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Jordan

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2001

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy ruled by King Abdullah II bin Hussein since the death of his father, King Hussein bin Talal, in February 1999. The Constitution concentrates a high degree of executive and legislative authority in the King, who determines domestic and foreign policy. In the King's absence, a regent, whose authority is outlined in the Constitution, assumes many of the King's responsibilities. The Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet are appointed by the King and manage the daily affairs of government. The Parliament consists of the 40-member Senate, appointed by the King, and a lower house, the Chamber of Deputies which is elected every 4 years. A new election law enacted by the Government in July increased the size of the lower house from 80 seats to 104. The lower house exerts influence only intermittently on domestic and foreign policy issues. The 1997 parliamentary elections were marred by reports of registration irregularities, fraud, and restrictions on the press and on campaign materials. The King dissolved Parliament in June and postponed elections scheduled for 2001 until no earlier than summer 2002. According to the Constitution, the judiciary is independent, and during the year, the Government took steps to strengthen the Judiciary's independence; however, in practice it remains susceptible to political pressure and interference by the executive.

General police functions are the responsibility of the Public Security Directorate (PSD). The PSD, the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), and the military share responsibility for maintaining internal security, and have authority to monitor the activities of persons believed to be security threats. Elements of the security forces continue to commit human rights abuses.

The country, with a population of approximately 5 million, has a mixed economy, with significant but declining government participation in industry, transportation, and communications. It has few natural resources and relies heavily on foreign assistance and remittances from citizens working abroad. Over the past 2 years, the Government took steps to increase privatization and to improve the country's investment climate. For example, in April 2000, the country acceded to the World Trade Organization. However, the economy continues to suffer from chronically high unemployment, and per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth since 1996 has stagnated between 1 and 2 percent above population growth rates. Price controls remain on bread, pharmaceuticals, gasoline, and animal feed. Wages remain stagnant. International sanctions against Iraq, historically the country's largest trading partner, continue to inhibit export growth. Ongoing violence in the occupied territories continued to adversely affect the tourist industry and foreign investment. Per capita GDP in 2000 was approximately \$1,654 (1,173 dinars). Many families, especially those in rural areas, are unable to meet basic needs to subsist.

The Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens in some areas; however, there were significant problems in other areas. There are significant restrictions on citizens' right to change their Government. Citizens may participate in the political system through their elected representatives in Parliament; however, the King has discretionary authority to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister, Cabinet, and upper house of Parliament, to dissolve Parliament, and to establish public policy. Other human rights problems included police abuse and mistreatment of detainees; allegations of torture; arbitrary arrest and detention; lack of transparent investigations and accountability within the security services; prolonged detention without charge; denial of due process of law stemming from the expanded authority of the State Security Court and interference in the judicial process; infringements on citizens' privacy rights; harassment of members of opposition political parties; and significant restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association. A law enacted by the Government in October gave the Government broad powers to restrict and prosecute journalists and close publications. This law effectively superseded the 1999 amendments to the Press and Publications Law, which had reduced somewhat the restrictions in previous laws regarding the ability of journalists and publications to function and report freely; however, significant restrictions continued to be in effect. The Government limits academic freedom. The Government imposes some limits on freedom of religion, and there is official and societal discrimination against adherents of unrecognized religions. The evangelical Christian community reported fewer incidents of governmental harassment during the year. There are some restrictions on freedom of movement. Violence against women, restrictions on women's rights, and societal discrimination against women are problems. The law still allows for reduced punishments for violent "honor crimes" against women for alleged immoral acts. Child abuse remains a problem, and discrimination against Palestinians persists. Abuse of foreign domestic servants is a problem, and child labor occurs.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports of the arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life committed by the Government or its agents during the year.

The security services continue to be reluctant to conduct transparent investigations into allegations of wrongful deaths that occurred during police detention in previous years, thus promoting a climate of impunity. However, in some instances, the authorities were more forthcoming.

According to the Government, several members of the security service were remanded for trial in the January 2000 beating death of Mar'i Khalil Al-Jahran in a South Shuna police station.

In September the police provided diplomatic representatives with credible information that security forces were not responsible for the death of one person and injury of six others during an October 2000 protest in the Baqaa refugee camp. Protesters continued to maintain that police caused the death and injuries.

During the year, a government investigation into the alleged beating death of Musa Shalback in May 2000 concluded that security forces were not responsible for his death. After police pursued Shalback for allegedly stealing a car, witnesses claimed that police handcuffed and severely beat him. Shalback was in a coma when he arrived at the hospital; he died from his injuries 10 days later. The investigation concluded that Shalback died as a result of injuries sustained in a car crash that followed the pursuit.

The Government officially closed its investigation into the July 2000 death of Amjad Salem Ahmad Smadi, who died at a police station in Ajloun 45 minutes after police officers placed him in custody for suspected robbery. Human rights activists and family members believe that Smadi died as a result of beatings by police officers while in custody and subsequently was hanged to make it appear as if he had committed suicide. Based on government-released autopsy results that showed that Smadi died of natural causes, the Government concluded that his death was a suicide.

There were no developments in the investigation of the May 1999 death of Mahmoud Rashid Qasem Mohammed Ishtayeh, who died in a hospital while in police custody.

On August 6, unknown assailants shot and killed an Israeli businessman working in Amman. Two terrorist organizations, the Islamic Movement of Jordan ("The Group of Ahmed Al Daqamseh") and the previously unknown Nobles of Jordan, claimed responsibility for the killing. The Government stated that it has reason to believe the murder was criminal and not political in nature. By year's end, the Government made no arrest in the case.

Women continued to be victims of "honor killings" (see Section 5).

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law provides prisoners with the right to humane treatment and provides prisoners the right to an attorney; however, the police and security forces sometimes abuse detainees physically and verbally during detention and interrogation, and allegedly also use torture. Allegations of torture are difficult to verify because the police and security officials frequently deny detainees timely access to lawyers, despite legal provisions requiring such access. The most frequently alleged methods of torture include sleep deprivation, beatings on the soles of the feet, prolonged suspension with ropes in contorted positions, and extended solitary confinement. Defendants in high-profile cases before the State Security Court claimed to have been subjected to physical and psychological abuse while in detention. Government officials deny allegations of torture and abuse.

In 2000 Syria apprehended Raed Hijazi, accused of a terrorist plot targeting American and Israeli tourists in Jordan during the millennium celebrations, and rendered him to Jordan to stand trial (see Section 1.e.). According to media accounts of the trial, doctors for both the defense and the prosecution testified that Hijazi's body showed signs of having been beaten, but witnesses, including Hijazi, made contradictory and inconclusive claims regarding whether the alleged abuse occurred while he was in Jordanian or Syrian custody. The Jordanian court has rejected the allegations that Hijazi's confession was coerced.

A number of cases of beatings and other abuse while in police custody were reported to human rights activists during the year. Human rights activists believe that there were many more incidents that were not documented. Allegations of physical abuse by prison guards persists.

In December a GID officer allegedly struck a local television reporter in the stomach while interrogating him. According to the reporter's account of the incident, the GID officer subsequently apologized for striking him.

Police on several occasions used force to disperse demonstrations during the year (see Section 2.b.). For

example, on May 11, police used tear gas, water cannons, and dogs to disperse protestors in the Sweileh and Mahatta areas of Amman (see Sections 2.a and 2.b). In April police used physical force to end a sit-in staged by Ph.D. holders seeking better employment opportunities (see Sections 1.d and 2.b).

According to the Government, Kazem Dashi, who allegedly was beaten during his detention in April 2000, never was in police custody (see Section 1.d.).

A Government investigation into the alleged beating death of Musa Shalback in May 2000 concluded that security forces were not responsible for his death. Shalback died in a hospital in March 2000, 10 days after police reportedly beat him in Hai Nazal (see Section 1.a.).

There were no developments in the investigation of the November and December 2000 shooting attacks against Israeli diplomats.

Prisons and local police detention facilities are Spartan, and on the whole are severely overcrowded and understaffed; however most prisons meet international standards. Human rights groups and prisoners complained of poor food and water quality, inadequate medical facilities, and poor sanitation in certain facilities. In 2000 the Government opened a new prison facility in an attempt to alleviate to some extent the problem of overcrowding.

The Government holds some persons who are detained on national security grounds in separate detention facilities maintained by the GID. The Government holds other security detainees and prisoners in regular prisons. Conditions in GID detention facilities are significantly better than general police detention facilities. The security prisoners often are separated from common criminals; however, conditions for such prisoners do not differ significantly.

With some exceptions, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is permitted unrestricted access to prisoners and prison facilities, including GID facilities. In 1999 the Government formally granted the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) access to prisoners. Local human rights monitors are allowed to visit prisons, but complain that the authorities require them to undertake a lengthy and difficult procedure in order to obtain permission for such visits.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The security forces arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens. Under the Constitution, citizens are subject to arrest, trial, and punishment for the defamation of heads of state, dissemination of "false or exaggerated information outside the country that attacks state dignity," or defamation of public officials. Criminal laws generally require warrants; however, in most cases suspects may be detained for up to 48 hours in the absence of a warrant. In practice many warrants are obtained after arrests are made.

