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Jordan

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices -2000

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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 these 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 the 80-member Chamber of Deputies, which is elected every 4 years. The lower house asserts itself 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. According to the Constitution, the judiciary is independent of other branches of government; however, in practice it is 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.

Jordan has a mixed economy, with significant but declining government participation in industry, transportation, and communications. The country has few natural resources and relies heavily on foreign assistance and remittances from citizens working abroad. During the year, the Government took steps to increase privatization and to improve the country's investment climate during the year. For example, in April the country acceded to the World Trade Organization, which entailed extensive legislative and regulatory reform. However, the economy continues to suffer from chronically high unemployment, and GDP growth has remained between 1 and 2 percent since 1996. 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. Violence in the occupied territories late in the year adversely affected the tourist industry, and many foreign investment projects were frozen. Per capita gross domestic product in 1999 was approximately \$1,542 (1,086 dinars). Many families, especially those in rural areas, are unable to meet basic needs to subsist.

There continued to be significant problems in the Government's human rights record. 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 and Cabinet, to dissolve Parliament, and to establish public policy. Other human rights problems include extrajudicial killings by members of the security forces, 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, lack of due process of law and interference in the judicial process, infringements on citizens' privacy rights, harassment of members of opposition political parties and the press, and significant restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association. The 1999 Press and Publications Law reduced somewhat the restrictions outlined in previous legislation on the ability of journalists and publications to function and report freely; however, significant restrictions continued to be in effect. 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 servants is a problem.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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

a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killings

There were no reports of political killings by government officials; however, security forces committed several extrajudicial killings.

In January police reportedly beat Mar' Khallil Al-Jahrani in a South Shuna police station, where he tried to death.

In March security forces fired at a group of villagers of the Bedul Tribe near Petra, killing a 21-year-old man and 2 teenagers. The villagers were protesting the demolition of a home by members of the Petra Regional Authorities; the home reportedly was built illegally on government-owned land. The Ministry of Interior stated that security forces acted in self-defense after villagers, armed with sticks, stones, and firearms attacked a group of officials from the Petra Regional Council who were attempting to carry out the demolition order. Following the incident, the Government stated that it would investigate and punish those responsible for the violence; however, by year's end, the Government had not taken legal action against any party. The Government did not launch an official investigation of the incident; however, King Abdullah offered the villagers an extensive compensation package, including economic assistance and increased land for housing.

In May police reportedly beat Musa Shalback in Hai Nazal after pursuing him for allegedly stealing a car and hitting two pedestrians. According to eyewitnesses, police handcuffed Shalback, severely beat him, and subsequently took him to a local hospital. Shalback was in a coma when he arrived to the hospital where he died from his injuries 10 days later. The Governor vent stated that Shalback died as a result of injuries sustained in a car crash that followed the pursuit. By year's end, the Government had not responded to diplomatic inquiries about this case.

On October 6, police used batons and tear gas to disperse protesters in Baqaa refugee camp; one person was killed and six others were injured during the protest. Protesters claim that police caused the death and injuries, while police personnel claim that the demonstrators caused the fatalities (see Sections 1.c. and 2.b.).

On July 20, 16-year-old Anjad Salem Ahmad Smadi died at a police station in Ajlun 45 minutes after police officers placed him in custody for suspected robbery. Government officials initially reported that Smadi hanged himself; however, family members and other residents of Ajlun demanded an investigation into the death. In response the Government formed an ad-hoc parliamentary committee to look into the incident and transferred the police officers and the local prosecutor to another part of the country. An unpublished forensics report supported the original autopsy's conclusion that the death was a suicide; however, the report also stated that Smadi was beaten prior to his death. Human rights activists and family members believe that the boy died as a result of the beatings and subsequently was hanged to make it appear as if he had committed suicide. Neither diplomatic representatives nor human rights activists were able to uncover evidence to support either the family's claims or to refute the Government's position.

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.

There were no developments in the investigation of the May 1999 death of Mahmoud Rashid Qasem Mohammed Ishayeh, who died in a hospital while in police custody. His family claimed that he died of injuries suffered during a beating; however, prison officials maintained that Ishayeh died of natural causes.

There were no developments in the investigation of the police officers who killed Maseed tribesmen in March 1998 or Mohammad Al-Khatib and Ismail Suleiman Alameh in February 1998.

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

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearance.

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

The law provides prisoners with the right to humane treatment; 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 security officials frequently deny detainees timely access to lawyers. The most frequently alleged methods of torture are 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.

