endoscopies and various catheterizations, and adhering to recognized international standards, in order to ensure, first, the safety of such procedures and, second, the extent to which they are necessary for the patient, since health care in all its forms is a human right and a citizen's right, and this right must be protected by all means.
4. Conducting medical surveys to diagnose certain diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, and working to treat them.
5. Considering mental health an essential part of health care services, and increasing the number of centers concerned with mental health so as to cover all regions of the Kingdom.
6. Continuing to focus on effective inspection and oversight by the Ministry of Health and the Jordan Food and Drug Administration to ensure that all food establishments, factories and restaurants throughout the Kingdom comply with public health and safety requirements.
7. Working to reduce the prices of medicines in order to provide medicines to citizens at the lowest possible prices, in line with prices in neighboring countries.
8. Focusing on intensifying specialization programs in the various branches of medicine at home and abroad to address the shortage in some medical specialties.
9. Finding appropriate solutions to address the problem of the attrition of qualified medical personnel working at the Ministry of Health.

6. The Right to a Healthy Environment

The Jordanian Constitution does not explicitly provide for the right to a healthy environment, although the numerous international conventions ratified by Jordan guarantee this right. This right is also guaranteed by the Environmental Protection Law No. (6) of 2017 and the regulations and instructions issued pursuant to it.

The year 2017 saw the Jordanian Government adopt a set of legal rules relating to the environment, the most important of which is the amended Environmental Protection Law No. (6) of 2017, which contains new provisions that contribute to preserving and developing the elements and components of the environment and its biodiversity, preventing its pollution and reducing the negative effects resulting from harmful activities carried out in it. It also activates the "polluter pays" principle, increases penalties for violators, obliges establishments engaged in activities with environmental impact to obtain environmental licenses in accordance with the classification of such activities, and specifies the procedures to be followed in monitoring such establishments. In addition, it provides for the development of an environmental map to be referred to when carrying out any activity that has an impact on the environment; this map shall be a binding reference for official institutions and public institutions concerned with planning and zoning in the Kingdom, including urban planning and zoning to determine land uses, along with other legal provisions that contribute to achieving sustainable development.

The Ministry of Environment also prepared and issued a number of draft laws and regulations, most notably the following³⁴⁶:

1. The Draft Waste Management Law of 2017, which was referred, together with its statement of reasons, to the House of Representatives on 19 November 2017. If officially adopted, it will provide the legal umbrella for increasing sustainable investments in the waste sector of all kinds and in methods of treating and recycling waste, curbing the phenomenon of random dumping, and defining the functions of the various entities concerned with waste management so as to avoid duplication of work among them.
2. The Draft Environmental Protection Fund Regulation of 2017. The draft of this regulation was submitted to the Prime Ministry; it sets out the basis for establishing the Fund, which is to be managed by a board of directors chaired by the Minister of Environment with six members, three of whom are from the private sector, in addition to specifying the provisions and procedures relating to the convening of the board's meetings, its composition, functions and powers, and all other matters relating to the Fund, its areas of expenditure and its financial resources.
3. Issuing the amended Administrative Organization Regulation of the Ministry of Environment No. (94) of 2017.
4. Issuing the Regulation on Biodegradable Plastic Shopping Bags No. (45) of 2017, and publishing it in the Official Gazette on 16 May 2017.
5. Adopting the Instructions on Selecting Sites for Development Activities of 2017, and publishing them in the Official Gazette on 16 October 2017.

³⁴⁶The Second Periodic Government Report for 2017 on the occasion of International Human Rights Day. For more information, please visit the website of the Prime Ministry at the following link: <http://www.pm.gov.jo>.

6. Adopting the Instructions on the Electronic Tracking of Vehicles Transporting Wastewater, Waste Mineral Oils and Hazardous Waste of 2017, and publishing them in the Official Gazette on 15 January 2017.
7. Adopting the Instructions on Hazardous Waste Prohibited from Entry into the Kingdom of 2017, and publishing them in the Official Gazette on 1 March 2017.

Waste and Its Management

There are currently (23) landfills in Jordan, including a hazardous waste landfill in the Swaqa area. Although there has been an improvement in solid waste collection, with collection rates ranging between 70–90%, waste management in Jordan still lacks sound environmental procedures, as these landfills lack the 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 and (45) thousand tons of hazardous industrial waste annually, a large part of which is recycled (such as used mineral oils and used lead-acid batteries); approximately (2000) tons are transferred annually to the Swaqa Hazardous Waste Treatment Center, and approximately (2400) tons of medical waste are generated. Solid waste collection coverage is estimated at about 90% in urban areas and 70% in rural areas. Organic waste accounts for about 50% of total waste, and plastic packaging materials that are recyclable account for 35%.

Oversight and Inspection

The oversight bodies, represented by 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, the Water Authority and the National Environmental Movement, work to monitor the environmental situation in the Kingdom by applying the laws, regulations and instructions on environmental protection to establishments whose activities may affect the environment. The most important means of oversight they exercise are the following:

A. Licenses

In 2017, the Central Licensing Committee granted (1815) environmental licenses, compared with (1650) licenses in 2016. By contrast, the Committee rejected (339) applications for licensing industrial, agricultural and handicraft projects and warehouses, compared with (259) applications for licensing industrial, agricultural and handicraft projects in 2016, for violating the environmental requirements for licensing investment projects, as shown in Table No. (25).

Table No. (25): Environmental licenses and their numbers

Result of licensing applications	2016	2017
Approved	1391	1476
Not approved	259	339
Total	1650	1815

B. Environmental Assessment and Audit Studies

In 2017, (3) environmental audit studies were approved for violating establishments, compared with (11) environmental audit studies approved in 2016. Likewise, (39) environmental impact assessment studies were conducted in 2017, compared with (41) studies in 2016.

C. Environmental Violations

In 2017, in cooperation with the Ministry's executive arm, the Royal Department for Environmental Protection, (129732) environmental violations were recorded; fixed checkpoints were established at the five entrances to the Jordan Valley to prevent the entry of untreated organic fertilizer (manure), and (1310) violating vehicles carrying (26538) tons of untreated fertilizer were seized; and two (2) aerial reconnaissance aircraft (drones) were introduced for use by the Royal Department for Environmental Protection to monitor and detect environmental violations in forests, parks and environmental hotspots in the Kingdom. The Royal Department for Environmental Protection was also granted (10) new all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) by Royal Grant (Makrumah) for the purpose of monitoring and detecting environmental violations, particularly in rugged areas.

D. Complaints and Closures

In 2017, (2294) development establishments in the Kingdom were inspected, (558) environmental complaints were handled, and (163) establishments were closed, compared with (83) establishments closed in 2016, as shown in Table No. (26).

Table No. (26): Number of complaints and closures

Measure	2016	2017
Complaints	478	558
Closure	83	163

E. Cases

In 2017, (270) establishments in violation of the provisions of the new Environmental Protection Law No. (6) of 2017 were referred to the Attorney General for the necessary legal action and referral to the competent courts, compared with (8) establishments referred in 2016 under the Environmental Protection Law No. (52) of 2006, as shown in Table No. (27).

Table No. (27): Number of cases

Measure	2016	2017
Cases	8	270

F. Electronic Tracking of Tankers

The year 2017 saw the signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Transport and the commencement of the implementation of the electronic tracking system project for tankers transporting domestic wastewater and waste oils and for vehicles transporting hazardous waste, in order to curb the random discharge of wastewater into valley beds, flood channels and elsewhere, and to ensure its disposal at the designated sites.

Rehabilitation of Environmentally Degraded Sites

- A consultant was appointed and the necessary studies were commenced, funded by a grant of (714) thousand euros from the European Investment Bank, for the project to establish an industrial wastewater treatment plant in Al-Hallabat on a (BOT) basis. This project is considered a fundamental step towards resolving the pollution problem of the Zarqa stream (Seil Al-Zarqa).
- Approval of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company's action plan to rehabilitate and remove the phosphate hills site, and commencement of the updating of the master plan for all areas of the site.
- Completion of the first phase of the construction of the environmental park in Russeifa District, with work underway to secure the funding needed to complete its construction.
- Commencement of the implementation of a project to construct a pond to collect olive mill wastewater (zibar) in the Al-Ukaider area at a cost of (1.1) million dinars, as part of the rehabilitation of the Al-Ukaider landfill.

State of the Environment Reports

The second State of the Environment Report in Jordan was issued with the participation of all relevant institutions. It is intended to help empower decision-makers and specialists, on the one hand, and to provide them with what is needed to take decisions on development and environmental issues on the basis of accurate, evidence-based information, in order to achieve balance and harmony among economic plans and policies, social growth and the exploitation of natural resources and ecological and environmental systems, and to address strategic national issues of great importance such as water scarcity, desertification, environmental degradation, natural and man-made disasters, pollution, waste and increasing population growth, while achieving sustainable economic growth without harming the environment.

Monitoring and Combating Pollution

The year 2017 saw the launch of the "One Dead Sea Is Enough" initiative on the sidelines of the World Science Forum, which aims to save seas and oceans from pollution and the waste left by humans. The first report of the National Project for Remote Water Monitoring was also launched; the first mobile laboratory for measuring air pollutants in the Kingdom was put into service; On-line ambient air pollutant monitoring stations were added in the Hashemiyya area as a qualitative addition to monitoring ambient air quality; and an agreement in the field of environmental protection was signed with the Saudi side at the bilateral summit held between the two countries in March 2017.

Field Monitoring

Monitoring of the Al-Dhulail Area in Zarqa Governorate

On Monday, 8 January 2018, a team from the NCHR monitored the Al-Dhulail area, an industrial and agricultural area that includes dozens of factories, such as garment factories, cement factories and milk and dairy production plants, as well as approximately (220) cattle farms, in order to monitor its environmental situation and the environmental problems it faces.

While touring the area, the Center's team observed that it suffers from a shortage of services, particularly infrastructure services in the cattle farm area. Although these farms are located in an attractive investment area and supply the Kingdom with (80%) of its milk, the area is considered marginalized and lies outside the zoning boundaries; the roads leading to it are unpaved, narrow and unlit. It also

needs its water network rehabilitated and a sewerage network established, as rainwater collects on the roads in front of the farms and factories, making travel on the roads extremely difficult.

The area also suffers from environmental pollution caused by farmers randomly dumping animal waste (untreated manure) on the roads, which leads to the gathering and breeding of insects, flies and rodents. Most farmers use this waste as fertilizer because of its low cost compared with treated fertilizer, as its cost ranges between (100–150) dinars, while the cost of treated fertilizer ranges between (200–250) dinars.

The team observed that septic tankers discharge their loads on roads and vacant land near the cattle farms without any oversight. Farmers were also observed disposing of dead livestock and cattle by throwing them on the roadsides, creating major health and environmental nuisances, which has led to the spread of stray dogs feeding on the carcasses of dead cattle dumped in the vacant lots between the farms.

Monitoring of Madaba Governorate

On Sunday, 11 February 2018, a team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a monitoring visit to Madaba Governorate to monitor its environmental situation and the environmental problems it faces. Its observations were as follows:

1. The team observed very foul odors spreading in the area of the landfill located east of Madaba, in addition to the accumulation of waste and plastic bags in the adjacent areas, which harms the environment and causes damage to neighboring residents. The team also observed that the landfill lacks a mechanism for sorting the waste that enters it, as solid waste (household waste) as well as hazardous waste (factory waste and electronic waste) is disposed of inside the landfill in unsafe ways by burning. One of the citizens living near the landfill complained of the smoke resulting from the burning of waste, which may cause serious illnesses among children and older persons, in addition to the spread of rodents and stray dogs feeding on waste remnants in the landfill and its surrounding areas.
2. The loads of septic tankers carrying untreated wastewater are discharged randomly without any oversight or follow-up.
3. The spread of butchers' tents (arbors) along the main street of the livestock market located east of Madaba and between residential neighborhoods, where butchers slaughter livestock outside the municipal slaughterhouse, in the absence of a veterinarian and without any oversight or supervision by the relevant authorities, which leads to the spread of blood and foul odors in the place. Butchers also leave the remains and waste of slaughtered animals in the same place, which has contributed to the spread of stray dogs.
4. The widespread presence of stray dogs in Madaba Governorate and in residential neighborhoods contributes to preventing citizens from going about their business freely and from leaving their homes at night or in the early morning hours, and terrifies the residents of the area.

The Center recommends relocating the Madaba landfill to another location far from residential areas and population centers, and finding a sanitary mechanism for waste disposal instead of burning or burying it, since this causes extensive environmental damage and pollution of groundwater and soil, in addition to the need to establish a mechanism for monitoring septic tankers.