The Criminal Code requires that police notify legal authorities within 48 hours of an arrest and that legal authorities file formal charges within 10 days of an arrest; however, the courts routinely grant requests from prosecutors for 15-day extensions, which also is provided by law. This practice generally extends pretrial detention for protracted periods of time. In cases involving state security, the authorities frequently hold defendants in lengthy pretrial detention, do not provide defendants with the written charges against them, and do not allow defendants to meet with their lawyers until shortly before trial. Defendants before the State Security Court usually meet with their attorneys only 1 or 2 days before their trial. In April the Parliament passed amendments to the Criminal Code that eliminate pretrial detentions for certain categories of misdemeanors.

The Government detains persons, including journalists (see Section 2.a.) and Islamists, for varying amounts of time for what appear to be political reasons. Human rights sources reported that more than 500 persons were detained for security reasons and subsequently released within a short period of time throughout the year. This number likely underestimates the total number of political detainees. Human rights groups report that there are a smaller number of long-term political detainees.

Local governors have the authority to invoke the Preventing Crimes Law, which allows them to place citizens under house arrest for up to a year without formally charging them (see Section 2.d.). House arrest may involve requiring persons to report daily to a local police station and the imposition of a curfew. Persons who violate the terms of their house arrest may be imprisoned for up to 14 days.

On January 27, security officials arrested 7 members of the Anti-Normalization Committee, a group that opposes the country's relations with Israel, on charges of belonging to an illegal group (see Section 2.a.). The State Security Court also charged 2 of the 7 persons with possession of explosives and with terrorist activities. The arrests followed the publication of the Committee's blacklist, which included the names of companies and individuals with ties to Israel or Israeli businesses. All 7 detainees were released on bail while awaiting trial. The trials had not yet begun by year's end.

According to press reports, riot police briefly detained at least 10 demonstrators during a March sit-in staged by Ph.D. holders seeking better employment opportunities (see Sections 1.c and 2.b).

In July the GID allegedly detained without charge Mohammad Musa Abu Awwad when he returned from Saudi Arabia. Abu Awwad's family claimed that he was held without explanation for 3 weeks, then released. The Government denied that it had ever detained Awwad.

Beginning about September 18, police began detaining small groups of Islamists, claiming that they had held rallies in violation of a new law on public gatherings (see Section 2.6.). The first arrests included two independent Islamists and one member of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Government released all three 2 weeks later without bringing charges against them.

In early October, the Government arrested or detained more than 50 persons for violating the public gathering laws. Included in the October detentions were at least 10 students from Jordan University, 15 members of the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front, and members of extremist groups. The Government had released all 50 persons by year's end.

The Government continued to deny allegations that the GID detained without charge Iraqi weightlifter Kazem Dashi at the Al-Ruwayshid border point in April 2000. Dashi claimed that he was beaten and intimidated during his interrogation in GID custody (see Section 1.c.). The Government stated that it had no record of Dashi's detention.

In July 2000, the GID detained 12 persons from Salt without charge, allegedly for security reasons. The Government stated that some of the detainees were held because they were "religious individuals" and that some were members of illegal political parties. In December 2000, the Government released all of the detainees; 4 of the 12 were charged after admitting that they had planned terrorist activities and were required to post bail. By year's end, the GID had dropped charges against and released the 4 persons from Salt whom it had detained along with 8 others in July 2000.

During the year, police detained up to hundreds of persons involved in protests against the Israeli Government's actions in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Police did not charge most of the demonstrators and released all of them within 1 day.

The Government uses the threat of detention to intimidate journalists into practicing self-censorship (see Section 2.a.). Before 2000 police typically detained from 5 to 10 days numerous journalists who criticized government officials or policies; some of the journalists experienced abuse (see Section 1.c.). When the Government filed charges, convictions were rare; however, some proceedings lasted several years, with defendants required to appear in court regularly. In June police in Zarqa briefly detained five journalists working with the Associated Press. The reporters were attempting to film a memorial service for the suicide bomber involved in the Dolphinarium Disco bombing in Tel Aviv. Police released all five after a few hours (see Section 2.a.).

The Constitution prohibits the expulsion of any citizen, and the Government does not routinely use forced exile; however, in June the Government attempted to prevent the return of Ibrahim Ghosheh, one of four HAMAS leaders allegedly expelled in 1999. On June 14, Ghosheh arrived unexpectedly from Qatar, and immigration authorities at Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA) attempted to block his admission to Jordan. Ghosheh was detained at QAIA until June 30, when the Government admitted him to the country in return for his pledge to cease his HAMAS activities. The three other expelled HAMAS leaders remained outside the country at year's end.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for the independence of the judiciary, and during the year the Government took steps to strengthen such independence; however, the judiciary remains subject to pressure and interference from the executive branch. A judge's appointment to, advancement within, and dismissal from the judiciary are determined by the Higher Judiciary Council, a committee whose members are appointed by the King. In June Parliament passed a law intended to give the Council increased independent jurisdiction over the judicial branch; previously, the council had been subject to frequent interference and pressure from the Ministry of Justice stemming from the Ministry's oversight of the council. The purpose of the new law was to limit the Ministry of Justice's influence over a judge's career and prevent it from subverting the judicial system in favor of the executive branch. There had been numerous allegations in previous years that judges were "reassigned" temporarily to another court or judicial district in order to remove them from a particular proceeding. The Government claims that the Higher Judiciary Council's new independence makes such tampering much more difficult. Despite constitutional prohibitions against such actions, judges complain of telephone surveillance by the Government.

The judicial system consists of several types of courts. Most criminal cases are tried in civilian courts, which include the appeals courts, the Court of Cassation, and the Supreme Court. Cases involving sedition, armed insurrection, financial crimes, drug trafficking, and offenses against the royal family are tried in the State Security Court.

Shari'a (Islamic law) courts have jurisdiction over marriage and divorce among Muslims and inheritance cases involving both Muslims and non-Muslims. Christian courts have jurisdiction over marriage and divorce cases among Christians, but apply Shari'a law in inheritance cases (see Section 5).

Most civilian court trials are open. Defendants are entitled to legal counsel, may challenge witnesses, and have the right to appeal. Defendants facing the death penalty or life imprisonment must be represented by legal counsel. Public defenders are provided if the defendant in such cases

is unable financially to hire legal counsel. Shari'a as applied in the country regards the testimony of one man

as equal to that of two women in proving matters of fact. This provision technically applies only in religious courts; however, in the past it has been imposed in civil courts as well, regardless of religion.

The State Security Court consists of a panel of three judges, 2 military officers and 1 civilian. Sessions frequently are closed to the public. Defendants tried in the State Security Court often are held in pretrial detention without access to lawyers, although they may be visited by representatives of the ICRC. In the State Security Court, judges have inquired into allegations that defendants were tortured and have allowed the testimony of physicians regarding such allegations (see Section 1.c.). The Court of Cassation has ruled that the State Security Court may not issue a death sentence on the basis of a confession obtained as a result of torture. Defendants in the State Security Court have the right to appeal their sentences to the Court of Cassation, which is authorized to review issues of both fact and law. Appeals are automatic for cases involving the death penalty.

In the past, defense attorneys have challenged the appointment of military judges to the State Security Court to try civilian cases as contrary to the concept of an independent judiciary. Military judges appear to receive adequate training in civil law and procedure.

In the past, the press routinely carried details of cases tried before the State Security Court, despite 1998 provisions in the Press and Publication Law that prohibited press coverage of any case that was under investigation, unless expressly permitted by the authorities. The 1999 amendments to the Press and Publications Law permit journalists to cover court proceedings "unless the court rules otherwise." At year's end, it was unclear how press-related amendments to the Penal Code passed in October (see Section 2.a.) would impact coverage of court proceedings. However, there was press coverage of trials in the State Security Court during the year.

In July the State Security Court retried and sentenced nine men to life imprisonment for their alleged involvement in politically motivated bombings in 1998. The retrial came as a result of credible reports that the initial trial, in 1998, was flawed and that the defendant's confessions were made under duress. The reports also included allegations that confessions were obtained using torture.

On September 18, 2000, the Security Court convicted 22 suspected members of the al-Qaida terrorist network for planning attacks at tourist sites around the country during millennium celebrations. The court sentenced 6 of those convicted to death and 16 to prison sentences ranging from 7 years to life. There were allegations of torture and forced confessions by some of the defendants (see Section 1.c.). The court officially closed the case in 2000.

In June the Government permitted one of the four HAMAS leaders expelled in 1999 to reenter the country (see Sections 1.d. and 2.d.); there were credible reports of executive branch influence with respect to the original verdict of expulsion.

There were no reports of political prisoners; however, the Government detainees persons for varying periods of time for political reasons (see Section 1.d.).