A number of cases of beatings 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. Iraqi weightlifter Kazem Dashi claimed that he was beaten and intimidated during his April detention (see Section 1.d.). Musa Shalback died in a hospital in March 10 days after police reportedly beat him in Hai Nazal (see Section 1.a.). Periodic detentions of foreign workers continue and allegations of overcrowded cells and physical abuse by guards persist.

Police on several occasions used force to disperse demonstrations during the year (see Sections 1.a. and 2.b.). For example, in April newspapers reported that police used excessive force to disperse student demonstrations at Jordan University, injuring a number of protesters. The students were protesting the administration's recent changes to the university's student council law, which were designed to curb the influence of Islamists (see Section 2.c.).

On several occasions in October, police used force to disperse large violent protests against the Israeli Government's actions in Israel and the occupied territories (see Section 2.b.). For example, on October 6, police used batons and tear gas to disperse protesters from Baqaa refugee camp; one person was killed and six were injured during the protest (see Sections 1.a. and 2.b.). Protesters claimed that police caused the death and injuries, while police personnel claimed that the demonstrators caused the fatalities. On October 8, police used batons against at least five persons at a demonstration at Jordan University. On October 24, police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse a demonstration of between 20,000 and 30,000 persons who were approaching a heavily mined border area. Police injured a number of persons, including a journalist covering the protest (see Section 2.a.).

On August 7, a small group of Palestinians attacked an Arab member of the Israeli Parliament at the Baqaa refugee camp. Police personnel immediately escorted him away from the area. On November 19, an unknown assailant shot and injured an Israeli diplomat. On December 5, unknown gunmen shot and injured a second Israeli diplomat. In December police officials arrested seven persons allegedly connected to these attacks.

Prisons and local police detention facilities are Spartan, and on the whole are severely overcrowded and understaffed. Human rights groups and prisoners complained of poor food and water quality, inadequate medical facilities, and poor sanitation in certain facilities. During the year, the Government opened a new prison facility in an attempt to alleviate somewhat the problem of overcrowding.

The Government holds some of the prisoners 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 them 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. However, the Government did not inform the UNHCR of the presence of seven Libyan security detainees prior to their deportation from the country, which effectively denied the UNHCR access to the detainees (see Section 2.d.). 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.

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 as 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.

The Government detains persons, including journalists, for varying amounts of time for what appear to be political reasons (see Section 2.a.). 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 enact the 1954 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.

In April the GID arrested Hassan Mahmoud Abdullah Abu Hamieh and held him without charge, legal representation, or access to the government prosecutor for 20 days (see Sections 1.f. and 2.d.).

On April 13, the GID allegedly detained without charge Iraqi weightlifter Kazem Dashi at the Al-Ruwayshid border point; the GID released Dashi the same day. Dashi claimed that he was beaten and intimidated during his interrogation in GID custody (see Section 1.c.). The Government denied the allegations.

In July the GID detained 12 persons from Sait without charge, allegedly for security reasons. The Government stated that some of the detainees were arrested because they were "religious individuals" and that some were members of political parties. In December 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.

In October following widespread protests against the Israeli Government's actions in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, police detained hundreds of persons. Police did not charge most of the demonstrators and released them within 1 day.

The Government uses the threat of detention to intimidate journalists into practicing self-censorship (see Section 2.a.). In past years, police typically detained for 5 to 10 days numerous journalists who criticized government officials or policies; some of the journalists experienced abuse. When the Government did file charges, convictions were rare; however, some proceedings lasted several years with defendants required to appear in court regularly. During the year, police arrested at least one journalist because of an article he wrote (see Section 2.a.).

There was no further information on Basil Abu Ghoshe, who continued to be detained despite having completed his sentence in 1998, ostensibly for his own protection due to threats from a rival tribe.

The security services detained approximately 50 persons, described in the press as "Islamists," during the year. Those detentions were related to allegations of involvement in terrorist or strictly political activities.

The Constitution prohibits the expulsion of any citizen, and the Government does not routinely use forced exile; however, in 1999 the Government allegedly expelled four HAMAS leaders, who subsequently filed an appeal to reverse the expulsion. On June 25, the High Court rejected on technical grounds an appeal by the defendants' attorney to reverse the alleged order of expulsion. The case was considered closed at year's end.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for the independence of the judiciary; however, the judiciary is subject to pressure from the executive branch. A judge's appointment to, advancement within, and dismissal from the judiciary are determined by a committee whose members are appointed by the King. The Ministry of Justice has great influence over a judge's career and subverts the judicial system in favor of the executive branch. There have been numerous allegations that judges have been "reassigned" temporarily to another court or judicial district in order to remove them from a particular proceeding. Judges also complain of unlawful telephone surveillance.