Monitoring of the Al-Ukaider Landfill

On Monday, 12 February 2018, a team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a field visit to the Al-Ukaider landfill, which is considered the largest waste disposal site in the north of the Kingdom, serves approximately (31) municipalities and is located in Mafraq Governorate. During the visit, the team examined the actual situation of the landfill and observed that this area suffers from many problems at the level of services, health and the environment, most notably:

1. Poor waste management and unsafe waste disposal, as waste of all kinds (household, industrial and commercial) is dumped in the open without treatment, which leads to the breeding of flies, harmful insects and rodents and the emission of gases and very foul odors.
2. Failure to follow scientific principles in the process of burying waste, as the method used at the landfill is to bury and pile up waste in the form of mounds, which increases the likelihood of soil and groundwater pollution as a result of waste leachate seeping and penetrating into the ground.
3. The absence of a mechanism for tracking septic tankers upon their entry and exit and when they discharge their loads at the Al-Ukaider wastewater treatment plant; these tankers discharge their loads randomly into the drying ponds and basins.
4. Farmers in areas adjacent to the landfill irrigate crops using untreated wastewater found in the drying basins, or what are known as "maturation ponds"³⁴⁷.

Monitoring of the Northern Jordan Valley Area

On Tuesday, 13 February 2018, a team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a monitoring visit to the towns of Al-Mashare' and Waqqas in the Northern Jordan Valley District. The team observed deteriorating health and environmental conditions and a low level of cleanliness in the two towns owing to the accumulation of waste on the roads. The team also observed the lack of a landfill and the failure of the Mu'ath Bin Jabal Municipality to provide services to citizens, in addition to septic tankers discharging their loads randomly without any oversight.

Monitoring of Ramtha Governorate

On Wednesday, 14 February 2018, a team from the National Center for Human Rights carried out a monitoring visit to the New Ramtha Municipality and the Sahl Horan and Al-Turra Municipality. The team observed deteriorating services and poor attention to cleanliness on the part of the municipalities, as waste accumulates on roadsides and between residential neighborhoods, with foul odors, mosquitoes, harmful insects and rodents spreading. The team also observed the presence of livestock farms within the zoning boundaries and population centers, thereby creating health nuisances.

Recommendations

In light of the foregoing, the NCHR reaffirms the recommendations made in its previous annual reports and recommends a set of measures that would provide protection for the right to a healthy environment, as follows:

1. Strengthening the role of the Ministry of Environment as a supervisory, oversight and coordinating body responsible for formulating public policy on environmental protection, and providing it with sufficient staff to strengthen its oversight role and law enforcement.

³⁴⁷This was documented by the Center's team with photographs.

2. Continuous coordination among policymakers in the relevant sectors that affect the environment directly and indirectly.
3. Not issuing any environmental legislation regulating the work of certain entities (as occurred with the legislation on development zones and others) except after coordination with the Ministry of Environment as the competent authority, in order to avoid overlapping powers in the environmental sector before, during and after the issuance of any legislation relating to environmental matters.
4. Taking the social, economic and environmental dimensions into account in an integrated manner when drafting environmental legislation.
5. Continuing to integrate environmental considerations into other sectoral policies, plans and programs.
6. Strengthening the technical capacities of the staff of the Royal Department for Environmental Protection to enable it to carry out inspections and enforce the law.
7. Building the national capacities of municipalities to enable them to contribute to national environmental protection efforts.
8. The Jordan Water Company (Miyahuna) should ensure the absence of pollution before pumping water from springs or wells to water pumping stations, and should not delay primary prevention measures until the departments of the Ministries of Health and Environment and the food authorities intervene, particularly in cases of mixing between drinking water and sewage and the occurrence of fecal contamination; it should also rectify the condition of pipes, springs and wells and ensure that they are tested in laboratories on a permanent basis that proves they are completely free of pollution.
9. The Greater Amman Municipality and the municipalities should develop rapid implementation plans to resolve the sewerage problem in all areas of the Greater Amman Municipality, and also expand sewerage networks in the various regions of the Kingdom, particularly in densely built residential neighborhoods.

7. Cultural Rights

Many international human rights instruments guarantee cultural rights³⁴⁸, which 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, and the freedom of scientific research and creative activity. Jordan has signed many conventions in the field of protecting cultural rights³⁴⁹. The Jordanian Constitution of 1952, as amended, also guarantees the freedom of cultural creativity and the freedom of scientific research, as Article (15/2) thereof provides that: "The State shall guarantee the freedom of scientific research and literary, artistic, cultural and sports creativity, provided that it does not violate the provisions of the law or public order and morals."

The year 2017 saw the issuance of the Instructions on Artistic and Cultural Festivals of 2017³⁵⁰, under which the holding of any festivals during the Jerash Festival was prohibited. They also prohibited receiving and contracting for any non-Jordanian funding except with the prior approval of the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister; provided that the duration of a festival shall not exceed (30) days; and required that there be a time gap between one festival and another. The Instructions also classified cultural and artistic festivals into permanent international, Arab or local festivals and non-permanent specialized thematic festivals.

The year 2017 saw more than (3000) local cultural and artistic events and activities held by the Ministry of Culture and its culture directorates in the governorates, including activities related to Amman as the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2017 and Mafrqa as the Jordanian City of Culture for 2017. These included conferences, forums, theatrical and artistic performances, various exhibitions, lectures, artistic and cultural evenings, courses and training workshops, children's carnivals, camps, cultural days, national celebrations and others, among them: the opening of the Heritage Library at the Heritage Directorate of the Ministry of Culture; the State Appreciation Awards for poets; the Children's Creativity Festival; the First Jordan Forum for Arabic Poetry, organized by the Ministry of Culture with the participation of a number of Arab and Jordanian poets; and the opening of the Irbid Cultural Center. In addition, approximately (150) radio and television episodes of the "Cultural Flashes" (Wamadat Thaqafiya) project produced by the Ministry of Culture were broadcast³⁵¹.

The Protestant Institute launched the project "Protection of Cultural Heritage in Jordan" through the documentation and preservation of archaeological holdings at the Jordan Archaeological Museum on Jabal Al-Qal'a (the Citadel). The project will run for (4) years (2017–2020) and aims to document, preserve and restore the archaeological holdings of the Jordan Archaeological Museum and its affiliated storerooms by computerizing them using the latest systems³⁵².

The year 2017 also saw an increase in the number of cultural bodies registered with the Ministry of Culture, which reached (637) cultural bodies, compared with (629) cultural bodies in 2016, as shown in Table No. (28).

³⁴⁸ Article (27) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article (27) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Article (15). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights shed further light on the scope and content of this right in General Comment No. (21).

³⁴⁹ The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 2005, ratified by Jordan 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.

³⁵⁰ Official Gazette, Issue No. (5471), dated 30 August 2017.

³⁵¹ Ad-Dustour newspaper, dated 31 December 2017.

³⁵² Al-Rai newspaper, dated 10 May 2017.

Table No. (28): Number of bodies registered with the Ministry of Culture in 2017

Governorate	Societies	Troupes	Forums and gatherings	Centers, leagues and clubs	Total
The Capital	150	15	55	58 + 2 hosted bodies	280
Irbid	38	14	49	2	103
Zarqa	11	2	9	7	29
Ma'raq	14	1	15	2	32
Karak	10	2	10	7	29
Ma'an	9	6	3	5	23
Aqaba	7	2	2	1	12
Balqa	9	5	15	3	32
Jerash	4	1	12	1	18
Madaba	1	1	12	3	17
Ajloun	10	3	23	5	41
Tafileh	8	4	9	—	21
Total	271	56	214	96	637

The Right to Take Part in or Contribute to Cultural Life

*First: Tangible Cultural Heritage*³⁵³

The year 2017 saw the Ministry of Tourism launch the National Strategy for the Development of the Tourism Sector for the years (2017–2021) concerning the impact of tourism on the national economy in general and on citizens in particular, with the aim of increasing the numbers of Jordanian, Arab and foreign tourists and extending their length of stay, in a manner that reflects positively on the economy and raises citizens' standard of living, in addition to integrating citizens into the process of advancing the Jordanian tourism product as an essential component, improving their performance in preserving tourist and archaeological sites and facilities, and promoting citizens' positive conduct in dealing with tourists³⁵⁴.

Tourism sector indicators for 2017 show a marked increase in the total number of tourists arriving in the Kingdom, as the number of overnight tourists in the first eleven months of 2017 reached (3.9) million tourists, an increase of 9% compared with the same period of 2016, during which the number of overnight tourists reached (3.6) million tourists³⁵⁵.

On the other hand, the challenges facing the tourism sector persisted in 2017. These consist of the linkage of tourism performance in general, including the flow of visitors to the Kingdom, to the political situation in the region; the linkage of the operation of many tourist sites to the municipal sector, which requires technical and financial support; the linkage of the development of the tourism product to many institutions, including the private sector, which makes it difficult to steer policies and decisions in the

³⁵³Tangible cultural heritage includes sites, structures and remains of historical, archaeological, religious, cultural or aesthetic value, which fall directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism and the Department of Antiquities.

³⁵⁴Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 21 January 2018.

³⁵⁵Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 16 December 2017.

interest of the tourism sector; and the failure to provide feedback channels that would help facilitate decision-making in the development of tourist sites and of the Jordanian tourism product³⁵⁶.

Second: Intangible Cultural Heritage³⁵⁷

The budget of the Ministry of Culture for 2017 amounted to (9,072,000) Jordanian dinars, compared with (8,147,200) Jordanian dinars for 2016³⁵⁸. Work resumed on the Jordanian Cities of Culture project, which began in 2007, with Mafraq selected as the Jordanian City of Culture for 2017³⁵⁹.

In 2017, the Ministry of Culture also implemented the "Reading for All" project, which is considered one of the most important publishing programs given its nominal prices and its socio-cultural aim of distributing the gains of reading-based cultural development to all governorates. In the tenth round of the Jordanian Family Library program, the Ministry issued (102) titles, of which (22) were children's titles and (80) were adult titles covering human knowledge, with a total of (350) thousand copies. Under the publishing program, the Ministry also issued (28) titles for adults and children and (24) issues of the magazines (Afkar) and (Wisam), and supported the publication of (107) titles, particularly bearing in mind that the Ministry issued (65) titles under the Jordanian City of Culture program for 2016 and 2017. It also presented thousands of copies of its publications as gifts to cultural institutions, schools, universities and individuals, and purchased hundreds of copies of publications by Jordanian authors³⁶⁰.

In 2017, the Ministry of Culture also launched the books presenting the results of the field survey of intangible cultural heritage in the governorates of Karak, Zarqa and Balqa. This project aimed to inventory the intangible cultural heritage in the three governorates by involving the local community in the inventory and providing the Heritage Directorate with everything related to intangible cultural heritage for inclusion in the database. The written material collected reached seven thousand pages covering the various fields and sub-categories adopted in classifying this heritage, in addition to the production of three documentary films illustrating on the ground the actual practices and ways of dealing with this heritage³⁶¹.

In 2017, the Ministry of Culture held a cultural diversity festival at Al-Hussein Gardens in Amman, organized by the Ministry's Heritage Directorate with the participation of a number of cultural societies and bodies. The festival included popular and folkloric artistic performances; an exhibition of crafts, industries and traditional handicrafts; various traditional popular foods and sweets; an exhibition of popular heritage holdings; and cultural and varied segments for children³⁶².

The challenges facing Jordanian artists, as set out in the Center's previous reports, persisted in 2017, most notably: the limited participation of the private and capital sectors in the television industry; the low material and moral returns for Jordanian artists; the deprivation of Jordanian artists of professional stability as a result of weak production; in addition to the unavailability of adequate health insurance and the limited financial support provided to cultural bodies³⁶³.

³⁵⁶Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 21 January 2018.

³⁵⁷Intangible cultural heritage includes traditions, customs, spiritual beliefs, colloquial dialects, forms of artistic expression and folklore, and falls directly within the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.

³⁵⁸General Budget Law for the Fiscal Year 2017, Chapter 1801: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

³⁵⁹Al-Rai newspaper, dated 3 July 2017.

³⁶⁰Al-Rai newspaper, dated 3 January 2018.

³⁶¹Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 13 December 2017.

³⁶²Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 13 December 2017.

³⁶³For more information, see: Report of the National Center for Human Rights for 2016, p. 172.

The Right to Benefit from Scientific Progress and Its Applications

The content of the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications includes the benefit of all, without discrimination, from the benefits of science; the provision of opportunities for all to contribute to scientific projects; and the freedom necessary for scientific research, creativity and innovation.

In 2017, the problems facing the scientific research sector persisted, 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 is clearly reflected in the low number of research papers published in peer-reviewed journals, which reached (305) papers in 2017, a very low number.
3. The financial claims against the Fund by public and private universities, which reached approximately (10) million dinars by the end of 2017, owing to the failure to disburse these financial entitlements for scientific research and scholarships in previous years.
4. Scientific research has been, and continues to be, driven by university faculty members' need for promotion; once a faculty member reaches the rank of professor, all of his research efforts cease.
5. The emigration of competent researchers to societies where their living and research needs are met, owing to low financial returns.
6. The financial problems facing scientific research, such as low spending; it is noted that there is a clear shortfall in research funding, as spending on scientific research in 2017 accounted for 19% of total actual spending for the period from 2008 to 2017, which amounted to approximately (41.3) million dinars, in addition to the weak participation of the private sector in funding scientific research. This reflects low confidence in the value of scientific research and calls for a supportive industrial policy that encourages scientific research.
7. The disproportion between the number of faculty members in national universities, which is close to (15) thousand members, and their scientific output³⁶⁴.