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution requires that security forces obtain a warrant from the Prosecutor General or a judge before conducting searches or otherwise interfering with these rights, and the security services generally respect these restrictions; however, in security cases, the authorities at times—in violation of the law—obtain warrants retroactively or obtain preapproved warrants. Security officers monitor telephone conversations and Internet communication, read private correspondence, and engage in surveillance of persons who are considered to pose a threat to the Government or national security. The law permits these practices if the Government obtains a court order. Judges complain of unlawful telephone surveillance (see Section 1.e.).

During the year, the Government released from house arrest Hassan Mahmoud Abdullah Abu Hanieh, whom the GID detained after confiscating without a warrant a box of publications in his possession (see Section 2.d.). The case was closed at year's end.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, the Government imposes a number of restrictions on these rights, and such restrictions increased during the year. During the year, the Government broadened its authority to prosecute journalists and close publications.

The 1998 Press and Publications Law and the 1999 revisions to the law, combined with the 1998 Press Association Law, impose stringent restrictions on the operation of newspapers. The Government also intimidates journalists to encourage self-censorship. Private citizens may be prosecuted for slandering the royal family, the Government, or foreign leaders, and for "sowing sedition." Citizens generally do not hesitate to criticize the Government openly, but are more circumspect in regard to the King and the royal family. The Press and Publications Law and the law governing the Jordan Press Association (JPA) require membership in the JPA for persons to be considered "legal" journalists or editors, thus potentially excluding dozens of practicing journalists from the profession. The JPA uses its authority to enforce bans on journalists receiving funding from foreign sources or having Israeli contacts. In 1999 then-Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh

issued an order directing government offices to cooperate only with JPA members.

The 1998 Press and Publications Law granted the Government wide discretionary powers to issue fines, withdraw licenses, and order shutdowns, which enabled it to control the editorial content of newspapers. The law also prohibited reporting on criminal cases or crimes at any stage of the investigation without prior authorization from the public prosecutor. However, the 1999 amendments to the Press and Publications Law limited to some extent the Government's discretion to issue fines, transferred the power to withdraw licenses to the judiciary, limited significantly the Government's power to order shutdowns, and allowed journalists to cover court proceedings unless the court rules otherwise. The 1999 amendments also reduced the fine for violations to between \$700 and \$1,400 (500 to 1,000 dinars), down from between \$7,000 and \$14,000 (5,000 and 10,000 dinars) under the 1998 Press and Publications Law (see Section 1.e.). It was illegal under the 1998 Press and Publications Law to publish news, opinion, information, reports, caricatures, or photos that disparage the King or the royal family, pertain to the armed forces or security services, harm national unity, disparage religion, offend an individual or harm his reputation, disparage the heads of friendly states, harm the country's relations with other nations, promote perversion or lead to moral corruption, shake confidence in the national currency, or feature false news or rumors. Although these restrictions were modified by the 1999 amendments, prohibitions on such activities still exist in the Penal Code and a number of other laws.

According to the 1999 amendments, all publications must be licensed by the Government. The law provides that those who seek to obtain a newspaper license must show proof of capital of \$700,000 (500,000 dinars) for a daily newspaper, \$70,000 (50,000 dinars) for most other publications, and \$7,000 (5,000 dinars) for specialized publications. The law also requires that the editor in chief of a newspaper be a citizen who permanently resides in the country and to have been a member of the JPA for at least 4 years. This last provision reflects a reduction in the requirements of previous legislation but places the burden of regulation on the JPA.

Persons accused of violating the Press and Publications Law are tried in a special court for press and copyright cases. Journalists also may be prosecuted for criminal and security violations in connection with their work. Although a substantial number of cases are dismissed before trial, many other cases linger in the courts for years. The Government routinely uses detention and prosecution or the threat of prosecution to intimidate journalists and thereby successfully encourages self-censorship (see Section 1.d.).

The Penal Code authorizes the State to take action against any person who incites violence, defames heads of state, disseminates "false or exaggerated information outside the country that attacks state dignity," or defames a public official.

In October the Government adopted a series of amendments to Penal Code provisions dealing with the press. The amendments reinforce existing Penal Code restrictions on free speech and allow for the prosecution of any person found to have written, published, or aired any statements "harmful to national unity; instigating criminal actions; sowing the seeds of hatred and malice; inciting divisions among members of the society; instigating acts of religious and racial fanaticism; insulting the dignity of individuals, their reputation or personal freedoms; committing acts of corruption or publishing false information or rumors; inciting people to organize strikes or sit-ins, or to hold meetings in a manner that violates the law; or committing any act considered harmful to the state's reputation and dignity." The amendments give the State Security Court the authority to temporarily or permanently close any publication or media outlet that publishes or airs any such statements. The Government strengthened provisions regarding defamation of the King or Royal Family, providing as punishment 3 year's imprisonment. In addition all violators of the new provisions automatically are subject to trial before the State Security Court rather than the special press and copyright court. By year's end, it was unclear to what extent the Government intended to enforce the restrictions in practice.

In July Senator Jawad Anani claimed that he was forced to resign following his publication of an article that criticized the Government. The Government denied any involvement in Anani's decision to resign.

On May 11, police in Amman arrested journalists Jamal Alawi, Tareq Ayyoub, and Yasser Zaatreh. According to press reports, police forcibly detained the journalists during anti-Israeli rallies marking the anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel (see Sections 1.c and 2.b). Police also reportedly seized film and cameras from other television journalists. Alawi, Ayyoub, and Zaatreh were released without charge after a brief detention.

In June police in Zarqa briefly detained 5 journalists working with the Associated Press (see Section 1.d).

In January the Government arrested 7 members of the Anti-Normalization Committee. The arrests took place 4 days after the publication of the Committee's blacklist which included the names of companies and individuals with ties to Israel. Some human rights observers believed that the arrests were linked to the Government's displeasure over the publication of the list (see Section 1.d). The Government also filed charges under the Press and Publications Law against two journalists, Ma'moun Rousan and Abdel Naser Hourani, for printing the blacklist in their publications. At year's end, both men were still involved in judicial proceedings related to the charges.

In December the GID reportedly detained two television journalists associated with al-Jazeera for covering a demonstration by Islamists in Ma'an. According to the reporters, the GID forced them to hand over their video footage and physically abused them while they were in custody (see Section 1.c.). Both journalists were released with 24 hours and no charges were filed against them.

The Press and Publications Department continued to enforce bans on the publication of a number of books within the country. Although some books were banned based on religious objections, anecdotal evidence

suggests that the number banned for political reasons is higher. One publisher reported that the Government blocked publication of five nonfiction works owned by his company during the year.

In June a Shari'a judge ordered a third retrial of poet Musa Hawamdeh on charges of apostasy. The charges stemmed from a book of poems written by Hawamdeh that drew criticism from radical Islamists. Hawamdeh again was cleared of all charges in late July, and the case was considered closed at year's end (see Section 2.c).

There were no developments in the January 2000 arrest of Asim Oglia Al-Maghayirah, whom authorities accused of affiliation with the banned political party Al-Tahrir and of distributing illegal pamphlets (see Section 2.b.).

In February the High Court of Justice dismissed the appeal of Nidal Mansour's expulsion from the JPA. In September 2000, the JPA had voted to expel Mansour for allegedly receiving foreign funding for the nongovernmental organization (NGO) that he headed (see Section 4). As a result of the Court's decision, Mansour was removed as editor of the newspaper that he owns.

The Press and Publications Department continued its April 2000 ban on a book of poetry by Ziyad Al-Anani; the book contained a poem that reportedly was offensive to Islam (see Section 2.c).

Some journalists continued to complain about high taxes on the media industry and tariffs on paper, which they claim led them to reduce the size of their publications. They also criticized the Government for its policy of advertising predominantly in newspapers in which the Government owns shares.

The Government did not block the entry of foreign publications during the year. In January 2000, the Government passed a bill that grants foreign media operations "absolute freedom of expression" in the country. The bill reportedly was passed in order to encourage foreign investment. At the time, some commentators criticized the Government for passing a bill that offers full autonomy for foreign journalists while maintaining laws that restrict freedom of expression for local journalists.

Radio and television news broadcasts are more restricted than the print media. The Government is the sole broadcaster of radio and television programs. It has commercial agreements with the British Broadcasting Corporation, the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Center, and Radio Monte Carlo that allow it to simulcast regional programs using local radio transmitters. Jordan Television (JTV) reports only the Government's position on controversial matters. International satellite television and Israeli and Syrian television broadcasts are available and unrestricted.

In December 2000, due to widespread criticism of local media coverage of events in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, King Abdullah took steps to reform the state media. For example, the King appointed new members to the board of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (JRTVC) and reportedly instructed the new director to discontinue the traditional practice of placing items about the King first in the evening news lineup. The Minister of Information also announced a plan to create an independent regulatory commission.

The GID actively investigates Internet reports of "crimes against the King."