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. In 1997 the Parliament passed amendments to the law governing the State Security Court that effectively extended its mandate indefinitely. The amendments had been rejected earlier by the lower house's judicial committee as "undemocratic" and contrary to the principle of judicial independence.

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 trials in the civilian courts 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 financially is unable to hire legal counsel. Shari'a as applied in the country regards the testimony of a woman to be equal to half that of a man. 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 who may be either civilians or military officers. 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. 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 Press and Publications Law permits journalists to cover court proceedings "unless the court rules otherwise" (see Section 2.a.). There was press coverage of trials in the State Security Court during the year.

On September 18, the Security Court convicted 22 suspected members of the "Al-Qaeda" terrorist network of 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.

In 1999 the Government expelled four HAMAS leaders (see Section 1.d.); there were credible reports of executive branch influence with respect to the verdict. On June 25, the High Court rejected on technical grounds an appeal by the defendants' attorney to reverse the order of expulsion. The case was considered

closed at year's end.

In late 1999, lawyers refused to represent an Israeli citizen who was accused of forging official documents. The court convicted him and he was sentenced to 1 year in prison.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

1. 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 constitutional restrictions; however, in security cases, the authorities sometimes—in violation of the law—obtain warrants retroactively or obtain preapproved warrants. Security officers monitor telephone conversations and Internet communication, read 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.).

In June the GID confiscated without a warrant a box of publications from Hassan Mahmoud Abdullah Abu Hanieh, detained him without charge for 20 days, then placed him under house arrest (see Sections 1.d. and 2.d.).

The Government did not block the entry of foreign publications (see Section 2.a.).

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 some restrictions on these rights.

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." 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 (see Section 4). In August 1999, then Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh issued an order directing government offices to cooperate only with JPA members. Citizens generally do not hesitate to criticize the Government openly, but are more circumspect in regard to the King and the royal family.

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, limit somewhat the Government's discretion to issue fines, transfer the power to withdraw licenses to the judiciary, limit significantly the Government's power to order shutdowns, and allow journalists to cover court proceedings "unless the court rules otherwise." The 1999 amendments to the Press and Publications Law also reduce the fine for violations at 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 to the Press and Publications Law, prohibitions on such activities still exist in the Penal Code and a number of other laws.

According to the 1999 Press and Publications Law, 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 a member of the JPA for at least 4 years. This last provision reflects a reduction in the requirements from previous legislation but places the onus 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 January security forces arrested engineering student Asim Ogla Al-Maghayrah from the University of Science and Technology, accusing him of affiliation with a banned political party (Al-Tahrir) and distributing illegal pamphlets (see Section 2.b.).

On May 25, police arrested Basil Talluzi, a freelance journalist and short-story writer for the independent weekly newspaper *Al-Mirrah* (The Mirror), for writing a satirical article about leaders in the Arab world (see Section 1.d.). Talluzi was released the next day and reported that he was not mistreated while in detention. The JPA claimed credit for obtaining Talluzi's prompt release.

In October police reportedly beat and confiscated the film of a reporter covering a demonstration against the Israeli Government's actions in Israel and the occupied territories. The police officer reportedly apologized and returned the film to the journalist the next day (see Sections 1.c. and 2.b.).

In September the JPA voted to expel Nidal Mansour, its own vice president and the president of a nongovernmental organization (NGO), the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CFJ). Mansour allegedly received foreign funding for CFJ activities (see Section 4). As a result of his expulsion from the JPA, Mansour was not permitted to keep his position as editor in chief of *Al-Hadath* newspaper. The Jordan Times, an English language newspaper, published an article criticizing the JPA's expulsion of Mansour. The JPA threatened the editor in chief of the Jordan Times with disciplinary measures; she subsequently published an apology letter. In October Mansour filed a complaint to the High Court of Justice; the court suspended the expulsion order pending review of the case.

In 1999 a columnist of *Al-Arab Al-Yawm* newspaper wrote an article that was critical of the JPA. The JPA subsequently suspended for 2 years the newspaper's editor in chief, Azzam Yunis, along with three other journalists. In June Yunis appealed the action; however, his request was denied.