As for the possibility of accessing information and scientific works, there is a good number of libraries in Jordan that provide such access. The number of public libraries reached (105) libraries, including libraries affiliated with the Greater Amman Municipality and the municipalities in the other governorates of the Kingdom and the Shoman Library, in addition to (417) school libraries that provide citizens with the necessary resources, as well as libraries affiliated with public and private universities.

With regard to ensuring access to information and communication technology and the rate of internet use in order to promote the right to benefit from scientific progress and opportunities to obtain information, it is noted that the information technology policies adopted by the Government in past years have contributed to creating an enabling environment. The year 2017 saw an increase in the internet user base, which expanded to include nearly (7.2) million users, raising the penetration rate to 90% relative to the population³⁶⁵.

³⁶⁴Based on an interview with the Director of the Scientific Research Support Fund, Dr. Abeer Al-Bawab, on 30 April 2018.

³⁶⁵Al-Ghad newspaper, dated 20 November 2017.

With regard to the freedom of scientific research, we note the continuation of what has been observed in previous years, namely the requirement to obtain the approval of the Department of Statistics (DoS) to conduct field studies, which constitutes an obstacle to the freedom to obtain the necessary information and contravenes the freedom of scientific research.

Third: Intellectual Property Rights³⁶⁶

The piracy rate in the Kingdom³⁶⁷ fell to 56% as of 2015, whereas it stood at 87% in the mid-1990s. In 2017, the number of works registered with the National Library Department reached (6570) works, of which only (2425) works were actually deposited in the National Library³⁶⁸. The number of cases referred to the competent courts from various regions of the Kingdom relating to copyright infringement reached (174) cases, involving the confiscation of more than half a million pirated works. It should be noted that in 2017, (317) cases were referred to the competent courts, most of which involved (code-cracking cases, counterfeit works and books)³⁶⁹.

Recommendations

1. Reviewing the legislation governing cultural work, particularly the Culture Promotion Law and the regulations issued thereunder.
2. Increasing the financial support provided to cultural bodies, particularly by the private sector, in order to raise the standard of cultural works.
3. Developing instructions on the use of archaeological sites by citizens in order to regulate activities within archaeological sites.
4. Restoring and maintaining archaeological sites and making them accessible to persons with disabilities.
5. Providing feedback channels that help facilitate decision-making in the development of tourist sites and of the Jordanian tourism product.
6. Promoting the principle of innovation and creativity in applied research, strengthening supportive incentives and increasing the budgets allocated to scientific research.
7. Increasing the material and moral returns for Jordanian artists and providing them with professional stability and adequate health insurance.
8. Increasing the number of public libraries outside the capital and paying greater attention to the quality of the services they provide.

³⁶⁶The Kingdom is a party to a number of international agreements, 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.

³⁶⁷According to the latest statistics available at the Department of the National Library, as stated by Mr. Ahmad Al-Khalayleh, Supervisor of the Copyright Protection Office at the Department of the National Library, in a meeting on 10 April 2018.

³⁶⁸According to the latest statistics available at the Department of the National Library, as stated by Mr. Firas Al-Hadid, Assistant Director General of the Department of the National Library, in a meeting on 10 April 2018.

³⁶⁹According to the latest statistics available at the Department of the National Library, as stated by Mr. Ahmad Al-Khalayleh, Supervisor of the Copyright Protection Office at the Department of the National Library, in a meeting on 10 April 2018.

9. 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 visit them, particularly in remote areas.

Third: Rights of the Groups Most Vulnerable to Violations

1. Women's Rights

The Jordanian Constitution guarantees the principle of equality among all Jordanians, as Article (6) thereof provides that "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 further provides that "The family is the foundation of society; its pillars are religion, morals and love of the homeland; the law shall preserve its legitimate entity and strengthen its bonds and values," and 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." Article (23) of the Constitution also refers to the need to lay down special conditions governing the work of women and juveniles.

The year 2017 witnessed a number of amendments to national legislation affecting women's rights, including the following:

1. The Amended Penal Code No. (27) of 2017

Under this law: (a) Article (308) of the Code was repealed; that Article constituted a violation of women's rights in cases of sexual offenses, as it permitted the discontinuation of prosecution or the suspension of punishment upon the conclusion of a marriage contract between the perpetrator and the victim, even where the victim was a minor. (b) Mitigating excuses under Article (98) are no longer applicable where the victim is female and the killing was committed under the pretext of preserving or defending honor, thereby lifting an injustice against women. (c) The law increased the penalty for indecent fondling contrary to public decency by amending the provisions of Article (305), so that the penalty became imprisonment for a period of not less than one year, after having been imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year; in addition, the age of protection of the male or female victim was raised to eighteen years. (d) The scope of the indecent act under Article (306) was expanded to include committing an indecent act, directing any immoral words, or making any immoral gestures. (e) The law established equality between men and women in paragraph (c) of Article (62), permitting the consent of the mother for surgical operations and medical treatment, whereas the law had previously restricted such consent to the father alone. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) notes the Government's failure to respond to the call to amend Article (340) of the Code, which discriminates between men and women: the wife does not benefit from the exculpatory excuse upon surprising her husband in the act of adultery unless this occurs in the marital home, whereas the husband benefits from it wherever the act occurs. The NCHR hopes that the legislator will establish equality between men and women in this regard.

2. Promulgation of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence No. (15) of 2017

This law repealed the previous law on protection from domestic violence. Its most notable provisions include the following:

It expanded the concept of the family to include relatives up to the fourth degree and in-laws of the third and fourth degrees. The law also obliged providers of medical, educational or social services in the public and private sectors to report cases of domestic violence committed against persons lacking or having diminished legal capacity, on pain of imprisonment, a fine, or both. It provided the necessary protection for informants and witnesses by not disclosing the identity of the informant unless legal proceedings require otherwise. The law further obliged the competent court to consider domestic violence cases as a matter of urgency, required the competent court to ratify the settlement procedures arranged by the Family Protection Department, and provided alternative measures in lieu of the penalties imposed by the competent court following the settlement process. It also obliged the Public

Prosecutor to use modern technical means in hearing witnesses in order to protect the victim where he or she is under eighteen years of age. The National Center for Human Rights considers it necessary to take preventive measures to prevent domestic violence, to disseminate awareness programs on this law and issue the regulations required thereunder, and to provide counseling and psychological treatment programs free of charge in all governorates.

3. The Flexible Work Regulation No. (22) of 2017

This Regulation defined the forms of flexible work, including part-time work and work within flexible hours in a manner commensurate with the needs of the worker. 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 defines 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 criticized on the grounds that its provisions apply only if the employer wishes to apply them, in addition to its requirement that the worker complete three years of service with the employer in order to benefit from its provisions³⁷⁰.

4. Instructions No. (1) of 2017 on Granting Permission to Marry to Persons Who Have Completed Fifteen Solar Years of Age but Have Not Completed Eighteen³⁷¹

These Instructions tightened the acceptance of early marriage, conditioning it on the court's verification that the marriage will not cause the discontinuation of education and that the suitor is not already married. The court must also inform the prospective bride of her right to stipulate any condition that serves her interest and to have it included in the contract. The Instructions further required the prospective spouses to produce a certificate proving that they have completed the pre-marriage course organized by the Department, and required the court to refer marriage applications of persons under eighteen years of age to the Family Reform and Reconciliation Office for its opinion. They also stipulated, 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 Supreme Judge Department. Despite the stricter approach to 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 has not completed eighteen years of age, in view of the adverse health and psychological effects of early marriage on the child, in addition to depriving the child of his or her rights set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

On another front, 2017 witnessed the discussion before the relevant committee of the shadow report submitted by the National Center for Human Rights on the sixth report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which the Center prepared in consultation and cooperation with civil society organizations concerned with women's rights³⁷².

³⁷⁰It should be noted that on 1 April 2018, while this report was being prepared, the Flexible Work Instructions of 2018 were issued pursuant to Article (13) of the Flexible Work Regulation No. (22) of 2017 and were published in Official Gazette No. (5509). Article (7) of the Instructions permits an employer to contract directly, and for the first time, with a new worker from outside the establishment under any of the forms of flexible work adopted by the establishment.

³⁷¹The Instructions were issued pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph (b) of Article Ten of the Personal Status Law No. (36) of 2010, and the previous instructions were thereby repealed.

³⁷²For more information, see the report of the National Center for Human Rights for 2016, p. 187.

The government delegation also discussed the sixth periodic government report on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention at the (66th) session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held in Geneva. The delegation reviewed the progress achieved in complying with international obligations to respect human rights since the submission of the previous report concerning women's rights to participate in economic, social, cultural and political development and in public life. The delegation also reviewed the relevant national legislation, policies, strategies and plans, and the extent of response to the previous recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations³⁷³.

Among the most prominent recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the sixth national report under the Convention were: (a) that legislative measures to eliminate discrimination against women be consistent with the Convention, and that it be affirmed that the provisions of the Convention prevail over national laws; (b) that Jordan withdraw its reservations to articles of the Convention; (c) that Jordan adopt a national action plan on women, peace and security; (d) that women's rights be integrated into school curricula at all levels of education; (e) that temporary special measures be adopted and implemented to achieve substantive equality for rural women in all areas in which they are underrepresented or not represented at all, including political and public life, education, health and employment; (f) that the Optional Protocol to the Convention be ratified; and (g) that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action be used and gender be mainstreamed in the national framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee called for these observations to be disseminated to the bodies concerned with their implementation, in particular the ministries, Parliament and the judiciary. The Committee also invited Jordan to submit its seventh report in February 2021.

The year 2017 also witnessed a number of positive developments in support of women's rights, the most important of which were:

1. The proportion of seats won by women in municipal councils through open competition rose to 11% of the total seats, the highest proportion ever obtained by women in the history of municipal or parliamentary elections³⁷⁴. Women's participation in municipal and local councils also rose to 37.6%, whereas their participation in municipal councils in 2013 had been 35.9%.
2. Women took part in voting and candidacy for governorate councils and won (53) seats out of (344), i.e. 14%, of which (32) seats were won through the quota, (4) seats through open competition, and (17) seats by appointment pursuant to the provisions of Article (6/d) of the Decentralization Law No. (49) of 2015. The National Center for Human Rights considers it necessary to raise the quota in governorate councils to 25% and to raise the share of appointments of women to one half instead of one third.
3. The first Jordanian woman reached the highest judicial grade in the Jordanian judiciary, and also attained membership of the Judicial Council. Women's participation in the judiciary rose in 2017

³⁷³It is worth noting that Jordan still maintains its reservation to Article (9/2), concerning granting women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children, and to Paragraphs (c, d, g) of Article (16), concerning marriage and family relations.

³⁷⁴In the 2007 municipal council elections, women won (23) seats through open competition out of (964) seats, i.e. 2.5%; these were the first elections to adopt the women's quota system. In the 2013 municipal council elections, women won (56) seats out of (1124) seats, i.e. 5%, whereas they won (5) seats through open competition in the 2016 parliamentary elections out of (130) seats, i.e. 3.9%.

to (181) female judges out of a total of (953) male and female judges, i.e. 18.9%, compared with (178) female judges out of (974) male and female judges in 2016, i.e. 18.2%.

4. The first woman won a seat on the Council of the Jordan Veterinary Medical Association since 1972. The share of women on the Council of the Jordan Press Association also rose in the elections held in May 2017 to two women, whereas the share of women on the previous Council had been one woman.
5. In December 2017, the Council of Ministers approved the National Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution (1325) on the role of women in peacekeeping and ending conflicts. The National Center for Human Rights took part in the coalition formed by the Jordanian National Commission for Women to prepare this Plan, which comprised four main objectives: responding to gender needs and ensuring women's effective participation in the security and military sectors and in peacekeeping missions; achieving women's participation in countering extremism and violence; providing psychosocial, legal and medical services; and fostering a societal culture supportive of gender needs, gender equality and the role of women in achieving security and peace.

On the other hand, the National Center for Human Rights observed a number of shortcomings affecting women's right to participate in public life, the most important of which are:

1. The proportion of female voters registered in the voter register for the 2017 municipal and decentralization elections was 53% of the total number of voters, while the proportion of registered male voters was 47%; however, the number of women who actually voted was lower than that of male voters. The proportion of women who actually voted out of the number of women registered in the final voter lists was 28.7%, while the proportion of male voters out of the number of registered men was approximately 35.1%.

