

Jordan

Jordan escalated its crackdown on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, detaining and prosecuting thousands of individuals for criticizing the authorities, expressing pro-Palestine sentiments or participating in peaceful protests. Hundreds were held in administrative detention without charge or access to due process guarantees. Political parties were dissolved. Women and girls continued to face discrimination in law and practice. Refugees and asylum seekers faced deteriorating conditions, including due to funding cuts. Jordan remained vulnerable to climate change, which threatened its water resources.

Background

Jordan underwent its fourth UPR in January. The government only noted recommendations to remove legal provisions that criminalize forms of expression protected under international law. It rejected recommendations to repeal or amend the Crime Prevention Law of 1954, which governors continued to use to administratively detain individuals without charge or trial. It did not commit to amending the Nationality Law which would grant women the right to pass on their nationality to their children on an equal basis with men. It rejected recommendations to abolish the death penalty and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

Parliamentary elections were held in September for the first time under a 2022 electoral law. Opposition parties won around a fifth of the seats. Tribal and pro-government factions continued to dominate the assembly.

Jordan continued to host around 2 million Palestinian refugees and more than 750,000 refugees from other countries, including Syria.

The unemployment rate remained high, especially among women and youth.

Freedom of expression

The authorities charged hundreds of individuals under the repressive 2023 Cybercrimes Law for social media posts that criticized the authorities, including the government's peace deal with Israel, expressed pro-Palestine sentiments, or called for peaceful protests and public strikes.¹

In June a criminal court convicted journalist Hiba Abu Taha and sentenced her to one year in prison for using social media platforms to “spread false news, or insult or defame a governmental authority or official body”, and for “inciting strife or sedition or threatening societal peace or inciting hatred or violence”. The charges stemmed from an article she wrote and which was shared on social media platforms, in which she criticized Jordan's interception of Iranian missiles aimed at Israel in April. According to Hiba Abu Taha's lawyer, the appeals court confirmed the conviction and sentence on the same day without holding a public hearing, which he said indicated that the judge's decision had already been made. The one-year prison term was the longest sentence documented by Amnesty International to date under the 2023 Cybercrimes Law.

In July a criminal court convicted lawyer and activist Moutaz Awwad of “provoking sedition or strife” under Article 17 of the 2023 Cybercrimes Law and fined him JOD 5,000 (around USD 7,000) for posts on X, formerly Twitter, in which he criticized the policies of Arab countries towards Israel and expressed pro-Palestine sentiment.

Also in July, security forces arrested prominent journalist Ahmad Hassan al-Zoubi, enacting a ruling by a court that had sentenced him to one year in prison in July 2023 for “provoking strife”

under the previous 2015 Cybercrimes Law for a Facebook post criticizing the authorities' response to transportation strikes.²

The authorities routinely violated the fair trial rights of detainees arrested for exercising their right to freedom of expression, including by failing to present an arrest warrant, failing to inform them of the reasons for their summons or the charges against them, questioning them without a lawyer, and using psychological coercion and intimidatory tactics during their interrogation and/or trial.

In February a prosecutor at the State Security Court, a military court, charged political activist Ayman Sanduka with “incitement to oppose the political regime” under Article 149 of the Penal Code. The charge related to an open letter to the king that Ayman Sanduka had posted on Facebook in October 2023 in which he criticized Jordan’s diplomatic relations with Israel. He remained on trial before the State Security Court at the end of the year.³

Freedom of peaceful assembly

Between October 2023 and October 2024, the authorities arrested thousands of protesters and bystanders following protests in support of Palestinian people in Gaza outside the Israeli embassy in the capital, Amman. Many remained in detention at the end of the year.⁴

In March, Jordanian security forces violently dispersed peaceful demonstrations outside the Israeli Embassy using tear gas, batons and beatings. Pro-Palestine protesters reported restrictions on banners with certain slogans and the participation of children under 18 years of age. The authorities also prohibited the continuation of protests after midnight.

Freedom of association

The authorities dissolved 19 political parties for “failure to comply with registration conditions”. Under the 2022 Political Parties Law, such conditions included having a minimum of 1,000 founding members who have never been convicted of crimes that violate “honour, morals and security”.

In April the Supreme Administrative Court upheld a decision to dissolve the Partnership and Salvation Party for “failing to hold a general conference that meets the conditions stipulated in the Jordanian Political Parties Law”. A lawyer who was a member of the party told Amnesty International that the party faced harassment and intimidation from the authorities.

Arbitrary detention

Local governors continued to use the Crime Prevention Law of 1954 to administratively detain anyone considered to be “a danger to the people” without charge or the ability to challenge the lawfulness of their detention before a competent judicial body. This included activists as well as women at risk of being victims of “honour crimes”, who were often detained under the pretext of protecting them from potential violence or reprisals.

Scores of individuals were held in administrative detention in relation to pro-Palestine protests or expression, on orders of the governor of Amman, including in cases where the prosecutor had ordered their release.

For example, in March, activist Majd al-Farraj was arrested during a protest and held in administrative detention for 40 days. Similarly, in April, security officers arrested online activist Samer al-Qassem over a TikTok video about Palestinian refugees. While the prosecution authorities released Samer al-Qassem on bail in May, the governor of Amman requested his administrative

detention for a further month. In June a criminal court sentenced him to three months' imprisonment and a fine under the 2023 Cybercrimes Law for "using social media platforms to provoke sedition and threaten societal peace".

Thousands of individuals faced debt imprisonment under the Execution Law, the primary legislative instrument which, in breach of international law, allows for the imprisonment of individuals who fail to repay debts.

Women's and girls' rights

Women and girls continued to face discrimination in law and practice, especially in personal status laws and the lack of protection from domestic violence. Women under the age of 40 needed the consent of a male guardian, typically their father or another male relative, to marry. Women remained legally unable to pass their nationality to their spouse and children on an equal basis with men.

Women were 40% more likely than men to be unemployed due to cultural and societal norms that limited their access to the workforce, as well as barriers such as long working hours and restricted access to childcare. According to the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap Report, the share of women in local government diminished by 6.9% compared to 2023.

Refugees' and migrants' rights

According to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, a shortage in international aid among other reasons left refugees and asylum seekers facing deteriorating conditions, including severe limitations in access to their economic and social rights – among others, the rights to food, water, healthcare, shelter, education and work. Poverty rates among registered refugees living in camps increased significantly, with 67% classified as poor, an increase from 45% in 2021. According to UNHCR, approximately 40% of refugees in camps faced severe levels of climate vulnerability, being particularly susceptible to leaks and flooding due to the inadequate quality of shelters.

In April the Jordanian authorities arrested Syrian refugees Atiya Mohammad Abu Salem and Wael al-Ashi during a sweeping crackdown on pro-Palestine protests. The Ministry of the Interior subsequently issued deportation orders for them.⁵ The men were not referred to a judicial body, nor charged with any crime.⁶ In May the authorities released Atiya Mohammad Abu Salem and reportedly deported Wael al-Ashi to the United Arab Emirates, where his family resided.

Non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers remained excluded from work unless they renounced their international protection and/or asylum applications with UNHCR and opted for migrant worker status.

Right to a healthy environment

Jordan continued to be one of the most water-scarce countries globally, with supply meeting around two-thirds of the population's water needs. A notable decline in rainfall, exacerbated by climate change, further reduced Jordan's water resources.

Jordan failed to update its 2021 NDC under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.