In March the Government banned a book of poems written by Musa Hawamdeh due to pressure from radical Islamists. In June the Shar'a court charged Hawamdeh with apostasy. The complainant requested that Hawamdeh publicly retract the controversial statements in his poem and requested that the Shar'a judge order that he divorce his wife and lose his rights to inherit property or manage his own wealth. The Shar'a court referred the case to a civil court. In July both the Shar'a and criminal courts acquitted Hawamdeh of all charges, without his retracting any portion of the poem (see Section 2.c.).

According to local press reports, the Press and Publications Department also banned a book of poetry by Ziyad Al-Anani in April; the book contained a poem that reportedly was offensive to Islam. The authorities did not bring charges against Al-Anani; the book was published and distributed in Beirut, Lebanon due to the Jordanian ban (see Section 2.c.).

Some journalists complained 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. In January 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. 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. The Government has commercial agreements with the British Broadcasting Corporation, the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Center, and Radio Monte Carlo that allows 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 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. No university professors were dismissed for their political views during the year; however, some academics claim that they receive frequent threats of dismissal. In March 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.).

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Government restricts freedom of assembly. Citizens must obtain permits for public gatherings. Following a demonstration on October 6 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 February the Government twice refused requests by human rights activists to hold demonstrations to protest a parliamentary vote rejecting the repeal of Article 340, the so-called honor crimes law. However, on February 14, Prince Ali bin Hussein and Prince Ghazi bin Mohammed, led more than 5,000 persons in a march to Parliament to demand the cancellation of Article 340. The Ministry of Interior denied permits for an Islamic Action Front (IAF) counterdemonstration. Some commentators criticized the Government for organizing and controlling the demonstration instead of allowing human rights activists to organize their own demonstration.

In March Jordan 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, and staged several demonstrations throughout April to protest against the appointments. Police used physical force, water cannons, and tear gas to disperse demonstrations, injuring a number of students (see Section 1.c.).

On July 1, the Higher Coordination Committee for Opposition Parties convened a rally to welcome home the three members of the Jordanian Professional Association who were shot by Israeli soldiers at a protest at the border between Israel and Lebanon.

In August the Islamic Action Front organized several large demonstrations in support of Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem. There was heavy police presence at these demonstrations; however, security forces did not prevent the demonstrations.

In October there were numerous large demonstrations against the Israeli Government's actions in Israel and the occupied territories and in support of Palestinians. Police used force to disperse demonstrators during several violent demonstrations (see Sections 1.a. and 1.c.).

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 January security forces arrested engineering student Asim Ogla Al-Maghayrah from the University of Science and Technology, reportedly due to his affiliation with a banned political party (Al-Tahrir) and because he allegedly distributed 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. Citizens may not always practice the religion of their choice. According to the Constitution, Islam is the state religion.

Islamic institutions are managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Trusts, which appoints imams and subsidizes certain activities sponsored by mosques. Religious institutions, such as churches that wish to receive official government recognition, must apply to the Prime Ministry for registration. The Protestant denominations registered as "societies" come under the jurisdiction of one of the recognized Protestant churches for purposes of family law, such as divorce and child custody. The Government does not recognize a number of religions.

Over 90 percent of the population are Sunni Muslim, and according to official government statistics, approximately 6 percent are Christian. Government and Christian officials privately estimate the true figure to be closer to between 2 and 4 percent. The Government does not recognize religious faiths other than the three main monotheistic religions: Islam; Christianity; and Judaism. In addition not all Christian denominations have been accorded official government recognition. Officially recognized denominations include the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic (Melkite), Armenian Orthodox, Maronite Catholic, and the Assyrian, Anglican, Lutheran, Seventh-Day Adventist, United Pentecostal, and Presbyterian Churches. Other churches, including the Baptist Church, the Free Evangelical Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the Assembly of God, and the Christian Missionary Alliance, are registered with the Ministry of Justice as "societies" but not as churches. There also are small numbers of Shi'a and Druze, as well as adherents of the Baha'i Faith. The Government does not interfere with public worship by the country's Christian minority. However, although the majority of Christians are allowed to practice freely, some activities, such as proselytizing or encouraging conversion to the Christian faith--both considered incompatible legally with Islam--are prohibited. Christians are subject to aspects of Shari'a (Islamic law) that designate how inheritances are distributed.