It is worth noting that the National Center for Human Rights had monitored the conditions of women in remote and underserved areas, and found that in most of the villages it visited, women had no real role in the elections, and that women cast their votes on the basis of prior instructions to choose a particular person. In addition, the Center observed that women were unable to reach candidates' headquarters, which are usually located outside the village, and that women in these areas refrained from running for election owing to their weak financial capacity, in addition to the scarcity of awareness programs on their rights, whether provided by civil society organizations or official institutions.

2. The National Center for Human Rights continues to reiterate its observations contained in its previous annual 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 or the Sharia Court, and the absence of female employees from the latter and from the General Iftaa' Department; and the failure to amend the Civil Service Regulation to stipulate the mandatory provision of nurseries for the children of female employees and to provide that the family allowance be paid to female employees on the same terms as the allowance paid to male employees. Moreover, erroneous customs and traditions still at times prevent women from enjoying their rights, particularly in the area of inheritance. Women's ignorance of 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 inheritance.
3. Several elections for the councils of professional associations were held in 2017. The National Center for Human Rights observed that no woman reached the Council of the Jordan Bar Association in

the elections held in April 2017, and the same applied to the Council of the Jordan Geologists Association, whose elections were held in May 2017.

4. There are also some pieces of legislation containing provisions that are considered discriminatory against women. The National Center for Human Rights has prepared a study on them addressing the legal provisions concerned, the proposed amendments and the justifications for amendment. These laws include the Personal Status Law, the Nationality Law, the Civil Retirement Law, the Social Security Law, the Penal Code, the Labor Law, the Passports Law, the Civil Service Regulation, and others.

Conditions of Women in Remote Areas

The National Center for Human Rights follows up on the conditions of women in remote and underserved areas, and its previous reports have pointed to the challenges and violations to which women in villages are exposed³⁷⁵. The Center made a number of recommendations, including urging the Government and the relevant authorities to improve the level of services in municipalities, villages and other areas in a manner that ensures the promotion of local development and raises the economic standard of their inhabitants. In light of the Center's follow-up of remote areas, we find that the challenges impeding women's enjoyment of their rights mentioned in previous reports still persist, and that any improvement, where it exists, is very slow. The Government has attributed this to the fact that, with the application of the provisions of the Decentralization Law, setting development priorities and identifying projects have become the competence of the elected governorate councils, starting with the 2018 budget.

Conditions of Women in Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers

The National Center for Human Rights carried out numerous visits to the Al-Juwaideh Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Center and recorded the following observations: (a) The building is not equipped for use by women with disabilities and older women. (b) Weak provision of health care services, in that there is no doctor on duty at the clinic around the clock (24 hours); weak attention to psychological treatment at the Center in the absence of a psychiatrist; the absence of a dedicated pharmacy at the Al-Juwaideh Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, as medicines are dispensed from the pharmacy of the Al-Juwaideh Men's Correctional and Rehabilitation Center; and the small number of beds in the medical clinic. (c) The absence of dedicated places for conjugal visits, as female inmates meet their husbands in staff rooms; and weak telephone communication facilities in terms of the limited time available to them, in addition to the small number of booths. (d) Weak utilization of the computer room and of literacy teaching. (e) Weak aftercare services for them and the scarcity of institutions needed to follow up on them after their release from the Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, which drives them to reoffend. (f) The small number of staff relative to the number of female inmates, particularly social workers and medical and psychological staff.

Violence against Women

Figures and statistics issued by the Family Protection Department of the Public Security Directorate (PSD) indicate that the number of cases involving women in 2017 was (3165), as shown in Table No. (29).

³⁷⁵For 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. (29): Number of cases involving women handled by the Family Protection Department in 2017 and number of female victims

Type of case	Number of cases	Number of adult female victims
Sexual assaults	994	999
Physical harm	2171	2182
Total	3165	3172

The National Center for Human Rights issued a study entitled "Gender-Based Violence against Women in Jordanian Society: The Governorates of Zarqa and Mafraq as a Model"³⁷⁶, with the aim of setting out the reality, causes and effects of gender-based violence against women. The study addressed the protection of women's rights against violence under international standards and national laws; the reality, causes and manifestations of gender-based violence against women in the governorates of Zarqa and Mafraq; national public policies for protecting women from violence and the economic empowerment program as one of the solutions for protecting them from violence; and the experience of the National Center for Human Rights in implementing the economic empowerment program in the governorates of Zarqa and Mafraq. The study revealed an imbalance in gender relations in private and public life to the detriment of women, and found that the causes of violence include deteriorating economic and environmental conditions and the spread of poverty and unemployment, which result in the husband, father or brother resorting to cruel treatment of women as a means of venting psychological distress, in addition to changes in the environment and harsh living conditions. The study arrived at a number of solutions for reducing gender-based violence against women in remote villages, such as the economic empowerment program and the importance of such programs in alleviating poverty and unemployment rates and providing a moderate income to help improve the standard of living of families in general and female-headed households in particular. The study also arrived at a set of recommendations, including: (a) taking gender into account when drafting and amending national laws, in application of the principle of gender justice; and (b) improving the social and economic environment of the family and enabling its members to meet their various needs through investment in economic empowerment projects based on small enterprises³⁷⁷.

Recommendations

To promote and protect women's rights, the National Center recommends taking a set of legal and practical measures that the Center has previously addressed in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following³⁷⁸:

1. Supporting and empowering women economically and socially, providing employment opportunities for them, and developing their skills in line with labor market needs, particularly in remote areas.
2. Adopting further temporary special measures, including quota systems and preferential treatment, to promote the integration of women in education and the economy, and continuing to provide incentives to promote women and their employment in the private sector.

³⁷⁶The study targeted remote villages in the two governorates of Zarqa and Mafraq (Rawdat Al-Amira Basma, Al-Khalidiyya, Al-Mushayrifa, Umm Al-Sulaih, Birayn and Al-Hallabat).

³⁷⁷For more information, please refer to the website of the National Center for Human Rights.

³⁷⁸For more information, see the National Center's report on the state of human rights in Jordan for 2016, p. (193).

3. 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 and increasing their representation in senior leadership positions in the State, and considering the possibility of amending the laws of labor unions and professional associations to expressly provide for seats reserved for women on union councils.
4. Amending national legislation in line with international human rights obligations, within a gender-sensitive approach, including the Penal Code, the Personal Status Law, the Labor Law, the Nationality Law and others.

2. Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Jordanian Constitution, in Article (6) thereof, guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities and protects their dignity from abuse and exploitation. Likewise, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which Jordan ratified in 2008, and the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017 guarantee their protection and their full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The year 2017 witnessed the issuance of a number of national legislative instruments related to the rights of persons with disabilities:

- The Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017³⁷⁹, which responded to important substantive elements of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, while keeping pace with developments in the field of disability in terms of concepts and practices, particularly the provision of opportunities and non-discrimination on the basis of disability. The Law also provided for the formation of a committee called the Equal Opportunities Committee, composed of (12) members, including a representative of the National Center for Human Rights³⁸⁰.
- The Law Amending the Jordanian Penal Code No. (27) of 2017, which expanded the scope of criminal protection to ensure that persons with disabilities are not harmed or assaulted.
- The Flexible Work Regulation No. (22) of 2017, which serves to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in flexible work³⁸¹.

At the Policy Level

- In July 2017, the Ministry of Social Development developed the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Development for the period 2017–2021, in order to entrench the principles of social justice and raise the quality of social services provided within a framework of cooperation and complementarity with all female and male workers in the developmental and voluntary social work sector, and as a continuation of and response to new challenges, foremost among them the Syrian refugee crisis facing the Kingdom and its repercussions on society³⁸², and in order to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030).
- The Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), began developing a comprehensive national plan containing solutions and alternatives for integrating persons with disabilities into their families, with the participation of the National Center for Human Rights³⁸³.
- On 5 April 2017, the Council of Ministers issued a decision granting employees working in care centers for persons with disabilities affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development an institutional allowance of up to 50% of their total basic salaries³⁸⁴, in addition to raising low

³⁷⁹Published in Official Gazette Issue No. (3710), dated 9 May 2017.

³⁸⁰Article (14/a) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20/2017 provides: "A committee named the (Equal Opportunities Committee) shall be formed in the Council, chaired by the Secretary-General and composed of the following members: 1. a representative of the Ministry of Labor; 2. a representative of the Civil Service Bureau; 3. a representative of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce; 4. a representative of the Jordan Chamber of Industry; 5. a representative of the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions; 6. three representatives of the private sector; 7. three persons with disabilities possessing expertise relevant to the Committee's functions; 8. a representative of the National Center for Human Rights named by its Commissioner General."

³⁸¹This Regulation was issued pursuant to Article (140) of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996, published in the Official Gazette, page (1924), dated 9 March 2017. For more information, see the sections on the right to work and women's rights in this report.

³⁸²Official website of the Ministry of Social Development.

³⁸³Letter from the Ministry of Social Development to the National Center for Human Rights, No. (T Kh/135/20), dated 4 January 2018.

³⁸⁴Pursuant to the provisions of Article (26/a) of the Civil Service Regulation No. (82) of 2013.

salaries, in view of the hazardous and difficult nature of their work and in order to provide greater protection and care for persons with disabilities, with a positive impact on their rights.

At the Level of the Work of International Treaty Mechanisms

- The shadow report submitted by the National Center for Human Rights to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 was discussed; the report contained observations and recommendations in the areas of legislation, policies and strategies for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities³⁸⁵.
- In 2017, the National Center for Human Rights contributed to developing a guide of indicators on the rights of persons with disabilities for the Sustainable Development Goals 2020–2030, in implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015–2030³⁸⁶.
- In 2017, the National Center for Human Rights also participated in preparing the observations submitted to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the draft General Comment on Article (5) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which called for: 1. measuring the definition of disability on the basis of discrimination and reforming the relevant legislation to prevent it; and 2. amending and refining the term "accommodation" to achieve its basic requirement, namely providing accommodation to those suffering hardship under special circumstances in individual cases on the basis of substantive equality.

Conditions of Persons with Disabilities in Residential Care Centers

The National Center for Human Rights monitored the conditions of persons with disabilities in the residential care centers³⁸⁷ shown in Table No. (30), and its observations were as follows:

Table No. (30): Residential care centers monitored by the National Center's team

Care and residential centers	Location	Capacity
Care and Rehabilitation Center	Jerash Governorate	260
Care and Residential Center / private sector	North Amman	200
Care, Rehabilitation and Residential Center / private sector	Central Amman	26
Care and Residential Center	West Amman	32
Cerebral Palsy Center / private sector ³⁸⁸	Aqaba Governorate	20
Residential Center for Persons with Special Needs	Tafileh Governorate	100

1. Weak communication between families and their relatives with disabilities who are beneficiaries residing in these centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development.
2. A scarcity of care and social work specialists in these residential centers, and a reluctance to work in them, given the specialized and qualitative nature of the work required. The National Center for Human Rights addressed H.E. the Prime Minister regarding the state of services at the Jerash Center for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development, enclosing its report³⁸⁹ containing its recommendations on the maintenance work

³⁸⁵For further information, see the shadow report and the paper on key issues of concern published on the website of the National Center for Human Rights, www.nchr.org.jo.

³⁸⁶For more information, see the report on the guide to indicators of the rights of persons with disabilities published on the website of the National Center for Human Rights.

³⁸⁷The Center monitored private-sector residential care homes on 10 May 2017, 21 May 2017 and 12 July 2017.

³⁸⁸Date of monitoring: 5 April 2011.

³⁸⁹Letter No. H A/18/429 dated 29 August 2017.

required for the Center, the need to provide specialized and sufficient staff, and cooperation with the bodies concerned with health, environmental and public safety matters, as well as those concerned with legislation and policies on persons with disabilities.

3. Disparity in the monthly fees charged by residential centers for persons with disabilities, which range between (300–1600) Jordanian dinars. At their upper limit, these are considered high fees in light of the difficult economic conditions experienced by the majority of middle-class and poor Jordanian families.
4. Insufficient social surveys to identify the needs of persons with disabilities and the level of services provided to them, so as to arrive at findings that would help develop a plan of priorities and work programs to address them.
5. The low level of financial assistance provided to support the families of persons with disabilities and its inadequacy to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, particularly as some families have more than one member with a disability.

The National Center for Human Rights issued a statement calling on all governmental and non-governmental institutions and civil society organizations to intensify efforts to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities³⁹⁰.

It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Social Development issued a decision on 8 February 2017, following its monitoring visits to (57) residential centers in the (voluntary and private) sectors, providing for the temporary closure of two residential centers for failing to respond to the warning previously served on them. Three warnings were also issued to residential centers in the private sector, and (12) warnings were issued to care centers for persons with disabilities for the purpose of regularizing their legal status. The centers that were warned or closed constituted 25% of the total centers and homes visited, while the remaining centers, constituting 75%, had previous observations recorded against them which their administrations promptly worked to rectify. The results of the visits demonstrated the urgent need for further oversight and a re-evaluation of their work to ensure that their situation has been rectified and that the observations recorded against them have been addressed³⁹¹.