The Government limits academic freedom. Two university presidents were pressured to resign for their political views during the year. Some academics claim that they receive frequent threats of dismissal. Some professors and students reported being asked by the GID to submit information regarding the political views expressed by colleagues in the classroom. In March 2000, Jordan University granted the president of the University the authority to appoint half of the university's 80-member student council, including the chair (see Section 2.b.). Despite several student protests during 2000, there was no change in the policy by year's end.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Government restricts freedom of assembly. Citizens must obtain permits for public gatherings. Following a demonstration in October 2000 in which one protester was killed and six were injured, the Government banned all demonstrations and public rallies; however, a number of demonstrations subsequently were held with government acquiescence, despite the ban. Before the ban, the Government denied permits for public protests and rallies that it determined pose a threat to security. In August the Government adopted a law that requires the organizers of rallies and demonstrations to request permission from provincial governors at least 3 days prior to any event. Under the law, no protest may be held without the governor's consent and violators face imprisonment from 1 to 6 months and a fine not to exceed \$4,230 (3,000 dinars). The Government adopted the law in the absence of a sitting Parliament, which the King dissolved in June (See Section 3).

On April 7, organizers canceled a planned march from the Shmeisani area of Amman to U.N. offices in the city. According to press reports, the Governor of Amman refused permission for the event.

On March 19, riot police protecting the Prime Ministry used physical force, including batons, to disperse a sit-in by 25 Ph.D. holders. The academics were protesting the absence of employment opportunities at local universities. No one was seriously injured; however, press reports claimed that at least 10 demonstrators briefly were detained (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). The Government denied that it detained any of the demonstrators.

On May 11, security forces dispersed hundreds of protestors who were attempting to stage two rallies in the Sweileh and Mahatta areas of Amman. The Government claimed that the rallies were unauthorized and unlawful. Police used tear gas, water cannons, batons, and dogs to disperse the demonstrators, reportedly injuring between 10 and 30 persons (see Sections 1.c. and 2.a.).

On July 31, police and University of Jordan security personnel refused to allow students holding an anti-Israeli protest to exit the campus. No force was used in the incident.

The Government restricts freedom of association. The Government requires, but routinely grants, approval for conferences, workshops, and seminars.

The Government routinely licenses political parties and other associations. There currently are 25 licensed political parties. Membership in an unlicensed political party is illegal. The Government may deny licenses to parties that it decides do not meet a list of political and other criteria contained in the Political Parties Law. The High Court of Justice may dissolve a party if it violates the Constitution or the Political Parties Law.

In March 2000, Jordan's University's administration amended the Student Council election law, granting the University president the authority to appoint half of the University's 80-member student council, including the chair. The amendment was viewed widely as an effort to curb the influence of campus Islamists. Many students, including non-Islamists, objected to the University's decision.

There were no developments in the January 2000 arrest of university student Asim Ogla al-Maghayirah, whom authorities accused of affiliation with the banned political party Al-Tahrir and of distributing illegal pamphlets (see Section 2.a.).

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for the safeguarding of "all forms of worship and religious rites in accordance with the customs observed in the Kingdom, unless such is inconsistent with public order or morality;" however, the Government imposes some restrictions on freedom of religion. The Constitution also states that "there shall be no discrimination" between Jordanians "as regards their rights and duties on grounds of race, language, or religion." However, some members of unrecognized religious groups and religious converts from Islam face legal discrimination and bureaucratic difficulties in personal status cases.

According to the Constitution, Islam is the state religion. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Trusts manages Islamic institutions and the construction of mosques. It also appoints imams, provides mosque staff salaries, manages Islamic clergy training centers, and subsidizes certain activities sponsored by mosques. The Government loosely monitors sermons at mosques and requires that speakers refrain from criticizing the Royal Family or instigating social or political unrest. The Political Parties Law prohibits houses of worship from being used for political party activity. The law was designed primarily to prevent Islamist politicians from preaching in mosques.

Neither Islam nor the Government recognizes religious faiths other than the three main monotheistic religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. In addition, not all Christian denominations have been accorded legal recognition as religions. The Prime Minister unofficially confers with an interfaith council of bishops representing local churches on all matters relating to the Christian community, including the registration of new churches in the country. The Government uses the following criteria when considering recognition of Christian churches as separate official religions: The faith does not contradict the nature of the Constitution, public ethics, customs, or traditions; the faith is recognized by the Middle East Council of Churches; the faith does not oppose the national religion; and the group includes some citizen followers.

Religious institutions, such as churches that wish to receive official government recognition, must apply to the Prime Ministry for registration. Recognized non-Muslim religious institutions do not receive subsidies; they are financially and administratively independent from the Government and are tax-exempt. Some churches are registered with the Ministry of Justice as "societies," rather than churches.

According to the Government, the role of the State in religious affairs is limited to supervision. Groups that have practices that violate the law and the nature of society--such as Satan worship--are prohibited.

The Government does not recognize the Druze or Baha'i faiths as religions but does not prohibit the practice of the faiths. Druze face official discrimination but do not complain of social discrimination. Baha'is face both official and social discrimination. The Government does not record the bearer's religion on national identity cards issued to Druze or Baha'is. The small Druze and Baha'i communities do not have their own courts to adjudicate personal status and family matters; such matters are heard in Shari'a courts. The Government does not officially recognize the Druze temple in Azraq, and four social halls belonging to the Druze are registered as "societies." The Government does not permit Baha'is to register schools or places of worship.

The Government does not recognize Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Christ, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, but each denomination is allowed to conduct religious services and activities without interference.

The Government does not interfere with public worship by the country's Christian minority. Although the

majority of Christians are allowed to practice freely, some activities, such as encouraging Muslims to convert to the Christian faith—as considered legally incompatible with Islam—are prohibited.

Shari'a prohibits non-Muslims from proselytizing Muslims. Conversion to the Muslim faith by Christians is allowed; however, a Muslim may not convert to another religion. Muslims who convert to other faiths complain of social and government discrimination. The Government does not fully recognize the legality of such conversions. Under Shari'a converts are regarded as apostates and legally may be denied their property and other rights. However, in practice this principle is not applied. According to the Government, it neither encourages nor prohibits apostasy. Converts from Islam do not fall under the jurisdiction of their new religion's laws in matters of personal status and still are considered Muslims under Shari'a. Conversely, converts to Islam fall under the jurisdiction of the Shari'a courts. Shari'a prescribes the death penalty for Muslims who convert to another religion; however, there is no corresponding statute under national law, and such punishment has never been applied.

According to one Christian cleric, the Government does not generally prohibit citizens from proselytizing if it is within the limits of the law and based on "the principle of maintaining personal security and safety and provided that it does not contradict the customs and traditions of society." Government policy requires that foreign missionary groups (which the Government believes are not familiar with the customs and traditions of Jordanian society) refrain from public proselytizing "for the sake of their own personal safety from fundamentalist members of society that oppose such practices." The Government has taken action against some Christian proselytizers in response to the complaints of recognized Christian groups who charge that the activities of these missionaries "disrupt the cohesiveness and peace between religious groups in the society."

There were some reports of local government officials encouraging Christian females involved in relationships with Muslim males to convert to Islam to diffuse family or tribal disputes caused by the relationship (see Section 5). However, there were no known cases in which local officials harassed or coerced individuals to convert during the year.

According to the Constitution, religious community trusts ("Awqaf") and matters of personal status, such as marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Shari'a courts for Muslims, and separate non-Muslim tribunals for each religious community recognized by the Government. There is no civil marriage. The head of the department that manages Shari'a court affairs (a cabinet-level position) appoints Shari'a judges, while each recognized non-Muslim religious community selects the structure and members of its own tribunal. All judicial nominations are approved by the Prime Minister and commissioned officially by royal decree. The Protestant denominations registered as "sociétés" come under the jurisdiction of one of the recognized Protestant church tribunals. There are no tribunals assigned for atheists or adherents of unrecognized religions. These individuals must request one of the recognized courts to hear their personal status cases.

Shari'a is applied in all matters relating to family law involving Muslims or the children of a Muslim father, and all citizens, including non-Muslims, are subject to Islamic legal provisions regarding inheritance.

All minor children of a male citizen who converts to Islam are automatically considered to be Muslim. Adult children of a male Christian who has converted to Islam become ineligible to inherit from their father if they do not themselves convert to Islam. In cases in which a Muslim converts to Christianity, the act is not legally recognized by the authorities, and the subject continues to be treated as a Muslim in matters of family and property law, and the minor children of a male Muslim who converts to Christianity continue to be treated as Muslims under the law.

Some Christians are unable to divorce under the legal system because they are subject to their faith's religious court system, which does not allow divorce. Many of these individuals convert to another Christian denomination or the Muslim faith in order to divorce legally.

The Government notes individuals' religions (except for Druze and Baha'is, and other unrecognized religions) on the national identity card and "family book" (a national registration record that is issued to the head of every family and that serves as proof of citizenship) of all citizens. Atheists much associate themselves with a recognized religion for official identification purposes.

The Government traditionally reserves some positions in the upper levels of the military for Christians; however, all senior command positions have been traditionally reserved for Muslims. Division-level commanders and above are required to lead Islamic prayer for certain occasions. There are no Christian clergy in the military.