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

The Government does not recognize the Baha'i Faith as a religion but does not prohibit the practice of the faith. However, Bahais, who number approximately 800 citizens, face both official and societal discrimination. The Government does not record the bearer's religion on national identity cards issued to Bahais, nor does it register property belonging to the Baha'i community. Adherents of the Baha'i Faith are considered as Muslims for purposes of family and inheritance law. Unlike Christian denominations, the Baha'i community does not have its own court to adjudicate personal status and family matters. Baha'i personal status matters are heard in Shar'a courts.

Non-Jordanian Christian missionaries operate in the country but are subject to restrictions. Christian missionaries may not proselytize Muslims. Since late 1998, foreign Christian mission groups in the country have complained of increased bureaucratic difficulties, including refusal by the Government to renew residence permits.

The Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS), a Christian training school for pastors and missionaries, which requested registration from the Ministry of Education in 1998, was not registered by year's end. Pending such registration, in 1999 authorities suspended renewal of the residence permits of all of the seminary's 36 foreign students and 2 members of the faculty. 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. To date the Ministry of Education's refusal to issue visas has affected 14 of 140 students and 4 staff members of the school.

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

In January GID officials contacted an official of Life Agape (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ)—an organization associated with the Baptist Church, which distributes Bibles and conducts Bible studies—and asked him to sign a letter stating that he would not "deal with Muslims." The GID officers told the official that if he did not sign the letter his office would be closed. In February police brought the letter to the Life Agape office, and escorted the official to the police station, and then to meet with the Governor of the Amman municipality. The following day, the Governor closed the Life Agape office; no reason was specified on the Governor's order.

The Government notes individuals' religions (except for Bahais) on the national identity card and "family book" (a national registration record issued to the head of every family that serves as proof of citizenship) of all citizens.

The Constitution provides that congregations have the right to establish schools for the education of their own members "provided that they comply with the general provisions of the law and be subject to the control of government in matters relating to their curricula and orientation."

In February criticism of a poem entitled "Yusef," which was included in a book of poems published in May 1999 by Muslim poet Musa Hawamdeh, began to circulate in mosques in Amman. Radical Islamists escalated the criticism of the poem and the poet, calling for the poet to be killed if he refused to recant the poem and for him to be divorced forcibly from his Muslim wife. Criticism of the poem from the Ministers of Religious Affairs and Information followed, and by the end of March, the Government banned the book in which the offending poem was published. In June Hawamdeh was summoned to a Shar'a court to face allegations of apostasy; he was charged by the head of court clerks with denying Koranic facts and defaming a prophet. The complainant requested that Hawamdeh publicly retract the controversial statements in his poem and requested that the Shar'a judge order that he divorce his wife and lose his rights to inherit property or manage his own wealth. The Shar'a court referred the case to a civil court. In July both the Shar'a and criminal courts acquitted Hawamdeh of all charges, without requiring him to retract any portion of the poem (see Section 2 a.).

According to local press reports, the Press and Publications Department banned a second book of poetry, by Ziyad Al-Anani in April; the book contained a poem that reportedly was offensive to Islam. The authorities did not bring charges against Al-Anani. The book was published and distributed in Beirut, Lebanon due to the Jordanian ban.

In June 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 Patriarchate in Damascus, Syria. The Government closed the church following a request from local Orthodox hierarchy to enforce a 1958 law that grants the Jerusalem Patriarchate authority over all Orthodox churches in the country. On November 29, the Government gave permission to the church to open officially on December 14 despite the fact that the dispute over authority had not been resolved. The church opened as scheduled; however, the Government closed it down 1 week later, stating that the church was in violation of the 1958 law for associating itself with the Orthodox church. The Government reportedly stated that the church has permission to reopen under a different name.

In December 1999, the municipality of Amman closed the Roy and Dora Whisman Academy—a nonprofit missionary school in Amman—on the basis that it was not registered with the Ministry of Education. In April the school received

registration and reopened. In July the Ministry of Labor approved official work permits for the academy's staff.

Shari'a in the country is applied in all matters relating to family law involving Muslims or the children of a Muslim father, 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 where a Muslim converts to Christianity, the act is not recognized legally by the authorities, and the subject continues to be treated as a Muslim in matters of family and property law. The minor children of a male Muslim who converts to Christianity continue to be treated as Muslims under the law.

The law 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 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, this principle is not applied. 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, although the reverse is not true. Shari'a prescribes a punishment of death for conversion; however, there is no equivalent statute under civil law.

