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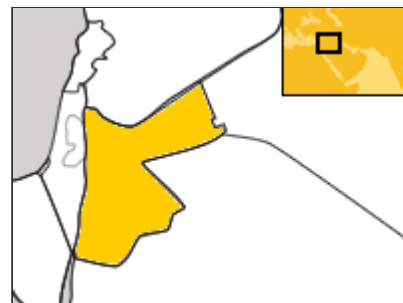
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Amnesty International

Jordan

Covering events from January - December 2004

At least 16 people were sentenced to death and one was executed. One man died in custody in Jweideh prison. Scores of political arrests were made, including for suspected "terrorist" activity, and there were reports of torture and ill-treatment in custody. At least 20 people were victims of family killings. Perpetrators continued to enjoy lenient sentences for killing female relatives for reasons of "honour".



Jordan

Death penalty

At least 16 people were sentenced to death, nine of them in absentia. Ibtisam Hussain, a 24-year-old woman, was executed in March, the only known execution in the year. She was convicted of murdering two children aged five and six in 2002; an earlier sentence of manslaughter was overturned on appeal. She was the first woman to be executed in Jordan since May 2002.

Death in custody

'Abdallah al-Mashaqbeh died in Jweideh prison in early September apparently following clashes between prisoners and prison staff. The incident was investigated by the government-funded National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), which submitted a report to the government containing evidence that the victim had been physically abused by prison staff and that people held in Jordan's prisons were being beaten. On 10 October, 11 police officers assigned to Jweideh prison pleaded not guilty in court on charges relating to the death of 'Abdallah al-Mashaqbeh.

Arrests and the State Security Court (SSC)

Scores of people were arrested for alleged "terrorist" activity and at least 18 security-related cases proceeded before the SSC. The SSC invariably uses panels of military judges and fails to provide adequate safeguards for fair trial. In at least six of the trials, defendants alleged that their "confessions" were made under torture. At least one case was referred to the National Institute of Forensic Medicine which concluded that the defendant had not been tortured. AI remained concerned that no judicial and impartial investigations were initiated into torture allegations.

- In December the trial before the SSC began of 13 men charged in connection with alleged attempts to carry out a chemical attack and of belonging to an illegal organization linked to al-Qa'ida. Four, including Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, were being tried in absentia. Some of the defendants faced the death penalty if convicted. Four men were reportedly killed in April during clashes with security services who were making arrests in connection with these allegations.

Jordanian national Wisam 'Abd al-Rahman was released from US detention in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, in the first quarter of the year. Reportedly, on his return to Jordan, he was held by the General Intelligence Department for 55 days, then placed under house arrest.

In October the government denied reports that it was allowing a detention centre to be run by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Jordan to interrogate "terror" suspects.

Violence and discrimination against women

The National Institute of Forensic Medicine said that around 750 women a year visit forensic medical clinics

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Head of state: King 'Abdallah II bin al-Hussein

Head of government: Faisal al-Fayez

Death penalty: retentionist

International Criminal Court: ratified

UN Women's Convention: ratified with reservations

Optional Protocol to UN Women's Convention: not signed

Further information

[The Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula: Human rights fall victim to the "war on terror"](#)
(AI Index: MDE 04/002/2004)

[All AI documents on Jordan](#)

in Amman after suffering domestic violence, although it estimated that the actual number of victims could be 10 times higher. On 2 September the authorities announced plans for the opening in early 2005 of the long-awaited government “family reconciliation” centre for victims of domestic violence. The Jordanian Women’s Union continued to run a small shelter for women needing temporary refuge from domestic violence.

At least 20 people were victims of family killings, including two 17-year-old girls, a baby and two men. In July the Justice Ministry proposed amendments to Article 98 of the Penal Code. Article 98 is often invoked in defence of men who kill their female relatives in a “fit of rage” caused by “unlawful” or “dangerous” acts on the part of the victim. The proposals included heavier sentencing – at least five years in prison – for such crimes. During 2004, at least two men who said they had killed women for reasons of “honour” benefited from Article 98.

- A man who killed his 18-year-old daughter, Amal, for reasons of “honour” was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment, in line with Article 98. The sentence was overturned on appeal and the case went for retrial in October. Amal had gone missing from her home and when she returned she was held for her own protection by the authorities. She was subsequently released when her father signed a guarantee that she would not be harmed by her family. He killed her the same day.

Proposed amendments by the government to the Personal Status Law to allow women the right to divorce without their husband’s consent were rejected by the Lower House of Parliament and remained pending before the Upper House.

A campaign focusing on violence against women – 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence – was launched in November by Jordanian non-governmental organizations including the NCHR.

AI visits

AI delegates visited Jordan in March to research violence against women. The same month AI’s Secretary General visited Jordan for the regional launch of AI’s Stop Violence Against Women campaign.

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