Conditions of Persons with Disabilities in Care, Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Centers

The National Center for Human Rights monitored the conditions of persons with disabilities in the care, rehabilitation and vocational training centers³⁹² shown in Table No. (31), and recorded the following observations:

³⁹⁰For more information, see the statement of the National Center for Human Rights of 3 December 2017, published at the following link of the National Center for Human Rights:
http://www.nchr.org.jo/usrer_site/site/view_articlerAr.aspx?type=2&ID=2780

³⁹¹Telephone call with the media spokesperson of the Ministry of Social Development on 9 February 2017 to verify a news item published by the Jordan News Agency (Petra) on 28 February 2017 and by Al-Ghad newspaper (Jordan) on 27 March 2017.

³⁹²Reports of the National Center for Human Rights on monitoring care, rehabilitation and training centers for persons with disabilities: dated 30 October 2017 (private sector), and dated 7 June 2017 for a care, training and rehabilitation center (public sector).

Table No. (31): Care, rehabilitation and training centers monitored

Centers ³⁹³	Date of establishment	Location	Capacity
Vocational Training and Employment Center	1973	Russeifa	67
Saudi Center for the Rehabilitation of Blind Women	1974	Amman Governorate	59

- The small number of care, rehabilitation and vocational training centers for persons with disabilities and the absence of appropriate geographical distribution across the governorates and districts of the Kingdom, which deprives many persons with disabilities of the services they provide, posing a challenge to their integration into society.
- A scarcity of specialized human resources in the rehabilitation and training of persons with disabilities and in dealing with them, which affects the level of their rehabilitation and training to become active members of society.
- A weak physical environment and a lack of appropriate specialized equipment for persons with disabilities to receive rehabilitation and training to meet their needs, which undermines the development of their personality and independence in working life.
- Weak specialized rehabilitation and training programs, which adversely affects the preparation of qualified and trained persons on an equal basis with persons without disabilities, and leads families to lose confidence in the development of their sons and daughters and in the activation of their role in society.

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Nurseries

The National Center for Human Rights monitored the conditions of children with disabilities in governmental, private and institutional nurseries, in realization of the rights of children and women with disabilities³⁹⁴, on the basis of a random sample of (70)³⁹⁵ nurseries during the period between July and October 2017. Its observations were as follows:

- The lack of adequate environmental accessibility facilities in the buildings of the nurseries³⁹⁶ monitored, in terms of ramps for the buildings and the lack of elevators in nurseries that require them.
- The nurseries³⁹⁷ monitored are not qualified to receive children with disabilities, in violation of the provisions of Article (27) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017.

³⁹³Table of employment and vocational training centers, website of the Ministry of Social Development.

³⁹⁴Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article (6) Women with disabilities: "1. States Parties recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present Convention." Article (7) Children with disabilities: "1. States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children. 2. In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

³⁹⁵The number of nurseries in the Kingdom reached (1080), classified as follows: public sector (527) nurseries, private sector (430) nurseries, voluntary sector (30) nurseries and institutional sector (93) nurseries, according to information issued by the Ministry of Social Development.

³⁹⁶Public, private and institutional nurseries.

³⁹⁷Public, private and institutional nurseries.

- Sanitary facilities are unsuitable for children with disabilities in terms of number, quality, gender separation, and separation between bathing areas and sanitary facilities in governmental, private and institutional nurseries³⁹⁸.
- Nursery administrations do not require, as a condition for registering a child, the provision of a medical report stating whether the child suffers from disabilities or chronic diseases such as asthma, epilepsy and allergies, so that the necessary health care can be provided for each case.
- Administrations do not have a child drop-off and pick-up form to document the child's health condition, including illness and any traces of violence found on the child's body, so that these can be addressed and the children protected.

Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Voting and Candidacy

The National Center for Human Rights monitored the participation of persons with disabilities in the municipal and decentralization elections held in 2017³⁹⁹ and recorded the following observations⁴⁰⁰:

1. The legislator did not allocate a quota for persons with disabilities for the purposes of positive discrimination in the Elections Law No. (6) of 2016 and the Decentralization Law No. (49) of 2015, which has prevented them from reaching decision-making positions.
2. The lack of a database containing complete numbers of persons with disabilities in the Kingdom in order to facilitate the exercise of their right to vote in terms of: (a) allocating polling stations close to their places of residence; (b) allocating the ground floors of polling station buildings without ramps for persons with disabilities; and (c) the failure to provide sign language interpreters at polling stations to facilitate the exercise by persons with hearing disabilities of their right to vote.
3. Persons with disabilities residing in residential care homes were unable to reach polling centers and stations; persons at home who are unable to move were unable to travel to and from polling centers; and there were no mobile polling stations to enable them to exercise their right to vote and stand for election.

Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Employment

The number of persons with disabilities who obtained employment in 2017 was (283) workers, of whom (177) were male and (106) female⁴⁰¹.

The employment rate of persons with disabilities stood at 1% in the public sector and 0.5% in the private sector, which deprives those of them who are able to work of their right to decent work⁴⁰².

The National Center for Human Rights considers that there is a gap in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in employment that requires the application of the text of Article (13) of the amended Labor

³⁹⁸Where a child needs to be bathed in cases of involuntary urination or vomiting.

³⁹⁹Paper on the outcomes of the municipal and decentralization elections held on 15 July 2018.

⁴⁰⁰Monitoring of the rights of persons with disabilities to vote and stand for election, and of older persons, in the municipal elections on 4 July 2017.

⁴⁰¹According to information provided by the Disability Employment Section at the Ministry of Labor.

⁴⁰²Position paper on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2017, issued by the Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies.

Law No. (8) of 1996⁴⁰³ and the text of Article (25) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017⁴⁰⁴.

Recommendations

The National Center reaffirms the recommendations contained in its previous annual reports⁴⁰⁵, in addition to the following:

1. Developing regulations to implement the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2017.
2. Following up on the implementation of the outputs and results of the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
3. Developing instructions for the integration of persons with disabilities into the family and society in preparation for dismantling residential care homes and finding alternatives to them in accordance with the law⁴⁰⁶.
4. Expanding the establishment of training and rehabilitation centers to cover all governorates of the Kingdom.
5. Expanding the establishment of centers for the early detection of disabilities and distributing them geographically across the Kingdom in a manner that meets the needs of children with disabilities.

⁴⁰³The amended Labor Law No. (8) of 1996, the temporary law published in the Official Gazette, Issue (5042), page (4478/7/15): "The employer shall employ disabled workers in the percentage specified in the Law on the Rights of Disabled Persons in force and in accordance with the conditions set out therein, and shall send to the Ministry a statement specifying the jobs occupied by disabled persons and the wage of each of them."

⁴⁰⁴"Without prejudice to the academic or professional qualifications required by the work or position, governmental and non-governmental entities in which the number of workers and employees is not less than (25) and not more than (50) workers and employees shall employ at least one person with a disability within their vacancies; where the number of workers and employees in any of them exceeds (50), a percentage of up to (4%) of their vacancies shall be allocated to persons with disabilities, as decided by the Ministry of Labor."

⁴⁰⁵The Thirteenth Annual Report / on the situation of the groups most in need of protection, p. 202.

⁴⁰⁶Pursuant to Article (27/c) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017: "The Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with the Council, shall: 1. develop a comprehensive national plan that includes interim and permanent solutions and alternatives to public and private residential care homes; 2. transform non-governmental residential entities for persons with disabilities into inclusive daytime service providers; implementation of this plan shall begin within a period not exceeding one year from the date of entry into force of this Law, and its completion shall not exceed a period of (10) years."

3. Rights of the Child

The Jordanian Constitution guarantees the rights of the child; Article (6/5) thereof provides that "The law shall protect motherhood, childhood and old age, shall care for the youth and persons with disabilities, and shall protect them from abuse and exploitation." Article (23/d) thereof further refers to the need to lay down special conditions governing the work of women and juveniles. Jordan has also ratified the CRC and its two Optional Protocols, 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. The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) had recommended in its previous reports that the Government accede to the Third Optional Protocol to the CRC; however, to date, its demand has not been met⁴⁰⁷.

In 2017, a number of amendments were made to national legislation relevant to the rights of the child, as follows:

1. The Law Amending the Penal Code No. (27) of 2017:

Paragraph (c) of Article (62) of the Law was amended so as to permit the consent of the mother for surgical operations and medical treatment, whereas such consent had previously been restricted to the father alone, in conformity with the principle of the best interests of the child set forth in the CRC. The NCHR notes the Government's failure to respond to the call to repeal paragraph (a) of the same Article, which permits forms of discipline inflicted by parents on their children in a manner that causes them no harm or injury, as permitted by general custom. The purpose of calling for its repeal was to deter parents from using violence and to seek non-punitive educational measures that ensure the safety and best interests of the child.

2. The Law on Protection from Domestic Violence No. (15) of 2017⁴⁰⁸:

The Law on Protection from Domestic Violence was enacted, addressing the definition of domestic violence and of family members. Article (4) thereof imposes on providers of health, educational or social services in the public and private sectors a mandatory duty to report any case of domestic violence committed against persons who lack or have diminished legal capacity as soon as they become aware of it or are informed thereof. Service providers who violate this duty are liable to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one week, or a fine not exceeding (50) Jordanian Dinars, or both penalties.

On the other hand, the Family Protection Department considers all complaints relating to domestic violence, and the Department may effect a settlement of the dispute with the consent of both parties. Where the act constitutes a felony, it must be referred to the competent Public Prosecutor. The Public Prosecutor or the competent court shall, where necessary, use modern technology for the purpose of protecting a victim who has not completed eighteen years of age, or a witness who is a juvenile, in the witness-hearing proceedings.

The NCHR considers that, notwithstanding the positive nature of this Law, preventive measures must be taken to reduce violence at all levels, beginning with the family and its surroundings, and the regulations necessary for this Law must be issued.

⁴⁰⁷The Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child enables children and their representatives to submit complaints and communications.

⁴⁰⁸Official Gazette, Issue No. (5460), dated 16 May 2017.

3. The Instructions on Granting Permission to Marry to Persons Who Have Completed Fifteen Solar Years of Age but Have Not Completed Eighteen No. (1) of 2017⁴⁰⁹.

The Instructions permit the judge to authorize the marriage of a person who has completed fifteen years of age but has not completed eighteen, after the court has verified that the marriage will not cause the person to discontinue his or her education, and that the suitor is not already married. The court must inform the fiancée of her right to stipulate any condition that serves her interest and to have it included in the contract. The Instructions further require, for approval of the contract, the production of a certificate proving that both parties have completed the pre-marriage course organized by the Chief Justice Department. The NCHR considers that, despite the stricter approach to accepting early marriage, paragraph (b) of Article (10) of the Personal Status Law, which permits the marriage of a person who has completed fifteen years of age but has not completed eighteen, must be repealed, given the health and psychological effects of such marriage on the child, in addition to depriving the child of all of his or her rights set forth in the CRC.

Conditions of Children in Nurseries:

- In 2017, the NCHR carried out a series of unannounced visits to governmental, private and institutional nurseries, covering approximately (70) nurseries during the period between July and October 2017. The visits aimed to assess the actual situation of nurseries in terms of the legal framework governing them, the level of services provided to children and the effectiveness of supervision and oversight over them, to identify any shortcomings, and to analyze the situation with a view to arriving at recommendations that would strengthen the rights of children and give their best interests primary consideration. Following a legislative analysis of the operation of nurseries, we find that Article (72) of the Labor Law No. (8) of 1996, as amended, is not consistent with Article (11/2/c) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in that it discriminates between men and women and fails to protect the right of men to enroll their sons and daughters in nurseries. The NCHR considers it important to review Article (72) of the Labor Law and to harmonize it with Article (11/2/c) of the Convention.

On the other hand, the Jordanian legislator included provisions in the Civil Service Regulation No. (82) of 2013⁴¹⁰, as amended, covering the rights of male and female employees at work; however, these provisions did not oblige government institutions to provide a suitable place for establishing a nursery for the children of their employees. A circular was issued by the Prime Minister in 2015 requesting public sector departments to provide nurseries for the children of female employees only; however, the circular was not binding on institutions. In its annual reports on the state of human rights in the Kingdom⁴¹¹, under the women's rights section, the NCHR had called for a separate legal provision in the Civil Service Regulation obliging public sector departments to provide nurseries for the children of their female and male employees on an equal footing and without discrimination. As for the Nurseries Regulation No. (52) of 2005⁴¹², it addresses the conditions for a child's enrollment in a nursery and sets the age of the children at under four years. The Regulation affirms that the purpose of the nursery is to raise and bring up children and to develop their physical, spiritual, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and psychological characteristics and abilities. The Regulation also lays down provisions concerning the conditions and procedures for licensing nurseries, their physical and human resources preparedness, and the supervision and oversight of the Ministry of Social Development over them. The legislator

⁴⁰⁹Official Gazette, Issue No. (5472), dated 16 July 2017.