The Political Parties Law prohibits houses of worship from being used for political party activity. The law was designed primarily to prevent Islamist parliamentarians from preaching in mosques.

Religious instruction is mandatory for all Muslim students in public schools. Christian and Bahai students are not required to attend courses in Islam.

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 enact the 1964 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.

In April after the GID released Hassan Mahmoud Abdullah Abu Hanieh following 20 days of detention without charge (see Section 1.d.), the governor of Amman, required Abu Hanieh to report to a local police station twice daily and to return home by 6:30 p.m. every evening. Officials did not bring charges against Hanieh and rescinded the house arrest in August.

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 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 only can be proven 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.

The Jordanian Society for Citizens' Rights (JSCR) reported a small number of cases in which Jordanian embassies overseas refused to issue new passports to Jordanians of Palestinian origin who were domiciled in foreign countries. Such Palestinians consequently were unable to return to Jordan.

The Constitution specifically prohibits the deportation of citizens. However, in July the High Court rejected an appeal challenging the alleged expulsion of four HAMAS leaders, all four of whom are citizens (see Sections 1.d., 1.e., and 2.b.).

There were credible reports that, due to a ban on his entering the country, government officials stopped former Minister of Parliament, Yaqoub Garrash, at the border in January when he tried to return from Saudi Arabia.

There is no law or statute that provides for the granting of refugee status to asylum seekers. The Government generally cooperates with the office of the UNHCR. The UNHCR must resettle refugees in other countries. However, in April 1998, 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. Since 1995 the UNHCR has held regular seminars to train law enforcement officials in international refugee law, including specialized courses for policewomen. The Government provides first asylum. According to UNHCR figures, 55,626 persons have sought asylum through the UNHCR since October 1990, and in approximately 8,389 cases (approximately 15 percent), applicants have been accorded refugee status.

The Government estimates that over 200,000 Iraqis reside in the country. Since 1991 thousands of Iraqis have applied for refugee status and received legal and material assistance from the UNHCR. During the year, 5,806 Iraqis applied for, and 641 were accorded, refugee status. Additionally 1,753 out of the total 1,868 refugees accorded status during the year were Iraqi nationals, reflecting applications from previous years. The UNHCR also received applications for refugee status during the year from Sudanese, Russians of Chechen descent, Somali, and Eritrean asylum seekers.

For the 1999-2000 school year, the Government reverted to 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. 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).

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 and Cabinet, 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 June King Abdullah dismissed then Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh and appointed Ali Abu Al-Raghab as his successor. The King also appointed 19 new members to the 29-member Cabinet.

The Parliament is composed of the 40-member Senate, appointed by the King, and the popularly elected 80-member Chamber of Deputies. The Parliament is empowered by the Constitution to initiate legislation, and it can 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 complained 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, by law it must submit the law to Parliament for consideration during the next session; however, this does not always occur in practice.

The Electoral Law and the distribution of parliamentary seats deliberately favor electorates in rural and southern Jordan, regions with populations known for their traditional, pro-Hashemite views.

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 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 so-called one-man, one-vote amendment to the Electoral Law was ratified by Parliament in 1997, nearly 4 years after it was first enacted by royal decree. The amendment 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 next parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held in 2001. The Islamic Action Front publicly declared that it would boycott the elections absent significant changes in the one-man, one-vote amendment to the

Electoral Law

Women have the right to vote, and women's groups encourage women to vote and to be active in the political process; however, they are underrepresented at the national and local level. There is one female minister and two female senators, but no women hold seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Of the 80 seats in the lower house, 9 are reserved for Christians, 6 for Bedouins, and 3 for the Circassian or Chechen ethnic minorities.

The Palestinian community, estimated to account for more than half of the total population, is not represented proportionately in the Government and legislature. Nine of 28 ministers, 6 of 40 senators, and 11 of 80 lower house deputies are of Palestinian origin. There also 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. However, the Press and Publications Law has restricted the publication of information about the military and security services, which, in effect prevented the publication by domestic groups of reports alleging torture and other abuses committed by the security services. The 1999 amendments to the Press and Publications Law removed these specific restrictions, but restrictions still exist in the Penal Code and other legislation (see Section 2.a.).

The local chapters of the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR), the Jordanian Human Rights Organization (JHRO), and the 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. The AOHR and the JSCR assert that the Government responds to only about 10 and 20 percent respectively of the complaints that they submit on behalf of individuals who allegedly were subjected to human rights violations by the authorities. 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. Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) 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 June the Jordan Bar Association (JBA) accused Asma Khadar of the Mizan Group, a local NGO, of accepting foreign funds and threatened to close the organization and disbar her. The JBA did not file formal charges against Khadar or close the Mizan Group and the case was considered closed by year's end.