According to June press reports, the Shari'a appeals court ordered Muslim poet Musa Hawamdeh retried on an apostasy charge due to a procedural error in his original trial. Some observers believed that the procedural error was used as a pretext to continue harassing the poet. In early 2000, radical Islamists had criticized a poem published by Hawamdeh. A government ban of his book and both a civil and Shari'a trial followed later in the year. In July 2000, Hawamdeh, without retracting any portion of his poem, was acquitted on all charges in both the Shari'a and civil courts. Hawamdeh again was cleared of all charges in July of this year after the retrial. The case was considered closed at year's end (see Section 2.a).

The Press and Publications Department continued its April 2000 ban on a book of poetry by Ziyad Al-Anani; the book contained a poem that reportedly was offensive to Islam (see Section 2.a.).

In June 2000, due to a dispute stemming from an intrachurch rivalry between the Jerusalem Patriarchate and

the Antioch Orthodox Patriarchate, the Government closed an Arab Orthodox church in Amman that was aligned with the Antioch Patriarch in Damascus, Syria. The Government closed the church following a request from the local Orthodox hierarchy to enforce a 1958 law that grants the Jerusalem Patriarchate authority over all Orthodox churches in the country. The church reopened in December 2000 with permission from the Government, but was closed again a week later based largely on pressure from the Orthodox hierarchy. The Government stated that the church was free to open under a different name that would not imply affiliation with the Orthodox Church. The church remained closed at year's end.

Non-Jordanian Christian missionaries operate in the country but are subject to restrictions. Christian missionaries may not proselytize Muslims. During the year, U.S.-affiliated Christian mission groups in the country continued to complain of bureaucratic difficulties, including refusal by the Government to renew residence permits.

In February 2000, the governor of Amman municipality closed the office of Life Agape—an organization associated with the Baptists Church—after the director refused to sign a letter stating that he would not "deal with Muslims." The office remained closed at year's end.

In April and September 1999, a foreign employee of a small language school in Amman applied for a residence permit from the Ministry of Interior. His application was denied, reportedly because government officials believed that he had been attempting to convert Muslims to Christianity. He reapplied in April 2000, and was awaiting a response from the Government at year's end.

In December 1999, the municipality of Amman closed the Roy and Dora Whitman Academy—a small, nonprofit school founded by U.S.-affiliated missionaries in Amman—because it was not registered with the Ministry of Education. The board of the academy had initiated the process of registering the school in 1997. After being contacted by embassies representing a number of countries, the Ministry of Education assisted the school in properly fulfilling registration requirements. In April 2000, the school received registration and once again began teaching students. In July 2000, the Ministry of Labor issued work permits to two faculty members at the school.

In February the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS), a Christian training school for pastors and missionaries, submitted a new application for registration as a university to the Ministry of Education. JETS had applied to the Ministry's Council of Higher Education (CHE) twice before, once in May 1999 and again in January 2000; neither application was successful. At the request of the CHE, the most recent application contained a proposal for an expanded curriculum and a new name without the word "evangelical"—Jordan Minara University. From August 1998 until year's end, students and faculty of JETS experienced difficulties in obtaining and renewing residence permits. The school's application still was pending at year's end, and the Ministry's failure to issue visas had affected 24 of 140 students (and their families), and 4 staff members at the school. In 1998 and 1999, some noncitizen Arab Muslim students were deported and asked to leave the country as a result of their association with JETS.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The law provides for the right of citizens to travel freely abroad and within the country except in designated military areas; however, there are some restrictions on freedom of movement. The law requires that all women, including foreign women married to citizens, obtain written permission from a male guardian—usually their father or husband—to apply for a Jordanian passport. During the year, there were several cases in which mothers reportedly were prevented from departing with their children because authorities enforced requests from fathers to prevent their children from leaving the country.

The GID sometimes withholds passports from citizens on security grounds. Local governors have the authority to invoke the Preventing Crimes Law, which allows them to place citizens under house arrest for up to a year without formally charging them (see Section 1.d.). House arrest may involve requiring persons to report daily to local police station and the imposition of a curfew. Persons who violate the terms of their house arrest may be imprisoned for up to 14 days.

Jordanians with full citizenship receive passports that are valid for 5 years. Most Palestinians living in Jordan are citizens and receive passports that are valid for 5 years. However, the Government estimates that there are 150,000 Palestinian residents who are refugees or children of refugees who arrived from Gaza after 1967 and do not qualify for citizenship. They receive 2-year passports valid for travel only. In the period following the country's administrative and legal disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, Palestinians residing in the West Bank received 2-year passports valid for travel only, instead of 5-year Jordanian passports. In 1995 King Hussein announced that West Bank residents without other travel documentation again would be eligible to receive 5-year passports. However, the Government has emphasized that these passports are for travel only and do not connote citizenship, which may be proven only by presenting one's "national number," a civil registration number accorded at birth or upon naturalization to persons holding citizenship. The national number is recorded on national identity cards and in family registration books, which are issued only to citizens.

During the year, there were allegations that the Government did not consistently apply citizenship laws. The Jordanian Society for Citizens' Rights (JSCR) reported 52 complaints from persons or families claiming that the Government denied their right to citizenship. All 52 complainants disputed the Government's claim that they were ineligible for citizenship under the regulations, and many filed appeals with the Ministry of the Interior. The Government had not recognized officially the citizenship of any of the complainants by year's end.

In July there were reports that immigration officials at the King Hussein/Allenby Bridge crossing with Israel confiscated the Jordanian passports belonging to Jordanians of Palestinian origin who were carrying both Jordanian and Palestinian Authority travel documents. The Government stated that such confiscations were consistent with laws that prohibit citizens of Arab League countries from holding passports of any other Arab League member. Human rights observers claimed that no such law exists, and that the policy against dual nationality is based on an informal agreement of Arab League countries.

Human rights activists reported that approximately 350 Jordanians of Palestinian origin remained outside the country at year's end, due to the Government's refusal to renew their passports at embassies overseas. The majority of such persons now live in Syria, Lebanon, and Libya as stateless persons. The Government offered no response to inquiries by diplomatic representatives or human rights observers.

The Constitution specifically prohibits the deportation of citizens. In June the Government permitted the return of Ibrahim Ghosheh, one of four HAMAS leaders allegedly expelled in 1999. Although initially refused entrance, Ghosheh was admitted in return for his pledge to cease his activities with HAMAS. The three other expelled HAMAS leaders remained outside the country at year's end (see Sections 1.d., 1.e., and 2.b.).

Former Member of Parliament Yaqoub Qarrash remained outside the country at year's end. He was refused entry at the border in January 2000, when he attempted to return from Saudi Arabia.

There is no law or statute that provides for the granting of refugee status or asylum. The Government generally cooperates with the office of the UNHCR. The UNHCR must resettle refugees in other countries. However, in April the Ministry of Interior signed a memorandum of understanding with the UNHCR concerning the status and treatment of refugees. Under the agreement, the Government admits asylum seekers, including those who have entered the country clandestinely, and respects the UNHCR's eligibility determinations under the refugee definitions set forth in the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The agreement provides protection against the forcible return of refugees from the country, and recognizes the legal definition of a refugee as set forth in the U.N. Convention. The UNHCR regularly trains law enforcement officials in international refugee law, including specialized courses for policewomen. The Government provides first asylum. According to UNHCR figures, 55,626 persons sought asylum through the UNHCR between October 1990 and 2000.

The Government estimates that over 300,000 Iraqis reside in the country. Since 1991 thousands of Iraqis have applied for refugee status and received legal and material assistance from the UNHCR. In addition to applications from Iraqis during the year, the UNHCR also received applications for refugee status from Sudanese, Russians of Chechen decent, Somali, and Eritrean asylum seekers.

For the 2000-2001 school year, the Government continued its policy of denying Iraqi children admittance to school unless such children are legal residents of the country or recognized as refugees by the UNHCR.

According to the Government, it deported eight Libyan nationals affiliated with "international terrorist organizations" in March 2000. The Government did not inform the UNHCR of the presence of the Libyans prior to their deportation from the country. The Libyan Government reportedly executed three of the eight Libyans upon their return to Libya (see Section 1.c.). There were no other cases in which the Government deported persons to a country where they feared persecution.

Almost 1.6 million Palestinian refugees are registered in Jordan with the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The UNRWA counts another 800,000 Palestinians as either displaced persons from the 1967 war, arrivals following the 1967 war, or returnees from the Gulf between 1990 and 1991.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

There are significant restrictions on citizens' right to change their government. Citizens may participate in the political system through their elected representatives in Parliament; however, the King has discretionary authority to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister, Cabinet, and upper house of Parliament, to dissolve Parliament, and to establish public policy. Appointments made by the King to high government posts do not require legislative approval. Executive power is vested in the King (or, in his absence, in the Regent), who exercises his power through his ministers in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

In both June and October, King Abdullah reordered his Cabinet, appointing new members and changing portfolios among serving ministers. Prior to the reordering, there were 29 ministers; at year's end there 26.