⁴¹⁰Official Gazette, Issue No. (5202), dated 29 December 2013.

⁴¹¹For more information, please refer to the website of the National Center for Human Rights at www.nchr.org.jo.

⁴¹²Official Gazette, Issue No. (4715), dated 1 August 2015.

regards a nursery as a nursery licensed in accordance with this Regulation; accordingly, unlicensed home-based nurseries are deemed illegal and are 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 gap in the area of supervision and oversight policies over home-based nurseries in Jordan has led to the formation of a general belief among owners of licensed nurseries, or those intending to establish nurseries, that the legal system governing the nursery sector is unfair and that the penalties are disproportionate to the violations therein, which in turn has led to reluctance to submit licensing applications. The legal system does not criminalize opening a nursery without a license, while at the same time it imposes obligations on licensed nurseries and subjects them to the possibility of penalties. The Center recorded a number of observations regarding governmental, private and institutional nurseries, including the following:

- a. Lack of adequate environmental accessibility facilities in nurseries⁴¹³, in terms of the availability of ramps and of sanitary facilities suited to the needs of children in terms of number, type and gender, and the absence of elevators in nurseries that require them.
- b. Nurseries⁴¹⁴ are not equipped to receive children with disabilities, which contravenes the provisions of Article (27) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017.
- c. The buildings of all governmental nurseries are old and unsuited to the needs of children in terms of the size and number of rooms; the necessary maintenance of buildings, equipment, furniture and tools is not carried out, and their fitness for use is poor, which affects the extent to which children enjoy their right to a good environment.
- d. Lack of safe heating appliances in winter in governmental⁴¹⁵ and private nurseries, and the use of gas heaters or electric air conditioners instead.
- e. The administrations of governmental and private nurseries have not set educational objectives that instill sound values and attitudes in children⁴¹⁶, which weakens the preparation and implementation of purposeful activities, programs and events.
- f. In governmental nurseries, female attendants carry out both cleaning duties and childcare at the same time, which contravenes the provisions of the third paragraph of Article (11) of the Instructions for Licensing Governmental School Nurseries No. (2) of 2008.
- g. The specializations of the staff working in governmental, private and institutional nurseries are not suited to the nature of the work, as no specialization relevant to modifying children's behavior or dealing with and caring for them is available, which affects the ability to manage children and to measure their growth, development and mental, physical and psychological progress. The educational attainment levels of female nursery workers range from below the General Secondary Certificate (Tawjihi) up to a diploma in public administration or a bachelor's degree.

⁴¹³Public, private and institutional nurseries.

⁴¹⁴Public, private and institutional nurseries.

⁴¹⁵In all public nurseries that have heating, which is rare, the heaters are not enclosed in a safe casing to protect children from injury.

⁴¹⁶Pursuant to Article Three of the Instructions for Licensing Public School Nurseries No. (2) of 2008.

- h. Low level of cleanliness in all governmental nurseries, where there are no sterilization materials and no feeding tools or utensils for children, whereas the level of cleanliness in private and institutional nurseries may be described as average⁴¹⁷.

In order to strengthen the rights of the child, the Center recommends working towards:

- a. Establishing nurseries in all public schools, whether girls' or boys' schools, or allowing male teachers to place their children in the nurseries of girls' schools.
- b. Activating and intensifying oversight of nurseries by the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Jordan Food and Drug Administration, the Civil Defense Directorate and other relevant ministries and institutions.
- c. Preparing a comprehensive national plan for dealing with illegal nurseries, given that this issue is not discussed by official or unofficial bodies or by the media unless a violation of a child's right to life and physical integrity occurs.

Child Labor:

The results of the National Child Labor Survey in Jordan, contained in a report issued by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, the Ministry of Labor and the Department of Statistics (DoS)⁴¹⁸, showed that the total number of children aged (5–17) years was (4,030,384), of whom (75,982) children were working, i.e., 1.89%.

1. In 2017, the NCHR issued an analytical paper on the legislation governing child labor, given that child labor infringes upon children's rights under international standards and breaches and violates the principle of the best interests of the child set forth in the CRC. The analysis concluded as follows:
 - a. The protection required for child labor under national legislation is weak, which exposes children to exploitation. Article (119) of the Jordanian Civil Code No. (43) of 1976 permits a discerning minor who has completed fifteen years of age, with the permission of his guardian, to engage in trade by way of trial; such permission may be absolute or restricted, and it is not invalidated by the death or removal of the guardian. The legislator has also permitted, under Article (5) of the Armed Forces Personnel Service Law, as amended, any person holding Jordanian nationality who has completed sixteen years of age to enlist in the Armed Forces, and any person aged fifteen to join as a cadet. Article (12) of the Public Security Law, as amended, likewise permits a juvenile who has completed seventeen years of age to be appointed to the Public Security Forces.
 - b. The Labor Law does not provide the required protection for working children, as the Law does not address juveniles⁴¹⁹ who work with their parents without pay, since the definition of "worker"⁴²⁰ does not legally apply to them. This justifies child labor and exempts their parents, as employers, from the penalties set forth in the Labor Law in the event of a violation of its provisions, whether the children are working under the legal age or before reaching the age of majority. Moreover, the restrictions imposed by the legislator prohibiting the employment of juveniles for more than six hours a day, on official and weekly holidays and religious feasts, and prohibiting their employment from eight in the evening until six in the morning⁴²¹, are insufficient, particularly in view of their

⁴¹⁷With the exception of the nursery of Prince Rashid Military Hospital, where the level of cleanliness was good.

⁴¹⁸For more information, see the following link: www.jcss.org/photos.

⁴¹⁹Every person, male or female, who has reached seven years of age and has not completed eighteen years.

⁴²⁰Article (2) defines a worker as: "every person, male or female, who performs work in return for a wage and is subordinate to and under the direction of the employer, including juveniles and persons on probation or in rehabilitation."

⁴²¹Article (74) of the Labor Law.

negative effects on the children's right to education and on the development of their psychological and cognitive abilities, and the failure to achieve their best interests⁴²². The harm is compounded where the Law sets the prohibition on employing a child from eight in the evening until six in the morning, especially in winter, which exposes the child not only to economic exploitation but possibly to sexual exploitation as well. It would have been preferable for the legislator to prohibit child labor altogether. c. The legislator, in Article (33) of the Juveniles Law No. (32) of 2014, considers a working child to be among juveniles in need of protection and care⁴²³. However, it narrowed the protection to certain types of work and did not consider all working children to be in need of protection and care; in addition, no regulations⁴²⁴ calling for the protection of working children have been issued to date. d. The legislator, in the Social Security Law No. (1) of 2014, did not provide protection for working children whose relationship with the employer is irregular, the majority of whom are children. The provisions of Articles (3, 4 and 5) of the Law subject every person who has completed sixteen years of age to social security, and include persons younger than that if they are apprentices, in the provisions relating to insurance against work injuries and occupational diseases; however, the legislator excluded workers whose relationship with the employer is irregular. On the other hand, there is some legislation that encourages child labor, including the Education Law, as amended: although the Law provides that education is compulsory and free of charge in public schools, it stipulates that a student may not be dismissed from education before sixteen years of age⁴²⁵, and it did not extend the age range within which a student may not be dismissed from education, which drives a student over sixteen years of age who is dismissed to resort to work, thereby exposing him or her to exploitation.

The paper recommended the importance of reviewing and amending national legislation so as to bring it into conformity with the CRC and its two Optional Protocols.

In 2017, the NCHR also implemented a child labor project in all governorates of the Kingdom, focusing on the areas of (Al-Wehdat and Downtown in the capital Amman, Russeifa/Zarqa, Ghor Al-Safi, Petra, Aqaba, and Mafrq), with the aim of contributing to governmental and non-governmental efforts to progressively eliminate the phenomenon of child labor, to advance children's rights and to protect them from exploitation, by raising general awareness of the phenomenon among governmental and non-governmental bodies, and in particular among children's families; highlighting the importance of children remaining in school, thereby reducing the phenomenon of school dropout; and strengthening the capacity of governmental and non-governmental bodies and encouraging them to develop programs that reduce child labor rates in order to progressively eliminate this phenomenon. The results of the project concluded that the legislation governing child labor must be amended so as to conform to the CRC and its two Optional Protocols, that work must be undertaken to eliminate child labor completely, and that enrollment in vocational training institutions must be encouraged, subject to certain controls.

⁴²²General Comment No. (14) (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (Article 3, paragraph 1).

⁴²³Article (33) of the Law provides that a working child is among the juveniles in need of protection and care, and details the acts concerned as follows: if the child engages in acts related to prostitution, debauchery, moral corruption, gambling or any unlawful acts, or serves those who engage in such acts, etc.; if the child is a street vendor or scavenges through waste; if the child is a working juvenile in violation of the legislation in force.

⁴²⁴Article Four of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Law affirms that the Council of Ministers, upon the recommendation of the Minister of Social Development and with the approval of the King, may issue regulations for the protection of working juveniles.

⁴²⁵Article Ten of the Law.

Furthermore, the NCHR monitored the conditions of children at the Beggars Care Center in Madaba, and the monitoring revealed the following: a. A low level of cleanliness inside and outside the center, in addition to the presence of stray dogs and insects on the premises. b. Most of the supervisors of the children do not hold qualifications or specialized training courses for dealing with this category of children. c. Lack of health care for children within these centers, as there is no nursing room and no specialized nurse, whether on a daily or a part-time basis; there is also no doctor or medical clinic at the center, nor does any doctor visit it. If a child falls ill, he or she is taken to the health center. Children are also brought to the center without a medical report, and a child may be suffering from an infectious disease that affects the health of the other children. d. Absence of a psychologist. e. The physical environment of the center is extremely poor, as broken windows, torn screens and high humidity were observed, as well as unprotected electrical wiring running through the building.

Conditions of Children in Remote Areas:

The NCHR monitored the conditions of children in remote and underserved areas in all governorates of the Kingdom. The monitoring results revealed a scarcity of places for children's recreation and entertainment, such as parks, public libraries and playgrounds, which drives children to play in the streets and between neighborhoods and residential compounds in unsafe conditions, exposing them daily to traffic accidents or fights with their peers, in addition to weak health care services provided to them, reflected in shortages of medical staff and medicines at health centers and the absence of pediatricians.

Children in Conflict with the Law:

In 2017, the Council of Ministers approved the National Juvenile Justice Strategy for the years (2017–2019), which was circulated to the relevant ministries and governmental and non-governmental institutions for implementation and inclusion in their executive work plans. The Strategy⁴²⁶ sets out how juvenile cases are to be handled according to a new philosophy and perspective consistent with the principles of restorative justice for juveniles, with a view to achieving the overall objective of, first, prevention and, second, reducing the rate of juvenile delinquency cases, as well as increasing efficiency and effectiveness so as to ensure fair investigation and trial procedures, and increasing the effectiveness of juvenile rehabilitation in accordance with international best practices.

The Public Security Directorate (PSD) responded to the Center's recommendation to separate the juvenile detention facility (girls' detention facility) in Aqaba Governorate from that of female detainees and to provide all the requirements of its physical environment.

On the other hand, the NCHR monitored the conditions of children in conflict with the law inside rehabilitation centers, and identified a number of challenges facing these centers, including the following:

1. Weak psychological care services, as most of the homes (juvenile centers) have no psychologists, despite the juveniles' need for them.
2. Scarcity of rehabilitation, awareness-raising and recreational programs for juvenile offenders, which results in boredom, imbalance and psychological stress, and isolates them from their community.

⁴²⁶The Strategy was developed by the National Council for Family Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, the National Center for Human Rights and the relevant entities.

3. Weak family contact with their juvenile children, owing to neglect and failure on the part of the juveniles' families towards their children.
4. Juvenile homes and detention facilities are not equipped to receive juveniles with disabilities in terms of the availability of environmental accessibility facilities and reasonable accommodation.
5. Ill-treatment of juveniles and the practice of physical and verbal violence against them by some PSD personnel during the stages of arrest and interrogation.
6. Most juvenile shelter homes do not adhere to the principle of separation on the basis of age group, relying solely on the distinction between convicted and detained juveniles.
7. A low level of cleanliness in most detention facilities, in addition to old furniture and sanitary facilities.

It should be noted that the number of crimes committed by juveniles in 2017 reached (3867) crimes, compared with (4864) crimes committed in 2016, as shown in Table No. (32).

Table No. (32): Number of crimes committed by juveniles in 2017 compared with 2016

Type of Crime	2016	2017
Felonies and misdemeanors against persons	241	250
Crimes against public trust	1	7
Crimes against property	1661	1642
Crimes against public administration	173	185
Crimes endangering public safety	101	85
Crimes against public morals	243	253
Other crimes	2444	2445
Total	4864	4867

Early Marriage:

Statistics issued by the Chief Justice Department showed that the number of marriages under the age of (18) years decreased from (10,907) cases in 2016 to (10,343) cases in 2017⁴²⁷.