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

In March the Government formed the new 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 the Commission sponsored two human rights awareness seminars with police and judicial officials in Amman and Ajlun. Members of the Commission also intervened in a number of individual cases of alleged human rights violations throughout the year.

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

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, minorities, and others 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. NGOs, 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 the husband may seek to demonstrate that he has authority from the Koran to correct an irreigious or disobedient wife by striking her.

The Criminal Code allows leniency for a person found guilty of committing a so-called "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. Twenty-one such murders were reported during the year in which the victims were strangled, stabbed, or shot several times. 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. The actual number of honor crimes is believed to be significantly higher. 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 this form of "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.

On January 11, a 29-year-old woman, who was being treated for self-inflicted burns at a local hospital, was shot several times and killed by her 28-year-old brother in an "honor crime." An autopsy indicated that the woman was 6 months' pregnant at the time of her death. A criminal court originally sentenced the brother to death; however, the court subsequently commuted his sentence to 10 years in prison.

After being released from protective custody on bail posted by her uncle in April, 40-year-old Fatmeh

Mohammad reportedly was shot and killed by her father, who subsequently turned himself in to the police, stating that he had killed his daughter to "cleanse his honor." The police also apprehended one of Fatmeh's brothers during the investigation and subsequently arrested both her father and brother for the crime. The case was pending at year's end.

In December police arrested a man for beating to death his 19-year-old sister in November for "reasons of honor." Police were investigating a second brother for his suspected involvement in the killing at year's end. Police exhumed the woman's body from a cemetery in which she was buried illegally. Medical tests proved that the victim had not engaged in sexual activity.

In February a criminal court sentenced Bassam Mahmoud to 15 years in prison with temporary hard labor for killing his sister in 1999 to "cleanse the honor." Mahmoud shot his 19-year-old sister Maysoon 21 times after bringing her home from the police station where she had been charged with "immoral" behavior. Following his sentencing, Mahmoud's family dropped all charges against him, and the court subsequently reduced his 15-year sentence by half.

Also in February, a tribunal of judges reduced the sentence against Samir Ayed, who in October 1999 had killed his sister in a "fit of fury" to "cleanse his honor," to 6 months in prison. Most activists believe that even if Article 340 were repealed, honor crimes likely would persist with sentences continuing to be reduced under Article 98.

In December 1999, the National Committee to Eliminate "Crimes of Honor" presented leaders of the upper and lower houses of the Parliament with a petition signed by 15,000 citizens demanding an end both to crimes of honor and the legislation that protects perpetrators of such crimes. In November 1999, the lower house rejected a government-supported amendment that would have eliminated Article 340; however, the upper house approved the same measure in December 1999. The amendment was returned to the lower house for reconsideration. In February the lower house again rejected the proposal to repeal Article 340.

In February the Government twice refused requests by human rights activists to hold demonstrations in protest of the lower house vote. However, on February 14, Prince Ali bin Hussein and Prince Ghazi bin Mohammed led more than 5,000 persons in a march on Parliament to demand the cancellation of Article 340. On the same day, the press reported that the Islamic Action Front (IAF) issued a fatwa stating that the cancellation of Article 340 would contradict Shari'a and would "destroy our Islamic, social, and family values by stripping men of their humanity when they surprise their wives or female relatives committing adultery." The Ministry of Interior denied permits for an IAF counterdemonstration, which drew protests from both sides of the debate (see Section 2.b.).

Women experience legal discrimination in matters of pension and social security benefits, inheritance, divorce, and the value of court testimony. 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.

Under Shari'a as applied in the country, female heirs receive half the amount of a male heir's inheritance, 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 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. In January the Jordanian Food Industry Factory reportedly fired a group of 28 women after they demanded to be paid the legal minimum wage. The women reportedly blamed their union and the Ministry of Labor for their inability to protect workers (see Section 6.a.).

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 constitute 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 U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reported in 1995 that women who work in agriculture average 15-hour days and earn less than men. The Jordanian chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Club gives 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 upcoming 2001 parliamentary elections. The University of Jordan launched a new graduate degree program in women's studies during the year 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. The law prohibits corporal punishment in schools; however, such punishment is known to occur. 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.).