On June 16, the King dissolved Parliament and directed the Government to draft a new election law. Parliamentary elections had been scheduled to be held during the year; however, the King exercised his authority under the Constitution to postpone elections for up to 2 years, indicating that elections would be held no earlier than summer 2002. At year's end, the King had not announced a specific date for elections and the Parliament remained dissolved. According to the provisions of a temporary election law approved by the King on July 22, the Parliament is composed of a 40-member Senate, appointed by the King, and a popularly elected 104-member Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies previously had contained 80 members. The Parliament is empowered by the Constitution to initiate legislation, and it may approve, reject, and amend legislation proposed by the Cabinet. A group of 10 senators or deputies may submit draft bills for consideration; however, in practice legislation is initiated and drafted by the Cabinet of Ministers and submitted by the Government to the Parliament for its consideration. Opposition Members of Parliament have claimed

that attempts by members of the lower house to initiate legislation receive no response from the Government. The King proposes and dismisses extraordinary sessions of Parliament and may postpone regular sessions for up to 60 days. If the Government amends or enacts a law when Parliament is not in session, it must submit the law to Parliament for consideration during the next session; however, such "temporary" laws do not expire and, while technically subject to action by Parliament when it returns to session, may in practice remain in force without legislative approval.

Over 500 candidates competed in the 1997 parliamentary elections, despite a boycott by Islamist and other parties. There were many reports of registration irregularities and fraud. Restrictions on the press and on campaign materials also had a negative effect on the campaign, which elicited much debate over the fairness of the previous electoral law and its implementation. Voter turnout was significantly lower in most urban areas than in rural areas. Centrist candidates with ties to major tribes dominate the Parliament.

Municipal elections in July 1999 featured the participation of the parties that had boycotted the 1997 parliamentary elections; however, low voter turnout necessitated a second day of balloting. The process generally was regarded as free and fair.

The election law adopted in July increased the number of electoral districts by redrawing district boundaries and redistributed seats among districts. The Government also included provisions, such as those requiring verification of polling results by members of the Judiciary, that are designed to increase transparency and accuracy. The voting age was lowered from 19 to 18 years. The law did not include quotas for women or opposition political parties. Observers believe that the new law continues to favor electorates in rural and southern Jordan, regions with populations known for their traditional, pro-Hashemite views.

The law retains the so-called one-man, one vote provision, which allows voters to choose only one candidate in multiple-seat districts. In the largely tribal society, citizens tend to cast their first vote for family members, and any additional votes in accordance with their political leanings. The amendment also limits representation in the largely Palestinian urban areas. As a result, the amendment in practice also has tended to limit the chances of other nontribal candidates, including women, Islamists, and other opposition candidates, to be elected. The Islamic Action Front, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, continues to declare publicly that it will boycott new elections unless significant changes to the one-man, one-vote provision are made.

From July to September, the Government initiated a series of consolidations designed to merge many of Jordan's 328 municipalities into a number of larger units that remained undetermined at year's end. The Ministry of Municipal, Rural, and Environment Affairs stated that these mergers were undertaken to reduce municipal operating costs and improve local services. Opponents of the measure claim that the consolidations are an attempt to undermine the strength of Islamist parties in local government, and that it will weaken the democratic process at the municipal level by reducing the number of locally elected officials. At year's end, the Islamic Action Front was considering legal action against the Government to halt the consolidations.

Women have the right to vote, and women's groups encourage women to vote and to be active in the political process; however, the percentage of women in government and politics does not reflect their numbers in the population. There is one female minister. In the previous Parliament there were two female senators, but no women held seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Of the 104 seats in the lower house scheduled for election in 2002, 9 are reserved for Christians, 9 for Bedouins, and 3 for the Circassian or Chechen ethnic minorities.

The Palestinian community, estimated at more than half of the total population, is not represented proportionately in the Government and legislature. Five of 28 ministers are of Palestinian origin, a decrease from 9 of 28 in the previous government. In the most recent Parliament, 6 of 40 senators and 11 of 80 lower house deputies were of Palestinian origin. There are no Palestinians in any of the 12 governorships throughout the country. The electoral system gives greater representation to areas that have a majority of inhabitants of non-Palestinian origin.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Domestic and international human rights groups investigate allegations of human rights abuses and publish and disseminate findings critical of government policy. The 1999 amendments to the Press and Publications Law removed restrictions on the publication of information about the military and security services, which had prevented the publication by domestic groups of reports alleging torture and other abuses committed by the security services; however, similar restrictions still exist in the Penal Code and other laws (see Section 2.a.).

The local chapters of the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR), the Jordanian Human Rights Organization (JHRO), and Jordanian Society for Citizens' Rights (JSCR) are registered with the Government. The groups drew public attention to alleged human rights abuses and a range of other political issues. They also have pressed the Government either to bring formal charges against political detainees or to release them promptly. Both the AOHR and JSCR published human rights reports during the year. The AOHR assert that the Government responds to only about 10 percent of the complaints that it submits on behalf of individuals who allegedly were subjected to human rights abuses by the authorities; the JSCR claim the Government responds to 20 percent of its cases. However, the JSCR reported that the Government generally supported public workshops that it held in which citizens discussed their viewpoints on sensitive social and political topics. At year's end, it was unclear how amendments to the Penal Code that broadened the Government's authority to prosecute certain types of speech would affect the work of local NGO's (see Section 2.a.). Local

NGO's are not permitted to receive funds from foreign sources, and some NGO workers reported that they feared they would be accused of accepting illegal funds from abroad. In September 2000, the Jordan Press Association expelled its vice president, Nidal Mansour for allegedly receiving foreign funding for the NGO he headed, the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists. In February the Higher Court of Justice denied Mansour's appeal of his expulsion (see Section 2.a.).

In March 2000, the Government formed the Royal Commission for Human Rights, which is chaired by Queen Rania. The mandate of the Commission is to present recommendations on reforming current laws and practices to King Abdullah and to institutionalize human rights in the country. In November 2000, the Commission sponsored two human rights awareness seminars with police and judicial officials in Amman and Aqaba. In June the Commission presented a draft law designed to create an independent National Center for Human Rights. The Government had not released the draft nor taken any further action on the legislation by year's end. Members of the Commission also intervened in a number of individual cases of alleged human rights violations throughout the year.

The Government established in 2000 the National Team for Family Protection and the Child Protection Center (see Section 5). The Government controls the Parliamentary Public Freedoms Committee, the Ombudsman, and the Human Rights Office at the Prime Ministry.

The Government generally cooperates with international NGO's. The ICRC usually is permitted full and unrestricted access to detainees and prisoners, including those held by the GID and the military intelligence directorate (see Section 1.c.).

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social status

The law does not distinguish between citizens on the basis of race; however, women and minorities are treated differently under the law and face discrimination in employment, housing, and other areas.

Women

Violence against women is common. Reported incidents of violence against women do not reflect the full extent of the problem. Medical experts acknowledge that spousal abuse occurs frequently. However, cultural norms discourage victims from seeking medical or legal help, thus making it difficult to assess the extent of such abuse.

Abused women have the right to file a complaint in court against their spouses for physical abuse but in practice familial and societal pressures discourage them from seeking legal remedies. Marital rape is not illegal. NGO's such as the Jordanian Women's Union, which has a telephone hot-line for victims of domestic violence, provide assistance in such matters. Wife-battering technically is grounds for divorce, but a husband may seek to demonstrate that he has authority from the Koran to correct an irreligious or disobedient wife by striking her.

The Criminal Code provides for leniency for a person found guilty of committing an "honor crime," a violent assault with intent to commit murder against a female by a relative for her perceived immodest behavior or alleged sexual misconduct. Law enforcement treatment of men accused of honor crimes reflects widespread unwillingness to recognize the abuse involved or to take action against the problem. Fourteen such murders were reported during the year, in which the victims were strangled, stabbed, or shot several times. The actual number of honor crimes is believed to be significantly higher. Human rights monitors believe that many more such crimes were committed but not documented as honor crimes. Moreover, most crimes of honor are not reported by the press. One forensic medical examiner estimated that 25 percent of all murders committed in the country are honor crimes. The police regularly imprison women who are potential victims of honor crimes for their own protection. There were up to 40 women involuntarily detained in such "protective custody" during the year.

According to Article 340 of the Penal Code, a "crime of honor" defense may be invoked by a defendant accused of murder who "surprises his wife or any close female relative" in an act of adultery or fornication, in which case the perpetrator of the honor crime is judged not guilty of murder. Although few defendants are able to meet the stringent requirements for a crime of honor defense (the defendant personally must have witnessed the female victim engaging in sexual relations), most avoid trial for the crime of murder, and are tried instead on the charge of manslaughter; even those convicted of murder rarely spend more than 2 years in prison. In contrast to honor crimes, the maximum penalty for first-degree murder is death, and the maximum penalty for second-degree murder is 15 years. Such defenses also commonly rely on the male relative having acted in the "heat of passion" upon hearing of a female relative's alleged transgression, usually without any investigation on the part of the assailant to determine the veracity of the allegation before committing the assault. Defenses in such cases fall under Article 98 of the Penal Code. Women may not invoke these defenses for murdering a male relative under the same circumstances, nor may they use them for killing men who attempt to rape, sexually harass, or otherwise threaten their honor.