The NCHR considers that early marriage has negative effects, which fall not only on the girl but also on the man; these effects are economic, social, health-related and psychological, and are not limited to the spouses alone but extend to affect 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 PSD indicate that the crime of indecent assault was among the most common crimes committed against children in 2017, with (566) cases, followed by physical abuse of children with (138) cases, and then the crime of committing acts contrary to public decency with (124) cases. The number of female victims also exceeds the number of male victims, as shown in Table No. (33).

⁴²⁷For more information, see the following link: <http://www.sjd.gov.jo>.

Table No. (33): Number and types of cases committed against children in 2017

Type of Assault	Number of Cases Committed against (Children)	Number of Victims (Males)	Number of Victims (Females)	Grand Total of Victims (Children)
Rape	58	–	58	58
Attempted rape	1	–	1	1
Indecent assault	566	287	279	566
Act contrary to public decency	124	58	98	156
Abduction	10	3	7	10
Miscellaneous sexual offenses (intercourse with a female, engaging in prostitution for money)	9	–	9	9
Other miscellaneous	75	19	62	81
Physical abuse of children	138	80	93	173
Physical abuse of adult females and children together	29	21	27	48
Sexually exploited	1	1	–	1
Total	1011	469	634	1103

Recommendations:

To strengthen and protect the rights of the child, the Center reaffirms the recommendations made in its previous annual reports, in addition to the following:

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 public schools and allowing male teachers to use the nurseries of girls' schools.
4. Increasing oversight of nurseries operating outside the framework of the law and intensifying oversight and inspection campaigns by the competent authorities on licensed nurseries.
5. Creating a child-friendly environment in order to bring about social change through continuous training and awareness-raising programs for the family and society.

4. Rights of Older Persons

The Jordanian Constitution guarantees the protection of this age group of society; Article (6/5) thereof provides that "The law shall protect motherhood, childhood and old age, shall care for the youth and persons with disabilities, and shall protect them from abuse and exploitation." Numerous international instruments also contain implicit obligations towards older persons, in the absence of a dedicated international instrument protecting their rights.

Legislation Relevant to the Rights of Older Persons:

The year 2017 witnessed no development in the laws and regulations governing the rights of older persons⁴²⁸, which the NCHR considers to be as follows: 1. Insufficient, and lacking rights specific to older persons outside care institutions, such as the right to work, the right to health care and the right to physical integrity; they also need to be amended to conform to international standards. 2. There is no unified, dedicated law to protect the rights of this group, including the absence of legal provisions in the Penal Code and the Personal Status Law to hold accountable children who fail in their duties towards their parents, particularly in cases of neglect and abandonment of parents. 3. The Labor Law contains no legal provisions allocating appropriate working hours for older persons or specifying the types of work in which they may be employed, which would enable them to participate in the labor market and allow their expertise to be utilized. 4. The Civil Retirement Law includes provisions obliging officials to retire older persons as soon as they reach the age of sixty, in addition to the Social Security Law, Article (62) of which provides that the insured person is entitled to a retirement pension upon completing (60) years of age for men and (55) years of age for women. The NCHR considers it necessary for retirement at this age to be optional, provided that the person is medically fit to work, and that it not exceed seventy years of age for both sexes. 5. Article (3) of the Regulation on Licensing Care Homes and Clubs for Older Persons No. (81) of 2012⁴²⁹ addresses the conditions for licensing a care home or club, as well as the conditions to be met by the license applicant, among other matters. The NCHR considers it necessary to add a provision to hold accountable anyone who commits physical or psychological abuse or exploitation against residents of such homes, and to consider such an act a violation warranting closure by the Minister of Social Development.

Conditions of the Rights of Older Persons in Jordan:

In 2017, the NCHR launched its Second Periodic Report on the Conditions of the Rights of Older Persons in Jordan. The report included a study and analysis of the international standards and the national framework governing their rights; the NCHR also set out its position on the international standards and domestic legislation governing their rights, and monitored the conditions of older persons in residential centers, day clubs, and remote and underserved areas in all governorates of the Kingdom. The NCHR recorded its monitoring observations as follows:

1. There are no residential homes affiliated with the governmental sector, while the Ministry of Social Development registers and licenses residential homes and purchases their services for a monthly

⁴²⁸Such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Law of 1956 and its amendments, the Social Security Law, the Personal Status Law, the Public Health Law, the Labor Law and the Regulation on Licensing Elderly Care Homes and their Clubs, as well as the Instructions for Licensing Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and the Instructions on Day Clubs for the Elderly.

⁴²⁹Official Gazette, Issue No. (5193), dated 31 December 2012.

amount of only (260) Jordanian Dinars⁴³⁰ per older person, which is a low amount compared with the needs of an older person, the minimum cost of which amounts to (500) Jordanian Dinars, covering accommodation, social care, food and other services.

2. All homes for older persons are located in the Central and Northern Regions, of which (9) homes are in the Central Region and one home in the Northern Region, while the Southern Region has none, which weakens residents' contact with the outside world, such as visits by family members and relatives residing in the Southern Region, and with civil society organizations and relevant bodies.
3. The physical environment of some homes for older persons is unsuitable in terms of: a. The absence of an outdoor area for sun exposure, or, where one exists, it is not equipped for them. b. Insufficient sanitary facilities relative to the number of beneficiaries. c. Lack of supportive environmental accessibility facilities such as handrails in corridors and sanitary facilities to avoid the risk of slipping. d. Absence of ramps at entrances, in contravention of the National Building Code. e. Absence of elevators, which forces caregivers to carry older persons, posing a risk to both older persons and staff. f. Lack of protective covers for electrical switches to protect older persons from harm. g. Overcrowding of some rooms with beds. h. Rooms are not fitted with a call bell to meet residents' needs when required. i. Buildings are not properly maintained, there is a shortage of equipment, furniture and tools, and some of them are unfit for use. j. Most dining halls in the homes are far from the rooms, which hinders older persons' use of them.
4. All homes have health clinics and health records and files; however, they are not adequately equipped with medical devices and equipment for emergencies to provide the necessary health care and follow-up.
5. Most homes lack reading libraries, computer rooms, or spaces for sports, recreational and religious activities.
6. Lack of experience and training among staff in most of these homes in dealing with older persons, which affects the rights of older persons who need special attention and care, given the presence of many older persons suffering from age-related diseases, Alzheimer's disease and other illnesses that require specialized knowledge on the part of supervisors regarding the nature of these diseases and how to deal with them.
7. Poor psychological condition of male and female beneficiaries of residential homes, owing to neglect by their families and the lack of contact with them by telephone or through visits, and their lack of participation in social occasions, which affects their psychological, social and physical condition.

The NCHR's observations on day clubs were as follows:

1. There are no day clubs affiliated with the governmental sector, as the role of the Ministry of Social Development is limited to registering and licensing such clubs only.
2. All registered and licensed clubs are located in the Central Region, particularly in the Capital and Balqa Governorates, while the Northern and Southern Regions have none.
3. Activities in the clubs vary between cultural, social, artistic, literary, recreational and health activities, but they lack sports activities.

⁴³⁰The number of older men and women in residential care homes at the expense of the Ministry of Social Development reached (136) out of (360) older men and women.

4. Older persons suffer from a lack of attention from local and international civil society organizations and relevant bodies, and from not being involved in the activities and programs currently available, with their participation limited to official occasions and holidays only.
5. Most older persons in the clubs possess diverse competencies and expertise, as well as higher educational levels, which could be utilized and passed on to future generations.
6. The lack of societal encouragement for older persons to join day clubs deprives them of their right to inclusion and interaction with society and contact with the outside world, and also limits the willingness of civil society organizations to establish day clubs and to support the Government in some of its roles in day care for older persons⁴³¹.

On the other hand, in 2017 the NCHR monitored a number of challenges faced by older persons outside care homes, which are the same challenges mentioned by the Center in its report on the state of human rights in Jordan for 2016⁴³², in addition to: 1. Weak contribution of the private sector to supporting homes for older persons. 2. The small number of institutions that reflect older persons' issues in their strategies and national plans. 3. Weak efforts to create an older-person-friendly environment in terms of buildings, means of transport and public parks. 4. Scarcity of studies and research specialized in issues of aging. 5. Insufficient attention to medical specializations concerned with older persons, such as geriatric medicine⁴³³, nursing and home health care, which has led to a notable shortage in the number of specialists in these fields and to the high cost of such services when provided by private sector institutions.

In 2017, the National Council for Family Affairs launched the Jordanian National Strategy for Older Persons for the years (2018–2022), which was prepared through a participatory approach with the NCHR, as a member of the National Committee for Following Up the Implementation of the Strategy, together with the governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with older persons' issues. The Strategy aims to provide security and dignity and to achieve well-being for older persons in Jordan. The Strategy includes the priority aspects and the actions required under each of its following main pillars: 1. Contribution of older persons to the development process. 2. Achieving health care for older persons. 3. Providing a supportive physical environment and social care for older persons. The Strategy was developed 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), the third pillar of which addresses the rights of older persons as one of the groups most vulnerable to violations.

The year 2017 also saw a decrease in the number of cases filed by parents against their children concerning claims for maintenance, which amounted to (560) cases compared with (761) cases in 2016. This is attributable to requests by the parties to the dispute to refer their dispute to the Family Reconciliation Office, of which there are (19) offices, (4) of which are still under establishment⁴³⁴.

The NCHR commends the Government's response to its recommendation to include older persons under the umbrella of health insurance. A decision of the Prime Minister was issued on 28 December 2017, pursuant to the provisions of Article (30) of the Civil Health Insurance Regulation, approving the Amended Instructions to the Instructions on the Coverage of Individual Citizens by Civil Health Insurance of 2004. The amended Instructions provide that the subscription fee of an individual

⁴³¹For more information, please refer to the Center's website <http://www.nchr.org.jo>.

⁴³²For more information, see the report on the state of human rights in Jordan for 2016, pp. (205–206).

⁴³³The number of physicians specialized in geriatric medicine at the Ministry of Health is only three.

⁴³⁴For more information, see the following link: http://www.sjd.gov.jo/DetailsPage/SJD_AR/NewsDetailsAr.aspx?ID=350

subscribed to health insurance who is over sixty years of age shall be covered from public expenditure. The Instructions take effect from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette⁴³⁵.

Recommendations:

To strengthen and protect the rights of older persons, the Center reaffirms the recommendations made in its previous annual reports⁴³⁶, in addition to the following:

1. Supporting 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. The competent authorities should prepare national social policies and plans specific to older persons in the fields of awareness-raising, education, employment, training, the family and other areas, including strengthening the participatory approach aimed at involving older persons in development and in making decisions that concern them, involving the private sector, exchanging expertise and purposeful media promotion.
3. Launching an initiative for sponsoring older persons with money or time, aimed at achieving social solidarity among citizens and integrating older persons into the local community.
4. Improving the physical environmental conditions of the buildings of homes and clubs for older persons, in terms of the adequacy of sanitary facilities relative to capacity and the provision of safe corridors, grab bars and handrails.
5. Supporting and encouraging intergenerational communication and providing opportunities to benefit from the expertise of older persons in various fields.
6. Calling on the Ministry of Social Development, voluntary bodies and the private sector to expand the provision of services to older persons, especially in the governorates.

⁴³⁵Official Gazette, Issue No. (5496), dated 16 January 2018.

⁴³⁶For more information, see the report on the state of human rights for 2016, pp. (206–207).

Annexes

Annex: Analysis of Complaints and Requests for Assistance for 2017

Complaints Received by the Center in 2017

In 2017, the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) received (337) complaints, compared with (299) complaints in 2016, of which (260) complaints related to civil and political rights and (70) complaints to economic, social and cultural rights, while the number of complaints related to the rights of the groups most in need of protection was only (7) complaints. The outcome of their follow-up was as follows:

A satisfactory result was achieved in (46) complaints, i.e. 13.65% of the total number of complaints; (7) complaints were closed without reaching a satisfactory result, i.e. 2.08%; and (16) complaints were closed as falling outside the Center's mandate, i.e. 4.75%. In addition, (28) complaints were closed because no violation was established, i.e. 8.31%, and (14) complaints were closed owing to the complainant's lack of cooperation, i.e. 4.15%, while the number of complaints still under follow-up reached (226) complaints, i.e. 67.06% of the total number of complaints, as shown in Table No. (1).

The high number of complaints still under follow-up⁴³⁷ at the NCHR is attributable to the following:

1. The failure of the competent authorities to respond to the Center's correspondence, their delay in responding, or their provision of merely formal replies, or the failure to provide the Center with the documents necessary to complete the verification process in some complaints, particularly complaints of torture and ill-treatment, namely the investigation records and the decisions issued by the Police Court.
2. The lack of cooperation of complainants in some cases and their fear of pursuing their complaints as a result of pressure exerted on them by certain authorities.
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 the compensation of victims.