Educational development, quality, and the relevance of education to job market demand have been on the Government's agenda since 1985, with few concrete results to date. Because there are government-run primary schools in virtually every village, most students in the country have access to primary education. 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.

In March Queen Rania established the National Team for Family Protection (NTFP) to consolidate all issues concerning family safety. On August 20, 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.

The Government attempts to safeguard some children's rights, especially regarding child labor. 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, these street 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.

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.

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 reportedly due to a family member's allegedly problematic record.

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.

People with Disabilities

High unemployment in the general population restricts job opportunities for disabled persons, estimated by the Ministry of Social Development to number 250,000. Thirteen percent of disabled citizens receive monetary assistance from the Government. The Government passed legislation in 1993 requiring future public buildings to accommodate the needs of the disabled and to retrofit existing public buildings; however, implementation has been slow. During the year, 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 mentally and physically disabled persons in public and private sector training courses. It has placed approximately 2,000 disabled persons in public and private sector jobs. The law requires that 2 percent of the available jobs be reserved for the physically disabled. Private organizations and members of the royal family actively promote programs to protect and advance the interests of the disabled.

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 presence in the general population. Baha'is face some societal and official discrimination. Their faith is not recognized officially, 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.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

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 1987 are not entitled to citizenship and are issued 2-year passports valid for travel only. In 1995 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.). 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.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

Workers in the private sector and in some state-owned companies have the right to establish and join unions. Unions must be registered to be considered legal. The law prohibits union membership for 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 binding legally. 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 April the Government refused a request by some 200 workers at the Jordan Telecommunication Company (JTC) to form their own union to safeguard their rights under the company's new privatized leadership. The Ministry of Labor justified the refusal by saying that the workers already were represented by the General Union for Public Workers, which includes artists, barbers, restaurant and hotel industry employees, and workers in social services.

In 1989 Pepsi-Cola Company fired 225 employees who staged an illegal strike. The Ministry of Labor intervened and the company reinstated 115 of the employees in 1999. Despite significant efforts by the Ministry of Labor and the Food Workers Union, the company rehired less than 10 percent of the remaining former employees during the year.

In January the Jordan Cable and Wire Company reinstated 20 of 220 workers that a labor court ruled were dismissed illegally in 1989. However, the company subsequently forced the employees to take a paid vacation and fired them again upon their return. No further action was taken during the year.

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

In late 1989, 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; however, it was not staffed adequately by year's end. The Government also did not provide training for government officials who are responsible for enforcing child labor laws. All child labor enforcement responsibilities rest in the hands of 85 Ministry of Labor inspectors. According to the law, employers that hire a child under the age of 16 must pay a fine ranging from \$140-\$710 (100-500 dinars). The fine is doubled if the offense is repeated. However, the Government did not enforce laws regarding child labor during the year. 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 violations of law, such as drug trafficking and prostitution, for income.

Basic education is free and compulsory for 10 scholastic years for citizens from the ages of 6 to 16. However, there are no provisions to enforce the law or punish guardians for violating it (see Section 5).

The Government ratified International Labor Convention 182 on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor;

however, it has not provided adequate financial support to implement its provisions. Nonetheless, government policy has 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, who constitute a segment of working children. There are no specific mechanisms for receiving, investigating, and addressing child labor complaints relating to allegations of the worst forms of child labor.

The Ministry of Labor in conjunction with the National Task Force on Children and approximately 50 other local NGO's, developed a National Plan of Action (NPA) and adopted it in a national workshop held in 1998. The Ministry of Labor subsequently 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. The Ministry began implementing some of the provisions of the NPA; however, the pace has been slow due to financial and logistical difficulties.

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).

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. Workers earning the minimum wage find it difficult to provide a decent standard of living for their families. 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 live at or below the poverty level; 1.5 percent live in "absolute" 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 prohibits most workers from working more than the customary 48 hours per week. Hotel, restaurant, and cinema employees may work up to 54 hours per week; the law requires overtime payment for hours in excess of the standard workweek. Workers may not work more than 16 hours in any continuous period or more than 60 hours of overtime per month. Employees are entitled to 1 day off per week.

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 country. Domestic servants generally are not given days off and frequently are called upon to work at any hour of the day or night.

In February the Ministry of Labor announced that it would require Egyptian workers to obtain work permits approved by the Governments of both Egypt and Jordan, and that the Government would start applying "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.

f. Trafficking in Persons

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

[End.]