In June Fadia Mohammad reportedly was shot and stabbed by her brother, who killed her for "reasons of family honor" after learning that she was pregnant. Coroner's reports later indicated that Fadia was 6 months pregnant at the time of her death. Her brother surrendered himself to police after initially fleeing the scene of the killing. The case was pending at year's end.

In July a 15-year-old boy from Irbid confessed to killing his 20-year-old sister. He claimed to have acted in defense of his family's honor. The boy repeatedly struck his sister in the head with a club before covering her

body in kerosene and setting it on fire. A coroner's report found that the girl had not been sexually active. Her brother surrendered himself to police and his case was pending at year's end.

There were no developments in the April 2000 death of Fathieh Mohammad, who reportedly was shot and killed by her father to "cleanse his honor." The police subsequently arrested and charged both her father and brother for the crime.

There were no developments in the November 2000 beating death of a 19-year-old girl. In December 2000, police arrested the girl's brother for beating to death his sister for "reasons of honor." Police were investigating a second brother for his suspected involvement in the killing. Medical tests indicated that the victim had not engaged in sexual activity.

Most activists believe that even if Article 340 were repealed, honor crimes likely would persist, with sentences continuing to be reduced under Article 98.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), a procedure widely condemned by international health experts as damaging to both physical and psychological health, rarely is practiced. However, one southern tribe of Egyptian origin in the small village of Rahmah near Aqaba reportedly practices FGM. One local Mufti issued a fatwa stating that FGM "safeguards women's chastity and protects them against malignant diseases by preventing fat excretions." However, the Mufti also stated that as FGM is not a requirement of Islam, women who do not undergo this procedure should not be embarrassed.

According to the law, sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and subject to criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment. Sexual harassment, assault, and unwelcome advances of a sexual nature against women do not appear to be widespread problems.

Women experience legal discrimination in matters of pension and social security benefits, inheritance, divorce, and the value of court testimony. In Shari'a courts, a woman's testimony is worth only half that of a man (see Section 1.e.). The Government provides men with more generous social security benefits than women. The Government continues pension payments of deceased male civil servants to their heirs but discontinues payments of deceased female civil servants. Current laws and regulations governing health insurance for civil servants do not permit women to extend their health insurance coverage to dependents or spouses. However, divorced and widowed women may extend coverage to their children.

Under Shari'a as applied in the country, female heirs receive half the amount of male heirs and the non-Muslim widows of Muslim spouses have no inheritance rights. A sole female heir receives half of her parents' estate; the balance goes to designated male relatives. A sole male heir inherits both of his parents' property. Male Muslim heirs have the duty to provide for all family members who need assistance. Men are able to divorce their spouses more easily than women. Marriage and divorce matters for Christians are adjudicated by special courts for each denomination (see Section 2.c.). Married women are ineligible for work in the diplomatic service, and, until recently, most women in the diplomatic corps automatically were assigned to administrative positions. There are six female judges in the country.

The law requires a married woman to obtain her husband's permission to obtain a passport (see Section 2.d.). Married women do not have the legal right to transmit citizenship to their children. Furthermore, women may not petition for citizenship for their non-Jordanian husbands. The husbands themselves must apply for citizenship after fulfilling a requirement of 15 years of continuous residence. Once the husbands have obtained citizenship, they may apply to transmit the citizenship to their children. However, in practice such an application may take years and, in many cases, citizenship ultimately still may be denied to the husband and children. Such children become stateless and, if they do not hold legal residency, lack the rights of citizen children, such as the right to attend school or seek other government services.

Civil law grants women equal pay for equal work, but in practice this law often is ignored. Press and union leaders reported during the year that some employers in the private sector reportedly paid their female employees well under the legal minimum wage, despite the fact that the women were under contract.

Social pressures discourage many women from pursuing professional careers. Nonetheless, women have employment opportunities in many professions, including engineering, medicine, education, the military, and law. Women constitute approximately 16.5 percent of the work force and 50 percent of university students. According to local NGO reports, while female employees hold approximately 52 and 39 percent of jobs in the education and health sectors respectively, they hold only 7.5 percent of managerial posts and 10 percent of all jobs in the private sector. Women's groups stress that the problem of discrimination is not only one of law, but also of women's lack of awareness of their rights or unwillingness to assert those rights. The Jordanian chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Club holds seminars on women's rights and assists women in establishing small businesses. The chapter also provided several programs for potential female voters and candidates for the since-rescheduled 2001 parliamentary elections. In 2000 the University of Jordan established a new graduate degree program in women's studies to promote "objective awareness between the sexes." Members of the royal family work actively to improve the status of women.

Children

The Government is committed to children's rights and welfare in the areas of education and health; however, government efforts in these areas are constrained by limited financial resources. Education is compulsory until the age of 16; however, no legislation exists to enforce the law or punish guardians for violating it, and children who do not attend school or attend infrequently are not considered truant. Since the beginning of the 1999-

2000 school year, the Government has denied Iraqi children admittance to school unless they are legal residents of the country or recognized as refugees by the UNHCR (see Section 2.d.).

The Government has attempted to address the issues of educational development and quality, and the relevance of education to job-market demand, with few concrete results. More than 90 percent of school-age children attend primary schools, although the percentage among males is slightly higher than that among females. The Government also grants fee reductions and food and transportation supplements to families with many children or to very poor families in order to make education more affordable.

Students must obtain a good behavior certificate from the GID in order to qualify for admission under the university quota system. Activists reported that the GID sometimes withholds these certificates from deserving students due to a family member's allegedly problematic record.

The Government provides free inoculation programs for children, which typically administered through the school system. In addition, children have access to government-subsidized public clinics, which offer reduced fees for most services.

In March 2000, Queen Rania established the National Team for Family Protection (NTFP) to consolidate all issues concerning family safety. In August 2000, the Government opened "Dar al Amman," the nation's first child protection center. The facility provides temporary shelter, medical care, and rehabilitation for children ages 6 to 12 years who have suffered abuse.

Although the problem is difficult to quantify, social and health workers believe that there is a significant incidence of child abuse in families, and that the incidence of child sexual abuse is significantly higher than reported. The law specifies punishment for abuses against children. Rape or sodomy of a child under 15 years of age carries the death penalty.

The Family Protection Unit of the Public Security Department (PSD) works with victims and perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence. The Unit deals primarily with child and spousal abuse, providing multiple in-house services, including medical treatment for patients. The Unit cooperates with police to apprehend perpetrators of domestic violence, facilitates participation in education and rehabilitation programs, and refers patients to other facilities.

Illegitimate children are entitled to the same rights under the law as legitimate children; however, in practice they suffer severe discrimination in a society that does not tolerate adultery or premarital sex. Most illegitimate children become wards of the State or live a meager existence on the fringes of society. In either case, their prospects for marriage and gainful employment are limited. Furthermore, illegitimate children who are not acknowledged legally by their fathers are considered stateless and are not given passports or identity numbers.

The Government attempts to safeguard some other children's rights, especially regarding child labor (see Section 6.d.). However, although the law prohibits most children under the age of 16 from working, child vendors work on the streets of Amman. The Ministry of Social Development has a committee to address the problem and in some cases removes the children from the streets, returns them to their families or to juvenile centers, and may provide the families with a monthly stipend. However, the children often return to the streets. Declining economic conditions have caused the number of these children to increase steadily over the last 10 years. Selling newspapers, tissues, small food items, or gum, the vendors, along with the other children who pick through trash dumpsters to find recyclable cans to sell, sometimes are the sole source of income for their families.

Persons with Disabilities

High unemployment in the general population restricts job opportunities for persons with disabilities, estimated by the Ministry of Social Development to number 220,000. Thirteen percent of citizens with disabilities receive monetary assistance from the Government. The Government passed legislation in 1993 requiring future public buildings to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities and to retro-fit existing public buildings; however, implementation has been slow. In 2000 the Greater Amman Municipality established a new Special Buildings Codes Department for Special Needs Citizens to enforce the implementation of the 1993 law.

Since 1993 the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Social Development has enrolled approximately 11,000 persons with mental and physical disabilities in public and private sector training courses. It has placed approximately 3,660 persons with disabilities in public and private sector jobs. The law requires that 2 percent of the available jobs be reserved for persons with physical disabilities. Private organizations and members of the royal family actively promote programs to protect and advance the interests of persons with disabilities.

Indigenous People

The country's indigenous people, nomadic Bedouin and East Bank town-dwellers, traditionally have been the backbone of popular support for the Hashemite monarchy. As a result, they generally have enjoyed considerable influence within the political system. They are represented disproportionately in senior military, security, and civil service jobs. Nevertheless, many Bedouin in rural areas are severely disadvantaged economically. Many persons of East Bank origin complain that the dynamic private sector largely is in the hands of the Palestinian majority.

