

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	99
Land:	Jordan
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Annual Report 2008
Udgivet:	28. maj 2008
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	5. november 2008

> [Home](#) > [Learn About Human Rights](#) > [Human rights by country](#) > Jordan - Amnesty International
Report 2008

JORDAN - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2008

HUMAN RIGHTS IN HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

Head of State : King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein

Head of government : Nader al-Dahabi (replaced Ma'arouf Bakhit in November)

Death penalty : retentionist

Population : 6 million

Life expectancy : 71.9 years

Under-5 mortality (m/f) : 23/21 per 1,000

Adult literacy : 91.1 per cent

People arrested on suspicion of involvement in terrorism continued to face unfair trials before the State Security Court (SSC). Defendants were sentenced to prison terms, or death, despite saying they had been tortured. Women continued to suffer from discrimination, domestic violence and "honour" killings.

BACKGROUND

Following elections in November, that NGOs were not allowed to monitor, a new government was formed headed by Prime Minister Nader al-Dahabi. The 27-member cabinet included four women ministers, three more than the previous cabinet. Jordan hosted some 500,000 Iraqis and almost two million UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees, most of whom have Jordanian citizenship.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

The authorities did not appear to have taken steps to implement most of the recommendations made by the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, following his 5 January report of a 2006 visit. The report concluded that "the practice of torture is widespread... and in some places routine", and urged that criminal investigations be initiated against at least eight identified officials. On 31 January the head of the Foreign Ministry's legal department rejected the report's conclusions as "incorrect and groundless". However, on 1 December the government amended Article 208 of the Penal Code to prohibit torture and adopt an identical definition of torture to that in the UN Convention against Torture. The amendment did not stipulate that penalties for perpetrators of torture should be in line with the Convention.

- In Swaqa prison on 21 August, following a visit by Human Rights Watch, most of the more than 2,100 detainees were reportedly beaten and had their beards and heads forcibly shaved. One detainee, 'Ala' Abu Utair, died on 22 August, reportedly from injuries caused by beatings. The prison director was dismissed and the authorities set up an investigation into the events but its outcome was not known by the end of the year.

In at least eight cases before the SSC, defendants withdrew "confessions" they had made in pre-trial detention, saying they had been extracted under torture. The SSC was not known to have investigated these allegations adequately.

'WAR ON TERROR'

At least 20 people suspected of terrorism said they had been tortured in pre-trial detention and coerced into signing "confessions" they later withdrew in court. On 31 January the head of the Foreign Ministry's legal department denied that the USA operates secret detention centres in Jordan. On 4 November US authorities transferred three Jordanian inmates from Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, to Jordan. Osama Abu-Kabir, Ahmad Hasan Sulayman, and Ibrahim Zaydan were arrested on arrival, detained for one week and then released. They were denied family or legal visits while held in Jordan, but said they were otherwise well treated.

PROLONGED DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL

- 'Isam al-'Utaibi, also known as Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, remained in solitary confinement in pre-trial detention at the General Intelligence Department (GID) following his arrest on 6 July 2005. The director of the GID stated that he was charged with "conspiracy to commit terrorist acts". He was not allowed a lawyer until 19 April and was then allowed to meet him only once by the end of the year.
- Samer Helmi al-Barq apparently remained detained without charge since his transfer to Jordan on 26 October 2003. He was arrested in Pakistan on 15 July 2003, detained for two weeks, then handed over to the US authorities and kept for three months in a secret prison outside Pakistan, before being transferred to Jordan.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Seventeen women were reported to have been victims of "honour killings". Perpetrators of such crimes continued to receive reduced sentences.

- In June the Criminal Court sentenced a man to a reduced six-month sentence for murdering his unmarried sister, because it accepted that he had killed her "in a fit of fury" after she said she was pregnant.

On 10 August the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Jordanian authorities enact a comprehensive gender equality law and

modify or repeal discriminatory provisions of the Personal Status Act, Penal Code and Nationality Act. The Committee also recommended amendment of the Penal Code to ensure perpetrators of “honour” crimes and of premeditated “honour” crimes do not benefit from reduced penalties; that article 99 (which halves a perpetrator’s sentence when he is excused by the victim’s family) is not applicable to “honour” crimes or other cases where the victim is related to the perpetrator; and to ensure a rapist does not escape punishment by marrying his victim. On 25 November the UN Development Fund for Women reported that in around two-thirds of cases the victim’s family drops charges against the perpetrator, making a lighter sentence more likely.

DEATH PENALTY

At least five people were sentenced to death following trials before the SSC despite alleging in court that they had been tortured. It was not known whether the SSC took adequate steps to investigate the allegations. Another 12 people were sentenced to death following trials before the criminal court. In May the Cassation Court directed the SSC to reconsider death sentences it had imposed on nine individuals convicted of planning a chemical attack in Amman. The cases were not completed by the end of the year. On 29 July King Abdullah commuted the death sentences on seven people allegedly involved in violent events in Ma’an in 2002. The sentences were reduced to terms of 15 years’ imprisonment. A number of the defendants said they had been tortured to secure their “confessions”.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

On 21 March the Jordanian parliament passed a new Press and Publication Law while rejecting a clause that would have allowed journalists to be imprisoned for certain publication violations. Journalists could still be imprisoned under other laws including the Penal Code for insulting the king and stirring sectarian strife and sedition.

- On 9 October the SSC sentenced former MP Ahmad al-‘Abbadi to two years’ imprisonment for “undermining the prestige and reputation of the state” and “for belonging to an illegal movement”, the US-based Jordan National Movement. He had allegedly written a letter to a US Senator citing corruption and human rights abuse in Jordan.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

The authorities refused permission for a number of peaceful events and proposed a law that would further restrict the activities of NGOs.

- On 26 October the governor of Amman reportedly denied for the fourth time in two months a request from the New Jordan NGO to host a workshop on civil society monitoring of elections.
- A draft NGO law proposed by the cabinet on 9 October would ban NGOs from engaging in “political, religious or sectarian” activities and from establishing branches, and increase the

scope for governmental influence over the management and financing of NGOs. It had not been enacted by the end of the year.

REFUGEES

Jordan counts among its population 1.9 million Palestinian refugees, most of whom have Jordanian citizenship. The country has hosted some 500,000 Iraqi refugees over the past few years. During the year an increasing number of Iraqis trying to enter Jordan were turned away. A number of Iraqi asylum-seekers and refugees were arrested in Jordan and forcibly returned to Iraq. The Jordanian authorities continued to deny entry to some 193 Iranian-Kurdish refugees who now live in appalling conditions in tents in Iraq near the border with Jordan. This contravenes international refugee law.

MIGRANT WORKERS

- The authorities failed to protect thousands of migrant workers from abuse. Employees' passports were confiscated, and residency permits were denied, putting them at risk of arrest and deportation. Overtime working was enforced, wages were withheld, some living conditions were inadequate and access to proper medical care was denied. Physical abuse and sexual abuse of employees were reported.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VISITS/REPORTS

- Amnesty International delegates visited Jordan in March, September and December.
 - **Jordan: Death penalty/torture and ill-treatment** (MDE 16/001/2007)
 - **Iraq: Millions in flight: the Iraqi refugee crisis** (MDE 14/041/2007)
-