Table No. (1): Total number of complaints received by the National Center for Human Rights by the rights allegedly violated, 2017

Right concerned	Number of complaints	Closed – satisfactory result	Closed – without satisfactory result	Outside the Center's mandate	No violation established	Complainant's lack of cooperation	Under follow-up
Recognition of legal personality (nationality)	7	0	0	0	0	1	6
Right to freedom of residence and movement	32	6	1	0	9	0	16
Right to obtain identity documents	13	1	1	1	0	0	10
Right to a fair trial	58	4	1	5	3	1	44
Right to liberty and security of person	34	2	0	3	1	0	28
Right to decent humane treatment	6	1	0	0	0	0	5
Right not to be subjected to beating and torture	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Right to asylum	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Right to equality and non-discrimination	4	1	0	0	1	0	2
Right to life	21	6	0	0	3	1	11

⁴³⁷ It should be noted that these reasons are the same as those set out in the NCHR's reports for previous years.

Right concerned	Number of complaints	Closed – satisfactory result	Closed – without satisfactory result	Outside the Center's mandate	No violation established	Complainant's lack of cooperation	Under follow-up
Right to physical integrity	48	8	2	1	4	8	25
Rights of inmates of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers	19	4	1	0	1	0	13
Right to freedom of opinion and expression	4	0	0	1	0	0	3
Right to vote and stand for election	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Right to join political parties and trade unions	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
Right to establish and join associations	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Right of access to information	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Right to health	11	4	0	1	1	0	5
Right to work	35	3	0	0	2	2	28
Right to an adequate standard of living	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Right to housing	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
Right to freedom of belief	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Right to education	9	1	1	0	0	0	7
Right to hold public office	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Right to social insurance	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
Right to property	4	0	0	1	0	0	3
Right to development	4	0	0	0	1	0	3
Right to compensation	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Rights of the child	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
Rights of persons with disabilities	3	2	0	0	0	0	1
Rights of juveniles	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rights of older persons	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grand total	337	46	7	16	28	14	226
Percentages	100%	13.65%	2.08%	4.75%	8.31%	4.15%	67.06%

Requests for Assistance Received by the NCHR in 2017

In 2017, the NCHR received (135) requests for assistance, compared with (225) requests in 2016, of which (90) requests related to civil and political rights and (39) requests to economic, social and cultural rights, while the number of requests for assistance related to the rights of the groups most in need of protection was (6) requests. Of these, (29) requests were closed with a satisfactory result, i.e. 21.48%, and (8) requests were closed without reaching a satisfactory result, i.e. 5.93%. The number of requests still under follow-up reached (76) requests, i.e. 56.3%. The Center also received (12) requests falling outside its mandate, i.e. 8.89%; (6) requests were closed because the violation was not established, i.e. 4.44% of the total number of requests for assistance; and (4) requests for assistance, i.e. 2.96%, were closed owing to their applicants' lack of cooperation. The closure of a number of requests for assistance with an unsatisfactory result is attributable to the lack of cooperation of the entity from which assistance was requested, or its provision of merely formal replies that did not lead to a satisfactory result, as shown in Table No. (2).

The Center notes a decrease in requests for assistance in 2017 compared with 2016 by (90) requests, as requests for assistance related to economic, social and cultural rights decreased by (45) requests, and requests for assistance related to civil and political rights likewise declined by (45) requests.

Table No. (2): Total number of requests for assistance received by the National Center for Human Rights by the rights allegedly violated, 2017

Right concerned	Number of complaints	Closed – satisfactory result	Closed – without satisfactory result	Outside the Center's mandate	No violation established	Complainant's lack of cooperation	Under follow-up
Recognition of legal personality (nationality)	5	1	1	0	0	0	3
Right to freedom of residence and movement	22	6	2	0	1	1	12
Right to obtain identity documents	16	6	1	2	0	0	7
Right to a fair trial	10	4	1	1	1	0	3
Right to liberty and security of person	5	3	1	0	0	0	1
Right to asylum	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Right to life and physical integrity	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Right not to be subjected to beating and torture	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rights of inmates of Correctional and Rehabilitation Centers	22	2	1	2	2	1	14
Right to freedom of opinion and expression	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Right to decent humane treatment	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Right to health	13	2	1	1	0	0	9
Right to work	13	3	0	2	0	0	8
Right to hold public office	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Right to an adequate standard of living	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Right to legal aid	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Right to education	3	1	0	0	0	0	2
Right to housing	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Right to property	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
Family rights	4	1	0	1	1	1	0
Rights of the child	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Rights of juveniles	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Grand total	135	29	8	12	6	4	76
Percentages	100%	21.48%	5.93%	8.89%	4.44%	2.96%	56.3%

Chart: Numbers of complaints and requests for assistance for the years 2016 and 2017

Year	Complaints	Requests for assistance
2016	299	225
2017	337	135

It should be noted that personal attendance at the NCHR's headquarters still ranks first among the means of receiving complaints, with (228) complaints, i.e. 67.66%, followed by complaints received by e-mail with (39) complaints, i.e. 11.57%; the number of complaints received by ordinary mail rose to (22)

complaints, i.e. 6.53%; complaints received through the hotline numbered (17), i.e. 5.04%, and by fax (14) complaints, i.e. 4.15%; complaints received through press monitoring numbered (12), i.e. 3.56% of total complaints; and the mechanism of receiving complaints through liaison officers in the governorates came last with (5) complaints, i.e. 1.48%.

Chart: Percentage of complaints received by the Center by means of receipt, 2017

Means of receipt	Percentage
Personal attendance	67.66%
E-mail	11.57%
Ordinary mail	6.53%
Hotline	5.04%
Fax	4.15%
Press monitoring	3.56%
Liaison officers	1.48%

Personal submission of requests for assistance through attendance at the NCHR's headquarters ranked first among the means of receiving requests, with (102) requests, i.e. 75.56% of total requests; receipt of requests for assistance by fax and hotline came second with (22) requests, i.e. 16.30%; e-mail ranked third with (7) requests, i.e. 5.19%; ordinary mail fourth with (3) requests, i.e. 2.22%; submission of requests for assistance through press monitoring ranked fifth with (1) request, i.e. 0.74%; and receipt through liaison officers in the governorates came last, as no request was received by the NCHR through them.

Chart: Percentage of requests for assistance received by the Center by means of receipt, 2017

Means of receipt	Percentage
Personal attendance	75.56%
Fax and hotline	16.30%
E-mail	5.19%
Ordinary mail	2.22%
Press monitoring	0.74%

As regards the distribution of complaints across the governorates of the Kingdom, the chart shows that the governorates of Amman, Zarqa and Irbid have continued for several years to occupy the top positions in the number of complaints received by the Center. The Capital, Amman, ranked first in the number of complaints received, with (220) complaints, i.e. 65.28%, mainly because the Center has no branches in the other governorates of the Kingdom, in addition to the higher population of the Capital Governorate compared with the other governorates and the Center's proximity to individuals residing in the Capital Governorate. Zarqa Governorate ranked second with (32) complaints, i.e. 9.5%, and Irbid Governorate third with (26) complaints, i.e. 7.72%, while the governorates of Karak and Madaba came fourth with (13) complaints each, i.e. 3.86%.

Chart: Number of complaints received by the Center by governorate, 2017

Governorate	Number of complaints
Amman	220

Governorate	Number of complaints
Zarqa	32
Irbid	26
Karak	13
Madaba	13
Ma'raq	9
Balqa	5
Ma'an	5
Jerash	3
Ajloun	3
Aqaba	2
Tafleh	1
Outside Jordan	5

As for requests for assistance, the Capital Governorate, Amman, ranked first in the number of requests for assistance received by the NCHR, with (90) requests, i.e. 66.67%; Zarqa Governorate ranked second with (12) requests, i.e. 8.89%; Madaba Governorate ranked third with (8) requests, i.e. 5.93%; and Ma'an Governorate ranked fourth with (6) requests, i.e. 4.44%, while the Center received no request for assistance from the governorates of Ajloun, Aqaba and Tafleh.

Chart: Number of requests for assistance received by the NCHR by governorate, 2017

Governorate	Number of requests for assistance
Amman	90
Zarqa	12
Madaba	8
Ma'an	6
Ma'raq	5
Balqa	4
Karak	4
Irbid	4
Jerash	2
Ajloun	0
Tafleh	0
Aqaba	0

The number of complaints received by the Center against security agencies reached (220) complaints, i.e. 65.28% of the total number of complaints received by the Center, of which (127) complaints were against the Public Security Directorate (PSD), (32) complaints against the Ministry of Interior and (61) complaints against the General Intelligence Department, as shown in the following figure.

Chart: Number of complaints received by the NCHR by respondent entity

Respondent entity	Number of complaints
Public Security	127
Ministry of Justice	4

Respondent entity	Number of complaints
Ministry of Labor	5
Ministry of Interior	32
Ministry of Health	4
Ministry of Industry and Trade	1
Ministry of Tourism	2
Ministry of Transport	2
Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs	1
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	1
Foreign entities	3
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2
Ministry of Social Development	5
Ministry of Education	14
Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs	3
Independent Election Commission (IEC)	1
Customs Department	2
Civil Service Bureau	2
Prime Ministry	2
Universities	4
House of Representatives	1
General Command (of the Armed Forces)	5
General Intelligence Department	61
State Security Court	3
Military Judiciary	1
Hospitals	6
Judicial Council	6
Royal Jordanian Geographic Center	2
Embassies	1
Ecclesiastical courts	1
Jordan Valley Authority	1
Ministry of Public Works and Housing	1
Other entities	4
Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places	1
Individuals	17
Companies	3
Housing and Urban Development	1
Royal Jordanian	1
Greater Amman Municipality	1
Associations	2
Artists Association	1

The Center also noted an increase in the number of complaints submitted against certain security agencies (such as the General Intelligence Department) and certain ministries (such as the Ministry of Education) compared with 2016,⁴³⁸ and a decrease in the number of complaints submitted against certain ministries such as the Ministry of Social Development, while the Center did not record any complaint against domestic worker recruitment agencies in 2017.

Despite the decrease in the number of requests for legal assistance directed to certain security agencies, such as the number of requests directed to the Public Security Directorate, from (55) requests in 2016 to (31) requests in 2017, and the decrease in the number of requests directed to the Ministry of Interior to (30) requests compared with (43) requests in 2016, the largest number of requests for assistance was nevertheless directed to the security agencies in general, reaching (89) requests, i.e. 65.93%, as shown in the following figure.

Chart: Number of requests for assistance by the entity from which assistance was requested

Entity	Number of requests for assistance
Public Security	31
Ministry of Interior	30
General Intelligence	28
Individuals	5
General Command	4
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4
Foreign entities	3
Ministry of Labor	3
Ministry of Health	2
Prime Ministry	2
Greater Amman Municipality	2
Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places	2
Judicial Council	2
Ministry of Education	2
Social Development	1
Royal Medical Services	1
Royal Hashemite Court	1
Social Security	1
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	1
Royal Jordanian	1
Universities	1
Department of Lands (and Survey)	1
Civil Service Bureau	1
Military Judiciary	1
Jordan Bar Association	1
Hospitals	1

⁴³⁸For more information, see the Annual Report of the National Center for Human Rights for 2016, page 220.

Entity	Number of requests for assistance
Ministry of Agriculture	1
Ministry of Justice	1
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	1

The number of complaints submitted by holders of Jordanian nationality reached (306) complaints, i.e. 90.8%, while the Palestinian and Syrian nationalities ranked second with (5) complaints each, i.e. 1.48%, and the Iraqi nationality ranked third with (3) complaints, i.e. 0.89%, as shown in the following chart:

Chart: Distribution of the number of complaints received by the NCHR by nationality

Nationality	Number of complaints
Jordanian	306
Palestinian	5
Syrian	5
Iraqi	3
Sudanese	2
Saudi	2
American	2
Indian	2
Filipino	2
Yemeni	2
Egyptian	1
Guinean	1
Kenyan	1
Sri Lankan	1
Bulgarian	1
South African	1

As regards the nationality of applicants for assistance, the following chart shows that requests for legal assistance received by the NCHR from holders of Jordanian nationality ranked first with (121) requests, i.e. 89.63%, while requests submitted by holders of Palestinian nationality ranked second with (7) requests, i.e. 5%, followed by the Syrian nationality in third place with (4) requests, i.e. 3%.

Chart: Distribution of the number of requests for assistance received by the NCHR by nationality

Nationality	Number of requests for assistance
Jordanian	121
Palestinian	7
Syrian	4
Iraqi	1
Egyptian	1
Filipino	1

The following figure also shows that the percentage of complaints submitted by males reached 76.26%, and the percentage of requests for assistance 67.41%, whereas the percentage of complaints submitted by females reached 23.74%, while the percentage of requests for assistance submitted by females reached 32.59%.

Chart: Number and percentage of complaints and requests for assistance received by the NCHR by sex

Category	Males	Females
Complaints	257 (76.26%)	80 (23.74%)
Requests for assistance	91 (67.41%)	44 (32.59%)