Religious Minorities

In general Christians do not suffer discrimination; however, there were some instances of official and societal discrimination during the year (see Section 2.c.). Christians hold government positions and are represented in the media and academia approximately in proportion to their percentage of the general population. Druze face official discrimination but do not complain of societal discrimination. Baha'is face both official and societal discrimination. Their faiths are not recognized officially, and Druze and Baha'is are classified as Muslims on official documents, such as the national identity card. Christian and Baha'i children in public schools are not required to participate in Islamic religious instruction.

The majority of the population views religion as central to personal identity, and religious conversions are not tolerated widely. Muslims who convert to other religions often face social ostracism, threats, and abuse from their families and Muslim religious leaders. Romantic relationships between members of different religions, which may lead to conversion—either to the Muslim or Christian faiths—usually are strongly discouraged by the families. Interfaith relationships may lead to ostracism and, in some cases, violence against the couple or feuds between members of the couple's families. When such situations arise, families may approach local government officials for resolution. There were reports during the year that in some cases, local government officials encouraged Christian women involved in relationships with Muslim men to convert to Islam in order to defuse potential family or tribal problems. However, there were no known cases in which local officials harassed or coerced persons to convert. In previous years, when the Government intervened, it sometimes placed the women concerned into "protective custody" to prevent retribution by one of the families.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Palestinians residing in Jordan, who make up more than half of the population, suffer discrimination in appointments to positions in the Government and the military, in admittance to public universities, and in the granting of university scholarships. The Government granted citizenship to all Palestinians who fled to Jordan in the period after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, and to a large number of refugees and displaced persons who arrived as a result of the 1967 war. However, most refugees who fled Gaza after 1967 are not entitled to citizenship and are issued 2-year passports valid for travel only. In 1995 then-King Hussein announced that West Bank residents without other travel documentation would be eligible to receive 5-year Jordanian passports. However, the Government has emphasized that these passports are for travel only and do not connote citizenship (see Section 2.d.).

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

Workers in the private sector and in some state-owned companies have the right to form and join unions. Unions must be registered to be considered legal. Union by-laws limit membership to citizens, effectively excluding the country's approximately 1.5 million foreign workers. Over 30 percent of the work force are organized into 17 unions. Although union membership in the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), the sole trade federation, is not mandatory, all unions belong to it. The Government subsidizes and audits the GFJTU's salaries and activities. Union officials are elected by secret ballot to 4-year terms. Although the Government cosponsors and approves the timing of these elections and monitors them to ensure compliance with the law, it does not interfere in the choice of candidates.

Labor laws mandate that workers must obtain permission from the Government in order to strike. Unions generally do not seek approval for a strike, but workers use the threat of a strike as a negotiating tactic. Strikes are prohibited if a labor dispute is under mediation or arbitration. If a settlement is not reached through mediation, the Ministry of Labor may refer the dispute to an industrial tribunal by agreement of both parties. The tribunal is an independent arbitration panel of judges appointed by the Ministry of Labor. The decisions of the panel are legally binding. If only one party agrees, the Ministry of Labor refers the dispute to the Council of Ministers and then to Parliament. Labor law prohibits employers from dismissing a worker during a labor dispute.

In July 300 workers employed by a sub-contractor of the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) staged a sit-in strike to demand 11 1/2 months of unpaid daily wages. The workers, mostly Egyptian laborers, were constructing an intersection in Amman. The GAM, the contractor, and the subcontractor all claimed that the other parties were responsible for resolving the dispute. The strike lasted less than a week and the workers received all wages due. The case was considered closed at year's end.

During the year, the Jordan Cable and Wire Company reinstated 220 workers that a labor court ruled were dismissed illegally in 1999.

The GFJTU belongs to the Arab Labor organization, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, and to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

Unions have and exercise the right to bargain collectively. The Constitution prohibits antiunion discrimination, but the ICFTU claims that the Government does not protect adequately employees from antiunion discrimination and that the Government has dismissed public sector employees for political reasons. Workers

may lodge complaints of antiunion discrimination with the Ministry of Labor, which is authorized to order the reinstatement of employees discharged for union activities. There were no complaints of antiunion discrimination lodged with the Ministry of Labor during the year.

The national labor laws apply in the free trade zones in Aqaba and Zarqa. Private sector employees in these zones belong to one national union that covers both zones, and have the right to bargain collectively.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The Constitution forbids compulsory labor, except in a state of emergency such as war or natural disaster, and it generally is not practiced; however, foreign domestic servants, almost exclusively female, often are subject to coercion and abuse and,

in some cases, work under conditions that amount to forced labor (see Section 6.e.). The law does not prohibit specifically forced or compulsory labor by children; however, such practices are not known to occur.

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

Labor law forbids children under the age of 16 from being employed, except as apprentices, and prohibits children under the age of 17 from working in hazardous jobs, including at restaurants, nightclubs, and jobs involving heavy machinery and toxic materials. Children under the age of 18 may not work for more than 6 hours continuously, may not work between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., and may not work during weekends, religious celebrations, or national holidays. Provisions in the labor laws do not extend to the informal sector, which consists of agriculture, domestic labor, and family businesses.

According to the law, employers that hire a child under the age of 16 must pay a fine ranging from \$140 to \$710 (100 to 500 dinars). The fine is doubled if the offense is repeated. However, the Government did not provide training for government officials who are responsible for enforcing child labor laws and did not enforce laws regarding child labor during the year. All child labor enforcement responsibilities rest in the hands of 85 Ministry of Labor inspectors. Government officials claim that if children are barred from working in practice, they will lose important income on which their families depend, and may turn to more serious activities, such as drug trafficking and prostitution, for income.

In late 1999, the Ministry of Labor established a new division to deal with issues of child labor. The division was established to receive, investigate, and address child labor complaints and related issues. Assistance received from the International Labor Organization (ILO) and increases in the Government's funding for the Ministry of Labor during the year, allowed the Ministry to staff the division with 5 employees by year's end.

The Ministry of Labor established a child labor unit in late 1999, which is responsible for conducting national research on child labor, adopting both preventative and remedial measures, developing a database on child laborers and their families, and training and monitoring Ministry of Labor inspectors about child labor issues. With assistance from the ILO and increased funding from the Government, the Ministry has made progress in implementing some of the provisions of the National Plan of Action on Child Labor.

Financial assistance received from ILO during the year supported government efforts to implement the provisions of ILO Convention 182 on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Government policy also facilitated the work of NGO's in this area. The Ministry of Social Development has programs to improve conditions for indigent children and to rehabilitate children who have committed petty crimes. However, there are no specific mechanisms for receiving, investigating, or addressing child labor complaints relating to allegations of the worst forms of child labor.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that child labor, especially of child street vendors, is more prevalent now than it was 10 years ago due to declining economic conditions (see Section 5).

The law does not specifically prohibit forced or bonded labor by children; however, such practices are not known to occur (see Section 6.c.).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The national minimum wage is \$114 (80 dinars) per month for all workers except domestic servants, those working in small family businesses, and those in the agricultural sector. The national minimum wage does not provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. The Government estimates that the poverty level is at a monthly wage of about \$125 (89 dinars) per month for a family with 7.5 members. A study completed by the Ministry of Labor in July 1999 found that 18.7 percent of the population lived at or below the poverty level and that 1.5 percent lived in "abject" poverty, defined by the Government as \$58 (40.5 dinars) per month for a family with 7.5 members. The Government provides minimal assistance to at least 45,000 indigent families.

The law requires overtime pay for hours worked in excess of the standard workweek, which generally is 48 hours. Hotel, restaurant, and cinema employees may work up to 54 hours per week. Workers may not work more than 10 hours in any continuous period or more than 60 hours of overtime per month. Employees are entitled to 1 day off per week.

The Ministry of Labor continues to enforce a February 2000 decision that required Egyptian workers to obtain work permits approved by the governments of both Egypt and Jordan. The Government also maintains its commitment to apply "more humane" criteria when deciding whether to deport Egyptian workers.

The law specifies a number of health and safety requirements for workers, including the presence of bathrooms, drinking water, and first aid equipment at work sites. The Ministry of Labor is authorized to enforce health and safety standards. The law does not require employers to report industrial accidents or occupational diseases to the Ministry of Labor. Workers do not have a statutory right to remove themselves from hazardous conditions without risking the loss of their jobs.

Labor law does not apply to the agricultural sector, small family businesses, or domestic servants. Domestic servants do not have a legal forum to address their labor grievances and have no standing to sue in court for nonpayment of wages. Abuse of domestic servants, most of whom are foreign, is widespread. Imprisonment of maids and illegal confiscation of travel documents by employers is common. Complaints of beatings, insufficient food, and rape generally are not reported to officials by victims, who fear losing their work permits and being returned to their home country. Domestic servants generally are not given days off and frequently are called upon to work at any hour of the day or night.

f. Trafficking in Persons

The law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in women or men; however, the practice is not known to occur. A 1926 law specifically prohibits trafficking in children. There were no reports that persons were trafficked, to, from, or within the country.

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